PROTESTING DEATH-DISABILITY-DEBILITY IMAGINARIES: ONTOLOGICAL ERASURE AND THE ENDEMIC VIOLENCES OF SETTLER COLONIALISM

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ABSTRACT

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White supremacist rule socially engineered impoverishment, dispossession and fomented brutality that black people in South Africa were made to endure through centuries of settler colonial history, which was intensified during apartheid and continued in the nearly three decades of the postapartheid era. Governance through attritional warfare, which actively worked to suppress and debilitate the black majority as a tactic of rule, used death, and the threat of death and disablement, to ensure white, and now also black, elites' security. The political economy was fundamentally premised on the right to produce black death-disability-debility to extract wealth in industries such as mining, and destroy, not just black security, but also black wealth through land dispossession. Structural violence, due to white supremacist rule, massified black death, disability and debility. In a country like South Africa, the black majority experiences conditions such as inadequate housing, food insecurity, and dangerous, violent neighbourhoods which causes an expansion of death-disability-debility. Death-disablement-debilitation is produced, and the continuity of structural violence intensifies and exacerbates disablement and debilitation and, for a great majority of black people, leads to an early death. The massification of black vulnerability to death-disability-debility is not shared with the majority of white South Africans and cannot be theorised as if it were.

The overwhelming and obvious racialised distribution of disability is not a significant concern for South African disability studies and the thesis argues that this lacuna constitutes ontological erasure that supports, maintains and furnishes a white epistemology of ignorance. This allows a place in transnational white disability studies that erases and ignores the costs of white supremacy, even as white supremacist reasoning is shored up through the evisceration of history. In some ways, the thesis offers up a crude catalogue to demonstrate the scale of black death-disablement-debilitation and the conditions of endemic violence. In the thesis, I provide openings for questions to emerge, and to demonstrate the vast scope that is possible for a historically

located South African disability studies, and how integral thinking about death-disability-debility is for any study of South African life. Wherever structural violence is present, its materialisation is death-disability-debility, which affects not only humans who are subjugated but, as we glimpse in the thesis, also the environment and other forms of life.

The thesis starts with an overview of disability in South Africa, questions the ontological erasure of race in South African disability studies, and offers some of the questions that accompanied me as I negotiated this project. I then provide a discussion on violence and an ontological sketch of the effects that settler colonial attritional war has had on black South Africans' health and life expectancy. Thereafter, I outline my methodological process and how I arrived at an emergent methodology. I started this research project with a feminist qualitative methodology, and decolonial and disability studies' perspectives. I did life histories with nine participants, but also wanted to make connections with the student protests that I was witnessing. I used a feminist trickster approach and outlaw epistemology which allowed me to shift scales across the production and experiences of disability, to events that revealed how enmeshed death-disability-debility was for black South Africans. Doing research on obvious violence had an affective force and the traumatic effects unveiled epistemic violence, gaslighting, settler colonial epistemologies, and ableism in the academy. I then turn to five life histories, of participants who became disabled due to interpersonal violence in the racially segregated black townships of the Cape Flats. The life histories are followed by an exploration of land dispossession, black criminalisation, and disability. First, I engage the connections between masculinity, interpersonal violence, gangsterism and disability and, then show how the concentration of violence in black spaces was made possible by land dispossession. In the final part of the thesis, I focus on protest to show that protests are dense epistemic sites from which to engage death-disability-debility imaginaries. Thinking with the Marikana Massacre, I explore the long and violent history of mining as an industry, which produced/s a staggering scale of black death-disability-debility. After which I look at crowd control weapons and how they produce, not just death-disability-debility, but also race through creating black terror. Finally, I discuss the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall student protests, which came to be known as Fallism, or Fallist protests and their use of black pain as a death-disability-debility imaginary to change white supremacist epistemologies of ignorance in which black suffering is normalised. I close the thesis with the insights that holding death-disability-debility together as an analytic provided me, critique the impoverished ontological imaginary bequeathed by white epistemologies of ignorance and show how important thinking with race is in South Africa and reiterate the affective density of doing

research on violence. Finally, I conclude with some of the questions that emerged from the study. Using disability as an analytic as a route to thinking about justice in a country like South Africa with its long history of racialised injustice, is far too critical a tool to allow it to languish in a racially sanitised ontological imaginary.

Keywords

Ontological erasure, settler colonialism, death-disability-debility imaginaries, epistemologies of ignorance, death, disability, debility, protest, endemic violence, attritional warfare

DECLARATION

I declare that *Protesting Death-Disability-Debility Imaginaries: Ontological Erasure and the Endemic Violences of Settler Colonialism* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Kharnita Mohamed September 2022

Signed

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Chapter One: Introducing the ontological erasure of Black vulnerability to death, disability and debility

Apartheid, which means separate development, was declared a crime against humanity by the United Nations (UN) in 1966. In 1948, despite securing less of the popular vote than the United Party, the white[1] supremacist Afrikaner Nationalist Party won the majority of Parliamentary Seats because they received more rural votes. The National Party ran on a platform of fanatical white supremacy where whites, as a statistical minority in South Africa, ensured the subjugation of the majority Black population. After 1948, the National Party won every whites-only election until the first fully democratic election in 1994 when every South African was entitled to vote. The majority of white South Africans thus affirmed their belief in white supremacy which necessitated the cruel and vicious subjugation of Black South Africa.

One of the apartheid government's first laws was the Population Registration Act of 1950 which decreed that all people would be classified by race. The three race groups were deemed to be African, Coloured and White. Coloureds were further divided into Griqua, Indian, Chinese, residual Coloured group, and Cape Malay, who had enslaved ancestors from Madagascar and South-East Asia (van Rooyen & Lemanski, 2020). The white minority, who now make up approximately 7.8% of the population, brutally oppressed the Black[2] majority, who constitute approximately 92.3% of the population and are comprised of Black Africans at 80.9%, Coloureds at 8.8% and Indians at 2.6% (Statistics South Africa [StatsSA], 2021). Apartheid legislated a hierarchy of Blackness, with Blacks who were racialised as Black Africans placed lowest on the hierarchy. Coloureds who were presumably 'mixed' race were second lowest on the hierarchy. Indians were considered superior to Coloureds and Black Africans but lower than those racialised as white. South Africa was a racist state. Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007: 28) defines '(r)acism, specifically, (as) the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-

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[1] Please note that racial classifications are not to imply the designation of race as a social fact but rather that South Africa's history of racial segregation has had enduring effects. Though utilising racial categorisation reproduces a violent system of classification, to elide the effects of these categories in the present would be irresponsible. The majority of South Africans are still held hostage by the inequalities wrought by a racialised system. In the case of disability, investigating the correlations with racial classification is crucial to understanding the operation of both race and disability.

[2] Throughout this thesis, unless necessary, I will use Black to refer to Black Africans, Coloureds and Indians rather than reproduce racist apartheid classifications for the formerly oppressed. There are instances where disarticulating forms of Blackness is useful to show the differential impact of the crises induced by white supremacist rule and, where this is the case, I utilise these categories. The usage of Black as a collective designator for the formerly oppressed draws from the Black Consciousness Movement and is intended to evince Black solidarity in opposition to white supremacy under apartheid (see Biko, 2004: 100).

differentiated vulnerability to premature death.’ South Africa’s legal categories of race intensified processes of racialisation, in which race was constantly remade through materialising racial difference. One of the most profound ways in which race was made was through rendering Black people inordinately vulnerable to death, disablement and debilitation.

Prior to apartheid, settler colonialism remade worlds through the destruction of Black worlds, backbreaking labour regimes, and dehumanising and racist modes of governance that normalised Black death, disability and debility. The use of violence was endemic in the making and settling of South Africa and was not confined to what would become the South African nation state. British imperialism, white racial capitalism and Afrikaner nationalism also devastated Black lives across Southern African to solidify white rule in the region. The white minority wielded cruel and vicious tactics of subjugation over the Black majority as a form of governance and a means to achieve their objectives. These are well-known and well-worn historical facts. However, one of the most marked characteristics of settler colonialism is the disavowal of founding violence by settler colonialists against indigenous and subject populations (Veracini, 2010) and the continuing violence needed to maintain settler colonial security. This disavowal runs through not just popular imaginaries but also within disciplinary imaginaries, where settler colonial ontologies and epistemologies are dominant and thus have profound epistemic effects.

The consequences of white supremacist rule, despite South Africa now in 2022 being a democratic state, having extensive social assistance programmes and being the most prosperous economy on the African continent, are still pervasive. South Africa is notorious for being the most unequal country in the world (Sulla, Zikhali & Cuevas, 2022). The historical legacy of centuries of white supremacist rule has bequeathed a society in which poverty is racialised. Nearly 60% (58,6%) of the Black majority live below the poverty line, which has most recently been exacerbated by COVID-19 and the numerous consequent economic disruptions (World Bank, 2021). Natural disasters such as the Kwazulu - Natal[3] floods in April 2022 and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as events such as the 2022 Russian incursion into Ukraine, almost always increase impoverishment for most Black South Africans. Nearly half of the population is unemployed (Stoddard, 2021), and approximately one in four are food insecure. Prior to COVID-19, South Africa was already beset by numerous epidemics, with some of the highest rates in the world of interpersonal violence, HIV/AIDS infection, tuberculosis (TB) (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2021), and maternal morbidity and mortality. Along with this, diseases of

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[3] One of the nine provinces in South Africa.

poverty are rampant (Coovadia, Jewkes, Barron, Sanders & McIntyre, 2009). However, these epidemics are racialised, with the Black majority being most vulnerable to ill health. The life expectancy and disability-adjusted life years of Black South Africans are woefully low in comparison to white South Africans (Shoko, 2018).

Despite the seemingly obvious racialisation of disabling structural conditions in South Africa, the confluence of race and disability is under-studied within South African disability studies. Whilst some South African disability studies scholars have begun drawing on decolonial scholarship (e.g. Ndlovu, 2020; Ubisi, 2021; Ned, 2022), there is very little research that closely explores the interconnectedness of South Africa's centuries-long regimes of racialised oppression and the production of disability. Within settler colonial states, the internal politics of knowledge production produces synergies (uneven, and not necessarily coherent) in which transnational forms of whiteness limit the ontological and epistemic scope of the questions asked, and emulates and amplifies the silences within scholarship from the Global North. Though recently there have been attempts to deal with disability from an intersectional perspective, racialisation and the deliberate debilitation and maiming of Black people as a tool of white supremacist rule is largely absent or misunderstood, despite some South African disability theorists writing from and as voices for the Global South.

Surely, in a country such as South Africa, disability studies theorists should have been at the forefront of thinking about race and disability, and South African disability theorists should at the least have had some kind of theorisation of the interconnection of race and disability. In one of the first edited volumes on disability in South Africa, *Disability and Social Change: a South African Agenda* (Watermeyer, Swartz, Lorenzo, Schneider & Priestley, 2006), the index contains seven entries for race. Meanwhile, in the edited volume, *The Palgrave Handbook of Disability and Citizenship in the Global South (*Watermeyer, McKenzie & Swartz, 2019*)*, which is edited and had contributions by some of the foremost disability studies theorists in Southern Africa, there are only four index entries for race. Most of these pertain to a chapter lamenting that as a white, male with a visual impairment, the author's suffering is negated in favour of Black suffering, as race is considered more important than disability in South Africa (Watermeyer, 2019). There is no chapter theorising the systematic and ongoing disabling conditions through which coloniality normalises Black disablement, nor is the perdurance of racialised structural violence incorporated into theorising about disability. Something curious happens in most South African disability studies' texts, even when our apartheid history is invoked. We are confronted with the history of apartheid, and then race disappears, as participants become deracialised subjects with disabilities.[4] Sometimes there are inferences of Africanness through a paragraph or two on ubuntu, which very often is more aspirational and a somewhat romanticised trope about South African life that sidesteps the innumerable ordinary crises that Black South Africans are forced to endure. Decontextualised arguments about access and infrastructure, in which the lack of access as a crisis for the majority of Black South Africans and not just people with disabilities, disappear. How does one think about accessibility when an entire public transport system is in crisis; when there is a dearth of cost-effective digital infrastructure for a majority of the population who are deeply impoverished; or when schooling was racialised and very few schools for Black people with disabilities were historically budgeted for, and in which the South African school system for most Black children is woefully inadequate and under-resourced?

The entanglement of race and disability for white and Black South Africans is related, but also different, as a consequence of death, disablement and debility being integral to Black subjugation by proponents and beneficiaries of white supremacist rule across much of South African history. In postapartheid South Africa, the continuities of differential lifeworlds with vastly different resources for Black and white South Africans have not abated and are now more visible. The problems of Black impoverishment circulate in public discourse repeatedly and are often at the centre of questions of social justice. Given the history and legacy of race in South Africa, there should be a theorisation of race that threads through the majority of South African disability theorists' thinking. However, theorisations of race are alarmingly absent. The nullification of racialised inequality, and its impact for Black South Africans that was/is manifested by death, disability and debility, lays bare ontological presuppositions with epistemic entailments. There is thus a peculiar obfuscation that occurs when raced subjects are made commensurable under the sign of disability within South Africa. I am not arguing for an Olympics of oppression or a hierarchy of oppression (see Watermeyer, 2019), but rather for ontologies that do not seek to erase or minimise history or the ongoing violence that Black people contend with. The larger South African academy has barely begun to reckon with its history, and neither has South African disability studies, as an ordinary epistemic investment, engaged with South Africa's legacy of racial inequality. The contestation for expanded ontological terrain that foregrounds Black life

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[4] I am choosing not to point out particular chapters, though there are examples of each of these kinds of evasions in this edited volume. Epistemic practices where deracialisation is effected are very pervasive and I am more interested in the structure of elision than the particularities of some of the arguments. These elisions are part of an episteme, as not only are some of the chapters co-authored, they have also been reviewed, and agreed to by editors. There is thus some form of epistemic consensus around the deracialisation of South African people with disabilities. This requires study.

and what has been done to, and continues to affect, the majority of Black people in this country is ongoing.

Questioning the absence of race in South African disability studies

This dissertation writes into the lacuna left by the elision of race and disability, and is inspired by critical disability scholars, such as Nirmala Erevelles (2011a; 2011b; 2014a; 2014b; 2015), Erevelles & Minnear (2010), Stephen Knadler (2019), Sami Schalk (2018), and Alexander Wehiliye (2014), to think about how racialised regimes of inequality rely on the systematic and organised disablement and debilitation of populations and depend on making difference through the right to maim (Puar, 2017). I have also been grateful to DisCrit scholars such as Annamma, Ferri & Connor (2013) for articulating the intersection of race and disability. This work diverges from critical disability studies as formulated in the Global North, which tend to think about anti-Blackness and disability and debility in the context of minorities within (settler) colonial states, and rather generate the kinds of questions we may want to explore about the normalised maiming of a statistical majority. I am deeply indebted to Jasbir Puar's work in the *Right to Maim* on Palestine, and her offering of debility as a conceptual tool wherein debility 'addresses injury and bodily exclusion that are endemic rather than epidemic or exceptional, and reflects a need for rethinking overarching structures of working, schooling, and living' (2017: xvii). Instead of debility being an identity, in the way that disability has come to be a form of life centred on identity and enables recognition from the state to secure rights, it is rather the massification of inevitable injuring that is normalised and expected by racial capitalism (Puar, 2017: xvii-xviii). Akin to the aforementioned scholars, I utilise disability studies towards an epistemic intervention (e.g. Minich, 2016) to ask how one could think about disability in South Africa. Given the paucity of research highlighting the connections between South Africa's history of racialisation and disability, during this PhD, I realised the only way to proceed was to generate questions, rather than epistemic certainties or ontological certitude.

Some of the questions that accompanied me as I began to write were about the normalisation of Black debilitation, disablement and death because of our long history of white supremacist violence, which rendered Black debilitation ordinary and justifiable. Whilst I list some of them here, these questions are not exhaustive. How do you write about disability in a country that was built by Black bodies being worked to their deaths, into disability and debilitation, as a desired end for white supremacist political economies to ensure a compliant Black population? How do you write about disability in a country when housing, education, hospitalisation and whatever social good to support life was inadequately provisioned for Black people, yet every single industry that supported white worlds and white thriving depended on cheap, disposable Black labour? How do you write about disability in a country where it is ordinary to use policing as a means of mass torture, in full view of the public, and yet blame Black people who dare to complain? What does it mean to write about Black death, disablement and debility in a country where Black suffering was considered necessary, as a tactic of governance, to ensure white security? How do you write about disability when young Black people who are agitating for ontologies and epistemologies that recognise them in their curricula and their histories are savagely disabled and debilitated by police and security companies on university campuses? How do you write about the massification of Black death, disability and debility when most of the white practitioners of knowledge who think about disability benefited from Black death, disablement and debility. Financially, spatially, ontologically, epistemically, psycho-affectively and in ways yet unimagined. How do you write about disability when what is available in the archive, whilst dense and full of possible re-readings, are largely wrought through settler colonial logics, and ontological imaginaries that are grounded in the normalcy of Black subjugation? What does it mean to think about disability in a context where structural violence has allowed interpersonal violence to flourish in Black neighbourhoods and where notions of agency rest uneasily alongside the unequal distribution of vulnerability? What does it mean to be good, to be ethical, when one is living a life made possible by the death, disability and debility of Black people? What does it mean to understand and theorise the world, when the lives of a majority who constitute the statistical norm are absent or, if they are present, are reductive?

What does normalcy[5] mean as a concept, or abnormality, when the conditions shared by a vast majority, and thus the statistical norm, are erased or ignored in favour of the experiences of a statistical minority whose existence, whilst considered ideal and represented as normative, is so befouled by the unspeakable violence that makes it possible? What does it mean in the most

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[5] In his seminal analysis of normalcy, Davis (1995) shows how the idea of the norm was constructed with the rise of statistics to contribute to the emergence of the ‘average *~~man~~*’ who exemplified the median. Critically, the concept of the average *~~man~~* implies that 'the majority of the population must or should somehow be part of the norm’ (2017: 3). The concept of the norm also implied deviation from the norm. Disability, as well as exceptional human traits, are at opposite ends of the distribution of normalcy. A new ranking system of desirable traits was devised so that the mediocre middle would not be the desired standard but rather the statistical ideal at the top end of the ranking system. For example, those with higher IQs rather than those with middling IQs. Normalcy and eugenics are intricately linked. Practitioners of and believers in eugenics sought the elimination of undesirable traits and held to the idea of the progressively perfectible body. The idea of normalcy relies on the abnormal at its margins. Normalcy (Davis, 2017) thus only encompasses a very tiny proportion of people in the Global North, and even fewer people within the Global South, in settler colonial spaces where racist, heteropatriarchal ableist capitalism shaped the making of worlds.

unequal country in the world, with a Black majority that was dominated and savagely subjugated because they were Black, that the most prominent scholars in the field of disability studies in your country have not theorised the relationship between race and disability? What does it do to the study of disability (and, indeed, any other discipline) if most theorists in a Black majority country are white?

Though I focus on disability studies, the question of the epistemic effects of whiteness in the South African academy pertains to most South African knowledge production. The historian, Teresa Barnes (2019), shows how universities such as the University of Cape Town, which prides itself on being liberal, inscribed Black inferiority during apartheid by arguing that Blacks could be fully enfranchised in time and with education. Thus, civilisational differences were ascribed to Blackness that required paternalistic modes of development. While it is assumed that there is a liberal, anti-racist tradition in the South African academy, exemplars of anti-racist thinking were largely exceptions. Like the historian, Saul Dubow (1995), who showed how pervasive scientific racism was in the South African academy, Barnes (2019) argued that most white South African academics supported, justified and were complicit in furthering the state's white supremacist agenda. Both Dubow (1995) and Barnes (2019), writing over 25 years apart, wondered at the myth-making that ignores how deeply entrenched racism was in the South African academy. The problems of ontological erasure, in the face of overwhelming and staggering violence to the Black majority across centuries, are riven through South African intellectual life.

The dissertation thus asks, albeit obliquely, what it means when a space like South Africa, which is in the Global South and has a majority Black population, is represented by largely white disability scholars at home and as representative of the Global South, members of the statistical minority who benefited, and continue to benefit, from the subjugation of Black South Africans. What does that say about how disability studies in general imagines disability and race and their intersection? Given how critical disability was/is to the making of a race as a mode of being, not just its material production but also as a device that justifies racism (Baynton, 2001; 2005), what does deracialising disability do? What does it indicate when white disability studies' theorists from South Africa are theorising and organising knowledge about the Global South and yet are unable to theorise the relationship between race and disability? Apartheid was not only about massifying vulnerability to death, disability and debility for Black people, but also a capacitating system (Puar, 2017) which benefited most white people. How do we understand what it means for white scholars to represent the Global South and make transnational interventions into the unequal terrain of knowledge production?

In South Africa, as in the Global North, most knowledge is produced by white scholars (Bell, 2017 in an untransformed academy where anti-Blackness and its logics are barely understood, despite race's ubiquitous metaphoric use by white scholars. Settler colonial epistemologies are sedimented in and require epistemologies of ignorance (Mills, 1997; Sullivan & Tuana, 2007), and this has epistemic effects for how one thinks about disability from the Global South and, in this case, South Africa. Whilst SA disability theorists are attempting to undo ignorance about disability, they are simultaneously occluding and ignoring the racialised dimensions of disability in South Africa. Mohanty's (2003) caution about the necessity for precision and political acuity when using geopolitical framings as an epistemic ground, given the fluidity and multiplicity of location, is worth thinking about. She demonstrates that one can simultaneously have a quality of life akin to the One-Third World minority who benefit from inequality, unlike those in the Two-Thirds World, who may share geographic closeness but not the same quality of life despite both being in the Global South. Importantly, she offers an intersectional reflexivity that recognises the multiplicity of location and, in so doing, perhaps avoids the kind of epistemic arrogance (Medina, 2013) that stems from an epistemology of racial ignorance (Mills, 1997; Sullivan & Tuana, 2007).

Charles Mills (1997: 18) argued that the racial contract is prescribed by 'an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance,' which renders whites unable to understand the world they have created. This kind of ignorance is something that is often very evident in conversations, at conferences and in literature about Black life. At the same time, knowledge about Black life is often accompanied by stereotypes and evasions about the scale and depth of the consequences of centuries of white rule. White ignorance is a particular kind of knowing and, in certain spaces, the certitude of white scholars (and students) as arbiters of knowledge can be quite forceful. For Medina,

> racial ignorance … is a very active and contentful form of ignorance: it is something more than a gap or an emptiness that can simply be filled when the opportunity arises; it is an ignorance that creates epistemic privileges and epistemic harms by protecting the epistemic agency of some and by blocking the epistemic agency of others (2018: 248).

Racial ignorance leads to profound forms of epistemic injustice, as well as distorted scholarship on social phenomena. Epistemologies of ignorances are intimately connected to not just the politics of location but also to ethics and worldings that are possible to think. As Loretta Code argued, an epistemology of ignorance is active and 'often blocks knowledge, stands in its place, and tacitly or more explicitly affirms a need or a commitment not to know' (2014: 154).

I want to state very strongly that this argument is not about individuals or ethico-political intentions, but rather about how history lives in us, and the entailments there are for the scope of epistemic authority. It is also not a quest to denigrate the important and necessary work that has been done by white scholars of disability in South Africa, which needs to continue given the paucity of research on disability. It is most definitely not an attempt to silence anyone's right to 'sing the blues' (Watermeyer, 2019), nor does it assume that it is impossible for scholars who were racialised as white to be capable of a political acuity that may yet offer vital insight into the racialisation of disability. Similarly, it does not assume that every Black scholar is likely to produce epistemically just research. Black scholars too can become steeped in similar categorical quandaries that reproduce epistemologies of ignorance. Rather, what I suggest are possible avenues for enquiry that are not yet within the purview of South African disability studies, which cannot flourish unless we are willing to recognise its current whiteness and limitations.

Most theorisation of disability emanates from the global north (Connell, 2011; Meekosha, 2011; Erevelles, 2015; Grech, 2015a; Grech & Soldatic, 2015; Ned, 2022) and has been approached from whiteness as an epistemic vantage point (Bell, 2017). In transnational literature[6] on disability, an epistemic shift is occurring where disability is being theorised by scholars who have put forward arguments on disability from epistemologies that incorporate Black (e.g. Christopher Bell, Michael Ralph, Laurence Ralph), decolonial (e.g. Helen Meekosha, Nirmala Erevelles, Shaun Grech, Karen Soldatic, Adria Imada), queer (e.g. Eli Clare, Robert McRuer, Jasbir Puar) and Black and/or womxn of colour feminist (e.g. Jasbir Puar, Sami Schalk, Nirmala Erevelles; Jina B. Kim) scholarship.[7] Despite the importance of disability as an analytic of social inequality, the production of subjectivity and organisation of society (see Davis, 2006; Siebers, 2008), disability is understudied globally. It is widely assumed that disability is understudied because of the stigma associated with disability (e.g. Goodley, Hughes & Davis, 2012;

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[6] The literature may not be intended to be transnational, but given the ways that knowledge circulates, is often read and applied transnationally.

[7] Attempting to categorise inevitably leads to the categories themselves being shown up as inadequate, as many of these theorists could be multiply categorised. This categorisation is thus more for utility than absolute.

Watermeyer, 2013. However, during this PhD, I began to wonder about this seeming truism in disability studies. Perhaps the widespread use of death, disablement and debility as tactics of oppression and modes of producing and maintaining inequality are challenging to confront from white epistemologies of ignorance, and disability is understudied because it shows the lie of white supremacist civilisational fantasies, or any other system that relies on multiple modes of violence to achieve its ends. When one begins to tally the oppressive costs to Black people through their maiming wrought by coloniality (Quijano, 2000; Lugones, 2008) as a result of white supremacist rule, it is hard to pretend there was anything civilised or civilising about ensuring white security. The scale of devastation for those deemed to be disposable and less than human is staggering.

Based on population estimates for 2010, the WHO (2011: 29) considered that approximately 785 (15.6%) to 975 million (19.46%) people over 15 years of age globally live with a disability. Even though most people with disabilities – eighty percent – live in the Global South (WHO, 2011), very little scholarship on disability emerges from there (Grech, 2015a; Meekosha, 2011) or takes it as an epistemic centre. Recently, a few edited volumes have been published with a focus on the Global South (e.g., Grech & Soldatic, 2016; Watermeyer et al., 2019) and Southern Africa (e.g Chataika, 2018) to engage this oversight. A journal, *Disability and the Global South,* has also been started. The Global South as an epistemic orientation within disability studies is thus in the process of being forged.

In Africa, the *African Journal of Disability*[8] focuses on disability on the continent, and this geographical and African-centred epistemic orientation is often mapped into the Global South within texts. That is, many authors will use the Global South to orient their research, yet will overwhelmingly elide race, except for a few exceptions (e.g. Harrison & Watermeyer, 2019; Lipenga, 2014b). Even where decoloniality is used, it becomes transposed into a metaphor (Grech, 2015a) and analytic for deracialised disability experience (e.g. Ndlovu, 2019). Much of the research about disability in and from the Global South still shows evidence of epistemic coloniality (Ibarro-Colado, 2007; Mignolo, 2000, 2009), where Northern theories and concerns are used to analyse and buttress research (Connell, 2011; Meekosha, 2011). For example, while a text will note that the prevalence of disability in the Global South is much higher than the

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[8] Do note, as I am most interested in South African disability studies here, my focus was on South African-focused articles. Within Africa, South African scholarship is most dominant and thus a very larger proportion of the articles are South African.

Global North, and that theory from the Global North dominates, they will often also obligatorily rehash the movement from the medical to social model of disability, as if it were a universal history, and do so primarily through theorists from the Global North. Despite the influence that global bodies such as the United Nations exert through the power to define disability, the transnational movement of ideas, funding and people through international non-governmental institutions and academic discourse, there are different histories of disability (Reynolds-Whyte & Ingstad, 1995). These divergent histories entail multiple modes of subject-making, interactions between the state, civic society and individuals. Goodley (2011), for example, outlines different histories of disability in the Global North, such as the different approaches in the US, Norway and UK, with concomitant discursive shifts in the language, trajectories of policy-making, technologies of subject-making, and everything that goes along with state and civil society action around disability.

How the models of disability have played out in a specific historical context, within the space/s a theorist in the African Journal of Disability is concerned with, is often elusive. In South Africa, for example, medical services for the Black population were woefully under-resourced (Phatlane, 2006), as I touch on briefly in the next chapter. How does the medical model of disability explain the history of disability in South Africa for different racialised population groups? How does the idea of individual pathology, which is often invoked in the medical model of disability, align with the pathologisation of Black people who were deemed to be fundamentally inferior and, at the same time, superhuman and able to perform arduous physical labour because they are Black? What does it mean to think with the social model of disability in a country where the Black majority were not treated as fully human for centuries, and thus were not allocated the bare minimum of resources or social goods? What does it mean now when many of those conditions persist under a largely Black government, and an economy that is still dominated by white ownership? The theorisation of a social model of disability begun in the late 1960s, and concretised or rather conceptualised by Oliver in 1981 (Barnes, 2019), emerged at the height of apartheid. How do we understand the social model of disability in a context where a Black majority was infantilised, thought of and treated as primitive, and morally and intellectually deficient, to justify white supremacist rule? How does the racialisation and despicable inequality of medicine in South Africa, the complicity that varying forms of labour had with the medical fraternity in wantonly and recklessly working Black people into their deaths and disablement, relate to the medical or social model of disability? These are questions that require research, and which can provide an African disability studies, and disability studies in and of the Global South, with the kinds of theorisation that opens pathways to understanding our own histories, and perhaps offer possibilities to redress rampant inequality. Yet, this can only be done if the racialisation of disability is central to disability studies.

As I noted above, even if a text purports to centre the Global South, like *The Palgrave Handbook of Disability and Citizenship in the Global South* (Watermeyer et al., 2019), the ontological presuppositions with which its geopolitics are negotiated can still avoid dealing with race. Thinking with and about race is ontologically and epistemically fundamental to understanding disability in the Global South. Thus, even where texts on the region exist, as an epistemic orientation, it can sometimes work more as a metaphor for a place within transnational scholarship and a push for recognition within transnational white scholarship on disability, than an epistemic orientation that reckons with the long histories of coloniality in the Global South. The use of Northern theories, such as claiming the histories of the social and medical model, as an expression of epistemic coloniality (Ibarro-Colado, 2007; Mignolo, 2000, 2009) remakes historical specificity that engages on reductive epistemic terrain.

Like Knadler (2019), I thus want to expand our understanding of death, disability and debilitation. Knadler brings together anti-Blackness and debility to:

> broaden our understanding of racial violence to include the gradual, toxic, and everyday assaults against African Americans that occurred through unsanitary housing, polluted drinking water, unequal segregated health care, the absence of sewage lines, unsafe food, or traumatic environmental stress, to take only a few examples, and to argue we need to pay as much attention to a biopolitics of debilitation and medicalization as criminalization, police violence, or surveillance if we are going to better understand how Black lives are made not to matter in our supposedly race-neutral multicultural democracy (2019: 3).

Whilst Knadler is focused on the US and its particularities, settler colonialism has produced many of the same effects for most Black, indigenous and other subjugated people across the world. Black social suffering has been normalised by white supremacy and its rapacious logics, alongside Black proxies who wield political power but are unable to fundamentally restructure the organisation of racialised and endemic violence, and this operates similarly in South Africa. I agree with Knadler (2019) that the biopolitics of debilitation (Puar, 2017) and medicalisation is not separate from police violence or surveillance. As we will touch on in this thesis, they are integrally tied to one another, not just through the ways in which police violence produces death, disability and debilitating harm, but also how debilitation is normalised and justified.

Unlike disability theorisation within the academy, the founding members of Disabled People South Africa (DPSA), the national representative body for people with disabilities formed during apartheid, knew that advocating for disability was not separable from advocating against the political economy of South Africa (Howell, Chalklen & Alberts, 2006). They recognised that disability was indelibly connected to the South African state's racist policies and tactics, which disabled Black people through direct violence and the consequences of the apartheid state's war of attrition, which was often an extension and continuation of colonial tactics of governance. These policies had the intent of rendering the Black population docile and governable. The long violent history of enslavement, colonialism, apartheid and postapartheid neoliberalism should be critical to the study of disability. More so, state responses to protests that aim to end Black debilitation are/were infused with not just the possibility and/or threat of death and physical injury and maiming, but also the intended embodied and psycho-affective debilitation which rests on physical violence. The longue durée of structural violence and anti-Blackness not only resulted in Black neighbourhoods and populations that were neglected by the state, and in which the necessities for flourishing were not available, but also allowed interpersonal violence to become endemic.

South Africa is one of the most violent countries in the world. Within impoverished Black neighbourhoods, interpersonal violence is rife and results in inordinate amounts of death, disability and debilitation. For many Black people, South Africa is a death-dealing, disabling and debilitating place. These multiple kinds of violences, which are endemic and part of ordinary, everyday discourse, and the consequent effects of endemic violence, are largely absent in the South African disability studies literature. It is almost as if the conditions of Black life were a world apart, epistemically and ontologically unimaginable. This thesis points to the sparsity of this disciplinary imaginary, in which race does not seem to matter, and develops questions for South African disability studies to think with race. Because of the absence of race, the ways in which inequality, local relations of power, and global imbalances of power produce disability are overwhelmingly elided, and preventative measures are rarely advocated for (Erevelles, 2011b; Meekosha, 2011). Given that conditions of inequality exacerbate and produce disability, it is imperative that we develop theoretical frameworks that are not complicit with power relations that reproduce impairment (Erevelles, 2011b; Meekosha, 2011; Grech & Soldatic, 2015). One of the primary foci of this thesis is the overwhelming production of death-disability-debility for the Black majority. When I began to accumulate what came to feel like a crude and ever-expanding catalogue on the ordinary disabling conditions in Black life, the egregious silence within disability studies struck me as ontological erasure.

Ontological erasure

Ontological erasure was theorised by Emily Nusbaum and Maya Steinborn (2019), regarding the erasure of disability in social studies curricula. They define ontological erasure as being 'beyond the absence of disability from curricular content, or silence around disability in educational justice frameworks—but rather is the active erasing of certain body-minds from "being" in the educational landscape' (2019: 24). Ontological erasure is thus not innocent, but rather something that is worked on. Ontological erasure of race is a making of a world flattened and reduced to the limits of white epistemology, and concomitantly the unmaking, denial or erasure of pluriversality (see Escobar, 2019). In a country saturated by race and its effects, ontological erasure of Black death-disablement-debilitation is a refusal not just to recognise the limits of white epistemologies, but also to reckon with the effects of what white supremacist rule has wrought. Even if this refusal is inchoate and unintended, by deracinating disabled worlds in South Africa, relationships of power between people with disabilities are made to disappear and hierarchies of power and inequality are unmade. Critically, the ontological erasure of the specificity of Black worlds, and the multiple and unending ways that the massification of vulnerability to death-disability-debility presents itself because of racial inequality, belies some of the most cherished ideas within disability studies. Again, what is normalcy? What does temporarily able-bodied mean in the face of such persistent socially engineered vulnerability?

Ontological erasure of race as an epistemic operation allows an almost fictive conceptual world to be mobilised, and enables the protection of that world. I am very compelled by Gervasio's (2018) treatment of ontological erasure, in her PhD thesis, *Arts of the Impossible: Violence, Trauma, and Erasure in the Global South*. For her,

> Ontological erasure is an insidious durational technology of dehumanization in which the very capacity to be a human is targeted for systematic eradication by an institutionalized power structure (2018:3).

What is more, Gervasio (2018: 4) states that ontological erasure is intricately connected to the desire to 'extinguish social and cultural memories of political violence from national memory'. Not only does ontological erasure have a historical dimension that avoids the cruelties of the past; continuing violences in the present are also extinguished from memory. Ontological erasure is deeply entangled with colonialism (Gervasio, 2018) and white supremacy, where the very possibility of Black people being human and, thus grievable (Butler, 2004), is expunged.

Ontological erasure and epistemicide, which Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2016) defines as 'the murder of knowledge', are kindred processes. Knowledge generated by the other is destroyed, which at the same time secures knowledge-making as a process that is attached to ontologically realised subjects who are usually white. Ontological erasure erases not just the knowledge-making of the other (de Sousa Santos, 2016), but also their existence as dense and complex, fully feeling, and particular in their locality, and as such erases the ways in which settler colonial violences and its continuities remake bodyminds (Price, 2015; Schalk, 2018)[9], communities, environments and worlds. Ontological erasure also produces white, colonial, settler or elite subjects as purified ethical subjects who do not have to contend with the bequeathment of destroyed worlds, which is properly their inheritance, rather than the spread of civilisation, which settler colonial epistemic fantasies may imply.

Within South African disability studies (and a great many other disciplinary formations), ontological erasure allows the costs – such as the physical, psycho-affective, material, and spiritual costs – of white supremacist-engineered structural violence to Black worlds to be evaded. Where it is addressed, poverty is very frequently used euphemistically without addressing racialised capitalist inequality. White ignorance of the layered ways in which structural violence plays out in Black worlds can be downplayed to maintain a semblance of epistemic mastery. Paradoxically, ontological erasure makes a kind of epistemic naïveté possible, where Black worlds can be explored ahistorically and the embodiment of structural violence, expressed by death, disability and debility, can be bypassed. People with disabilities are often treated as an already-constituted population, and thus the perdurance of pervasive disabling conditions can be ignored. The discomfort of having to engage with white privilege as epistemic, ontological, methodological, ethical and political does not form part of reflexive practices or situated knowledge. The injustice of ignoring the existence of Black worlds, and

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[9] Margaret Price's term bodyminds (2015) refutes the linguistic and conceptual division of bodies and minds, to assert their dynamic and inseparable entanglement. She states that, as a feminist, materialist, Disability Studies concept, bodyminds are 'a sociopolitically constituted and material entity that emerges through both structural (power- and violence-laden) contexts and also individual (specific) experience' (2015:271). Sami Schalk expands the use of bodyminds to consider how conditions of racial oppression exert psychic stress and the physical toll claimed by non-physical oppression. She is interested in the 'ways experiences and histories of oppression impact us mentally, physically, and even on a cellular level, (and thus) the term bodymind can help highlight the relationship of nonphysical experiences of oppression — psychic stress — and overall well-being' (Schalk 2018: 5-6).

how vastly different they are to what is ordinary for whiteness, can be left unaddressed, along with the critical consideration that in South Africa, where almost 90% of the population is Black, in the statistical sense, what constitutes normalcy is not whiteness but Blackness. South African disability studies is steeped in an epistemology of ignorance that re/produces ontological erasures about the brutality of South African life for the Black majority. There are epistemic (and social justice and ethical) consequences for these and other ontological erasures that impoverish disability studies. This thesis is centrally concerned with the ontological erasure of Black worlds within South African disability studies, and as such the chapters that follow elaborate on the entanglement of race and disability in South Africa. Before I outline the thesis, the following section briefly discusses disability in South Africa.

Disability in South Africa

Like DPSA, the new democratic government recognised the links between apartheid and disability. South Africa's transition to democracy in the 1990s thus also impacted policy and legislation on disability. Whilst the apartheid government understood disability from a welfare perspective, the postapartheid government approached disability through a human rights framework (Dlamini, 2016). This changing conceptualisation echoed global changes in the way in which disability was defined (see Goodley, 2011). The social model of disability influenced subsequent legislation, which focused on social barriers that are experienced by people with disabilities (Priestley, 2006; Goodley, 2011). The South African White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (WPRPD) (Dlamini, 2016:17), approved by Cabinet on 09 December 2015, states that a universal definition of disability is not feasible because disability is 'complex and evolving'. In 2007, South Africa ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and its Optional Protocol, without reservation (Dlamini, 2016). The WPRPD quotes the UNCRPD's definition as follows:

> … disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (Dlamini, 2016: 18).

Despite the progressive legislative framework through which disability is understood, the lived experience of most people with disabilities differs markedly (Maart, 2015) from the vision set out in the WPRPD. Ameliorating the impact of the environment for people with disabilities will require resolving racialised inequality. The fluidity of disability is tied to how poverty exacerbates disability and produces debilitation and, at its most extreme end, an early death.

Throughout the thesis, I have chosen to hold death, disability and debility together as a conceptual space. It is a reminder that, particularly for Black South Africans, racialisation has produced worlds that are death-dealing, or disabling and debilitating at best, and in turn that impairing and debilitating worlds hasten death. One of the few studies that engages disability, race and apartheid was undertaken by Jacklyn Cock (1989) with 88 spinal cord injured wheelchair users in Soweto, one of the largest Black townships in the country. Most of her participants were disabled due to state or criminal violence, and the multiple discriminations they experienced were indelibly connected to the political economy. She concluded that South Africa is a disabling society for Black South Africans and her study showed 'the concrete results of apartheid as a violent and disabling system' (1989:19). Systematic impoverishment was a consequence of apartheid and many of the discriminations Black people with disabilities experience are related to the multiple exclusions of poverty that continue in postapartheid South Africa. Poverty is a shared condition (Grech, 2015b, 2016) in a country like South Africa, but it is not equally shared, with most of the Black majority being deeply impoverished in contrast with most white South Africans. Whilst people with disabilities are more likely to become impoverished, for many Black South Africans with disabilities, they share the privations of poverty with their families and communities. Impoverishment for white South Africans with disabilities will most likely not be equivalent to the lives of Black impoverished South Africans. Environment, given South Africa's history of spatial apartheid, in which race was mapped onto space, is critical, as is the recognition that spatial vulnerability is not equally distributed.

As of yet, there is very little scholarship on the South African history of disability, and even the prevalence of disability in the country is uncertain, with no baseline data prior to 1994 (Dlamini, 2016), as South African government policy, even prior to apartheid, was not to collect data on the health of the Black population (Phatlane, 2006). One of the South African state's tactics was to remove people with debilitating conditions, such as TB, from white settlement areas, send them to rural areas, and expunge their records (Phatlane, 2006: 55). The Census taken by StatsSA in 1996, 2001 and 2011, and the Community Survey of 2007, used different definitions of disability (StatsSA, 2014). Census 2011 excluded people with some neurological and psychosocial difficulties, as well as children under five. For the purposes of this thesis, we will use Census 2011 to get a sense of the instability of the available data on disability prevalence in South Africa. The national disability prevalence, according to StatsSA (2014), was 7.5%. According to gender: 8.3% females and 6.5% males. The differences according to race were: Black Africans at 7.8%, whites at 6.5%, and Indian and Coloured were 6.2% each. The differences in type of disability, measured as difficulty, were: 11% seeing, 4.2% cognitive, 3.6% hearing, 2% self-care, and communication and walking difficulties. According to Sherry:

> Estimates of the prevalence of disability in South Africa vary between 7,5% (Statistics South Africa 2014a) and 25% (World Health Organisation 2011), but these are based mainly on measurements of impairment and activity limitation, and may fail to capture the extent to which deprived rural environments exacerbate disability in these settings (2016: 5).

It is not just the prevalence and intensification of disabling conditions in rural areas that is obscured, but also the prevalence in Black neighbourhoods in urban centres. Amosun, Jelsma & Maart (2019) explored disability in two Black South African neighbourhoods in the Western Cape, and found a prevalence rate of 9.7%. In Nyanga, one of the most impoverished largely Black African neighbourhoods in the Cape Town metropole, the prevalence was approximately 13%. The area is characterised by a mix of formal housing and shacks. In Oudtshoorn, which is a farming district, also impoverished but mostly brick houses and largely Coloured, the prevalence was 6.8%. Not only were there differences in prevalence, but there were also marked differences in distribution of disability by gender, severity of disability, income and age. They concluded that site-specific statistics are required, as there are implications for the distribution of resources and provision of effective services to people with disabilities. Determining the prevalence of disability requires extensive work, particularly given the devastating statistics of conditions like HIV/AIDS, interpersonal violence, TB and, recently, COVID-19, which would undoubtedly exacerbate these figures. Despite the shortcomings of the data and the divergence from global averages, what can be seen is the diversity of people subsumed under the label of disability. This diversity is rarely considered in South African disability studies. In South Africa, with its history of mapping race onto space, site-specific studies of disability are also studies on the racialisation of disability.

Hansen and Sait (2011) argue that practices around the Disability Grant under South Africa’s Comprehensive Social Security System suggest there is no difference between poverty and disability. For some people with disabilities, the struggle to survive overrides many of the desires expressed in Northern literature, such as independent living (Buga, 2006). The institutional structures and support available to people in South Africa are still variegated by race (Maart, 2015). Thus, Black people with disabilities who live in conditions of structural violence might not only have limited state support in regard to schooling, housing, and accessible public transport, but also be profoundly disabled by hostile environments which are also experienced by the people with whom they share a lifeworld (Emmet, 2006; Ingstad & Eide, 2011; Grech, 2015b). For example, as shown in some of the life histories later in the thesis, within many South African informal settlements, mobility for someone who uses a wheelchair would be severely compromised as there are few tarred streets. Toilets may be scarce and/or, unsanitary, never mind accessible. Public transport is expensive, limited and not wheelchair friendly. For some, access to a wheelchair may not be possible at all.

Whilst both men and women are affected, in conditions of poverty, the differences which manifest across and between gender/s will arise from gendered expectations. Gender-based violence in all its manifestations – rape and sexual assault, domestic violence, assault and battery, murder and attempted murder, robbery – have effects on men and women’s bodies and psyches, causing impairment (Emmet, 2006). Public hospitals and clinics are under-resourced (see Sherry 2014, 2015). For the majority of South Africans, limited access to healthcare results in disabling conditions, such as when ambulance services are unable to expeditiously transport injured people to clinics and hospitals, or patients are not provided the immediacy and kinds of care that would negate the possibility of impairment (Sherry, 2014, 2015). Some incidents of impairment are temporary and need not have long-term impact with continued care and rehabilitation (Sherry, 2014, 2015). However, when transportation is not available, reliable, or overly expensive, then the intervention window narrows (Sherry, 2014, 2015). Where conditions of violence are endemic and mobility is affected by factors beyond access to transport, leaving home regularly and consistently to access healthcare may be impossible. Healthcare workers may not be willing to do home visits in places that experience high levels of violence. Endemic violence re/produces intergenerational trauma, which can have debilitating psychic effects and lead to multiple forms of psychosocial impairment. Thus, the racialised variegations of postapartheid spatiality may be an important contributor to disability. This was something I became profoundly aware of during this study, and this awareness would fundamentally change my project and the approach I took to understanding disability in South Africa. In the following section, I outline the thesis, starting with the epistemic desires that influenced the trajectory of the project, before elaborating on the four parts of the thesis and the chapter outline.

The thesis

This thesis is animated by two at times contradictory epistemic desires. The first is to pierce the pervasive epistemology of ignorance and ontological erasure of Black life within South African disability studies and the larger academy. The other is to make a claim about something I have called the Scholarship of the Obvious. Most of the conditions of Black life that I engage with in the thesis are well-known to most Black scholars, and are obvious. In some ways, I am writing into and for an anti-racist scholarship, and mobilising death-disability-debility to do so. Thus, the thesis is not only about dispelling ignorance, but also bringing together multiple ways in which violence has shaped Black worlds, stitching it into death-disability-debility as a way to name the conditions we lament, and offer an epistemic terrain. I consider disability and debility studies from a feminist, anti-racist and decolonial stance to be one of the most important modes of thinking towards engendering justice, as it requires engaging with the consequences of violence. Disability and debility studies hold the potential to name and show what violence does to human beings who remain in the aftermath of persistent violence and the worlds they inhabit. The thesis does not so much argue, as is conventional for academic texts, but rather generates questions and possibilities for thinking about the conjuncture of race and death-disability-debility in a country where most of the country, who are largely Black, endures endemic violence. I am aware that I have sacrificed depth for breadth, and it is my hope that some of the conjunctures I touch on inspire research which seeks to fill in those gaps.

When I began this project in 2016, universities around the country were in turmoil due to student protests. The #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) and #FeesMustFall (#FMF) protests began in 2015, and would come to be known as Fallist protests or Fallism, decried the whiteness of the South African curriculum, the white aesthetics of the university, and the financial challenges of gaining a university education for Black students because of the historical legacy of systematic impoverishment the black majority had endured for centuries. The battles for and about the South African academy were about the materiality of South African history, symbolised in the aesthetics of universities which lauded white supremacists, such as Cecil John Rhodes, the British arch-imperialist, and the material conditions of Black students who faced inordinate financial challenges. The South African academy, largely dominated by white faculty, faces ongoing and persistent epistemic conflicts, which Black students expressed as demands to decolonise the curriculum. South African knowledge production is largely wrought through and with the ontological erasure of the costs of white supremacy to Black life. Calling for the decolonisation of the curriculum is to demand ontological expansion from the South African academy to include Black life.

During the student protests, universities were battlegrounds, not just of the mind and discourse, but also physically, as many universities turned security companies and police against their own students. Crowd control mechanisms, which injured and debilitated largely Black student protesters, were ever-present. Similarly, within the postapartheid imaginary of protest and police violence, the Marikana miner’s strike at Lonmin mines was especially shocking, and came to be known as the Marikana massacre. Thirty-four miners were killed, which was the highest amount of people killed during a postapartheid protest. During the student protests, the fear that students would be massacred was ever-present and the spectre of Marikana continues to haunt me.

At the same time as the student protests, in the early stages of the project in 2016, gang warfare erupted on the Cape Flats, the segregated Black neighbourhoods that were produced by apartheid spatial planning. At the close of this project, a very similar gang war is underway. The decimation of Black people in spatially segregated apartheid Black neighbourhoods through interpersonal violence kills more people than some countries at war. Whilst the scale of violence takes an episodic form, with multiple deaths spread across Cape Town within a short time-period, death, disablement and debilitation from persistent and continuous gang warfare has an overwhelming presence and is structural. The Cape Flats was my home for many decades, and it is where my family and loved ones live. A great many Black people try to live lives that are generous, kind, and build supportive worlds in the absence of resources and the presence of violence from people like gangsters and drug dealers who they share a community with. They risk constant death and disablement, and experience invisibilised debilitation. I could not understand how these conditions that make up worlds for a great many South Africans are missing in disability studies and are elided in the presumption of disability experience being deracialised.

At the outset of the project, nine people with disabilities shared their life histories with me. Five Black participants had been injured by interpersonal violence on the Cape Flats. It seemed to me that there were connections between the violence on the Cape Flats, and the protests, which were urgent to explore. Whilst participants’ life histories gave me a lot to think about, the connections between the multiple violences around me were harder to grasp through the lens of the life histories. What I wanted to attempt was an ontological expansion within disability studies that worked against ontological erasure. The thesis thus brought together disparate but connected modes of producing death, disablement and debility for Black South Africans. There are four parts to the thesis. The nine life histories are one part, presented as interludes to maintain a coherent structure for the thesis. They are presented in two chapters, Chapters Five and Eleven, to demonstrate how important intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1990) is to the study of disability. Critically, because I mobilise a scale of death, disablement and disability that is hard to grasp and could reduce the Black majority to suffering subjects, I hope the life histories of both white and Black participants with disabilities offer enough complexity to humanise people with disabilities in their multiplicity. I also hope that sketching the participants will limit reductive readings of the conjuncture of race and disability. People are so much more complex than the historical forces that are arrayed against them.

Thesis Outline

Part One focuses on the onto-epistemic dimensions of the project, because ontology, epistemology and ethics are inseparable (Barad, 2007; Escobar, 2019). In this section, I begin in *Chapter Two* by sketching some ontological connections that are critical to think with, moving onto the methods that I used in *Chapter Three*, and the debilitating effects of doing this research in *Chapter Four*. In *Interlude 1: Chapter 5*, I present life histories of five participants who were all disabled by interpersonal violence. In the next Part, which explores land dispossession, criminality and disability, I look at interpersonal violence, masculinity and gangsterism on the Cape Flats in *Chapter Six*, after which I explore land dispossession and the spatialisation of race in South Africa in *Chapter Seven*. In the final Part, I centre my concerns on protest as death-disability-debility imaginaries, which I start off by engaging the Marikana massacre in *Chapter Eight*, then crowd control weapons in *Chapter Nine*, and finally the student protests as death-disability-debility imaginaries in *Chapter Ten*. In *Interlude 2: Chapter 11*, I present four more life histories and, finally, the concluding chapter. I will now outline the individual chapters.

Part I, *Onto-Epistemic Dimensions of Researching the Massification of Death-Disability-Debility* brings together an ontological sketch of Black life in South Africa. The first chapter is intended to bring a materialist and historical sensibility into the conversation, so that the ontological grounds which I use to think about death, disability and debility in South Africa are apparent. My methods flow from the ontology that I sketch and recognition of the limitations that I felt in executing my methods at the outset of the project. The affective dimensions of doing work that is steeped in violence have epistemic effects which affected me as a researcher.

In Chapter Two, *Living in the Aftermath of a Criminal State: Sketching an Ontology of Endemic Violence,* I explore endemic violence against the Black majority, which produced the massification of vulnerability to death, disability and debility as a consequence of white supremacist rule. The systematic oppression of black South Africans was so severe, so immoral, that apartheid was declared a crime against humanity by the United Nations. Attritional warfare has been entrenched and a feature of South African life for centuries, and endemic violence has been normalised and justified. Land dispossession and its relation to labour regimes that relied on circular migration, inadequate housing and healthcare, all lead to foreshortened life expectancy. So too did brute forms of violence such as could be seen against protesters. The chapter sketches an ontology of the ordinary ways in which conditions that produced death-disability-debility were thoroughly enmeshed with Black South African life, to demonstrate how bizarre the ontological erasure of race is in South African disability studies.

In Chapter Three, *Methodology: Emergent Questions amid Settler Colonialism's Long Emergencies,* I outline the shifts within my project which produced my methodology. My methodology was qualitative, and started with life histories of nine people with disabilities. My interest in contemporary events of violence that animated South African discourse, and yet did not penetrate disability studies, awareness of persistent violence due to South Africa's long history of settler colonialism, and my disaffection with the limits of my methods, induced an emergent epistemology. Grounded by feminist, decolonial and disabilities studies, I deployed feminist trickster approaches as method and mode of representation towards generating epistemic openings and spaces for further research. My methodological intervention allowed me to forego epistemic certainty, so that I could generate questions. However, the nature of my project induced periods where I was unable to move, which I discuss in the following chapter.

In Chapter 4, *Debilitating Research: Scholarship of the Obvious and Traumatic Research,* I explore the challenges of having to work with violence and its ontological erasure, particularly obvious violence, which I termed the Scholarship of the Obvious. I experienced periods of extreme debilitation during this project, and it was only when I realised that this was an epistemic relation, rather than a personal failing, that the project was able to take shape. Theorising the sense of failure allowed me to engage with epistemic violence and gaslighting, through engaging white settler colonial epistemologies of ignorance. Claiming the right to feel broken by doing traumatic research revealed how positionality affects the temporality of academic labour and the costs of ableism in the academy.

I then move into the first Interlude – Chapter 5, *Life on the Cape Flats: Jonathan, Mzi, Sipho, Teboho and Fahiema*, which brings together five life histories. All the participants in this chapter became disabled through interpersonal violence in impoverished and segregated Black spaces. Jonathan, Mzi, Teboho and Sipho all lived in Langa at the time of my research, the oldest South

African urban township for Black Africans. Though they became disabled in varying places, most urban Black spaces have similar characteristics. Fahiema became disabled in Lavender Hill, a township created during apartheid for Coloured people.

The life histories set up the next part of the thesis, *Part II: Land dispossession, Criminalisation and Disability*. The life histories show the production of disability and provide insight into how individuals make, remake and live in Black worlds. Part II focuses on the interrelated themes of interpersonal violence, masculinity and gangsterism, as well as takes a historical view of how land dispossession came to constitute Black spaces. Though individuals might join gangs and use violence to act in the world, and in so doing create death-disability-debility in still-segregated Black communities, those worlds are shaped by violent settler colonial histories of land dispossession.

In Chapter 6, *Warring Worlds: Urban Warfare and Gangster Masculinities*, I explore connections between masculinity, interpersonal violence, gangsterism and disability. On the Cape Flats, where I am from, gangsterism and violence is endemic. The levels of interpersonal violence in many impoverished Black neighbourhoods in South Africa is catastrophic, and yet is barely present in South African disability studies. Young men in Black urban spaces join gangs and often use drugs and alcohol to escape challenging homes and community lives. Masculinities as a death-dealing, disabling and debilitating force relate to the capacity to take risks, wield and endure violence, and evince invulnerable masculinities. Impoverished Black communities have largely been abandoned by the state and are expected to endure the urban warfare produced by gangsterism.

In Chapter 7, *Racialising space: Materialising Structural Violence*, I explore land dispossession and how injurious worlds were made possible by South Africa’s spatialisation of race. I discuss the Cape Flats, and the concentration of violence and concomitant concentration of vulnerability to injury due to violence. Injurious worlds, such as those produced through racial segregation, allow us to reframe the materialisation of Black criminality, and apprehend the scale of impairment and the connection to space in South Africa. South Africa’s settler colonial and slavocratic history is critical to understanding death-disability-debility as a tactic of rule, and how Black violence and sociality is shaped by unacknowledged intergenerational trauma. The remainders of enslavement, even as they are concentrated in space, have material traces such as in the ordinary circulation and history of the sjambok, a whip that has been used and continues to be used to mark and maim Black flesh. The normalisation of violence and its concentration within Black spaces should be critical to thinking about disability in South Africa, especially given the scale and wide distribution of violence.

In Part III: *Protest as death-disability-debility imaginaries*, I explore protest as dense epistemic sites that will allow South African disability studies theorists to comprehend the material conditions that produce death-disability-debility for Black South Africans. This section of the thesis shows, if obliquely, that Black South Africans have death-disability-debility imaginaries. When they advocate for themselves against the conditions they endure that produce death-disability-debility through protest, they are subjected to spectacular and public forms of violence and torture that produce more death-disability-debility.

In Chapter 8, *Marikana and Mining: labours of death-disability-debility,* I explore the Marikana protest as an event where death was produced, *and* disability and debility. The disabling-debilitating effects of the protest on the miners, as well as on some of the policemen who were present at the massacre, are not a large part of the public discourse. The history of mining that made the Marikana massacre possible is riven by death-disability-debility as part of the ordinary history and operation of this vicious industry. Land dispossession and Black enslavement are foundational to the history of labour in South Africa, and this has had enduring effects on labour conditions. Mining as a form of labour has produced enormous rates of death-disability-debility, alongside miners' living conditions and the meagre resources they are provided to care for their lives. Protests such as Marikana are indicators of endemic violence with long histories that act upon Black lives to produce and intensify conditions leading to Black death-disability-debility, and creating disposable lifeworlds for Black subjects in which Black death-disability-debility is ordinary and not exceptional.

In Chapter 9, *Crowd-control weapons: protest technologies to ensure Black accommodation to death-disability-debility,* ordinary responses to protest through the use of crowd control technologies such as tear gas and rubber bullets are explored. In this chapter, I discuss protest policing and its history to the militarisation of policing in South Africa, which is indelibly related to the repression and governance of Black worlds by the white minority. Crowd control technologies are usually thought of as non-lethal. However, they are technologies that produce not only disablement, but also mass forms of terror, which are supposed to lead to debilitated populations that are easily governable and integral to attritional warfare. Long familiarity with tear gas and rubber bullets as technologies of governance have rendered these technologies almost invisible, and therefore I explore these technologies' effects in the chapter. Crowd control technologies not only act to produce Black acquiescence to inequitable worlds, but also produce race through which bodies are permitted to be harmed and are contemporary processes of Black maiming and dismemberment.

In the final chapter on protest, Chapter 10, *Death-disability-debility imaginaries and piercing white supremacist epistemologies of ignorance*, I focus on Chumani Maxwele, a student leader, and the #RMF and #FMF student protests that started in 2015 and changed the discourse about race at South African universities. The idea of Black pain was used by the student movements to engage with Black South Africans' material conditions. The ontological erasure of Black pain through white epistemologies of ignorance by the South African academy was a central critique by the student movement. The student movements mobilised death-disability-debility imaginaries, which came into confrontation with white epistemologies of ignorance and the ontological erasure of the costs of white supremacy to Black people, and thus the impoverished epistemic imaginaries of a great many South African academics for whom Black suffering is/was normalised. Even in a discipline like disability studies, which should have been at the forefront of understanding the massification of disability in South Africa because of the cruel deprivations of our settler colonial history, apartheid and the failure of the postapartheid state, possibilities for solidarity were not realised.

In the second Interlude and final chapter, Chapter 11: *The Complexities of Disabled Lives: Anna, Tariq, Tania, Margaret*, I present the last four life histories. At the close of the thesis, these four histories show just how complex the lives of people with disabilities in South Africa are, and how enriching it is when we locate people in the specificities of a racialising place like South Africa. The four life histories open questions about the making of racial subjectivities, such as how racialisation and whiteness, racialisation and migrancy, and racialisation and internalised racism come together with gender, nationality, and disability to make worlds. People find ways to live and create worlds that are deeply inflected by the socio-political injunctions of their time and do so in interesting and unexpected ways. However, these complexities are impossible to apprehend in a South African disability studies that is ahistorical and unwilling to contend with the death-disability-debility that was sowed in service to white supremacy.

In the conclusion, I expand on what using death-disability-debility as an analytic offered to ameliorate the ontological erasure of the massification of Black death-disability-debility. I then discuss the challenges of doing research in conversation with white epistemologies of ignorance, which obscure and justify Black death-disability-debility. Doing this project, and engaging with so much wilful and obvious violence that has been ignored, was extremely taxing and thus I advocate for support for researchers of violence. Finally, I conclude with a list of questions for further research.

The thesis shows the staggering scale of Black death-disability-debility that is ignored, much of it obvious, well-known and normalised within South Africa. In the next chapter, I provide an ontological sketch of the effects of settler colonialism on Black health and life expectancy, as well as explore some of the theories of violence I have found useful to think with. As a system of mass oppression of a Black majority by a white minority, settler colonialism and its apex during apartheid was deeply violent and the attrition of the Black majority was structurally engineered as a technique of governance. The massification of Black death-disability-debility, which has continued into the present, was the consequence of centuries of violence leveraged in service of white supremacist settler colonialism. The ontological sketch I provide is foundational to my understanding of disability in South Africa.

Chapter 2: Living in the Aftermath of a Criminal State: sketching an ontology of endemic violence

Apartheid continued settler colonial modes of governance in which white supremacist rule was normalised in the aftermath of mass enslavement. In the seventeenth century, indigenous people were enslaved, or faced slave-like conditions, even when enslavement was legally abolished in the nineteenth century (Abrahams, 1996). Not only were indigenous people enslaved; enslaved and indentured people were brought to these shores to enrich white colonisers. The predations of racial capitalism were integral to the political economy, though it took different forms, from black enslavement to direct and indirect coerced labour. In its contemporaneous form, racial capitalism still requires *backbreaking* work from black people for meagre wages that are not enough to sustain flourishing, healthy lives. White supremacist rule nakedly and aggressively pursued white supremacist policies that ripped black people from their homes and communities to produce segregated neighbourhoods that conformed to apartheid race classifications. White capacitation was built on the exploitation of black labour. The Apartheid Group Areas Act of 1950, which designated where differentially raced persons could reside, followed and intensified a long history of segregationist residential policies (Swanson, 1977; Maylam, 1995; Isaacs-Martin, 2015). Neighbourhoods were racialised and resourced according to racial categorisation which affirmed apartheid racialised hierarchies. For black people, debilitating worlds were socially engineered to produce black abjection and, conversely, white worlds were capacitated to demonstrate white superiority. Segregationist policies thus entailed creating worlds of penury for black people, where a lack in all dimensions – housing, health, education, and many of the things needful for life to flourish – were part of the logic of making race. Apartheid actively produced race and sought in all possible ways to socially engineer and shape the world according to its classificatory logic.

What was normalised and continues to be normalised amid the psychological and physical violences black people endure, is black penury and its consequences. Black death, disability and debility are the consequences of the black majority's inordinate and socially manufactured vulnerability. White supremacist rule normalised the massification of vulnerability to debility, disability and death of most of the population. Black people were systematically impoverished over centuries of South African history, dispossessed of land and made to labour in conditions which further impoverished them, as family members became debilitated or died. Black oppression, the destruction of black worlds and the cruelty white supremacist ideology normalised, enabled and capacitated most white South Africans materially and psychologically. Though apartheid intensified and legalised white supremacist rule, in a period where most of the world was beginning to move from crude racist forms of governance, the Apartheid state embodied a continuity of unabashed racist governance over black people.

This chapter sketches the South African context to show that violence is endemic and not exceptional. The chapter is in many ways a bare description and represents a crude catalogue of how colonial and apartheid racialisation produced black debilitation, disability and death. In the statistical sense, it is a catalogue of South African normalcy, given the wide distribution of disastrous effects for black South Africans. It is not a complete catalogue, is not chronological, lacks nuance, and in some ways, the contents of this crude catalogue are well-known, even if not in its specific dimensions. To reiterate, this racialised ontology of South Africa that affects the black majority is largely invisible within South African disability studies and many other disciplinary formations within the South African academy. In the first section, I explore structural violence and other conceptualisations of violence such as raw life, slow violence, apartheid as attritional warfare, necropolitics and slow death. In the following sections, I look at land dispossession and labour, housing, healthcare and life expectancy. In the final section, I engage with direct violence and protest. The conclusion restates that South Africa is characterised by endemic violence which is very difficult to ignore, and the fact that it is so easily elided poses epistemic questions in the face of brute ontological erasure.

Violence and apartheid as attritional warfare

In all ways, black South African life conforms to our understanding of the well-known concept of structural violence. Originating with Galtung (1969), structural violence as a concept is distinguished, though not necessarily separable from, personal or direct violence. Structural violence or indirect violence is embedded within a social structure and expressed in an unequal distribution of resources and power. Structural violence, unlike direct violence, is not always observable; however, direct violence often supports and maintains structural violence, such as police evicting people who have been rendered landless, or responding with military force against domestic populations. Galtung (1969: 170) stated that both indirect and structural violence may result in individuals being ‘killed or mutilated, hit or hurt in both senses of these words, and manipulated by means of stick or carrot strategies.’ The consequences of inequality produced by structural violence are higher morbidity and mortality rates for those who are oppressed. Unless directly and persistently combatted, structural violence will perdure even when the original proponents of a violent system are replaced. This may be because the structures are retained, though renamed, and reside with a different power group or re-emerge because the logic of inequality is retained and justified. For Galtung (1969), the presence of structural violence was also the absence of peace and social justice. This well-known concept, which has been with us for over 50 years, contains within it a means to apprehend the death-dealing, disabling and debilitating force that is produced by structural violence, such as that engineered by white supremacist ideologues in South Africa across centuries of rule. Structural violence is a well-known and well-worn fact of South African existence, and is still present in South Africa, even though postapartheid governments have increased housing, expanded electrification, and access to water, healthcare and other basic services to a significant proportion of the population. Despite the expansion of the welfare state, some of the conditions in what were the former 'native reserves', called Bantustans, were not only retained but reinforced in postapartheid South Africa (Westaway, 2012). Kleptocratic elements in successive postapartheid governments have also largely derailed developmental initiatives and for many black South Africans, impoverishment is ongoing and incremental.

In her PhD dissertation based on ethnographic work on the disability rights movement in South Africa, Laclave (2005: 9) stated apartheid was structural violence as it was 'institutionalised oppression and dehumanisation'. She asserted that the formation of disabled bodies was a form of state control through multiple mechanisms of indirect political violence, such as poverty, which 'manifested in deaths, illnesses, depressed quality of life, and disability' (2005: 14). Further, she notes in her conclusion that:

> Apartheid created a difference in the experiences of disability. Where the white experience of disability had been influenced by medicine and welfare through special schools and institutions sponsored by the state, the black experience of disability was and is characterized through being the target of structural violence, including the maintenance of poverty. What they have in common is living under able-bodied ideology (2005: 177).

Given the history of South Africa, and the well-known oppression of black people and their systematic impoverishment, differential experiences of disability are unsurprisingly connected to race which, along with the use of race to order, categorise and legitimate structural violence, infuses South African life. The scale of structural violence is notable, given that, unlike in the Global North, black people are the majority in South Africa, and whites who benefited and continue to benefit from South Africa's racist history are a minority.

There are other modes of explanation that are potent to understand the winnowing down of black South Africans. Fiona Ross (2010) calls the conditions, which deeply impoverished black South Africans endure, raw life. She states that:

> While people are busy trying to make and live ordinary lives, they do so in contexts that lay bare social and institutional failures to support, transform and care. Reduced material circumstances and opportunities mean that people must make extraordinary efforts to achieve stability and routine in daily lives marked by ugliness and the slow erasure of hope that is poverty's grinding legacy (Ross, 2010: 4).

For the residents of the informal settlement with whom she did her ethnography, life was characterised by persistent exposure to the rawness of life, which rendered stability fragile and made them vulnerable. What Ross retains in raw life is the capacity for meaning-making and living with and through precarity as a mode of life that is not denuded of a fullness of being, even in circumstances that are dehumanising.

Rob Nixon (2011) highlights the role of time in his theorisation of slow violence and environmentalism and the difficulty of memory, when events of violence unfold over time. He critiques Galtung for implying structural violence is static, which I am not convinced by. After all, Galtung was quite clear that structural violence produces its pernicious effects over time, and can continue even if the original perpetrators have left. Despite this, Nixon's (2011) theorisation of how difficult representing slow violence is, given our propensity for having our attention captured by spectacular and instantaneous forms of violence, is critical. He states that:

> Attritional catastrophes that overspill clear boundaries in time and space are marked above all by displacements—temporal, geographical, rhetorical, and technological displacements that simplify violence and underestimate, in advance and in retrospect, the human and environmental costs. Such displacements smooth the way for amnesia, as places are rendered irretrievable to those who once inhabited them, places that ordinarily pass unmourned in the corporate media (2011: 7).

Amnesia is tied to who the 'casualties of slow violence' are (Nixon, 2011: 13). They are most likely to be unreckoned with and thrown out of historical accountability. Their precarity renders them ungrievable (Butler, 2004). The total toll of wars and events with long lives, such as the toxic consequences of mine dumps and its aftereffects, disappear in the expedient calculus of who matters and the temporality of an event. Slow violence's displacements therefore are constitutive of ontological erasure, even as the unfolding of slow violence has what Connell

(2011: 1371) has called ontoformative effects, which are the creation of ‘social realities through historical time’.

Attritional lethality moves through bodies and environments, remaking them over generations (Nixon, 2011), such that the wearing down of populations (Livingston, 2005; Puar, 2017) appears normal and ordinary. Racial capitalism and settler colonialism were wars of attrition which ground down populations. Munson argues quite chillingly that the USA should use strategies of attrition in the future and defines it as follows:

> War of annihilation seeks the complete prostration of the enemy in unconditional surrender. War of attrition is a more circumscribed form that uses various tools, from battle, to maneuver, to other elements of national power, to exhaust the enemy in to acquiescence. Less clear-cut and rapid, this form has often been necessary in history when state power has been limited or adversaries have refused to come into open annihilatory battle (2007: np).

Most forms of settler colonial violence achieve subjugation through attrition and, because of the temporal dynamics, these forms of life become the everyday, routinised and normalised. That is, a state of constant and persistent warfare often becomes elided. However, the nakedness of apartheid racial enmity and militarised rule over black South Africans, and its quest for dominance on the continent, frequently laid these dynamics bare. White rule required persistent warfare against black South Africans, across multiple fronts, to secure a racialised security for white South Africans.

The apartheid government developed and formalised a total national strategy to subdue the population, as well as the surrounding countries which had achieved independence from white-dominated rule (Geldenhuys, 1981). They ardently believed they were subject to the threat of annihilation, from communist threats internally and elsewhere on the continent (Geldenhuys, 1981). Thus, their strategies were to engage in a war of attrition (Campbell, 1988), a form of warfare that wears down an enemy. In the aftermath of a bombing of three policeman by anti-apartheid activists, apartheid South African Police Commissioner, Johan Coetzee, was quoted in the New York Times as saying that:

> This is a war of attrition … (t)here is no cutoff point. He who lasts longest wins because, in the final analysis, it is about the will of the nation to exist and that of the others to wear them down. … It is generally agreed that you do not contain an

> onslaught of this nature solely by security means. You must do it also by other means, which include economic, political and social measures and you should do it in an evolutionary way (Battersby, 1987).

Whilst we should note that the anti-apartheid movement also engaged in activities that created death and disablement, it was a response to the overwhelming repression of the apartheid regime which intensified the armed struggle. The South African apartheid regimes' strategies were persistent and pervasive and not only involved spectacular acts of violence as security measures, but also incorporated measures that were 'evolutionary', which played out at an ontological scale through social engineering. Rather than seeking to civilise, as is often claimed as a motive and desire for white rule, evolutionary strategies were strategies of debilitation. Further, we should see South African history as located in a durable structure of warfare, that has taken different strategies over time to produce a subject population.

The apartheid government planned and orchestrated debilitation, disablement and death at such a scale that even some of its proponents were aware that the morality of apartheid strategies were in question. As a moral enterprise, South Africa's war of attrition against black South Africans sowed unremitting terror and was relentless in the pursuit of black subjugation. In his article on apartheid political rationalities, Suren Pillay cites a former chief of the South African Defence Force, who claimed:

> this was a new kind of total war, not total in its destructiveness, but total in its means of applying different ways of coercion: political, psychological, economic propaganda. This war, if it could be called a war, is so unique that the traditional 'just war theory 'cannot easily be applied (2005: 419).

According to Mosely (2012), just war theory applies limits to warfare and is usually a tacit agreement between two culturally similar enemies. However, where an enemy is perceived to be less than human, akin to how the racist capitalist South African apartheid regime viewed black South Africans as racially inferior, then just war theories are not applied. We should not forget, though, that racial repression preceded the Afrikaner Nationalist Government and, as we will see throughout the thesis, the apartheid regime built on pre-existing racist colonial repression. Racism enables and drives 'organized destruction, for a sacrificial economy, the functioning of which requires, on the one hand, a generalized cheapening of the price of life and, on the other, a habituation to loss' (Mbembe, 2019: 38). Attrition as a strategy of rule targeted black life for death, disablement and debilitation to encompass all arenas of black life. Erevelles (2011b) cautions that we cannot separate warfare and eugenics, and thus we should view white supremacist rule in South Africa as a type of eugenic strategy. Holding the black population in abeyance could not be a total eugenic strategy with 'total destructiveness', given how critical black labour was for racist capitalist needs, but it was a systematic grinding down of a population. There was nothing benign about apartheid or colonial racism: black bodies, black psyches, black economies, black forms of life were targeted. The aim was black acquiescence and the attritional route to black acquiescence sowed and used death, disablement and debilitation as worldmaking forces.

Another mode of explaining violence that perdures and reshapes worlds are theories in which life and death are entangled, such as necropolitics (Mbembe, 2003, 2019), and slow death (Berlant, 2007). As a minority, white South Africans were deeply reliant on black labour, and despite the fantasies of segregation, white worlds were deeply enmeshed with black life. Total destruction of a majority population was not an option, in the same way as the destructive potentials within settler colonialisms where whites became the majority. Attaining acquiescence while avoiding total destruction meant that the tactics of rule were not purely necropolitical (Mbembe, 2003, 2019) but rather that death, disablement and debilitation existed on a continuum. Whilst Mbembe makes allowances for amputations and other forms of wounding or 'being in pain' (2003: 39) as products of necropower, he argues that necropower or necropolitics creates death-worlds 'in which vast populations are subjected to living conditions that confer upon them the status of the living dead' (2019: 92). For Berlant (2007: 754), slow death 'refers to the physical wearing out of a population and the deterioration of people in that population that is very nearly a defining condition of their experience and historical existence.' It is an endemic form of violence in which people continue to live on in conditions that do not allow them to thrive within an 'attrition of life or pacing of death (2007: 780). Like Nixon's slow violence, it is a process that unfolds over time and is distanced from its origins. Both these theories, in which death is entangled with life, do not disarticulate maiming and disablement as forms of life, nor centre them (Puar, 2017).

Like Puar (2017), I believe that disability and debility are forms of life with their own status, distinct from death. Some of my conviction comes from my fieldwork, in which the question of to whom someone is dead, or living a slow death, came up over and over. I could not perceive any of those conditions in the participants I engaged with. Not because of the glacial temporality of slow death, but because participants were multiply situated and not just in relation to a necropolitical state. Even as the state or agents of the state may have desired their deaths or (not) worked to ensure slow death, there were family members, friends, religious leaders and loved ones who worked very hard to create a form of life that was liveable, even under debilitating and disabling circumstances. Even when participants were agents of their own disablement, through gangsterism, they were never completely abandoned nor consigned to death. More so, even when participants desired their own deaths, someone fought to infuse them with life and to provide hopeful handholds to the living. In the worlds that I occupy, supposed zones of non-being, life still flourishes and people do not act out or experience themselves as dying in life, notwithstanding short life expectancies. Despite the catalogue of brutality that I marshal repeatedly in the thesis, the complexity and multiplicity of black lives are not reducible to only death-disability-debility. Further, death as a condition of non-being is an ontological presupposition that comes out of a particular and often localised cosmological view. For many black people, death is not the cessation of being. As an epistemic move that works against ontological erasure, invoking death-disability-debility together, for me, is critical. It is my attempt to continually enfold the relatedness of the three conditions and the ways in which structural violence has produced continuities, overlaps and relationships between death, disability and debility for black South Africans. However, it is also a reminder that whilst the three conditions are related, they are not the same. In the following sections, I explore some of the multifaceted dimensions through which black death-disability-debility has been engineered in South Africa. In the next section, to explore structural violence, I look at some of South Africa's history, land dispossession and labour, housing, health and life expectancy.

Land dispossession and labour

During apartheid, pass laws or influx control policies limited black people's movement around the country. The rapacious accumulation of land by white settlers had its roots in colonialism and imperialism, and the scramble for land in the country that would become South Africa by Dutch and British colonisers. Acquiring land and demanding unfree black labour were integrally connected, and were decisions made continually over time (Terreblanche, 2002). At the end of formal apartheid in 1994, settler colonial policies of land dispossession resulted in almost 90% of the land being in the hands of the white minority (Akinola, Kaseeram & Jili, 2021), who made up less than 10% of the population. An important piece of legislation was the Native Land Act of 1913, which restricted where and from whom Africans could buy land, and reserved only 7% of the land for Africans (Feinberg, 1993; Gibson, 2009). The Native Trust and Land Act, No 18 of 1936 would expand the proportion of land for Africans to 13,6% (Gibson, 2009). The black majority were thus forced into native reserves and, unsurprisingly, some of the land was not fertile. During apartheid, native reserves, under the guise of ‘separate development’, were restructured into ethnicised ‘homelands’. The consequent destruction of food systems created dependency on a cash economy. Indelibly tied to land dispossession, food insecurity is an ongoing problem, with an estimated fourteen million food insecure people, who cannot produce their own food (Jili & Masuku, 2021). Apartheid created a continuous process of stripping black people’s assets, from their land to their labour, and prevented the accumulation of black wealth.

Land dispossession and struggles around land have not stopped in postapartheid South Africa. In its contemporary form, land dispossession is connected to the market and processes of gentrification in urban areas (see e.g. Garside, 1993; Miraftab, 2007; Ah Goo, 2018), and neoliberal state policies that privilege mining and other extractive industries (e.g. Mahlatsi, 2018; Shackleton, 2020). Land dispossession and displacement enforces multiple forms of vulnerability, such as food insecurity, homelessness, migrancy, exposure to crime and other effects, that have bodily and psycho-affective outcomes. Where industrialised mining and other extractive industries are involved, they can also produce toxic ecologies and their practices can further impoverish communities that have already been subjected to the privations of racialised spatial planning (e.g. Shackleton, 2020). Evictions in South Africa are frequently also accompanied by police violence, in which people can be beaten, shot at, and have their clothes and belongings dumped unceremoniously, irrespective of whether it is raining or cold. Land dispossession as a practice and lived condition has exposed black people to multiple forms of slow violence (Nixon, 2011) and events of violence that produce death, disabilities, and debilities.

The labour system and enforced segregation produced structural circular migration, where people moved between, for example, the mines, domestic labour as gardeners, or household domestic workers in urban centres, to the ‘native reserves’. The forms of labour black people could do was limited, and the education system was geared towards preparing black students to be menial labourers. Invariably, menial labourers had very limited forms of protection to ensure their health and that they were not exploited. Not only did they have limited protection, but some labour practices, like the ‘dop system’ on farms which paid agricultural workers in alcohol, produced addiction and fostered violent conditions (London, Sanders & te Water Naude, 1998). In the Western Cape, South Africa’s wine-producing region, rates of foetal alcohol syndrome are the highest in the world (McKinstry, 2005). In the mines, catastrophic, and one could even say genocidal, levels of occupational diseases, such as silicosis and a host of disabling conditions, devastated men and their families across the Southern African region (e.g. Marks, 2006; McCulloch, 2009, 2012; van Onselen, 2019). In the case of silicosis, mining medical officials colluded with the mines, along with the research community, to render the scale of black death, disablement and debilitation invisible (McCulloch, 2009, 2012). Elisions of black labourers' disabling working conditions and endemic occupational diseases occurred at such a mass scale, across varying industries, that brutal labour regimes appear ordinary and their production of race and racialised death, disability and debility has been normalised.

Not only did occupations produce disease, but movement between spaces of labour and home in the rural areas meant that black men carried home diseases such as TB. Currently, South Africa has the highest prevalence of TB in the world, and it is the top cause of mortality caused by infectious diseases (Van Der Walt & Moyo, 2021). Sexual arrangements, induced by the separation of families because of circular migration, also resulted in high rates of sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis moving between urban centres and rural areas (Susser & Cherry, 1982; Phatlane, 2006). The postapartheid movement of HIV/AIDS between urban centres and rural areas was a continuity of racist capitalist social engineering's consequences on health. Due to the long history of settler colonialism (Wakeham, 2021) and its dire impact on sexual politics, South Africa has the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in the world, with approximately 8.2 million people infected in 2021 (13,75% of the population) and 19.5% of adults aged 15-49 years of age (StatsSA, 2021). There are extremely high correlations with TB.

According to Savage (1986:181), pass laws were dated from 1760 and authorised travel for enslaved people. Pass laws were responsible for over 17 745 000 arrests and prosecutions from 1916 to 1984 (Savage, 1986). Pass laws were intended to negotiate the tension for whites between the need for a supply of cheap black labour and 'political security by controlling and policing the number of Africans in "white" areas' (Savage 1986: 181). Not only did circular migration place black people in jeopardy with the law, but also destroyed black families by separating members of households for protracted periods of time. Black men who left their families to work in mines did not always return. Men whose work and living conditions would over time destroy their bodies, required backbreaking levels of care when they returned to their families (Ledwaba and Sadiki, 2017). Black women left their families to care for white homes and children in the city, doing all the backbreaking labour that capacitated white families and made the aesthetics of white life possible. The criminalisation of black movement was one of many laws and rules that criminalised black people, and came with vicious forms of punishment, such as flogging black people for even the pettiest infractions. Enslavement, colonial rule, and apartheid imprisonment used flogging and maiming to assert white dominance and authority (Peté & Devenish, 2005). Centuries-long practices rife with barbarous and vicious intent that remade black bodies and terrorised black people, which had started in the enslavement and conquest of black people in South Africa, continued, intensified and were rabidly defended by white supremacist apartheid ideologues.

Black men's living standards, in places such as single-sex mining compounds or hostels in urban centres, were cramped and under-resourced, and allowed diseases like tuberculosis, silicosis and pneumonia to thrive (see Packard, 1989; McCulloch 2009, 2012; van Onselen, 2019). Whilst there have been changes in the mining industry, most black mineworkers' living conditions remain unsanitary, crowded, and lack basic amenities such as water and electricity (Pelders & Nelson, 2018). Black women, who may have had better accommodations as domestic workers in white homes, often worked long days of servitude, were intensely isolated and subjected to verbal and physical abuse (Ginsburg, 2000). They were also subjected to numerous humiliations by their white bosses, such as constant surveillance, and being fed inferior food, and in some cases, food intended for animals (Ginsburg, 2000). These practices, along with domestic workers' dehumanisation, sexual assault and experimentation by men/boys in the household, being stripped of their names and treated as objects, amongst other demeaning practices, has continued post-apartheid (Ally, 2009).

Devereux (2020: 383) states that, 'physical assaults, rape, child labour, inhumane living conditions, summary evictions of farm worker families, and the *dop* system' were ordinary features of life for farmworkers during apartheid and the colonial period. In a study with women farmworkers, despite postapartheid legal protections, they found extremely exploitative conditions where women had inadequate housing, were exposed to pesticides, worked without contracts, did not have adequate sanitation in the work environments, and nearly 40% were paid beneath the paltry minimum wage. Further, very few occupational injuries were reported, and approximately a third were not compensated for injuries, with some even having to pay for their own medical attention. According to Naidoo (2011), black agricultural workers who live(d) on white commercial farms live in extremely impoverished and precarious circumstances, where approximately 80% did not have indoor toilets, nearly half had no access to electricity, and nearly a third did not have access to safe and clean drinking water. Security of tenure on farms depends on farmers' largesse, despite postapartheid legislation. Since 1950, over 3.5 million farmworkers have been evicted from farms and rendered homeless or indigent, and 75% of farmworkers' children did not have a secure source of food. In her ethnography with children, based on fourteen years of fieldwork ending in 2012 in the touristic wine-producing region of the Cape Winelands, Susan Levine (2013) found that child labour was common and was a means to stave off dire poverty. Towards the end of Levine's book, we learn about a publicised case of a child labourer which caused moral outrage in 2003 when she was involved in a tractor accident and had to have her leg amputated. Farming labour practices have long continuities with South Africa's slavocratic past and varying forms of indentured and coerced labour, in which social domination of whites over blacks was achieved by cruel and violent means (Terreblanche, 2002). Apartheid labour and housing practices produced intergenerational effects, reshaped childhood and families, and were not benign. They remade bodyminds (Price, 2015; Schalk, 2018) and the effects have continued into the postapartheid period, and are deeply systemic. According to Terreblanche (2002), citing Julian May, the systemic black impoverishment and racialised inequality engineered by white supremacist governance has the potential to be self-perpetuating. Approximately 49.2% of the population lived below the poverty line in 2014/2015 (StatsSA, 2019b), and with the impact of COVID-19, 55.5% of people live below the poverty line (Futshane, 2021). The conditions in impoverished black neighbourhoods show how deeply enmeshed impoverishment and ill-health are, which are consequences and drivers of poverty.

Housing

Black neighbourhoods are diverse, and express different class relations. However, most poor, black neighbourhoods in South Africa are severely under-resourced. Race zoning, with hierarchical segregation, after the Group Areas Act in South Africa reordered already segregated cities to ensure rigid racialised divisions between whites and the different categories of blacks. According to van Rooyen & Lemanski, (2020: 23), in Cape Town, '54% of the city's population (all Coloured) were relocated to 27% of the urban area'. Segregation and urban restrictions for Black Africans had already largely occurred pre-apartheid, in the 1920s. By 1960, approximately 150 000 people, largely Coloured and Indian, had been forcibly removed to public housing townships, and Cape Town became the most segregated city in the country. The housing crisis has given rise to what are called backyard dwellers, who very often live in ramshackle, poorly constructed shelters in the yards of formal black apartheid housing, and share the amenities of the formal household (Turok & Borel-Saladin, 2016). This is due to a housing backlog in 2014 of 2.3 million, and the high cost of rent (Turok & Borel-Saladin, 2016). Backyard dwellers often live in squalid and polluted conditions with limited household waste removal and drainage for grey water, and pests such as rodents and cockroaches (Govender, Barnes & Pieper, 2011). In their study on the health effects of backyard dwelling, Govender et al. (2011) found nearly 40% of their respondents had diarrhoea, and whilst some had diagnoses of TB and HIV, they did not have any medication. Lack of water and a clean environment are a health disaster for immunocompromised people, along with overcrowded spaces and respiratory diseases such as TB. Many of their respondents had undiagnosed conditions and, because of the poor healthcare system, chose not to go to the clinic but rather to self-medicate. Approximately a third of their respondents suffered an ailment, only 12% chose to get medical help at their local clinic, and nearly a fifth continued to suffer. The history of spatial apartheid and racially hierarchised distribution of resources produced dense, penurious and under-resourced black townships, in contrast with the first-class amenities in spacious, leafy white suburbs. Along with the systematic impoverishment and exploitation of black people, housing conditions have had continued effects, such as extreme levels of interpersonal violence and a host of acute and chronic health consequences.

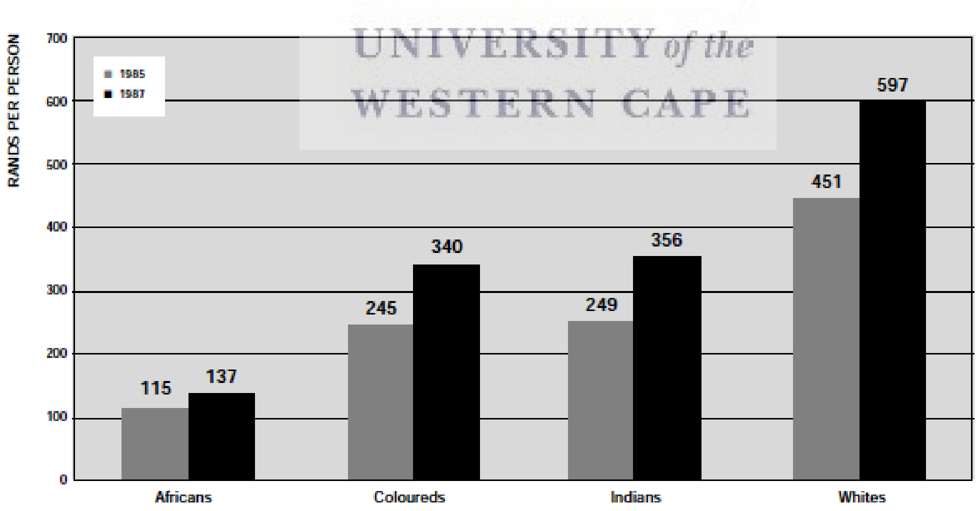
The urban housing crisis also produced informal settlements that lack basic services such as water and sanitation (Lemanski, 2009). People live in informal housing, tiny make-do shacks that are often made of wood, cardboard and corrugated iron and are highly combustible. These shelters still expose people to the elements. It is scorching hot in the summer, damp and cold in winter, and often flooded and wet when it rains. Because millions of black South Africans still rely on hazardous energy technologies such as candles, paraffin stoves and lanterns to make meals, warm themselves and light their homes (Kimemia, Vermaak, Pachauri & Rhodes, 2014), there are many fires that spread across informal settlements, destroying people's meagre possessions, leaving them out in the cold, and burning their bodies. Annually, there are over 200 000 reported incidents of injury and property damage, and over 80 000 children swallow paraffin which causes death, disability and trauma (Kimemia et al, 2014). According to Cloake, Haigh, Cheshire & Walker (2017: 411), 'shack fires and flame accounted cumulatively for 85% of total inhalational burns, the highest rates of admission to ICU (85.5%), the highest rate of complications, as well as 92.3% of all total fatalities.' 21 million households use kerosene on a daily basis, and it accounts for 56% of low income households' energy usage (Rode, Cox, Numanoglu & Berg, 2014). Lack of running water, limited access to flush toilets, lack of refuse removal services, streets that are unlit which create the conditions for opportunistic assaults, and the stress of living with many people who are often traumatised from the multiple daily violences of trying to survive, are contributors to ill health and debilitation, disability and death.

The necessities for ensuring health are thus not available, and there is scant protection from diseases caused by poverty. In their eleven-year study on overcrowding in two low income neighbourhoods in Johannesburg, Nkosi, Haman, Naicker and Matthee (2019) found that nearly 58% of households were overcrowded. Further, like Govender et al.'s (2011) study conducted in Cape Town, Nkosi et al. (2019) found very high correlations, with fever and chills, acute respiratory and gastrointestinal conditions associated with overcrowding. In their review of the scant literature on health and informal settlements, Weimann and Oni (2019) found that crowding was related to the transmission of TB and mental health issues, burns and smoke inhalation. Damp and mould contributed to respiratory illness such as asthma and allergies, while the inordinate presence of pests, leading to pesticide use, impacted atopic dermatitis. In her ethnography of an informal settlement, Fiona Ross (2010) found the inhabitants' lives beset by illnesses caused by impoverishment. Most of the residents were chronically and acutely ill and their daily routines revolved around their medical regimes. In Ross' ethnography, we perceive how thoroughly enmeshed disability, debility and death were for her participants. Very few expected to live very long or to live without their bodies struggling through the day. In a study on black female-headed households, it was found that most household deaths were from illness, and only 14% from old age, which was still considerably higher than what the authors called 'Other-headed households,' which had 0% deaths from old age. The legacies of apartheid spatial planning and its health effects are still with us, and postapartheid studies such as Ross (2010), Govender et al. (2011), Nkosi et al. (2019), and Weiman and Oni (2019) show the massification of death, disability and debilitation caused by land dispossession. The connections between health and housing are not unknown. That a case needs to be made for it, as with other apartheid legacies, tells us about the obfuscation of postapartheid knowledge production, the normalisation of black suffering, and the continuities of black death, disablement and debilitation.

Reading Ross' ethnography and the widespread distribution of ill-health in one community, what it means to be black and able-bodied is a question rather than a certainty, and disability exists on a continuum with death and debility. Whilst not all conditions are formally recognised or diagnosed (Govender et al., 2011), and in Ross' (2010) study we are shown multiple interpretations of illness, we are also able to get a sense of the pervasiveness and scope of illness caused by impoverishment. For black people with disabilities living in impoverished conditions where roads are not tarred, are sandy and stony and get muddy, manoeuvring a wheelchair or using environmental locators if visually impaired exacerbates daily struggles. Imagine attempting to access communal toilets that are often dirty, blocked, far, or unsafe, for someone who requires touch to navigate the world or space to move between wheelchair or mobility device and toilet. Very few white people with disabilities are or were likely to experience these kinds of conditions.

Healthcare

Like settler colonialism across the globe, such as in the United States (Williams, Lawrence & Davis, 2019), Australia (Soldatic, 2015), and Aotearoa (Paradies, Harris & Anderson, 2008), structural racism has had complex and pervasive influences on healthcare across multiple dimensions. In apartheid South Africa, like housing and labour, the provision of healthcare was also racialised and evinces a ‘genocidal approach to health and health care’ (de Beer, in Phatlane, 2006). Healthcare primarily provisioned settler needs during the colonial period, and prevented the spread of infectious diseases by urban blacks (Andersson & Marks, 1989). Healthcare for whites was akin to what could be found in the industrialised Global North (Susser & Cherry, 1982; Phatlane, 2006). The per capita expenditure during apartheid expressed a racial hierarchy where, in 1987, whites received ZAR597[10] per person, Indians ZAR356, Coloureds ZAR340 and Africans, ZAR137.



Source: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998: 120

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[10] In 1987, the South African exchange rate with the United States Dollar was ZAR2.09 to USD1.

The apartheid policy of separate development decentralised healthcare and ensured inefficient, racialised distribution of resources by in effect producing 14 different health ministries: ten for the black homelands, one each for whites, Asians, Coloureds, and one for all races (Nightingale, Hannibal, Geiger, Hartmann, Lawrence & Spurlock, 1990). This pseudo-separation allowed the apartheid state to ignore their responsibilities to black people in the homelands (Phatlane, 2006). This neglect extended to epidemiological data, as the apartheid government obscured the data on health for black South Africans significantly, and there is little to no reliable data for black Africans during apartheid, particularly in the rural areas (Susser & Cherry, 1982). There was strict segregation in hospitals, with black patients provided overcrowded facilities and minimal resources in comparison to white patients (Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), 1998; Baldwin-Ragaven, London & De Gruchy, 1999). This spatial and institutional racism extended to private health providers who also segregated patients (Baldwin-Ragaven et al., 1999). Very few black people were allowed medical training, and thus the ratio of doctors to population by race group reflected racial inequality (Baldwin-Ragaven et al., 1999; Phatlane, 2006).

Collusions between medical personnel and the apartheid state (TRC, 1998) lead to varying forms of death, disability and debility for black people. There were widespread incidences of medical negligence with detained and tortured apartheid prisoners (see e.g. Nightingale et al, 1990; Dowdall, 1991; TRC, 1998; Baldwin-Ragaven, London & de Gruchy, 2000; Gready, 2007). Medical complicity was also present in labour-related medical administration, such as in mines, where genocidal occupational hazards and scant protection injured and killed generations of black people (McCulloch, 2009, 2012; van Onselen, 2019). Members of the medical fraternity were even actively involved in the planning of state-sponsored violence, such as biological warfare on domestic populations through Project Coast, apartheid South Africa's covert biological and chemical warfare programme which was run by still-practising cardiologist, Wouter Basson (Gould, 2001; Burger & Gould, 2012; Moodley & Kling, 2015). As participants in the state's Malthusian nightmare, white doctors would regularly sterilise or cause harm to black female patients' reproductive capacities when they were admitted for surgical procedures unrelated to reproductive health (Baldwin-Ragaven et al., 1999). Sterilisation abuse with HIV-AIDS positive women has continued, despite postapartheid legislation forbidding involuntary or coercive sterilisation (Strode, Mthembu & Essack, 2012).[11] Black bodies were harvested for

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[11] This text does not specify race but does tell us that interviews were conducted in isiZulu and isiXhosa - languages traditionally spoken by black South Africans. The racialised dimensions of the women's maiming are difficult to parse and are left unanalysed, even though one woman reported that the doctor who pressured her to get sterilised said '… all black people are careless' (Strode et al, 2012: 65). However, this is a curious feature of most South

organs without their consent, and unethical conduct was normalised and justified (see Baldwin-Ragaven et al., 1999; Scheper-Hughes, 1999). Though there may have been some dissident physicians (Baldwin-Ragaven et al., 1999), the apartheid healthcare system was thoroughly racist and racialised and played a fundamental role in the destruction of black life (TRC, 1998). Many of these effects continue into the present.

Life expectancy

Life expectancy shows unsurprising differences between white and black South Africans. As we can see in the table below, during apartheid, the life expectancy for whites was relatively stable, with white men having a markedly lower life expectancy than white women. The life expectancy for Africans increased over time, and the life expectancy by gender was less differentiated, but African life expectancy was significantly lower than life expectancy for white South Africans.

Apartheid Life expectancies at birth

Period	**Whites (Male/Female)**	**Africans (Male/Female)**
1959-1961	64.73 / 71.67	44.0 / 46.0[134]
1969-1971	64.50 / 72.28	49.0 / 51.0[135]

Source: Phatlane, 2006: 175.

Life expectancy in South Africa in 2021 is estimated to be 59,3 years for males and 64,6 years for females (StatsSA, 2021). The 2021 mortality statistics showed a 34% increase in deaths due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to COVID-19, the life expectancy rate was 61,5 for males and 67,7 for females in 2019 (StatsSA, 2019a). HIV-AIDS is credited as one of the primary reasons for the low life expectancy of the population, with COVID-19 further lowering life expectancy.

Most measures of life expectancy in South Africa do not distinguish between the four population groups created by apartheid South Africa. I struggled to find disaggregated data from StatsSA, South Africa’s national demographer who is responsible for producing census data. They provide

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African academic scholarship in where it is inferred that participants are black people and, unless explicitly stated, impoverished black people. Acts of maiming perpetrated on black people often become occluded. It is not just white scholars who do this.

age and sex desegregation, but not by population group. This is a curious oversight in a country where health and life expectancy were racialised, which we have not yet overcome. However, StatsSA do show the difference in racialised patterns of ageing, showing that, in 2011, there were only approximately 6% of black Africans over 60, approximately 7% of Coloureds, 11% of Indians and 20% of Whites (Lehohla, 2014). Moreover, since 1996, the numbers for Indians and Whites increased substantially, but for Black Africans, the increase was marginal (Lehohla, 2014). Shoko (2018: 315) calculated the life expectancy and disability-free life expectancy by population group because ‘it characteristically gets masked at national level’. This obfuscation gets carried over into research articles. Masking unequal health destinies encodes racial disparities, and erases white, as well as black middle-class, well-being in the context of enormous suffering.

Unsurprisingly, Shoko (2018) found a distinct difference in life expectancy between white and black South Africans. Coloured South Africans had the worst outcomes. White South Africans’ chances for longevity and health were markedly high. Black African and Coloured men’s life expectancy were lower than women’s, and they had less years of disability-free life. Given the small percentage of black people likely to live beyond 60, the winnowing down of black people we see below should be considered exponentially.

Based on the 2011 census data and mortality data, Shoko (2018: 321-322) produced the following table that details life expectancy per population group, disaggregated by age:

Age	**Black African**		**Coloured**		**Indian/Asian**		**White**		**South Africa**	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
50	19.7 (15.4)	25.5 (17.9)	18.3 (15.5)	23.1 (18.8)	23.0 (19.1)	26.8 (21.2)	46.6 (33.9)	48.5 (35.0)	21.2 (16.9)	26.4 (19.4)
51	19.2 (14.9)	24.9 (17.3)	17.5 (14.8)	22.2 (18.0)	22.2 (18.4)	25.9 (20.4)	46.1 (33.3)	47.8 (34.3)	20.6 (16.4)	25.7 (18.7)
52	18.7 (14.4)	24.2 (16.7)	16.7 (14.0)	21.4 (17.2)	21.5 (17.7)	25.1 (19.6)	45.7 (32.8)	47.1 (33.6)	20.0 (15.8)	25.0 (18.1)
53	18.2 (13.9)	23.6 (16.1)	15.9 (13.3)	20.5 (16.4)	20.9 (17.0)	24.2 (18.8)	45.2 (32.2)	46.5 (32.9)	19.5 (15.3)	24.3 (17.5)
54	17.7 (13.4)	23.0 (15.5)	15.2 (12.6)	19.6 (15.6)	20.2 (16.4)	23.4 (18.0)	44.7 (31.7)	45.9 (32.2)	19.0 (14.8)	23.7 (16.8)
55	17.2 (12.9)	22.4 (15.0)	14.4 (11.9)	18.8 (14.9)	19.4 (15.7)	22.6 (17.3)	44.3 (31.2)	45.3 (31.5)	18.4 (14.2)	23.0 (16.2)
56	16.7 (12.4)	21.7 (14.4)	13.7 (11.2)	18.0 (14.1)	18.7 (15.0)	21.8 (16.6)	43.9 (30.7)	44.6 (30.8)	17.9 (13.7)	22.3 (15.6)
57	16.2 (12.0)	21.1 (13.8)	13.0 (10.6)	17.1 (13.4)	18.1 (14.4)	21.0 (15.8)	43.4 (30.1)	44.0 (30.2)	17.4 (13.2)	21.7 (15.0)
58	15.8 (11.5)	20.5 (13.3)	12.3 (9.9)	16.3 (12.6)	17.5 (13.8)	20.2 (15.1)	43.0 (29.6)	43.4 (29.5)	16.9 (12.7)	21.0 (14.4)
59	15.3 (11.1)	19.9 (12.8)	11.6 (9.3)	15.5 (11.9)	16.9 (13.2)	19.4 (14.3)	42.6 (29.1)	42.8 (28.9)	16.4 (12.2)	20.4 (13.8)
60	14.8 (10.6)	19.3 (12.2)	10.9 (8.7)	14.7 (11.2)	16.2 (12.6)	18.6 (13.6)	42.2 (28.6)	42.2 (28.2)	15.8 (11.7)	19.7 (13.2)
61	14.4 (10.2)	18.7 (11.7)	10.3 (8.1)	13.9 (10.5)	15.6 (12.0)	17.8 (13.0)	41.8 (28.1)	41.6 (27.6)	15.3 (11.3)	19.1 (12.7)
62	14.0 (9.8)	18.1 (11.2)	9.7 (7.6)	13.2 (9.9)	15.0 (11.5)	17.1 (12.3)	41.4 (27.6)	41.1 (27.0)	14.9 (10.8)	18.4 (12.1)
63	13.6 (9.4)	17.6 (10.7)	9.1 (7.1)	12.5 (9.3)	14.4 (10.9)	16.4 (11.6)	41.0 (27.1)	40.6 (26.4)	14.4 (10.4)	17.8 (11.6)
64	13.2 (9.0)	17.0 (10.2)	8.5 (6.6)	11.8 (8.6)	13.9 (10.4)	15.6 (11.0)	40.6 (26.7)	39.9 (25.7)	13.9 (9.9)	17.2 (11.0)
65	12.8 (8.6)	16.4 (9.7)	8.0 (6.1)	11.1 (8.1)	13.4 (10.0)	15.1 (10.4)	40.2 (26.1)	39.3 (25.1)	13.5 (9.5)	16.6 (10.5)

Table 17.1 Life and (health expectancy in brackets) for males and females calculated by Shoko (2018), using the 2011 South African census and mortality and cause of death data

As we can see, life expectancy is profoundly racialised. Even where there are higher socioeconomic indicators, and class differences between black racialised categories, the life expectancy is almost half of that of white South Africans. White South Africans’ quality of life has been capacitated in multiple ways, from forms of labour, access to education, healthcare, safe and well-provisioned neighbourhoods, as well as varied ways of spending leisure time that require access to resources. The numerous humiliations that black people endured at racist workplaces, in spaces that were designated for whites, also contributed to an affective dimension that was deleterious to health.

Black people attempt(ed) to make homes in crowded spaces surrounded by the violences induced by concentrated poverty, such as addiction, interpersonal violence, and food insecurity. People who were classified as African and Coloured have the highest rates of impoverishment, which has continued into postapartheid South Africa. Some black neighbourhoods in Cape Town have rates of interpersonal violence that are higher than countries at war. Despite having one of the best constitutions in the world, neoliberal governance and a kleptocratic postapartheid state have maintained and produced worlds that keep the black majority impoverished. The racist structures that have been inherited have continued to exact a brutal regime of death, disability and debility on black South Africans. However, structural violence was and continues to be undergirded by multiple and interlocking forms of direct violence. In the section below, I will briefly look at the murderousness of apartheid death squads, the UN's declaration of the apartheid state as criminal, the Sharpeville protests, and protests as a site of state terror.

Direct Violence

To manage national security, the National Party used death squads to pursue and kill thousands of dissenters (Gottschalk, 2002), and where they failed to kill, invariably maimed people (Lapsley & Karakashian, 2012; Sachs, 2014). The esteemed postapartheid Constitutional Court Judge, Albie Sachs, was an anti-apartheid activist who was disabled by a car bomb in Mozambique in 1988 (Sachs, 2014). One eye and an arm were destroyed. Michael Lapsley opened a letter bomb in 1990 and both his hands and his left eye were destroyed (Lapsley & Karakashian, 2012). Apartheid death squads not only targeted white male anti-apartheid activists; the lists of victims are extensive and incomplete (see Binckes, 2018). Apartheid operatives did not only shoot people, beat and torture them, or use explosive devices (Binckes, 2018); they also used toxins (Bale, 2006). According to Gottschalk, death squads arose out of:

> South Africa's colonial history of racial domination by white settlers (which) included a deep-rooted pattern of unpunished brutality that extended from settler violence against workers, sharecroppers, and other tenants to virtually unchecked police and Prisons Department murders of black persons. In fact, during the South African epoch of farm jails, farm owners and prison commandants formed a continuum rather than separate categories (2002: 231).

Apartheid brutality was extensive and endemic, and created terror for black people for centuries. Gottschalk (2002) goes on to state that, because the apartheid government believed it was fighting a war, there was little distinction between combatants and non-combatants. Apartheid police were comfortable with illegal killings and considered it 'legitimate to kill unarmed civilians' (Gottschalk, 2002: 232) and routinely beat African suspects, political and non-political. It was also legal to use maximum force to stop protests, and the Security Police were able to torture detained people to death without consequence. The black populace was met with whippings, mass arrests and fines for civil disobedience. White violence against black people, in several repressive modalities, was so ordinary that even death due to racist violence was acceptable and treated as justified. To repeat, apartheid was not a benign form of rule. It was a deeply violent and cruel form of politics in which brutality against black people was ordinary and widespread. There was no part of black life that was not affected by the cruelty of white supremacist imaginaries.

Collusions between multiple institutions, such as the law, labour, medicine, researchers, and the media, rendered black people's subjugation normal and justified. The morality of apartheid death-dealing was deeply located in white supremacist ideology and a political rationality that considered black people as enemies (Pillay, 2005). This political rationality enabled the majority of white South Africans to do violence to black South Africans without remorse, and even with enjoyment of racial superiority. I am not very convinced by arguments of black non-being, as advocated by some decolonial scholars, building on Fanon and others. The viciousness of apartheid violence attacked the humanity of black South Africans in every conceivable way, somatically, psychologically, epistemically, ontologically. Black pasts were destroyed, black futures annihilated and black presents were made meagre and harrowing. You do not need to vanquish repeatedly and consistently that which is not life, which is not being. The desire to render and consign black people into the zone of non-being is to believe that black being is a threat.

Apartheid was declared a crime against humanity by the United Nations (UN) in 1966, and in 1973, *The Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid* declared South African apartheid's contravention of the Charter of the United Nations unlawful and also criminal (Dugard, 2008). Dugard (2008) cites from Article II, in which the nature of apartheid as criminal is explicated. The criminality of apartheid was constituted by 'inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them' (Dugard, 2008: 1). He goes on to list the acts that the UN considered crimes:

> murder, torture, inhuman treatment and arbitrary arrest of members of a racial group; deliberate imposition on a racial group of living conditions calculated to cause it physical destruction; legislative measures that discriminate in the political, social, economic and cultural fields; measures that divide the population along racial lines by the creation of separate residential areas for racial groups; the prohibition of interracial marriages; and the persecution of persons opposed to apartheid (Dugard, 2008:1).

Reading through this list, it is unbearably obvious that these criminal practices would have led to not just death but also disablement. The condition that such criminal treatment was intended to induce was debilitation, in multifarious and systemic ways. Continued and ongoing living conditions that cause physical destruction over time have effects: on black South Africans' bodyminds, on families and on social relations. Apartheid was condemned every year by the UN General Assembly from 1952 until 1990, and regularly in the Security Council from 1960 (Dugard, 2008). What apartheid legalised was crisis as a form of life for black people in their everyday living conditions. Persistent crisis was secured by spectacular forms of violence during protests.

The Sharpeville Massacre, where police killed 69 protesters and injured 180, according to underestimated official statistics (Frankel, 2001), was one of the catalysts for the UN condemnation. The massacre provoked what Robertson (2012: 54-55) calls, 'that horrified international response which is a hallmark of crimes against humanity'. On 21 March 1960, black South Africans marched to the police station in Sharpeville to protest the pass laws which limited their movement and, as we have seen above, criminalised their movement and legalised beatings, imprisonment and other humiliations and violences. The protest was thus about the pass laws, but also critically about desiring an end to the consequences that black people bore because of the pass laws. Most protests are about the violent consequences a people must endure due to some or other lack or unjust law. If people are protesting about the lack of running water, for example, the protest is about water, but also about the food that does not get cooked or washed. The illnesses due to hygiene that cannot be maintained because there is no possibility for bathing, no water for sewerage, no water to wash hands. They are also protesting about the damage done to bodies that carry heavy canisters of water over distances. Sometimes water gets carried through spaces where female water carriers are subject to beatings, sexual assault, humiliations and all manner of violations.

Sharpeville was thus about the Pass Laws, but also about fines, arrests, beatings, humiliations, dispossession, and the racism that arose from being made strangers in the land of one's ancestors by colonisers. The Sharpeville protest happened despite the apartheid state having created numerous security laws in the 1960s and turning the country into a police state (Terreblanche, 2002). It was supposed to be a peaceful protest, but police opened fire and shot into the crowd of men, women and children. In his book, *Sharpeville: an Apartheid massacre and its consequences*, Tom Lodge (2011) explored the aftermath of the massacre and the reasons for international condemnation. The Sharpeville protest was not the first time that police responded to protest with lethal force, and it would not be the last. There were protests with higher fatality and casualty rates. Sharpeville, however, occurred amid the ferment of the international civil rights movement and would shape international perceptions of apartheid South Africa. The Pan-African Congress and the African National Congress, both liberation organisations who were involved with organising the march, were banned after the massacre and went underground.

Police treated people who were injured in the massacre as criminals and arrested them; some were rounded up at hospitals. One account in Lodge's (2011) book, by Isaac Mogeung, states that police came into a hospital ward after some of the injured had been there for four weeks and asked if people wanted to go home. They said yes. When they got outside, they were loaded into trucks which took them to jail, where their injured bodies were made to sleep on hard, cement floors with thin blankets. They received no healthcare when they got ill, had two buckets in the cell, one for water and one to relieve themselves in. The experience was so demoralising that Isaac says he was made to feel lower than a pig. They awaited trial for over a year, and even though he was acquitted, the police regularly raided his home, along with anyone else who had been arrested. He remained pained by the memory of his ordeal. Police harassment and arrests suppressed witnesses and ensured that those present would not give evidence. The numbers of dead, injured and disabled are low because people were afraid they would be arrested if they sought care, and some went to hospitals further away. There are accounts of bodies that disappeared and were not included in the official account. Much later, some people who were disabled were compensated with pitifully small amounts of money. Lodge (2011) states that the deaths and serious wounding of providers affected over 216 families and over 500 children.

There are a few accounts in Lodge's (2011) book of disability. One woman, Puselato Malelo, was pregnant and shot in her leg, and continues to limp. Another pregnant woman, Mrs Mguni, was also arrested at the hospital but released after being questioned. Due to her injuries, where a sizeable amount of flesh had been ripped out of her leg by the bullets, she took medication for over a year. Her son was born with an intellectual impairment and she counts him as another invisibilised victim of the massacre. Alongside these accounts were the sedimentation of trauma and its psychosocial effects, particularly as public memory of the event was criminalised. People who spoke about Sharpeville were arrested, and thus the event was wrapped in silence, working its way through a community. Some people acted as spies for the police to supplement their meagre incomes. The fear and distrust sown by betrayals and police harassment broke down community relations. The wounds of Sharpeville never healed for many of the people who were there, and who were affected. This long history of repression and multiple modalities of violence and, as we can see here, lack of empathy or regard for victims, occurred in other places across the country. South Africa had numerous protests, despite attempts to prevent them, and they have continued into the present. South Africa is known as the protest capital of the world (Alexander, 2013), and many of the tactics used against protesters in apartheid South Africa are still used, which will be explored in more depth in the third part of thesis.

The consequences of apartheid protests were so numerous that it would contribute to the founding of Disabled Persons South Africa. The student protests in Soweto, Johannesburg in 1976 were also iconic and became another moral landmark in South Africa's history. In a chapter on the history of the national organisation for disabled people in South Africa, Howell et al. (2006: 52) inform us that the student uprisings in 1976 and 1977 were important because:

> many people were disabled through the violence of this period. Some of the activists who are involved in the disability rights movement today were shot by the police, tortured in detention, or hurt in other ways linked to the violence of this period that resulted in them becoming permanently disabled. … (T)hese events also politicised many disabled people who now recognised more clearly how the liberation of disabled people could only happen through the liberation of the majority of South Africans and the establishment of democracy in the country. They felt inspired by what the students had done and recognised the importance of disabled people organising themselves to take forward their struggle.

They are also unequivocal about how racialisation produced differential experiences for black and white people with disabilities. Whilst all people with disabilities experienced discrimination, for white disabled South Africans their concerns were largely centred on freedom from a repressive medical and welfare system run by able-bodied professionals. For black South Africans with disabilities, the multiple violences of the apartheid system produced their impairments, provided inadequate healthcare and rehabilitative services, and sent them back to the same impoverished conditions which, needless to say, were inaccessible and exacerbated their already deprived circumstances. Apartheid's direct and structural violence were integral to politicising disability activism and the formation of what would be a multiracial disability organisation that managed to traverse the South African racial landscape, with a deep recognition of what racist rule had done to black South Africans. However, this awareness of how deeply entangled disability is with South Africa's history of racist rule has not extended into academic disability activism. The emergence of South African disability studies as a field of study is a postapartheid phenomenon, is very white, tied to international circuits of knowledge production and, in many ways, separated from the historical foundations of disability activism. This is an area that requires further research.

Conclusion

South Africa's long history of settler colonialism and apartheid has had disastrous effects for the black majority. Racism enabled a system of mass oppression, labour theft, land dispossession and justification of structural and direct violence, which has created an ontology in which black impoverishment has been normalised. Within disability studies, the connections between poverty and disability are widely accepted as both a driver and consequence of impairment. Even though the relationship between poverty and disability may be complex, and distribute vulnerabilities in ways we do not fully understand (Grech, 2015b, 2016), what is indisputable is that black impoverishment has been structurally engineered over centuries. The racialisation of poverty, and how racism created resource-deprived and injurious worlds for the black majority, is a shared condition from which disability is not separable. Nor is disability separable from death and debility. Within South African disability studies, ignoring South Africa's history of racialisation and the consequences of white supremacist rule for the black majority constitutes a serious ontological lacuna which has epistemic effects. Ontological erasures of racialised differentiation through using decontextualised South African disability subjects is ahistorical and distorts our understanding of the effects of a deeply violent history, not just for disabled black South Africans, but also white South Africans. What is more, there are connections between other disciplinary endeavours and formations of knowledge that are sacrificed to produce disability analyses with fictive disabled South African subjects. The effects of centuries of racialised domination of the black majority by a white minority has continued into postapartheid South Africa, despite a majority black government and the enfranchisement of the black majority.

In this chapter, some of the ways in which racist governance in South Africa produced disastrous and vicious outcomes for the black majority were explored. The apartheid state was at war with the black majority, and attritional warfare has had unreckoned with and widely distributed levels of black death, disability and debility. Apartheid's means of governance, its means of control, was violence on multiple fronts, from land dispossession to backbreaking labour practices to inadequate housing to inadequate healthcare that has created foreshortened life expectancies for the black majority and longer life expectancies for white South Africans. As I stated in the beginning of the chapter, it is a very crude catalogue of a South African ontology that takes the history of racialisation as foundational to any study of disability in South Africa. There are multiple intersecting lenses, such as class and gender, that have not been engaged with to sketch this racialised ontology. There is scope, just within this chapter, for numerous studies on death-disability-debility and its intersections with other analytics of inequality and oppression. What is germane for this project is the woefully inadequate engagement with race and the violence that black people have had to and continue to endure. That South African disability studies has not yet developed a recognisable theorisation of race and disability, given the history of this country, is a lacuna that profoundly shaped the methodology of this thesis.

In the following chapter, I discuss how my methodology and research questions shifted to explore sites of enquiry that seemed to be palpably obvious spaces of death, disability and debility, based on an ontological locatedness within South Africa's history of endemic racialised violence. I started the project with life histories from a qualitative feminist research perspective that were intended to elicit data to show that disability was intersectional. However, taking inspiration from feminist trickster approaches and outlaw epistemologies, my methods were emergent. The project moved from learning that five of my participants became disabled through interpersonal violence, to looking at protests as possible ways to ameliorate ontological erasure.

Chapter 3: *Methodology - Emergent Questions amid Settler Colonialism's Long Emergencies*

My methodology was emergent and shifted considerably as I began writing. As a qualitative project, the research process was iterative, flexible and fluid (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). In the earliest iteration of the project, I explored the life histories of nine participants from April 2017 to October 2018. However, as I began writing up my analysis, I wanted to understand the connections between my data, protest on university campuses, and events like the Marikana massacre. More particularly, I wanted to engage with events of violence, and persistent violence, and their effects as a consequence of settler colonialism within Southern Africa. Despite the long emergency of settler colonialism (Wakeham, 2021), and its disabling effects for black South Africans, and as questioned in the preceding chapters, South African disability studies has done very little work to understand race and disability. I was and remain deeply puzzled by this. Undoubtedly, like disability studies in the Global North (Erevelles, 2011a; Stienstra & Nyerere, 2016; Bell, 2017; Bailey & Mobley, 2019), South African disability studies is very white. However, unlike the Global North, most people in South Africa are black. South Africa is also a country in which racialised structural violence, and thus the oppression and debilitation of black life as part of white supremacist rule, was legalised far longer than anywhere else in the world. As discussed in the previous chapter, most black people experienced an inordinate amount of violence, in which death, disability and debility are inescapably entangled with blackness. And yet, this entanglement is frequently ignored and evaded.

My methods emerged contingently, yet centred on the palpably systemic and obvious, such as the processes of disablement because of state responses to protest. Even though the life histories offered me a rich and dense data set, I felt unable to write. I explore this inability more fully in the following chapter, as an epistemic question which became part of my analysis. I realised in my proto-analysis of the life histories that I might be able to produce an analysis that showed the complexity of being disabled in South Africa, and disrupt some of the universalisation that South African disability studies engaged in, and yet it felt inadequate. The larger epistemic and ontological questions remained. What was most puzzling was why so many obvious modes of black death, disablement and debility remained unexplored. My methods then were to immerse myself through reading newspaper reports, academic and grey literature, memoirs and creative non-fiction, and creative works about events I considered to be dense spaces that were obviously about disablement, and yet went mostly unremarked in South African disability studies. What I hoped to do was expand South African disability studies' disability imaginary, and thus offer a more expansive ontology that includes the effects of coloniality and recognises the fragility of black bodies and psyches. I was, and still am, more interested in generating questions than epistemic certainty. Recognising that one has inherited centuries of black dehumanisation, and thus the normalisation of black pain, through and with white supremacist epistemologies of ignorance requires epistemic uncertainty.

Whilst there are limitations to my choices and decisions, it is my hope that my heterodox methods open generative avenues through which South African disability studies can more fully engage with the ongoing violence done to black people. If an inclusive liberatory disability studies is unattainable, given how white supremacist epistemologies of ignorance reproduce epistemic evasions, my hope is to at least contribute to a black feminist approach to disability and debility. Further, my hope is for South African disability studies to stop mimicking the theorisation from the Global North and offer conceptual apparatus that allows us to understand how racialised inequalities are entangled with disability. In a country credited as being the most unequal in the world because of our long history of racist rule, we should be able to offer cogent conceptual apparatus which extends how we think about race and disability and its multiple entanglements with inequality. As stated in the introduction, South African disability studies' thinkers have not been integral in the formation of conceptual apparatus about race and disability in their thinking with and for the Global South, which is unbearably sad and evidence of a troubling and glaring epistemic lacunae.

In this brief chapter, I will elaborate on the methodological decisions that went into developing the project. First, I will introduce my research questions, followed by an overview of qualitative feminist research, then discuss and describe the life histories. I will then introduce the idea of emergent research, outlaw epistemologies that encompass feminist tricksters, and being inspired by the figure of the *bandita*. Following that, I will briefly outline some of the ways I immersed myself in the questions that emerged during the writing up process.

Research questions: questioning your questions

My initial question was: How does the intersection of race, gender and disability produce subjectivity for people with disabilities in South Africa? To follow this question, I did life history interviews, which I elaborate on below. One of the patterns that struck me most forcibly was the connections between interpersonal violence, masculinity and gangsterism in the production of disability. These events of violence occurred within black neighbourhoods that had been constituted by apartheid legislation. I wanted to understand the relationship between violence, disability and the racialisation of space, and thus followed that question. Segregated spaces in the country preceded apartheid legislation. South Africa's long history of enslavement of indigenous black populations, as well as enslaved people who were transported here, colonial rule and the persistent use of violence, was the untold part of the life stories. Explorations of land in South Africa invariably entail asking questions about labour, as land dispossession and colonial tactics around land were deliberately aimed at creating cheap, disposable labour. Deeply influenced by witnessing Fallist (#RMF and #FMF) protests, and the illogic of crowd control tactics, I began to ask questions about crowd control, labour and protest, which is how I arrived at a focus on the Marikana massacre, a deeply painful postapartheid event that haunts black protest action. I was shocked when I could not find statistics on the disabling effects of Marikana, and thus realised that crowd control effects are almost always assumed rather than carefully studied. The ubiquity of protest in South Africa, alongside the cruel consequences of state-sponsored violence, suffuses the South African public sphere, yet very little research on the disabling effects of South African policing is available. The materiality of crowd control and its obvious fatal, disabling and debilitating effects thus required an exploration. Finally, I wanted to make a connection between structural violence, and its material and epistemic effects, through thinking with the Fallist protests, and ask what protests offer disability studies as epistemic sites.

The kinds of questions I was interested in pursuing after I had collected the life histories therefore demanded reliance on secondary data and to move outside the parameters of the questions I had started my project with. The question that drove my project was why there was so little research and theorising on such obvious conditions that affected most black people in the country. Why do we not have more research from within disability studies about the labour conditions for black people, and what happens to black workers after they have been disabled? Most black labourers who are engaged in menial work do so with the barest of their subsistence requirements being met, often have scant labour protection, and are disposed of when they become impaired. Why do we not have a flourishing subfield on racialised labour and disability? Why do we not have a subfield within disability studies that seeks to understand interpersonal violence and gangsterism which has been allowed to flourish in black neighbourhoods? Why are disability studies' theorists in this country ignoring the many black people who are wounded and disabled after police have used martial tactics on civilian populations and called it crowd control? These are often public events, with news reports and moral outrage circulating when people experience impairments due to police violence. Why is it that disability studies' theorists in this country often insist on thinking about disability as if the distribution of vulnerability to disabling conditions are the same across class, race and gender? I became more interested in generating questions such as these, and thus my methodology became a tool to ask questions about the ordinary processes of black disablement which have become normalised. Finally, the question that I still have, and returned to over and over in the last few years, is what does it mean to think with normalcy as a counter-discourse within disability studies, in a country where whiteness is not the statistical norm and the distribution of black debility, disability and death is normalised as a statistical norm?

The impairing effects on black life are so normalised that they evade notice. My questions are ongoing. Having started with feminist qualitative research methods, I was attuned to the possibility of my project changing and following those changes. As a methodology, feminist qualitative research is well-suited to studying disability from a decolonial standpoint.

Qualitative feminist, disabilities, and decolonial research

Feminist qualitative research traverses multiple epistemic positions and encompasses a dizzying range of politics, methods, ethics and approaches (see Olesen, 2018). This radical openness to new horizons for thinking and questioning was attractive when I started the study. At the outset, the study was grounded in feminist qualitative research, to elicit participants' experiences and perceptions of their subjectivity (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006: 5). Qualitative research enabled a reflexive, holistic and process-driven approach that was culturally situated and foregrounded the way participants made meaning (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006: 5). People with disabilities are often stigmatised, marginalised and silenced (Watermeyer, 2013). Within disability studies, Lester & Nusbaum (2018) have argued the necessity for critical qualitative research to centre disability and offer new ways of understanding it. The social model of disability recognised that people with disabilities interacted with their environments and that disability was critically entangled with context, thus creating complex experiences of disability (O'Day & Killeen, 2002). Doing qualitative research enabled my interlocutors to be heard and to relay their life histories from their perspective (O'Day & Killeen, 2002; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). My feminist standpoint (Harding, 1993) was grounded in a decolonial approach to disability where race and coloniality are critical to world-making (Quijano, 2000), which is inextricably linked to gender (Lugones, 2008; Gqola, 2015). What is more, I consider disability to be fundamental to the making of race and coloniality (Erevelles, 2011a; Grech, 2015a; Grech & Soldatic, 2015).

The intimacy of qualitative research (O’Day & Killeen, 2002) and a decolonial feminist standpoint could break down the power relationship between researchers and researched (see Harding, 2007). Reflexivity was crucial to elicit what Sandra Harding (2007: 55) calls ‘strong objectivity’. As an able-bodied black woman who had relative privilege, and was traversing multiple forms of relatedness across varying relationships of power, it was important for me to be reflexive and alert to the nuances of engagement with my participants. More critically, I needed to note the epistemic entailments that emerged because of my positionality. Research is not neutral and objective; doing feminist qualitative research made this palpable (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). A feminist qualitative approach expected me to locate myself in the research and treat my positionality as a strength where situated knowledge would emerge (Haraway, 1988). As an educated black South African woman who does not have a disability, I had to be ethically scrupulous with my participants and attempt as far as possible to limit inequitable relations. However, as I show in the following chapter, reflexivity, as I understood it prior to doing this study, is often not enough. The performance of scholarly reflexivity can be a way of avoiding ontological and epistemic presuppositions. Nonetheless, having started in 2017, I completed my data collection of life histories in early 2018.

Life Histories

I employed life history interviews to elicit information about interlocutors’ beliefs about their identities and experiences as people with disabilities. Bornat (2008: 344) considers biographical methods to lead to an ‘expression of the self, a focus on feelings and emotions providing insight into individual perceptions and understandings of situations and experiences.’ Furthermore, life histories are ‘sensitive to the social context, to change and to the wider factors that shape individual lives without losing sight of the individual interpretations and understandings through which humans make the worlds they live in’ (Zeitlyn, 2008: 167). This method of exploring subject formation is distinguished from other interview techniques by:

> (1) tapping into processes; (2) micro–macro linkages; (3) comprehensive understanding; (4) bearing witness and filling in the historical record; (5) collaboration in the meaning-making process; and (6) a focus on the participants’ perspectives (which may or may not be the case with in-depth interviews) (Leavy, 2011: 22).

Thus, life histories enabled linking the social, economic and political transformations in South Africa and participants’ understandings of these influences. Life histories were also conducive to unearthing people with disabilities’ subjugated histories. This method was premised on building relationships with participants, rather than merely brief encounters, as with most interview-based methods.

I met with nine participants with the intention of doing life histories with them. As I was interested in intersectionality, I wanted interlocutors with a diverse range of disabilities and socioeconomic identities to ensure complex comparison. The only criteria were that participants had to identify as having a disability. I had no preferences regarding gender, age, racial classification, sexuality, religion, types of disability, nationality and class location. I met with each participant prior to the life history interviews to discuss the research, build rapport and offer them the information they needed for informed consent. Participants were also informed that they could do one life history interview of an hour, or participate over a period of six months, or for five interviews. If a participant indicated they did not want to participate in the study or withdrew or seemed reluctant to continue meeting, they were allowed to do so without fuss.

There were five black male participants. Through an NGO that had a project with disabled people, I was introduced to a black male participant, Jonathan, in Langa. He introduced me to another three men in the neighbourhood, Mzi, Sipho and Teboho. All four men were unemployed, unmarried, had mobility impairments and had become disabled through an act of violence. At the time, Jonathan lived in a care facility, while the other three men lived in their family homes. The other male participant, Tariq, was Congolese with permanent resident status, self-employed, Muslim, and married with four children, three of whom were adults. He too had lived in Langa for a brief and very difficult period. He lived with his family in a part of the city that had once been affordable, but was gentrifying, which put their home at risk. He had polio as a child and had a mobility impairment. I met him through an acquaintance who did legal work for migrants. Except for Teboho, who I interviewed on two occasions, I met with the other four men repeatedly, either four or five times, and for a minimum of five hours each.

There were four female participants, two white, and two black. All the women were professionals at different stages in their careers. My contact at the NGO, who had introduced me to Jonathan, also provided contact details for a black female participant, Tania, who had a degenerative impairment that affected her bone density and stature. Unlike the male participants, who were recipients of the NGO’s services, their connection with her was through her creative work and was more collegial. She was not married and had no desire to have children. I met Margaret at a book festival when we were in the same writing workshop. She shared details of her harrowing experiences with institutionalisation due to being diagnosed as bipolar. She was white, in her seventies, divorced and a grandmother. I had one hour-long interview with both her and Tania. I had encountered Anna and Fahiema professionally, though did not know them very well. Both women were married, had very high-powered careers and were parents. Anna was white and visually impaired. Fahiema was black, had been shot by a boyfriend as a teenager, and was a wheelchair user. I met both Fahiema and Anna five times over a period of approximately six months.

Frequent contact allowed me to have a fuller sense of participants' lives, which limited the possibility for re/inscribing abjectness and suffering. I had multiple conversations with seven of the participants, some on a weekly basis, some over a period of six months. I framed my encounters with participants as conversations, rather than unstructured interviews, to create a less instrumental relationship (see Oakley 1981). I visited most of the participants at their homes, except for Margaret and Tania, who I met and interviewed at restaurants, and Anna, who I met at her office. Questions were wide-ranging and focused on gender and sexuality, race, class and disability. I allowed my participants to decide what parts of their lives they wanted to focus on and was not very directive unless the conversation stalled. The process was iterative, and I or my participants followed up on information that emerged in previous conversations. The fluidity and flexibility of this approach allowed me to elicit information that I may not have received otherwise. For example, Jonathan revised the initial story of how he became disabled in a subsequent visit, and the openness allowed some of my participants to explore very painful experiences. If I had only met Jonathan once, I would not have heard the stories of who he was prior to his disablement, and therefore would not have understood gangsterism, and the role it plays in making disability. However, for some participants, like Margaret, who had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder, the openness of this method was anxiety-provoking. This may be one of the reasons that she did not continue with the study. From this, I learnt that, when doing research with multiple participants who have different disabilities, the methods need to be adapted to each participant and participants cannot be approached as if they are monolithic.

All participants gave informed consent and, for those I visited frequently, consent was repeatedly negotiated. Participants were provided with information sheets and informed consent forms that contained information about the project and my institutional affiliation. Participants were offered confidentiality and have been anonymised. As some of the participants may be recognisable, I have changed some of the details in the stories that are presented, either through omission or in ways that do not significantly change their stories. People with disabilities tend to be stigmatised and I therefore endeavoured to always act ethically and not impinge on participants' dignity. All conversations were recorded on my phone and transcribed. Where I used a professional transcriber, a contract of confidentiality was agreed to and signed, and the transcriber destroyed their recordings. One of the issues that arose due to the use of a transcription service was that participants who had speech impediments were frequently transcribed incorrectly, and sometimes the meaning of their statements were completely changed. I therefore checked, redid and corrected those transcriptions. All the data is on password-protected files and separate from participants' identities.

I have summarised and included the participants' life stories in two chapters in the thesis. I have chosen not to analyse them, but rather have the diverse life stories make the point that disability is complex and intersectional. People with disabilities have multiple backgrounds, and for those who have traumatic life experiences that result in disability, they still experience life fully after the event of disablement, even if there is a period when they want to die. Most of the thesis focuses on disability and violence, events of violence, and the making of a racialised world through the dehumanisation of black people. The life histories are testament to disabled lives being more than violence. There are distinctions of class within black experiences of disability. White people with disabilities have also been impacted by a racialised world in unexpected and surprising ways that require careful reflection. Not all women with disabilities have less power than men with disabilities; some of them have careers they love and have fallen in love and been loved. Even though structural violence indelibly impacts people with disabilities' lifeworlds, they do not live in a state of constant abjection, repression, or stigmatisation. Whilst a world that is hostile to difference forges subjectivities with its imprint, people still find ways to live and even to thrive. Even when there are commonalities of experience, there are also differences that matter. People with disabilities love, hurt, create hurt, and have experiences that are not reducible to disability, gender, race or any other vector of identity. I am hoping that, by offering these life stories in this form, the connections, differences and unexplored areas will offer spaces for further research. For example, I have yet to see research in South Africa about the connections between whiteness, mental health and solidifying apartheid and colonial racialised regimes, or about marriage, where presumptions of erased sexuality or stigmatised sexuality are not necessarily foregrounded. There were undoubtedly productive and generative directions that could have been followed in the life histories. However, that so many critical and obvious avenues were unexplored and ignored in disability studies became more pressing. In the following section, I will discuss emergent research, and feminist tricksters as an inspiration.

Trickster epistemologies: emergent research, feminist tricksters and border crossing

In the edited volume, *Transdisciplinary feminist research*, Jaarsma (2020), in her essay entitled *Critical disability studies and the problem of method*, argues that Critical Disability Studies (CDS) is a transdisciplinary endeavour that seeks methods that allow ‘us' to move. CDS’ open-ended invitation, ‘asks us to inhabit methods in ways that undo the grip of knowledge-in-advance’ (2020: 16). Therefore, our task is to problematise and to respond creatively to the problem and the conditions that produce the problem. The transdisciplinarity of CDS engenders immanent and situated methodological practices which are characterised by, amongst others, dynamism, flexibility, contingency, non-linearity, ongoing revision and boundary-negotiations. I had set out to demonstrate intersectionality and, of course, I found it and thus was in ‘the grip of knowledge in advance’ (Jaarsma, 2020: 16), which Jaarsma calls false problems. She makes a compelling argument that ‘false problems' keep disciplinary logics intact.

In a world where the concept of intersectionality has begun to circulate in popular culture, that differences exist and have critical import on the making of lifeworlds is fairly obvious. Thus, the quest to demonstrate intersectionality appeared to me as a false problem. This is not because demonstrating intersectionality does not matter, but because the demonstration affirms white, androcentric, Global North disability studies and, for that matter, racist, sexist, ableist, elitist (and on and on) epistemologies’ pretences of innocence and naïveté. There are few people on this planet who do not know that inequality creates vastly different worlds and have multifarious effects that produce difference. No serious thinker can truly imagine that all lives are the same. Having to show over and over that intersectionality matters has thus become less about making a scholarly argument, and more about making an ethical claim. We are asserting a kind of ethical subjectivity for people who benefit from inequality in which we presume that, with the correct knowledge, they would be fundamentally anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-capitalist, anti-ableist, etc. This assertion and bequeathment of ethical subjectivity render those who most benefit from inequality as pristine ethical subjects who have a fundamental and almost essentialist investment in right-thinking which, of course, we hope results in right-doing.

In finding what I had set out to find (intersectionality), I became stuck. I could not move because what appeared to me to be the problem of the systemic disavowal of black disablement, which was all around us, was largely absent in the literature, and my methods did not actually allow me to make the connections I needed or allowed me to move. What I was most troubled by was the endemic violence which saturated some black neighbourhoods and produced disability. Interpersonal violence was a feature of structural violence, which layered and layered and layered multiple forms of debilitating, disabling and death-dealing violence for black people. I also felt impelled to connect state-sanctioned violence that occurs during protests to participants who had experienced events of disabling violence.

I realised that the only way to move was to forego a conventional thematic analysis of the empirical data I had co-constructed with participants, and become a feminist trickster. In her PhD thesis, Puotinen (2006: 35-84) offers an intriguing discussion on feminist role models who exemplify trickster figures. Trickster figures transgress, resist and even sometimes change dominant systems as ‘moral leaders who actively work to provoke, educate and inspire us in our feminist projects’ (Puotinen, 2006: 40). She identifies three types: the outlaw, the storyteller and the troublemaker. Tricksters resist and transform knowledge towards liberatory ends. Outlaws like bell hooks and Chela Sandoval can exist on the inside of the knowledge system but resist from the outside. Troublemakers like Judith Butler and Luce Irigaray resist from within, turning epistemic familiarity upside down. Storytellers like Dorothy Allison resist from beyond by bringing new life-giving communities into being and crafting new meanings. None of these thinkers are confined to one category, but slip between them, crossing and moving borders towards a vision of a different world. Puotinen (2006) cautions that feminist tricksters do not always get it right, and their propensity for a particular style of provocation can also be limiting and dangerous. Whilst I accept her caution, there is something freeing in knowing that feminist tricksters are not perfect, but rather fallible people with a desire and commitment to liberation, as they envision it. Chela Sandoval (2000), in *The Methodology of the Oppressed*, states that a trickster consciousness is one of many oppositional consciousnesses that operate within academia. Trickster consciousness, like other terms such as mestizaje, coyote, outsider/within, situated knowledges, are tactics that are invested in resisting dominant social hierarchy. The apartheid of academia renders these multiple methodologies of the oppressed distinct, rather than bringing them into conversation.

Border thinking and crossing (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006) have become vital to a decolonial project. Engaging in epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2009) is an ethical imperative in a world where some people are rendered less than human, or the violence done to them, structurally and otherwise, is ignored and justified. In *Friction: An Ethnography of a Global Connection,* Anna Tsing (2005) outlines a way to implode the border on itself through reading the friction between the universal and the local. Borders are not always to be crossed but sometimes needed to hold seemingly opposing possibilities. However, Tsing's (2005) work is a reminder that a discourse that is grounded in opposition can sometimes also miss the importance of dealing with the disavowed category. Said's (1993) contrapuntal method allows one to hold the borders between imperialism and resistance to read and redeploy colonising texts. Too often, in the desire to wish borders away, entire bodies of work are ignored, rather than being used to make the border transparent and allow immanent critique to emerge.

I recall reading Linda Singer's (1993) *Erotic Welfare* as an undergraduate, and never lost the transformative possibility she inspired when she claimed to be a *bandita*, crossing borders to raid androcentric scholarship and transforming it towards feminist ends. Singer's *bandita* gave me the freedom to be promiscuous in my scholarship, whilst honouring my ethico-political commitments to a queer, feminist, anti-racist, crip, Africanist, anti-capitalist world. The feminist philosopher, Iris Marion Young, who I quote extensively below, was also deeply influenced by Singer's *bandita*. Young's beautiful and evocative description of the *Bandita* is as follows:

> The feminist philosopher as Bandita takes what she finds useful from the storehouses and treasures of other, mostly white male, philosophers. In her exploits she is guided by problems and by the need to construct alternative visions to address them and to bring about a world in which she can be more at home. She sleeps around with other philosophers, often seduced by their brilliance and wanting to learn from them, and steals away at dawn with a few of their ideas. She never drags along the whole house and the estate; she simply takes her precious mementos to build and combine as she sees most useful and beautiful. She sifts through the grave sites of dead men, stealing belts and buttons for new fastenings. While she may gratefully and even lovingly acknowledge the sources of her constructions, she feels bound by none of them. Living at the frontiers, respecting no ideas as private property, acting as messenger among factions, she brings ideas together in unlikely but fruitful conjunction (1993: 186-187).

The *bandita* is thus driven by problems, and her outlaw epistemology mediates the forms of knowledge she gathers, so that which is useful becomes repurposed towards liberatory ideals. Whilst Singer and Marion-Young are concerned with their borrowings from white, male philosophers, my borrowings and repurposing were more extensive. As examples, I drew from feminist work across identities, disciplines and geopolitical boundaries, which included but was not limited to black, African feminist work, and feminist disability studies. I drew on anti-racist, decolonial androcentric texts, and disability studies that pretend race does not matter. I tacked between disciplines and epistemic formations such as disability studies, gender studies, history, medical studies, criminology, anthropology, philosophy and psychology. I cobbled together information from varying sources, such as news reports, creative writing, and testimony and reports from non-governmental institutions and international organisations. Inspired by feminist tricksters and their tactics, I attempted some of their methods. I used varying forms of address, from academic, poetic, confessional, storytelling, typographical emphasis and others, to assist me in depicting conjunctions through which to apprehend black death-disablement-debilitation.

Through showing pervasive black disablement, my aim was to render visible the epistemologies of ignorance that ignore the massification of death, disability and debility in a country that is repeatedly declared the most unequal in the world, and which is notorious for its long history of formalised black subjugation that was secured through multiple and ongoing forms of violence. My methods were about eliciting the kinds of questions that need to be confronted for South African disability studies to be able to claim it is located in the history of this county and is alert to the ways in which violence has impacted black lives. The chapters that sought to explore Marikana, crowd control weapons and Rhodes Must Fall were attempts to furnish imaginaries about death, disability, and debility, and to make available resources for thinking. My mode of analysis was therefore an attempt to find a way of reading, subverting, resisting and playing with the archive in conversation with the insights gained from my participants and what was transpiring around me to engender what I hope is a life-giving epistemology.

To build a foundation to generate questions, I assembled information from what seemed obvious to me as starting points about specific protests, like Marikana and the Fallist protests, and police response to protest in general. These starting points were that protests by black people in South Africa were frequently asking for the cessation of some form of violence or another. For example, low wages, inadequate housing, unsafe neighbourhoods, inaccessible education (epistemic and financial), amongst an endless array of humiliations and slow violences (Nixon, 2011), slow death (Berlant, 2007), and/or necropolitics (Mbembe, 2019) endured by the majority of black South Africans. The response to protest in South Africa, in my observation, was often more direct violence by the state through the technologies they had at their disposal. The Marikana Massacre not only killed people, but also disabled and debilitated them. The Marikana protests for better wages were intended to stop or ameliorate the conditions that sometimes caused death, but often caused disablement and debilitation. I became steeped in Marikana, the events around the massacre and its aftermath, as well as tried to imagine the worlds that miners lived in. For the chapter on crowd control weapons, I began with the obvious notion that crowd control weapons can harm bodies and psyches. I read medical literature and literature on militarised police and crowd control weapons to understand what the disabling and debilitating effects might be. For the Fallist protest, I drew on memory and also immersed myself in the literature. I chose to focus some of my research on the figure of Chumani Maxwele to understand the ideas and paradoxes around the Fallist protests. Whilst I found what I was looking for, similar to when I was first analysing the life histories for intersectionality, I was constantly surprised. Starting at the obvious opened up horizons for thinking, and taught me so much by taking me to more generative and surprising conjunctures than I had expected, and invariably elicited more questions. Being a *bandita*, and engaging in a trickster epistemology forced me to learn and unlearn in affectively dense ways that allowed me to bring all of myself to my questions about how we do knowledge and recognise how worlds are made through the normalisation of black debilitation, disablement and death.

In the following chapter, I explore what I learned from the period where I could not move, and what periods and experiences of debilitation during the research process taught me. When I took my debilitation seriously as insights into epistemic quandaries, and began to theorise the challenges of having to write into and against epistemologies of ignorance, a path emerged. When we are forced to work against centuries of ontological erasure, or treat the violence that is so palpably obvious to those of us who share not just worlds but destinies with people who are subjugated, debilitation is an epistemic condition. We have inherited generations of violence. We live in the midst of violence. The archive that we seek to understand to engage in liberatory epistemologies also traumatises us as we bear witness to white supremacist, capitalist and heteropatriarchal violence. We also witness what black people do to each other, the ways in which some forms of survival reproduced violence, which disabled, debilitated and lead to death. We do so in ableist institutions that were not designed for a view of the world from the perspective of the oppressed, for whom the consequences of violence are debilitation, disablement and death. It should not be surprising that these conditions have epistemic effects on those of us who have liberatory desires. That my debilitation came as a surprise begs the question: who do we imagine as knowledge producers, and what do we imagine the knowledge they find and make does to them?

Chapter 4: *Debilitating research: Scholarship of the obvious and traumatic research*

Research can be deeply debilitating. Working with and from epistemologies of ignorance, where ontological erasure is normalised, is intellectually challenging. As explored in the previous chapter, the methods we have inherited are not always sufficient, and sometimes obfuscate the scale of an epistemic and ontological problem. It can also be extremely difficult to recognise that when we are having trouble making sense of the archive, it is the episteme that is flawed and not your scholarship. This is a deeply affective process that undoubtedly has multifarious effects, depending on the researcher. Some of the most prolific scholars are energised by the lacuna they seek to populate to expand ontological terrain. Some scholars can find their way through debilitation by shifting their relationship to the archive, their epistemic communities and place in intergenerational trauma. There are many, many people who do not find their way through. Over 50% of possible doctoral graduates (Mouton, 2011; Sverdlik, Hall, McAlpine & Hubbard, 2018), some of whom may have held the possibility of reshaping our understanding, leave the academy. For some of those scholars working in, with and against ontological erasure created affective terrain, perhaps it was too debilitating to endure.

During this project, I found it obscene that I had to produce this woefully crude and incomplete catalogue of obvious violences to disrupt what often feels like overwhelming epistemologies of ignorance. The process, at times, was deeply wounding and made more so by trying to navigate institutions in which human failing is shameful. That we have inherited incalculable horror and trauma that has continued unabated for millions of South Africans is not a secret; it is painfully obvious. The violence around us that is so ordinary and normalised is world-making, and maims, debilitates and disables. To choose to spend time with the effects of that violence is also to court injury and trauma. That there are very few measures in place in our universities to recognise what research on violence does to researchers, reveals who we imagine as researchers, and the ableist fantasies we cultivate about our relations to the archive. There are ontological fantasies of ideal researchers which many of us, those the academy was never designed to host, train and nurture, have to contend with. Academic institutions, epistemic terrain and the positionality of researchers who are invested in liberatory work are frequently misaligned. This misalignment can have debilitating consequences. Using affective and vulnerable writing allowed me the space to understand what burdens ontological erasure place on researchers like myself, who are deeply located in the worlds we are trying to understand. It is my hope that doing so does not reproduce ableist forms of representation. What is more, I hope that affected and vulnerable writing will allow an ethical reader, rather than merely a knowing reader, to emerge, and provide openings where we work collectively to stem violence or, at the very least, not disregard what is so obvious.

I have come to understand that I was writing to learn and unlearn, which has entailed a less mechanistic mode of analysis (Kleinsasser, 2000). In the dissertation, therefore, there are moments where I engage in vulnerable writing, questioning my methods and research practices, and engaging in epistemic uncertainty. According to Kleinsasser (2000: 156-157), vulnerable means to ‘wound physically, make assailable and susceptible, open to censure or criticism.’ She goes on to say that, ‘(r)esearcher reflexivity creates physical evidence of personal and theoretical tracks through a created text, evidencing the researcher’s deep learning and unlearning.’ However, we are rarely allowed to push the limits of our reflexive performances on the page to bring our ‘mastery’ of a subject into question.

The willingness to show failure as epistemic relation is not encouraged. Neither is showing how deeply affected we are by what we learn about the world through our research. Similarly, the vulnerability that ensues from doing research about worlds we know intimately, and having to represent those worlds as if the connections we are making are not obvious, can be not just ‘unsettling’ but also unbearably painful. For me, it made me wonder what kind of people could bypass so much obvious violence, and realised that when I was poor and black, my suffering, and that of many people who make up my world, was of no regard. It is very painful having to engage with people who have assumed the position of knower, and be polite and civil as they turn the cruelty inflicted on the people in the world you grew up with into meaningless abstractions. Most perversely, proving knowledge and showcasing epistemic mastery relies on wasting inordinate amounts of time on learning and then reproducing badly fitting ideas that shore up the importance of misaligned theories. Nonetheless, having to describe obvious connections regarding violence and the gaps in the literature laid bare ontological and epistemic lacuna. Absences and the fight for epistemic existence appears to be a vitalising force for prolific feminist theorists such as bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Sara Ahmed and others. This cannot be true for everyone. Rather, epistemic rupture and epistemic dissonance can be debilitating for some of us, and the expectation that we be prolific as if unaffected by the trauma and violence of the archive is ableist. Patriarchal and colonial histories of knowledge production, in which objectivity was presumed, were also histories that removed the traces of what doing work with violence and injustice does to researchers. It is not just a history of the erasure of unexplored epistemic terrain or narrowed ontologies, but also a history of affectively ablated intellectuals who had to hide their vulnerabilities and affectability. Expectations within the academy of able-mindedness are wounding and ignore the effects of epistemic violence and injustice.

Erin Manning (2018) writes very poignantly about what the expectation of neurotypicality does to people whose movement through and with knowledge is not recognised as knowledge, but that some people do it anyhow and reshape the academy. What I want to share in this chapter, however, is what I learned from not being able to work, when I could not pick up a book, when my body stubbornly refused to open my laptop, when I would avert my eyes from anything related to my research. There were days, that became weeks and months, when I could not move. I was not attempting new forms of study, the undercommons did not beckon and the only kind of fugitivity I experienced was fleeing from my research (see Harney & Moten, 2013). This period was not a period of learning to work otherwise, or desiring to work otherwise. Whilst I could frequently do a great many other things, doing this project was debilitating. In this chapter, I will reflect first on failure as epistemic relation, and then on what I have called the scholarship of the obvious. I will then turn to gaslighting and epistemic violence, after which I claim the feeling of being broken as a route to epistemic insight. I explore trauma and the affective costs of choosing to abide by and return again and again to violence and its effects on me as a scholar, and finally the costs of ableism. This chapter seeks to make preliminary connections between debilitation as a part of the research process, epistemologies of ignorance, and the traumatic effect of being immersed in violence. These connections require further study, as there is very little research that has been conducted with scholars of violence on how their research has affected them.

Failure as epistemic relation

Writing a dissertation and doing a PhD is famously debilitating. There are many websites and support groups online, and universities put several mechanisms in place to ameliorate the debilitation experienced by graduate students and subsequent dropout rates. In South Africa, Mouton (2011) found that, for the 2001 doctoral cohort, there was a 46% dropout rate across all disciplines. The natural, engineering and health sciences lost 36% of doctoral students, while the humanities lost 53%. Sverdlik et al. (2018), in their comprehensive review article, *The Phd experience: a review of the factors influencing doctoral students' completion, achievement, and well-being*, state that, in North American universities, only 50% of doctoral students complete, and the literature shows that doctoral students struggle with mental health concerns, high stress levels and physical health symptoms. They found that doctoral completion was influenced by external factors such as the supervisory relationship, internal departmental dynamics, financial opportunities, and the demands of their personal or social lives. Internal factors which affected completion were motivation to succeed, their emotions in response to writing skills, their regulatory skills, their academic identity, and sense of self-worth and self-efficacy. One text (Aitchison, Catterall, Ross & Burgin, 2012) states that, in STEM fields, the idea of not measuring up is seen as a process of natural selection.

I found this review puzzling in a way that I still struggle to articulate. Undoubtedly, all these factors matter, but there is something in how the issues get framed, as if knowledge itself is inert and not a factor, unless one is thinking in terms of intellectual complexity. While there are distinctions made about the kind of research and its difficulty as an intellectual task, the affective gravity of the work does not seem to be something we think about. Rather, it is only the researcher's affective responses to the work that seem to matter, and not the context of that work itself.

Some kinds of disciplinary endeavours create atmospheres of dread, pain and unbearable sorrow, such as for those who study enslavement or violence. For example, I read Saidiya Hartman's *Scenes of Subjection* (1997) in snatches, and rarely do so without weeping. I am stunned repeatedly at the brutality that has been normalised and erased, and the continuity of injustice in the present. I am enraged that those who have been brutalised by history are made to carry the shame, vilification and impoverishment, whilst the heirs of violence are able to profess ignorance, and continue to dominate the discourse of the past.

Hartman (1997: 51) speaks to the historicisation of black pain[12] as 'history that hurts.' Ignoring black pain, she goes on to say, is grounded in ignoring black sentience, which justifies and enables the inordinate amounts of pain that black people were made to endure under conditions of enslavement. She calls the archive a mortuary (2007, 2008). For those of us doing work on the brutalisation of black life, it is a very particular sort of mortuary, one that draws us into the pain of black history and how that pain creates worlds that maim. This is not to say that doing work on the aftermath and continuity of direct and structural violence is the only way in which research can hurt or be debilitating. I imagine even studying something like the history of

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[12] While Hartman focuses her analysis on enslavement and its continuing unfolding in the Americas, the point she makes about blackness and pain holds for South Africa and is foundational to transnational discourses of blackness and coloniality.

mathematics or physics in programmes where, for example, indigenous or feminist or Global South knowledges are denigrated, would constitute epistemic violence that is thick and ominous. In other words, our research has agency and pushes back to affect us.

As many of us know, in the academy, systemic issues are often turned into the properties of individuals. Students are thought to be weak and without the fortitude, skills or background to succeed. In other words, students are treated as deficient and thus incapable of coping. Deficit ideology, according to Gorski (2011: 153), 'justifies outcome inequalities' and 'discounts sociopolitical context, such as the systemic conditions … that grant some people greater social, political and economic access.' How institutions produce or exacerbate disabling or debilitating conditions are usually ignored, and focusing on students as failures allows for the continuation of debilitating systems. That we labour in racist, sexist, ableist and classist institutions, and live in societies where multiple forms of violence are pervasive, impacts our epistemic relations to the work we do. I thus eventually chose to treat my moments of self-doubt, some of which reflect my own history, as something that was not arbitrary, but an integral part of the gaps and elisions within the scholarship. I relied on moments of failure to illuminate how myths of the ideal researcher produce affects that have epistemic effects.

A few years ago, I wrote the following in my novel, *Called to Song*:

> We don't allow ourselves the freedom to learn. To struggle to learn. Struggling to learn is a privilege of those who are taught they're entitled to be whatever they want. They're allowed to take as many paths as necessary to learn, without fearing that they're simply not good enough when they fail. Whereas people who've been taught that they're incapable and inferior because of the colour of their skin think that if they fail, they cannot learn; that new skills should come effortlessly or not at all. If you cannot fail, you cannot learn. To be born into a cannibalised people is to fear failure so much that you don't even try, because you ventriloquise racist bureaucrats' imaginings of who you should be. And then you stop trying, and you make yourself invisible. Confirming the lies you were taught (Mohamed, 2018: 233).

If I were to write that today, I would not focus on only race, but rather make space for all of us who have histories of subjugation and for whom the battle to access places like the university is ongoing. Failure, as an epistemic relation, is one of the ways in which imposter syndrome can be alleviated and not treated as an individual failing, but rather as part of the process of learning. Bell, Canham, Dutta and Fernández (2020) argue that embracing failure is part of a decolonial praxis within a New University, one that is intended for all of us. They assert that the right to fail opens the route to experimentation, nullifies the necessity for competition and thus facilitates collaboration. Valuing failure, according to them, allows for practices of social justice and makes new forms of relatedness possible. It is the right to fail that undoes most of the debilitating effects that have become a substrate of the academy. If we can fail, none of us have to engage ableist discourses and practices to prove our value.

The process of knowledge production, and the many failures and iterations that a work goes through, is usually absent in the final published version. More pertinently, most academic texts are produced in epistemic communities who comment and engage and help to polish the final published version. Friends, colleagues, editors, copy editors and reviewers are all part of the process of producing a text which may claim to be single-authored. The process of research and writing is frequently absent, and most methodology sections usually retain only the processes that performs mastery. The process of writing and refining ideas is also usually absent. What readers and early researchers see is a text that is devoid of the process of its development and we assume, despite the communities present in an acknowledgements section, is that a text with an individual's name attached is solely an individual's work. Some people will learn about this process tacitly, if they have a community that is supportive to start with and can be inducted into the process generously. Others, however, like many first-generation students and scholars, will read a text and not recognise the layers and layers of entanglement with others that occurred in the process of putting that text together. They will assume that how you produce knowledge and perform expertise is an individual enterprise and will compare their early neophyte efforts to something that has gone through many iterations and countless engagements, and this comparison will either enforce a mode of working that is brutal and debilitating or lead to considering themselves incompetent and withdraw. Race, gender, class and ableism are tied to these expectations of expertise. People who hail from subjugated categories, as we well know, are often expected to work harder to prove their right to be there. Moreover, for those of us grappling to find vocabularies to create liberatory possibilities, we cannot be tied to older forms of presentation that fake epistemic relations to present some people as masterful and erase the fraught process of knowledge production.

When you are thinking about violence every day and attempting to bear witness, it can be very hard to keep going, to get up and face reading about violence. There were many days I felt like a fraud for not doing what I thought was the work, the work of writing and reading and putting it all together in some semblance of expertise. Pain, anger, fear, horror and so much sorrow seeped into me. Avoiding encountering violence over and over and over again, and feeling the effects of violence, frequently looked like procrastination. My already high propensity to anxiety became unbearable and often expressed itself in a stubborn refusal to move, despite productivity hacks like time management apps, using the Pomodoro technique, and far too many efforts at discipline. It was only when I stopped asking what was wrong with me and began to ask myself what I was avoiding, and did not label the things I was avoiding as work, that the way in which academic work on trauma and violence reshapes the self became visible. Responding affectively to so much obvious violence engendered an epistemic relation that was traumatic. It was only when I took seriously how violence moved across time and space to affect me, that I was able to move. Refusing the sense of myself as being unaffected by violence which, despite our awareness of reflexivity and situatedness has barely been theorised or taught formally, allowed me to apprehend the epistemic relations we are imagining when we do research. I offer a preliminary analysis of traumatising research below as part of and critical to the epistemic terrain that I navigated in this project. There is so much work that needs to be done on the effects of violence for researchers, particularly if they are engaged in liberatory work that seeks to stop violence, and have had to document violence. We urgently need to develop programmes for researchers and students on how to cope with the ways in which the trauma of others becomes part of who we are as scholars, and shapes our relations with our families, friends, colleagues, the multiple communities we are located in, disciplines (and its associations), and our institutions. We need to find strategies to support those of us who (have) become debilitated by the weight of suffering our research brings to us. We must transmit the tactics that give neophyte scholars permission to reimagine epistemic terrain that allows them to work and to recognise that the research they are doing is not just intellectual, but carries with it the hopes and sorrows of the past, present and future. We should arm those who will struggle with the knowledge that it is okay to falter, to wait until you are ready, to feel inadequate in the face of so much brutality that is woefully obvious and yet continues to be borne by far too many people. In the next section, I discuss what I learned from having to tally the obvious.

Scholarship of the Obvious

I kept getting stymied by the obvious. I would say, ‘is this something that needs to be stated, it is so obvious’. There is something debilitating about making connections between obvious kinds of harm that befall people who have been subjugated, whether because of racial capitalism, epistemic violence, structural violence, misogyny or all the ways in which oppression makes people available for slow violence (Nixon, 2011), spectacular violence, ordinary violence. Over and over, before laying down a word, self-doubt arrests you, holds you captive by asking: do people need to be shown that this produces dying, disablement and debilitation. Surely, they know? Do you really have to state this, cobble this together? Surely it is obvious? Starting a paragraph or a section with the obvious, you wonder, how it is that an obvious violence needs to be stated.

The violence on the Cape Flats (and other ghettoised spaces across the globe where violence is allowed to flourish) does not disappear into the ether. The violence done to men's (and increasingly women's) bodyminds on the mines does not just vanish when they are made to leave. When students stop protesting, the violence of the confrontation with the state, private security, and the institutions responsible for caring for them, teaching them what they need to know to be citizens of a country they will one day be responsible for and to, does not disappear. Violence done to women by men, who are given legitimacy by a range of institutions, does not disappear. The long histories of violent whippings endured by ill-used, dispossessed and enslaved people in Southern Africa did not disappear. It goes on and on. The violences we know to occur, if we were to sit with them for a moment, we also know do not disappear. They are silenced but nonetheless obvious.

These violences manifest somewhere: in societies where beating is a response to a slight (e.g. Fanon, 1961/2004), where bodies are not cared for, and psyches are not treated as the precious carriers of our health, individually and collectively. Violences are nestled in bodies to make lives harrowing, painful and, in many instances, a slow route to death and yet faster than if care was ordinary (e.g. Berlant, 2007; Ross, 2010). Those bodies riven with pain that needs to be cared for can reveal how decades and decades of penury, of ill-health, exclusion from wealth, and citizenship winnow down worlds, and debilitate worlds (Livingston, 2005).

And yet, we also know that violence has been naturalised, as properties of persons, properties of communities, properties deployed onto bodies and psyches that have been sexed, raced, classed, sacralised by this or that religion, this or that caste, and on and on. The logic of inequality is frequently that some bodyminds (Price, 2015; Schalk, 2018) deserve to flourish as they are superior, and those who are inferior bring the violences they experience onto themselves. Women by virtue of being women, LGBTIQA+ people by virtue of sexual plurality, black people by virtue of being black, poor people by virtue of being poor, disabled people by virtue of disability.

Many of our arguments for incorporation of particular demographics into the rights of citizenship or ethical lifeworlds, rest on making the violence of subjugation visible, calling elites to account for obviously unethical behaviour and showing this thing we call violence, its consequences, its grounds, its logics and what sustains it.

Most of the scholarship that seeks justice for a group, rests on making violence obvious, reducing a demographic's vulnerability to predation, and what they all lament are the consequences of (intersectional) predation: of women by men, of blacks by whites, of the poor by the wealthy, of the queer by the heterosexual, of the disabled by the able-bodied, of the debilitated by the flourishing. Putting together these obvious violences, and how racist capitalist ableist heteropatriarchal societies rest on the right to do violence, produces myths of normalcy by ignoring violence, and thus equally ignoring the necessity for crafting flourishing worlds for the multitudes of others. And that those who benefit from oppression, by resting on the ferments of violence, are invested in the production of disability and debility. Every kind of scholarship that seeks to oppose subjugation is invested in arguing against the right to enact cruel deprivations, punishments, attacks and forms of terror. Most of it is obvious.

The question is always to whom it is obvious and to whom a matter of violence, that will without doubt manifest on bodyminds (Price, 2015; Schalk, 2018) in some way or fashion. Who can justify a violence as being exactly what someone, something, some place needed? Certainly, even the subaltern, even the oppressed, cannot always recognise that neglect, lack of care, abandonment and all manner of violences, the presence of injustice and hierarchisation of being, is something that needs to be undone. Situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988), as we now know, is critical as submerged and subjugated knowledges become visible from the position of the oppressed. What the scholarship of the obvious does is to reveal the ontological horizons of the researcher. Our knowledges are always partial (Haraway, 1988) and thus woven through with obfuscation and layers of ignorance.

The 'normal,' which acts as a counter-discourse in disability studies, is overwhelmingly a white world. The normal live in a world of plenty, seen and cared for and afforded protection by the formal instruments of the state, and able to move and have and live with abandon. In a place like South Africa, this is a life afforded to very few. This world of the normal is served by those that a scholarship of the obvious is about, the people who are quietly debilitated, who endure worlds that maim, disable, impair, as if that were the natural order of the world. Or, as we will note in this dissertation, not so quietly, and yet still unremarked and barely present in the literature on disability. Even though they are the vast majority, they are outside of this idealised normalcy. They are obvious to those who have done work on race, some scholars of gender, some scholars of class, very few scholars of disability. Obvious to most of us (we are yet too few in the academy for our worlds to be construed as normal) who are from those woefully ordinary worlds in which the world's majority live but which are not the stuff of normalcy. The statistical majority who do not form part of the normal. A country like South Africa has a long history of manipulating statistics to create its skewed version of normalcy. This included the black people who sickened and were moved out of the city to the outskirts so they did not mess up health statistics (Phatlane, 2006), or the people in the Bantustans who were not counted, or the children under five who were not counted in the 2011 Census.

A scholarship of the obvious centres the unremarked violence that brings death, disability and debility to those who are marked as lower in a hierarchy of being. After all, it is in being marked (see Brekhus, 2008; Goffman, 1986) that these categories of people are made vulnerable to violence. Their markedness is a justification for the debilitating, disabling violence they will endure, and is so obvious, and the violence that will come to them so obvious, it will be seen as *just* the world we live in. These are the people not deemed worthy of protection or care, or even to be thought of with care as fragile, tender-hearted, with bodies that cannot withstand the whip, nor endure if they are made to plough those fields without rest. Their endurance of violence has been rendered utterly ordinary across centuries of scholarship. We would call it violence, if what befell them were to befall any of those categories of people who are to be cherished (Butler, 2004). After all, some of those people only become human through violence. Their worth is accrued through enduring violent practices and structures (Spillers, 1987). Are they willing to stay at this university, this job, this place after having their rebellious sentiments beaten out of them, or are they willing to reform after facing the rubber bullet? Do they need more disciplining or civilising, so we can have peace? These people who are marked for violence, but unremarked during or after the blow has changed their bodyminds, even if the marks on their body are screaming at us, this is who the scholarship of the obvious is about, and who it is for. If these violences are not obvious to you, then that is the work you need to do on yourself. Undo the violence that allowed you to perceive these marked people and unsee, unperceive, unfeel the obvious violence done to them and to you. Undo epistemic certitude and work against the epistemology of ignorance you have inherited and have worked to maintain. Begin the labour of bringing to life ontologies that are otherwise. Find your way towards recognising human beings that your entire history may have trained you to feel contempt for, or paternalistic compassion, or all those unremarked forms of disregard. You, too, become marked, and the violence to your capacity to perceive the suffering of others is remarked on when you engage in a scholarship of the obvious. Worlds inside you were lost because you believe in or have not questioned and laboured against a white supremacist/heteropatriarchal/ableist/capitalist logic. The scholarship of the obvious marks your epistemic relations and your ontological horizons. What is normal to you? What is obvious? Which kinds of violence are you invested in? Which kinds of violence can go unremarked?

A scholarship of the obvious does not seek to subvert the ignorance contract (Mills, 1997; Sullivan & Tuana, 2007), or even to do fugitive work in the undercommons (Harney & Moten, 2013). Rather, it restates an epistemic position of ordinariness and throws back the ethical burden to those for whom the ontological erasure of the massification of death-disability-debility is ordinary, but who still claim to be experts of the margins. To work from the scholarship of the obvious is to claim the right to epistemic terrain and to do work for the people whose worlds we share and whose hurting histories are ours too (Hartman, 1997).

As I was doing this work, struggling with the obvious, I realised a lot of feminist and decolonial work is about showing how obviously violent certain practices and beliefs were. All work which shows how obviously violent unjust social structures are, lament the debilitation, the disabling, impairing worlds that have gone quietly unremarked. A lot of this work can be claimed, as Minich (2016) argues, to be Critical Disability Studies. The ordinary, everyday, slow, structural violence that winnows people into subjugation creates separate worlds in which senescence comes quickly and seems unremarkable, and is as real as accommodating oneself to the ordinariness of inequality. The statistical norm, in a settler colonial state like South Africa, is the vast majority of black people who live in debilitating worlds and is the shadow that is ignored when ‘the normal’ is invoked. The scholarship of the obvious centres on the great majority of people who are ontologically erased. Doing work on obvious violence, from academies where epistemologies of ignorance hold sway, is an embodied and affective experience of a particular sort. I will now discuss some of the ways epistemic conflict and dissonance made me feel.

Gaslighting and epistemic violence

Have you ever had to argue with someone that something is obviously violence, and dealt with their smug indifference or arrogance? It is usually arrogance and wilful ignorance wrapped up in superiority, often unearned, by virtue of having a skin colour that is replete with the rights of former enslavers, or having a penis that is invested with heteronormative phallic power, or a body or psyche that has been deemed able or, a sexuality they have never had to question. It may even be someone who secretly, silently does question and works so very hard to fool everyone because those unspoken rules of who matters need to be negotiated. At any rate, if you had argued with these foolish people, who hold inordinate amounts of power to re/produce violence, there is something that happens that can feel like dislocated reality, as if you are living on different planets. Epistemic and political difference have affective force. Sometimes, we feel it at the level of the body before we have been able to intellectualise what epistemic rupture feels like.

Ruíz (2020) argues that cultural gaslighting is not just interpersonal, but also a settler colonial tactic that works to maintain settler structural innocence, and ensures epistemic impunity through tactics of thought which work towards normalising settler colonial violence. Epistemic impunity, she argues, facilitates settler self-exoneration from the multiple violences that have befallen subjugated populations, and forecloses reparative claims. For her:

> gaslighting is a structural phenomenon that upholds interpersonal and institutional modes of mental abuse in settler colonial societies; it is not merely a generalized human trait of psychological susceptibility. Rather, it is a technique of violence that produces asymmetric harms for different populations depending on one's processive relation to/within settler social structures (Ruíz, 2020: 688).

Gaslighting allows settler colonial lies and myths to be treated as knowledge worth having and knowing. Epistemologies of ignorance become the standard, which facilitates settler innocence and allows settler knowledge producers to slough off, evade, and ignore their relations to violence that are so obvious all around them, and thus make the asymmetry of access disappear. Ruíz states that we are offered weak concepts which 'have to be rebuilt wholesale to even begin to approximate the complexity of harm and violence experienced in settler states' (2020:689). This labour constitutes an enormous task and is very daunting, and because it rests on the need to assert the obvious, it can feel precarious and brings one's sensibility into question, sparking self-doubt.

In her article, *White Feminist Gaslighting*, Nora Berenstain (2020) shows that Marilyn Fricker's theorisation of hermeneutical injustice is an instance of white feminist gaslighting, even as she unveils epistemic injustice. Fricker denies how structural oppression produces interpretive harm;

her focus on gender elides other axes of oppression such as race, and she employed strategic forgetting by erasing women of colour’s knowledge contributions. Nora Berenstain states that:

> Structural gaslighting describes any conceptual work that functions to obscure the nonaccidental connections between structures of oppression and the patterns of harm that they produce and license. Individuals engage in structural gaslighting when they invoke epistemologies and ideologies of domination that actively disappear and obscure the actual causes, mechanisms, and effects of oppression. Structural oppressions are maintained in part through systems of justification that locate the causes of pervasive inequalities in flaws of the oppressed groups themselves while obscuring the social systems and mechanisms of power that uphold them … One way that structural gaslighting upholds oppression is by denying that marginalized people s experiences are informed, influenced, or partially constituted by structures of oppression and settler colonialism … Conceptually severing individual instances and broader patterns of discrimination, violence, and oppression from the larger structures that produce them is a linchpin of structural gaslighting (2020: 734-735).

Drawing on McKinnon, Berenstain (2020) asserts that it is allies and theorists who purport to be well-meaning who are most effective at structural gaslighting. Ill intent is not required to maintain and justify racist epistemologies of ignorance, but structural gaslighting is. The kind of whitewashing that Fricker effects erases the structural vulnerabilities that are experienced by women of colour. Similarly, the whitewashing of South African disability studies erases the structural vulnerabilities experienced by black South Africans, but also the intensification and continuity of vulnerability by impoverished black South Africans, which is also gendered. Structural gaslighting effects the control of a moral narrative which ensures that settler narratives maintain dominance. In a field such as disability, where white vulnerability and suffering matter, and should and must matter, there is also an affective and moral judgement that comes to bear in asserting black suffering. In some ways, the intersection of white vulnerability and disability increases the silencing of the scale of disabling violence that black South Africans experience, even in a field where the production of disability is ignored, and disability as an identity is most prevalent. Structural innocence (Ruíz, 2020) also creates purified ethical subjects who become virtuous and removed from racist structural oppression through making disability analogous with racial oppression. However, this is a deeply stigmatising discourse that also stigmatises white people with disabilities, as it excises them from social participation and historicity. We need studies of whiteness, disability and racialisation. Both white women participants I interviewed showed how apartheid racist logics influenced their experiences, and how critical close analyses of racialised subject-making through and with disability can be.

The unease that structural (Beranstain, 2020) and cultural (Ruíz, 2020) gaslighting elicits can be very challenging to recognise, and to negotiate and strategise against. According to Abramson (2014), gaslighting makes you feel like a nobody and incompetent; it undercuts your moral authority and evaluative capacity. She states that, whilst intent may be hard to parse, the aims of gaslighting are to assure assent, destroy the possibility of challenge, and at the same time maintain a relationship on the gaslighter's terms. Detailing the operation of gaslighting, she states that to dismiss a target's concerns, gaslighters frequently frame their targets as 'crazy', paranoid, and overly sensitive. Thus, ableist discourse is used to manipulate, and not just take on epistemic authority but undercut the possibility of the other having epistemic authority. Epistemic violence (Spivak, 1988) operates through testimonial injustice (Fricker, 2007) and hermeneutic violence[13] (Ruíz; 2020), which delegitimates knowers who do not have credibility because they occupy marked categories, and those who have power are unable to relate to the knowledge that is being imparted. Medina (2018: 248), in his discussion of epistemologies of ignorance, states that racial epistemic injustice and purported racial ignorance 'creates epistemic privilege and epistemic harms by protecting the epistemic agency of some and by blocking the epistemic privilege of others.' What is more, racial epistemic injustice produces what Medina (2018: 249) calls epistemic hiding, which makes 'subjects and their experiences and perspectives invisible and inaudible, or visible and audible only precariously and in a distorted way.' What is clear is that epistemologies of ignorance protect those for whom the violences are not obvious and, to protect their epistemic privilege, they would delegitimate and make us do all the work of persuading them. I do not intend to do this, therefore this thesis is not intended to make persuasive arguments, but rather to call an ethical reader, rather than a knowing reader, into being. Through crafting spaces for questions to emerge, my hope is that life-giving and restorative epistemologies arise. I want to make room for a visceral vocabulary that names what is obvious so that we may have the tools to craft revivified worlds, because you cannot provide succour to hurts you do not acknowledge. If the violences and the connections that I detail throughout the thesis are not obvious to you, but you wish them to be, then there is work for you to do that you

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[13] Fricker (2007: 2) defines testimonial and hermeneutic injustice as follows: 'Testimonial injustice occurs when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word'. For Ruíz, (2020) hermeneutic violence precedes hermeneutic injustice and is prestructural, as it encompasses the destruction of indigenous worlds, indigenous relational ontologies, and epistemologies which displace referential systems independent of settler colonial epistemologies.

cannot read in a text. There is a labour towards justice and the humanisation of black people for you to undertake.

Because I am engaged in a scholarship of the obvious, I would ask you to sit with what you know in your bones, what you know when you are willing to sit with the layers of violence of the worlds we have inherited. You are the reference, your knowing and your unknowing. The hundreds of examples you have encountered. The ways in which accommodation to some violences were once ordinary, the violences you struggle to break free of and reshape. The hard work of coming into modified[14] ethical horizons, relations, politics and also the violences you are yet to encounter. I am asking you to read fleshily, affectively embodiedly and vulnerably, to build in your flesh and psyche bridges of empathy; that is, if you are able to,[15] so that we may move to relations of solidarity. To imagine yourself living in worlds that refused you succour, used your desire for care, used your desire for life to winnow you down. I want you to close the circle of understanding in yourself. We all know that the quest for liberatory worlds have been undertaken by feminists, anti-racists, anti-colonialists, anti-capitalists, anti-ableists, and others. I am asking you to take whatever your anti is, and add it to what is useful here. If you are invested in the quest for a world free of violence, you are invested in an approach that seeks to ameliorate and prevent the making of avoidable death, debility and disability, and to deal with the consequences with the wilful breaking we are so good at turning away from.

Claiming brokenness

I broke over and over in the making of this dissertation. I broke open, sometimes softening into empathy and compassion, and other times into an obdurate refusal to countenance the myths of injustice. There were days, weeks, months, and sometimes it feels like years, when I got lost in powerlessness and the futility of making another work that beseeches for another world, one in which I am, as you are, obsolete because the world we desire has come to joyful, wondrous life. Where the commodification of pain and suffering in a neoliberal academy ceases, for it is no longer needed and is nothing more than feeble excuses to manufacture suffering in texts that are

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[14] We rarely enter into completely new modes of the ethico-political; after a political horizon has been attained, a new one usually comes into focus.

[15] Not everyone is capable of feeling empathy. Wool (2020) writes about a war veteran who, due to his injury, was unable to feel. At a seminar in which I presented a paper on black feminist decolonial disability studies, a participant asked me if I was not normalising the capacity to feel empathy. I was stumped. I still am, as I believe mutual ethical horizons require ethical sensibilities that go beyond juridical recognition and entail the capacity to empathise. This does take me into an expectation of a neurotypical political subject with presumably normative psycho-affective capacity. It is something I am still attempting to resolve in thinking about the multiplicity of being and the psycho-affective dimensions of difference and its implications for crafting political horizons.

no longer evident in the fleshy world. Reading over and over about bodies that were blown up by the apartheid regime, and remembering running from a faceless policeman’s sjambok in the eighties, was painful. Having to slowly weave together the pain of a sjambok on the back of the enslaved, and the slow loss of breath, feeling it with them from the distance of a future where my surroundings are comfortable, remade the fabric of my days. Wondering what the enslaved felt when they were beaten, had the flesh pulled from their bodies with hot pincers or when they had their ears and nose cut off as punishment (de Kock, 1963) sometimes trapped me. What their lives were like, what it was like to be forced to continue serving people who treated you savagely and cruelly, and then acted as if they were morally superior, made me wonder how people who now purport to no longer be racist would have treated me and my loved ones in a different historical moment. Then, looking at my family and wondering how we came to be and what was suppressed to allow us to laugh and live with abundant rude life in the here and now. Knowing how easily it could be otherwise, and is otherwise for millions of black people.

I am not using brokenness to invoke readings that incite pity. Hartman (2007) argues that we should refuse to sensationalise violence and expose the violated body. Eve Tuck (2009) has argued that damage-centred research traps the subjugated in being seen as only damaged, and that a moratorium should be placed on it, moving rather to focus on desire. How can we refuse to claim damage, by insisting on damage? The erasure of damage allows the purification of white epistemologies; to produce innocence, and setter colonial epistemologies to claim and enact ethical impunity (Ruíz, 2020). How do we refuse to witness and represent damage, our own and those we share histories with, when it is barely documented, barely reckoned with? The vacuum of speaking from and on behalf of the Global South is taken up by those whom this refusal of damage provides the epistemic authority to speak, and not only validates but valorises epistemologies of ignorance. We cannot refuse to witness and engage the trauma of our histories; the refusal of engaging trauma is dire. The evidence of that repression is the dead, disabled and debilitated who are killed on the Cape Flats, lost to addiction and early deaths because of impoverishment. How do you change something you are too uncomfortable witnessing? How do you change something that you do not understand, and refuse to plumb the depths of? If reflexivity matters, then how do you refuse the damage of your epistemic relations? Whilst I am sympathetic to both Hartman and Tuck’s arguments, and have seen this pathologising discourse over and over in South Africa, it has helped immensely to recognise that to refuse damage is to also enforce ableism. To refuse to represent damage is also to refuse to insist on expanded ethical relationships in which the shame of damage does not belong to the oppressed, but is properly deployed onto those who benefit from oppression.

Rather, when I claim brokenness, I am claiming the right to write about what structural violence in a settler colonial state produces. Injurious worlds seek to break and maim people, and people do break. In many ways, the language of endurance and survival of violence falls short of allowing us to mourn and lament violence. It is only in a world where strength is valued over and above softness, frailty and vulnerability that the incapacity to withstand violence becomes shameful. That people survive and find ways to live does not change or nullify the violence and, in many ways, we can never reclaim those who have died, who lived the ends of their lives in incredible pain, in worlds so cruelly disposed to them. The perpetrators and beneficiaries of such violence should have to face and endure the censure that rightfully belongs to them. This is one of the ways cultural gaslighting works (Ruíz, 2020): it refuses to recognise the effects of settler colonial violence, and that in its fullest intention, white supremacist heteropatriarchal capitalist ableist violence was intended to deal death, disability and debilitation to ensure rule. Settler colonial rule was fundamentally violent and intended to break: bodies, psyches, spirits, memory, communities, solidarities. Wars of attrition are intended to sap your energy and capacity to fight, to reclaim sovereignty of the self, the land from which you were dispossessed, the community that nurtures you, and the knowledge with which you understand and reclaim sovereignty. The fear of claiming breaking and brokenness is so deeply ableist that it does not allow those of us trapped in violent social arrangements to properly place the shame with the perpetrators of violence. Rather, the subjugated are to enter a paradoxical affective relation which entails feeling the effects of violence and being subdued and governable as a result, but also to not *feel* the violence as a work of mourning, but rather as a shameful lack of enervation, or incapacity to endure or be resilient. This is also one of the ways that some of the agentive work of anger, which can be turned inwards as shame and/or lassitude or outwards onto others who are perceived as ‘weaker,’ becomes possible. In so doing, misdirected anger continues the work of domination, whilst making subjugated people appear to be the architects of their own destruction. However, anger cannot be directed at the perpetrators of structural violence for then more immediate and spectacular forms of violence will ensue, as we will see later in the thesis.

Some of my relatives live in places I describe, people I love, whose happiness is deeply tied to mine. When the native writes, the fictions of what research and position must be disappear. I write for me and for them, and to understand what I know in my bones, what the stories of my mother and aunts enfleshed. About poverty that gnaws so deep into you that, when you leave it behind, it lives inside you, begging for re-enactment. When I think of the ways in which violence travels in families, and remakes and unmakes communities, it is my family I seek to understand. What does it mean when a man beats a woman and has abandoned the scene? How do those actions ripple into a future to be carried by the woman whose scars are nestled inside her, and that a medical establishment would come to name but not heal? How does passing a street where you once played, and were evicted from, create an ache that cannot be fully named. A lot of this is not on the page, but it is there when I am trying to understand this country, and how so much obvious violence, pain and anguish has been magicked away in the scholarship.

I want you to know that when I read all those black mineworker's accounts of how they worked in dust that choked them and found its ways into their lungs and broke their bodies down and how they await death (Ledwaba & Sadiki, 2017), awash in a grief so utterly ordinary it is unremarked, the words on the page cannot tell me what it feels like to live surrounded by people who found their death in the same way that you will. I broke. There were days I could not face the page. Bearing witness has a cost. What kind of human being remains objective in its face, remains unmoved, unaffected? I want you to read that, to share it with you. When I do not, perhaps it is because that cool distancing academic voice protects me, and not because I have insight. That voice never changes the feeling of utter helplessness. Doing work on violence, excavating violence in the mine, in the protest, in the home, in neighbourhoods where people make homes and live despite centuries of dispossession, subjugation and abandonment and wondering about its long histories changes you.

Traumatic research

Writing, reading, researching and teaching about violence and trauma can be debilitating, and cause trauma for which we, as academics, are given few support structures (Nikischer, 2019). Andrea Nikischer's article was one of the most important texts I read to understand my affective process of working with violence and trauma as an academic. I cried when I realised that this thing we call procrastination, berate ourselves with as laziness, that takes on a force that sits on your chest, sucking your pleasure when you try to get a little break but are instead haunted by the reading you are not ready to do, the writing you do not have any good words for, the audience you do not have faith in, the worlds you have left as you found them and your own general sense of incompetence, that I was not alone in feeling this. It is more than feminist objectivity or strong objectivity or about an epistemic transparency when we communicate how incredibly hard some of this work is and what it does to us. Communicating this allows those who read you to continue, to recognise that the personal is the political and that you are not alone. Writing transparently about the struggle to understand, particularly when you are working with the erasure of obvious violences, is an ethical and political relationship that opens affordances and provides community. The attempt to show mastery is a scam, and for those for whom it is not, what woefully pitiful worlds they live in. When I began to understand the affective burden that work on violence entails, especially in the context of an epistemology of ignorance, what looked like procrastination became evident as an epistemic relation. It was through affect, refusal and a stubborn unwillingness to move, that confronting the density of violence situated me in history as an epistemic relation. Being brought to a standstill by the pain of the archive was a response to the gaslighting of epistemic violence and the ethical impunity that constitutes postapartheid settler epistemologies (Abramson, 2014; Berenstain, 2020; Ruíz, 2020).

While most of our ethical protocols are geared towards protecting participants, how we as researchers ameliorate the effects of trauma, live with it and communicate about trauma, is not often included. The affective work that arrests your body, causes your breath to catch, you to avert your eyes from your computer, and allow your leaden body to remain where it is so that you do not have to listen, watch, read or in any way engage with the breaking of worlds that constitutes decolonial, feminist, anti-ableist, anti-capitalist scholarship, is not in our ethical protocols. This is without reckoning with the ways in which impostor syndrome, and the evaluative mode through which scholarship has come to matter, is produced. Rather, there is an assumption of who you are as a researcher. Invariably, the power relations you are assumed to instantiate are those of white, male, heterosexual, middle-class researchers who are presumed to be objective and who are able to analyse, but not necessarily be so moved that they come to a standstill. Yes, I know we talk about reflexivity, but I am not so sure that the way in which research makes and unmakes you is something we truly write about. The horror, the fear, the sense of inadequacy, and so on. Our institutions demand that we work to deadlines[16] and, when we do not, we are subjected to humiliating bureaucratic procedures that do not recognise that the nature of the work sometimes requires a different temporal relationship. That our research can traumatise, haunt and debilitate us is something we rarely engage with the fullness that our affectability demands.

In her introduction to a special issue on trauma by anthropologists, Lester (2013: 753) calls trauma ‘edge of existence experiences,’ where people are ‘(p)ushed to the very precipice of

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[16] In SA, a PhD is expected to be completed in a maximum of five years.

physical and/or psychological annihilation, (and) the bonds that tether a person to the everyday world become stretched, distorted, and even torn; sometimes irreparably so.' What we consider to be trauma is a cultural and social phenomenon, and not merely an intrapsychic experience but rather a relational injury that induces a sense of 'ontological aloneness' and 'however it is locally defined, is hardly over once the immediate danger has passed—it simply enters a new phase' (p.754). She also states that trauma as event and trauma as ongoing lived experience often get conflated, which might trap people conceptually. People do move in dynamic ways, and are not merely the traumatic event; depending on how they retether to their social connections, they can refigure their ontological aloneness in complex and idiosyncratic ways. Thus, for my purposes, epistemic trauma, when one works in and with epistemologies in which you are not recognised and thus made to feel ontological aloneness, is a process of radical alienation that has traumatic effects that undo your relationship to an epistemic community. Working with material that requires witnessing deeply violent events that is, the edge of existence experiences of communities within which you are located and its unremitting continuity, also produces traumatic relations, but it is a relational injury of identification rather than alienation. What is also important to note is the multiplicity of affect and the dynamic way in which one may be affected by trauma.

Indirect exposure to traumatic events, that negatively change someone who supports a victim of direct violence, has been called vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress (Branson, 2019; Nikischer, 2019). For Branson (2019:3), 'vicarious trauma is accumulative in nature, the result of a process, and has the potential to create permanent changes to the clinician's worldview that can manifest professionally and/or personally.' Vicarious trauma has largely been applied to clinicians and other service professionals who have close and empathetic relationships with people who disclose, in detail, the trauma they have experienced (Branson, 2019; Nikischer, 2019). However, Nikischer (2019) very convincingly argues, using autoethnography, how necessary it is for vicarious trauma to be recognised in academic work, and not just in service professions. She shows how studying, doing research on and teaching about violence, with minimum preparation for the affective consequences, produces negative consequences, such as a sense of isolation.

Researcher guilt and discomfort is likely to ensue because, unlike therapeutic relationships where there is an attempt to ameliorate the effects of violence for clients, academics hope that their work will go into policy or other knowledge production endeavours which have a longer view, and are less likely to benefit their participants (Nikischer, 2019). The extractive nature of research, no matter how careful, is intricately tied to these affects. This was something I felt keenly with my participants who lived in impoverished circumstances and, even though I offered access to certain resources, it was not enough. One of my participants, who fled the violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), hoped that by speaking to me, as someone who was imagined to have access to spaces that he did not, I would be able to bring the plight of the DRC to the attention of those who matter. It was painful having to state and restate that I do not have that kind of access and to be honest about the limitations of the work. Further, when I shifted direction into thinking of violence as a substrate for the making of unequal lifeworlds, it changed how I worked with the life stories.[17]

Whilst I realised early in the analysis that I was interested in making connections in a somewhat heterodox fashion across different kinds of data and that, in the scope of the PhD, the individual stories would have less prominence, I felt a paralysing sense of loss and lack of integrity, as if I had broken an unspoken ethical compact. Though I do believe trying to understand how coloniality works, and how disability, debility and everyday violence are entangled, is still faithful to the same ethics that animated and sustained my project over the last few years, it still feels like a betrayal. What looked and felt to me like procrastination, and an abdication of responsibility to my research project, was really a deep ethical tussling. It was only in committing to doing work on varying levels and with different kinds of audiences in mind that I could eventually proceed and feel my way through an analysis. I feel that it is vital to state this. In site after site that is supposed to assist PhD thesis writers, the mechanics of process are used to motivate and ameliorate crushing debility amongst PhD students who have alarming rates of suicide. For some of us, our tussling entails deep enmeshment in ethico-political struggles and the strategic ways we negotiate our relationship to our research, to the worlds we wish to remake as a result of our encounters and the limitations with which we must contend. Once we have made our compromises with the narrowed circulation of knowledge we know as part of neoliberal knowledge-making, recognising the affective forces that rage within institutionally-bound knowledge-making processes may allow us to come to the page. In some ways, this relieves the burden of individualised struggles to write and facilitates a means to proceed. As with most forms of subjugation, learning that there is something systemic that is interacting with you as an individual to produce debilitation is vitalising.

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[17] I am planning to work on shorter pieces that do analyse the life stories in the spirit that I started, to fully honour the time that I spent with participants.

Researchers who do work on sexual violence and interpersonal violence have resources such as the Sexual Violence Research Initiative[18] to draw on, which recognises the importance of vicarious trauma (in Nikischer, 2019; https://www.svri.org/research-methods/researcher-trauma-and-safety). Recognising what empathetic research into violence does to researchers allows organisations to support them and prevent feelings of isolation, as well as mitigate feelings of guilt, anxiety and fear (Nikischer, 2019). However, because doing research on disability, the ways in which violence produces disability, and the massification of debility, is not a normative frame, I was completely unprepared for vicarious trauma. The epistemic effect of crafting intellectual fields that ignore most people's experiences in a field like disability is thus not only a faulty ontology, but also has methodological implications that require research. It is ethically imperative that we recognise what this kind of work does to our colleagues, students and epistemic community. It is my contention that anyone who is doing work on the effects of patriarchy and coloniality requires debriefing and support. I often wonder if one of the reasons that disability is elided, and violence spoken about in abstract, reductive terms in both decolonial and feminist work, is because of the effects of vicarious trauma, and what it does to sit with the tearing of flesh and psycho-affective breaks through which race, geopolitics, gender and class and other unequal identity vectors is expressed.

Branson (2019) argues that there is much confusion and a looseness in how vicarious trauma has been used, and its interchangeability with concepts such as secondary traumatic stress or compassion fatigue. Whilst precision might be important (Branson, 2019), what matters is that being deeply engaged with the suffering of others has profound effects and is coextensive and entangled with other psychological affects. In her discussion of the lexicon of vicarious trauma, Branson (2019) includes not just secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue, but also burnout, countertransference, transference, post-traumatic stress disorder, emotional contagion and shared trauma and double exposure. Shared trauma occurs when a clinician's trauma is similar to a client's experience though, unlike vicarious trauma, does not necessarily indicate a negative effect. Double exposure is when traumatic events are community-wide, so that both clinician and client have experienced it, such as political violence. There were frequent moments throughout the research where traumatic events would affect me, and trigger my own histories. Whilst Branson is able to neatly separate each of these affects, how I experienced them, in the

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[18] The SVRI is an organisation that seeks to end sexual violence and, according to their website, are a network of people who promote research on sexual violence and aim to strengthen national responses on sexual violence prevention, policies and services for survivors of sexual violence.

encounters with participants, with texts across time and space on enslavement, life writing and literatures on disability, race and gender, was sometimes so piercing that they could not be borne and I required a respite. Though the events were physically distant, they were affectively close, so that calling it vicarious trauma feels like an injustice. When we contend with intergenerational and intersectional solidarities and identifications, withdrawing from a scene of violence is not possible; rather, the violence marks you (see Hartman, 2008).

I frequently felt extreme hatred for the research area I had chosen, even as I believed in its urgency and necessity, and would thus feel incredible shame. I rarely expressed these sentiments, and came to feel that my responses or lack of responsiveness were due to a moral failing. The stories I would relate in my teaching, at academic presentations or in conversation, about the necessity for disability to be treated with the same world-making importance as studies of race, gender and class, were frequently the ones I could not shake, the stories that haunted me. Of a little girl coming home to her mother in a pool of blood and young boys making themselves and remaking worlds with drugs and violence and a husband carrying a piece of paper and making his wife live in daily terror and my memories of the sjambok as a young woman and a young man who wanted to die. The students I watched run from police, much as I ran almost three decades ago, or the gunshots on a koppie. There are other stories. Gentle and beautiful and also world-making in their generosity. The grace of love and friendship. Learning that, even though inequality is made through violence, life remains and people make lives, full and loving and good. When we talk about social death and a politics of death, the question is always, dead to whom? Who has fought for this life and how this life found and made a world to live in. In *Native Nostalgia*, Jacob Dlamini (2009) reminds readers that black people also lived fully. Settler colonial violence normalised attritional war and, within the structure of persistent, unrelenting warfare, black people found ways to survive and even to thrive. I am hoping that, in exorcising these stories of pain, I can make more room for the stories that give me hope.

Methodologically, I chose to focus first on stories of violence in the dissertation, and let myself be guided by my distress. Perhaps in sharing them, I can transform them into something that makes me feel less wounded. When I started out, I did not have a language to understand that my hatred of my research was protective and a way to refuse fully feeling the violence of the world we have inherited. It was a way to refuse tasting the fear and to shrug off guilt at the life I do have. If I had not come to think of debility as world-making and ordinary and obvious, I would not have found language that helped me understand. What I was engaging with was long histories of unacknowledged and persistent trauma and I, too, had experienced similar kinds of trauma, if not at present in my life, then historically, intergenerationally and relationally. What is more, the route through and out of trauma required recognising my affectability, and then choosing to witness and name the slow, persistent and entrenched violence that people like myself have been subjugated by repeatedly. The will to witness, despite how debilitating it was, and name the suffering that has been erased and normalised as collective trauma allowed me to take the space I needed to repair, recuperate, seek support, and relinquish any idea of myself as a lone maverick conquering the archive. By recasting my malaise as affective refusals, I was able to not just perceive an epistemic relation and enter into epistemic labour with the entirety of who I was, but also recognise how deeply enmeshed ableism is in the production of knowledge.

The costs of ableism

To move outside of individualist models of research into vulnerability as a shared condition was also to risk what Jirek has called:

> Soul pain … a deep, gut-wrenching ache that pierces the core of one's being. It is a spiritual pain, a sorrow born of seeing the cruelty that human beings inflict on one another and of feeling powerless to stop it (2015:1).

Inspired by Patricia Williams, Erevelles and Minnear (2010) use the idea of spirit murder to highlight how disregard produces worlds of hatred and fear which fall upon the disregarded. Whilst they are focused on poor, black students who have disabilities and are subjugated by institutions in varying ways, I want to extend the ideas of spirit murder and soul pain to those of us who not only are subjugated by racist, sexist, ableist societies and institutions, but also those who are expected to do research on the conditions and consequences of violence.

Vulnerable observers (Behar, 1997), who are only able to share a limited version of how their research affects them, are subject to ableism. Academia is deeply ableist (Dolmage, 2017; Manning, 2018). Ableism, according to Wolbring (2012: 78), 'leads to an ability based and ability justified understanding of oneself, one's body, one's relationship with others within one's species and one's environment.' Ableism is integrally tied to the making of race, gender and other social categories in which inequality is justified (Campbell, 2008; Wolbring, 2012; Goodley, 2014; Dolmage, 2017). It is the presumed inability of the other that makes them available as a marked category, and therefore subject to violence, and subjugation to those who are able. Campbell (2008) argues that it is impossible to have difference without ableism. Ableism makes able-bodiedness and able-mindedness compulsory and the university, according to Dolmage (2017), more than any other institution valorises ableism and hyperability. The epistemic effects of ableism in the academy are dire. The expectation to showcase ability in the academy foregoes the possibility of following trails of failure and pauses that do not conform to the chronopolitics of the university, which enforces that knowledge has a normative temporality. The university exemplifies neoliberal-ableism (Goodley, 2014), in which the suppression of difference belies that our ontological, epistemic, political, ethical and methodological horizons are not the same, and not always commensurable. For those of us who are doing liberatory work and who have to engage and combat epistemologies that wound, gaslight and traumatise, we also have to contend with the affective impact of our work. It is not always easy to write when you are struggling with the horror of the work. It is not always easy to understand when the epistemologies you have to negotiate hem you in with refusals to acknowledge the massification of suffering that generations of erudite scholars justified and maintained and, even where they produced counter-narratives, still made genocidal levels of damage possible. Ableism is very often a refusal of the radical vulnerability that witnessing violence requires (Erevelles, 2019), and is an epistemic relation that masquerades as being about ability. Ableism is another tactic of settler colonial epistemologies.

Ableism facilitates epistemic hiding (Medina, 2018), in which vitalising ethico-political horizons are stifled. What the fantasy of ability hides is epistemic relations in which the ideal knower remains unaffected by the violence, its aftermath and perdurance in the world around him. He is expected to be distant from the world he may once have ruled, but even he, the ideal knower, is woefully ignorant of what the world is like for the vast majority about whom he pontificates. Ability, therefore, is a masquerade. Those who presumably are its bearers cannot perceive what is obvious and, in so doing, enforce and instantiate a new epistemic relation for those of us who cannot remove ourselves from scenes of violence. This relation is one through which we seek not only to admit and ameliorate our soul pain at bearing witness to what the quest for and myths of ability have wrought in the world, but also to write ourselves and those we share a common present and future with, into flourishing modes of being.

Towards a conclusion

Tussling with epistemologies of ignorance can be debilitating, and very often debilitation can signal epistemic relations in which domination and ethical quandaries are present. Failure to work and move were indications of ableism in the academy as an ontological presupposition, where the theorist is imagined to be unaffected by the traumatising violence they are engaged with as knowledge producers. Ableism was also an epistemic relation, and not just about ability but also about a location in settler colonial histories. Working from, within and against epistemologies of ignorance required what I have called the scholarship of the obvious, which reframes study to centre the oppressed and, in doing this work, shows up epistemologies of ignorance. Negotiating knowledge that magics away what is obvious can be experienced as gaslighting, which is a tool of setter colonial epistemologies that allows settler innocence and ethical impunity. In claiming and naming how broken this work made me, I was able to engender epistemic insight and refuse ableist expectations that I forgo vulnerability. Working with death-disability-debility, and having to abide with the scale and intensity of violence that the majority of black South Africans have had to and continue to endure, was traumatising. Accepting my affectability allowed me to claim and carve out the space from which to move and to refuse ableism. Critically, research is required on the affective terrain of doing work on violence. Scholars who are doing such work should be prepared for the affective possibilities, and institutional structures of support should be provided to them.

In the following section, I will explore interpersonal violence in the segregated worlds created by apartheid. Most black South Africans in impoverished black neighbourhoods in South Africa are trapped by extremely high rates of violence, which remakes lives. The organised abandonment (Gilmore, 2007) of black neighbourhoods has a long history in South Africa, which was most ardently enforced during apartheid. Five life histories of black South Africans who live/d on the Cape Flats, and were wounded by interpersonal violence, will be shared next. All the stories show not only the breadth of life of black South Africans with disabilities, but also their multifaceted experiences amidst structural violence.

Interlude - Chapter 5: Life on the Cape Flats: Jonathan, Mzi, Sipho, Teboho and Fahiema

The five life histories that follow offer an introduction and context to think about settler colonial practices of segregation and how organised abandonment (Gilmore, 2007) shapes/d black lives, and in particular black people who became disabled due to interpersonal violence. The five participants – Jonathan, Mzi, Sipho, Teboho and Fahiema – came to adulthood on the Cape Flats, in the black dormitory townships that were created by segregationist policies. There are a few themes that are notable within the life histories. Two of the primary themes which I explore in the next chapter are masculinity and interpersonal violence, and gangsterism. Segregationist policies which justified racialised neighbourhoods, and concentrated poverty and interpersonal violence by abandoning black subjects within their confines, as well as the history of enslavement and violence as techniques of rule, are also explored in the following chapter. There are several productive themes in these life histories that I do not explore, such as negligent and abusive medical care, inadequate rehabilitation services, and ambulances avoiding black neighbourhoods because of the high rates of violence, which must increase the production of disablement.

That all four men were not able to return to high school after they were disabled raises questions about accessible schools, but also the gendered dimensions of school-going for boys and young men who become disabled, and what happens to the educational possibilities of young people with violently acquired impairments. Most high schools on the Cape Flats are two-storey buildings without lifts. Fahiema returned to her high school and let her classmates carry her up the stairs. South African schools in black townships are severely under-resourced, particularly in regard to creating inclusive, accessible education. Fish Hodgson (2018), a legal scholar, outlined the urgent necessity for advocacy around inclusive, accessible education in South Africa. During apartheid, children with disabilities were placed in racially segregated special schools. He states, there were 71 severely under-resourced schools for black children with disabilities, who made up 79.2% of special school enrolments, and 89 schools for the 9.7% of white children with disabilities. Most black children with disabilities were not in schools, or ‘mainstreamed by default’ (Fish Hodgson, 2018: 463). In postapartheid South Africa, despite publishing an inclusive education policy in 2001, barriers to education persist. In 2001, approximately 280 000 children with disabilities were not in school and, by 2016, a shocking 597 953 were not in school or, if in school, were not provided with the needed support. Fish

Hodgson goes on to say that people with disabilities have an average of 2,5 years less schooling than people without disabilities, but that ‘this average conceals the real damage caused by apartheid's doubly segregated special-needs education system. White people with disabilities enjoy approximately five more years of education than black people with disabilities’ (2018: 463). The difference that access to schooling and then higher education makes can be seen not just in Fahiema’s life histories, but also in Anna, Margaret and Tania’s life histories, detailed later in the thesis. That some of the barriers to education have persisted for some of the participants as adults, in secondary education for Mzi and higher education for Jonathan, is also of concern.

As noted in the first two chapters, black life, like all life, is complex and nuanced, and so are black people. Even if black people were/are consigned to slow death (Berlant, 20007), or social death (Patterson, 2018) by a necropolitical (Mbembe, 2003; 2019) state, they are not dead to everyone. There are people who fight for their existence and who hold them dear, even as there are others for whom they incite bitter enmity, and contempt. Even if they wish themselves dead, and lament being treated with disregard, they are still fully human and worthy of love and care to someone. Amid raw life (Ross, 2010), people find ways to continue and remake themselves. Their lives do not remain static, but change through circumstance, the opportunities available to them and the people in their lives. Despite a careless state, a homicidally negligent state, there are other institutions, such as the church for Jonathan and Mzi, an educational institution for Fahiema, or a multiracial running club like Sipho belonged to, that may offer a new space for becoming or exact the needed care from an agent of necropolitics (Mbembe, 2003; 2019). For these participants, life continued, even if it was not easy. There are a great many people who did not continue, whose impairments lead to their deaths, like so many of the men that died in Teboho’s organisation. As most of the participants in the life histories that follow were from Langa, a more detailed snapshot of Langa is provided below.

Langa

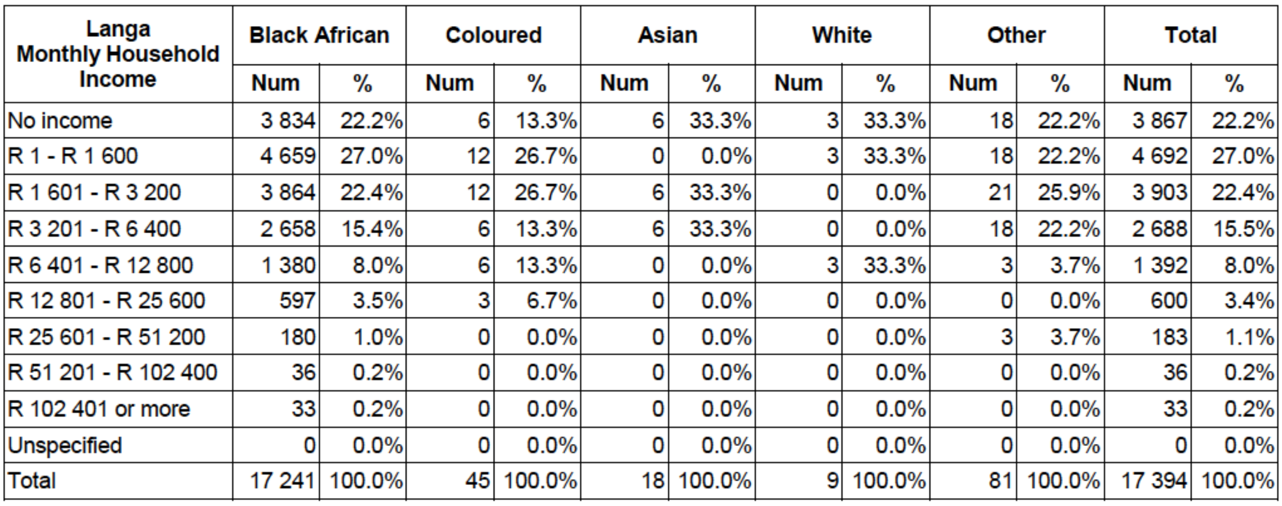
2011 Census suburb Langa includes the following sub-places: Langa SP.

Langa

Five of the participants in the study lived in Langa at one point. Four lived there at the time of the study and Tariq, who is a migrant from the DRC, lived there briefly. Some of the participants, like Mzi, Sipho and Teboho, had lived in Langa for most of their lives, and Jonathan lived there for many years. Langa is a largely black African township and is similar to many black urban townships. Smith (2014) detailed some of the later history of Langa in his Master's thesis, which I draw on here for Langa's history, unless otherwise indicated. Langa was established in 1927 for black African men who had migrated to Cape Town from across the region. Prior to Langa's establishment, colonial control of the Cape Colony had a profound impact on black movement and residence, and labour relations between white settlers, indigenous people and black Africans who came from across Southern Africa. Enslavement of indigenous peoples and the importation of enslaved and dispossessed people shaped the making of the Cape Colony from the seventeenth century, when the Dutch East India company first colonised the Cape, and the transition into and out of British Imperial rule (Laband, 2020; Mellet, 2020). The Cape Colony was a thoroughly slavocratic society, and when the trade in enslaved people was ended by the British in 1808, there were more enslaved than European enslavers (Laband, 2020). Pass controls on African movement were instituted in the Cape Colony in 1828 and, in 1841, the Masters and Servants Ordinance entrenched labour control.

The mineral revolution which transformed Southern Africa (Laband, 2020) brought an influx of people to the Cape Colony in search of opportunities, and a housing crisis ensued (Smith, 2014). Moral panics around poor living conditions and sanitation resulted in the Public Health Act of 1897. In 1901, in response to the bubonic plague, black residents, who were racialised as contaminants, were forcibly removed to the outskirts of the city, to the sewage farm, Uitvlugt (renamed Ndabeni), in the first planned location (Swanson, 1977). In 1913, three years after the Cape Colony became the Cape Province following the creation of the Union of South Africa, the Native Land Act prevented blacks from purchasing or leasing land outside of the native reserves. Langa was established under the Native Urban Areas Act no 21 of 1923. Langa became the first formal township and was replicated across the country as a model location during apartheid (Ralphs, 2008). Hostels were provided as housing for single men, and thus arose the overcrowded dormitory townships that were rationalised and justified as a pragmatic means of ensuring labour supply.

Despite most people not being counted by the 2011 census, it does give a sense of the demographics and economic conditions within Langa. According to the City of Cape Town's Strategic Development Information and GIS Department (SDI&GIS) (2013a), there were 52 401 people in Langa, and 17 400 households. In an area of 3.09km, the population density is 17000 per square kilometre. 99% of the population is black African, and the unemployment rate is over 40%. 72% of households had a catastrophically low monthly household income of ZAR3200 or less, as seen in the table below.



Langa Monthly Household Income	Black African		Coloured		Asian		White		Other		Total	
	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%
No income	3 834	22.2%	6	13.3%	6	33.3%	3	33.3%	18	22.2%	3 867	22.2%
R 1 - R 1 600	4 659	27.0%	12	26.7%	0	0.0%	3	33.3%	18	22.2%	4 692	27.0%
R 1 601 - R 3 200	3 864	22.4%	12	26.7%	6	33.3%	0	0.0%	21	25.9%	3 903	22.4%
R 3 201 - R 6 400	2 658	15.4%	6	13.3%	6	33.3%	0	0.0%	18	22.2%	2 688	15.5%
R 6 401 - R 12 800	1 380	8.0%	6	13.3%	0	0.0%	3	33.3%	3	3.7%	1 392	8.0%
R 12 801 - R 25 600	597	3.5%	3	6.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	600	3.4%
R 25 601 - R 51 200	180	1.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	3.7%	183	1.1%
R 51 201 - R 102 400	36	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	36	0.2%
R 102 401 or more	33	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	33	0.2%
Unspecified	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	17 241	100.0%	45	100.0%	18	100.0%	9	100.0%	81	100.0%	17 394	100.0%

Langa Monthly Household Income (SDGIS, 2013: 4)

Langa is now comprised of the old hostels mentioned before, apartheid-era government housing that was divided into zones, newer government housing, informal settlements, and more than a decade-old emergency housing that was supposed to be temporary, after a large fire created mass indigency. I did all my research in Langa during the day. In the streets with formal housing, it was mostly placid and quiet, unless you drove through the transport hub, which abutted the informal settlement, or the road that separated the houses from the blocks of flats. There, it was congested, always busy, and people moved around constantly. Because there was tourist activity around the flats, it always felt safe, although crowded. Jason St Mary (2020), who did a mixed methods PhD study to understand the lived experience of youth in Langa, noted the difference in Langa at night. At night, Langa is a dangerous place, with gangs of boys in search of drugs creating a violent and unstable community. Gangsterism, drug use and violence were some of the greatest threats to wellbeing for most his participants. Like the participants who shared their life stories with me, limited resources and avenues for entertainment contributed to gangsterism, drug use and violence.

Most of the participants in my study, except Mzi, were injured during apartheid. However, the conditions that turned the streets of Langa deadly, disabling and debilitating still pertain for participants in St Mary's (2020) study, more than two decades after the end of formal apartheid. The sense of betrayal by corrupt postapartheid leaders has contributed to despondency. St Mary's (2020) participants asserted how apartheid dynamics persisted, such as witnessing white wealth, still having to learn in colonial languages and not receiving mother tongue instruction, the lack of opportunities, poverty, and being treated as other and inferior because of racialisation. Gangs provide both stability and a means to procure resources, but sow catastrophic levels of violence that are incessant and unremitting. Gang recruitment practices target young boys, and result in continuous child deaths, with residents feeling that they are attending child funerals every weekend. Though St Mary (2020) does not show disablement, given the high death rates from violence, where one participant claimed there were more than one hundred child deaths because of gangsterism over the previous three years, we can infer that death was accompanied by high rates of disablement. His participants also mention what the lack of a hospital entails, and persistent racialisation between black African and Coloured neighbourhoods. The hospital in the adjoining Coloured area is perceived as a contributor to the deaths of Black Africans, as they do not receive equal treatment and are made to wait despite having fatal injuries. Similarly, some of the contours of debilitation are present, such as the psycho-affective and physical effects caused by food insecurity, inadequate housing for those in informal settlements, and overcrowded housing. Catastrophic exposure to past and present cumulative, unacknowledged and unhealed trauma has produced a sense of malaise, where some participants stated many people preferred to sleep, but also contributed to violence through heightened frustration, anger and hatred.

Lavender Hill

The dynamics in Langa are present in impoverished black neighbourhoods across the country. Lavender Hill, where Fahiema became injured, a neighbourhood developed for Coloureds, is likewise affected by extremely high rates of violence, gangsterism and drug use. Unlike Langa, Lavender Hill was constructed during the infamous period of forced removals, and the making of the Cape Flats, because of the Group Areas Act of 1950. The three recognised racial groups – black Africans, Coloureds and white – were to stay in designated areas, or they could be criminally prosecuted. Approximately 7.5 million people were displaced and dispossessed (Donaldson, Hyman, Chang, Confiado, Ruiz, Salud & Yildiz, 2014) due to the re-enactment of this Act in 1966, ripping families and communities apart and destroying black wealth accumulation through property expropriation and dispossession of cattle, and turning landowners into wage labourers (Ngcukaitobi, 2021). Naidoo and Dreyer (1984) detailed the establishment of Lavender Hill which, at the time of their study in 1984, was also besieged by impoverishment, unemployment, substance abuse and gang violence. Initially called Hardevlei and Rondevlei, before being renamed Lavender Hill and Vrygrond, the areas, were communities of property owners with large properties on which they grew produce and raised livestock. It was a neighbourly place where interpersonal violence, including sexual violence, was not ordinary. The community was nearly self-sufficient and sold their surplus produce to neighbours at low prices. In 1967, Hardevlei and Rondevlei property owners were informed that their land would be expropriated and offered meagre sums of money, which severely undervalued their land. They engaged in protracted legal battles with the state, but eventually started selling their properties, as they feared they would receive no compensation from the state if they did not succumb to legal pressure to sell. On a Friday morning in 1974, rangers arrived with loudspeakers to inform the remaining residents that, if they did not move, their homes would be bulldozed the following Monday morning. The Lavender Hill community which arose afterwards were comprised of renters who were formerly property owners and people like Fahiema's family, who were displaced from places like District Six, Claremont, Newlands and Plumstead. These became white areas and, in postapartheid South Africa, the property value is so high that only a very few black people can afford to buy and live there. Lavender Hill is characterised by overcrowded two- and three-storey flats made of extremely cheap materials and, when it first was built, the rents were more than many residents could afford.

These neighbourhoods are or were home to participants, and whilst the state had designed neighbourhoods that cruelly dislocated people, many people also created community structures and continued to build loving relationships that affirmed their right to existence, even as they continued to experience catastrophic levels of exposure to violence. For some people, like Fahiema's family, despite the wrench of being moved from a place like District Six, the shoddy amenities of their new homes also represented some forms of convenience when they first moved in. However, the violences that gangs produced outside also made their way into their home, through intimate partner violence. In her life history, the ways in which substance abuse created deadly, disabling and debilitating domestic lives for women and children, due to men's violence, are evident. The violence on the street, where black men are brutalising black men, is also present in the home. Unfortunately, within the scope of the thesis, I was unable to follow this critically important theme. It is my hope that feminist, and particularly black and African feminist, analyses of gender-based violence utilise death-disability-debility as analytics to express the cost of misogynistic and homophobic violence.

Below, I summarise Jonathan, Mzi, Sipho, Teboho and Fahiema's life histories, and include my reflections on our encounters. Jonathan was the first participant I met in Langa. His life history is below. The order of participants should not be taken to indicate a hierarchy.

Jonathan

Jonathan speaks slowly, and moves slowly. His electric wheelchair allows him to get around quickly, when it works. When the wheels break, he has to wait a few weeks to get it fixed. While he is waiting, he spends a lot of time manoeuvring back and forth to get where he wants to go. The first time I meet him, at the home for people with disabilities in Langa, I struggle to understand him. I soon realise his slow speech does not reflect the quickness of his thinking. He speaks at least three languages, English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. He would go on to introduce me to Mzi, Sipho and Teboho. The first time he tells me the story of how he becomes disabled, we are sitting in the common room at the home. It is a discomfiting, bleak space with very little furniture, to allow the wheelchairs to move freely. The room is not beautiful and there is little to offer the residents stimulation. No books, no TV, no games, a tired chart on the wall that someone forgot to remove. There are residents hanging out in the room. Two groups with their wheelchairs sit in a circle. A few residents sit on their own, dotted around the room, some of the wheelchairs faced away from others. One of the residents is keening, then babbling, then short sharp shouting, a language of his own. No-one seems to mind.

Jonathan tells me about his childhood. I struggle not to cry, to keep my researcher face in place, to offer a smile, an encouraging nod, a question here or there. When his Coloured mother left her hometown, George,[19] to work in the upmarket white suburb of Constantia[20] in Cape Town, she met his black African father, and Jonathan was born in 1977. After providing me with this racialised genealogy, he makes sure to let me know that his grandparents also had 'white blood in them'. His grandparents' dislike of his father resulted in their taking care of Jonathan for the first few years of his life. He had a happy early childhood, was treated like his aunts and uncles' sibling, and doted on by his grandparents. He would move back to live with his mother when he started school at seven. His mother had since remarried and had children with her new husband in Mitchells Plain[21] on the Cape Flats. She was both strict and neglectful. Her alcoholism was a point of contention between her and her parents. Over the next few years, Jonathan would move between Cape Town and George. When in Cape Town, he worked part-time so he could clothe himself or buy the little necessities he did not receive from his mother. As a teenager, when he was in Standard Eight[22] and living in Cape Town, he dropped out of school to live and work with his uncle as a building construction labourer. When his uncle refused to allow him to go back to

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[19] George is the second-largest city, after Cape Town, in the Western Cape Province. Despite George's size, it is thought of as rural in the spatial imaginary.

[20] Constantia is one of the wealthiest suburbs in South Africa, is largely white, and has a 4% unemployment rate.

[21] Mitchells Plain, one of the largest residential dormitory towns on the Cape Flats, was established in 1974, is largely Coloured, is approximately 28kms from the city centre, and a terrible public transport system means hours of commuting to work for many residents. Whilst the Census 2011 (SDI&GIS, 2013b) estimates found the population to be about 310 000 people, a 2004 Bureau of Market Research study in an IOL news article (Smetherham, 2004), found a population of 852 000. Mitchells Plain consists of many different suburbs, which range from deeply impoverished to lower-middle class. The most impoverished suburbs have extremely high rates of violence, crime and substance abuse, whereas neighbourhoods with more middle-class profiles are much more placid. I grew up in Mitchells Plain. First, in a tiny three-bedroom home in Beacon Valley, when it was just developed. We moved in when there were a handful of other families in our street and in the few years we lived there, the neighbourhood's character changed dramatically as gangsterism and substance abuse took hold of the streets and reshaped our world. My single mother was a teacher and like many of the other parents, earned enough to stave off desperation but not enough to live without the margin beckoning. It was a good place to grow up. We knew all our neighbours, played in the streets and were comfortable and welcome in each other's homes. Before my parents got divorced, we had lived in more securely middle-class Coloured neighbourhoods that had a degree of affluence and, in postapartheid South Africa, most of those neighbourhoods have seen astronomical rises in their property value, even though the neighbourhoods are still largely black, and crime spills over from nearby impoverished black neighbourhoods. We then moved to Westridge, which was one of the oldest neighbourhoods in Mitchell's Plain. The houses were much larger and whilst there was substance abuse, it had a more private character, and the neighbourhood at that time had very little crime or fear of public safety or gangsterism. At present, Beacon Valley is one of the neighbourhoods in Mitchells Plain that has a reputation of being one of the most dangerous. The social geography of Mitchells Plain is complex, even though most academic literature conflates most of the suburbs.

[22] Grade 10, in the postapartheid school system.

school, he moved from his uncle's place in Delft[23] back to his grandparents in George, and then back to Cape Town to live with his aunt in Atlantis, another Coloured dormitory town, and then back to George again.

He would eventually finish grade ten to twelve at night school many years later, while living in a home for the disabled in Mitchells Plain. To get to his classes, he would organise five lifts with friends, in case someone cancelled. He wants to finish his degree. He was registered at a university that is primarily long-distance, but also offers classes in Cape Town, which he needed to attend to use the facilities and where he would write exams. Getting to university, with limited transport possibilities and an inaccessible public transport system, was a challenge he could not surmount. The City's Dial a Ride[24] programme did not have the flexibility or capacity to ensure he got there on time, and he was frequently late for exams. The university provided very little in the way of reasonable accommodation and he has not yet finished his degree. To demand accessibility, Jonathan started an organisation for students at the university. However, he wanted to move to another institution that had much better facilities. Despite numerous attempts and activating his contacts gained from disability organising, his application was unsuccessful because he did not meet their minimum academic requirements. He is extremely active in local organising and organises on behalf of a local political party, as well as belonging to disability organisations.

He has never held a full-time job for a significant period, though works periodically and frustratedly for the city in protected employment, because he is never given any substantial work. He and a friend ran a pre-school out of a garage for a short period of time, before they got shut down by the city for being unhygienic. He loved working with children and found it very satisfying. He follows up every job lead. One week, he cancels our appointment because he needs to fill out, photocopy and certify numerous documents. There was an opening for a job with the city and he needed to get all his documents in order. The amount of documentation for a job application with the City of Cape Town is staggering, particularly given that he has worked there before. He needs to provide a proof of disability form, which he can only get from the Western

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[23] Delft was established in 1989, has an almost equal mix of Black African and Coloured residents, and is also characterised by poverty, and high rates of violence and substance abuse. For demographic information, see SDI&GIS (2013c).

[24] For more information on Dial a Ride and disabled users' challenges with the service and public transport in Cape Town, see Morta-Andrews (2018).

Cape Rehabilitation Centre[25] at Lentegeur Hospital in Mitchells Plain. The disability assessment can only be done on Fridays, by appointment. When they are fully booked, he must wait for the first available opening on a Friday. Sometimes it takes weeks. Fortunately, because it is at a hospital, and the home provides transportation to hospital, despite him not being ill, it is one of the few places the home will provide transport to. Once validated, the forms are only valid for three months. For some of the learnerships in the protected employment workshops offered by the city, he needs to apply for a tax clearance certificate. For this application, he also got an affidavit stating that he is unemployed and a volunteer with the city. To supplement his meagre disability grant, he works part-time recruiting for a major political party on Saturdays, for which he gets paid R70.[26] A few years ago, he helped start and build a local disability organisation in the largest Coloured township in Cape Town. The small salary he earned there was raised from bake sales.

We are in the common room at the home the first time Jonathan tells me the story of how he became impaired. He was 18 or 19 years old, hanging out at a friend's house in George, when he had an altercation with his friends' older brother, who was bullying the younger boy. Jonathan stood up for his friend and threatened the brother. That evening, the brother and his friends lay in wait for Jonathan to return from a party. The beating they give him caused brain damage. The next time he tells me the story of how he became impaired, we are in the lounge in the building in the back of the home, where his room is. This is the section of the home where he lives with other long-term residents who have more control over their bodily needs and require less assistance. The lounge in that building is more private. The seating is made up of old office furniture with chairs I plant myself in firmly, or they will tip me onto the floor. His voice even lower than usual, Jonathan confides that he had begun to deal drugs as a teenager and had been feared as a gangster. The rage that he suppressed when confronted with his mother's addiction, neglect and violence would manifest in criminality. He would, '*tend to get angrier and angrier. And then sommer*[27] *take it out on people. Sommer do crime and, you know, and rob, and whatever. … because I was very tall, so, a lot of, some people, they were actually intimidated by my tallness*.' To get Mandrax,[28] he would sell it, so he could have some for himself and his

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[25] The Western Cape Rehabilitation Centre is an amalgamation of the Karl Bremer and Conradie Hospital Rehabilitation Centres. It offers a range of rehabilitative and community integration services which include wheelchair repair and certification. For more information: https://www.wcrc.co.za/about_us.htm.

[26] USD4.87

[27] *sommer* is Afrikaans and equivalent to 'just'.

[28] According to Legget (2002), Mandrax is known colloquially as buttons, and South Africa is the only country that uses it. It is a tablet made with combination of methaqualone, diaphenhydramine or diazepam. Mandrax was made illegal in 1977 due to abuse. Mandrax, as a street drug, is crushed and smoked in a pipe made of a broken bottle

friends. He joined the gang to be around other young men who were also having difficulty at home '*because, for me, it was just nice to be amongst guys, you can relate with, with growing up with grandparents who is maybe drug (addicted), or, alcoholic'*. He wasn't attacked because of the gang he was in, though; he was attacked because he liked to fight with security guards and the neighbourhood watch. Late one Friday night, walking on his own after drinking and partying with his friends, the neighbourhood watch waited for him. He had a knife and tried to get away so he would not spend the weekend in jail. He was eighteen and in standard 9. The beating put him in a coma with brain damage, and he no longer had the use of his lower body. The next few years were a blur.

Immediately afterwards, he lived in George with his grandparents. He passed out a number of times and would wake up in hospital. His aunt, who lived with his grandparents and now owns the family house, told him his grandparents were suffering because of him. One day, when he was crawling to his room, he saw his grandmother crying in the kitchen. He decided it would be better for him to leave than to let his grandmother suffer because of the toll of caring for him. He then moved to live with his sister in Cape Town, even though his grandparents begged him to stay. They even approached their neighbours to give them assistance with his care. He found out much later that his grandparents were intending to leave their house to him and that it was supposed to have become a family house. The story he was told was that, on her way to see him in Cape Town because she was worried about him, his grandmother fell from a taxi and went into a coma. She was hospitalised and then placed in an institution by his aunt because she was unable to care for herself. The parallels between his grandmother's story and his own are uncanny.

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head, the silver filter paper out of a pack of cigarettes, which is rolled to act as a filter; and cannabis soaked in paraffin. This is called a white pipe. Users only smoke with people they trust, as they lose consciousness and fall to the ground, drooling, because of the intensity of the hit. The drug's effects and addictiveness were understudied. It gave rise to what Leggett calls White Pipe Gangsterism, and was at the centre of bitter wars in which many black people died, and was integral to gang-making in largely Coloured communities. It does not have the same prominence now. Wouter Basson, as head of Project Coast, South Africa's apartheid biological and chemical warfare organisation, experimented with Mandrax as a means of crowd control, to be used in teargas, but found it unsuitable. He not only requisitioned Mandrax from drug busts, and bought huge quantities from international suppliers but also produced it. In 1997, he was arrested with for selling Mandrax and ecstasy. Whilst unsubstantiated, there are suspicions that the drugs found their way to the streets. An audit found more than enough ingredients to manufacture 3.5 million Mandrax tablets. Leggett (2002) says researchers suspected that the South African apartheid state was a significant role-player in organised crime, and used drugs to destabilise the region. They, of course, would also have profited from the drug trade and, similarly to the US, contributed to a carceral state. It is twenty years after Legget's book was published, and these vicious attritional tactics of destroying black people, families and communities are wisps of history. We will encounter Project Coast again in the chapter on crowd control. Whilst other drugs, such as 'tik' (crystal meth) and nyaope (low-grade heroin), are more prominent now, Mandrax still exerts death-dealing, disabling and debilitating power. See a fairly recent news article of a drug bust and fears that another drug war will be the result: https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/huge-mandrax-bust-could-spark-a-turf-war-between-cape-flats-drug-dealers-40523383

He would move between his mother and aunt’s house. In time, he moved into a home for the physically disabled that was shared with senior citizens in Mitchells Plain, where he lived for eight years. He had many friends and engaged in activities like sports and games when he lived there. There was less stigmatisation in Mitchells Plain and easier access to get around than where he is now. He even fell in love with someone with whom he was in a relationship for many years. She was also a wheelchair user. She died, as did many of the disabled friends he had there. The management at the centre did not maintain the place well. He reported some of the difficulties he and the other residents of the home experienced to the police, the ward councillor and the newspapers. Due to mismanagement and the conflicts he had with the manager, he had to move. The home he lives in now has experienced a number of burglaries, and the police do not take it seriously. The management is not proactive about improving the quality of residents’ lives either.

During one of his hospitalisations, he became a staunch believer in God and converted to Christianity. He is a lay pastor in his church and plays an active role in outreach activities. He tells me that, if he had not come to God because of his disability, he would never have given up his life of gangsterism. Though he is still friends with and has relationships with some of his childhood gangster friends, he does not have that much in common with them anymore because most of their lives had not changed. He says becoming disabled was the best thing that could have happened to him.

Mzi

Mzi has a mischievous laugh. He laughs a lot even, when what he is talking about is unutterably sad. When I ask him about the laughter, he says he does not know why and he did not used to laugh like this before he was stabbed. Very frequently, his interactions feel light. When the lightness shifts, the depth of pain feels unseemly to witness. He walks with a heavy limp, has limited use of his right arm, and has a profound speech impairment. I struggle to understand him[29] and repeat as much as I can for the recording, trying to sound as natural as possible so as not to hurt his feelings. He is patient with me and repeats himself as often as needed when I get

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[29] Doing research with someone with a profound speech impairment is extremely challenging. You cannot always be sure that you heard what you think you did. It is difficult sitting with someone who is struggling to make themselves understood. The recordings are difficult to transcribe and data gets lost. In some ways, one comes up against the limits of communication, even though both parties are working really hard to develop a shared understanding. As noted in the methods chapter, the transcriber got so much wrong that I had to redo the transcriptions.

it wrong. He and Jonathan go to the same church and are part of a group that wants to start an entrepreneurial venture.

Mzi lives with his family. There are three buildings on the property: the original house, a small one-roomed building in the back, and what looked like a two-roomed building[30] in the front of the property. His grandmother, aunt and cousins live in the main house, and he is in the single-roomed outbuilding. He had it built for himself when he needed privacy, because having his own space befitted his status as an adult man. He learnt in church that to be a man was to be independent and not burden his family, and to do things on his own, so that he could care for and be responsible for a family. He does not want to live here forever, because he says there is fighting over who will own the house and he wants his own house. He would like to live in Thornton[31] or Pinelands. To get to his flatlet from the outside, passing through the back of the house, requires moving over sand and rough stone. On the day Jonathan brings me, his electric wheelchair gets stuck. One of the wheels had been giving him trouble and moving over the uneven terrain requires patience and good humour. He had gone to visit a disabled friend at the nearby Temporary Relocation Area[32] a few days before, and damaged a wheel moving through

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[30] I never entered this space, nor saw anyone enter it, or thought to ask who the tenants were.

[31] This was the neighbourhood I lived in at the time. In terms of the social geography of Cape Town, both Thornton and Pinelands, separated by a railway line, are formerly white and expensive neighbourhoods. Pinelands is known as the first garden city in South Africa, the properties are huge and the streets shaded with trees and greenery. Thornton is not as affluent as Pinelands, though in comparison with Langa, is a completely different mode of life.

[32] The state, through provincial governments, has built several Temporary Relocation Areas (TRAs), many of which are now over a decade old. Ranslem (2015), who I draw on, explored the contradictions of TRAs as, constitutionally, all South Africans are entitled to housing and cannot be evicted without providing alternative housing. TRAs are a category of emergency housing which facilitate evictions elsewhere in the city, as evicted people in gentrifying neighbourhoods are pushed into these camp-like conditions. Ubiquitous exposure to fires, and other housing crises that many black South Africans in informal housing are vulnerable to, are also facilitated by TRAs. In the aftermath of disasters caused by inadequate housing, displaced black South Africans are also placed in TRAs. Erroneously called ‘temporary,’ TRAs foster a precarious permanence. Essentially formalised tin shacks, the city’s emergency housing is a one-roomed, 18m^2 corrugated space. Four shacks share an outside cinderblock toilet and a single tap, and there are no bathing facilities. These shacks frequently house families across three generations. In Cape Town, TRAs house people who have been displaced by gentrification, unemployment, and low income, in a city that has an out-of-control housing market which is unsustainably expensive, given systematic black impoverishment for the black majority and very little decent, affordable social housing. TRAs are characterised by endemic violence, which cause repeated traumatic events, drug and alcohol addiction and extreme rates of poverty. A few years ago, I facilitated a community-based organisation for women in a notorious TRA, Blikkiesdorp. Unlike the TRA that Jonathan visited, which was largely Black African, Blikkiesdorp was largely Coloured. Each of the women who was serviced by the organisation had experienced numerous, ongoing and persistent forms of violence. The women experienced, amongst others, anxieties and trauma around food insecurity, persistent and unrelenting gender-based violence, dealing with the travails of drug-addicted spouses and children, the trauma of losing children, friends and family to death, high rates of HIV/AIDS, witnessing interpersonal violence and other chronic illnesses. For residents who had to contend with disability, the inhospitable physical environment was inaccessible, with toilet doorways that are too narrow for wheelchairs, and too little space inside the houses. The pressures on families with disabled members were extremely high. A few of the women died: from cancer, high blood pressure and complications from diabetes, most of them in their late forties and fifties. I carry their stories when I think about what we do when we move people to the outskirts of the city, in housing that none of the planners would themselves live in. I often wonder about the kind of people that would plan lives such as these for other human beings. For this research project,

the unpaved area. It takes him about fifteen minutes to get through about five metres. At one point, he tells us to go ahead and leave him in the passage between the house and the front flatlet. We wait for him.

Most of the furniture in Mzi's one-roomed flatlet has seen long and useful lives. At the time of the first interview, his television had been broken for four months and he spent most of his time reading the Bible. He was saving for a new television, because he does not enjoy dealing with the children fighting over what to watch in the house. I sit on the rickety chair next to his bed, while he sits on the side of the bed. His grandmother always offers me tea or water when we greet. He is loved, deeply. He did not realise or care much about how his churchgoing family felt about him as a teenager, and found them boring. He grew up in the same house he lives in now, though then the overcrowded household also included his mother, siblings and other relatives. His alcoholic father was largely absent, but his uncles were involved in his life. It was his brother and female relatives who supported him through circumcision rites. Even though his father was expected by others to have been involved, Mzi had held very little hope of his father being part of this important ritual of manhood. Unlike Sipho, there was very little doubt in Mzi's family, who hail from rural Eastern Cape,[33] that he would go through the arduous rite of passage to manhood. He says he was treated like a king when he returned, and now he is a man who can do the things that men do.

Mzi struggles with his disability. He hated his body and went to a *sangoma*, a traditional healer, once a month for just over a year to help him change his body so he could walk like he used to before. Every month, he would receive paraffin mixed with herbs, which he drank to cleanse his body. His friends, who knew, said he should continue going because soon he would be able to run. He eventually learnt to accept his body and his limitations through his relationship to God. Mzi did eventually learn to walk, although he had to convince the rehabilitative team at hospital that he did not want to be a wheelchair user. He also wanted to learn to walk so he could be moved out of the paraplegic ward, as there was too much crying and death in the ward. After intensive rehabilitation for about a year, he discharged himself, as he no longer wanted to live at hospital and longed to be home with his family.

I did not speak to someone in a TRA. Sometimes, even when we are doing research that is hard and challenging, we protect ourselves with the work we do not do. Our research is not just about developing the intellectual stamina to carry it; it is also about what we are able to confront. I am not very brave. I comfort myself with knowing that Jonathan only introduced me to people who lived in 'formal' housing and, within the social geography of Langa, could be considered affluent.

[33] A province in South Africa

He used to be feared and respected. Now, because he is unsteady on his feet, he might be pushed over so people can laugh. The young men in the neighbourhood, who are now feared, treat him as if he is a fool because he is disabled. It makes him sad because he can see the parallels in their lives. They do not respect him enough to hear any words of caution he might offer them, but then, he never noticed people with disabilities before he became disabled. Now, most of his friends are other men with disabilities.

Single at the time of the interview, he longs to fall in love again. The relationships he has had since his impairment have not worked out. Trusting someone, anyone, is something he considers ill-advised. He often mentions his embarrassment in regard to lost love and the relationships that have not worked out. His last relationship was over three years long. During the relationship, there was conflict because she would not stop smoking marijuana. She cheated on him and fell pregnant. The humiliation still stings. His shame is palpable at times and the lightness disappears. We rarely sit with his pain and anger for very long, though. When his ex-girlfriend’s lover died and she wanted to resume her relationship with Mzi, he rejected her because he cannot forgive her for making him an object of derision. The women he has dated in the last ten years since his disablement have been disappointing because they smoked and drank. He is now deeply religious and frequently, to my discomfit, tried to convert me from Islam to Christianity. He does not miss his previous life, and rarely spends time with the friends he had at that time, because he is no longer the same person who drinks, smokes or does drugs, because of his conversion to Christianity. He wants to marry a churchgoing woman, who prays to have her sins forgiven and, because premarital sex is a sin, she should be a virgin.

At 29, Mzi has never held a job. He wants to finish Matric but does not know where he will be accommodated. He did not return to school after his impairment. Some of the classes are too fast and he needs a school where they will slow down so he can work at a pace that suits him. He used to go to a night school and passed some of the subjects, receiving a respectable C-pass for English. His English is excellent, and is one of the four languages he is fluent in. isiXhosa is his first language and he also speaks Sotho and Afrikaans. There is a well-thumbed English dictionary in his room, which he uses whenever he does not understand a word. He believes in the importance of gaining knowledge and finding out the things he does not know. He wants to be a computer programmer and went to classes set up by an NGO in his neighbourhood for a while, until they were robbed of all their computers. He does not own a computer on which to practice, though, and does not want to use the computers at the public library.

When he was ten years old, Mzi hung out with friends at the games shop and began smoking cigarettes. At eleven, they started using marijuana, Mandrax at 13 and eventually rocks (heroin) by the time they were 14. To service their drug habit, they robbed people and houses. They were deeply feared in their neighbourhood and enjoyed being able to intimidate people. Becoming a gangster was a process and occurred despite his family (and most of his friends' families) being respectable. All his friends of that time have been in prison. He was 14 or 15 the first time he went to prison, a result of one of the seven police cases he was involved in. He says, except for one, his friends' lives have not changed and they continue to be involved in criminality, despite frequent bouts of imprisonment. He loved having numerous girlfriends, living outside of the law and being feared in his community. In 2007, when he was 18, Mzi went to a shop opposite a shebeen[34] and noticed that his friend was in a fight outside the shebeen. He left the shop, went to assist his friend to break up the fight, and got stabbed in his head and right arm. Like Teboho below, he spent years rehabilitating, most of it on his own, so that he would not have to be a wheelchair user. His doctors, and the medical professionals who first worked with him, did not expect him to regain his speech or walk.

Sipho

Sipho lives in the same neighbourhood, is very charismatic and self-assured, and frequently teases me, sometimes bordering on flirtation. I struggled at first to ascertain whether he was serious. Very early on, he tells me that he does not consent to the use of his information. Despite being disappointed, I say, I understand, even though I do not, and assure him that I will withdraw what he has told me and get ready to leave. He laughs and tells me he is joking. He looks a little puzzled that I responded so seriously. There is something in the way in which he interacts, the darkness of his humour and the ease with which he engages the world, that confounds me. I realise much later that I expected dourness, and a deep sadness from people who have become disabled, and certainly did not expect playfulness and a pragmatic accommodation to the vagaries of life. Reading the transcripts, I am discomfited by my struggle to understand. There are frequent questions from me and short responses from him, as if the pragmatic way in which he engages the world makes absolute sense and requires little explanation. He frequently responds to my 'why?' with, 'it's a life'.

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[34] Tavern

He lives in his family home with a cousin; his family has lived in this house for decades. The house is frequently dark and there is not a lot of furniture in the lounge[35] where we sit. There is a make-shift ramp next to the wide front door. The entrance between the lounge and the rest of the house is large, and allows him easy and free access within the house. The cared-for beautiful dark wood lounge suite with floral cushions has clearly been with the family for a long time. Except for the stacked cases that must have held alcohol, it looks like a living room out of my childhood. He sells barbecued meat on Fridays to supplement his meagre income from the monthly state disability grant,[36] and the cases are part of his business. I would learn later that he tends to wake late and go to bed late. My preference for meeting earlier in the day was an irregular part of his routine. Sipho does not tell me a lot about his family and his early childhood. The sense I get is that he was deeply loved and his childhood was thus unremarkable.[37] His is not a story of being unwanted or uncertain of his place in his family. He does share a litany of deaths – his uncle, grandmother and father – shortly after he becomes paralysed, and the deep pain that caused. His family fetched him from hospital for the funerals without telling him of the deaths, because they were afraid of what it would mean for his recovery. He wept for days, at the funerals and afterwards, and there is something about how he relates the depth of emotion for the loss of his family that makes his mourning feel like love in action. Then, much later, his mother’s devastating death in 2002.

Sipho ran away, despite his mother’s disapproval and attempt to protect him because of his disability, to go through the rites of passage to manhood. He did not tell his mother; the only person who knew was his oldest brother. His mother thought he was spending the weekend with friends. He says it was hard, though people were helpful. When he came back just over a month later and his mother asked him why he would do such a thing, he told her he was not going to defer to his friends who had become men through circumcision rites. His family celebrated his manhood by slaughtering a cow and six sheep.

He has a full social life and spends most of his evenings with a close-knit group of ten friends that he has had since childhood. They hang out, smoke, drink and watch television and, the way he tells it, they laugh a lot. He belongs to a multiracial wheelchair rugby club, frequently travels

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[35] I am fascinated by how I interpreted empty space and accessible design in different places. It took me a long time to understand that empty space in impoverished spaces are as vital to accommodate wheelchairs as they are in beautifully accommodated and aesthetically minimalist middle-class spaces.

[36] In 2022, it is ZAR1980 which is equivalent to USD122.51.

[37] Not that happy childhoods do not matter …

to play, and has deep, long-lasting and close relationships with his team-mates. When he was first approached to play wheelchair rugby in 2002, he was at a social worker's office in Bridgetown.[38] He agreed to go and see what it was like. He says his team tricked him into thinking it was an easy sport for his first two months of playing. When he was in his first national match, he got thrown out of his chair and did not want to play after that incident. Pushing past his anger and resistance, his teammates went to a lot of effort to ensure he remained in their team. They have since become like family and are an immense source of support, such as providing lifts and money when needed. He and his best friend in the club, who is married with five children and lives a fair distance away, sometimes sleep over at each other's homes when a visit has stretched into the early hours of the morning. He tried to start a wheelchair rugby club at Jonathan's home, but the administrator at the time did not encourage it.

Sipho is in a long-distance relationship. His girlfriend of 17 years moves across the country frequently for her job. When she was based in Cape Town, they lived together. He built a routine around caring for her. In the mornings, he would wake and make her breakfast and prepare lunch for her to take to work; in the evenings, he cooked supper and when she got home, he would make her a cup of tea or coffee. Weekends too, he saw to it that she never had to do any domestic labour. For a short while, nine months, he worked as a closed-circuit television camera operator for a major department store in one of the larger malls in Cape Town. He liked the job because he worked half-days and could still care for the household while earning money. However, his boss repeatedly paid him short and he stopped working. When he stopped working, his girlfriend asked him why he was being lazy and wanting to sleep rather than working. He then began a small business selling fruit and vegetables. Sipho has an adapted vehicle now. Though, at the time of interviewing him, it was not running because he could not afford to fix it. When he started his small business, he did not have a car. He relied on public transport and wheeling himself many kilometres to buy stock when he moved between the neighbourhood where he lived, bought stock and his family home, to where he sold his produce. The long days and difficulties of maintaining a household could not be sustained and so he stopped working. He says it was a lazy period. He struggled at first to accept his girlfriend's financial assistance. He wanted to buy her gifts and take care of her financially. She preferred it when he saved his money and did not spend it on her.

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[38] The Cape Town Association for Physically Disabled is in Bridgetown, another black neighbourhood on the Cape Flats that is predominantly Coloured.

He also has a girlfriend in Cape Town. Relationships with girlfriends, other than his long-term girlfriend, are usually shorter, three or four years, primarily because it is hard having to explain how sex works and what being in a relationship with a paraplegic entails. He tells me there are two kinds of romantic relationships. Long-term ones, like he has with his long-term girlfriend, who is like a wife. She is perfume, while short-term girlfriends are ‘roll-ons,’ like the underarm antiperspirant, everyday and hidden under the armpit. Secret from his long-term girlfriend but not from his friends and family, he has little obligation to his short-term girlfriend and sees her intermittently. He admits that cheating is wrong and, whilst not condemned by his family or friends, it is not fully accepted.

As a teenager, Sipho belonged to a Claremont running club and, on 20 September 1992, when he was 19, went for a run in Observatory.[39] When he came home from his run at around 11am, he hung up his laundry in the yard. He was home alone that day. His family was in Gugulethu[40] and he was getting ready to join them. There was fighting in the street, shots were being fired and he got caught in the crossfire. He felt something hot on his neck and ran inside, opened the door and fell. Fortunately, he fell close to the phone and after a struggle to get the phone down to ground-level, he managed to call a relative who lived close by. When his cousin arrived, he called the ambulance. They were quick to arrive. Just outside his neighbourhood, on the highway, the two paramedics stopped the ambulance, opened a cooler box on the side of the road, pulled out a bottle of Bertram’s whiskey and drank. When I first heard the story, I was aghast at the callousness. The greater part of me remains horrified and outraged. After many months of reflection, I wondered how terrifying it must have been for those paramedics to drive through a neighbourhood where gunfire was taking and maiming life. How do they cope, the largely black men and women who confront the violence of this divided city?

He was left in a corridor of Groote Schuur hospital for hours. A family friend, who had heard about the shooting, came to the hospital to see him and was told maybe he had been sent to another hospital because there was no record of him. The friend searched and found him in one of the corridors where he had been forgotten, drenched in blood, after which he was admitted.

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[39] Both Claremont and Observatory are formerly white neighbourhoods, thus this was a largely white running club. 1992 was just before South Africa became democratic (1994), and during the transition period where negotiations for democratic South Africa were taking place, but after the unbanning of political parties (1990), such as the ANC, and release of Nelson Mandela.

[40] A black African neighbourhood

They transferred him to Conradie Hospital, which at the time had a Spinal Cord Injuries Centre.[41] His white, female doctor told his mother 'your son, (there is) nothing I can do. If there is something, I (am) supposed to put a(n) injection, and then your son must die.' I gasped at this suggestion of euthanasia. He goes on to tell me how his mother responded to the doctor: 'my mother says no. I can't do that. That's my son.' He would be moved to another ward, and in that ward, the black people in the segregated ward were dying continually, terrorising him into wondering when he will die. He credits the frequent visits of his white friends in his running club for why he was moved into a ward where he was treated with care. He remembers some of the nursing staff with extreme fondness. When he left the hospital, he was barely able to help himself and he stayed indoors for months, not wanting to leave the house. He trained himself to gradually be able to dress himself and move from the bed to the wheelchair. When he returned to hospital for a check-up, the medical professionals who had taken care of him were shocked at his progress.

Teboho

Teboho also lives in this neighbourhood. He is dignified and feels like an elder, even though he is only two years older than I am. We would only have two interviews. He confirms and then cancels twice, and forgets the last confirmed interview. We drive past each other; he is with his brother on his way to an urgent family matter and makes hasty apologies. Our interviews are difficult, though not unpleasant or bad-humoured. He is parsimonious with his words. I want long, reflective and detailed responses with minimal prompting from me, but this is not how our conversations unfold. The sense I have of him is someone who spends more time doing than talking, with a deeply private core that few gain access to. He does not feel lonely.

He lives with his two brothers. The house has a steep set of stairs to the narrow front door, which is high off the ground. The living room is tiny and filled with furniture, books, files and Teboho's numerous craft projects. He was making hats to sell and was more interested in hearing about my hobby, knitting, and the knitted bags I design, than talking about his life. As a way of building rapport, I had told him about my hobby when we first met, when he told me he liked making things. His nephew studies in the living room when he comes home from school. At our first

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[41] The Conradie Hospital Spinal and General Rehabilitation Units were merged with the Karl Bremer Rehabilitation Unit, and are now the Western Cape Rehabilitation Centre. These merged centres are centralised in a new location in Mitchells Plain. The Conradie Spinal Rehabilitation Unit was the largest in South Africa and situated in Pinelands, an affluent formerly white neighbourhood. Karl Bremer Rehabilitation Unit is also in a formerly white neighbourhood in Bellville.

interview, when he arrived back from a learnership, the house was locked and we went to the public library. When the children from the neighbourhood, his nephew included, began streaming into the library after school, most greeted him with careful respect. On the day I interview him in his house, relatives arrive frequently. It is a busy household, and in the way that his relatives speak to him, it is evident he is loved and respected. He has been dating someone for a few years but does not want to settle down with her. He wants someone who drinks less, is more mature, and with whom he can build a life. He also wants his own home before he gets married, somewhere with more space. He cannot remember how many years ago it was when he applied to the housing department, but he has registered and is on the waiting list for government housing.

In 2004, he started an organisation in his neighbourhood for men with disabilities. By 2011, out of 17, there were only two members of the organisation left in the neighbourhood. Six had died of pressure sores, one had moved to the Eastern Cape, and the majority had been moved to Delft, another under-resourced government housing project. Delft, too, is a largely black and deeply impoverished township with minimal access to services, and endemic violence. Teboho longs to revive his organisation so he can teach young men with disabilities skills and crafts that can occupy them. It bothers him that they sit around and do not do anything. For over five years, up until 2017, he had worked on short-term contracts for the Western Cape Government in their Department of Social Development's Peer Support Programme. He was tasked with counselling people in his neighbourhood who had just become disabled, and providing support to navigate the bureaucracy of disability. When I ask him how many new people with disabilities he has met in this way, he estimates more than 100 in a year, and that 70% have become disabled because of injury through either interpersonal violence or accidents.

Teboho goes from one protective workshop[42] to another, learning new skills. At the time of interviewing him, he was learning hairdressing. He did not continue with school after his impairment, but instead did numerous courses like business administration, marketing, sewing, and leatherwork. His parents had wanted him to study law at university and he had wanted to travel the world. Because of the organisation he started, and his involvement in the national disability organisation, he has travelled extensively across South Africa. He never got to study law, though. Instead, he did one learnership after another, at whichever institutions were available to him, because he did not want to limit himself and he wanted to be sure that he would

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[42] These are workshops where people with disabilities learn new skills that can be used to make things to supplement their income and not threaten their disability grant.

have an array of skills that could be income-generating. He could not recall all the courses he had done over the last 20 years. When he was 21, he wanted to be a business administrator and completed training in business administration, but only secured internships. He applies for new learnerships and work opportunities while he is in the midst of an opportunity, so that he does not have to wait for protracted periods of time where he is not engaged in doing something. I had a sense during our interviews that he was hoping I could be a source of a new work opportunity, or assist with structuring his revived NGO.

In 1988, when he was 18, he tells me at first, he was mugged by criminals in Khayelitsha,[43] another largely black African neighbourhood. Later, in the same interview, he says while he and a friend were walking, his friend got into a fight. When he came to his friend's aid to protect, him, he was stabbed. They lay in the street for a long time before the ambulance came.

Rehabilitation took about three gruelling years. Though he was told he would never walk again, he was determined to not be in a wheelchair. He related how hard he worked at physiotherapy and occupational therapy so he could become strong. After hospital-based rehabilitation, and about three years after his injury, he went to the mountain and for three months, like other young black South African men, he underwent the rituals to manhood. He was treated with kindness and received the assistance he needed to successfully come home a man. He says, similarly to Mzi and Sipho, if he had not gone to the mountain, he would forever be a boy. Even though he says that he treats disabled men who have not undergone the rites of passage as normal men, going was important. He says it made him strong and when he returned, he eventually took his wheelchair back to the hospital and got crutches. Leaving his wheelchair behind, using callipers and crutches, he would go to the stadium with his athletic friends. He trained, day after day, hopping in his callipers until he was exhausted, and brooking no pity from his friends who tried to get him to be gentler with himself. Until he no longer required his callipers to walk and could take both the wheelchair and callipers back to the hospital and only use crutches.

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[43] Khayelitsha abuts Mitchells Plain and, according to Pijper, Breetzke & Edelstein (2020), the 2011 Census estimates approximately 400 000 people, but there are estimates of up to 1.2 million people in an area of 43.51 square kilometres. It is one of the world's five biggest 'slums', with between 32 and 46% of people living in dire poverty, with three quarters of households living on monthly incomes of less than USD160 and nearly 40% unemployment. As with most deeply impoverished spaces in South Africa, the crime rate is staggering and Khayelitsha is often in the top ten crime spots in the country.

Fahiema

Fahiema is very self-assured and has an authoritative presence. Initially, I over-identified with her. I recognised parts of my life in hers and some of her story aligned so closely with my own history that I would lose sight of who she was. We are close in age, as she is two years older than I am. We are both Muslim and classified as Cape Malay under apartheid's racial classificatory regime. We were both raised in violent households on the Cape Flats with a sense of middle-classness, whilst simultaneously moving in and out of poverty. Educated well beyond many of the people we grew up with, we both found a measure of the promised postapartheid that has eluded so many. The sense I have, even with the distance of time, is that while there have been significant changes in our lives from our beginnings, those early years on the Cape Flats, both as the site of love and trauma, have indelibly shaped our emotional landscapes. We did not really escape after all. I did warn you that I over-identified with her. There were moments when I would summarise what she had said or reflected on something she had shared through similarities in my own history, and she would correct me to say that was my experience, not hers. Whilst I might have over-identified, she did not.

The interviews were largely conducted in winter at her beautiful, fully adapted home in a prestigious neighbourhood, with minimalist and Muslim-inspired aesthetics and gently rolling floors to accommodate her and her husband's wheelchairs. The door was usually opened by their domestic worker. The lighting in the house was frequently low, the blinds not fully drawn. At the time, she operated a consulting business from her home which mentored professional women into achieving their full potential within their careers. Previously, she worked in the South African civil service.

Fahiema was born in District Six.[44] Her family was relocated to Lavender Hill. Her parents owned a thriving small business and, in her early years, she wanted for nothing. She adored her doting father. He had four wives, and she was the eleventh of twelve children. Her parents got

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[44] District Six has iconic status in South Africa's spatial imagination. Established in the early 19th century, and housing formerly enslaved people, merchants and artisans, the area had seen numerous changes and at one point housed a tenth of the city's population. Whilst largely occupied by people classified as Coloured and Cape Malay, it was a multiracial area on the outskirts of Cape Town's city centre and occupied prime land. After the Group Areas Act of 1956 legislated separate areas that were racially proscribed, District Six was declared a white area in February 1966 and, between 1968 and 1982, over 60 000 people were forcibly removed and relocated in the Cape Flats. Homes were bulldozed and most of the land was developed but, due to ongoing protests, about a third of the land remains unused. District Six is a wound that persists in postapartheid South Africa. According to the postapartheid Land Restitution Act of 1994, claims can be made on land where people were forcibly removed. However, these processes remain fraught and a great many claims have not been processed. For more on District Six, and the restitution processes, see Alicia Fortuin's (2018) thesis.

divorced when her father married one of his wives not just by Islamic marital rites but also in the South African court, thus giving that wife the advantage of inheritance and legal protection by the state. Because Fahiema's mother did most of the work in the business that supported her husband's other wives and children, she was angered and divorced him. First, she ran away and Fahiema says this left her with a fear of abandonment. Her mother started an affair with a man she would eventually marry. Fahiema was eight. She began calling her mother a whore because she had heard her father use this term during their arguments.

When she was ten years old, her stepfather attempted to sexually abuse her. Her mother did not believe her, which caused an irrevocable break in their relationship. She spent most of her childhood attempting to protect her sister and two brothers from her drug-addicted stepfather, and witnessed the brutal beatings he meted out to her mother. From a life of plenty, they were plunged into penury where, for example, their electricity was disconnected for more than two years, they had very little to eat, and were in constant danger of eviction because her stepfather would take her mother's income. She learned to be tough and to portray toughness. She dated a gangster thinking her would protect her. He would shoot her, in her mother's house, when she was 17.

The police wrongfully thought her mother was involved in the shooting and arrested her. Fahiema's traumatised sister and brothers had to stay with her at Conradie Hospital while her mother was in police custody. The case was withdrawn and her mother and Fahiema's boyfriend were freed. Fahiema continued dating him for a while afterward. During her rehabilitation, in a peer support meeting for people with disabilities, she met Riedwaan, the man who would become her husband.

He was a student at the University of Cape Town and drove his own car. Her world changed. Going to a university, a predominantly white institution, no less, became possible. She fought to be readmitted to high school, and trained her peers to carry her up and down the stairs but, despite her determined efforts, failed that year. She had always been one of the top students, and to Riedwaan's dismay, her father berated her for her failure and gave very little concession for her disability. Despite her humiliation, she went back to school. The following year, her pass was not good enough for a UCT admittance. Riedwaan advocated for her acceptance and she was admitted into the supported academic programme with a full scholarship that included living in residence. The shift from the noise and bustle of the Cape Flats to having her own room was profound, but so was the difficulty of navigating an institution like UCT in the 80s. The toughness she had cultivated on the Cape Flats to keep herself safe enabled her to negotiate the alienation of a largely white institution, where many of the implicit rules were used as gatekeeping mechanisms. Education provided new possibilities, not just for her but her entire family, and allowed her to surmount setbacks.

Despite Fahiema's efforts to protect her sister and ensure a good life, when Fahiema was in her first year at university, her fourteen-year-old sister became pregnant. Fahiema advocated to ensure her sister could continue her schooling, in a school system where pregnant girls were stigmatised and prevented from attending classes. Her sister graduated from UCT and, unlike Fahiema, did not need to be in an academic support programme. She, however, died at 23 in a car accident. Fahiema and Riedwaan had struggled with infertility for many years, and had undergone infertility treatments over a four-year period. When her sister died, they adopted her son. That her son did not want to pursue a tertiary education was very difficult for Fahiema to accept. Her drive and belief in education was not matched by his interests. It took her a while to accept that his path diverged from what she believed was necessary for a respectable and thriving life. He now runs a successful business, and is married with a wife and child. They live with Fahiema and her husband. Her granddaughter has shifted her need to control and is an immense source of joy. She thinks motherhood was one of her greatest failures.

Positioned advantageously due to her university education in the early years of a democratic South Africa, and possessing an indomitable drive, she was able to create and take on extremely challenging and high-profile employment opportunities. Married to an ambitious man who supported her, she travelled extensively and had the freedom to pursue her ambitions. She has a long and distinguished career in government service. In an environment where women, black people, and disabled people did not receive much respect or support, she successfully managed several government departments. She had to do a lot of work to ensure she received respect and cooperation. Fahiema has a deep-seated sense of social justice. She left government service when the terrain of engagement changed, and a new kind of government employee became entrenched who focused more on service to power than changing apartheid's historical legacies. For almost 25 years, work had been central to her identity. At the time of interviewing, she was re-evaluating her life so she and her husband would not be vulnerable in their old age, and could maintain their independence and standard of life. The work she does now is ensuring that people who have important roles to play in shifting social conditions are able to do that as healthy and empowered individuals.

Conclusion

The five individuals we have met through the life histories all became disabled through interpersonal violence. Their lives are also shot through with the presence of multiple kinds of violences: inadequate infrastructure, inaccessible schools, overcrowded housing and neighbourhoods, medical violence and negligence, and domestic violence towards women and children. Drug and substance addiction by children and adults contributes to interpersonal violence by creating inhospitable homes and communities, and substance abuse is used to soothe the pain of alienation and violence. There is a lot of research required on death, disability and debility and substance abuse, including how bodies get worn down by chemical dependencies. I am hoping that the conjunctures, and even the choices, in my presentation of participants are productive and open spaces for questions. There is a lot of room for tender, gentle work, such as research on friendship, and on churches and religion as sites of healing and not just of stigma. Similarly, there is scope for research on familial relationships and bonds where, even when a child becomes injured and causes injury, they continue to be loved and cared for and fought for fiercely.

In the next chapter, I focus on interpersonal violence, masculinity and gangsterism. Although a small percentage of black men and boys become gangsters, it is a form of sociality that has terrorised the Cape Flats and caused catastrophic amounts of death, disability and debility. There are periodic gang wars in which the casualty rates are so spectacular that they are newsworthy, but there is also violence that is constant and does not make the news. We do not get news on those who are injured, who become disabled. We do not get news of the everyday terror that causes people to remain indoors, the ways in which debilitation becomes a form of life. The exercise you cannot take because to walk for pleasure, for leisure is to court injury or death. The foods filled with sugar and fat that you eat to soothe yourself, to make it tasty, that result in lifestyle diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and hypertension. The hidden ways in which structural violence massified death, disability and debility is not present in South African disability studies scholarship, but neither is the visible production of death, disability and debility. Interpersonal violence is endemic in South Africa and, in places like the Cape Flats, men learn to portray invulnerability in the face of violence. Friendships often require a willingness to fight and risk violence on each other’s behalf and, for some young boys, the street, gangs and drugs become places of escape. Based on Jonathan and Mzi’s life histories, I explore some of these dynamics in the next chapter.

PART II: LAND DISPOSSESSION, BLACK CRIMINALISATION AND DISABILITY

Chapter 6: *Warring worlds: Urban warfare and gangster masculinities*

The five life histories in the previous chapter offered snapshots of disabled black lives that were shaped by interpersonal violence. A bullet ripped through Sipho's neck while he was hanging laundry outside. Fahiema was shot by her gangster boyfriend. Teboho was severely beaten in defence of a friend. Jonathan, a teenage gangster at the time, was also beaten. Like Jonathan, Mzi was also a teenage gangster when he was stabbed in his head and, like Teboho, in a fight to defend a friend. They all have violently acquired spinal cord injuries (VASCI), and became disabled due to interpersonal violence, with varying degrees of disablement that have shifted over time for some of them. All five were raised in impoverished black South African neighbourhoods with extremely high levels of interpersonal violence. Gangsterism shaped worlds and, as we have seen in the stories, had/has ontological effects. Drug and alcohol addictions are rife as coping mechanisms that in turn produced more violence (Seedat, van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla & Ratele, 2009). Whilst all the participants lived in Cape Town at the time of their study, their injuries were dispersed across space and time. In their stories, a social geography of apartheid spatial planning comes into view, as well as the conditions that became part of the making of South African cities. What was common was that the worlds in which their injuries occurred were shaped by apartheid policies of segregation and resource deprivation, which I explore further in the next chapter.

What I focus on in this chapter is the production of disability in black worlds due to the ubiquity of interpersonal violence. That violence is endemic in South Africa, and concentrated in black spaces, are well-known, well-worn facts. In 2000, after HIV/AIDS, violence and interpersonal violence were the second leading causes of death and injury in South Africa, and was responsible for over 1.7 million disability adjusted life years (DALY) (Seedat et al., 2009; Norman, Schneider, Bradshaw, Jewkes, Abrahams, Matzoupolos & Vos, 2010). Approximately 3.5 million people seek help for injuries every year (Seedat et al., 2009) and South Africa is one of the few countries that has a higher rate of injury due to intentional, rather than unintentional, injury (Schuurman, Cinnamon, Walker, Fawcett, Nicol, Hameed & Matzoupolos, 2015). Schuurman et al. (2015) did a study on trauma-related injuries at a major Cape Town hospital, and found that most injuries occurred at night and weekends, were violence related (35%), most victims were male (75%), mostly young, and in records where alcohol or substance abuse was present, 80% were males. The authors also state injuries may be under-reported. In their study of trauma-related injuries at a district hospital in Cape Town, Zaidi, Dixon, Lupez, De Vries, Wallis, Ginde & Mould-Millman (2019) state that, whilst the global burden DALY caused by interpersonal violence dropped by 19.1%, it rose in Southern Africa by almost 50%. They also found nearly half (45%) of admissions to be injury-related. As a district hospital, they received an inordinately high amount of trauma cases which they were not prepared for, as they did not have the facilities, and thus patients had to be transferred to other facilities. As most injuries happen at nights and weekends, the hospital also had less staff. Lack of resources, facilities, misaligned staffing with the time that most trauma cases would present itself, all contribute to higher mortality and disability rates.

When I started, and as I closed off the project, gang wars erupted on the Cape Flats. Gang wars and violence connected to gangs, while only intermittently circulating in public consciousness, is a persistent form of warfare in many impoverished black neighbourhoods on the Cape Flats. The possibility and effects of interpersonal violence exerted by gangsterism exerts a heavy presence in those neighbourhoods (Shields, Nadasen & Pierce, 2008). I want to stress that the social geography of blackness is varied; it was classed during apartheid and remains classed, even if there are spillovers into more economically secure black neighbourhoods. For example, spatial planning in South Africa had more porous boundaries amongst black neighbourhoods, as black neighbourhoods abutted each other, and black people moved through and between them. Most black people have families across class divides. I have relatives who, like myself, have moved into formerly white neighbourhoods, and relatives who live in neighbourhoods across class spectrums. Some live in neighbourhoods which, whilst majority black, are very middle class, though services and responses from the state through its agents, such as public healthcare, municipal services and police, are still not equivalent to the responsiveness in neighbourhoods that are majority white. For people who live in impoverished spaces, exposure to violence, such as physical violence, substance addiction, hunger and want, is naked and ordinary. Exposure to violence is spatialised, and so profoundly mark experience that moving a few kilometres produces very different life potentials. The majority of black South Africans live in conditions where they cannot evade or ignore the ways in which interpersonal is woven into their everyday lives.

In this chapter, I will focus on interpersonal violence and the relationship to masculinity and gangsterism. Interpersonal violence, as we saw with Fahiema, can be disabling for women. The high rates of terror that accompany gender-based violence and femicide – what Pumla Gqola (2021) calls the female fear factory – are debilitating. My focus, however, will be on masculinity, not only because four male participants were victims of violence, and at least two were habitual perpetrators of violence, but also because Fahiema's gangster boyfriend caused her disablement. There is very little work on violence and women with disabilities in South Africa (Van der Heijden, Abrahams, & Harries, 2019), and on the production of disability for women. There is thus urgent work required on all aspects of the intersection of gender, disability (and of course its correlates, death and debility) and violence.

In this chapter, I want to make some preliminary connections between masculinity, disability, and gangsterism, and what the willingness to do and experience violence may tell us about the affective work that makes violence possible. That death, disability and debility is the consequence of the valorisation of violence will be treated as given. I am not attempting an engagement with the structures, i.e. the organised abandonment (Gilmore, 2007) by the apartheid state, and settler colonial tactics of systematic impoverishment of black settlement, that preceded apartheid. The process of destroying communities, and the wealth that accrued from stewardship of property through forcible removals to spatialise apartheid, is part of the story, along with allowing and fostering rampant criminality. However, here I am interested in some of what makes death-dealing, disabling and debilitating violence possible by young, black men. As agents of the destruction of peace in black communities through their willingness to do violence, they are both victims and perpetrators of settler colonial attritional tactics of warfare. At the same time, violence is a symptom of other affective forces, such as needing to show invulnerability and stoicism and thus be respected, and to be willing to endure and mete out violence to show loyalty. What is important to note about the violence itself is that homosociality – the bonds between men (Flood, 2008; Hammarén & Johansson, 2014) – is expressed through the willingness to do violence, and has been engendered as a means of fostering connection.

I have no clear argument. What I have is a grasping for a vocabulary, through my sorrow and despair and general sense of powerlessness at the implications of sustained and relentless violence, and what living and enduring long histories of violence has entailed for people with whom I share histories. In the following section, I will briefly explore masculinity, interpersonal violence and risk. The next section will focus on Mzi and Jonathan, who were self-confessed gangsters, and their pathways with gangsterism. Gangsterism remakes worlds and is a form of endemic urban warfare which bedevils many black communities and discussed in the following section, after which, I explore invulnerable masculinities.

Masculinity, interpersonal violence and risk

That five of the people with whom I did life histories had violently acquired impairments (VAI) (Green, 2019) or VASCI (Devlieger, Albrecht & Hertz, 2007) speaks to not just the prevalence of violence but also how masculinity shapes risk and disability. In their study on the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder in people with acquired spinal cord injuries, Moodley and Pillay (2013) found that road traffic accidents and interpersonal violence are the largest causes of traumatic spinal cord injuries, and largely affect young, single men because they are greater risk-takers. Further, their participants (which included women) experienced high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder. Interpersonal violence thus produces multiple disabilities, and compounds the continuing effect of mass, neglected and ignored trauma experienced by people who live in neighbourhoods with unacceptably high rates of violence. Masculinities that express themselves through violence is a public health crisis (Seedat et al., 2009) that destroys through sowing death, but also disables and debilitates, not just individual lives, but communities.

In South Africa, young, black men wound and kill each other, and are both the perpetrators and victims of fatal and impairing violence (Ratele, 2010, 2016). Sometimes for sport, sometimes because of deadly rivalries, or for any of a variety of reasons where everyday life in impoverished spaces across the world makes lethal force a possible response for young, marginalised men. Young, black men use weapons, such as guns and bullets that are readily available (Lambrechts, 2012),[45] to level deadly force and split open bodies. Some of those who get shot will be bystanders. Weapons that kill at a distance do not discriminate. Some of those who are shot will die, but many will not. Young, black men also use their fists, knives (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation [CSVR], 2010), bottles and whatever is available to remake the bodies of others, to create armour made of fear and enforced respect, and to protect themselves from the violence of others (Ratele, 2016).

Men's capacity to wield and endure interpersonal violence, from physical violence and bullying to withstanding insults, is endemic as a mechanism of manhood, irrespective of race (Collins, 2013; Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2020; Boonzaier, Huysamen & van Niekerk, 2021). While the concept of hegemonic masculinity, the dominant form of masculinity in a specific context, has been subjected to much critique (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Langa & Kiguwa, 2013),

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[45] Lambrechts' (2012) participants in Manenberg, a neighbourhood beset with gang violence, asserted that guns were easy to access and moved between neighbourhoods on the Cape Flats. The participants claimed that, in some cases, when police raided homes and found weapons, they would not confiscate the weapons but instead would return the following day to claim a bribe from the gangster whose gun it was.

Connell’s influential assertion that masculinity is a place in the gender order and is produced in opposition to femininity (Connell, 2005) remains germane (Ratele, Shefer, Strebel & Fouten, 2010; Collins, 2013). Being unwilling to engage in violence is to re-gender the self and be stigmatised as effeminate or a nerd (Ratele, 2016; Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2020; Langa, 2020). In contexts of relentless, pervasive violence, the willingness to jump into a fight to defend a friend is the glue around which masculinity is made (Ratele, 2016; Langa, 2020; Stevens, 2008). How masculine violence is expressed is deeply and integrally tied to histories of domination in South Africa, such as the abandonment of black neighbourhoods and multiple frustrations caused by racist capitalist structural violence (Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2020; Ratele, 2016; Langa & Kiguwa, 2013), some of which I explore in the next chapter.

Robinson (2020: 492), in her review of studies on masculinity and risk, states that ‘masculinities, risk and risk taking are interconnected, socially sanctioned, discursively constituted and individually embodied and experienced.’ Men are also at risk, as their need to evince invulnerability means they do not seek medical help when they need it, and are more at risk for suicide than women. Similar to the South African masculinities scholars whose work I have drawn on, Robinson points out that, ‘The issue of male violence against other men is also important to address, as men are themselves often at risk of violence, either death or injury, at the hands of other men’ (2020: 494). According to Ratele, in South Africa,

> black males between the ages 20 and 40 are roughly nine times as likely to die from homicidal violence as black females in the corresponding age group, 17 times as likely as white males in the same age group, and about 35 times as likely as Indian females (2010: 20).

The risks of death, disability and debility men experience are not just gendered but also raced. Mzi and Jonathan's life histories allowed me to witness some of these risks as they recalled the events of their disablement, but also the pleasure of those risks, and of being seen as risky. They also both claimed, despite having been suicidal at different points after becoming impaired, that they were happy they became disabled because they found God. Disability thus closed off gangsterism as a pathway (gangway), and inducted them into different relational structures, with the church offering them new routes to patriarchal privilege. In the following section, we will explore some of the ways they characterised the seduction of gangsterism and the pleasure of violence, before discussing gangsterism more broadly in the following section.

Mzi and Jonathan's 'gangways'

Both Mzi and Jonathan confessed to having been in gangs as young boys. Undoubtedly, the presence and normativity of criminality in their everyday lives had an impact. Both their paths into gangster masculinities depended on violence and the willingness to engage in criminal activities, and was deeply affected by the camaraderie of friendship. They were both in worlds in which drugs played a part, and drug use created danger and/or criminality. For Jonathan, selling drugs added another dimension to gangsterism. Whilst most of Jonathan's childhood and adolescence was characterised by a difficult relationship with his parents, his grandparents loved him deeply. For Mzi, whose family was loving, respectable and churchgoing, his path to a life on the street was not about escaping a home. Though there are similarities in their stories, there are notable difference in their sense of belonging within their families. There are many things about their stories that remain opaque and offer possibilities for further studies in South Africa on gangsterism, masculinity and disability. It hurt Mzi that he was now a person who could be mishandled in the street and was on the other side of the power relationship. It would still have hurt him, even if he had not once been a gangster, but it was precisely how far he had moved from a sense of power that created the wound. Jonathan's intelligence has found other pathways, such as higher education, politics, the church and activism for people with disabilities, and he is deeply wounded by the shame of who he used to be. What stands out is how vivid their friendships were, and how comparatively pale their descriptions of criminality and victimising others.

Their masculinities shifted over time into the paradox of what Shuttleworth, Wedgwood and Wilson (2012) call the dilemma of disabled masculinities. This sense of masculinity being threatened by disability runs through most of the international literature on masculinity and disability. Because disability destabilises the patriarchal dividend, it creates a dilemma for disabled masculinity (Shuttleworth et al., 2012). In the aftermath of their traumatic injuries, who they had become had probably been worked and reworked through behavioural self-blame (Kaminer & Eagle, 2010), to come to terms with their new identities. Men with disabilities' identification with hegemonic masculinity brings them into conflict with their marginalised status (Hahn, 1989), as we can see in Mzi's mourning of his status as a victim of violence by the young men in his neighbourhood. Not all men with disabilities seek to conform to hegemonic masculinity; some reject it and others reformulate their relationship to normative masculine ideals (Gerschick & Miller, 2000). All the men I encountered in my research interwove hegemonic ideals of masculinity with reformulations and rejections of hegemonic masculinity.

Frequently, because patriarchal dominance is possible through multiple avenues that are sociohistorically and culturally available, all the men chose other forms of ideal masculinity. Whilst Mzi and Jonathan rejected the hegemonic ideals of gangster masculinity, they still strove for the patriarchal privileges bestowed on them through the church and cultural practices, such as circumcision rites. However, similar to Ostrander's (2008: 596) participants, who all had VASCI and were from environments where hypermasculinity conferred 'power and privilege,', they felt very vulnerable as disabled men. Thus, as Robertson, Monaghan and Southby (2020) state, men with disabilities can be understood as operating within a matrix of dominance, with multiple advantages and disadvantages.

In one of the few South African studies on the intersection of masculinity and disability, in their Master's thesis, Helenard Louw (2019) did life histories and photo-voice with 15 Coloured men with paraplegia. The men confided, many for the first time, how vulnerable they felt. They were frequently robbed, sometimes by people who were assisting them, and subjected to violence. Robberies were not just about taking their goods, but often also about humiliating them and depriving them of their dignity. In Louw's (2021) article on the value of photo-voice, the men show the multiple ways in which they are dehumanised, objectified and stigmatised in their communities, and the kinds of emotional labour the men engage in to reformulate their masculinities. So, too, have Mzi and Jonathan had to labour against not just their identities as men with disabilities, but also the choices they made when they were young and the world around them did not offer them many places to go but the street.

Mzi

Mzi[46] laughs when he tells me that people in his neighbourhood used to be very afraid of him and his friends. His pleasure, in having once been feared, is palpable. When he starts to tell me his story, he calls his young self:

> a naughty boy … who started drinking and smoking with lots of girls just to show everyone. I was in the gangsterism that day. Anyone who tried to tell me, I pushed them away. You know that power you have. Everybody is scared of you. I liked that. I liked that. I didn't know then, the end was this. The end was this.

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[46] As noted in the methods, Mzi has a speech impairment. Information came in short and brief statements and took quite a long time to piece together. Where I have used direct speech, I have chosen to forego 'authenticity' to convey the meaning without the back and forth we required to ensure I had understood what he said.

His laugh often contains both the joy of remembering a different time and life, and a complicated embarrassment at who he used to be and who he is now. It was a brief period in a life; from feeling powerful to being the person who now gets taunted by the young men in his neighbourhood. Sometimes they push him just to see him fall over. Like the men in Ostrander's (2008) and Louw’s (2019) studies, his vulnerability and the humiliations he was made to endure made him feel emasculated. The regret he felt at his disablement, and how harrowing the change in circumstance was, were often painful to witness.

When he tells me his story, I am shocked at how young he and his friends were when they started terrorising the neighbourhood. Boys, really, in their early teens. With very few places for children to go to for entertainment in Langa, they started hanging out at the game shop[47] down the road; with the grown men, in a place where high unemployment, violence and poverty also meant the circulation of substances like drugs and alcohol to numb and self-medicate. At the age of ten, he and about five of his friends started smoking cigarettes, which escalated to drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana, then Mandrax and eventually becoming fully addicted to heroin by the age of 14. To service their addiction, they shoplifted, robbed people and broke into houses, and the risk was fun.

> *There is a moment where he tells me they were naughty with a knife. I don’t follow up, I am barely able to comprehend that perhaps Mzi might have impaired someone, in much the same way he had been impaired. I don’t know what it means to be naughty with a knife or to be talking to someone who was once injurious and revelled in it. There are no clear victims here. It is hard to reconcile this vulnerable man who laughs and whispers his pain and anger with who he tells me he was. ‘I was naughty’ is something that I have heard growing up on the Cape Flats, usually by grown men who are now fathers and sometimes respectable husbands. Grown men who to tell you that once they were very different, violent, would claim to have been naughty. Women who were sexually active as young women before they were respectably married would tell you that they used to be naughty. It is how people speak about a less than respectable past, and what is considered naughty is deeply gendered. And to say you were naughty, is to also say that now that you were no longer naughty, you were an adult. That this thing that young men do to each other is a childhood thing. The naughtiness of violence where young people tear each other apart and do not respect how fragile they all are. Knives, to me, are quite serious. I don’t follow up, I am too uneasy and it is already difficult to*

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[47] This would be like a pool hall elsewhere.

> *parse meaning and whether the word I have heard is indeed the word. When I read and listen to the transcript, I feel injured. I am not a very good researcher who follows up and carefully probes when she hears something interesting.*

They were frequently arrested; all of his friends have spent some time in prison. Mzi, too, had been caught and spent a few months in prison when he was 14 or 15. At the time he was stabbed, he had seven court cases pending. He never told me what happened to those cases or what they were about. Prison, despite being some of the worst months of his life, did not deter him or most of his friends, for whom frequent bouts of imprisonment[48] were just a part of their lives. On the day Mzi became disabled, they had gone to Cape Town's city centre, shoplifted and sold the goods. They came back with a R1000 and partied. His girlfriend, one of six at the time, asked him to spend the night with her and not leave. Because he had money to spend, he left and chatted to someone at the shop. One of his friends went to a shebeen across the road and got into a fight. On seeing the fight, Mzi left to intervene. He got stabbed in his arm and his head, the blow so powerful that some of his teeth would be knocked out of his mouth. During the long period of rehabilitation, many people thought he had died and few friends visited him. His girlfriend became pregnant by someone else, and he has not had many romantic relationships since his impairment.

Jonathan

The first time Jonathan tells me how he became injured, we are sitting in the noisy common room at the home for the disabled where he lived. His voice is very soft and, like Mzi, he has a speech impairment because of his injuries. He tells me he was at a friend's house and his friend's brother acted like a bully. He responded by threatening the brother to protect his friend. The brother and his friends found him later when he was alone and they beat him so severely that it induced a coma, and subsequently paraplegia. He would later confide that the first story he told me was different to the way events unfolded.

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[48] According to Gillespie (2008), during apartheid, South Africa had one of the top ten highest rates of incarceration, Postapartheid, South Africa has had a 60% growth in imprisonment and prisons are overcrowded. Like other racial states, incarceration is raced and classed (Gillespie, 2008). South Africa's criminalisation of black people has a very long history. As Gabeba Baderoon (2018:8) states, 'One measure of the "soiled" afterlife of slavery and colonialism can be found in the history of racially disparate rates of incarceration and sexual violence in South Africa, manifested in exponentially higher rates of sexual violence and imprisonment for Black people. An analysis of the entanglement of race and punishment since the colonial period suggests that the stain of slavery forms a powerful substratum for apartheid's racial hierarchy.' Boys like Mzi and his friends got caught in South Africa's carceral politics and, instead of rehabilitative care or any number of social measures in which criminal desistance was attempted, they were inducted into prison as a pathway. Baderoon (2018), like Gillespie (2008), states that widespread incarceration has become attached to moral projects. Black incarceration enables the state to relinquish accountability for worlds that create criminality, and instead treat the individual, their families and their communities as a problem.

His childhood was one of movement, insecurity and abandonment, moving between his loving grandparents, who lived in George, to his alcoholic mother on the Cape Flats with her new family. His mother's alcoholism and rages sent him into the streets, where he joined a gang. Her beatings left him more and more enraged, and when he was close to retaliating, he quenched the urge 'to strangle her', cried and packed to live with a friend. Joining the gang was not about wanting to be a gangster at first. Away from the rest of the residents where he could not be overhead, he confided:

> I joined because, for me, it was just nice to be amongst guys you can relate with, with growing up with one parent who is maybe a drug addict, uh, alcoholic, and so on …And, they know what it is to go through this and so for me, it was nice, because I was comfortable between them. When I am between them, and I feel like (…) I'm in charge also of them.[49]

It was the camaraderie of his friends, and the understanding he found amongst them, that made his tumultuous childhood bearable. Homosociality, the bonds cultivated between men to inhabit and perform masculinity (Hammaren & Johansson, 2014), was cultivated through the refuge they found with each other from the untreated addictions within their homes and whatever the fallout of those addictions might be. They bonded over the pain of their domestic lives and offered each other protection from the violences they endured. Mzi and Jonathan are not exceptions; there are young men like them across the world, who join gangs to escape family difficulties (Barker, 2005; Pinnock, 2016). Maier (2021) argues that addictions are disabilities. If we take this view, that there are psychoaffective and embodied effects, some chronic, some fatal, disabling and debilitating, from some long-term addictions, rather than seeing addiction as moral failings, then this opens up another space for disability studies. In a country like South Africa, where black addiction to alcohol was fostered as a means of labour control through the 'dop system,' the connections between disability and addiction should be a critical site of study, not least because there are questions about how untreated disabling conditions, like addiction, shape the experience of childhood and gender. There are also questions to be asked about the conditions that create domestic lives that send children into the street, into forms of life such as gangsterism which, in turn, produce more death, disablement and debilitation. Addictions are public health crises. Some of the young men would come to emulate similar addictions to those that created their familial relationships, thus participating in the intergenerational transmission of trauma.

Unlike his mother, his friends also made him feel confident and shored-up his sense of self-

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[49] Edited for readability: meaning not changed

worth. His friendships had a cost, though; his friends' fights became his own, as he would:

> maybe start a fight, or, whatever, if you are just giving my friends something bad or, just telling them something, you know? Maybe you going to get them, and I will say now, come get me now, get us now.

Friendship was thus both what made unbearable domestic situations liveable, but also what created volatile streets, where retaliation by disaffected young men was a group affair. Where violence is a way for a young man to attain a sense of power, patriarchy demands that men strip their capacity for certain kinds of feeling, such as the capacity to feel empathy and tenderness for an enlarged community, so that they can be men. However, they do not stop feeling. They are allowed a limited range of feeling, such as anger, rage, pleasure at cruelty and violence, but also very deep bonds of loyalty. Masculinity is rife with contradictions, tensions, and limits that men navigate, in which their sense of vulnerability and endangerment is rarely engaged with (Shefer, Kruger & Schepers, 2015). The world of the gangster, even as it is tempered by older women in a moral community (Salo, 2018), is one in which deep attachment, love and fraternal devotion to gang brothers at the expense of one's own life is permissible. At first, I was puzzled about Jonathan's lie about coming to the rescue of a friend, until I realised that, in three of the stories, loyalty was the overriding factor. Teboho, like Mzi, claimed to come to the rescue of a friend who was in a fight. Fighting, even as it was borne from frustrations, was also a means to show loyalty and love. Thus, the capacity to love is not diminished; rather, the range of people it is permissible to love, and the behaviours that attend that loving, make the will to injure, maim and debilitate possible. It is frequently injuries that are made or claimed on behalf of others. Gangsters are not without rules. As Salo (2018) shows, to engage in violence with other young men outside the gang, which might spill over into a turf war, can result in being disciplined and punished, as it places the brotherhood (Pinnock, 2016), and the space within which they live, at risk.

Frustration, pain, loneliness, and all the complicated feelings brought on by a challenging household or lack thereof, were exacerbated by drug addiction. Jonathan told me that:

> You see, that kind of attitude. And that's how I got angry, worse and worse and the drug problem, you know? The drug make you aggressive. … if you don't get the stimulation, then you tend to get angrier and angrier. And then you sommer (just) take it out on people. Sommer (just) do crime and, you know, and rob, and whatever. Just to get by, because I was very tall, a lot of, some people, they were actually intimidated by my tallness, you know?

Aggression and addiction accompanied each other, and his drug addiction, like Mzi's, further fuelled his criminal activities. However, using drugs to enhance the performance of gangster masculinities does create a theoretical quandary. The ubiquity of drugs in gangs, the hypermasculine affects they enable, can be thought of as agentive. Drugs as agents engender adolescent young men (and adult men), as it is through drugs and other substances such as alcohol they are able to produce hypermasculinity. It is probably more appropriate to think of these gendered performances as pharmaceutical or narcotic masculinities, which are affected and shaped by chemical interactions, rather than being a stable or indelible identity trait. Further, it is well-known that drugs and substances such as alcohol can have long-term impairing effects on both the body and psyche (Hansell & Raskin White, 1991). There is therefore a layered and complex relationship between disability, debility and addictive substances in precarious worlds. This does not mean that the model of masculinity in which pharmaceutical masculinities find expression is arbitrary; after all, narcotics are used towards cultivating (in)vulnerable masculinities.

Jonathan also sold drugs to have an income and a supply of drugs. Like Mzi, he expressed that his younger self enjoyed the sense of power that his stature and willingness to do violence afforded him. Unlike Mzi, there was so much shame that I almost wanted to stop. When he tells me where he was living when he first found a home with other young men on the streets, I want to weep. We had lived in the same neighbourhood, maybe even at the same time, and my brother had also found camaraderie on the streets. Perhaps I had known him, even seen him, and, because I have negotiated confidentiality, I can never ask my brothers if they knew him or how closely our lives had touched. We change the subject very shortly after. Jonathan insists he was not beaten because of the gang. The gang was not responsible for his impairment, and he has individualised his propensity to get aggressive. His innumerable fights had angered a neighbourhood watch, he tells me. They waited until he was inebriated and alone after a night's revelry and beat him. However, being in a gang made particular kinds of violences possible. In the next section, I therefore discuss gangs in South Africa.

Gangs in South Africa

Gang violence is responsible for innumerable turf wars where not only gangsters, but also bystanders, endure worlds threatened by violence. Not that all gangs are necessarily violent for, as Pinnock (2016) argues, whilst crime is attached to gangs because they are identifiable, they are not the only perpetrators of crime. As Malose Langa (2020) demonstrates, not all young men who live in Black townships become gangsters, as there are other routes to manhood. It cannot be emphasised enough that most black men do not become gangsters or violent. However, gangsterism affects everyone in a neighbourhood. Pinnock (2016) makes an important point, which is that Cape Town does not have a gang problem, it has a youth problem. There is very little for young men to do for leisure, very little in the way of resources or space for young men in black neighbourhoods. Unemployment is rife and a great many have no prospects of employment. Nor can all murder and fatal injuries be attributed to gang violence, but perhaps rather the ubiquity of substance abuse on weekends (Mbanyele & Faull, 2019).

Gangsterism, however, is a significant mode of worldmaking and affects every single person who has to live with its effects. Any family who has a gang member is affected, and in any neighbourhood where a young boy becomes a gangster, or a husband, brother, or lover is affected, as gangsters are deeply tied to the making of moral economies and the ways in which gender is produced in neighbourhoods where gangs are an ordinary part of everyday life (Salo, 2018). Gangs also affect everyone through the inculcation of fear; they delimit the spaces people may use and the times they may enjoy their neighbourhoods in myriad ways that are barely documented because they have become ordinary, ways of making racialisation and justifying racism. Gangsterism affects how families and neighbourhoods endure near-endless grief in spaces where layers of violence remake families and communities when someone is killed or injured.

There are somewhere in the region of 90 to 130 (Standing, 2005) gangs in the Cape Flats, with an estimated 100000 members (Dziewanski, 2021). Gang structures vary, and Standing (2005) claims that gang policy misses that there are various kinds of gangs, from neighbourhood gangs who operate on street corners (such as my two participants), to transnational syndicates that are entangled with the drug trade and all manner of illicit activities (Pinnock, 2016). Some gangs were formed as defensive formations against predation, such as robbery and harassment, which would transmute over time into a source of menace in communities. The differences between these formations is vast and at the same time messy in its entanglement (Pinnock, 2016); for example, Jonathan had to get the drugs he sold somewhere, though most of his activity was at the level of the street.

Approximately a third of the murders in the Western Cape can be attributed to gang violence (South African Police Service, 2019). Where the Cape Flats[50] is concerned, after apartheid, the state first attributed gang violence to apartheid, and then reverted to essentialist, deterministic and unitary explanations, where "local representatives saw coloureds as caught in 'cultures of violence', 'cultures of entitlement' and 'cultures of dependency'" (Jensen, 2010: 86). Scholars of gangsterism acknowledge that gangs are a global phenomenon and are largely prevalent amongst population groups who have been marginalised and impoverished (Kinnes, 2017).

Like most social structures, gang formations are multiple and take different forms over time and space, relevant to the context of their emergence. Jensen (2008) argues that, in Cape Town, gangs emerged around the Second World War, and were tied to the intensification of migration from farms and other areas to the city. For Pinnock (2016), gangs emerged as a response to the forced removals of the Group Areas Act during apartheid. The breaking of social bonds and community, as well as the trauma of dislocation, produced voids in social life which gangs filled. Jensen (2010) disputes this narrative, as gang activity abated immediately after apartheid-induced dislocations and would only intensify about ten years later. Jensen (2008) asserts very strongly that there are distinct differences between Coloured and Black African gangs, given their different social locations within Apartheid's spatial geography. Whilst this may be true, my focus on the effects of violent gang-related activity, and the ways in which it debilitates communities and effects physical and psycho-affective impairment, means that I have a less located view, but whether there is a racialised difference to the death-dealing, disabling and debilitating effects of gangs requires study. The particularity of gangs, and how different kinds of gangs interact within precarious lifeworlds to produce death, disability and debility, is a needed area of future research.

The incessant supply of drugs by corporate gangsters distorts local economies, and gangsters who profit off the addictions of people become sources of income and assistance. Different kinds of gangs interact with each other to create toxic economies that poison the possibility of flourishing socialities. Drug addiction sows terror in families, creating discord, and predatory and unpredictable behaviour in the addicted people escaping their precarious lifeworlds, and thus devastating the possibilities of home being a space of respite from a harsh political economy. As we can see in Mzi and Jonathan's stories, drugs fuel criminality and violent behaviour, and intensify feelings of power and aggression. The connection between drug abuse and violence has

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[50] I doubt that it is particular to the Cape Flats, but most of the gang literature in South Africa focuses on Coloured masculinity. Blacks are in gangs, whites are in subcultures.

been well-documented, along with the ways that gangs normalise the use of drugs to increase fearlessness (Sommer et al., 2017). Given how racist capitalist structural violence and settler colonial tactics of racialisation and attritional warfare have massified vulnerability in black worlds, the desire for (in)vulnerable masculinities seem especially cruel, which I discuss in the next section.

(In)Vulnerable Masculinities

That men are at risk because of masculinity is so aberrant that most students of gender are unable to articulate the violence that patriarchy places on men, or how masculinity is a gender construct, and that men would benefit from gender equity or equality (Clowes, 2013). Kopano Ratele (2010, 2016) has argued that young black men are most often the perpetrators of violence, but also at most risk of violence. It is their fearlessness, or more specifically fronting fearlessness, borne of defensive fearlessness, that places them most at risk for violence. Ratele draws on William Pollock's idea of defensive autonomy, which is related to men transmuting shame into anger. According to Ratele:

> Defensive fearlessness … is an internalisation of what it means to be a man, including a refusal to allow feelings of fear and vulnerability, derived from the culturally prevalent construction of masculinity. The pose of fearlessness goes into making masculinity. The prevalent model of 'a man without fear' persuades many young males to actively support the idea that successfully masculine males are always ready for a fight, ignore pain, play it cool and, of course, never show fear (2016: 50).

Though he is most concerned with the high rates of fatality that young black men in townships face, he notes in passing that differentiated and hierarchical conceptualisations of masculinity are useful to 'understanding men's differentiated exposure to risk as well as men's difficulties in responding to disability and injury' (p. 49). He claims that it is from positions of powerlessness, rather than hegemony, that young black men victimise each other when they are fronting fearlessness. However, pretending fearlessness places men, particularly black men, in high-risk situations that produce an inordinate distribution of vulnerability.

Yet, fronting fearlessness is not specific to (black) men. Impoverished, black women in the world I grew up in also often refused to show fear. Invulnerability may have taken different forms, but women and young girls certainly perform invulnerability too, and do not show that they have been affected or wounded. In my study, Fahiema in many ways continued to show some of the stoicism of invulnerability. I wonder how much of this ability to show endurance through trauma, an unflinching attitude to violence, has to do with histories of conquest and enslavement. In her PhD Dissertation on the Antebellum South, *Mastering Emotions: The Emotional Politics of Slavery,* Erin Dwyer (2012) shows how racialised affective differences were cultivated, and how integral the management of affect was for both the enslaved and slaveholders. The willingness to be tempered by violence, and to learn and evince steadfastness and endurance through and despite violence, might be a consequence of survival strategies learned under the relentless and enduring violence of racist capitalist ableist patriarchy. To be objectified, to be less than and not wither, requires affective formations that turn those privations into becoming. Violence is not extraordinary in some places, and so routes of becoming through affective transmutations of trauma make an awful kind of sense. This does not mean people have trained themselves to not feel; it is precisely because they do feel that they have had to remake what feeling does, where affect goes. If they did not feel the blow, the humiliation, then there would be nothing to endure, nothing to work on. The work on the self is to not be undone or in the case of gang initiations that require maiming relationships by breaking social bonds, relinquish the capacity to have empathy for an enemy or a random bystander. The labour to belong requires undoing affective connections elsewhere, in other modes of sociality, that may threaten the gang. After all, the gang is held together by affect: affective bonds of loyalty and love. In worlds where one could be undone by the violence of the overseer, the violence of the farmer, the violence of farmers' wives and white housewives, to endure a beating without breaking, without giving the holder of the whip satisfaction, and to do so without telling on your friends, is to be a person who can be trusted. Dwyer (2012) shows that there was an affective cultivation for the enslaver, and that the demand for civility, and the threat of black joy and intense affect, has been with us for a very long time. Fronting fearlessness (Ratele, 2016) may have been one of the ways that people found to survive a world in which being tender in certain spaces will be to hurt without cessation.

Masculinity within impoverished, black communities in South Africa is cultivated through the capacity to withstand pain, to inhabit a toughened masculinity (and femininity). While there are multiple paths to manhood (Langa, 2020), and these shift across time and space (Morrell, 1998), to front fearlessness and evince invulnerability is how young men learn to survive and redeploy practices of violence on others. In Elaine Salo's ethnography of Rio Street in Manenberg on the Cape Flats, conducted in the late 1990s, she found that men were expected to have *sterk bene* (strong bones), the capacity to withstand pain. Making men who can stoically endure endemic physical and emotional violence was a lifelong practice that started from infancy. She 'witnessed young mothers slapping their male infants' hands until they cried, to the hearty amusement of others' (2018: 168), so that they could be toughened up. Young men *en route* to adulthood endured ganging rituals that tested their capacity to face violence unflinchingly. To join the gang, for example, they were battered with fists and a range of weapons as part of their initiation. Making these young men practise invulnerability and disciplining them to endure violence was intended to turn them into men. What is more, their willingness to endure violence with bravery and courage was evidence of their capacity to defend their friends by not shirking violence, and thus be loyal to their gang or chosen group. Despite an outside perspective of gangs as chaotic, what emerges from ethnographic studies like Salo's, and Jensen's (2008) in Heideveld, also on the Cape Flats, is how practices of disciplining are imbricated within gang lives. To live in a gang is to wrest order and create stable social connections through ritual and intensified loyalties, which are made through antagonistic relations to those outside of the loyalties of the gang.

Tempering the fragility of the body and psyche so that men can endure violence is resignified as a disciplining practice. Making tough bodies and psyches is a practice that shows us how endemic violence is within places like the Cape Flats. Despite the insistence on localisation in studies like Salo's (208) (Manenberg) and Jensen's (2008) (Heideveld), and the subtle way in which racialisation is attached to performing invulnerability, fronting fearlessness and performing invulnerability with stoicism run through numerous studies on masculinities across the globe. How this is achieved is deeply localised. Using force as a mechanism of subject-making can be because of the abandonment of the state, to whom giving up the right to violence is not a possibility given the long histories of marginalisation. However, bodies and psyches are fragile, no matter how they are tempered, and they do not always endure force. Impairment and disability ensue. In other places with more resources, tempering the body is achieved through sports and other disciplines of remaking the body to withstand violence through violence (Collins, 2013). When it goes wrong, disability ensues. Toughened masculinities, therefore, are those that do not find disability as an end in the process of enduring and absorbing violence.

The psychic maiming of affective life[51] is one of the most egregious demands of masculinity, and what is most in need of healing. bell hooks tells us this in a popular quote because it resonates so strongly across worlds:

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[51] Please don't take this to mean a pathology of poor, black and marginalised masculinity. For white and elite men, they may be permitted a wider range of feeling, however capitalism ensures that their wielding of violence is possible at a remove. There is a particular disconnection to a sensibility that allows you to pay people less than is required to live, to use and discard people in factories and farms and all manner of labour, and to grow fat and hearty whilst

> The first act of violence that patriarchy demands of males is not violence toward women. Instead patriarchy demands of all males that they engage in acts of psychic self-mutilation, that they kill off the emotional parts of themselves. If an individual is not successful in emotionally crippling himself, he can count on patriarchal men to enact rituals of power that will assault his self-esteem (2004: 137).

However, this psychic mutilation does not necessarily feel this way to men as they are doing it. Men rework traumatic experiences, which become evidence of their masculinity. In his ethnographic study in Cape Town, Reihling (2020) argues that men's affective health, their capacity to affect and be affected, is undermined by the necessity to perform invulnerability to achieve stable masculine identities. He worked with men across demographic and geographic locations. The men in his study transmuted traumatic events into masculine achievement, and chose male role models who appeared invulnerable, and thus offered them idioms of distress that resignified trauma into the foundation for making invulnerable masculinities. However, he found that the ideals of invulnerable masculinity, autonomy and invulnerability lead his participants to various kinds of affective health crises, which damaged their relationships and forced them over time to transpose their masculine ideals into ones that foregrounded healing, mutuality and reciprocity. Masculinity was not stable for his participants prior to their crises, and was constantly being reworked. My participants also had to rework their masculinity over time, as they were forced into dependency and reformulations of masculinity (Gerschick & Miller, 2000). Shefer et al. (2015), in their work with young South African men, found that, even as young men wanted to claim dangerousness within precarious circumstances, they were also deeply vulnerable. They do caution, though, that even as we acknowledge men's vulnerability and how they inhabit contradictory notions of masculinity, so that we may find creative ways of engaging men in gender justice, young men should not be excused for their troubling practices.

Towards a conclusion

In this chapter, we explored some of the ways in which young, black men enter into gangs that decimate their communities and create violent worlds in black neighbourhoods. Most of them

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those who make that possible become indebted and live with a constant sense of precarity in dysfunctional states with little to no safety nets. You have to be a very disconnected person to be able to pay someone so little that they have to rely on broken healthcare systems, broken food systems, and broken neighbourhoods, and still consider yourself a good person. The consequences of racialised labour systems, in which people endure endless suffering which can be ignored, are also the consequences of numbed masculinities. The very nature of what a pathology might be, given how normative cruelty is and what this indicates about our capacity to feel for an other, to witness and act on behalf of an other, becomes a question when we consider how ordinary maiming and debilitation is in racist, capitalist heteropatriarchal states.

are deeply affected by drugs and alcohol abuse, their own and their families'. The capacity to endure and withstand violence, and to be able do so in the defence of friends, is integral to the production of death, disability and debility. The cultivation of an affective, corporeal and social life, in which men strive to be invulnerable, creates vulnerability, as it exposes them to violence. For the black men in my study who became disabled, they frequently became exposed to even more violence and humiliation. However, making themselves invulnerable and engaging in ganging practices produces urban warfare for their communities, which sow death-disability-debility. In the following chapter, I will explore the racialisation of space in South Africa, and how it concentrated impoverishment. The racialisation of space in South Africa, and the long history of land dispossession, enslavement, and the erasure of slavocratic history, is critical to any study of violence, death-disability-debility and black life.

Chapter 7: *Racialising space - Materialising structural violence*

I had known that the aftermaths of violence were all around me and that disability and impairment were woven into everyday life on the Cape Flats. Yet, I was still shocked that five participants had become disabled because of interpersonal violence. Their life histories materialised the death-dealing, disabling and debilitating effects that white supremacy had meted out to black people. Most people who have a passing acquaintance with inequality in a settler colonial state and its effects on black people will have heard similar stories of black men's violence. There is almost nothing surprising in the violences these men experienced or, for some of them, their perpetration of violence, which must have left impaired bodyminds (Price, 2015; Schalk, 2018) behind, none of which they shared in the interviews. Perhaps they too fled the scene after damage was inflicted and did not have to confront the costs to others of their actions. That they have very different personalities, yet there is a commonality of experience in the circulation and effects of violence within their lifeworlds across time and space, is a tired and worn everyday form of knowing. The ways in which black masculinities and physical violence are entangled are also not surprising; it is the discourse about black masculinities that circulates in popular culture, in that moment when we cross the street and clutch our bags when a black man is on the same side of the street as us. The way in which countless acts of violence are woven through their world and made ordinary by them, and us, is far too familiar.

The racialisation of space in South Africa has resulted in most black people living in urban areas characterised by high population densities, limited infrastructure, and high rates of unemployment as I have shared in the snapshots of black neighbourhoods elsewhere in the thesis. Township masculinities, where street life and gangsterism are steeped in violent displays of masculinity, have resulted in debilitating amounts of violence that stretch across decades. Racial segregation during apartheid, its persistence within democratic South Africa, and continuing modes of racist discrimination where black subjugation to violence is normalised, has rendered the ontoformative effects (Connell, 2011) of structural violence ordinary. As we will see in the chapter on Mining and Marikana later in the thesis, it is not just in the streets of black neighbourhoods, but also in forms of labour where black labourers are concentrated, that connections between inordinate amounts of violence and black subjugation are rendered ordinary.

Death-Disability-Debility is the materialisation of structural violence on the bodyminds of black people. Though decolonial studies uses disability as a metaphor to speak to the effects of coloniality, impairing black bodies is not metaphorical, and therefore obfuscates settler colonial relations (Sherry, 2007; Grech, 2015a). Rather, disability that arises as a result of structural violence, and its normalisation and thus disavowal, is a mode of rule and the formation, maintenance and reproduction of an ontological ground through which coloniality is affirmed. What violence in the black township does is produce an affective economy that sediments fear of black people and justifies the racially segregated spatialisation of the racist city, and produces modes of subjectivity that differentiate not only orders of affective existence, but also embodied orders of existence. In the one world, the black neighbourhood, maiming is a perpetual possibility, and in the other, the white or elite neighbourhood, it is an accident and often an exception. Disability becomes a signifier of the propensity for black violence. What escapes view is the formation of the political, that is, structural violence. This allows black male violence to rest on the individualised subjectivity of poor black men.

In this section, therefore, I will explore a set of connections to understand what Wehiliye (2014) has called racialising assemblages, and how violence has become endemic in poor black neighbourhoods in the Western Cape. I will start with the Cape Flats, and then spend some time with Fanon (1961/2004) and his description of the injurious worlds produced by colonialism, before considering the divided city in Cape Town. I will then look at the history of slavery in South Africa. The set of connections I am sketching, while not comprehensive, will argue that disability caused by interpersonal violence in black neighbourhoods is a materialisation of structural violence and racialisation. I am interested in how violence has become internalised as a logic over time. Not by all black people, but enough that a kind of normal can be produced, where black life debilitates itself, and which has historical continuities with, but differs from, its originating contexts.

The Cape Flats and the distribution of violence

On the Cape Flats in the Western Cape – where all five of the participants in the previous chapter were injured – the murder statistics are some of the highest in the world. According to the Western Cape's Department of Community Safety (DCS, 2022), the Western Cape's murder rate is ten times the global average, and the national murder average is six times the global average. The neighbourhoods with the highest incidence of contact crimes, such as murder, attempted murder and aggravated assault, are all on the Cape Flats. For a country not at war, South African crime statistics are alarming. The Western Cape Government attributes the murder and attempted murder rates on the Cape Flats to factors such as gang-related violence, arguments, and retaliation (DCS, 2022). What crime statistics do not show is that the state has allowed gangsterism, substance abuse and interpersonal violence, in all its manifestations, from sexual assault to murder to continue unabated in these neighbourhoods (Pinnock, 2016).

Whilst we are seemingly a postcolonial/postapartheid society, the conditions that make violence so pervasive are shockingly similar. All the ways in which impoverished post-slavery societies turn on themselves (Thomas, 2011) have been allowed to proliferate on the Cape Flats. What is needed is more schools, access to recreation facilities, livelihood programmes, decent and humane housing, more services from the state, such as rehabilitative programmes for addiction and family and gang violence, and trauma counselling. In other words, strategies to stem and heal systemic trauma and dispossession. Rather, violence is often met with more violence, such as when the army was sent into the Cape Flats to respond to gang violence in July 2019 (e.g. Hendricks, 2019).

Instead of dealing with the causes of violence, which are the spatial and attendant socioeconomic segregation and systemic inequality, intervention is enforced at the level of the dangerous neighbourhood (Gillespie, 2014). The problem of locating violence within certain dangerous neighbourhoods is symptomatic of a noxious spatiality, in which long histories of segregation have racialised space (Gillespie, 2014). What this does is naturalise violence as a property of black people, rather than an effect of structural violence. The ordering of the apartheid city allowed not only the flourishing of violence in poor, black neighbourhoods, but also an expectation of violence by the state as a mechanism of control. The dangerous neighbourhood can be dealt with through violent reprisals by the state. The logic of black bodies that must be met with violence to secure a peace continues unabated, despite changes in sociopolitical arrangements and the rights to citizenship over time.

The demographic most cited as being responsible for and most victimised by physical violence are poor, young, black men (Ratele, 2010; Pinnock, 2016). Black men beat, stab and shoot each other, and frequently also beat, stab, shoot and sexually assault women and children. Some of the most-shared news, and which generates most moral panic, is when a child is involved, their death, shooting, abduction or sexual assault. Moral panics circulate around the violation of children (see, for example, Posel, 2005). As with most societies in which violence is the substrate of the ordinary, it is often spectacular violence and victims deemed innocent and worthy of care, such as children and white women, around which public conversations swirl and adhere. To repeat: we are a society that ignores injury and counts death, even though not all deaths are treated as grievable (Butler, 2004; Gqola, 2015; Boonzaier, 2017) or remarkable.

Even though most acts of violence will not have lethal consequences, a great many do have lasting, lingering effects. For example, it is estimated that, for every person killed by gun violence, anything from three to six people survive, often with severe disabilities (Buchanan, 2014). A study in the USA found that many survivors of non-fatal gunshot injuries notwithstanding the continuum of injury, experienced severe and chronic physical and mental health-related problems, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, months after the event of injury was treated at a hospital (Greenspan & Kellerman, 2002). Non-fatal gun injuries were also one of the leading causes of disabilities such as spinal cord injuries, paraplegia and mental health impairments (Fowler, Dahlberg, Haileyesus & Annest, 2015). Those are the effects of gun violence. When we include the countless fights with knives, fists, and whichever weapon can be brought to bear on the body of another, the scale of impairment-inducing events in some places is horrifying. Events of violence are rarely contained, but rather carry on long after hospitalisation. When we consider not just the physical effects but also the mental health consequences of unremitting and pervasive violence, the scale of debilitation in neighbourhoods where violence is allowed to thrive is incalculable. The very idea of what constitutes the normal, the statistical mean, cannot hold.

Whilst there are many, many people on the Cape Flats who attempt to carve out respectable lives centred on religion, sport, the family and education, many of those living in the poorest neighbourhoods do so while beset by entrenched urban warfare, perpetrated by gangs. I can rarely wrap my head around the scale of violence in a place like the Cape Flats, or how one can delimit the grounds for what can be included in how we frame disability (Michalko, 2002). To prevent impairment at this scale is not the same as making a bioethical argument about the right to life, or denigrating the existence of disability. It is rather to make an intervention into injustice, and to utilise disability and impairment to evaluate the extent of injurious worlds and injustice. In the following section, we will explore the long racist history of segregation that has gone into creating spaces like the Cape Flats.

Distribution of vulnerability

As I showed in Chapter 2, South African cities are still divided by race, despite over 25 years of democracy. The history of spatial segregation by racial hierarchies persists, and so do divisions of resources. To restate, segregation was achieved during apartheid through legislation, but the history of segregation started much earlier. I will also reiterate that historically black neighbourhoods are diverse and stratified by class, and there are some affluent, largely black neighbourhoods, albeit not with the same degree of infrastructural care to be found in formerly white neighbourhoods. The roads are narrower, the fences are higher, it is less green, the parks are not as cared for, the proximity to poor black neighbourhoods and informal settlements entails higher levels of exposure to crime, and there is invariably less policing, although private security often takes on the role of the state. Formerly white neighbourhoods are the most desirable property, though some working-class white neighbourhoods have experienced white flight, and the racial demographics of neighbourhoods changed as more black people moved in. Low income black neighbourhoods have largely retained patterns of racial segregation.

Though the Group Areas Act of 1950 is frequently referenced as the most important moment in South Africa's history of racial segregation, the displacement of black people and racial social engineering within SA cities has a much longer history (Swanson, 1977; Maylam, 1995; Isaacs-Martin, 2015). Dubow (1989), in fact, states that Afrikaner Nationalism being responsible for segregationist logic is the least plausible. According to Isaacs-Martin (2015), the racialisation of space in South Africa was constituted through more than 100 statutory measures which segregated groups and enabled racial stereotyping. Maylam (1995) notes that not all segregation was legislated and other mechanisms, such as racially restricting urban residence through title deeds, were also used. Ironically, health as a mode of constituting worlds became a key site through which the biopolitical management of racially segregated populations was naturalised. The resultant ontoformative effects (Connell, 2011) have produced debilitating worlds for poor, black people. South African settler colonial relations were dealing with the rapid urbanisation of black populations, and were concerned with influx control, miscegenation and the maintenance of a racial order.

Overcrowding, poverty, slum conditions and 'unsanitary' living conditions were treated as a health hazard. As a societal metaphor, contagion and infectious diseases interacted with South African and British racial metaphors, and the 'sanitation syndrome' (Swanson, 1977) was used to racialise disease and measures of containment in the late 19th (Deacon, 1996) and early 20th centuries (Maylam, 1995). Swanson (1997) details how public health as a mode of configuring cities was used by colonial rule as a rationale for racial segregation. Whereas public health panics divided metropolitan cities based on class and ethnicity, in the colonies it was racial segregation. Plague was a means to quickly effect racial segregation (Swanson,1977), and thus the temporality of racial segregation relied on plague panics. The Public Health Act of 1919, for example, was passed six months after the influenza epidemic of 1918 (Maylam, 1995).

The public health laws of 1893 and 1897, and the Public Health Acts of 1919, provided the regulatory mechanisms to move, displace and segregate urban populations under the guise of maintaining a 'healthy' city. Where health and sanitation laws failed, or the urgency of epidemics dissipated, the fears of contagion and pre-emptive responses generated legislation such as the Native Administration Act of 1927, Slums Act of 1934, and countless other legislative devices to contain black urban populations. Urban black populations within dense settlements became connected to the 'imagery of infection and epidemic disease' (Swanson, 1977: 387). Biopolitical regimes focused on the management of urban space, and public health would increasingly be used to not only displace black urban populations for white and industrial use, but would also naturalise racial segregation. What is more, sanitation laws and discourses would come to equate the black body with disease that had to be managed (Zoia, 2015). White disgust normalised black bodies as sites to be avoided lest contamination ensue. Racial segregation appeared not only natural but urgent.

Cape Town had a reputation for more urban mixing, due to having higher rates of miscegenation and mixed working-class neighbourhoods than other South African towns in the early 19th and 20th centuries. However, starting in 1875, increased racial segregation was in evidence (Bickford-Smith, 1995). Maylam (1985) disputes the notion that Cape Town was a liberal city prior to the National Party imposing the Groups Areas Act in 1950, showing that it already had a history of segregation. District Six was proposed for elimination as early as 1940, prior to the National Party's rise to power in 1948 (Maylam, 1985), and removals would only commence in 1968. The history of segregation was thus much longer and more entrenched than discourses on formal apartheid would have us remember.

Minich (2016; np) has argued that when we use disability as a method, it allows us to scrutinise 'the social conditions that concentrate stigmatized attributes in particular populations.' The centuries-long processes of segregation facilitated the continuity of organised abandonment

(Gilmore, 2007) through the death-dealing, disabling and debilitating cumulative effects of racism. To once more invoke Gilmore's definition, '(r)acism, specifically, is the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death' (2007: 28). Using disability as a method enjoins us to ask what the consequences of organised racist abandonment are. What is more, historicising the cumulative effects of organised abandonment and statecraft is a crucial intervention, particularly in a context like South Africa, where there were so many ways in which the ontological erasure of black suffering was enforced, induced and deployed as a tactic of race-making. In the next section, I engage with Fanon's theorisation of the bifurcated worlds made by racist states, and how the racialisation of space concentrates injuries in the worlds of the colonised.

Injurious worlds

> The colonial world is a **compartmentalised world**. It is obviously as superfluous to recall the existence of "native" towns and European towns, of schools for "natives" and schools for Europeans, as it is to recall apartheid in South Africa. Yet if we penetrate inside this compartmentalisation we shall at least bring to light some of its key aspects. By penetrating its geographical configuration and classification we shall be able to delineate the backbone on which the decolonized society is reorganised.
>
> The **colonist's sector** is a sector built to last, all stone and steel. It's a sector of lights and paved roads, where the trash cans constantly overflow with strange and wonderful garbage, undreamed-of leftovers. The colonist's feet can never be glimpsed, except perhaps in the sea, but then you can never get close enough. They are protected by solid shoes in a sector where the streets are clean and smooth, without a pothole, without a stone. The colonist's sector is a sated, sluggish sector, its belly is permanently full of good things. The colonist's sector is a white folks' sector, a sector of foreigners.
>
> The **colonized's sector,** or at least the "native" quarters, the shanty town, the Medina, the reservation, is **a disreputable place inhabited by disreputable people**. You are born anywhere, anyhow. You die anywhere, from anything. It's a world with no space, people are piled one on top of the other, the shacks squeezed tightly together. The colonized's sector is a famished sector, hungry for bread,

> meat, shoes, coal, and light. The colonized's sector is a sector that crouches and cowers, a sector on its knees, a sector that is prostrate.
>
> This compartmentalized world, this world divided in two, is inhabited by **different species**. The singularity of the colonial context lies in the fact that economic reality, i**nequality, and enormous disparities in lifestyles** never manage to mask the human reality. Looking at the immediacies of the colonial context, it is clear that what divides this world is first and foremost what species, what race one belongs to (Fanon, 1961/2004: 3-5, emphasis added).

Nearly 60 years ago, Frantz Fanon, in *Le Damnes de la Terre/The Wretched of the Earth*, famously described the racialisation of space, the materialisation of different orders of being, and the psycho-affective effects of colonial orderings of the world. He goes on to describe how the Manichean materialisation of blackness as a category and lived experience within conditions of penury apart from whiteness also produced different modalities of interaction between black and white subjects compared to interaction between black subjects. The violence and humiliations of the colonial order induce a nervous condition in the black subject, which *he* takes out on other black people who shares *his* condition.

Fanon offers us a few important tools to think with in this text. One is that the distribution of psycho-affective disorder within the colonised, producing violence, is induced by social conditions and therefore not the sole attribute of an individual, as most individualistic psychoanalytic theorising would claim. Psycho-affective impairments, the kinds produced by the disorder of settler colonialism, can therefore be prevented in a liberatory political economy. Though his approach to disability is through the medical model (Sherry, 2007), the massification of psycho-affective impairment under conditions of subjugation enable(d) applying a political dimension (Hook, 2004) to impairment. Critically, we realise that the violence of those who are subjugated is an effect of a racialised political economy.

The way in which criminality is read by colonialist scholars in Fanon's Algeria[52] is disputed (p.221-22). Detailing the mental disorders that arise (for Algerians) from colonialism, Fanon poignantly tallies up frustrations that might spur *him* to violence. He states that:

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[52] Hook (2004) reminds us that Fanon believed in the specificity of historical context for analyses. What is of interest for us, given coloniality is not temporally limited but a perduring mode of structuring worlds (Quijano, 2000; Lugones, 2008), is the connection between criminality and blackness.

> The criminality of the Algerian, his impulsiveness, the savagery of his murders are not, therefore, the consequence of how his nervous system is organised or specific character traits, but the direct result of the colonial situation (1961/2004: 233).

Fanon therefore attributes that propensity to violence in the social order to the narrowness of survival, the difficulty and challenge for survival. What Fanon does not offer us, however, is the aftermath of those acts of frustration. We see the frustrated colonised, but we do not see his victims. We do not see the people who are impaired by his subjugated sense of frustration, even though they may share a psycho-affective disorder. The impulse to act, to take out the frustration and the hustle to live on the other colonised, becomes the defining feature. It is death or mental disorder, not the impaired body, that remains. Fanon thus offers us black men's desire to do violence, to act through violence, but rarely does he abide with those who are subjugated by this violence or altered in body as a consequence.

For Fanon (1961/2004), it is the psychological effects of domination that he is concerned with, for both the subjugated and the oppressor. For example, he details the disorders that ensue due to torturing colonial subjects. How colonial societies are ordered therefore leaves psychological impairment in its wake (Sharpe, 2016) at an unimaginable, yet unremarked, scale. In South Africa, the discourse of moving on and leaving the past behind[53] ignores the psychoaffective consequences of unremitting violence. Were we to include just the psychoaffective effects of racial hierarchisation, and take seriously that the making of a racial order requires working on and maiming the flesh (Spillers, 1987) to materialise hierarchy, and that this work has psychoaffective effects, what constitutes the human would indelibly be shaped by violence, and what constitutes impairment or the normal would have to be rethought.

For our purposes, the section in which Fanon (1961/2004: 221-229) contests the notion that Algerian criminality is a consequence of Algerian physiology, and thus a natural condition that justifies a racial order, is of interest, as well as the operation of Algerian criminality within a closed circle. In this section, he showed the absurdity of some colonial scholarship – how colonialism rested on ableist discourse in which black deficiency was used as a justification for rule (Grech, 2015a). He cites a colonial scholar, Carothers, who stated that 'the normal African is a lobotomised European' (1961/2004: 227). The idea that Algerians were naturally defective

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[53] In South African public discourse, whenever there is an incident that highlights the continuation of racism on most public platforms, a great number of white commentators tend to demand that black South Africans move on and leave the past behind. The fantasy is that we can ignore the material and psychic injustices of the past, and thus black subjects are called to treat the difference in worlds and status as normal and ordinary (e.g. Maimela (2021).

and ‘born idlers, born liars, born thieves, and born criminals’ was established by colonialism, Fanon (1961/2004: 221) informs us. Numerous institutions, legal, educational, and medical, came together to establish black criminality as a physiological condition, and thus black criminality was naturalised. Whilst social constructivist theories have shifted this discourse, at least in some spaces, many elements of it persist and still justify racial hierarchies and black subjugation.

This discourse on the North African and, given the dispersion of coloniality, black deficiency, where criminality is the natural consequence, centres on imagining black subjects as ‘habitual’, ‘senseless’, and ‘savage killers’ (1961/2004: 222). Fanon details the myriad ways in which colonial theory and rule rendered black subjects deficient. Black subjects are incapable of reason or discipline, are not trustworthy, are inherently violent, have no capacity for nuance, are congenitally impulsive, and does not self-reflect for there is no inner life (1961/2004: 223-224). The Algerian would rather attack than self-reflect and so aggression is a natural consequence of the deficiency of reason. The cause of these affects and aggressive behaviour is as a result of ‘his mental capacity, The Algerian is mentally retarded’ (1961/2004: 224). Fanon goes on to quote a Professor Porot who, in 1935 at the Congress of French-Speaking Psychiatrists and Neurologists, stated that:

> This primitivism is not only a condition resulting from a specific upbringing, its foundations go far deeper, and we believe its substratum must lie in a specific configuration of the architectonics, or at least of the dynamic hierarchical organization of the nervous system. We have observed that the impulsiveness of the Algerian, the frequency and nature of his murders, his permanent criminal tendencies and his primitivism are no coincidences. We are in the presence of a coherent pattern of behavior and a coherent lifestyle which can be explained scientifically. The Algerian has no cortex, or to be more exact, like the inferior vertebrates he is governed by his diencephalon. The cortical functions, if they exist, are extremely weak, virtually excluded from the brain's dynamics. There is therefore neither mystery nor paradox. The colonizer's reluctance to entrust the native with any kind of responsibility does not stem from racism or paternalism but quite simply from a scientific assessment of the colonized's limited biological possibilities (1961/2004: 226).

This naturalisation of black violence as a consequence of a deficient subject, a naturally impaired subject was one of the ways in which scientific racism justified racial hierarchisation (Chanock,1995). We can see in Porot's statement that the making of black subjectivities due to colonialism recedes, and the effects of colonialism on black subjects, i.e. violence, becomes its grounds. The purportedly deficient black subject is not only biologically incapable of self-discipline, but requires colonisation. Thus, this spurious logic could justify incredible amounts of violence[54] aimed at disciplining and curtailing black violence and affirming white supremacy. What is more, the violence that black people perpetrated on each other, as a consequence of the structural violence of colonialism, was treated as a natural effect of black being.

The materialisation of race within compartmentalised worlds could thus be ignored, and a further affirming of a racist political order could be maintained. Inwood and Yarbrough (2010: 299) state that:

> The racialisation of place is a process of constructing particular geographic landscapes that helps define and reinforce racialised social hierarchies, thus facilitating domination and exploitation.

Maintaining separate worlds, where one world had all it required and another was one of penury and violence, was a mode of making race and racial hierarchy. Fanon dispels the arguments of colonial scholars by asserting that, in Algeria,[55] violence occurred in 'a closed circle.' While he affirms that Algerians internalised the discourse of their violence, he notes that to dispel the idea of black criminality and its internalisation is to make revolutionary progress. There are also shifts after a revolution to effect a postcolonial world where violence begins to dissipate.

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[54] However, Chanock (1995) shows that sometimes the belief in the innate incapacity of black people to regulate themselves might make liberal judges less likely to punish them harshly. He argues that criminal law in South Africa between the 1900s and 1930s imported the science of criminology from the global north, which justified the biological basis of black criminality as a consequence of their primitive physiology. Through contact, some whites would catch the contagion of criminality, though they had hopes of being rehabilitated if they were removed from blacks' contagious effects. Criminal law became elaborated into an ethnographic enterprise because it became focused on the difference of the other, the black/criminal. He (1995: 939) concludes his paper by stating: 'Both law and criminology can be seen as ways of not knowing, of avoidance and creation. Both seem removed from pragmatism and observation, and closer to fantasy.' Criminology as a science, with its outlandish ideas of black difference, deeply impacted the exercise of the law, and as such was critical in epistemologies of ignorance. This paper was unsurprisingly not cited often. However, what studies such as Chanock's offer, are the possibilities for studies of South African legal history and how it was impacted by ideas of impaired black subjects.

[55] This is different to violence in France where Algerians fought the French.

‘Within a colonial situation,’ Fanon (1961/2004: 230) said, ‘the colonised are confronted with themselves.’ In segregated spaces for black people, in which want, deprivation and humiliation occur daily, the only targets for disaffection are other black people. He stated that:

> Exposed to daily incitement to murder resulting from famine, eviction from his room for unpaid rent, a mother's withered breast, children who are nothing but skin and bone, the closure of a worksite and the jobless who hang around the foreman like crows, the colonized subject comes to see his fellow man as a relentless enemy. If he stubs his bare feet on a large stone in his path it is a fellow countryman who has put it there, and the meager olives he was about to pick, here are X's children who have eaten them during the night. Yes, during the colonial period in Algeria and elsewhere a lot of things can be committed for a few pounds of semolina. One can kill. You need to use your imagination to understand these things. Or your memory. In the concentration camps men killed each other for a morsel of bread (1961/2004: 231).

The numerous violences caused by inequality produce forms of interpersonal violence that make the building of community not only difficult but, for some people, almost impossible. The daily grind of survival is ubiquitous and creates enmity. There is another factor Fanon expounded on, and that is the minimal value accorded to black life. There is a kind of lawlessness within black spaces as the protection of the state is largely consolidated on white and elite spaces. But also, the constant negation of black people’s rights to dignity, create a sensibility where the internalisation of racist logic facilitates black subjects’ devaluation of each other.

Fanon was more concerned with the impulse to do harm, to enact violence, and the psychological effects of colonialism. He was not focused on bodies that are impaired, or the impairing consequences of Algerians’ violence to each other. What he makes available is a disarticulation of criminality from the Algerian body and, like other black intellectuals of his time, makes an argument for the vindication of black being. What he allows us to apprehend is the scale of impairment of bodies and psyches and, what is more, the connection to space within the logics of racist political order. Black bodies were made available to maim, kill and debilitate through settler colonial slavocratic practices, some of which, such as whipping, continued in various modes in apartheid South Africa, which I discuss in the following section.

The aftermath of enslavement

South Africa’s history as a settler colonial state has meant that the subjugation of black people is deeply sedimented in discourses of black inferiority, and that the enslavement of black people is implicated within discourses of maiming, historically and contemporaneously. According to Bonds and Inwood (2016: 716, citing Wolfe, 2006), settler colonialism, such as found in South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Israel, is an enduring structure that operates on a racist ‘logics of extermination,’ as indigenous people have to be both exploited and erased so as to claim land and maintain permanent structures. During the British colonial period, slavery in South Africa was crucial to developing a racist political economy, and was the basis upon which apartheid South Africa was built (Wilkins, 2017).

Living in the wake of slavery (Sharpe, 2016) attenuates settler colonial societies to the normalisation of anti-blackness (Hartman, 1997). When reading Hartman (1997), I kept trying to push against South Africa’s history being a history of slavery. Whilst I could excavate her work for thinking with orthographies of anti-blackness and its interruption and refusal, locating South African history as an afterlife of the plantation and slave trade as a constitutive force in the making of contemporary South Africa, required suppressing already knowns. Fighting my own forgetfulness required remembering that slavery is indelibly tied to my own history, and so is its forgetting. Remembering with Gabeba Baderoon (2014), Pumla Gqola (2010) and Yvette Abrahams (2000) forced not just an epistemic connection to the dispersal of violence and its role in debilitated communities, but also resituated the work of black scholars centrally in historicisation. That I had read and heard Gabeba, Pumla and Yvette talk about these connections, and yet could not make the connection to how I understood the historicisation of black life, was telling. Cloete (2017: 77), writing on Yvette Christiaanse’s *Unconfessed*, says that slavery for descendants in the Cape is largely “‘unspeakable” and indescribable or unutterable, whether in terms of their horror or as part of a process of amnesia in public discourse’. However, to understand the normalcy of maiming, and the long, long history of brutalising black bodies, requires abiding with black enslavement.

South Africa’s slave history is disavowed. The long history, changes and continuity of subjugation are frequently erased and ignored. What is more, the effects over time of subjugation on the dispossessed are not given attention. Most histories of domination and inequality tend to focus on apartheid as *the* world-making history for South Africans (Baderoon, 2014). Whilst there is recognition that providing juridical rights with the advent of democracy to black people has not resulted in liberation, the limited temporality of the historical and popular imagination within South Africa has not provided the kind of resources a postcolonial, post-slavery and postapartheid state requires. The continuity of debilitating conditions, and the layered violences in the everyday lives of poor, black South Africans, whilst not static, bear continuations: of the relation between black subjects and states, between black subjects, and between black subjects as bearers of gendered identities. Violence, and the forms it takes where the body is the mode to making sociality, expresses a desire for dominance over another, coloniality's primary animating desire. Race, gender and able-bodiedness were mutually constituting 'fatal power-difference couplings' through which dominance was exerted (Gilmore, 2002: 16). It is in the use of violence as a mode of control that continuities with slavery may be found. Interpersonal violence echoes the master, and his tools bear witness to how embedded the logic of violence is.

Maintaining enslavement, as we well know, was violent, savage and brutal. The imaginative ways in which cruelty was distributed to dominate, whilst being rendered banal and ordinary, were anything but ordinary or banal (Worden, 1985; Hoosain, 2013; Baderoon, 2014). People, human beings coded as other and racialised as black, endured this brutal system. People racialised as white ensured the maintenance of a system of governance that justified the torture of black people into docility to extract labour, to extract acquiescence, to materialise white supremacy, albeit unevenly and perhaps with varying levels of intensity, as South Africa moved from Dutch rule to British colonialism to Afrikaner Nationalist rule during Apartheid. Securing the compliance of dominated peoples was not benign, and there were no neat completions of history. Expected to be docile, subjugated people were worked on and tortured (De Kock, 1963), through the flesh (Spillers, 1987).

Many, many bodies were broken to break spirits. The mind of the colonised is frequently cited as the anchor of coloniality (e.g. Nandy, 1989; Wa Thiong'o, 1992). Whilst the colonisation of the mind is undoubtedly of crucial significance, the threat of violence to the body and the psyche, and its actuality in history and memory, are frequently erased, treated as if it were of little import or dematerialised in this formulation. Colonising the mind was frequently achieved through the materiality of the flesh, through the willingness to maim, amputate, break, and savage the flesh of those who lived amongst the many, many unmarked graves of those who did not survive. This seemingly known rending of flesh that characterises acts of violence is important and worth stating. The kinds of wilful amnesia we live with as black people in the academy (and popular culture), where white supremacist logic would rather have us anaesthetise our inheritances, forecloses the full horror of our histories. Death, debility and disability were tools of domination, technologies of rule.

There was no work done in any of the periods of transition to new socio-juridical arrangements – from slavery to colonialism to apartheid to the postapartheid – to undo the lessons of history on the flesh, on the body, on the psyche, on the spirit. No work done to reach and remake the body, the flesh, the psyche or the spirit with gentleness, tenderness and care. No work done to restore the body, the flesh, the psyche or the spirit.

From the 17th century to 1838, South Africa was a slave colony. The Dutch, and later the English, brought enslaved people to South Africa from East Africa, the South African hinterland, South-East Asia, and East African Islands like Madagascar and Mauritius (Gqola, 2010). Social relations in the Cape, colonised two centuries prior to the rest of South Africa, were indubitably shaped by slavery, and slave relations would in turn shape the entirety of South Africa's political economy (Worden, 1985; Baderoon, 2014). In the Cape Colony, the enslaved formed the majority of the population between 1658 and 1834 (Worden, 1985). New forms of enslavement and coerced labour, such as indentured labourers from India, where labourers were often tricked into indebtedness, were also secured to ensure a cheap labour supply and to undercut Africans' bargaining power (Meer, 1985). South Africa's economy was wholly dependent on the theft of black labour and the brutalisation of human beings.

Nigel Worden's (1985) ground-breaking study notes enslavers' brutality towards the enslaved in the Cape colony. The sjambok, a tapered whip traditionally made of either rhinoceros or hippopotamus hide, about three feet in length, and used to drive cattle and horses, was frequently used to ensure compliance. Almost every slaveholding household in the Cape colony contained a sjambok. Worden (1985) informs us that:

> Whipping was the most common form of slave punishment. It inflicted considerable pain, which could be increased by rubbing salt into the wounds, providing a striking impact to the victim and the other slaves on the farm of the visible authority and supremacy of the master, and yet it did not greatly reduce the labour efficiency or time at work of the punished slave (1985:106).

He goes on to tell a story about an enslaved man, Jacob van Malabar, who, after being whipped severely for trying to escape, was ordered to immediately start ploughing. On collapsing in the field, he was whipped again and told by his enslaver's wife that he had gotten what he deserved and should continue working. The enslaved were whipped for any number of reasons, such as attempting to escape, neglecting work, theft and assault, insolence, an insecure enslaver's attempt to assert control or because it gave an enslaver sadistic pleasure. Female enslavers could whip an enslaved woman because they were jealous and afraid that their spouse's affections would be directed to an enslaved woman.[56] Whippings were frequently public, where other enslaved were to witness the chastisement to demonstrate the authority of the enslaver, and were sometimes also meted out by enslaver's proxies such as overseers. Frequently the use of corporal punishment to exert control resulted in 'extreme brutality and sadism' (1985:108).

Whilst South Africa's slave history is commonly known and accepted, the implications of slavery on the making of contemporary South Africa are rarely given the kind of gravitas a post-slavery society requires. Prior to the 1980s, slavery in South Africa was frequently described by historians as benign (Worden, 1985; Gqola, 2010), and a 'system characterised by the exercise of brutal control was portrayed as mild and picturesque' (Baderoon, 2014: 10). This is probably related to the continuity of racist subjugation in South Africa, which censored what was sayable about racist subjugation. Whilst there is a dearth of folk memory regarding enslavement, the period after the transition to democracy has seen an efflorescence of studies on slavery (see Gqola, 2010). There are a few novels that deal with slavery, such as Yvette Christiansë's, *Unconfessed,* Rayda Jacobs' *The Slave Book,* Maxine Case' *The Softness of Lime,* and André Brink's *Philida, Chain of Voices* and *Rights of Desire.* Public consciousness of the history of slavery has slowly begun to take shape (Gqola, 2010). For example, the District Six Museum hosts an annual slave walk commemorating the history of slavery. The Iziko Slave Lodge, a museum that centres on the history of slavery in South Africa, replaced the South African Cultural History Museum in 1998. However, the impact of slavery has not been dealt with.

In her PhD thesis, Hoosain (2013) explores the transmission of intergenerational trauma due to enslavement. She lists the kinds of historical trauma induced by enslavement. Punishments like severe whippings and mutilation where noses and ears were cut off. Hands were amputated, people were strangled and burned on slow fires. Psychological control was exerted through naming patterns that perpetuated natal alienation and frequently were humiliating, along with the use of violence and torture. She notes that it is not only experiencing torture, but also witnessing the torture of other enslaved people, that would have produced trauma and subsequently post-traumatic stress disorder and psychological wounding. The enslaved population contained more men than women, and competition amongst men was fierce and enslaved women were also sexually assaulted by white men. The enslaved were not allowed marital or family rights. They

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[56] Given that enslaved women could not consent to sexual relations within this unequal relationship of power, their rape by a male enslaver would therefore also be exacerbated by the violence of female enslavers.

were also racialised. Further, they were infantilised in a paternalistic system through their required dress and how they were spoken to. Hoosain (2013) further notes that, despite emancipation, farmers used other methods of enslaving farmworkers, such as the ‘dopstelsel,’ the ‘tot system,’ in which farmworkers were paid with alcohol, which was formally made illegal in 1960, though there was evidence of it still being used in 1998. The Western Cape has the highest rate of foetal alchohol syndrome in the world (McKinstry, 2005), and widespread alcohol abuse, with all the attendant social problems. In her analysis of families in the Western Cape, Hoosain (2013) found the transmission of intergenerational trauma through violence. Without other avenues for expression, disenfranchised grief, internalised oppression, and shame and silence, the historical trauma of slavery and displacement presented in violences to those closest to them, intimate partner violence, gang violence and substance abuse.

The links to slavery in contemporary South Africa cannot be unequivocally made; the distance of time and shifting political economies have undoubtedly created new kinds of relations and socialities. What persists, however, are the ways in which the use of violence has become an indelible part of the everyday of the Western Cape. The kinds of amnesia induced by slavery, and the substitution of modes of behaviour, such as violence, caused by the repetition of historical trauma, are the ghosts that haunt post-slavery societies. But, lest we forget, the sjambok is a symbol of South African repression not only in regard to enslavement and colonial relations, but also as part of apartheid repression and postapartheid everyday life.

1. A policeman whipping a student with a sjambok, 21 August 1985, Louise Gubbs, Johannesburg

The sjambok: slavery's remainders

Seen as a non-lethal weapon, the sjambok was used by police officers during apartheid to subdue crowds. I have vivid memories of the 1985-86 protests, where police officers charged assemblies of high school students with dogs and sjamboks. In most accounts of South African unrest, across decades, the sjambok is an ubiquitous feature. So much so that, after international condemnation of police brutality, a declaration by President F.W. de Klerk was made in 1989 that the sjambok would no longer be used by the police (Wren, 1989). In response to increased civil unrest in the 1980s, the South African government declared two states of emergency, which intensified violent and brutal repression in black townships.

At the Symposium on Children in Detention in South Africa in Washington, D.C. in 1987, testimony by South African panellists William Tshabalala, Zanoduma Mntambo, Sacco Terry, Mamphela Ramphele, and Ivan Abrahams (1988) highlighted the kinds of direct state violence experienced in black townships. Reading the testimonies is deeply moving; the urgency of the moment and the terror for the future comes through very powerfully, and I will therefore quote at length from the testimony in the section below. Police beat children, some so severely they were paralysed and had to have a limb amputated. There were mass detentions of students who were tortured mercilessly and relentlessly in prison, whilst in some cases, entire high schools were arrested and released the same day. Mr Sacco, a social worker, testified about what detention did to communities:

> Detention is one means of repression. Detention is a deliberate assault …used to destroy people, to strike fear and terror and to disorganise families (1988: 93)

Families endured physical, emotional and financial hardship if a parent was detained, as parents may have lost employment from being detained, or the search for a loved one may have lead to a job loss. Women had to give birth in detention, or were separated from babies and children as a result of detention. He goes on to note the incredible emotional, physical and psychological toll that parents endured when children were detained. Marriages became strained under the worry, and the siblings who remained may have become neglected. He even notes an instance where a father committed suicide after all his children were detained. The terror is so intense, so thick, so ominous, that a mother was glad to find her child in a mortuary. When an activist was not found, the security police would take a whole family hostage. He goes on to say:

> Life in the township is a living nightmare. There is insecurity experienced in the homes of people living in the township. The children of the township are living in a

> civil war, a war between the state and the people. Children are exposed to the brutality of the police through evictions, door to door raids; children are exposed to roadblocks, tear gas, shootings, and troops in the township. ***Children are being sjambokked. The police use instruments as such to sjambok our children in the townships.*** Police chase children without warning. Many of our children have been shot in the schools and at funerals … There is a nationwide pattern of attacks, assassinations, and arson by private armies, right-wing vigilante groups, and mysterious hit squads. Children have become the brunt of vigilante action and they have become refugees in their own country. These are young people drawn into violent actions through vigilante force. These young people are learning to survive through violent means (p. 93-94, emphasis added).

He continued by testifying to the changing relationships of children to parents. Not only were homes no longer places of safety, but parental authority and familial love was in a constant state of flux. Men who were remote and becoming peripheral to the family were expressing anger to their wives and children (the account is largely urbanised without taking cognisance of circular migration). He said that parents were unable to fulfil their functions and felt fearful, impotent and were depressed. He asked what this meant for childhood and responded by saying:

> A generation of angry, militant, politicised and brutalized youth with no formal education is emerging. Continuous brutalisation has led to children responding in various ways from positive political involvement to anger, which finds expression with no political base … The fear of loss is constant. Families experience the loss of loved ones who have died, are missing and in detention and hiding. People experience loss of limbs and bodily functions, loss of protection and loss of property (p.94-95).

In Mr Sacco’s testimony, we come to see that the sjambok is part of an extensive system of repression that allows it to be wielded. It is a world where the bodies, the psyches, the families of black people can be broken with impunity, that systematically brutalises and leaves behind brutalisation as a norm, which will come to be exercised by black people on other black people. It is the remains of a world where wielding physical violence means to be invested with power, but also one where communities were contained in racialised enclaves and forcibly debilitated through fear and terror. What is more, disabling back people, much like during enslavement, was part of producing a docile population. Docility was produced actively and the capacity to disable was an expression of power.

The sjambok, though mostly plastic now, has not disappeared. The continuity of violent subjugation in South Africa can be found in this iconic tool of domination. The sjambok has been used as part of vigilante and mob justice within black neighbourhoods that have limited policing. On my recent holiday to the beachside town of Kleinmond, sitting on the balcony watching the ocean, a white couple passed by, possibly in their late sixties, the wife swinging a sjambok, presumably as protection. The sjambok makes a comeback in the news every now and then (Msimang, 2014). In 2014, a white man in a BMW in the affluent formerly white neighbourhood, Claremont, mistook a gardener for a criminal and used a sjambok on him. It is still part of police gear and, in 2019, there was a report of a drunk driver beaten with a sjambok by police (Moneron, 2019). In 2016, a former ANC Youth League leader whipped his girlfriend to death with a sjambok (Henderson, 2016).

Death, however, is not the only outcome of sjambok injuries. There is a correlation between sjambok beatings, a type of crush injury that is local to South Africa, and kidney damage, which can be fatal if not found early (Skinner, Laing, Bruce, Biccard & Muckart, 2017). Someone does not need to be beaten in the vicinity of the kidneys; the damage done to the tissue will affect the kidneys and, unless this is tested for, the correlation might not be made. While the studies (e.g. Bowley, Buchan, Khulu & Boffard, 2002) I scoured to understand the effects of kidney damage were concerned largely with the prevention of death, effects other than death accrue from kidney damage, such as fatigue, shortness of breath, and amputation. Slow, torturous, debilitating, and sometimes even visible disability. What is more, the sjambok is removed from the scene. Over the long history of the sjambok’s use in South Africa, how many victims has it claimed?

Sjambok

(A colonial essay)

A whip of plaited leather terminating
in a single thong, you pronounce the thing
shambok and you can buy them at
the Victoria Falls or any tourist trap
but a hundred good cracks and you are left holding
a cheap skein of lousy Egyptian cotton
wilting at unstrategic and weathered
corners, and whoever heard of a leather

whip with corners? These are not really
properly cured: chew them and they
are not salty enough, and with the faint
rancid flavour of animal fat
which should have been eliminated in
the diligent scraping and an indulgent sun.

Nowadays, paradox this, the best ones
are made in Australia, out of kangaroos
– strange pouched upright giant mice –
or, hell! What does a kangaroo look like
anyway apart from a gonetoseed prize-
fighter, too heavy in the arse?

Perhaps you have heard the old sjambok tales;
bleeding and crucified on wagon wheels,
the early farmers flayed their blacks into death;
soandso's grandfather kept
five men equipped with the stabbing assegai –
a marauding Matabele patrol – at bay
with a twelvefooter; and somebody else sliced
his brother into thick crimson strips
with one for loving his wife too well. Shades
of Cain and Abel and all that jazz.

The sjambok was a subcontinent's tool
and like the freemason's trowel
has been promoted or relegated,
depending on which side of all the elevated
wrists your granddaddy stood, to a symbol.
It looks good on a wall and is still
the only goad the phlegmatic oxen apparently
understand. Of course, it is excellent
for killing snakes – the oldest symbol – lifts

off their heads in one if you are in practice.
Douglas Livingstone, 1964

The sjambok – used to harry humans (and animals) along to extract free labour, to disperse them, to reprimand and punish – with its long, long history in South Africa, is a symbol of terror. The sjambok coalesces around its historical traces, an archive of debilitated and scarred flesh. The aim here was not to write a history or account of the sjambok, but rather to show what comes into view and how historical traces of death, debility and disability and their continuity may be right in front of us, waiting to be wielded when we are alert to racist domination. For our purposes, though, what matters is the way in which physical violence has been distributed and normalised as an exercise of power.

Marked flesh

In an influential essay, *Mama's baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book*, Hortense Spillers (1987) distinguishes between bodies and flesh. While she, like many standpoint theorists, does not specifically use the language of disability, the catalogue of horrors endured by the enslaved's flesh is about processes of disablement. As Erevelles (2011a) notes, it is in being someone that can be disabled that the enslaved become valuable. This is contrary to the claim within disability studies that disability has often been made to signify lack or absence of value. In Spillers' account, it is the flesh of the enslaved that is torn, lacerated, separated, punctured, that bears the scarring of whips, chains, fists and all the devices and effects of torture. She states that the:

> undecipherable markings on the captive body render a kind of hieroglyphics of the flesh whose severe disjunctures come to be hidden to the cultural seeing by skin (Spillers, 1987: 66).

The making of race is inextricably tied to the 'hieroglyphics of the flesh'. The flesh is debilitated through all kinds of torture and maiming, with the actuality and threat of disability as a technique of rule. It is through the vulnerability of the flesh that racialised and unequal world-making was/is materialised. Whilst scarring on skin that has been racialised as not deserving of care is visible, it is rendered silent by sociopolitical systems whereby anyone not racialised as white is subject to a hieroglyphics of the flesh.[57] Violence, not a dematerialised violence but one carved in the flesh of black people and those who are subjugated, shapes race and inequalities and provides the conditions of possibility for making racialised selves that not only produce black subjects,

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[57] Women, including white women, are also subjugated under a silenced hieroglyphics of the flesh.

but also render the hieroglyphics of marking invisible and illegible. The use and threat of disability and debility as world-making, producing blackness and inequality as ordinary and banal, becomes normalised by social and political arrangements that are ‘hidden (by) the cultural seeing of skin’ (Spillers, 1987: 66).

Taking inspiration from Spillers, Erevelles (2011a: 26) informs us: ‘it is the materiality of racialised violence that becomes the space of originary violence’. Erevelles (2011a) shows how disability studies’ theorisations, such as posthumanism, that seek to enjoy the transgressive possibilities of disablement, do not take account of slavery. How race animates the making of disability, and how disability in turn animates race, not just as metaphoric possibilities or interchangeable modes of oppression, is frequently missed. So, too, that the production of disability is historically located and tied to materially dense political economies. Contending with the materiality of identities, and the processes through which flesh is rendered (il)legible, requires not using identities as metaphors, and not collapsing race into disability or disability into race. Rather, the historical configurations through which race and disability are mutually constituted require explication (Wehiliye, 2014).

Spillers (1987) goes on to pose a potent question, and generates a connection from the past of enslavement to the ways in which the flesh gets carried within post-slavery societies. It is a question that post-slavery societies have to contend with, as the propensity to do violence is turned inward by survivors of slavery who perpetrate violence on each other.

> We might well ask if this phenomenon of marking and branding actually ‘transfers’ from one generation to another, finding its various symbolic substitutions in an efficacy of meanings that repeat the initiating moments (Spillers, 1987: 66)?

The continuation of a hieroglyphics of the flesh holds the potential to continue to manipulate the flesh so that race, blackness, and subjugation become self-evident. What is more, this transfer of a kind of relation takes on new and continually moving forms that repeat the relation whereby some bodies contain flesh that can be brutalised to moor subjugation. Weheliye (2014), also building on Spillers (1987), calls these relations racializing assemblages, in which new and changing configurations come together in varying ways to continue the work of making racial hierarchies. The flesh becomes a bearer of the political, and it is through the flesh that racialising assemblages coalesce.

Helen Meekosha's essay (2011), *Decolonising disability: thinking and acting globally*, argues that impairing political economies on a global scale are largely ignored by disability studies. She makes multiple connections from war, to industries that depend on cheap, disposable labour to do *back-breaking* work, to scientific experimentation, to the export of militarised masculinities and technologies. Thinking at the scales that Meekosha asks requires us to reckon with the normalisation of impairing conditions for the great majority of people in the Global South, which in South Africa has been localised in places like the Cape Flats, but is the materialisation of structural violence that settler colonialism has seeded globally. The distribution of vulnerability to impairment is assumed to affect the entire population, as 97% of impairment is acquired, and which disability studies instantiates by the notion of the 'able-bodied' being temporarily able-bodied (TAB) (Goodley, 2011; Liasidou, 2014). However, given how societies with racist political economies order differential material existences and forms of life based on racial classification, the risk of impairment to poor, black people is significantly higher.

Politics plays out on the body. Citizenship is embodied (Thomas, 2011). Connell (2011: 1371) refers to this mode of making bodies, on a global scale, as the 'ontoformativity of social process,' where worlds and bodies, what she calls social embodiment, are created through historical time, within which disability should be understood. I take Connell to mean a reimagination of disability histories, where the making of impaired bodies indexes the *longue durée* of dispossession and violence on a global scale. Within settler colonial nation-states, the transformation of the present through struggles for liberation retain coloniality as an aesthetics of the everyday, re/shaping lives and bodies. For a great many poor, black disabled people, impairment is the political inscribed on and manifested by impaired bodies. Not all poor, black bodies are visible materialisations of uncaring and wilfully destructive political economies. They are, however, bearers of the psycho-affective effects (Fanon, 1964/2001), of spaces where violence is allowed to flourish.

Towards a conclusion

I did not go out looking for four men who lived in the same place who had become impaired through injury and interpersonal violence. Undoubtedly, Langa contains many other stories of coming to visible impairment and, given the small amount of life histories I gathered, it would be foolhardy to claim a generalisable disability narrative that materialises South Africa's long histories of disenfranchisement in under-resourced, largely black neighbourhoods. Not all people with impairments become impaired through interpersonal violence; there are impairments caused by car accidents, work accidents, illness and a range of congenital psycho-affective and bodily differences. What we have seen in the ontological connections in Chapter Two, and will see in the next chapter on Marikana, is that the distribution of illness, accidents, occupational impairments, state violence and chronic ill health are racialised. What comes into view is how the layered histories of violence (Thomas, 2011) within colonial, apartheid and postapartheid South Africa have produced the conditions of possibility for impairment.

The normalisation of violence, under which black lives endure, redistributes vulnerability to impairment. In South Africa, with its high rates of inequality, unemployment and impoverishment, injury is a consequence of the endemic violence that characterises black, impoverished neighbourhoods. This is an effect of the long history of racial segregation, the distribution of wealth, and possibilities for class mobility within a racist capitalist political economy. This relationship to history is expressed through the forms of life that emerge, such as the participants we met in the previous chapter. Within all five histories, where violence changed their lives, what comes into view are masculinities that emerged within spaces of resource deprivation. Theirs were not only stories about the intersection of masculinity and (the production of) disability, or essentialist black masculinities, or of disability as a stable category. Rather, the racialisation of space, from slavery to colonialism to apartheid to postapartheid, has produced effects in which black criminality is naturalised, and rending the flesh of other black people has been made ordinary for some. It is critical to remember that, at the same time as there are young (largely) men reshaping their worlds through violence, there are a great many people attempting to create lives that are tender and beautiful. We need strategies to reach those men for whom violence is the most accessible resource, so that they can learn other ways of worldmaking, many of which are around them. The participants in the previous chapter, like Jonathan and Mzi who once were gangsters, show us that another world is possible. It should, however, not require maiming to come to fruition.

Not only is the Global South subjected to the worst privations of racist global capitalism; practices of knowledge production are also frequently colonial. Very often, the Global South and scholars who live here are treated as extractable resources for data collection, whilst the Global North is assumed to be the space where intellectual work happens. Internal forms of colonial knowledge production often mimic this relation, where white scholars treat black scholars as if they are to be developed into producers of theory, even as South Africa's long history of settler colonial violence and its materialisation is ignored. These kinds of relations are integral to epistemologies of ignorance. Like the sjambok, there are innumerable material traces through which the massification of black death-disablement and debilitation can be apprehended. However, to perceive these material traces requires a willingness to admit the violence of settler colonialism and how fundamentally destructive white supremacist rule has been for black people. As we move into the next section on protest, and consider how much erasure there is within South African knowledge production that is constituted by uneven intellectual relationships, the question I was often left with was: ‘what is knowledge?’, given how much erasure and wilful ignorance is part of the long history of white epistemologies. There are, of course, no satisfying answers to a question such as this, but it does bear holding onto. What is certain is that epistemic and ontological anchors require justice and an imaginary liveable world for all, in which death, disability and debility are not ordinary consequences of our socio-political arrangements.

In the following chapter, I will explore the Marikana massacre and the openings it offers to the long history of mining and labour in the country. As an exemplar of racist capitalism in South Africa, mining demonstrates how deeply sedimented death, disablement, and debility are within the South African political economy. Black South Africans who attempt to change arrangements of exploitation are met with spectacular violence by the state, which produces more death, disablement and debility.

Part III: Protest as death-disability-debility imaginaries

Chapter 8: *Marikana and Mining - labours of death-disability-debility*

In the previous chapter, I explored death-disability-debility as the materialisation of structural violence. Land dispossession and the racialisation of space concentrated the distribution of vulnerability to interpersonal violence in dense, poorly resourced spaces of black life, and created injurious worlds. South Africa's long history of enslavement is largely disavowed or mobilised in a cursory way in contemporary South African scholarship. However, thinking with the *longue durée* of enslavement, and how it has influenced everyday life, is critical. So, too, are the ways in which South Africa's history of enslavement and land dispossession influenced contemporary labour politics. Protests around labour rights and desires are critical sites for disability studies, as these spaces reveal how death-disability-debility are enfolded in black South African life.

David Bruce (2018) described the Marikana protests in a report entitled *The Sound of Gunfire: The Police Shootings at Marikana Scene 2, 16 August 2012*. In 2012, protests about living conditions and the salaries of rock-drill operators at a Lonmin-owned mine in Marikana[58] resulted in police opening fire on miners on 16 August, killing 34 and, according to official figures, injuring 78 more. The incident was considered the most violent response to protest in South Africa since apartheid. The event was preceded by violent incidents between mineworkers, the police and security, and competing unions from 12 to 14 August. Two Lonmin security guards, two policemen, two non-striking Lonmin employees, and three strikers were killed. On 16 August 2012, approximately 1600 striking miners were gathered on a koppie (hillock), when the police fired teargas and stun grenades, which pushed the striking miners towards police. In response to being shot at with rubber bullets by Public Order Police, one of the strikers shot at police with a pistol, about ten seconds before police opened fire with live ammunition. There were two scenes at which shooting occurred, with half the fatalities on the day coming from each scene. Some of the strikers were shot in the back, or in the side.

Even though he decries the police response in his report, Bruce (2018) refers to the miners as belligerent, which annoys me greatly. This kind of characterisation plays into tropes that delegitimate the struggle for life that is ongoing in South Africa, and presumes a normative frame through which people who are being ill-used and receive no support are to behave. The expectation that this language sets up is of the necessity for those who are subjugated to be docile

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[58] For detailed documentation on the Marikana Massacre, please visit Marikana Conference (2015a) at https://www.marikana-conference.com/index.php/marikana-exhibits.

subjects, who respond to slow violence and the affective build-up that ensues with calm and a truncated kind of confrontation. How they respond to overbearing, persistent, ruinous violence is expected to be through a fantastical code of civility, that expresses care for those who have presided over and maintained death-dealing, disabling and debilitating conditions. In Marikana, as both structure and event, we are able to perceive postapartheid alliances in which black elites reproduce and maintain racist capitalist violence. Galtung's (1969) caution should be heeded, that, unless structural violence is rigorously combatted, its conditions will persist even when those who set it in motion are no longer in charge.

Members of the ruling party, the former liberation party, the African National Congress (ANC), were implicated in the use of the police to secure suppression of the strike.[59] Our current president, Cyril Ramaphosa, the first leader of the National Union of Mines[60] during apartheid, was a non-executive director of Lonmin and a minority shareholder at the time of the massacre. He sent inflammatory emails prior to the use of live ammunition, in which he referred to the strikers as ‘plainly dastardly criminals,’ and stated that the preceding events ‘cannot be described as a labour dispute,’ and demanded that ‘concomitant action’ be taken (Head, 2018; see Marikana Conference, 2015b). His correspondence contributed to shifting the discourse of the events of Marikana from a labour dispute into criminalising the protestors. What was generally ignored was the lingering resentment of Lonmin having fired over 9000 miners in 2011 because of a labour strike, some of whom they rehired, but most remaining unemployed (Ngcukaitobi, 2021: 370).

In the aftermath of the shooting, widespread public condemnation ensued. The Marikana Commission of Enquiry, or Farlam Commission, which was convened by then-President Jacob Zuma a day after the killings to investigate the events at Marikana, would subsequently absolve

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[59] Tito Mboweni, SA’s minister of Finance, was CEO of the 3rd largest gold mining company, AngloGold Ashanti, in 2010. He went into exile during apartheid and became a member of the ANC. South Africa’s black postapartheid political elite are now deeply tied to the fortunes of mining and the misfortunes of mineworkers. The increased class divide between the black precariat and black political elite at times feels as if it has intensified violence. That Fanon (1961/2004) mapped and predicted the ways in which colonial structures of violence endure into postcolonial contexts does not offer succour.

[60] The National Union of Mines (NUM) was established in 1982, with Cyril Ramaphosa as a founding member, and was among the earliest unions who founded the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in 1985. COSATU and member unions were integral to the struggle for a democratic South Africa. Twala & Kompi (2012: 175) state that, ‘COSATU’s main aim was to organise the unorganised workers to fight for the improvement of the material conditions of its members in particular, and workers in general.’ The Marikana massacre was a terrible betrayal of those principles.

the major political players involved. Though the Commission[61] made recommendations on policing, the report mostly blames the strikers because of their displays of violence, and does not recommend a compensation scheme for families and survivors. Whilst some of the recommendations were related to improving the living conditions of workers, very little has yet been done to substantially change miners' lives. The mine, in recompense, has employed the wives and sons of slain miners to ensure continuity of income, and thus also the inheritance of generational impoverishment and, for some, intergenerational continuity of death, disablement and debilitation. Annual commemorations of the event have stressed the perduring pain of slain miners' families (Mahlakoana, 2020). Two years after the massacre, one of the widows stated that: "The life of a person who is working in the mines is cheaper than even chewing gum […] A manner will be devised to kill people who are working in the mines, but as it is, it doesn't matter' (Nicolson, 2014: np). Others at that meeting spoke about their pain being a constant hum. The first compensation payment made to a bereaved family was in 2017, five years after the massacre (Pillay, 2021). In August 2021, nine years after the massacre, the 275 claims for injuries were still being processed. Of those claims, there were 'delays' with 18 claims, where the miner could not be found, or the state-required evidence of their injury was insufficient (Khumalo, 2021).

Official police reports claimed there were 78 injuries. According to the South African Human Rights Commission, cited in David Bruce's (2018) report on Marikana for the Institute of Security Studies:

> In addition to those killed, many more were wounded, with some suffering devastating and permanent disablement. It is not possible to give accurate figures for the numbers who were shot by police but survived. The medical records of the injured and arrested suggest around 50, but the number may be higher than that. The fact that the Marikana Commission of Inquiry ('the Commission') has not engaged closely in the circumstances of the shootings of the survivors does not lessen their significance (2018: 28).

The prevalence of physical injury that was experienced at Marikana is thus uncertain. I struggled to find a catalogue of injuries and again I was reminded that we record death, but are not as faithful to those who are injured and have to live in, and with, the aftermath of violence. Despite

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[61] South Africa loves Commissions after events of astonishing violence; which waste taxpayer money. It is as if the law and prosecution of criminality by political elites needs to be substituted by public events of memory-making, like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. After every major public outrage, there is a Commission, rather than a criminal investigation with subsequent prosecutions.

the many articles, books and varying literature and media that have emerged after Marikana, there are no analyses of disability by senior scholars in South African disability studies. Whilst Marikana has been mentioned in some pieces (e.g., Swartz 2015), and notwithstanding the public outcry and Commission of Enquiry, and that the disabling and debilitating effects of mining have been rendered palpable, it has not induced an epistemic shift in SA disability studies to incorporate close analyses of occupational injury and connections with racial capitalism.

Nonetheless, what I found instructive was the medico-legal report by the esteemed forensic pathologist, Dr S. R. Naidoo (2013), about Marikana's survivors that was presented to the Marikana Commission. Dr Naidoo analysed data available from most of the hospitals where victims were taken in the aftermath of the massacre. There were no systematic records by doctors, and most of the data was from incidental reports by nursing staff. However, what Dr Naidoo found should concern us greatly. Of the 61 victims Dr Naidoo identified, 37 were left with:

> permanent disability and / or disfigurement, some severe, and a significant number of the remainder with moderate disability. The disabilities will include chronicity of symptoms, pain and dysfunction, affecting gait and lifestyle as well as livelihood /earning capacity. One with a gunshot of the head may be left with permanent neurological impairment. Six (6) victims appear to have ocular injuries and some may be with permanent visual loss. Many of the victims will be left with permanent disfigurement of limbs from unsightly scarring, much if (sic) this from multiple and destructive gunshots (2013: 3-4).

This catalogue of injuries should trouble us. The scale and severity of injury not only entails the intensification of injurious states for the individuals, but also has injurious entailments for families. Whilst Marikana may have been exceptional or notable for the use of live ammunition and subsequent inquiries that allow us a snapshot into the aftermath of protest policing, what we do not see is how survivors will be burdened with navigating their communities as people with disabilities. If the strikers' demands are any indication, and those who are now visibly impaired as a result of repressive violence remain in the communities around the mine, they will endure under-resourced communities with inadequate housing, healthcare and the other amenities needed to make worlds accessible for people with disabilities. The conditions that gave rise to Marikana still persist. Disability in debilitating worlds intensifies the struggle for accessibility. As we will see below, whilst the Marikana massacre was exceptional, mining as an industry carries high risks of impairment as a normal consequence of the occupation. It should also be noted that Dr Naidoo warned of possible post-traumatic injuries, which were not calculated.

Were we to calculate post-traumatic injuries, the scale of debilitation and impairment on the day would be far greater, and move us away from thinking with exceptional, anomalous or singular states of being, as disability has varyingly been framed. If the impairing work of trauma and its psycho-affective effects are distributed collectively with multiple, uneven, contingent and emergent results, especially in a context where it is not recorded, and trauma as a possible effect of violence is not recognised in the immediate aftermath of world-making events such as the Marikana Massacre, then how can we understand the events of that day? Or understand what repression and its distribution does, as well as its long-term effects at the societal level? There would also have to be a shift in reckoning about the remainders of traumatic events and a recognition of the affectability and *longue durée* of violent events on black subjectivity.

I do want to state very strongly that it is not only the strikers who we should be concerned about. After the Marikana Massacre, at least two of the police officers committed suicide (SAPA, 2013). In her testimony at the Marikana Commission, then-National Police Commissioner Riah Phiyega stated that, in 2010, there were 97 police suicides, 85 in 2011, and 116 in 2012. Events like Marikana, with multiple exposures to forceful subjugation, the use of weapons that maim and kill, and the threat of death, disability and impairment, do not only affect those who face a militarised police force's arsenal. The police are also subject to the effects of witnessing and participating in black subjugation, where the body and the psyche is rendered available for death and maiming.

What is more, the families of those miners who died at Marikana also continue to be impacted by the effects of the massacre. At least one of the slain miners' children has committed suicide (Webster & Gomba, 2018). We should also consider those miners who now live with physical and psychological impairment. What effects have their impairment had on the families, particularly given the interaction between disability and poverty? What new relations of care have emerged, and what are its gendered dimensions? What role has the state played to redress and support those they have injured? How do workers at state healthcare facilities deal with the effects of caring for the wounded? Given how limited rehabilitation facilities for ex-miners are (Enhancing Care Foundation & World Bank Group, 2017), and the already-exacting burden on healthcare staff in under-resourced facilities, how do events like Marikana contribute to the debilitation of healthcare workers? What kinds of communal feelings have been induced by living in the presence of those miners whose protests at the injustice of their working conditions lead to their impairment? These are just some of the questions that could be asked about disability in the aftermath of an event where the use of lethal force results in a continuum of injury, whose temporal and relational dimensions might not be immediately apparent.

The events at Marikana have had multifarious traumatic effects, not only on those who were present that day, but also their families and communities. Events such as Marikana thus have debilitating effects, albeit not even or predictable, but enough so that they reshape socialities, imaginaries and lifeworlds, often in ways that are unremarked or normalised. If we consider that histories of repression are made up of multiple and successive events, even if they are not amplified in the same way as an event like Marikana, then the constant shocks to socialities are what turns events into structure. These events are world-making but, without recognising their ontological effects, the worlds they are producing, and how the massification of debilitation and disability they register, produce, and instantiate, remain unclear. The ubiquity of protest in South Africa across generations, and the tendency to meet these micro-mobilisations (Duncan, 2016) with force that debilitates black communities, gives us insight into how repression and inequality is normalised over time, and what work disability and debility do in securing the reproduction of inequality.

Marikana exacted a heavy toll. The spectacular violence and swift repression, that tore bodies and psyches apart, that we witnessed on our televisions in the circulation of news and media, and continue to be exposed to, is a moment in a long history of fatal, disabling and debilitating effects by the mining industry and political elites. The story of mining is indelibly tied to the making of racial and extractive capitalism in South Africa. What the Marikana massacre did was reveal what generations of black families have known for decades: that black labour is disposable and that mining is so riven with violence that killing to secure the status quo is not unthinkable. Marikana made visible the violence that secures a cheap, disposable labour force, that enriches mine owners, shareholders and political elites who benefit from racial capitalism, at the expense of the lives of the men who labour and their families.

In the last few years, reading about the effects of mining has left me with a sense of horror at the sheer scale of what racial capitalism has wrought, even as I recognise that I had always known, though perhaps not systematically, how multiply exposed and vulnerable to injury miners were/are, or how entangled debilitation is/was in their everyday life. When I consider the similarities with the agricultural industry in South Africa,[62] factories and forms of labour where black penury and debilitation is rendered ordinary and expected, the scale of debilitation is so overwhelming, that I can barely grasp its dimensions. The level of denial and normalisation of the violence done to black labourers is so perverse that I wonder how we can ever constitute ourselves as a society where equality and the right to thrive is a norm. Once more, that I have had to state what is so palpably obvious, seems an affront, and again elicits the question of whose normal we are thinking with. To understand what happened at Marikana, and perhaps to gain some insight into why the children of miners, such as Chumani Maxwele who I engage with in Chapter 10, have protested so vehemently for epistemic encounters at their universities that recognised the debilitating legacies of racial capitalism, I will turn now to the mining industry in general. As with other sections, I am merely putting together a snapshot. What is required is thorough and ongoing research, using the lens of death-disability-debility, to understand how worlds are constituted by racialising bodyminds (Price, 2015; Schalk, 2018), and how wearing down bodyminds becomes normalised and makes populations available for disablement and debility. What is more, research is required on how, within settler colonial states, epistemic ignorance about the massification of disabling conditions is allowed to thrive. I will begin by discussing some of the history of mining in South Africa, as well as mining and disability, and

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[62] The agricultural industry in South Africa has some of the highest burdens of communicable and noncommunicable diseases, and is possibly an even more debilitating industry than mining, with higher rates of injury (London, 2003). To repeat, the legacy of inequality in the industry in which the ‘dop system’ was a feature, where workers were paid with alcohol to ensure a docile labour force during colonial and apartheid rule, has resulted in South Africa, the Western Cape in particular having the highest foetal alchohol syndrome rates in the world (see McKinstry, 2005; Lubbe, van Walbeek & Vellios, 2017; Popova, Lange, Probst, Gmel & Rehm, 2017). According to London (2003: 60), in Western Cape farming areas, TB rates are two to three times higher than urban rates, and childhood stunting is double the national average for urban children. Pesticide poisoning and occupational injuries are extensive and distributed across families due to the use of child labour (London, 2003). In 1998, conducted as part of a study on the neurological and neurobehavioral effects of exposure to organophosphate insecticides, London, Nell, Thompson and Meyers (1998: 109) found ‘considerable burden of morbidity and a high prevalence of risk factors for chronic illness and disability’; notably, brain injuries were common for nearly 70% of their 247 Coloured farmworker participants from 73 Western Cape farms. 19% of the workers reported being used as human markers for aerial spraying in their lifetime. This industry had protests that were brutally repressed, which shook the nation in 2012. Farmworker wages were institutionalised to below the minimum wage until February 2021, when it was brought to parity with the national minimum wage. Like mining, the agricultural industry has blocked economic restructuring that would enable people to move out of poverty and precarity. This is an industry with a very long history in enslavement, benefiting from the dispossession of black people, and normalising black labour as abject and thus available for maiming and debilitation. The farming industry has also cultivated enormous amounts of social capital through framing their struggles with the narrative of white genocide as something they fear, whilst presiding over incalculable human rights abuses and violations due to inhumane employment practices. The rhetoric of farm murders is one of the ways in which white supremacist discourse is normalised. By elevating the lives of white farmers, it erases the perduring and normalised violence that farmworkers are exposed to. There are numerous avenues for research in this industry that require analyses of death-disability-debility, especially from a decolonial feminist perspective. Once more, this is an industry that is obviously producing impairment at scales that are unimaginable, and is also an industry that has not had much claim to epistemic space within South African disability studies.

provide an example of one mining company and the debilitating and disabling effects it has been responsible for. There are over 500 mines in South Africa, so this account is not exhaustive.[63]

Mining

Diamonds were discovered in South Africa in 1867 (Wilson, 2001), and gold in 1886, which sparked what has been called the mineral revolution (Richardson & Van Helten, 1984; Davenport, 2013). The discovery of gold, and the subsequent gold rush,[64] was arguably one of the most important, with South Africa becoming the largest producer of gold within 20 years of its discovery by colonisers (Richardson & Van Helten, 1984).[65] It coincided with the discovery of coal (Richardson & Van Helten, 1984), as well as other minor but important minerals such as copper (Davenport, 2013). What is more, due to the gold rush, an influx of outward migration from the United Kingdom and elsewhere swelled the number of whites, and intensified and completed black land dispossession (Richardson & Van Helten, 1984) and subsequent transformations of black people into large reserves of forced, cheap labour. The gold and diamond mining industries, and the influx of whites seeking their fortune, was also at the centre of conflict[66] amongst acquisitive white settlers, and resulted in the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). Mining required vast amounts of labour, and mining companies engaged in predatory labour

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[63] For more reports on the effects of mining on miners and the surrounding communities, see The Benchmark Foundations, Policy Gap Series at: https://www.bench-marks.org.za/policy-gap-series/.

[64] One of the stories colonial education has been fond of relating was how colonisers stole the land in exchange for baubles, which they gave to indigenous people. It struck me forcibly, whilst reading about the history of mining, how desperately attached to shiny things colonisers were and to what ends they were willing to go for the shiny minerals they desired. They enslaved and subjugated populations to accrue shiny rocks, and called the subsequent transformations of lifeworlds, 'civilisation'. I wonder about these stories of colonial transactions and gullible natives. Do they contain a mode of colonial reflexivity, which gets transposed onto those they have subjugated, in which they can disavow the absurdity of relinquishing humane sensibilities, and torturing and maiming other humans for shiny rocks. It is deeply disquieting to consider what kinds of worlds have been made in the quest for shiny baubles.

[65] Indigenous people had been mining for centuries and had established deep level mining for gold (see Moeti, 1986, who cites Richard Hall's (1904) *The Ancient Ruins of Rhodesia*).

[66] Just a reminder that war and conflict produce enormous amounts of death, disability and debility. The lust for minerals restructured the political economy but also generated vast amounts of intergenerational trauma, irrespective of race. The long histories of the Anglo-Boer War and its concentration camps have been used within Afrikaner nationalist rhetoric to justify domination. The unresolved grief, living with multiple losses, and securing futures against death, disablement and debility is something that requires extensive research. How do memories, as a continuum of suffering, produce the will to dominate and render others vulnerable to maiming? What kinds of structural violence are the source of fear that generates new modes of sociality? That much settler colonialism was carried out by people who would have starved and suffered in Europe's imperial monarchies is not a small matter. They carried with them not just the normalisation of inequality, but also the brute tactics of domination that feudalism inculcated, as well as the lust for land, which many of them were not able to acquire as a consequence of repressive class systems. A shift to thinking of the modes of affective impairment that makes white supremacy possible would also be significant. It is my view that whiteness, as a mode of being in the world, requires cognitive and psycho-affective impairments that allow erasing the capacity to feel for those who have been othered. There are also intense desires for material comfort, that require the servitude of others, much of it unnecessary for the making of a good life, and which are in fact harmful to the environment and others, thus contributing to the destruction of worlds.

practices, using both indirect labour coercion and forced labour practices on surrounding black populations.

Land dispossession, mining and labour

Much like land dispossession was central to racialised neighbourhoods, in which black people were and continue to be exposed to existences that fostered interpersonal violence and modes of masculinity that terrorised black populations, land dispossession was crucial in making black labour vulnerable to death, disability and debility. Land dispossession by white settlers destroyed African forms of subsistence (Ngcukaitobi, 2021), restructured gender (Moodie, 1988)[67] and family relations (Budlender & Lund, 2011; Hall & Posel, 2019), when black men had to leave their homes to live in squalid single-sex mining compounds that fomented diseases like TB which they carried back to their families in the native reserves (Packard, 1989; Rees, Murray, Nelson & Sonnenberg, 2010), and also generated the conditions that forced black people to accept menial, arduous forms of labour that destroyed their health (Packard, 1989; Rees et al., 2010).

Cecil John Rhodes, mining magnate and prime minister of the Cape Colony - whose statue at the University of Cape Town became a flashpoint in 2015 and provided the impetus for the #RhodesMustFall movement which has since taken on transnational dimensions - enacted the Glen Grey Act in 1894. The act instituted a system of individual rather than collective tenure, restricted land and cattle ownership by native people, and imposed a labour tax which was intended to force Africans into a cash economy and thereby provide labour for the mines and industry (Ngcukaitobi, 2021). Taxation, which was not used to benefit black South Africans but rather keep them impoverished (see Trevor, 1936), was primarily a form of indirect labour coercion (Moeti, 1986).

The continuities with enslavement are palpable. According to Moeti (1986: 279 - 280), in the last quarter of the 19th century, controlling black labour was also achieved by trapping and forcing black workers into patronage systems, where they were treated as if they were owned by

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[67] In Moodie (1988), we see how single-sex mining compounds reshaped sexualities and sexual relations between older and younger male miners. Undoubtedly, these new gender and sexual imaginaries would have impacted sexual dynamics when miners travelled home to their families. What is more, the patterns of forced sexual encounters, forcible initiations of young men into submissive, feminised sexual roles and non-consensual ‘mine marriages’, coupled with the stigmatisation and secrecy that forbade their sharing these histories with wives or female sexual intimates at home, may have foreclosed the kind of vulnerable intimacies that fostered mutuality and reciprocity. Mining management’s complicity, which ignored the sexual dynamics and its consequences, was one more way in which the traumatisation of black people was treated as negligible. This is not to say same-sex relations are traumatic; rather, it is the secrecy and shame that was attached to hyper-masculine performances, and the disruption of intimacy enforced by circular migration and the cloistered world of the mining compound.

the patron. Called *Magoduka*, forced migrant worker, their wages were frequently unpaid and, despite having contracts, they were not allowed to go home. Some of them would apply for work in the morning, be told there was none, and be captured as vagrants in the afternoons. If they got drunk at European-owned bars, they would also be captured and trapped into slave-like labour conditions. There was thus a system, after the abolishment of formal slavery, that ensured a supply of forced labour and continued the theft of African labour, and a white-owned industrial machinery that felt entitled to profit off stolen black labour.

Labour was recruited and monopolised by the Chamber of Mines (Van Onselen, 2019). They ensured a steady supply of labour by raising hut taxes and other taxation mechanisms which could only be paid in cash. According to Wilson, wages did not rise for at least two generations of black gold miners (2001:103):

> ln 1969, wages were no higher than they had been in 1911, and the wages were, if anything, *lower* than they had been decades before that. At the same time, the diamond mines housed their black labor force in single-sex compounds, issuing contracts of limited duration. This practice, adopted by the gold-mining industry, meant that men were compelled to return to the rural areas on a regular basis (after their contracts, ranging from a few months to two years, ended) – a system of oscillating migration that was enforced by means of "pass laws" (which had roots going all the way back to the reluctant abolition of slavery in the 1830s).

Mining labour practices thus not only continued enslavement, but circular migration also remade families and gendered relations. The pittance that men were paid, precarious labour practices, and temporary and frequently overcrowded housing, allowed the mines to debilitate the men who worked in their mines and dispose of them when they showed signs of senescence. Black land dispossession, and being forced into wage labour, made black men available for debilitation, disability and death. Oscillating migration not only created precarity, but also allowed the mines to distance themselves from any accountability for the suffering they bequeathed to their black employees.

Black prospective miners were subjected to rigorous and dehumanising medical examinations, which not only assessed the miner's body, but also, as Butchart (1996) argues, constructed and controlled it. Miners whose contracts came to an end were also made to take medical examinations and were frequently disposed of by the mines when they were no longer considered to have productive capacities (Livingston, 2005; van Onselen, 2019). Butchart's (1996) and Livingston's (2005) monographs also show that medical examinations drew on ableist discourses to construct the body of miners, but also, given the shifts over time in how racialised embodiment was understood and evaluated and the inhumane expectations and tests that black miners underwent, it was a distinctly racialised ableist discourse. Black men were expected to perform tasks that demonstrated inordinate capacities. Productive black bodies were thus those at the peak of physical performance. The making of black embodiment in spaces like mines, agricultural labour and other intensive physical forms of labour, requires thorough research through disability and debility.

It is chilling reading accounts of men undergoing a yearly medical examination, which presumably charts their senescence and growing debility, with awareness of their future of disability and eventual death and, rather than set up forms of care, recommends their retrenchment, often with paltry sums of money (see Ledwaba & Sadiki, 2016). Van Onselen (2019) details the nightmarish journeys that debilitated and disabled miners experienced in the hospital car of the trains that carried miners across the Southern African region. He states that, before mines had better hospital facilities, the coach that carried the disabled and sick was a 'coffin-on-wheels and part of a systematic mass-evacuation campaign for permanently disabled "rejects" and the terminally ill' (2019: 123). This practice, of sending men back to their communities when they could no longer work, reshaped the places they returned to, and remade moral and gendered subjectivities (Livingston, 2005). Mining thus institutionalised responses to disablement and debility, and its effects were dispersed to communities across Southern Africa. In the next section, we will look more closely at the disabling states that work in mines produced.

Mining and disability

Mining is physically arduous labour. Black mineworkers, from across the Southern African Development Community (SADC region), have endured brutal working conditions for meagre salaries. Many of them would leave the mines with chronic health conditions that were debilitating, disabling, and eventually fatal. According to Hermanus (in van Niekerk, 2016), over one million men were disabled, and over 68 000 killed, in the mines in South Africa between 1900 and 1991. The World Bank commissioned the Enhancing Care Foundation to do a study on disability and the rehabilitation of ex-miners, and the report, *ECRF Final Report: Rapid Assessment of the Disability and Rehabilitation of Ex-miners Living in Lesotho, Swaziland, South Africa and Botswana,* was released in March 2017. According to them, there are over 500 000 men who currently work in mines, and about 2 million ex-miners. There are scant resources for disabled miners in their communities when they return, and in rural communities, they are further disabled by environments that are inaccessible (Sherry, 2014, 2016). Ex-miners who were disabled lamented the burden on their families, the financial constraints of unemployment, and the inability to sustain their livelihoods. Of those miners who had been injured, 13% did not receive any compensation, though 42.32% had been compensated. There was very little literature on, or a systematic database of, ex-mineworkers. The Equal Care study primarily looked at mineworkers who were recorded as injured, and the prevalence of injury across all ex-mineworkers is not certain.

Mines are one of the greatest producers of disability for black workers (Leger, 1989), responsible for producing two thirds of physical disability, and considered to be ‘the most hazardous industrial sector’ (Hermanus, 2007: 531).[68] For generations, miners worked with very little protection from silica dust, and were harried violently by white overseers who would both verbally and physically abuse them with ‘boots and fists’ (Ledwaba & Sadiki, 2016). Here and there, written in the most unremarked upon way, you may find that sjamboks were used in the early 1900s, and van Onselen (2019) even notes an incident in the 1970s.[69] Black mineworkers were made to stay close by when new shafts were being blasted, as it was too time-consuming for them to first evacuate. Unstable underground conditions, and proximity to explosions, would exacerbate vulnerability to rock cave-ins, which resulted in bodily harm and, increasingly in the last few years, more fatalities than injuries. Not only is physical disablement pervasive, but due to exposure to and fear of accidents, exposure to the deaths and illness of friends and colleagues, and the host of stresses that miners experience, post-traumatic stress is endemic (van Niekerk, 2016). Despite awareness of the multiple traumatic events miners might experience, there is very little work on post-traumatic stress in mines (Dumakude, 2012).

That mining is hazardous, and causes debilitation, disability and slow painful deaths to generations of black men, has been known from at least the 1800s (Livingston, 2005; Ledwaba

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[68] Though, see footnote 62 on the agricultural industry. What this may tell us is that black labour experiences extremely high rates of disability, debility and death, and that the scale is so disastrous across these industries that it is unfathomable that there could be a more injurious industry. These contradictions need careful investigation, and more systematic databases are required, as well as more oversight, in these industries as regulating themselves might not necessarily lead to an accurate description of the scale of human disaster they are responsible for.

[69] Because black workers are assumed to be lazy, and the racial contract assumes the right to extract labour from black people very cheaply, and if not directed to racial capitalist ends, then the black body as an instrument of the will of others must be punished and harried, much like one would once harry oxen or cattle. The use of instruments of violence are normalised, and thus need not be remarked on. Frequently, it is merely an extension of the will of the overseer, whether he is white or a proxy for capital. A white miner could not be whipped.

& Sadiki, 2016; van Onselen, 2019). Despite changes in regulations and safety conditions, ‘much still needs to be done to end the genocidal conditions that have left tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands even, maimed and relegated to slow and painful deaths’ (Ledwaba & Sadiki, 2016: 113). Not only is labouring in the mines hazardous, but overcrowding in mining hostels has debilitated, disabled and ended lives by creating the ideal conditions for the transmission of pulmonary tuberculosis (TB). In 2007, ‘a health and safety audit found that the tuberculosis rates in mines are the highest in the world’ due to non-compliance with legislation (Ledwaba & Sadiki, 2016: 120; see also Osewe & Nkrumah, 2018). Inadequate housing, salaries, and access to healthcare create debilitating conditions that produce slow deaths, some more agonising than others. These deaths are immensely profitable for shareholders and the elite in management, which in postapartheid South Africa crosses racial boundaries and complicities. Racial capitalism still profits off black death and suffering.

According to Osewe & Nkrumah (2018), it may very well have been the migration of miners from Cornwall and South Wales, who were riven with TB and then worked in the hot, humid mines in South Africa, that caused the devastating and uncontained spread of TB in Southern Africa. Whilst the story of the migration into South Africa for the gold rush is frequently told, what one hardly ever hears about are the white mineworkers who contracted an accelerated form of silicosis due to the brutal working conditions. Miners from Cornwall provided the skills needed to pioneer industrial gold mining in South Africa, and a great many of them returned home to die after having contracted silicosis.

What struck me when I read this was not the fact of bearing disease, but the conditions under which the disease would be fatal. It is these brutal working conditions that, despite postapartheid labour regulations and shifts in the meaning of racialised labour, had continued unabated. What is more, Marikana showed us that docility to slow violence (Nixon, 2011), and the winnowing down of people’s living in long emergencies (Wakeham, 2021), such as that instituted and normalised by the mining industry, is expected. Anything less than docility will be met with unemployment, such as the over 9 000 Lonmin miners in 2011 who were fired, or encountered spectacular violence such as those on the koppie at Marikana in 2012 experienced. It is a whipping under another name, under new technologies, a training into docility through the body. The mineral revolution carried devastating and slow forms of death across borders, which in time became so normalised that the death-disablement-debilitation produced would be part of the condition of being black in the world. To reiterate and expand on the endemic disability, debility and death normalised by mining, I will turn now to merely one example[70] of slow violence, to show the impact one mining company, ArcelorMittal, has had on four communities. I have thought a little with platinum mining (Lonmin/Marikana Massacre) and gold mining (gold rush), and now will look at steel mining with a focus on disability and debility. Mining's protected status, and the wealth it creates for a very small class of people, has been allowed to devastate at a genocidal scale.

ArcelorMittal: producing ruin and rendering lifeworlds disposable

> '*While i**t may seem obvious** that people have suffered the effects of pollution* from ArcelorMittal, *attributing it to the company has not been easy.'* (Benchmark Foundation, 2013: 7)

The Benchmarks Foundation (2013) conducted a study on four communities in the Vaal Triangle – Bophelong, KwaMasiza, Joko Tea and Sebokeng – which were impacted by ArcelorMittal,[71] an international steel mining company that had a revenue of R30 billion in 2010. These communities were/are near the operations of ArcelorMittal. The mine impacted their environment, and was also one of the primary employers in the area. Benchmarks Foundation investigated environmental concerns, working conditions, and compensation after injury, but their focus was on how well ArcelorMittal honoured their stated corporate social responsibility. Unsurprisingly, they found that it decimated the environment, treated employees as disposable, and created unsafe working conditions, thereby contravening their own stated company vision and standards of worker, community and environmental safety. Benchmarks Foundation also repeatedly attempted to get officials at the company to partake in the study, to no avail. Their findings were based on publicly available company records, and engagement with the affected communities.

The Benchmarks Foundation (2013: 11) found that, whilst the company has a policy on minimising occupational hazards, there was no policy on 'what happens to those injured or fallen ill as a result (both in the workplace and community) of the hazardous process of steel production.' This, despite how polluting steel production is, or that physical working conditions

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[70] For more studies of the effect of varying kinds of mining, see The Benchmarks Foundation Policy Gap series at https://www.bench-marks.org.za/policy-gap-series/.

[71] According to the Benchmarks Foundation (2013), steel production started in 1912 under the United Steel Corporation of South Africa. Iscor was formed in 1928, was taken over by Mittal Steel in 2004, and then merged with Arcelor in 2006.

killed many employees, or injured them so severely that they were unable to work again. The company's response has been to create onerous legal processes to avoid paying the enormous compensation that employees and communities would be entitled to because of their immoral business practices and colonial use of the law, with, of course, the collusion of the state. Benchmarks Foundation's report provides a catalogue of devastation that if translated, albeit with local differences, to other mining communities across the country is criminal, morally repugnant and genocidal in the scope of decimation it indicates. They found that there was a health crisis due to pollution, with 49% of their respondents declaring respiratory problems such as asthma, coughs and sinusitis, and 35% who were ill because of pollution. Other ailments that were reported, some affecting children and the larger community, were itchy skin (32% of respondents), lung problems (18%), kidney problems (18%), cancer (9%), stomach aches (9%), high blood pressure (9%), and headaches (5%). The environmental devastation from pollution has affected air quality and water safety, and has caused some farms in the area to relocate as a result of the endemic illnesses to humans, livestock and the environment. One farmer claimed that over 10 000 jobs were lost in the farming sector as a result of this mining company's toxic ecology. Not only is the company not held responsible or accountable, but former and current workers, residents and landholders in the surrounds are held responsible for their own healthcare, and extracting compensation is onerous and impossible. To sum up the most obvious, living close to and working in the mine produced disability and senescent effects. The toxic ecologies that mines leave behind and produce have death-dealing, disabling and debilitating effects, which require research. It is not just the environment that is devastated, but also the people who are forced to live there and cannot afford to leave.

Former workers declared that they experienced physical injury and sensory loss due to their work, and many of them had been retrenched as a result. Thirty two percent experienced loss of eyesight, 32% had eye problems, 27% had loss of hearing and 9% had an ear problem.[72] Twenty five percent of workers became disabled or injured, 25% had foot-ache, 19% had chest pains, 13% had waist pain, 13% had leg injuries, and 6% had been burnt. The workers received no or inadequate compensation for the destruction of their bodies and livelihoods. It is heart-wrenching reading snippets of interviews, where ex-workers are retrenched after becoming impaired, and are disposed of by the company without compensation or the support needed to care for themselves, particularly as they are now unemployable. It is scandalous that entire communities are being decimated whilst companies such as this hoard money, and grow wealthy on the

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[72] We should note that, whilst these impairments are noted singly, one person may have had multiple impairments.

massification of death-disability-debility without consequence. This has been happening for over a century, it is happening today, and will happen tomorrow. The temporality of slow violence is used to evade accountability, even when it is obvious. There is one case mentioned where a white person was injured in the mine, and the company rushed to respond. It is only because of coloniality that this winnowing down of health is treated as normal, and that effects on black bodies need to be proved. How many black people's lives were used in this cruel fashion:

> *I am sick because of Iscor. As I was working for Iscor and was injured by a crane in the eyes and teeth. When the doctor checks people who worked for Iscor they say I am not sick and yet I have a problem with my eyes and teeth (p.31)*

> *I gain more pain than work experience in my life. I can't provide for my family and I cannot pay for medication. I lost my eyesight because of this horrible company. They can't even take responsibility (p. 31)*

> *Worked from 1986 – 1996. Came into contact with chemicals but the company did not do anything. I took them to court and the company brought a lawyer to change my story and they won. People are suffering from TB and other lung related illnesses because of Mittal. Most ex-workers are disabled and babies are born deformed. Mittal dump their ash where people can easily access (p.32)*

Towards a conclusion

It is almost ten years since the Marikana Massacre. Whilst the shooting was emblematic of the extreme ends of the continuum of violence, miners, mining communities and mining families have been enduring endemic violence that has devastated generations of black families. Disability, debility and death are consequences of this violence, and have been rendered ordinary. Protesting structural violence (Galtung, 1969), slow violence (Nixon, 2011), or the long emergency (Wakeham, 2021) that these racist, capitalist spaces of death-disability-debility produce is to become vulnerable to swift and spectacular forms of violence by the state and mining companies. What the response to the protests communicated was that miners should be content to endure the slow violence of penury as their bodies are used up to create wealth, and that the state would work to suppress the democratic right to protest through spectacular and direct violence. Rather than being a key producer of wealth, mining as a mode of production has destroyed worlds for over a century in South Africa. It is directly linked to the death-disablement-debilitation and destruction of generations of black people. Were we to calculate the worth of an industry based on its destructive capacities, rather than the generation of wealth for a small subclass, mining would be one of the worst producers and sustainers of human capital. Mining was envisioned as a cannabilistic enterprise, and has continued to eat up lives. Crucially, land dispossession, and what it has entailed in terms of human suffering and instituting modes of labour that make black people available for maiming and disposal in under-resourced labour reserves, has been critical to the maintenance of a death-disability-debility imaginary that renders black suffering ordinary. Settler colonial states' death-disability-debility imaginaries require the continuity of epistemologies of ignorance which transform the obvious wearing down of populations (Puar, 2017) into race, more specifically into blackness, as a mode of being. Mining has also transformed the land into toxic ecologies which have produced ecological collapse, and death, disability and debility for those humans and animals who have to live with and in the environments created. Whilst we are accustomed to thinking of the mines as extractive industries, they also leave remainders of illness and blasted ecologies, slow violences (Nixon, 2011) that linger.

What I have shown in this chapter is how thoroughly mining capitalism creates, sustains and reproduces disability and debility as an ordinary, rather than an exceptional, consequence of its operations. The distribution and scale of devastation that mining has left across Southern Africa, over more than a century, can be traced directly to labour in the mines, with over a million people disabled. This is without considering the scale of psycho-affective residues produced for black miners when they witness death, disability, debility, and the constant loss of their fellow workers who do not return when they are no longer able to labour. Because mining leaves behind toxic ecologies that affect and debilitate surrounding communities, some of whom are also exposed because they labour in the mines, the cost of mining on our ecologies and populations is devastating.[73] When we add in the ways that black miners affect their families and communities[74] as an ordinary consequence of labour, and those who police and repress miners in service of the status quo, then the toll of mining[75] is almost beyond comprehension.

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[73] I sat spellbound and stuck, sometimes for hours, trying to comprehend and find the language, the right adjective, to describe. I also feel a little unbound writing this, as if this can only be a work of the imagination, as I try to grasp over a century of devastation, that was preceded by slavocratic colonialism so dense and savage that the contours of what was wrought have been mostly erased. Devastating is an inadequate word.

[74] See Livingston (2005) for how debility over time is rendered ordinary in the making of worlds. People continue to live and make life even in the presence of perduring and ceaseless loss and the constant recalibrating they are called to endure.

[75] As well as other industries where people get used up to make rapacious others wealthy, which extend from racialised forms of labour, such as agriculture, factories, policing, domestic labour and a host of other denigrated jobs, to include formerly prestigious forms of labour, such as university employment and a range of bullshit jobs (Graeber, 2019), where you are expected to toil ceaselessly for little security or remuneration. Though some jobs may pay much more, neoliberal forms of labour, with its emphasis on productivity, responsiveness, mechanised audits, and of work being life, are no less debilitating. In many ways, the logic of the plantation, and the violent bureaucratic measures to extract labour at all costs, has seized previously protected demographics in the quest to maximise profits. Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) truly helps us all, as to secure the rights of those most

What is more, how do we think about disability studies in and from the Global South when multiple interlocking forms, and the massification, of debilitation are not obvious, visible or centred in thinking about impairment. There have been some studies on disability and the mining industry from occupational health. The logic of disablement in industries such as mining where racial capitalism has normalised black debility and disability as an ordinary consequence of labour escapes notice in South African disability studies, which should concern us, along with the erasure of the distribution of vulnerability to disability, and the chronopolitics of debility in black neighbourhoods where structural violence or slow violence is ordinary. What is more, these dynamics force us to question some of the foundational concepts of a disability studies in the Global South, where the long histories of settler colonialism, and the ways in which lifeworlds were destroyed and continue to be under threat, escape notice because the perduring crises of blackness are not exceptional. We have to, given the absences of this scale of devastation, debilitation, disability and death, contend that disability studies in South Africa, despite enormous admiration for its achievements, works through and with settler colonial logics.

In the following chapter, I will explore crowd control technologies and the consequences of protest policing. By focusing on the visceral effects and affects induced by this form of spectacular violence, I show that the militarisation of policing in South Africa has a long history of using death-disablement-debilitation to maintain black subjugation. This form of public mass torture, and the very obvious production of disablement, is also woefully absent in South African disability studies.

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oppressed will result in more equitable societies for all. If only we would stop thinking it was normal to destroy people’s bodies and psyches in labour, we would secure our own freedom to labour in ways that are humane.

Chapter 9: *Crowd-control weapons - protest technologies to ensure black accommodation to death-disability-debility*

> ***Siyasanga Gijana was fetching water*** near her home in the Ramaphosa informal settlement in Philippi, Cape Town on 23 April 2020 when she was shot in the face. The police allegedly ***fired rubber bullets out of their vehicle*** in her direction. ***She ~~lost~~ her eye.*** … From the beginning of the initial lockdown, ***police, including municipal police forces, were deployed,*** initially at a large scale ***alongside members of the military.*** The ***police were armed*** with a range of weapons: in particular, ***shotguns and rubber bullets, police-standard 9mm pistols capable of firing lethal rounds, stun grenades and tear gas***. For a period, ***some police were*** reportedly ***armed with sjamboks***, claiming that they were following ***orders from 'the top***'. ***The use of sjamboks is unlawful*** under South African constitutional and international human rights law. It is also not included as an ***authorised weapon*** in the South African Police Service (SAPS) national instruction 4 of 2014 (Rayner, Masiangoako & Corney, 2020: np, emphases added).

This is not how one loses body parts,
misplaces body parts,
relinquishes body parts.
Body parts are taken by systems of control when some (black) bodies are available for maiming.
When some (black) bodies can have weapons pointed at them
and a human being is authorised to unleash
that weapon into the (black) body of someone with very little power.
Someone who can be turned into an agent who loses their (black) body parts.
The human being who had their eye shot out by a police-person
because there was no running water in her home,
because when we make national lockdown plans to save lives
based on national plans in most of the Global North,
based on shielded settlers and the black elite,
we imagine that homes provide shelter in the same way for all people.
To fantasise a nation,
we lose our memories
that not all homes have water
and some women will have to be outside
to fetch water.
That some woman will be fetching water at the tap in her fenced yard[76]
And men with weapons in a moving vehicle will think her sport.
Will shoot, a black woman fetching water
In her face
Will point a weapon at her face
And let loose a rubber bullet.
Non-lethal, less-lethal weapon, they call it.
Shot, from the safety of their vehicle.
'She says there was a protest in the area about water cuts,
but that was on the other side of the settlement and far from her house.'
"There was no protest action close to us and everyone was indoors," she says[77].'
During the lockdown, it was not illegal to bring food into a home.
Unless you were black and queuing to get into a store in a (black) township
that was engineered
to squeeze far too many (black) people into too little land.[78]

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[76] https://www.dailyvoice.co.za/news/cops-shot-my-eye-out-47325233

[77] ibid.

[78] https://www.straitstimes.com/world/africa/coronavirus-south-african-police-fire-rubber-bullets-at-shoppers-during-lockdown

The political elite have lost their/our memories
that to ask for social distancing is to stretch the space
people dispossessed of land do not have,
because you were made to lose your homes, your land.
Dispossession of homes and dispossession of eyes are not separate things[79].

In this chapter, I once more want to make impairment visceral, to enflesh encounters with crowd-control weapons, and thus offer up a contemporary grammar of race written on the flesh (Spillers, 1987), and inscribed on the psyche in ways we are yet to understand. In the previous chapter on Marikana, I showed how protests express endemic violence, and that death-disability-debility is constitutive of black worlds, rather than exceptions. When black people have protested their attritional living conditions to make their plight known, or asked for often-meagre concessions to stave off death-disability-debility, they are often met with spectacular forms of violence by police and private security. The endemic violence that black people have endured for centuries is undergirded by swift, cruel forms of mass torture called crowd control. Black death-disablement-debilitation is enacted in full view of the public, to debilitate the black majority as a longstanding tactic of governance. To start, I will sketch some connections, then discuss protest and policing in South Africa. I will then work my way through crowd-control weapons, tear gas and rubber bullets, after which I briefly touch on trauma of both protesters and police. There are, of course, many other crowd-control weapons, and thus my focus is illustrative rather than comprehensive. I hope that more research emerges about the particularity of different weapons, such as rubber bullets, and slow, visceral, careful and detailed studies of what urban warfare wielded by the state and other law enforcement agencies does to civilian populations physically, psychologically, ethically and politically. Moreover, we require long-term research that tracks the effects of chemical warfare in neighbourhoods that have repeatedly been exposed to tear gas, as well as the effects of tear gas on children, women, and people with respiratory and other vulnerabilities to toxified atmospheres.

In *The Right to Maim*, Jasbir Puar (2017) shows how tactics and technologies of repression create maiming as a mode of life that is not death, but also an intensification of death-making. Building on Puar (2017), I want to stray from some of the very productive conceptualisations we are offered that destabilise the thanatopolitical grounds of biopolitics, to rather spend some time with the technologies and their effects. Crowd control weapons are often rendered ordinary and justifiable in their everyday use. The afterlife of protests usually dissipates, unless there are

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[79] I wrote the poem.

spectacular death tolls, such as the Marikana Massacre, as if the temporariness of the event and its effects are coeval. This chapter sketches connections for further research. Crowd-control weapons, as technologies of repression, work through the flesh and psyche, and mobilise the threat of death, debility and disability to achieve acquiescence. When protests against debilitation are met by these weapons, what ensues is further debilitation, disability and death. Crowd-control weapons are wielded on a near daily basis, and are so ubiquitous that they almost escape notice. These are weapons that I, people I love(d), students, and countless others, across South Africa and globally, have faced. Countless people who have and continue to endure harsh living conditions, in their quests for the most meagre concessions, have been enveloped in toxic, polluting gas, been stunned, shot at, and punished for congregating and asking for change, and to be recognised.

Sketching connections

Crowd-control weapons (CCWs), used to disperse protesters, have become an ordinary feature of policing. The militarisation of policing globally has lead to an increased use of CCWs, which are frequently touted as non-lethal, and thus placed in a binary relationship with lethal weapons (Henkin, 2019). In South Africa, the centuries-long history of repression and martial policing (Howell, 2018) of the oppressed black majority have produced one of the most technically advanced military industries in the world, and the most advanced in the Global South (Auger, in Feigenbaum, 2017). After Marikana, for example, riot-control drone technology, which shoots pepper-spray balls from the sky, was marketed as preventing another Marikana, despite evidence that the use of tear gas was a critical reason why people lost their lives in Marikana (Feigenbaum, 2017). Under apartheid, not only did South Africa's arms industry develop weapons for domestic control but, as a leader in riot control, they also profitably exported techniques and armaments such as tear gas, developed in the secret apartheid government biological and chemical warfare programme, Project Coast (Feigenbaum, 2017).

Project Coast was run by Wouter Basson, a still-practicing cardiologist, who was responsible for the deaths and suffering of countless people. He hired hundreds of scientists and researchers, had a multimillion-Rand budget, and developed transnational links and synergies in the research and arms industries, whose prime purpose was the destruction of life, disabling and debilitating populations at unimaginable scales for profit or to secure and maintain inequality. There are many questions that have been unasked about South Africa's long history, in which black bodies were systematically targeted, as well as the industries that emerged around the making of death, disability and debility in black life. This is another way in which the evasion of intellectual complicity with black subjugation is effected. There are still flourishing and dense connections between the medical, commercial, research, and security industries, in which the destruction of life is treated as an acceptable enterprise. Often, black subjugation ensues. The massification of violence against black bodies is overwhelming. In the next section, I will discuss protest policing. There are many questions about the pervasive use of protest policing and the centuries-long militarisation of policing in South Africa that require further study, as well as the relationships between multiple industries that profit(ed) from very public forms of black terror.

Protest policing

According to Mansley (2013: 10), protest policing defends state institutions and non-state groups from groups who are protesting, whilst balancing protesters' rights to protest, and the rights and property of state institutions and non-state groups to continue their lawful business. Mansley develops a binary topology of protest policing: hard policing and soft policing.

> 'Soft' policing is negotiated management or 'community policing'. 'Community policing' implies greater citizen involvement in the identification of problems and priorities for police attention … 'Hard' policing is paramilitarised policing: the use of riot gear, containments, baton charges, mounted charges, dogs, stop-and-search and counter-terrorism powers, surveillance/information gathering and the imposition of banning orders or conditions on demonstrations (2013: 12).

He argues that the style of policing is related to the state's priorities and that, in the US and UK, a punitive turn in criminal justice and neoliberalism is related to hard policing. Most theorists of militarised policing consider it to be a more recent phenomena in Western democracies such as the US. However, when one remembers that policing is racially differentiated and, in the US, arose out of controlling enslaved people (Howell, 2018), these normative histories seem to be more about understanding how white and formerly protected subjects come to be policed so harshly. In the context of policing in Canada as a settler colonial practice, Shantz (2016) states that those who are not oppressed are impervious to the militarisation of policing, as it is part of the ordinary structures of domination.

Alison Howell (2018) argues that, instead of thinking that police have become militarised, we should instead be aware that peace and war have been intertwined. She states it may be better to conceptualise policing as martial politics, and shows that both universities and policing are martial. She says that the concept of militarisation 'underestimates the extent to which we live with war: how marginalized people, those who are racialized, disabled or poor, are subject to war-like (martial) forms of politics' (2018: 118). She further connects racialised carceral politics to disability carceral politics, where disabled people were incarcerated in psychiatric institutions. One of the participants in my study, Margaret, recounted that, during apartheid, her ex-husband, a medical professional, would threaten to incarcerate her in a psychiatric institution when she contravened the racial order by being intimate with black friends. He often carried the letter that would allow him to commit her. Thus, this logic penetrated intimate relations in ways we are yet to understand. More so, we are offered a glimpse, through Margaret's story, of how the carceral politics of disability (Ben-Moshe, Chapman & Carey, 2014) overlapped with South Africa's entrenched racial logics. Returning to policing, Howell's (2018) conceptualisation of martial policing accords with the history of the South African Police (SAP), and also with the South African academy, as suggested by the links between the military and universities in Project Coast.

South Africa has had over three centuries of militarised policing (Lamb, 2018), and thus hard policing (Mansley, 2013) has perdured over time, in relation to the available technologies. According to Lamb (2018), paramilitary forces were responsible for both policing and military functions during the colonial period. These intertwined functions produced well-armed police who used 'excessive force in an attempt to defeat and/or subjugate rebellious and threatening groups' (2018: 936). In 1910, after a period of warfare, the Union of South Africa was formed, and the SAP came into existence in 1912. The SAP was modelled after the military, colonial, 19th century Royal Irish Constabulary, and had a militarised mandate under the Defense Act (1912) and the Police Act (1912) (Lamb, 2018). The SAP was thus thoroughly inflected by coloniality, which normalised the use of martial policing on the majority black population. The SAP often joined the military, first the Defence Force and then, after 1957, the South African Defence Force (SADF), to put down rebellions such as strikes and protests. The SAP also played a role in regional politics, and was part of counter-insurgencies in South-West Africa (now Namibia) and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), among others.

A brief history of the SAPS

According to Guy Lamb (2018), the history of the South African Police is deeply entwined with the modes of repression required by internal colonialism, and apartheid police did not have to develop non-confrontational tactics of protest policing (Waddington, 1998). Whilst they could be competent in defusing protests, they were not required to, and were pre-emptively absolved from any lethal consequences that would ensue from confrontational tactics (Waddington, 1998). According to Lamb (2018), while there were efforts to demilitarise the South African police force in the 1990s, it remained a militarised institution, and that militarisation was escalated in 1999. The SAP and SADF would operate jointly during apartheid to perform crackdown operations in the township (Lamb, 2018). After 1994, the SAP was rebranded as the South African Police Service (SAPS) by the democratic postapartheid government. The reformed SAPS combined apartheid-era policing bodies and military members of the liberation movements. In the 1990s, an attempt was made to demilitarise SAPS, as the new structures retained a militarised ethos. This failed, as rising criminality in South Africa was deemed to justify a more punitive approach.

The idea of SAPS as a force, with military ranks, was reintroduced in 2010 to instil public confidence. As I noted in the chapter on interpersonal violence on the Cape Flats, high crime areas that would supposedly be stabilised, such as Langa and Khayelitsha, have been subjected to military style operations. Joint operations treated criminals as enemies of the state, and used counter-insurgency tactics learned in SAPS' long histories in places like South Africa's former colony, South-West Africa, and its neighbour, Rhodesia.

In 2011, due to increased protests, heavily armed, militaristic Public Order Policing Units (POP) were established. The many protests in South Africa have multiplied, due to bad governance, corruption, and a state that is not proactively responsive to the needs of impoverished black people. SAPS has asked for an expansion of POP to deal with the increased amount of protests. The POP have often been criticised for their brutal methods. According to Omar (2007: 47), crowd control police are equipped with helmets, shields, rubber batons, body armour, pepper spray, stun grenades, gas masks, 12-gauge shotguns, baton or rubber rounds. They also have Nyalas, which are armoured vehicles, and water cannons. In the following section, I will discuss crowd control weapons. These technologies are critical to the maiming and death of black bodies. There have been protests by white South Africans, to which the police very rarely respond with the same technologies (see Wolff-Piggot, 2015), even if white protestors are excessively violent (e.g. IOL, 2020). During the students protests, which I discuss in the next chapter, white students who were allied with the student movements would move to the front of the line to create a human shield, and they were invariably spared the violence that their black peers experienced (Wolff-Piggot, 2015). Black students would be savagely and brutally shot with rubber bullets. In one instance, Shaeera Kalla, a Fees Must Fall student leader, was shot thirteen times at close range, even though her hands were up and her back was turned to police (Haffejee, 2015).

Crowd-control weapons

One of the reasons for the ubiquitous use of CCWs is because they were touted as being non-lethal, and thus placed in a binary relationship with lethal weapons (Omega Foundation, 2000; Henkin, 2019). Non-lethal weapons are increasingly being acknowledged as rather being 'less-lethal' weapons, as their fatal potentialities are becoming increasingly visible (Omega Foundation, 2000; Davison, 2009; Bruce, 2019; Henkin, 2019). According to Davison (2009), in his book, *'Non-Lethal' Weapons,* definitions of less-lethal weapons are premised on the intent to minimise injury and death. However, they usually supplement firearms, are a tier of support in which firearms could be used depending on context, and often have comparable rates of lethality to conventional weapons defined as lethal. The semantic shifts are more about public perception than a desire for less lethality.

Much like the sjambok, technologies of repression, such as rubber bullets, tear gas, stun grenades and water cannons, have long-term and chronic effects. What is more, crowd-control weapons are usually deployed without ensuring adequate medical services for protesters who will be injured, and thus constitute a double harm (Rayner, Baldwin-Ragaven, & Naidoo, 2017). The wellbeing of protesters is therefore not paramount, as the injurious effects of CCWs are not planned for. Where police officers have first aid training, they do not consider it their responsibility to provide medical assistance, as was evident at Marikana.[80]

In 2016, the first report that looks at the medical effects of crowd-control weapons, *Lethal in Disguise: the Health Consequences of Crowd-control weapons,* was published by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) and the International Network of Civil Liberties Organizations (hereafter, PHR & INCLO, 2016):

> Also known as "riot-control weapons," "non-lethal," "less lethal," or "less than lethal" weapons, CCWs include chemical irritants, kinetic impact projectiles, acoustic weapons, water cannons, stun grenades, electrical conduction devices, and directed energy weapons, among others (p. 13).

Chemical irritants would be weapons such as tear gas, and kinetic impact projectiles (KIPs) would be rubber or plastic bullets. They found that, despite the wide use of CCWs, there was

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[80] Panel of experts report on policing and crowd management (2018)

very little research or studies into the health consequences and, due to the lack of systematic medical reporting requirements in the aftermath of crowd-control incidences, that the scale of death and injury might be vastly underestimated. Police are insufficiently trained in the use of CCWs and, because the weapons are touted as non-lethal, they are frequently used excessively. Whilst the global trade in the manufacture and commodification of CCWs is expanding, along with the use of CCWs, the industry is poorly regulated. What is more, a lack of accountability for the misuse of CCWs is prevalent.

To demonstrate the lack of accountability, PHR & INCLO use an example from South Africa where ‘204 crowd-control-related complaints (were) lodged against law enforcement between 2002 and 2011, but only 85 cases were investigated, and only one police officer was convicted’ (2016: 19). Though CCWs might be an ordinary feature of everyday life in a place like South Africa, and in other places where repression is an ordinary tactic of governance, they do not feature prominently in the law, in research or even in the media. It is only in spectacular cases, where death is immediate, that a conversation around police violence will ensue. However, the right to use weapons of repression is rarely discussed.

PHR & INCLO (2016) stated that there were very few international standards regulating the use of CCWs. In some instances, a weapon such as chemical agents, is forbidden or limited in conditions of warfare, but it may be used for domestic riot control. However, since the PHR and INCLO report, and what seems to be a small but growing body of work on the effects of CCWs, there are small but promising shifts. Noting the significant gap in guidance on the use of non-lethal weapons, amid concerns of extrajudicial force by law enforcement, the United Nations launched the *Guidance on Less - Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement* on 25 October 2019 (OHCHR, 2020). In a footnote, they note that they too do not use the term ‘non-lethal weapons’ and instead use ‘less-lethal weapons’ as ‘the use of any weapon can have lethal consequences’ (2020: v, also, p.1).

While some of the measures are intended to bring pause and enhance oversight, such as law enforcement agencies conducting independent testing of the effects of less-lethal weapons, and ensuring proportionality of response and responsible conduct, there is something profoundly disturbing about the document. The language is quite high-minded and appears rational, and yet is steeped within the chaos of equipping some people to injure the bodyminds (Price, 2015; Schalk, 2018) of others. It normalises responding to protests with violence through offering degrees of responsiveness as a mitigating potential, but the logic of violent response is not undone. These weapons do leave death in their wake, cause injury, and leave impairment that is poorly documented, but widely dispersed and distributed in crowd control events.

Disability is hardly used in the document. Where it is used, it usually refers to people with disabilities as a category of people, as an identity, rather than disability as an outcome of the weapons under discussion. Thus, the use of weapons does not become a category of things that are causative of disability. Rather, it is merely an unfortunate by-product of unlawful or incorrect use of weapons that are intended to incapacitate and wound. What is used is the category of 'serious injury' which becomes possible when weapons are used in what they call 'potentially unlawful use,' such as targeting body parts like the eyes to cause permanent blindness. Injuries occur in a range of possible effects, from mild to moderate to serious. Post-traumatic stress as a result of being bludgeoned by a truncheon, or having to confront any one of the weapons under discussion, is not mentioned once. As Lochlain Jain (2006: 3) notes: 'Since institutions addressed to injury law pose as both moral and rational, they remain susceptible to political manipulation.' Jain draws on Elizabeth Povinelli, who argued that rationality and moral sensibility are not equivalent, and the law and its rational discourse hides how deeply irrational the moral sensibilities are that drive consideration when difference is at stake.

The space for moral ambiguity, that Jain (2006) and Povinelli draw our attention to, is present in the UN's framing of the conditions under which well-armed states may use technologies against protestors that are unsafe and injurious. What is more, the UN treats all states as if they are not enmeshed in power relations of *longue durée*, under which particular population groups are preconceived of as violent. For example, they state:

> The use of less-lethal weapons to disperse an assembly should be considered a *measure of last reso*rt. Before approving dispersal, law enforcement agencies should seek to *identify any violent individuals* and isolate them from the other participants. This may enable the main assembly to continue. If *these targeted interventions are ineffective, law enforcement officials may employ weapons that target groups rather than individuals* (such as water cannon or tear gas) after having issued an a*ppropriate warning, unless giving the warning would cause a delay* that would either risk causing serious injury or, in the circumstances, be futile. In addition, participants in the assembly should be given time to obey the

> warning and a safe space or route for them to move to shall be ensured (pp. 23-24, emphases added).

In a racist, unequal society like South Africa, we know that black people are most often perceived as a violent crowd that should be harshly targeted. What is more, as Erevelles (2014b) argues in the context of the US, black bodies are pathologised, criminalised, and considered deviant because of histories of racialisation and enslavement. In the context of the US, black, disabled people are subjected to police brutality, as they are perceived to be violent. In South Africa's largely unacknowledged slavocratic history, black people were not only disposable, but labour practices were also tied to criminalisation, and the racialisation of space proscribed movement (Baderoon, 2018). We have seen elements of this in previous chapters. The black body is treated as a repository and agent of violence at so many levels, that the idea that law enforcement officers are able to rationally look at a group of black people who are protesting, choose one or two 'violent' individuals and isolate them, is ludicrous. South Africa has a long history in which the massification of punishment and rightlessness has been normalised, and the black body *en masse* was available to be shot at, poisoned, watered down, beaten with a sjambok, chased with dogs, and any number of other cruel and depraved actions by police. Without context or considering what kind of state, what kind of people, what relations have been mediated by the weaponry of the state, and which modes of violent state responses are treated as ordinary tactics of mediation between the state and its citizens, the UN's guidance is naïve and not meaningful.

The category of 'unlawful use' thus normalises targeting people in volatile situations, where who constitutes a person or, more particularly, a human, is an obfuscation as in some places like South Africa, black people are ordinarily subdued through debilitating and disabling tactics. It offers a ready excuse, rather than acts as a deterrent. Some people fire rubber bullets or tear gas or use batons lawfully when incapacitating other human beings' bodies, and when people get injured, it will be an event where presumably 'unlawful use' occurred. We all know these kinds of defences, where it is one bad police officer, one bad event, and not part of a continuum of systemic injuring where certain bodies must be punished for discipline to be exerted. Where certain bodies, black bodies, are already presumed to be impaired, incapable of reason, present as threats, and thus the only recourse is to discipline through the body.

In the aftermath of the student protests, the Marikana Massacre, and other incidences where police brutality has come under discussion in South Africa, there do seem to be more directive efforts (e.g. Bruce, 2019; Rayner et al., 2017) towards thinking about the use of CCWs. After

Marikana, the Marikana Commission of Enquiry advocated for convening a panel of experts to investigate the failures of policing that took place. A panel was convened in 2016, and the almost 600-page report was finalised in May 2018, and released in March 2021. One of the findings of interest was that the use of CCWs at Marikana pushed the strikers towards police, rather than dispersed the crowd, and thus contributed to the fatalities that ensued. Amongst other recommendations, the panel recommended the professionalisation of SAPS and higher levels of accountability, that human rights principles should guide the use of force, and the provision of medical care to injured persons. More importantly, it highlighted the necessity of demilitarisation of SAPS. Burger (2021: n.p.) informs us that this is not the first report that highlighted systemic issues at SAPS and recommended reforms in the last decade, with the following all still languishing: 'National Development Plan (2012), Khayelitsha Commission of Inquiry Report (2014), Marikana Commission of Inquiry Report (2015), White Paper on Policing (2016), State of Democratic Policing Report (2017)'. Despite attempts to change the relations between the police and the majority of black South Africans, postapartheid policing has found it difficult to disentangle from previous modes of policing. I will now move to discuss specific technologies of crowd control: tear gas, and rubber bullets.

Atmospheric policing: tear gas

South Africa has been using tear gas for almost 100 years, yet there is scant information on the history of its use in the country, or its epidemiological and psycho-affective effects. Scientific advances in chemistry made chemical warfare possible in the mid-1800s. Whilst there were attempts to ban the use of weaponised gas or chemical warfare at the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, it was first used in World War 1 (Feigenbaum, 2017). Though the British Empire had contestations and reservations around the use of tear gas in their colonies, such as in Northern Rhodesia, their former colony, South Africa was already using tear gas in the 1920s (see Feigenbaum, 2017; Linstrum, 2019).

Feigenbaum (2017: 11) calls tear gas 'the international weapon of choice for riot control'. Whilst the dense materiality of rubber bullets produces disabling and debilitating effects, CCWs like tear gas and stun grenades reshape the air around people to incapacitate them (Feigenbaum & Kanngieser, 2015; Feigenbaum, 2017). Police use of tear gas and stun grenades are what Wall (2019: 147) calls atmotechnics, which are 'techniques that aim to create, manage or change affective atmospheres'. In the context of policing, Feigenbaum & Kanngieser (2015) argue that we should think of these technologies as atmospheric policing, which produce atmospheres of terror. They state that:

> Atmospheric policing refers to those technologies and techniques for controlling populations that are fundamentally predicated on their relationship with air; through requiring air for their transmission and dispersion, they colonize space in ways that other weapons do not (2015:81).

The right to maim (Puar, 2017) is also the right to reshape the air and produce toxic atmospheres as a means of social control, through manipulating the air we breathe during events of dissent. While legal for police to use domestically on civilian populations, the Chemical Weapons Convention does not allow airborne chemical weapons in situations of warfare (Nieuwenhuis, 2016; Feigenbaum, 2017; Haar, Iacopino, Ranadive, Weiser & Dandu, 2017). Atmospheric policing, by targeting the air, reshapes the ecological terrain in which humans breathe (Nieuwenhuis, 2016), and are indiscriminate in their effects (Haar et al., 2017). Bystanders, passers-by, people with disabilities, citizens with the right to congregate, human beings, animals, are all caught up in its toxic, polluting effects.

Tear gas is one of those technologies that declare most forcefully that the very air we breathe is politically potent, and uses our physiological necessity to breathe to debilitate and incapacitate. Nieuwenhuis avers that:

> Atmoterrorism entails not a mere attack on the materiality of the body, but more fundamentally assaults its immersed psychological and physiological relationship to the air. Terror can, in other words, not be said to be exclusively induced psychologically, but is physically mediated through the production of a lethal atmosphere (2016: 510).

Tear gas, like other CCWs, is intended to be psychologically and physically traumatic, and assumed to be used in ideal circumstances on targets who are presumed to be young, male and able-bodied (Feigenbaum & Kanngieser, 2015). These technologies make use of sensory incapacitation, and thus use their targets’ autonomic bodily effects as weapons, taking over the body as a site of punishment. Crowd-control weapons are intended to harm; they are not just deterrents, and they harm in a way that engages the humans they target as fully feeling, fleshy and embodied, environmentally located subjects. Despite the perception of tear gas as a cloud that has a short temporal span, Feigenbaum and Kanngieser (2015) argue for the materiality of tear gas droplets, which not only leave damaging residue to property, but also have health hazards. Tear gas also poisons animals and crops (Feigenbaum, 2017).

No country in the world is legally obligated to record the prevalence of death and injury because of tear gas use, nor report on its purchase, deployment, export or environmental damage (Feigenbaum, 2017: 12). The following two studies below reviewed the available scholarly literature on the effects of tear gas. Haar et al. (2017) poignantly note the limitations in their study, which also apply to Rothenberg, Achanta, Svendsen and Jordt's (2016) study, that the scale of death, injury and disability may be vastly underestimated, as there is very little research or systematic reporting and, because there are rarely follow-ups on cases in the literature, the long-term health effects are unknown. What is more, their reviews did not include grey literature such as news reports, social justice organisations or social media, and were limited by exclusions of focus, such as case studies, and lack of injury specifics.

In their review of the health and epidemiological effects of tear gas, Rothenberg et al. (2016) state there is very little research on the health effects of tear gas, and its safety is overstated. This dearth of knowledge results in limited effective medical responses to tear gas exposure, particularly as very little is known about its long-term effects. The tests that were performed were with laboratory animals, or a few, healthy able-bodied men under controlled circumstances. The long-term effects of exposure to children, women, or people with pre-existing conditions that make them vulnerable to impairment or death, have not been studied. The authors also consider the possibility that tear gas may be carcinogenic, and have immunological, endocrine and histological effects, based on animal studies. They detail the immediate exposure effects, which include the well-known 'irritation to the eyes, nose and mouth,' and skin, as well respiratory tract effects such as coughing (2016: 98). Tear gas residue is a toxic waste, and may constitute an enduring environmental hazard for animals and people living in environments where tear gas was used. Numerous injuries, such as ocular effects that could result in visual impairment, skin burns and dermatitis, cardiovascular and gastrointestinal effects, may ensue after exposure to tear gas. Long-term respiratory effects, such as persistent coughing and chronic bronchitis, were found after frequent exposure to tear gas, or exposure within a confined space.

Haar et al. (2017) reviewed the literature for the past 25 years on death, injuries and permanent disabilities as secondary effects of chemical irritants. They found that tear gas caused significant injury, disability and death. In addition to the injuries mentioned by Rothenberg et al. (2016), Haar et al. (2017) included neurological effects. A study by the Omega Foundation (2000) on crowd control technologies, that was commissioned for the European Parliament, found that CR, the tear gas used in South Africa, increased anxiety and blood pressure, and that it should be treated as a drug. Like most CCWs, studies into the effects of CR were only conducted after the technology had already been deployed, and they suggested that studies into its effects be a legal requirement.

Along with the previously mentioned injuries, Haar et al. (2017) also found evidence of visible disabilities, which included functional loss of limbs, amputation, and blindness. There were also reports of traumatic brain injury. Significantly, they found alarming rates of psychological effects, such as acute stress disorder, PTSD, and major depressive disorder, which result in long-term disability. This aspect of exposure to tear gas has not been well studied.

The crowd effects induced by tear gas, such as mass panic and stampedes, contribute significantly to morbidity and mortality (Haar et al., 2017). In South Africa, 47 people died in a stampede at a stadium after security guards fired tear gas into the crowd (Haar et al., 2017). Tear gas delivery systems, such as the flammable components and canister, have material effects. Tear gas canisters have been used as projectile weapons and fired at protesters, causing disabilities such as visual impairment or loss of extremities (PHR & INCLO, 2016; Feigenbaum, 2017). Tear gas does not placate crowds or create the possibility of orderly evacuations.

Tear gas has been an enduring feature of South African protests for decades, and continues to be wielded by the state. One of the technologies Project Coast engineered and produced was a more virulent kind of tear gas, called New Generation Tear Gas. According to Burger and Gould (2012), in their book on Basson, all the scientists who worked on developing this tear gas experienced adverse effects, and at least two became chronically ill and were unable to continue working. Project Coast not only produced tear gas, but also tons of drugs such as Ecstasy and Mandrax, which they claim they were testing for use as crowd control weapons, and which they tested on humans and animals. Tear gas was part of the apartheid chemical warfare arsenal, which also included biological weapons and diseases such as cholera, anti-fertility treatments, poisons and toxins for assassination.

Drawn from South African universities and research institutes, the more than 200 scientists in Project Coast, who were chosen for their patriotism, should give us pause. Project Coast, and the history of tear gas in South Africa, offers glimpses of the close ties between science, education and the medical profession in furthering the aims of a genocidal, debilitating regime. Science or medicine are not value-free, and universities are not neutral sites. Some of the people who worked on projects like Project Coast for the state, that enabled and facilitated repressive, racist rule, are still part of knowledge institutions. What do those kinds of intellectual biographies entail for knowledge production that does not normalise black death-disability-debility? While it is impossible to fully explore Project Coast here, given the scope of this thesis, the number of linkages across industries and institutions, in South Africa and globally, require careful and close work. Project Coast, and its relation to the normalised feature of tear gas at protests, is illustrative of South Africa's long history of perverse, immoral uses of violence against black people. What is more, a regime that is intent on finding toxic ways to punish people for assembling, and toxic ways to kill and debilitate, is not likely to ensure decent living standards or labour conditions. It is not surprising that knowledge production about debilitation, disability and death is frequently evaded, given the South African academy's entanglement with race-based governance and the normalisation of racialised violences. As Teresa Barnes (2019) notes, white people were trained to ignore, have contempt for, and even take pleasure in, black suffering. The virulent variant of tear gas borne from Project Coast is a feature of global protests, and profits are being made (Feigenbaum, 2017) on torturing crowds of people who are frequently agitating for worlds that do not debilitate. In the next section, I will briefly historicise rubber bullets, and explore what they do when they strike a body.

Kinetic impact projectiles: Rubber bullets

Kinetic impact projectiles (KIPs) are various kinds of impact rounds, such as rubber bullets, plastic, hard foam, wood or steel. The SAPS uses firm rubber bullets, which are fired from a shotgun called shotgun batons (Bruce, 2019). Though places like the US only included the use of rubber bullets in their protest policing strategies in the 1990s, when militarised policing expanded, settler colonies like South Africa and Israel have been using it for much longer as part of their strategies for repression (Wood, 2014). According to Norton (2021), the original rounds were made of broom handles in 1880 in Singapore. Most of the literature on rubber bullets historicise it as having been intended as a practice tear gas projectile by Federal Laboratories in the US, and were initially made of wood (Sheridan & Whitlock, 1983; Hunter & Greaves, 2002). Hong Kong police in the 1950s modified these wooden practice rounds to enable using mechanised batons at a distance, and first used them to suppress riots (Sheridan & Whitlock, 1983; Hunter & Greaves, 2002). Made of teak, the batons would splinter and cause fatal injuries (Norton, 2021).

Rubber bullets were first used in Northern Ireland on protesters by the British Ministry of Defence in the 1970s (Cohen, 1985; Hunter & Greaves, 2002; Wood, 2014). Norton (2021) claims that the change from wood to rubber was introduced by the UK Government, not for humanitarian reasons, but because of what it would look like if protesters were televised with pieces of wood sticking out of them. The UK government would move from rubber to plastic because they found it was difficult to control the direction in which rubber bullets bounced. However, plastic bullets were lethal and caused serious injury when fired at close range. In the Omega Foundation's (2000) assessment of kinetic weapons for the European Parliament, they considered it the most dangerous weapon of crowd control. Despite replacing the dangers posed by wood batons, they state that:

> Rubber and plastic bullets have proved even more dangerous with numerous deaths and injuries including fractured skulls, brain damage, blindings, scalpings, broken bones, permanent disability, soft tissue damage to internal organs such as kidney, liver, spleen, intestine and heart, loss of sense of smell, psychological problems and post traumatic stress (2000: xxix).

The range of injuries caused by these weapons are intended to be a punishing deterrent, lodged within settler colonial logics, and work as a means of extrajudicial punishment on the people they are used against. The shift in technologies and materials used to inflict harm were clearly not about the prevention of lethality or injury, but rather, in my reading of the effects and uses of these technologies, it is difficult to not consider them tied to the logic of the whip, of the sjambok. As technologies of repression, which enable a mechanistic and distanced, yet immediate, mode of punishment, rubber bullets allow a grammar of the flesh (Spillers, 1987). The wounds circulate on the bodies of those who dared to relinquish docility, and are intended to sow terror. Death, disability and debility become instructive. That these technologies have been, and will continue to be used, despite inquiries and commissions and 500 page reports, tells us that any optimism we may have for a significantly different political economy, in which black lives may be treated as if they are precious and tender, is still a long way off.

I was not able to find a history of rubber bullets in South Africa to establish an approximate date of first use, but there are indications that they may have been used in the 1970s, and were used extensively in riot control in subsequent decades. The famous photographer of apartheid violence, Peter Magubane, mentioned rubber bullets in his testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Testimony on the events of the Soweto Uprisings in 1976.[81] In 1985,

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[81] https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/soweto/magubane.htm

Cohen wrote one of the few apartheid-era journal articles against the use of rubber bullets in quelling protests, showing the kinds of facial injuries it caused. He noted their failure as a riot control measure and asked doctors to object to their use.

Contemporaneously, David Bruce, a South African expert on policing, whose work I have used extensively, is one of the few people doing research on less-lethal weapons. He has been influential in numerous fora with police and other stakeholders. He was also part of the Marikana Commission of Enquiry. In a recent news report, it was claimed that the South African Human Rights Commission wants the police to develop other measures of crowd control (Lindeque, 2021). Bruce, however, does not consider banning rubber bullets to be a solution, rather stating that police should have better training, guidance and be accountable for misuse (Lindeque, 2021). I disagree. Even though I value some of the scholarship that he does, it is unconscionable to me that we have measures of punishment, devised as strategies of colonialism and internal colonialism, which continue to be deployed against black people who are now exercising their democratic rights. The histories of these technologies, those who have faced them, those who use them, those who authorise their purchase, those who invent and modify and maintain them, require research. The brief histories of these technologies that I have been able to glean show that we have inherited cruel technologies and tactics of repression, which use(d) fatal, disabling and debilitating violence instrumentally as ordinary forms of rule. We should be advocating for these practices to end, not for conditional use, or indulging in fantasies of correct usage, which presumes ideal conditions for the enactment of violence.

There are frequent news reports on the injuries produced by rubber bullets and, when deaths ensue, there are numerous denouncements in the popular media. Like tear gas and other CCWs, there is limited systematic research into the injuries caused by rubber bullets in South Africa. Most studies were found to be retrospective (Omega Foundation, 2000), after rubber bullets had already been introduced, such as by Cohen (1985), or an Irish study (Millar, Rutherford, Johnston & Malhotra, 1975), five years after rubber bullets were first used in Ireland (see Omega Foundation, 2000). A study in the US, conducted by military specialists, found that seven out of the eight available weapons inflicted severe damage, and one was dangerous to use (Omega Foundation, 2000). Do note that the US study, like tear gas studies, would have been conducted under controlled circumstances with an imagined ideal target, that is, young, able-bodied men. These weapons are usually used in the chaos of protest encounters, where women, children, the aged and those who are unable to flee, to hear a warning, are present. No-one should be subjected to their use.

Whilst PHR & INCLO (2017) note that most severe injuries are related to bullets that have a metal core, unlike those used by SAPS, the injuries that do result are nonetheless devastating (Bruce, 2019). In many cases, police would shoot one person multiple times with rubber bullets, would not maintain a ‘safe’ distance (Rayner et al., 2017), and would not aim below the legs or shoot at the ground. Rubber bullets are supposed to be used from a distance of approximately 9-14 metres. However, they are usually used at much shorter ranges (PHR& INCLO, 2017). In 2011, for example, at a service delivery protest in Ficksburg, South Africa, Andries Tatane was shot twice in the chest from a distance of 1.5 metres. He died.

The PHR & INCLO’s (2017) review of the medical literature on KIP’s found that serious injury, disability and death could occur. They found the following:

> In the 26 studies selected for analysis, we identified 1,925 people with injuries, 53 of whom died as a result of their injuries (3 percent), and 294 individuals who suffered permanent disabilities (15 percent), the vast majority of which consisted of permanent vision loss (84 percent of eye injuries resulted in permanent blindness, usually requiring complete removal of the eye). Of those injured, 70 percent had injuries that were considered severe. Permanent disability and severe injuries often resulted from strikes to the head and neck (49 percent of deaths and 84 percent of permanent disabilities). Those with injuries to the torso were also at risk of severe injury. Specifically, one of every five people with abdominal injuries suffered a permanent disability. (2017: 30)

This review of the medical literature and thinking about the widespread use of rubber bullets in South Africa, shows the necessity for thinking about disability differently. What is not represented in these numbers is the terror and its residues, what we could think of as trauma, that has a wider distribution and may never be dealt with in a hospital. Even though these numbers do not fully represent the prevalence of injury, there are also injuries that are not presented. The sjambok, and the long-term effects of blunt trauma, which lead to kidney disease, has made me wonder about the long-term effects of bruising the skin with impact projectiles and what, if any, invisible physical disabilities might take hold in the body of someone who has been shot. We should remember that those who are most likely to face rubber bullets in South Africa are black. We should once again sit with impaired black bodies and ask how these kinds of impairments animate an intellectual project. Rubber bullets, whilst indiscriminate in who they strike, are not aimed indiscriminately. It is by and large black collectives who will be responded to with injury and the distribution of harm we see here, another layer of injury which will devastate individual lives, even as they create the conditions for fear.

According to the PHR& INCLO (2017), KIPs can cause a number of health impacts, such as blunt or penetrative trauma. Injuries to the head and neck can be very traumatic, as these areas are very vulnerable to injury, due to bones and blood vessels being close to the surface. Direct trauma to the eyes will cause ocular injuries such as blindness, and can also cause brain injuries if the projectile enters the brain. The cardiorespiratory system can be injured when the lungs or heart are bruised, which causes internal bleeding, heart attacks and collapsed lungs (pneumothorax). Neurovascular structures can be permanently damaged through deep injuries to bones and muscles, which can result in amputations or compartment syndrome. Abdominal injuries from blunt trauma to the spleen, kidneys and liver can result in urogenital injuries, bleeding and perforations. Some of the effects on skin and soft tissue can be superficial, while some may cause muscle or nerve damage.

The psychoaffective aftermath of the state response to protests is not well known, though there are indications that depression increased by 7% in affected populations, post-traumatic stress disorder from 4% to 41%, anxiety from 10,5 % to an alarming 75% in looting and arson victims, as well as increased alcohol and substance abuse (Ni, Kim, McDowell, Wong, Qiu, Wong, Galea & Leung, 2020). In South Africa, Slone, Kaminer & Durrheim (2000) found significant psychoaffective effects for white and black adolescents who had been exposed to political violence. That people who live through protests and political violence have effects seems self-evident, but does require further study in the context of disability and debility. Crowd control weapons not only injure bodies, but can also create pscychoaffective impairments, which may compound injuries and other resultant disabilities.

Paramilitary policing tactics are not good for anyone. The necessity for changing police practices is not just to safeguard protestors. For example, Haar et al. (2017) note that police officers who are frequently exposed to tear gas may be at greater risk of the long-term effects of tear gas, along with people who protest frequently, and healthcare workers. There might be physiological, and thus invisibilised, health effects for police officers, alongside the effects of retaliatory violence that produces injury, disability, debility and death. We should also alleviate the ethical and psychological burden that police as human beings have to endure. In the chapter on Marikana, I noted that some of the policemen, who were present that day, subsequently committed suicide. Being responsible for upholding inequality, intensifying terror and suffering, and being the agents of ontoformativity (Connell, 2011), in which they reshape people's bodyminds (Price, 2015; Schalk, 2018) to acquiesce to an unjust social order, affects them too. Feigenbaum (2017) states that it is imperative to stop training police to use force:

> Like war veterans, police experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after seeing or inflicting violence. The suicides, domestic violence, and mental illness that can erupt after military combat are likewise experienced in policing. Yet while there is now a general public understanding of the trauma of perpetuating violence in war, in policing, trauma remains part of (sic) cycle of silence. When officer trauma is discussed, it is framed as a form of suffering caused by vulnerability rather than by officer violence. This vulnerability is then used to call for more weapons equipment and training—the warrior must be toughened up, not healed (2017: 261).

For the police, using weapons that produce death-disability-debility on people who are generally unarmed, unprotected and often poor, black, and vulnerable, changes them too, and has far-reaching effects for their families, their intimates and their communities. Ignoring the cost to police, who may themselves become disabled and injured, and also experience continuous stress or routinised traumatisation of war (Kopel & Friedman, 1997), constitutes another mode of maiming. We should also be mindful that many black police persons share similar structural conditions to the black majority, and are privy to the deprivations of inequality through their extended families and loved ones. Asking people to be insensible to the maiming they cause, and to deride them for the regret and sorrow they may feel at wounding another by increasing their armour rather than healing them, as Feigenbaum so poignantly states, is part of the logic of debilitating societies and needs to be undone.

Towards a conclusion

I was quite astonished, and deeply saddened, to realise that, in some ways, praxes of repression target human beings in complex ways which recognise that black people are fragile and located in space. This awareness of how repression relies on disabling, remaking bodyminds (Price, 2015; Schalk, 2018) to coerce, silence, disperse and maintain unequal societies, requires further study. Most of our theorisation depends on the assumption that white supremacists consider black people to be incapable of pain, and at one level, this may be so. However, the wilful targeting of the body, the ways in which fear is used to create unequal worlds, tell us that it is precisely the recognition of a fully feeling subject that makes these forms of repression possible, through the body and distribution of terror.

In South Africa, where CCWs are ordinary, they need to be a potent space for disability studies. So, too, are the protests. They may seem to be demands, but are also laments about black worlds with preventable death, disability and debility. Black South Africans enter confrontations with martial policing and its machinery, despite the threat of death, disability and debility, to agitate for better lives, better worlds. In a country like South Africa, where protest has had a history of being criminalised which has continued despite postapartheid legislation, healthcare services are onerous to use, and very little research is done on the aftereffects of protest, not only is there urgent research to be done, but there are also questions that we have not even begun to approach. Crowd control weapons are unleashed on civilians who have the democratic right to assemble and protest. Poor, black protesters are often seeking the amelioration and/or cessation of debilitating and disabling conditions. CCWs exacerbate, intensify and proliferate new forms of debilitation and disability. Sometimes, as with sjamboks, there is an immediacy to debilitation, but also a longer horizon, in which impairment arrives slowly. The temporality of protest and CCWs are often fleeting, due to the ways police use force to disperse protests. The short duration of protests, however, are not coeval with their effects. People who are suffering endemic violence, and are inordinately vulnerable to death-disability-debility and who mount protests to gain recognition for their plight, could therefore face deepening inequality in the aftermath of state (and private security) responses to protests. The violence of South African policing not only leads to the death, disability and debility of protesters, but the police who are the agents of collective violence also face death-disablement-debilitation from their use of violence.

Protest policing is a contemporary form of mass terror that creates race, even as it acts on black bodies as bodies that can be harmed. There are a number of questions about disability and protest that are critical for understanding governance. How does disability act as a symbolic marker against protest? How does psychoaffective debilitation, that makes resistance to oppressive governance challenging, congeal around disability? The impairing effects of crowd control tactics are contemporary processes of dismemberment, contemporary ‘hieroglyphics of the flesh’ (Spillers, 1987: 66). Disability, as a threat, is a tool of governance and, in some ways, the stigma of disability is also a tool of repressing political dissent. If we fear disablement, not just because living in cruel societies where care from the state is in short supply as an ordinary consequence of unequal societies, then the threat of being injured and living with an impairment is even more threatening. Fear and stigmatisation of disability can also create sociopolitical complicity, and thus the expectation that we do not speak about the production of disability may also play into this compact. However, South Africans continue to protest, despite extreme material disadvantage, and knowing that spectacular violence and its consequences are likely. The failure of the threat of disability as a tool of governance also requires research.

In the next chapter, I will focus on the student movements, #RMF and #FMF, that began in 2015. The students used the metaphor of black pain to bring attention to the challenges of black life in South Africa, to pierce white epistemologies of ignorance. It is my contention that the students, like most black protesters such as the Marikana protesters, were expressing death-disability-debility imaginaries which were animated by the materiality of dense and entangled violences experienced by black people.

Chapter 10: *Death-disability-debility imaginaries and piercing white supremacist epistemologies of ignorance*

Within settler colonial societies like South Africa, disability is not discontinuous with death and debility. The young people who become disabled in their neighbourhoods because of gangsterism, which has become entrenched due to the long histories of enslavement and dispossession that have normalised violence, are/were at risk of disability, death and debility. As we have seen, the continuum, scale and wide dispersal of violence across varying dimensions of miners' lives contribute to worlds where death, disability and debility are normal consequences of the everyday condition of black life. Efforts through protest to ameliorate the conditions that are normalised by slow violence (Nixon, 2011), result in spectacular violence. Death may ensue, slowly or with an immediacy that is clearly connected to the event of protest, and also may have slow debilitating and disabling dimensions that may be more challenging to trace.

In settler colonial societies like South Africa, disability *imaginaries* are thus continuous with *imaginaries* of death and debility. Disability imaginaries are epistemic relations. Death-disability-debility imaginaries are frequently mobilised by black people who experience a range of death-dealing, disabling and debilitating conditions as a consequence of structural violence. However, recognising the massification of debilitating, disabling and death-dealing conditions as everyday life is absent from most disability theorists' work. In the following chapter, I will discuss social imaginaries and its possibilities for a transversal dialogical epistemology (Yuval-Davis, 2012). I will first provide an overview of #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) and #FeesMustFall (#FMF), then draw on the concept of black pain that emerged during the student movements. This will be followed by an exploration of disability imaginaries and social imaginaries, followed by a discussion of epistemic imaginaries and epistemologies of ignorance. In closing, I will argue that the student protests were intended to pierce the epistemologies of ignorance within the South African academy. Students expressed a death-disability-debility imaginary that exposed the limits of white epistemic and disability imaginaries that do not take cognisance of the massification of black pain in South Africa. I then state that what the student protests allow us to perceive are the multiplicity and contestations of death-disability-debility imaginaries. In places where domination and inequality are ordinary, protests are not just dense sites where death-disability-debility are concentrated; they also allow us a potent means through which to explore death-disability-debility imaginaries and their contestations.

#RMF and #FMF: an overview

> *I don't think that there are adequate words in any language to explain the depths to which so many of us Black students have become chronically exhausted by the debilitating journey we have had to negotiate in historically White universities* (Malaika Wa Azania, 2020:19).

> *I felt compelled to "remind" Whiteness of the devastated state of my people in their own homeland. To share and experience with them the shame of our people. What better way to do that than to bring the human faeces, which Black people are forced to live with?* (Chumani Maxwele, 2020: np).

> *Black students ... followed the B[lack] C[onsciousness] tradition of becoming conscious of one's own condition and the conditions of other black people as the first step to changing those conditions. BC also insists that black people, once conscious, become their own liberators by first freeing their minds from the oppressions of a racist, capitalist, sexist and patriarchal world, and then working together to free themselves physically or change the material conditions of black students' lives* (Leigh-Ann Naidoo, 2016: 181, my insertion).

On 12 March 2015, at the University of Cape Town in Cape Town (UCT), South Africa, Chumani Maxwele, a black male student who was the **son of a miner and a domestic worker** (The Journalist, 2015) threw faeces on the statue of Cecil John Rhodes, the coloniser who had 'gifted' the university its land on the slopes of Table Mountain. Maxwele wore a pink hard hat, and a sign that said 'White Arrogance' on the front and 'Black Assimilation' on the back. In the words of the #RMF collective, which coalesced in the aftermath of Maxwele's actions, the statue 'glorifie(d) a mass-murderer who exploited black labour and stole land from indigenous people. Its presence erases black history and is an act of violence against black students, workers and staff' (#RMF Collective, 2015). The statue venerating Rhodes stood at the centre of the campus with a commanding view over Cape Town. Rhodes was a diamond magnate and governor who was integral to brutal settler colonial labour regimes that killed, debilitated and disabled generations of black men. His policies of land dispossession and taxation reshaped the meanings of home and family for black people (see Ngcukaitobi, 2021) and, in time, the meanings of health

(Livingston, 2005). Rhodes was refigured from the vantage of the oppressed, and a new epistemic relation and ontological condition became visible.

In an interview for *The Guardian* with Eve Fairbanks (2015), Maxwele confided that a few weeks before throwing faeces at the statue, he had sat in a public talk where a black executive from the largely white-owned Lonmin mine spoke to students about the Marikana Massacre in a room filled with predominantly white people. When Maxwele intervened to express his views, the black academic who chaired the talk threatened to call security. Maxwele had moved from the Eastern Cape to Delft, a deeply impoverished neighbourhood on the Cape Flats, after his father died in a mining accident (News24, 2015). Maxwele had transported the faeces from Khayelitsha, the largest and fastest growing black township in South Africa. He said of Khayelitsha, where he volunteered on an HIV/AIDS campaign:

> In a 1km stretch of road, you’d pass a thousand people,” Maxwele told me. “For me, that was shocking.” He discovered that people loitered on the streets because there was hardly room to stand up in their dark, claustrophobic shacks. Families defecated in plastic boxes collected once a week by the municipality. While the boxes sat by the kerb, children played around them. In the winter, a bluster of whipping wind and sideways-slanting rain, Khayelitsha flooded, and sometimes the makeshift shacks dissolved wholesale, their tarp roofs and cardboard-box sidings disintegrating like sandcastles in a heavy wave (Fairbanks, 2015).

Maxwele, and the group of activists who had planned this sensory assault through excremental political theatre, claimed to be inspired by service delivery protests in 2013 when faeces were thrown on the steps of the provincial legislature and at Cape Town international airport. According to Robins (2014), ‘poo protests’ brought the stench of the townships to the seats of power. Activists for better living conditions, that did not lead to debilitation and illness such as the persistent diarrhoea that living with sewerage produced, made the politics of sanitation visible through both spectacular excremental politics and slow activism (Robins, 2014).

Through a politics of shit, Maxwele connected the pristine aesthetics of the university, which celebrated, or at the very least normalised, a history of domination, to the sewerage and inadequate living conditions that debilitated black worlds. Through Maxwele, we can see a story of black life that contains a great many of the conditions that South Africa’s long histories of structural violence rendered ordinary for the black majority. In one of his interviews, he said he wanted whites to understand how poor black people, like he and his family, lived (Sampson, 2015). Throwing faeces was an attempt to interrupt and pierce white ignorance. Maxwele's actions catalysed the movement called #RhodesMustFall (#RMF). #RMF would ultimately unsettle universities nationally and globally, or at least unveil, albeit unevenly and with intense contestation, the epistemic ignorance through which universities ordinarily negotiated knowledge. This contestation is ongoing and attempts to delegitimate the student protests and the changes that the student movement engendered are ongoing.

As a figure, Maxwele is controversial, as there have been allegations made against him of homophobic assault (see Isaacs, 2016; Mthonti, 2016; Mugo, nd). At a protest at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, on 4 April 2016, Maxwele was part of a group of men who grabbed and assaulted queer feminist activist, Thenjiwe Mswane, and called her *sthabane,*[82] an isiZulu homophobic slur. Thenjiwe Mswane had come to the protest armed with a sjambok to interrupt the exclusionary and patriarchal politics that had begun to define the movement just over a year after its emergence. Maxwele claims his actions were intended to prevent the violence that would have ensued if the sjambok had been used. The sjambok has travelled from its colonial origins, as noted in Chapter Five, to find its way into queer and feminist hands. Given South Africa's very high rates of gender-based violence and how, in certain places, being queer marks you as a target for rape and death, and my horror at the patriarchal mob attack, it is challenging to articulate my disquiet at the presence of the sjambok, and what it means for feminist and queer activists to wield this colonial weapon. It is an instance where a grounded ethical and political engagement is so difficult that I feel traitorous for including this example. However, it is precisely these kinds of confrontations that show how histories materialise in new and surprising ways, which need to be thought about within the contexts that give them life.

I chose to focus extensively on Maxwele to think about the making of black worlds and, in his person, to think about the contradictions about black life in its gendered formations. As we well know, anti-colonial, or resistant or liberatory, masculinities frequently are also patriarchal, and thus have visions of freedom premised on the subjugation of women and queer people, as assertions of mastery which express homophobia, and thus engender a kind of hypermasculinity (see e.g. Langa & Kiguwa, 2013). However, I do not have the scope in this project to fully explore

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[82] Swarr (2009) provides a history of *stabane* which initially referred to an intersexed person in isiZulu, one of South African's national languages, and came to refer to black gay and lesbian South Africans in the vernacular. The term has changed over time, indicating slippages between gender and sex that have often had dangerous and humiliating implications for black queer South Africans.

the gendered dimensions of Maxwele’s politics. More research is required on this aspect, but do see Mthonti (2016) on Maxwele expressing rape culture.

Maxwele is also instructive when discussing class relations. Universities are frequently thought of as spaces of elite class formation, with a university education offering upward class mobility. Some black university students are/were middle-class, and experience(d) few material privations. The great majority were/are not. Most black students (like myself) straddle worlds with radically disparate class relations, between the university and our natal communities, and sometimes between family and loved ones that are deeply mired in poverty and material privation, and relatives with abundant wealth. Akin to other student activists, Maxwele’s outrage at the perversity of material difference between the world he was raised in and the world he encountered at university was critical. Differential and contradictory class relations were another border (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006) that black students crossed, and which enabled insight into possible worlds and the impoverished theories they encountered. When you are black, material advantages do not rescue you from white supremacist epistemologies of ignorance, displace the historical narratives of black privation that circulated among your families and friends, or shield you from microaggressions.

According to Leigh-Ann Naidoo (2016), whose chronology of #RMF and #FMF I have relied on heavily in this chapter, the composition of Historically White Universities (HWU) had changed in postapartheid South Africa, with larger numbers of black students within institutions that had not substantially changed. The staff composition remained largely white, thus intellectual production was largely wrought through settler colonial epistemologies. Curricula therefore did not reflect what was most obvious to black students about their lifeworlds and histories. Most classes were taught by white lecturers, and university spaces celebrated histories of domination and conquest, with buildings and statues that were named after historical figures that had brought death, disability and debility to black people. The university, as microcosm of an unequal society, not only perpetuated white supremacy through epistemic hiding (Medina, 2013) and ignorance, but also played a crucial role in the aesthetics of domination, normalising epistemic violence and perpetuating racialised trauma. Racist capitalism, and the commodification of education, raise further barriers to access for poor black students. The student movements questioned the ordinary ways in which universities reproduced racist logics, as well as the convenient fictions of knowledge traditions, which were premised on racialised subjugation as the norm. Black students' ontological horizons were asserted towards reimagined epistemic relations, and concomitant demands for emancipatory political and ethical horizons.

Universities were deeply complicit with, and participated in, the subjugation of black people (Dubow, 1995; Barnes, 2019; Beinart & Dubow, 2021). The formation of knowledge and ontological vapidness persisted at HWUs, which reproduced colonial and patriarchal politics. Ahistorical, deracialised or, worse, theorisations of race that sedimented developmental views of race and inscribed blackness as a problem to be solved, abounded. Rarely has white supremacy, as a vicious, destructive, immoral logic - as we have seen throughout the thesis - become central to epistemic revitalisation as part of the pursuit of a postapartheid intellectual sensibility.

Teresa Barnes (2019), in her book, *Uprooting University Apartheid in South Africa: From Decolonisation to Liberalism*, has shown that presumably liberal universities, such as UCT, which frames itself as having a history of protest and academic freedom, do so by virtue of exceptional anti-racist individuals and incidents. A history that tends to be ignored is how deeply involved some intellectuals were with black subjugation, from helping to frame and justify racist policies, providing legal support for the incarceration of black people, and spying on colleagues and students, to assisting the National Intelligence Agency. This is alongside the tainted chalice of their intellectual labour, which was imparted to generations of students. Barnes (2019) argues that even self-professed white liberals had conditions for black humanisation and freedom, as many believed in a qualified franchise, where black people would only be ready to be fully recognised political subjects after being educated.

We have also seen elsewhere in the thesis that projects of black destruction, such as Project Coast, had deep footholds in universities and research institutes. So, too, was there intellectual complicity with the destruction wrought by the mining industry, as touched on in the chapter on Marikana. In 1995, Dubow noted the paucity of research on scientific racisms, and how strange it was, given South African history. He states that, in the postapartheid period, discourses of non-racialism slipped smoothly into public discourse; however, what was stated in private by whites was quite different and it seems that intellectual racism has almost been wished away. Barnes (2019) asks, how are we to do away with the structure of contempt for black suffering in South Africa that whites have been trained into? Not only were whites trained to ignore black suffering, they were also taught to enjoy and participate in the spectacle of black humiliation and violence. To restate, universities are not just battlegrounds of ideas that are free-floating; they are also deeply entangled with the ideological formations of their societies. Grappling with the historical complicity of white epistemologies in postapartheid South Africa is still an unrealised project. A new generation of black refusal of white knowledge production, which is riven with this contempt of black suffering, came to national and international attention in 2015 with the #RMF protests.

Whilst student protests are not unknown in South Africa, and occur periodically at historically black higher education institutions, #RMF and #FMF interrupted epistemologies of ignorance at HWUs, which had to contend with their racist histories, epistemic violence, the effects of financial exclusion for black students, and racialised labour practices at universities. Even though students were able to negotiate with university administrators, this relationship was frequently fraught, and students were often confronted by Public Order Police and private security companies, whose use of CCWs was frequently indiscriminate. Students were also arrested and expelled. As we have seen in the previous chapter on protest and the impairing and lethal responses by the state and law enforcement, visibilising black debilitation and epistemic erasure within the academy made students vulnerable to spectacular forms of violence. Students were also vilified in the press by some academics and faced a barrage of psychological abuse. We should also be curious about the debilitating after-effects of trauma, which in ableist institutions, such as the university, would be largely invisible as intimated in the chapter on debilitating research. To repeat, as the staggering ignorance that undergirds most South African knowledge production bears repeating, universities were thus and are a battleground for the inclusion to think about what is obvious to the black majority.

Throughout 2015 there were protests across university campuses that dealt with the lack of transformation ranging from the need for decolonised curricula and faculty that were representative of the nation, rather than overwhelmingly white. Students fought to insource black menial labourers such as cleaners and gardening staff at the university who were paid a pittance by labour brokers and had few labour rights. They protested the inadequate provision of university residences that, for poor black students, lead to student homelessness as they often travelled across the country and were not able to pay the exorbitant rents exacted by landlords in surrounding neighbourhoods.

In October 2015, the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), an HWU in Johannesburg, announced a 10,5% fee increase for 2016. Students started protesting on 14 October and kicked off what would become the #FeesMustFall movement. This movement united Black students across the country. #FMF expanded to #RMF and other black student movements, from its focus on the aesthetics of domination, slow pace of transformation, and the university's racist epistemic inheritances and ontological erasures, and intensified the student movement's confrontations with the political economy of the university. What is more, government, as a major stakeholder in universities, would also be called to account. Students marched to Parliament and confronted the Minister of Education. They made art, held sit-ins and lockdowns of the university, interrupted classes, marched and blockaded roads and sometimes, very rarely, burned things, threw stones, and engaged in other acts that are thought of as violent. The protests were multifaceted and used a variety of techniques to express students' dissatisfaction, contest epistemic erasures, and make knowledge of their plight and the solutions they imagined visible. At times, they were met by conciliatory university administrators. However, often universities would call Public Order Police and employ private security companies, who were untrained in crowd control and yet had access to impairing and, in some cases, lethal weapons. Men who had been trained to protect property would be pointed at students; some of the brightest young, black minds in the country would once again be savaged. It also emerged later that the student movement had been infiltrated by the State Security Agency (SSA), who attempted to influence the direction of the movement (The Daily Vox Team, 2021). The SSA also intervened in the instability of the platinum belt, by influencing union building and influencing the media on a range of issues (Review Panel, 2019). As we glimpsed during the Sharpeville protests, creating conditions of suspicion contributed to the breakdown of community but also, more insidiously, wove in traumatising forms of silence in the aftermath of and mobilisation of liberatory endeavours. These policing continuities under postapartheid governments require study, not just in terms of their political significance, but also how the subversion of liberatory endeavours contributes to debilitation.

Black Pain

The student protests that started in 2015 at South African universities sought to reshape the ontological horizons of the university, and force recognition that what was treated as normal in the university was not inclusive of the experiences, knowledges and sensibilities of the black majority, who had been wilfully and cruelly subjugated for centuries. Of the many interventions that students made to change the ordinariness of white supremacist institutions, one of the most poignant ideas was to demand that 'black pain' (#RMF Collective, 2015) be acknowledged. In a statement released on Facebook on 25 March 2015, by a collective of black students, workers and staff, in the aftermath of Chumani Maxwele's actions, black pain was connected to the 'dehumanisation of black people' (#RMF Collective, 2015). Black pain encompasses the multi-layered violences induced by racialised hierarchies (see Fairbanks, 2015; Kessi, 2015; Nyamnjoh, 2016). The complexity, entanglement and layered ways in which white supremacist rule produced pain in black lives is so encompassing that it is difficult to parse a precise definition. Nyamnjoh (2016) argues that black pain and white privilege are co-constitutive, with black pain making white privilege possible. Using Puar's (2017) formulation, white privilege is the capacitation enabled by black pain, i.e. black debility, disablement and death. The necessity for black students to make black pain visible was a critique of the university as a space of white, elite knowledge production.

As mentioned earlier, one aspect of their demands related to black menial workers, such as cleaners and food service staff. Many of these workers were outsourced, paid very little, and had no protection or benefits from the institution, even though some of them had worked there for years. The RMF collective demanded that, 'Workers must be able, without penalty of any kind, to refuse work that is a danger or hazard to their health and safety' (#RMF Collective, 2015). The RMF Collective were palpably aware of the injurious risks of being a poor, black worker. In a recent article in *Herri*, Chumani Maxwele (2020) states that there was very little work that critically engaged his flinging of faeces and that, while RMF generated a lot of conversation around transformation and institutional racism at the university, the everyday indignities that black people experience(d) became invisible.

The Fallist movements, like Marikana, have generated what I think of as an epistemic event, a catalytic moment that has shifted an imaginary and become part of everyday discourse, and which are invoked to speak to a set of conditions and make claims around new political formations, as well as draw upon expanded ontological horizons. Also, like Marikana, the way that this imaginary circulates depends on from where and how you are viewing it. For some, these events point to wayward black people who are not grateful for what they have received in the postapartheid period, while for others, they are evidence of a woefully incomplete revolution and, for most, it would be somewhere in between. As I have shown, Marikana as an event was made possible by long histories of black debilitation, disablement and death. The layered and complex material realities that ground Maxwele and black Fallists' imaginaries incorporate the kind of worldings we can perceive through Marikana, and, for many of them, the fatal, disabling, debilitating conditions within impoverished black neighbourhoods, like Delft, Khayelitsha, or

Langa. It is also a kind of everyday that black students and staff do not usually speak about in places like UCT. This erasure of black lived experience, and remaking of the black self to fit into white worlds in ways that do not create white discomfort, is what Maxwele (2020) frames as 'Black Assimilation'. The privileging of white experience and understanding of the world, which makes these erasures possible and contours black being into assimilation, is what he calls 'White Arrogance'. Black assimilation and white arrogance are constitutive epistemic relations that make up the ontological erasure that normalised white experience, and thus secured mastery for white epistemologies of ignorance.

The student movements made an ethical demand for the normalcy of black debilitation, disability and death to be part of knowledge production. This was not just a quest to recognise black pain, but also a plea for its cessation. The student protests allow us to perceive a death-disability-debility imaginary that is situated in the lived experience of black subjects, and the protests as an attempt to reshape imaginaries. The university had a long history of settler colonial knowledge formation, where the visceral consequences of domination could be evaded. Ethical accountability for the gross violations of black people was non-existent, particularly at HWUs. The fallacious assumptions of anti-racist liberal traditions conjured away how normative white supremacy was in their thinking. One of the things I find most remarkable about a great many white intellectuals is the assumption that they are unmarked by history and can transcend the historical conditions that make their epistemic privilege possible. This mode of inhabiting history and producing knowledge is one of the epistemic manoeuvres that facilitates white intellectuals' complicity with black subjugation. Not only did universities produce woefully inadequate white folk theories, but this knowledge was also transmitted to generations of students. Curriculum transformation was, therefore, one of the student movements' most trenchant demands, to force epistemic rupture and in so doing make black worlds visible. However, the ontological and epistemic shifts secured by the student movements, whilst far-reaching, remain limited. To engage the conceptual terrain I am in conversation with, I will now explore social imaginaries, and discuss a few of the instances when imaginaries have been used in disability studies. What I am aiming for is to reassert that the student protests, and other protests by poor black South Africans, express a death-disability-debility imaginary.

Social Imaginaries

There are a few usages of social imaginaries in disability studies (Rapp & Ginsburg, 2001, 2011; Campbell, 2008; Shuttleworth & Meekosha, 2013; Gammeltoft, 2014; Lipenga, 2014a; Ginsburg

& Rapp, 2015; Titchkosky, 2019). Where they are used, what is meant by an imaginary is not always defined or, if it is defined, it is cursory, and the meaning of imaginaries is often assumed (Strauss, 2006; Adams, Blokker, Doyle, Krummel & Smith, 2015). For example, Ken Lipenga (2014a), in his PhD thesis, N*arrative Enablement: constructions of disability in contemporary African imaginaries,* does not define ‘imaginary,’ and ‘imaginaries’ is used interchangeably with ‘imagination.’ In the newly established *International Journal of Social Imaginaries,* which was launched in 2015, social imaginaries, as a conceptual apparatus, is conceived as a ‘recognisable field and paradigm-in-the-making’ (Adams et al., 2015: 15). Understanding the effects of the imagination as a social practice (see e.g. Appadurai, 1990), or as fundamental to the making of community (Anderson, 2006), has a long history, and the imaginary as a descriptor is in fairly common use (Strauss, 2006; Adams et al., 2015). The three primary theorists though who are associated with social imaginaries are Paul Ricouer, Carlos Castoriadis, and Charles Taylor (Strauss, 2006; Adams et al., 2015).

I heed Strauss’ (2006: 322) caution, who argues from the vantage of anthropology and cultural studies, that imaginaries have become a new way of speaking about ‘culture and cultural beliefs, meanings, and models which (were) deeply entangled with homogenised subalterns, fixity and Otherness.’ The collective aspect and entailment of mass imagination which could become essentialised is where this caution should most be heeded. Even though I speak in broad strokes about the imaginaries of the student movements, we can see through Chumani Maxwele and his confrontation with Thenjiwe Maswane that there are contradictions, tensions and fissures within imaginaries constituted around black life. Further, the ubiquity and heterogeneity of imaginaries as a concept, which is often used without definitions or even claiming a source (Strauss, 2016), can lead to the concept of imaginaries being ‘empty of content’ (Adams et al., 2015: 42).

Social imaginaries, approached systematically, is a new and burgeoning field, with ten related trends, according to Adams et al. (2015: 16-18):

1. The imagination as social and not merely an individual endeavour.
2. The creative aspect of the imagination entails more than reproduction or imitation.
3. Modernity is no longer premised on reason, but rather on the tensions between varying rationalities and imaginaries.
4. However, reason, including public reason and various rationalities, are not ignored and are still analysed.
5. The tensions between reason and imagination are competing versions of ‘world-hood.’

6. World-hood and world-alienation, in their varying configurations, are problematics in their own right. Being in the world as a phenomenological problem enables investigations into ontological and anthropological pre-conditions for being human.
7. Because they are social, and thus collective and institute collectivity, meaning, power and action are considered trans-subjective as the condition for inter-subjectivity within a trans-objective world. This reorients conceptualisations of subject/object relations through the insistence of societal relations.
8. Social imaginaries are also ‘cultural articulations of the world,’ in which cultures are imagined to be open, and plural, and thus opening the possibility for intercultural, inter-civilisational, and comparative analyses.
9. Society is political and social interaction is situated and collective.
10. Debates about social formations and power are political, and not always ethical, responses.

As we can see from this list, social imaginaries provide multiple openings for exploring the making of worlds and the ways in which change, through the tensions of competing and overlapping imaginaries, can be thought.

Adams et al. (2015) are at pains to ask that we do not treat imaginaries as static and, to prevent creating stasis, we should incorporate thinking about social power and social doing. More importantly, they assert that:

> Social imaginaries presuppose society as a self-altering social world comprised of instituted and instituting aspects: it is thus well placed to elucidate movements towards social change, as well as recognising the existence of meaningful social practices (2015: 42).

It is this aspect of social imaginaries that I find most productive, given my interest in protest, and thinking about protest as a dense epistemic site which could offer methodological openings to disability and debility. Social movements are spaces of learning, for both activists and the publics they address, and the Fallist movements were no exception in this regard (Mdepa, 2020). Wandile Kasibe (2021) was instrumental in planning Maxwele’s excremental political theatre to viscerally resignify the meaning of Rhodes. In a news article for IOL, Kasibe (2021: nd) stated that ‘critical theory, decolonial reasoning towards realising critical pedagogy, praxis and alternative options for the oppressed’ and Pan-Africanism, Black Consciousness and Black Radical Feminism, were critical analytical tools. On campuses across the country, students educated themselves about these theoretical orientations and thereby shaped the discourse of the movements. Despite this political education, the movement failed to inculcate these principles as praxis. Wanelisa Xaba (2017), a black feminist, argued that what the Fallist movements achieved was to disseminate the concept of decolonisation to non-academic audiences, and offer it as a tool of resistance. Fallist imaginaries thus induced change at multiple levels, but how that change sedimented was not deterministic, but rather emergent and dynamic.

Charles Taylor’s (2003) exploration of social imaginaries offers a productive tension between theory and the popular imagination which grounds social imaginaries. He offers us a way of perceiving tension, conflict, competition and, of course, synergies between theory and social imaginaries that have epistemic and ontological entailments. As conceived by Taylor (2003), social imaginaries are integrally tied to moral orders, which are imbricated in a set of norms that are ontic. To theorise social imaginaries, Taylor compares them to theories. Theories are the provenance of a small amount of people, and are expressed in theoretical terms, and thus have a particular discursive structure. Imaginaries are ordinary peoples’ widely shared common understandings of their worlds, and are shared through popular forms such as legends, images and stories. Imaginaries provide the basis for legitimacy and common practices. However, theories and imaginaries are not distinct forms, as theory can come to influence imaginaries. One could think here, for example, of how Social Darwinism influenced racialisation, and was in turn influenced by imperial and colonial world-making practices to express coloniality as a world-making endeavour. Imaginaries are also practiced which animate understanding, and it is the understanding that contains the potential and limitations for particular practices.

Moral orders, which undergird ideas of right or wrong, provide the context within which actions are possible. Protests come from this idea of the possible, where new ways of configuring social relations are in conversation with a moral order. However, imaginaries and their concomitant practices can also influence theory. In the student movements, an exhortation of a moral order that is predicated on care for black life, by recognising black pain and thus black sentience (Hartman, 1997), is an ontological reconfiguration. It is from situated knowledge (Haraway, 1991) that Fallists recognised epistemic fissures, epistemic violence and epistemic and ontological erasure, which they attempted to make visible and, in so doing, make demands for epistemic justice. The new social relations they were imagining were to be operationalised through new curricula, and thus move from imaginaries into knowledge production as a formal, legitimated and structured mode of recognition that has the potential for social change.

I take from Taylor (2003) that theorists, too, are subject to imaginaries. I would therefore argue that theories – because of their ontological dimensions and the kinds of worldings they imagine – are also social imaginaries, which are negotiated, legitimated and justified in epistemic communities. Barad (2007) has argued that ontology and epistemology are deeply entwined, and that this indivisible process is a profoundly ethical concern. As argued by Castoriadis (1991), imaginaries in their temporal dimensions are grounded by the specificities of history that particular communities carry towards usable pasts in the present. In academies with settler colonial histories, epistemologies of ignorance can be constraints on academics with shared settler histories or, where they recognise a conceptual formation such as race or gender, the capacity to solidify their sense-making and worlding may be constrained by their capacity to imagine the Other's density of experience. However, as we have seen in the aftermath of Fallist movements, decolonisation as a conceptual category has proliferated across the South African academy, sometimes to nauseating effect. For example, when I started this project in 2016, during the height of the student movement, I intended to craft a decolonial feminist approach to disability. However, given the emptying out of the category, the ways in which land dispossession is evaded, the metaphorical use of decolonisation, and the evisceration of the material violences experienced by black people, the concept has begun to lose its conceptual vitality.

Decoloniality as conceptual terrain has infused our epistemic imaginaries. However, in some instances, the ontological density of black life is sorely lacking. As Maxwele (2020: n.p.) laments:

> The actual act of throwing poo at the statue of Rhodes is not something that is talked about in academia, in fact the politics of poo never really saw the day light in University dialogues. Many were quick to condemn the act and immediately after that it was buried. Today we talk about #RMF, we talk about institutional racism in Universities, we talk about lack of transformation, without delving deep into the act of throwing shit itself and what that act means for our struggle as Black people. It seems academics have no interest in talking about human faeces as a tool to alert the world of our struggles and bring back our dignity.

The material dimensions of everyday black life, where toxicity and excrement flow in black streets, have been dematerialised. The terrain of struggle at the university has in some ways decentred the necessity and urgency of changing black debilitation. This sanitised version of decoloniality does not foreground the struggles of the flesh, psyche or destruction of community and, as we have seen throughout the thesis, these are considerable struggles. Faeces as a technique of protest was intended to point to the material conditions of the massification of black death-disability-debility. The unsanitary street flowing with shit is not a metaphor. The inheritance of racialised social order, in its shitty dimensions, kills, breaks and debilitates bodies, ignoring and using the foulness of the air and streets to create inequality. The unsanitary street flowing with shit is coextensive with other debilitating conditions; it is akin to Fanon's (1961/ 2004) colonised sector, replete with all the nervous conditions that leave impairment in its wake.

I wonder what happens when someone reads the words 'inequality,' or hears someone like Maxwele (2020) speak about a 'brutal history'. What do they imagine? What do they imagine that inequality of access does, to bodies, psyches, families, and communities? Nyamnjoh (2016: 50) claims that Maxwele did not act quite as an individual, but for and on behalf of 'an intellectually and emotionally wounded community of black students'. Claiming black pain is an undoing of black apartheid psyches that had to forego feeling to survive and thus:

> For blacks to actually own up to pain on bodies as monuments of centuries of torture, the way Maxwele speaks about it can only be explained by the likelihood that they must have invested much hope and aspiration in the declaration that apartheid had come to an end and that its victims could now dream about reactivating their humanity. To feel pain is to have hope, and to believe that human agency can result in creative innovations (p.53).

Undoubtedly, recognising and claiming black pain is about affective resuscitation, but it is also about how some forms of everyday life are 'torture' that brutalise bodies and psyches. A world in which hope and aspiration express desires for an end to debilitation and a demand for black flourishing. An end to the material violences that remake bodyminds (Price, 2015; Schalk, 2018) and treat black people, their lives, wellbeing and health as disposable and of no importance. Quoting black intellectual Xolela Mangcu, Nyamnjoh avers that over 150 years of black theorisation is absent in the university. Calls for curriculum reform and increased numbers of black faculty in overwhelmingly white institutions were thus necessary and urgent.

Disability theorist, Titchkosky (2019), has used disability imaginaries to discuss how disability figures in the media. When the media asks us to imagine disability, it is frequently to incite a response in which disability is a pitiful and scary condition denoting lack and incapacity. The media is significant for how it shapes disability imaginaries. As Mitchell and Snyder (2000) have argued, disability is used as a metaphor to tell stories. Unlike race and gender, which are largely absent, popular culture often uses disability as narrative prosthesis (Mitchell & Snyder, 2000). This shapes our understanding of and affective responses to disability. Discussing the ways in which Western media asks audiences to imagine disability, Titchkosky defines:

> ‘imagination’ as a complicated interpretive social action, potentially creative, but done always in relation to existing cultural conceptions and images; the products of imagination can be conceived as ‘imaginaries,’ a kind of solidification of sense … Conceiving of imagination as a meeting point between the made and the really made up, as well as between alienation and engagement, permits us to encounter the invitation to imagine as an ‘enworlded phenomenon,’ potentially tied to the disruption of the same or, even, to making something new. This enworlded sense of imagination brings together things, people and events with expectations of the normative order while also pulling things or people or events apart since we can imagine a different social existence. As a particular form of assemblage, the invitation to *imagine disability* both mirrors and marks the intersection of the already made and the really made up in the simultaneity of what is both repetitive and productive in the human imaginary (2019:13;18, emphasis in original).

The solidification of sense that Titchosky points to as an enworlded phenomenon is very helpful in understanding how the imaginaries that undergird theory fail. Epistemologies of ignorance are normalised and legitimated through the negotiation of situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988). As an enworlded phenomenon, black students’, particularly poor black students,’ sensibilities around the consequences of structural violence would differ from the majority of white theorists who, if they have encountered the layered ways in which structural violence shapes black worlds, would largely have done so through the text or as a consequence of limited research engagement. Moreover, it is conceivable that the myths of history most white intellectuals assert offers them a means to protect themselves from confronting the inordinate amount of suffering their privilege is grounded on. Nonetheless, it is the imaginary, and the creative capacities of the imagination, that offer hope and possibility. To imagine black death, disablement and debilitation as a consequence of historical forces that acted as capacitation for white world-making, requires imaginative and affective acts towards undoing what feels like the normal. The creative aspect of imaginaries makes it possible to enter epistemic terrain that might not be enworlded.

Epistemic imaginaries

Changing the ontological horizon of an imaginary is critical for revitalising and changing disciplinary practices and expanding epistemic possibilities. Shuttleworth and Meekosha (2012) have argued for the transformation of the sociological imaginary. Drawing on Charles Mills' sociological imagination, they note that how we imagine a society's structure, history and people influence our awareness. Further, the sociological imaginary reflects a society's biases, and disabled people are generally ignored. We should also note that, when disability is recognised, it is particular kinds of disabled people who are included. The normative disabled subject has been under a process of constant revision, as new enworlded subjects engage disability as a lens to think about the making of their worlds. For example, feminist intellectuals like Garland-Thomson (2002) and Wendell (2006) have argued for understanding gender through the lens of disability, and the critical transformation of disability studies through a feminist standpoint. Chris Bell (2017) pointed out the whiteness of disability studies, and its tendency to ignore the differences between disabled people of colour and white people, and brought awareness to the racialised partiality of disability studies. There have been increasing calls to include race, and how colonialism is implicated in producing disability, in disability studies (see e.g. Parekh, 2007; Erevelles, 2011a, 2011b; Meekosha, 2011; Ghai, 2012; Grech, 2015a; Grech & Soldatic, 2015; Bell, 2017; Bailey & Mobley, 2019).

Disability theorists have also argued for the inclusion of disability within a particular discipline or epistemic orientation, and the mutual transformation of both the disciplinary formation and disability studies. Kasnitz and Shuttleworth (2001), Ginsburg and Rapp (2013), and Staples and Mehrotra (2016) have argued for thinking with disability in anthropology, and the value of using anthropological perspectives within disability studies to avoid universalisation. Ginsburg and Rapp (2020) have used imaginaries to speak to disability imaginaries and bioethical debates. Rapp and Ginsburg (2001) showed how disability refigures kinship imaginaries, and thus the mutual imbrication of disability with anthropology allowed a subtle and nuanced demonstration of how disability makes new socialities possible.

The growth of disability studies has expanded the ontological terrain through which disability is imagined, though there is still much work ahead. Shuttleworth and Meekosha (2013) caution that Mill's concept of the sociological imagination was not sufficiently reflexive to interrogate its own categories, and some of the shortcomings of the sociological imaginary were its reliance on a small group of metropolitan men's theory, and that it ignored thinking from the Global South. We can also say this of disability studies (Connell, 2011), and the lacuna that Critical Disability Studies seeks to fill. Despite efforts to incorporate Global South thinking, I often wonder, who counts as the Global, South and what imaginaries of the Global South are in operation? At this stage in this thesis, when we have encountered a scale of racialised disablement which is staggering, and yet barely present in South African theorisation of disability, I want to turn to Dieleman's definition of epistemic imaginaries:

> An epistemic imaginary, as … composed of the set of epistemic norms that inform and govern the knowledge practices within a given society. Typically, such epistemic norms and practices will manifest themselves in what I call a "hegemonic epistemic imaginary," which constructs and dictates proper epistemic behavior for all those living in and seeking to engage with others in that society (2012: 940).

Epistemic imaginaries are therefore also subject to constant contestation as hegemonies are questioned, as we can see in the student movements, and in disability studies. Normalising features of epistemic imaginaries are usually those practices and statements that legitimate someone as part of an epistemic community. One such practice which I always find very strange, even as I perform it, is the orthodoxy of rehearsing the contestations between 'models' of disability, such as the medical and social model, which I noted in the introduction. Within these models, particular subjects of disability are imagined, with a universalising aspect to the arguments that frequently erase the particularity of contexts and different vernacular understandings of disability.

For example, Laurence Ralph (2014) has shown, with the men who become disabled in Chicago due to gang violence, how useful the medical model of disability is for them, which they use to advocate for a cessation of gang violence. Michael Ralph (2015) also shows how the concept of impairment, that is so critical to the social model of disability, emerges from a calculus of black life in the insurance industry that recognised higher probabilities of black injury because of enslavement. The concept of impairment placed a monetary value on racialised inequality, and privatised racialised risk. However, as a concept, impairments' roots in black enslavement, and the continuity of racialised inequality, are ignored. What is most germane here, however, is to recognise the formulaic ways that epistemic imaginaries perform forgetting, whilst attempting to theorise how modes of explanation may instantiate narrowed ontological horizons.

The university, a place of knowledge production, is thus also a place where a student like Maxwele would become frustrated at the practiced forgetting he encountered. He states:

> Institutions such as UCT are quick to forget about the daily conditions that Black people are subjected to. Conditions that are a direct result of colonialism and Apartheid. These conditions of Black people were not to be discussed either by Black

> people among themselves nor by White people in their positions of administrative and epistemic power. The state of Blackness and conditions of Black people were not part of critical discourses at UCT. For to speak about the State of Blackness and the conditions of Black people in UCT was to directly and indirectly ask for consequence management and the political and ethical accountability of White people (2020: np).

The university was thus a place of forgetting, a place of erasure. The imaginaries that circulated and could be given public expression expressed a historicity that denied black students' memories and everyday lives in ways that are quite fantastical. In my own experience, I often find some of the conversations to be surreal. There is nothing more bizarre than having someone who has never lived your experience arguing with you, with utter sincerity and zealous belief, how you should understand the place you call home. My experience of enforcing the dominance of ignorance also encompasses historically black institutions in South Africa, as well as within the Global North. Encountering white fantasies that masquerade as theory, and the impoverished view of the world it offers, filled with distortions, erasure and minimisation of the brutality that was and continue to be meted out on the bodyminds (Price, 2015; Schalk, 2018) of black people, can be debilitating. What kind of historical and humanist sensibilities can ignore the scale of devastation that racist capitalism has wrought, in a country whose sociopolitical history was declared a crime against humanity, and treatment of black people was considered inhumane (Dugard, 2008)? What kind of disability studies ignores over a million men who became disabled in a destructive industry such as mining? Or ignores the generations of people who farmed the land and are counted as an industry with one of the highest rates of disablement? Or the bleeding bodies and traumatised psyches of students on their own campuses and not recognise that those young people are being debilitated, and impaired when they are shot at with rubber bullets and tear gas? These spaces for thinking are / were also spaces of impoverished epistemic imaginaries.

Within South African disability studies, that the study of disability has barely engaged race and black debilitation as coextensive with disablement is sad. I respect many of the disability theorists, and teach alongside some of them, and mobilising a critique is quite hard from this position. Yet, it is very necessary. Similar to disability studies elsewhere, the discipline is largely white and, in my estimation, the framing of the discourse elides our history. That there is an earnest and sincere interest and care about social inequality is something I do not doubt. However, I am concerned about how epistemic privilege operates. South African disability studies theorists, who write on behalf of Southern Africa as representatives of the Global South, should have more than a cursory engagement with race. It is no small matter that black South Africans are inordinately vulnerable to disability as a continuous, perduring consequence of structural violence. It is something I think about a lot: what it means to represent the Global South from an epistemic position that was made possible by racial subjugation, and to speak on behalf of those who were subjugated. This is not to close off the possibility of speaking, but rather to use the space in ways that simultaneously recognise the violence of ableism, and be aware of the scale at which the destruction of black worlds was normalised, and that black disablement is not arbitrary.

There are a few ways in which race figures in contemporary South African disability studies. As an almost abject subject who is constantly denigrated through lack of access, and is also somewhat universal, race is not named, and the destruction of black life due to settler colonial histories is evaded. Vulnerability to disability is thus assumed to be equally distributed, irrespective of unequal power relations. Similarly, in the aftermath of the student protests, racial difference and the violence of racialised inequality is recognised, yet the ideal subject through whom race is thought, and whose suffering matters, is a white, disabled person (see Watermeyer, 2019; Swartz, Bantjes, Lourens & Watermeyer, 2020). The arguments are poignant and critically important, as recognition matters for everybody, and I have deep empathy for the writers and the difficulties they face. However, the capacity for the reach and scope of disability studies in South Africa to have the same urgency and use as gender, class or sexuality, as analytics, is undermined by the limits imposed by evasions of South Africa’s racist history and its effects.

The first essay I will engage, and which I mentioned in the introduction, is by prolific South African disability studies theorist, Brian Watermeyer (2019). The essay appears in the *Palgrave Handbook of Disability and Citizenship in the Global South*, which was edited by three South African disability theorists, Watermeyer, Judith McKenzie, and Leslie Swartz. Watermeyer (2019) argues that, during the student movements, race trumped everything else and, because he is a white male, his suffering due to his disability is not legitimated. He asserts very early in the essay that most people with disabilities in South Africa are black. He shows his empathy and awareness of the intertwining of race and disability, the massive suffering and brutality of apartheid at the beginning of his argument, and establishes himself as invested in undoing racial trauma. His historicisation of racial inequity is, however, a short one, that only includes formal apartheid from 1948 to 1994, and thus ignores centuries of enslavement and colonialism. The consequences of racism and racialising practices, and the role they play in producing disability, disappear. In the course of the essay, a slippage happens where black people are black people, and not black people who might also be disabled. The disabled subject becomes white, and the plight of disablement is the plight of a white, disabled subject, who is also oppressed, invisibilised and silenced because of their oppression. Watermeyer (2019) wonders what being disabled would be like for him if he was Swiss. A more potent challenge would be to wonder what disability would be like as a black academic with a disability, rather than a European counterpart. In Watermeyer's reading of the student movement, even as he acknowledges what our history has wrought for black people, he does not offer a space of mutuality, even as he asks for one. More critically, in an edited volume on the Global South, Watermeyer's essay on ignoring his suffering is one of the few sustained discussions of race.[83]

The second essay emerged in the aftermath of a publishing scandal, of a now-retracted 2020 paper entitled, *Age- and Education-Related Effects on Cognitive Functioning in Colored South African Women*. White academics, using faulty methodology, had done research into the cognitive functioning of Coloured women in the Western Cape. When the article circulated, there was an uproar about the racist methods and race reasoning used in the article, which did not contextualise South African history and was not careful about how context and educational levels were framed. After a series of talks at the University of Stellenbosch,[84] where the academics who had written the article were located, *Fault Lines: a Primer on race, science and society*, edited by Jonathan Jansen and Cyrill Walters (2020), was published to mobilise academics to talk about race in ways that do not essentialise. An essay on disability, *The Forgotten Side of Race Science*, by four white disability theorists, Leslie Swartz, Jason Bantjes, Heidi Lourens and Watermeyer (2020), was published in the primer. In many ways, what the essay does is make disability analogous to race (Erevelles, 2015; Frederick & Shifrer, 2019). While the theorists agree that the article about Coloured women's cognitive functioning uses racist ideas, the essay is aimed at showing that people with disabilities also experience stigma, are marginalised and excluded. They also recognise the ways in which race and disability were entangled, and how colonial discourse used disability to dehumanise and exclude. The dehumanisation of people with disabilities then becomes the central focus of the essay, with the three[85] disabled writers telling stories of their exclusion at university. They inform us that, when they discussed the chapter in the context of an outcry about racial science, even though they never discussed the stories they

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[83] According to the index, race and racism occur on pp. 67–77, 80–81, 226–227, and 353. Pages 67-81 is Watermeyer's essay.

[84] A former Afrikaans university and bastion of Afrikaner Nationalism.

[85] Leslie Swartz is not disabled. Bantjes, Lourens and Watermeyer have varying visual impairments.

would tell for the chapter, what emerged were stories of their own exclusion. Like Watermeyer's (2019) essay, what the university may be for a black, disabled person does not figure in the ontological imaginary, nor their epistemic imaginaries. The experience of being treated as disabled or impaired in the making of race, and what that might mean in in a country like South Africa in which race relies on disability, is not an analysis that some of the foremost disability theorists in our country are able to offer. Race is something that must be dealt with and recognised, before the authors' own enworlded imaginary can negotiate a discussion around race. Their own raced sensibilites are brought to the fore, in which disability is a condition best understood through whiteness.

I have focused on these two essays because they are both missed opportunities, not because the writers were white and have no right to speak and should be silenced, but because the connections between their experience and how worlding through disability works, evaporated. As an analytic of injustice, the capacity to think about disability and disablement as process rather than only identity, would expand disability studies' epistemic terrain. What happened with both essays however, was a foreclosure. Disability, and its entanglement with death and debility, is so integral to understanding a place like South Africa, that to retreat into disability as identity, and as identity that cannot meaningfully engage with black racialisation, is to narrow the potential reach of disability as a conceptual apparatus. Disability becomes one among other identities, rather than a mode of making worlds, creating hierarchies, and thus being integral to ontoformativity (Connell, 2011). The quest for recognition in these essays, rather than creating a space for solidarity within disability studies, does not offer forms of relatedness to the disabled gangster, the disabled miner, the debilitated student, who live in a world with shitty streets, and whose parents and loved ones face death, disability and debility as an ordinary consequence of structural violence.

In the aftermath of the protests, and reading these two essays in particular, I have to conclude that as death-disability-debility imaginaries, the student protests failed to include some new publics. Epistemic exclusion from an imaginary (Dieleman, 2012) occurs when you were not supposed to be included, and are made illegible or not given credibility to speak, or your methods do not accord with group norms. If the protesters were recognised, it was to place race, according to Watermeyer (2019), as a central feature of their discontent. What was not recognised was how South Africa's racist history created death-disability-debility within their worlds, which is really at the heart of what the protestors were lamenting, and perhaps did not have the words to convey, because if you are black, it is so obvious that the problem is what white supremacist ideas of race do to black worlds. But it is more likely that when they did convey their pain, as Chumani points out, they were not believed, heard, or understood.

How the student movements were understood was limited to the capacity to imagine connection between their worlds and other worlds where marginalisation is ordinary, such as in the lives of white academics with disabilities. While disability is analogous to race for these intellectuals, the lived condition of blackness, and its consequences on the body and psyche, are not yet fully recognisable. Medina (2013) argues that:

> Exclusionary social imaginaries and deficiently resistant social sensibilities result in a lack of empathy, in the accumulation of cognitive-affective obstacles that makes it difficult to see others as our peers or fellow-travelers and to see their experiences as having bearing on our life. Through the pluralization of the social imagination and the cultivation of a kaleidoscopic social sensibility, we can meliorate our social perception and learn increasingly better to see people's problems, interests, and needs in their own terms and in relation to our own, becoming interested (even invested) in them (2013: 206).

A pluralistic sensibility is necessary for resistant imaginaries to emerge through friction and contestation, and requires that we are able to perceive the struggles of others. However, South Africa's history is one in which plurality organised racist imaginaries, and strove to create plural worlds through a deep belief in the multiplicity of difference. A pluralistic sensibility cannot merely be about the recognition of difference, but requires work to ensure that the relations between worlds do not reproduce hierarchies. We need empathy and a historical sensibility that recognises how deeply we were expected to dehumanise those who were not deemed normal, such as racialised and disabled others. If we are able to do the work of undoing contempt for the suffering of others, which became a national bloodsport (Barnes, 2019), then we might find connections and epistemic openings that allow for a vitalising South African disability studies that is able to move across disciplines and multiple entangled liberatory knowledge formations. For this to happen, we need to ameliorate epistemic exclusion by including people who were excluded (Dieleman, 2012). Disability studies in South Africa might want to urgently ensure that a cohort of black students are trained to develop their own conceptual apparatus through which to explore the entanglement of race and disability in the making of South Africa. New epistemic norms which do not exclude the massification of black death-disability-debility should be created, so that disability imaginaries can incorporate an expanded ontological terrain that takes

South African history seriously. Disabilities studies scholars should train themselves in a historical sensibility that incorporates black death, disablement and debilitation. The trick, of course, will be to do so without reproducing blackness as merely abject suffering, thus recreating new forms of white and elite paternalism and justification for white supremacist developmental epistemologies.

Towards hope

Not shirking the different worldings that apartheid, and our long histories of colonisation, enslavement and settler histories, bequeathed us is critical to building a disability studies (and other disciplinary formations) with expansive ontological and epistemic horizons. If we take seriously the multiplicity of being in postapartheid South Africa, and the differential social locations which are raced and classed, then finding sites to disrupt epistemic and ontological certitude is critical. As stated in the introduction, in *Under Western Eyes Revisited*, Mohanty (2003) provides us a means to think about differential power within and between nation-states that recognises the multiplicity and plurality of our locatedness through multiple co-ordinates that are geopolitical, classed, gendered and raced. It is my contention that the many protests in South Africa are imaginaries, and are imaginaries that seek to alleviate or prevent structural violence which produces death, disability and debility. South African disability studies theorists are overwhelmingly white and, in a settler colonial state like South Africa, theorising on and for the Global South may well stretch the imaginations of white South African disability theorists. This is not because of an intellectual failure, but rather a refusal of the full scope of South Africa’s violent history.

Social imaginaries as a conceptual tool, however, in conjunction with desiring social change and thinking about social movements, offers us a transversal politics that might just lead us to transversal dialogical epistemologies (Yuval-Davis, 2012). As is well-known by now, due to how intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1990) as a conceptual apparatus has travelled, as well as the reach of feminist and decolonial scholarship, situated knowledge matters. Our differential positions have epistemic effects because how we perceive the world is situated (Haraway, 1991; Harding, 1993). The imagination, too, is situated, which is enfleshed, and affective and critical to our willingness and capacity to transform information (Stoetzler & Yuval- Davis, 2002). Situated imagination is a fundamental component of a feminist standpoint theory (Stoetzler & Yuval- Davis, 2002) and, I would argue, for *any* liberatory theory. Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis situate the imagination as follows:

> Experience, made by the senses and mediated through the faculties of the intellect and the imagination, produces knowledge as well as imaginings, and along with them meanings, values, visions, goals, and critical and creative, along with reactionary and destructive, potentials. Here lies rooted the possibility and indeterminacy of (or else the 'freedom' to) social change (2002: 326).

We see here that situated imaginations are a critical component of what Adams et al. (2015) called 'worldhood,' and that the result of these complex entanglements contain uncertainty, but also the possibility for changing worlds. Yuval-Davis (2012) has argued that transversal politics allows us to take our own and others' histories seriously without hierarchising, but encompassing difference. She states that participants in a political dialogue should root themselves in their history, and shift to place themselves in the situation of those who are different to them. It is the imaginative capacity to shift into a space where understanding of the other becomes possible through shared values, and enlarge one's epistemic and ontological horizons as political acts. Transversal politics and the dialogical method (Yuval-Davis, 2012) are desperately needed in a context like South Africa, where vast differences in worlds have been socially engineered, and made to appear normal and ordinary. The project of rehistoricisation would require studies of whiteness and epistemologies of ignorance, as being situated in one's history requires a willingness to confront the staggering scale of violence upon which white epistemic privilege rest. A situated imagination would require not just awareness of black death, disablement and debilitation, but also white capacitation. At the very least, an awareness that one requires an act of situated and also transversal imagination, rather than the certitude of a received ontic imagination, to engage in dialogue. Along with the willingness to confront the vast inequalities that have been normalised may produce the conditions to ask the kinds of questions we have been trained to ignore. Even, and especially, if those questions take us to histories that hurt (Hartman, 1997).

Liu and Shange (2018) offer a possible route to the formation of political alliances, not just between white disability studies thinkers and black liberatory thinkers but between people who were oppressed by white supremacy. In South Africa, blackness as an epistemic relation and political identity frequently erases the ways in which racialised sensibilities play out between black people who were racialised differently. Focusing on the dense relationship between Asian Lives Matter and Black Lives Matter, Liu and Shange work towards a:

> robust, polyvalent approach to crossracial coalition building—what we might think of as a thick solidarity. Thick solidarity layers interpersonal empathy with historical

> analysis, political acumen, and a willingness to be led by those most directly impacted. It is a thickness that can withstand the tension of critique, the pulling back and forth between that which we owe and that which we share (2018: 196).

Thick solidarity offers a way to engage across difference and create alliances that do not require thin readings of history or ablations of suffering in societies with multiple exclusions. As Yuval-Davis (2012) has argued, transversal politics require us to enter into alliances with common political goals. It is the only way we will arrive at social justice that does not require remaking histories that enable oppression, or relinquishes thinking about the distribution of vulnerabilities and its massification amongst black people in settler colonial societies. The racialising politics amongst people with disabilities then also become a concern for social justice. Common goals of thwarting ableist political economies become possible through alliances that recognise we are all located in history. That we have been made through the worlds we inherited and we collectively have to undo how history works in and through us. We should aim to build societies where inequality becomes aberrant and thus stem the logics and conditions that produce, intensify, and exacerbate death-disability-debility.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used the concept of imaginaries to argue that the student movements mobilised a death-disability-debility imaginary when they used the concept of Black pain, and this was intended to pierce white epistemologies of ignorance. Black pain encapsulated the layered violences within students' worlds, and which activists like Chumani Maxwele embodied and attempted to communicate. The Fallist movement sought to remake the university so that Black pain, which is deeply material and not just affective, could be recognised and incorporated into knowledge production. Maxwele's patriarchal and homophobic politics also allow us to see that imaginaries within the student movement were contested, and not static. Imaginaries induce change, and are not only about the popular imagination, but also influence theories and are influenced by theory. What the student movements attempted was to change the ontological horizon of the university, and produce epistemic imaginaries that encompassed their experiences. They also sought to destabilise the epistemic terrain they encountered, which sanitised and justified the disembodied, ahistorical settler colonial logics and knowledge production they were expected to imbibe and reproduce. However, their attempts to be included in epistemic imaginaries in SA disability studies (and other disciplines) did not always succeed. Rather than recognise the opportunity to enlarge the scope of disability studies and accept the challenge to incorporate thinking about race, disability studies elided the consequences of black pain, which are critical to the making of raced worlds. What came to the fore was disability as identity, and often the disabled figure was white. However, through cultivating resistant imaginaries that have pluralistic sensibilities, and using situated knowledge in transversal dialogical epistemologies, it may be possible for South African disability studies to move into epistemic terrain that is inclusive of the experiences of the majority of South Africans. Disability studies theorists also have disability imaginaries that are ontic and enworlded and these were/are in contestation, friction and tension with black death-disability-debility imaginaries as they emerged in the student protests (and elsewhere). Disability studies theorists were not able to recognise the protests or events where disability and blackness were mutually constituting. These are missed opportunities, as protests and other moments of racialised suffering are dense epistemic sites with which to explore death-disability-debility imaginaries, rather than sites that delegitimate disability as a site of suffering for white disabled people.

Interlude - Chapter 11: ***The complexities of disabled lives - Anna, Tariq, Tania, Margaret***

In the previous chapter, I explored the idea of death-disability-debility imaginaries, and how black pain, used by Fallist students, expressed an ontology that was rooted in their lived conditions. I also suggested that protests are productive epistemic spaces through which South African disabilities studies scholars could ameliorate the ontological erasure of the co-constitution of blackness and death-disability-debility towards crafting transversal dialogical epistemologies (Yuval-Davis, 2012) that enabled thick solidarity (Liu & Shange, 2018).

Anna, Tariq, Tania and Margaret's life histories open up the possibility of thinking about race and disability beyond Manichean ideas of racial subjugation, in which a binary of whiteness and blackness play off against each other. When race is taken seriously as an analytic, disability histories expand, and the complexities of being racialised, in a country that was and continues to be obsessed with race, offer new epistemic possibilities. Even though strategic essentialism (Spivak, 1988) is important and allows political traction and gains to be exacted for people with disabilities in South Africa, not shying away from racialised differences also offers complex and much more beautiful ways of understanding the lives of people with disabilities. Unlike the previous life histories, these were not brought into conversation because of a theme, although reading the life histories together shows how foundational intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) is to an analysis. So much is lost when differences are erased to tell easy, facile stories that slip neatly into theories that facilitate ontological erasure, ensure comfort from epistemologies of ignorance, and allow theoretical synergies between transnational white epistemologies of ignorance.

The life histories offer stories around racial desire and the postapartheid, race and the making of liberatory selves, race, gender and subjugation, race and xenophobia, racialised differences across time, and whiteness and disability. What becomes apparent is that the flattened ways in which we relate race, forego the details that offer generous and generative reflections of the people we encounter, and the handholds for thick solidarities (Liu & Shange, 2018) to emerge. What is relinquished is the dynamism of being in the world, of making a self over time, and the difficulties of relaying and communicating some of the ways in which people come to be who they are. To reach for each other, from the particularity of our own histories (Yuval-Davis, 2012), requires us to meet each other through and with the ways our positions in history brought us into an encounter with each other. The first life history is Anna's, followed by Tariq, then Tania and finally Margaret.

Anna

Anna is very dynamic. Born in the late 1980s, she would have been classified as Coloured during apartheid. She was raised in Ravensmead,[86] in a household with loving parents who did their best to give her and her sibling the best possible life. She lives a very full, busy life. Anna was determined to present as someone who has not allowed disability to diminish her possibilities. She has travelled extensively, and was completing an MBA, owned her own home, and was purchasing a second property. She has had a few different careers, as a journalist, a professional sportsperson, and a sought-after public speaker. She does sports that are dangerous for someone with her physical disability, drives an adapted vehicle, and has an active social life. While she does walk, she frequently uses a wheelchair. She is not married, but has an active love life and does not want a committed relationship or children because of how demanding and busy her life is.

The first time we meet to discuss the research, she bubbles over and the conversation flows. We went to the same university and did some of the same classes as undergraduate students, and reminiscing helped us connect. Meeting for the interview was different; we start out bubbling but then the conversation becomes stilted and talking feels hard. We have just the one interview at a restaurant. Somehow, recording the conversation shifts the dynamic. Anna's answers are short, snappy and upbeat. I become confused, as some of what I'm hearing differs from what she had shared when we met initially. My confusion renders the ebb and flow of conversation awkward, as I try to elicit some of the ways in which stigma might work, and the challenges a black woman with a disability might encounter. A few moments after the recording ceases and we are wrapping up our meal, some of what I had hoped to elicit about the social challenges she

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[86] Ravensmead is a largely (94%) Coloured suburb in the Northern suburbs of Cape Town, with a population of 18 325 people in 1.94 square kilometres (Frith, n.d.). There is not a lot of demographic information on Ravensmead. Recent news reports indicate that the area is struggling with gangsterism (Fokazi, 2020; Cruywagen, 2021; Mlamla, 2021). Ravensmead, formerly called Tiervlei, was also developed to structurally accommodate Coloured people who were forcibly removed from places like Parow, Parow Valley and District Six. In an interview (IOL, 2014) with two playwrights about their play, *Toe Ravensmead nog Tiervlei was* (When Ravensmead was still Tiervlei), they shared how they went about researching oral histories with older residents in the early 2010s, and how raw the wounds of forced removals still were, so many decades later. What seemed to hurt more was how earlier removals, which preceded the iconic removals in the 1960s, had evaporated from public memory. What was poignant in this news report was how little so many black people who live in a place such as Ravensmead know about the histories of how their homes, and what forced removals meant for their parents and grandparents. In one or two generations, the memories have been lost, silenced, muted, and maybe speak in ways that have made connection challenging.

has experienced emerges. Afterwards, I would wonder why, for me, the ‘real story’ of a life is always one that highlights pain and woundedness.

Maybe Anna was just tired of having her challenges be the story of her life. She is accustomed to being interviewed and has interacted with the media for decades, first as a young sportswoman[87] who competed internationally, then as a journalist, and now in other capacities. She tells me a story of being invited to do a talk on Women’s Day, and choosing to talk about being a woman rather than disability, and how her being very ‘light and upbeat’ moved an audience member to tears. In numerous moments, she disassociates herself from disability as an identity, and asserts her strength of character. It is her personality that has allowed her to benefit from numerous opportunities, as well as what she calls her mouth, which is her ability to communicate effectively to get what she wants. She has had to ’push doors open’ because people assume that she is incapable of doing things because of her disability.

Although she went to a primary school for children with disabilities, she has not maintained friendships with any of her previous classmates. Most disabled people, she says, behave in ways that incite pity because it allows them to get things. A close relative has the same genetic condition as hers. They are barely on speaking terms. When she affirms herself, she frequently compares herself to her relative, who is dependent (whereas she is independent), does not communicate well, and is not very successful, whereas her capacity to communicate has created an enlarged relationship to the world. As a child, Anna went to a primary school for children with disabilities but, because she became bored, she pushed her parents to send her to a mainstream school. She was shocked by the difference in academic expectations, as her previous school did not expect students to excel academically. Because of her sporting career, and the many public engagements she had during and after school, her encounters with other people with disabilities has shown her what the effects are of internalising stigmas of helplessness and abjection, and all the other negative ways in which people with disabilities are treated. There was something about the necessity to counter abject stereotypes of people with disabilities that instead worked towards affirming those very stereotypes of others, whilst producing an individualist, liberal sense of subjectivity for herself that was painful to witness. It was not that it was not earnest, or even honest, but rather that witnessing how a laudable self in the face of stigma required unmaking the agency of others.

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[87] She would be recognisable if the sport is named.

Some of her ideas around race had a similar quality, where separating from the abject category of Colouredness and passing for white took on a celebratory tone. The mainstream high school Anna went to was a formerly white and Afrikaans-speaking school, and at the time, she was one of the few Coloured students there after the end of formal apartheid. Unlike the schools that the men in Langa attended, this school already had a ramp, and accommodating a student with a disability therefore did not present infrastructural challenges. The Afrikaans accent she acquired at high school, along with her being relatively light-skinned, sometimes allows her to pass as white. Anna's accomplishments, as a black woman with a visible disability that frequently results in infantilisation because of her diminutive stature, are indeed laudable. However, the cost of being accomplished in a country that still essentialises race, gender and disability was somehow more palpable and oppressive when it was being refused, as so many of the refusals required stigmatising the categories that Anna was associated with. Her opposition to stereotypes paradoxically heightened awareness of the very categories she was refusing. I wonder how my fixation on the multiplicity in her refusals are my own methodological and epistemic flaws, and whether others experience her how she wants to be represented.

Tariq

I loved visiting this family. Tariq was in his mid-fifties, a staunch Muslim and very earnest. I would visit on Sundays and sit in the lounge and talk to him while his family bustled about. There were frequent interruptions, and he would often call one of his children or his wife to clarify something or to bring something. He worked very long and demanding hours. The time he was able to give to me was time he could have used elsewhere. He believed that sharing your knowledge is a gift, and hopes that in speaking about his life, there might be a possibility that the plight of the people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)[88] can be heard. I had

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[88] The DRC, formerly the Belgian Congo. During Leopold II of Belgium's reign, it was thought of as his personal possession, and he ruled through disablement. Dismemberment was a tool used by Belgian colonisers to enforce cruel labour regimes in rubber plantations (Verstraete, Verhaegen & Depaepe, 2017). If workers did not meet their quotas, their hand or foot would be cut off. Colonialism's long history in this extremely wealthy place, with some the most sought-after natural resources, has impoverished the lives of most Congolese. As with most African countries, where white supremacist colonial terror through death-disability-debility was sowed based on the belief of white superiority and black Africans being subhuman, the calculus of brutality is obscured by self-serving archives and delusional frames of reference of white supremacists as saviours. Civil wars, and the brutal dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko after independence in the 1960s when Tariq was born, destroyed healthcare such as inoculations and other forms of medical care. According to Zihindula & Maharaj (2013), over 71.3% of people live under the poverty line, and 36% of households are food insecure. Access to healthcare remains challenging. There are no reliable statistics for disability prevalence in the Congo, and most estimates are based on the WHO's estimates of 10 to 15% which, given the high rates of violence in the DRC, seem woefully inadequate. The constant conflicts have claimed an estimated 5.4 million lives since 1998. For more than a century preceding 1998, colonialism, enslavement, and brutal dictatorship were part of the history of the DRC, and thus this indicator is vastly insufficient, but useful to get a sense of the scale of violence endured.

never felt so powerless and fraudulent as I did when he told me that someone like him will not be heard, but someone like me, who works at a university, might be.

The civil war in the DRC induced him to leave and find a place to make home. He travelled down the continent to Zambia, Mozambique, Johannesburg, and then Cape Town, in trucks, trains and buses. He had polio as a child, which stunted the growth of his legs. He uses a wheelchair, and sometimes moves across the floor using his hands. His upper body is very strong and, when he had time, he used to do a lot of work at gym to build muscle. He does not want to go back to the Congo, even though he would love to go back. He is haunted by his absence from his mother's illness and her death. He fears that the injustice of life in the Congo will be hard for him to be silent about, and he will be killed. A few times, he confides about people he knows who have been killed for daring to speak up. The movement of news across borders through social media had a profound impact on him, and he often showed me YouTube clips and shared stories that he encountered online. Sometimes, it felt like he was building an archive of social media posts so he could remain connected. It does not help that most of what circulates is spectacularly violent. Tariq is a very proud man. The pain he felt at the devastation and violence in the Congo was palpable. He did not try to hide his pain, sorrow or fear.

Tariq tells me a story of being hit by a tree branch, and finding himself in hospital and needing to bribe someone with a set of hair clippers so he could get medical attention, until his wife and mother arrived with money. He sat for hours, bleeding, and when patients who had survived a bus accident arrived, he tried to arrange care for them too. The horror of the experience, and the meagreness of the services he could expect, reminded me of the stories of trauma units here, where patients sat for hours waiting to be helped, without the bartering to ensure service. Yet, he appreciates the care he receives for his high blood pressure and other ailments when he goes to a government hospital or clinic in South Africa. You might wait a long time, but there will be medicine, it is affordable and, depending on the hospital, the staff are kind. Though, when Tariq and his wife lost their baby, they were sent a R16000[89] bill, which shocked them. The bill was eventually reduced but until it was, it caused their family a lot of anxiety and stress.

As a child in the Congo, Tariq's parents frequently kept him out of school when he outgrew his crutches. His father would eventually send him to do short courses to develop skills so he could earn a living someday. He fixed radios and televisions, though that knowledge is now outdated.

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[89] USD1002.20

He learnt to fix shoes, and while he never had the opportunity to use that in the Congo, it is how he earns a living now. In the Congo, for many years, Tariq worked as a go-between at the border between Brazzaville, Congo and the DRC. At the time, the Congolese government exempted people with disabilities from certain forms of taxation, such as border taxes, or allowed them free use of public services, such as transportation. People with disabilities used their tax-exempt status to ferry goods for businesses, buying and selling goods in each city. Tariq ferried clothing, and had a small business selling clothes. When the border closed, he struggled to survive, and eventually made his way to South Africa. When he arrived, one of the hardest things initially was that he was not expected to work in some of the places he received refuge, and was expected to live off charity. He now has an informal business with which he has been able to sustain himself and his family. The business is good, but he is frequently robbed. During the time I did research with him, the place he stores his goods was broken into, which made him very anxious about stock and equipment losses.

He spent a few years establishing his business before being joined by his family. During that time, he moved frequently, first to a friend's place, another Congolese refugee who had married a local woman and was no longer a practicing Muslim. They expected Tariq to be a childminder while they went to work. His friend asked him not to pray in their home, as his Muslim religious rituals might bring bad luck on the house. For a while, Tariq prayed outside, with great discomfort. He eventually made plans to leave, and received assistance from a refugee programme. Travelling to their offices was difficult, in an unfamiliar city whose public transport system was not accessible. The refugee office did not have signage, and he could not reach the buzzer for the gate from his wheelchair. However, on gaining access to their services, they found him accommodation in a place that, while kindly, felt like a prison, where he needed passes to leave the compound, and was unable to work and earn a salary. He approached the refugee office again, and they found him another placement, where they offered to give him a letter testifying to his right to beg. He was scandalised, as the idea that he would live off charity was abhorrent. He then moved again, this time to Langa for a short while. The place he lived in had eleven rooms, one communal toilet, and no bathing facilities. He could not use his wheelchair in the toilet, and would have to crawl through faeces and urine-drenched floors to reach it. He moved a few more times, once to a place without a bathroom, and was refused the use of the shower at the mosque. In another rental, he shared an outbuilding with someone who did not pay his share of the rent, and whose wild partying offended the neighbours, so Tariq had to move. He eventually moved into the house he is in now.[90] His landlord frequently insults him by saying the neighbours hate them because they are Congolese. When he tells me the amounts he has paid for rent over the years, I am shocked. The amounts are very low in a city where housing is in short supply, but now his neighbourhood is gentrifying, and his rent has been increasing steadily in the last few years. The most recent rent increase has nearly doubled what they have been paying, and he is worried that he will not be able to afford to live there soon, and will have to move again. When he first moved to the neighbourhood, which has one of the few fully accessible train stations, he would go to work in another neighbourhood. He works about two blocks away from where he lives now, and is well-known in the neighbourhood. He worries that a move would be detrimental to his business.

He married his wife in 1990, and they have four children. She is his second wife. His first wife aborted their baby because she was afraid that she would give birth to a child with a disability. The sorrow and shame when he tells me this story was hard to sit with. When he tells me the stories of becoming a father, he also recalls feeling humiliated by receiving unsolicited advice from a male nurse in Congo on how he should go about becoming a father and impregnating his wife. Tariq loves his wife and she treats him with love and respect. Unlike Tariq, who did English proficiency courses, she does not speak much English. Tariq is very much the head of his household, and says his wife is too soft with the kids. Their lives are centred around Islamic values and the rituals of a Muslim family. He is afraid that living in Cape Town might cause his children to lose their religious values, and be seduced by drugs, premarital sex and other behaviours that do not accord with Islamic principles. The family talks to each other every night, and Tariq shares his wisdom with his children so that he can guide them on how to live good lives. Tariq's eldest daughter is married, and he has a grandchild, on whom he dotes. His eldest daughter loves clothes, and he despairs a little of her expensive tastes. His youngest daughter, and one of his sons, teach religious studies. It was hard when they were growing up, as they were sometimes given charity. The children felt ashamed, and so he stopped accepting clothes for them. They are sometimes stigmatised because of his disability and the disrespect shown to him, sometimes by their friends. Tariq has also experienced parents telling their children that, if they do not behave, they would set Tariq on them, or had children treat him as a toy because of his diminutive stature. He tells his children that, no matter what others say, they should respect him and value the life he has managed to provide them. As Congolese, Afrophobia is a constant in

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[90] I am withholding the neighbourhood to maintain his anonymity.

his and the children's lives. For example, his son was accused of theft at school, although it later emerged that another boy had been responsible for the theft.

Tariq is now a permanent resident and, after a long and arduous process, receives a government stipend, though it is not the same amount received by South African citizens. Persistent advocacy by a refugee organisation, on behalf of the group of refugees with disabilities that Tariq was part of at the time, allowed him to eventually access assistance from the state. They were asked to return repeatedly to the Home Affairs Offices and, eventually, their monthly stipend was arranged. The group eventually stopped meeting, after the programme officer who championed the meetings left the organisation, and Tariq misses the sociality of being with other refugees with disabilities. After his family joined him, they all, including his school-going children, had to make an appearance at the Home Affairs Department for the annual renewal of their permits. Despite the indignities that he sometimes experiences dealing with state institutions, Tariq is happy to have made a home for his family in South Africa.

Tania

I met Tania many years ago, as she was also engaged with disability studies, and provided services for people with disabilities. Even though she had a fairly high-powered position at the time of doing research, Tania tended to be very diffident and accommodating. Our conversations would frequently veer off from discussing her life into talking about books and theories. I frequently talked to her about challenges I was grappling with in my research. She made me feel okay about how little I knew, and how much there was yet to learn. It was a great passion of hers to recognise that people with disabilities differed in many ways, and that those differences had consequences for how we organise an accessible society. She was also very pragmatic about what could be done, and the failures of what some disability theorists imagine is necessary. I could talk to her for hours, and regret deeply that I did not carry on the conversation with the same intensity after the research component of my PhD process had wrapped up. Some of our conversations before and after the recordings were profound.

She has been visually impaired since childhood. Born in the early 1950s, and raised in apartheid South Africa to white Afrikaner parents, she was sent to the Worcester School of the Blind as a child, where she completed her schooling. The school was predominantly Afrikaans, for white visually impaired students from across the African continent, run on Afrikaner nationalist principles, and Calvinist education and religion played a primary role. She says many of her fellow students were racist, as they were raised in racist families, and so were many white blind people, as race was not about what one sees but where people were placed in South Africa's racial hierarchy. At the school, students whose first language was not Afrikaans would soon not only be fluent in Afrikaans, but also assimilate culturally. While she hated the enforced religious study, she loved the sense of belonging. Institutionalisation, and the school's enforcement of a disciplinary regime, was deeply challenging. At the same time, her one weekend at home per term was always a difficult adjustment. She asserted numerous times that she has not felt the sense of belonging and normalcy since she was at school. She would go on to university to get a Masters degree. She excelled at university, and her experiences at a university abroad reshaped how she understood race, opening her to ideas of a non-racial society. She credits her academic excellence to the education she received at Worcester, where she said that they were raised to be articulate, educated, middle-class people, and to behave in socially acceptable ways. Her educational experiences in a school for disabled children are very different to Anna's, who was not expected to excel. She thought disability studies' focus on inaccessibility overemphasised failure, and that there should be more research done on what enabled successful graduates, as there were hundreds of blind graduates during apartheid. She noted that the school had several tracks: for students who were only visually impaired and were expected to be able to access higher education, students who were multiply impaired, and students who were also intellectually impaired. She worried about mainstreaming because teachers would not have specialist knowledge, but also because impaired students' behaviour would not always be corrected, as their behaviour would be treated as a feature of their impairment, rather than as something they could learn.

She was married. Her marriage sounded like it was challenging in the beginning, but had become very loving over time, and the care she had longed for as a young woman materialised in some ways as they both matured. Her husband, who was her first sighted lover, was not very emotionally available, and did not place his time at her disposal. When they were younger, he had expected a degree of independence from her that had been very difficult. She tells a story of being pregnant and her husband telling her to take the train to an area she was unfamiliar with. They spent many evenings in silence, which she eventually became habituated to, even though, as someone who is a wonderful conversationalist, this must have been really hard to become accustomed to. Her husband came to show more tenderness and care in an everyday sense in the last few years, such as walking her to the train, but his absence nonetheless had a profound effect, as she learned to build a life that ran parallel to his, and seems mostly to have bypassed him. She loved him very much, despite the challenges. As a mother, Tania had a very close relationship with her daughter and was able to have conversations with her about sexuality that would have been impossible for Tania to have had with her parents as a young woman.

As a young woman, Tania had numerous lovers, most of them blind. She thought the physical way in which she interacted, because of her blindness, was frequently misconstrued as sexual and lead to sexual encounters, some of which she was too polite to put a stop to. The need to be loved, to feel affirmed and belong with someone, saw her frequently trading sex for intimacy. She had a passionate affair with a younger visually impaired man while she was married. He was the first person who made her feel that her needs were legitimate and who saw her fully. However, the world they had created between them was also deeply wounding to him, because they could not publicly declare their relationship. When the affair ended, the void caused her to attempt to end her life, and she was committed to a psychiatric institution. Because she hated the experience of being institutionalised after her suicide attempt, she worked very hard to recover her self-esteem and self-respect.

Margaret

I met Margaret at a workshop a few years ago, where she shared part of her story. Margaret is an incredibly dynamic, gentle, generous and sophisticated woman with a wealth of experience. She is white, in her seventies, educated and played a significant role in the anti-apartheid struggle. She had two biological children and one adopted daughter, and was a grandmother. Like Tania above, children were an integral part of her life, and she mothered in many capacities. At one stage, she ran a children's day-care centre.

Margaret had been diagnosed as having manic depression, now bipolar disorder, in the 1970s. As a young professional in a helping profession, she worked in England for a brief period as an addiction specialist. In England, she was part of an experimental programme to treat addiction, which used step-down drugs, sensory deprivation techniques, and strategies such as asking her to confront her father's death by speaking to him in his coffin to effect a psycho-affective transformation. She partook in one of the workshops, and afterwards had chronic insomnia and was very talkative. She spent the night at a friend's house, who was a doctor, and confided she could not sleep and he, along with the doctor who was running the programme, suggested she be hospitalised at Bethlem Royal Hospital, the infamous Bedlam Hospital. Having to be on the other side of the therapeutic relationship was extremely difficult, as she became a patient and underwent numerous tests such as brain scans. The medication she was prescribed, such as halopiderol, affected her adversely. This was her first experience with institutionalisation, but it would not be her last.

She would be hospitalised numerous times at Valkenberg hospital in South Africa. It flustered her that she could not remember how many times or for how long, or that some of the records had been destroyed. She wanted dearly to go and spend a day there and sift through the records so she could piece together a history of her time there. We only met for one interview. The open-mindedness of the conversational format that I had chosen was challenging for Margaret, as she was worried that she would come across as disordered if she did not have dates and a carefully worked-through chronology of events. Remembering looked very taxing, as the person she was now had done a lot of work to find a way to live with grace and a hard-won measure of peace.

Her father was a doctor, and her mother, who was a twin, had also been hospitalised twice for a mental health illness, which Margaret thinks might have been depression. As a child, the reason for her mother's hospitalisation was not really talked about, and she never remembers her mother being ill, but does remember visiting her in a nursing home. When her mother was hospitalised, Margaret lived with her mother's psychiatrist and his wife, which was a horrible experience. She is not sure why she did not live with her father when her mother was hospitalised. Margaret's mother had a twin sister who, unlike her flamboyant mother, was more conservative. As a young woman, Margaret tried very hard not to be like her mother, as she was afraid that she would follow her mother's illness trajectory. She said she tried to be 'serious and intense, normal'. Margaret's mother was artistic, attracted lots of people to her, and whilst she loved unconditionally, was not very discreet or reliable. Her father, who died when Margaret was a teenager and was a lot more intense, enjoyed the varied people her mother attracted into their world. When he wanted to annoy her, Margaret's husband, also a medical professional, would accuse her of being 'just like your mother'. After their divorce, she reclaimed the parts of her mother she had sloughed off, and now she says she feels 'more whole'.

As a white woman who was part of the anti-apartheid intelligentsia, her conversations are filled with notable people and events that, in postapartheid memory-making, have immense cultural significance. However, during apartheid South Africa, her relationships with many members of the black intelligentsia, and anti-apartheid activists in the arts and other spheres of influence, were very unconventional. Her relationships across the colour line created stress in her marriage.

Prior to her taking him to an event in the townships, her husband had never been exposed to black people in a social setting.

She tells me about two incidences which I cannot shake. In the first, she was working as an organiser for a very famous black musician. She was sitting in the studio on the floor while he was recording, and looked up to see her husband at the window. He told her to get up and come outside and, when they were outside, he told her that, ‘I got a letter from Dr Pseudonym, I can take you to Valkenberg at any time’. She was bewildered and still seems to not understand why he made this threat: ‘I mean, I had made my children’s lunch, I had organised lifts, I had done all those correct things.’ She goes on to ask ‘how could I have been abnormal, that abnormal,’ if she had been able to do all the work to organise the recording and ‘if (she) had been raving (she) wouldn’t have been in that position. And I had covered my bases. You know, by making sure that I was being a good mother.’ In another incident, in the artist’s studio at the back of her home, there was an interracial gathering of writers and poets one evening, at which she was present. Later that evening, when she was home and washing dishes, her husband called the police as ‘he decided that I had now completely lost it. … he was wanting to prove that I was crazy.’ She rushed up to the bedroom and sat placidly in bed when the police came, and they left because they considered it a domestic dispute, and she did not look like someone who needed to go to Valkenberg. When she followed up with the police later, the policeman told her: ‘your husband told me that you are a mental patient and you needed to go to Valkenberg and he had an order for you.’ Her husband would walk around the house with the letter authorising him to institutionalise her in his pocket, and threaten her with it. She says he wanted her to be mad, so it could allow him to be a hero, the noble doctor with a wife that he could not fix, and who would ‘be mental for the rest of her life’. This way, he could leave her without reputational damage.

It emerged later that the psychiatrist who had given him the letter had affairs with his patients and, despite how difficult it was at the time to remove someone from practicing, he was no longer allowed to practice. Her adopted daughter revealed a few years ago that Margaret’s ex-husband had tried to have an affair with her. Because her father was a doctor, her uncle was a doctor and her husband was a doctor, she also knows the histories of some of the doctors who were given responsibility over her mental health. It was awful being taken to the district surgeon, who she knows also had his own challenges with mental health, and that all the doctors were men who were allowed to condemn her and institutionalise her. Medicalisation intersects with patriarchy in Margaret’s story in devastating ways. Hers is also a story of whiteness, and the power and authority accorded to educated white men, and how socialising across the divisions that apartheid had normalised was agreed to be a kind of madness by these medical practitioners.

Conclusion

Anna, Tariq, Tania and Margaret are all disabled, but they do not share universal histories and experiences of disability, nor are they raced or gendered in the same way. Their differences matter, along with how they came to navigate the racial politics of South Africa across time and place. It is critically important that white, visually impaired people with disabilities, as Tania tells us, were racist. It is also important that some white people with disabilities, like Margaret, were fundamentally opposed to apartheid and worked very hard to create some of the benefits of postapartheid South Africa that some of us are fortunate enough to enjoy. Along with this, it matters that carceral practices, the asylum, medicalisation, white patriarchal privilege and the stigma of mental illness were used to contain and discipline Margaret, and normalise apartheid's reprehensible racial politics. Disability was also a potential tool of white men's management of their domestic affairs, and not only a technique of governing black life. It also matters that Anna enjoyed passing as white, and that Tariq's experiences of xenophobia were perpetrated by black Muslims, and that it was another Congolese migrant who was Islamophobic. These kinds of differences make and destroy worlds, which almost always produces death, disablement and debilitation for those who do not have power. Whilst I have emphasised race, gender matters in reproductive politics and parenting, in quests for love, care and sexuality, which cannot be meaningfully separated from race, class, religion, nationality or age. Violence, too, is enfolded in gendered worlds in so many ways, in the small cuts that are often invisible, as well as the wounds that are easily recognisable as structural. As an ethico-political imperative, these violences have to be recognised, alongside the joy, respect, love and care in the four participants' lives. While I have provided glimpses here of lives well-lived, rather than focused on those aspects of the life histories, this is no less important than heartache and violence.

I now move into the concluding chapter of the thesis, to reiterate that ontological erasure of the effects of settler colonial violence and apartheid attritional war on black people is a profound loss and impoverishment of scholarship. The massification of black people's vulnerability to death-disability-debility is not central to disability studies and other disciplines' theorisation of life in South Africa, which reveals the effects of white epistemologies of ignorance. I discuss what using death-disability-debility offered me as an analytic, and advocate for more support to be offered to researchers of violence. Finally, I end with a list of questions for further research.

Chapter 12: *Questioning death-disability-debility and ameliorating ontological erasure*

The systematic impoverishment, dispossession and brutality that black people in South Africa were made to endure for centuries of settler colonial history, which was intensified during apartheid and had continued in the nearly three decades of the postapartheid era, has massified black death-disability-debility. That the overwhelming and obvious racialised distribution of disability is not a significant concern for South African disability studies constitutes ontological erasure that supports, maintains and furnishes a white epistemology of ignorance. This allows a place in transnational white disability studies that erases and ignores the costs of white supremacy, even as white supremacist reasoning is shored up through the evisceration of history. Governance through attritional warfare, which actively worked to suppress and debilitate the black majority as a tactic of rule, used death, and the threat of death and disablement, to ensure white, and now also black, elites' security. The political economy was fundamentally premised on the right to produce black death-disability-debility to extract wealth in industries such as mining, and destroy, not just black security, but also black wealth through land dispossession. In a country like South Africa, where the black majority experiences conditions such as inadequate housing, food insecurity, and dangerous, violent neighbourhoods that cause an expansion of death-disability-debility, structural violence produces and acts upon the majority of impoverished, black people. Death-disablement-debilitation is produced, and the continuity of structural violence intensifies and exacerbates disablement and debilitation and, for a great majority of black people, leads to an early death. The massification of black vulnerability to death-disability-debility is not shared with the majority of white South Africans, and cannot be theorised as if it were.

To briefly recap, I started the thesis with an overview of disability in South Africa, questioned the ontological erasure of race in South African disability studies, and offered some of the questions that accompanied me as I negotiated this project. In the first part of the thesis, I provided the onto-epistemic contours of the project, to show the connections between my ontological imaginary, my methodology, how the project affected me, and reflexively aware interconnections between epistemology and ontology. In Chapter Two, I provided an ontological sketch of the effects that settler colonial attritional war has had on black South Africans' health and life expectancy. In Chapter Three, I outlined my methodological process and how I arrived at an emergent methodology. I started this research project with a feminist qualitative methodology, and decolonial and disability studies perspective. I did life histories with nine participants, but also wanted to make connections with the student protests that I was witnessing. Using a feminist trickster approach and outlaw epistemology allowed me to shift scales across the production and experiences of disability, to events that revealed how enmeshed death-disability-debility was for black South Africans. In Chapter Four, I discussed the affective force of doing research on obvious violence, and what the traumatic effects unveiled about epistemic violence, gaslighting, settler colonial epistemologies, and ableism in the academy. The first Interlude – Chapter Five – followed Part One. Here, I provided five life histories of participants on the Cape Flats who became disabled due to interpersonal violence. The life histories were followed by Part Two of the thesis, in which I explored land dispossession, black criminalisation, and disability. In Chapter Six, I engaged the connections between masculinity, interpersonal violence, gangsterism and disability and, in Chapter Seven, I showed how the concentration of violence in black spaces was made possible by land dispossession. The final part of the thesis focused on protest to demonstrate that protests are dense epistemic sites from which to engage death-disability-debility imaginaries. In Chapter Eight, thinking with the Marikana Massacre, I explored the long and violent history of mining as an industry, which produced/s a staggering scale of black death-disability-debility. In Chapter Nine, I looked at crowd control weapons and how they produce, not just death-disability-debility, but also race through mass terror that is largely deployed on black people. In Chapter Ten, I discussed the #RMF and #FMF student protests and their use of black pain as a death-disability-debility imaginary to change white supremacist epistemologies of ignorance in which black suffering is normalised.

In the thesis, I provided openings for questions to emerge, and to demonstrate the vast scope that is possible for a historically located South African disability studies, and how integral thinking about death-disability-debility is for any study of South African life. Wherever structural violence is present, its materialisation is death-disability-debility, which affects not only humans who are subjugated but, as we have glimpsed in the thesis, also the environment and other forms of life. Examples include the tear gas whose memory remains in the places that are repeatedly forced to endure its poison, and the uninhabitable toxic land around mines that destroyers of worlds shirk their responsibility for. A more robust gendered analysis is needed, as well as looking at the ways in which attritional practices crossed borders to distribute black death-disability-debility regionally. All the life history participants were heterosexual, and there were no white males or black African women. I chose to sacrifice depth in the thesis, to begin the work of furnishing an ontological imaginary in which the visceral and psychoaffective effects of domination by a white minority on the black majority could take shape. I was struck in each chapter by how much research was needed, to understand the expanse of death-disability-debility and experience of disability and debilitation in South Africa across time and space. Nearly every section and, in some sections, every paragraph, offered spaces that required full studies, theorisation, and empirical work from a plurality of standpoints, such as gender and sexuality, along with race and death-disability-debility. There are some studies where the visibility of death tends to be paramount, but not yet enough. There are so few studies of the aftermath of violent events, after the dead have been counted. Those who remain are often forgotten or ignored, as if they did not constitute a transformed mode of life and a category of being that required attention, as if only the dead can speak. I wonder about that. Why is it that the dead can be made to speak, but not the injured and debilitated, who must live with the materialisation of violence on their bodyminds.

One of my principle aims in the thesis was to critique the impoverished ontological imaginary of white epistemologies of ignorance and show how important thinking with race is in South Africa. What is more, thinking about South African life and disability without thinking about race, and how race figures in the experience of and production of disability, is bizarre. Thinking with race is tied to social justice and shows a capacity to think with history. More specifically, thinking with the experiences of racialisation for the black majority, and how centuries of oppression have affected black worlds, is critical to any study of South African life. The production and massification of black death-disability-debility cannot be ignored. In the first section of the conclusion, I point to some of the insights that holding death-disability-debility together as an analytic provided me. The second section discusses white epistemologies of ignorance, and the third section, how negotiating this research project affected me. Finally, I conclude with some of the questions that have emerged for me from the study.

Death-disability-debility

I have offered death-disability-debility as an analytic, to hold those three categories of thinking together without foregoing that they are related but separate conditions. For me, it offered the means to shape an ontological imaginary of black life. Obliquely, what was also made noticeable was the operation of white supremacy, and foundational techniques of governance, which are the products of multiple, mutually constituting and reinforcing, overlapping, and sometimes even disjunctive, forms of violence which create(d) death-disability-debility. Death-disability-debility were tools of race-craft which was also intersected with gender, class, sexuality, and other identities. My focus in the thesis was largely on race. However, as an analytic, death-disability-debility can also describe what Pumla Gqola (2021) has called the female fear factory, which are the techniques patriarchy uses against women and those who are feminised or stigmatised because of their gender /sexuality, and which create the conditions for their violation. When a woman is sexually assaulted by a man, death-disability-debility are products and tools of making identities such as, but not limited to gender, race, and sexuality, as well as making, reinforcing and maintaining gender regimes in which fear, shame and other affects make worlds, and shape material conditions. The circulation of fear and shame makes individual experiences collective. These death-disability-debility imaginaries shape where people go, how they circulate in space, and the kinds of socialities they craft, maintain and relinquish. The making of the everyday with death-disability-debility imaginaries in a place like South Africa, where violences in certain spaces are so ubiquitous, is banal in its ordinariness. However, death-disability-debility are related but not the same, and also require work that explores each category and the relations between each category. What is critical for disability studies is that acquired disabilities, in a country where structural violence is racialised and ordinary, requires recognition that disability is not discontinuous with death, and may often lead to a low life expectancy, as debilitation may speed up senescence.

As an analytic, death-disability-debility allowed me to trace and name the effects of violence to show the costs of inequality, and how it materialises on bodyminds (Price, 2015; Schalk, 2018). I have found this extremely valuable, as it moves from bloodless abstraction into witnessing, and forced me to excavate what black people have had to endure. What does a whip do to a person, living in shoddy housing, not having enough food, a form of labour and scant labour protection, a rubber bullet, tear gas, a drug, being beaten, shot at? As an analytic that recognises historical processes and the material effects of those processes on people’s bodyminds, the conjunctural effect of death-disability-debility forced me to abide by the experiences of disablement. In a resource-deprived environment, death-disablement-debilitation is structural, and the conditions which induce these effects are continuous, and not temporally bound to an event of disablement. There was thus a temporal dimension that was made available by the concept, but also a spatial dimension.

The racialisation of space in South Africa, such as the space of the black neighbourhood, the mine, the protest, the university, created deadly-disabling-debilitating environments, whose effects unfold(ed) in time. Some of these effects were /are visible and immediate, and some are temporally delayed, but unfold nonetheless. The processual and conjunctural potentiality of death-disability-debility, as well as the racialisation of space, demanded a view that was not merely localised in the space of disablement, but also ensured I asked about the conditions that made the concentrated distribution of black death-disability-debility possible. I was also able to perceive how black masculinities and agency have been affected by the concentration of impoverishment within racialised spaces, where interpersonal violence and intergenerational trauma is rife. Young boys, who have few recreational outlets or safe spaces, have access to drugs, and gangsterism and the desire to perform invulnerable masculinities create the conditions that makes interpersonal violence flourish. Death-disability-debility allowed me to work against the ontological erasure of how violence, in service to white supremacist, heteropatriarchal, capitalist ideals, affected millions of black people across time and space in South(ern) Africa.

White epistemologies of ignorance

For centuries, the right to use violence, and to practice attrition on black people as a tactic to settle Southern Africa, continued with varying degrees of intensity and under different forms. White supremacist reasoning justified the theft of and trade in human beings, created the conditions to steal resources such as land and labour, and demeaned and destroyed individuals, families and communities. White supremacist practices of conquest ensured that meagre resources for life were provided to the black majority, whose labour they felt entitled to exploit. To clean their homes and gardens, build streets, housing and infrastructure, build their wealth on farms, in factories, mines, shops, and whatever enterprise required backbreaking labour against which profit or ease could be extracted cheaply. White South Africans were legally and politically allowed to dispose of those black human beings after they were worn down. It was normal that those same human beings, who were exploited so cheaply and whose labour built white worlds, were dispossessed and treated as if they were not entitled to social benefits, such as adequate housing, healthcare, or education. These greedy, rapacious, cruel and morally decrepit tactics were deployed by human beings who were racialised as white, albeit not evenly or without contestations. Yet, attritional warfare secured white prosperity and security for most white South Africans. For centuries, the air that was breathed in white enclaves were of entitlements to black subjugation, and the idea that that knowledge has been vanquished in three decades, where white socioeconomic power has been unaffected by postapartheid political changes in which blacks have been enfranchised, is ridiculous. To fantasise that centuries of knowledge production, which normalised white supremacy, have dissipated and no longer have epistemic power, even though some of the people who were trained in and with, and formulated and maintained white supremacist epistemologies of ignorance are still in the South African academy, is magical thinking. During postapartheid South Africa, even under a kleptocratic black government and an unaccountable, irresponsible black governing elite that has continued the deprivations the majority of black South Africans, the majority of whites in South Africa live flourishing lives. Most knowledge production takes place in these bubbles of security, in worlds where the depths of material deprivation and its effects are not a daily, grinding reality, and where most white people have grown up in enclaves that asserted their superiority over black people and, as Barnes (2018) has stated, contempt for black suffering.

The practices of settlement are ongoing, as are the violent processes that subdue even the right to think about the *longue durée* of settlement and its effects. Violent responses to protests, in neighbourhoods, at places of work, and at universities, are extensions of the normalisation of black death-disability-debility. Crowd control and protest policing work against black people to secure and demand their accommodation to death-disability-debility. Black South Africans face spectacular and immediate forms of mass punishment aimed at subduing rebellion and their quests for liveable, flourishing lives, and life-giving epistemologies. I want to retrieve, for a moment, an idea on protest that was underdeveloped in the thesis. Even as protests, as a dense epistemic site, showed how reprisal and subjugation work, they also showed that black people could theorise their own condition and that, in as much as they were expected to be docile, black people's practices of freedom continued in the face of overwhelming repression and were/are collective endeavours. Practices and epistemologies of freedom exist, whether or not the academy recognises them in action or is versed in its vernaculars.

As inheritors of settler colonial, heteropatriarchal, capitalist and white supremacist archives, the archive itself, and the epistemologies we are offered, are deeply impoverished. Most of the theory on offer to understand the scale of death-disablement-debilitation in a country such as South Africa is weak and inadequate. Most of the data, such as the Census data, with its unfaithful definitions and scalar inefficiencies, replicate theoretical lacuna. Throughout the thesis, the trouble of rendering the scale of black death-disability-debility visible has been mentioned. Settler colonial logics of disposability makes calculuses of violence, and thus accrued accountability and the moral decrepitude that underlies settler worlds and the ordinary use of violence against black people, hard to figure. It is supposed to. Producing epistemic mastery, as well as ethical and moral superiority, relies on the manufacture of justified violence, or creating epistemic silos where thinking could not penetrate or, if it did, only in circumscribed ways. For example, an ethnographic gaze would erase the persistence of violence that was produced by colonial conquest, and rather focus on the quaintness of difference, or, if the violence of racist political economies were at the centre of analyses, the representation of black life retained a patina of paternalism.

As mentioned in the thesis, mines sent men away when they sickened or became disabled, so they could die elsewhere. When people became ill in cities, they were migrated to segregated spaces where data was not gathered. Settler colonial epistemologies create borders of statistical reasoning, places with and without data, where darkened data about black lives could undo statistical fantasies of an unreasonably racist state. In this country, people were moved into concentrated spaces where tallies of death-disability-debility were not undertaken, where they were ignored, and spaces legally remade and epistemically reframed to tell a white supremacist story that negated the brutal criminality that made white worlds possible. This wilful erasure and remaking of statistical and knowledge worlds, which was performed to hide gross violations perpetrated by settler colonial governance, and undergirded by the massification of black death-disability-debility, is obscured, rendered opaque and almost unapproachable. In South Africa, the right to count the costs of white supremacy is to invite critique of wanting to instantiate hierarchies of suffering, in which white accountability evaporates. However unreliable the archive is, what is required are tactics of reading the archive towards liberatory ends, and locating studies of death-disability-debility historically, without sanitising the effects of apartheid and settler colonial crimes against humanity. The erasure of enslavement in the making of South Africa, and how profoundly slavocracy has shaped and continues to shape contemporary South Africa, fosters amnesia that does not facilitate understanding how we got here, to this place where black people's struggle for flourishing lives is ongoing. This foreshortened history minimises how sedimented violence is, and removes us from the knowledge required to tackle the very long history of survivance, and its enmeshment with intergenerational trauma.

During the student protests, and in their aftermath, some of the most farcical claims have been mounted by white academics to delegitimate black pain. Those crude catalogues, such as that marshalled in Chapter Two to populate an ontological imaginary and sketch a scale of death-disability-debility, are often treated like epistemic threats. And they are. What ontologies of black death-disability-debility do is to destroy white mythmaking that the settler colonial enterprise was a valuable and necessary endeavour, and with it, the epistemic authority of many white academics who have produced subjectless, deracialised histories which ground their analyses of South Africa and, more often than not, end up mimicking Global North theory. White supremacy's fundamental premise of whiteness' civilisational imperatives is shown for the fabrication it is. Progress for whom? Hospitals for whom? Clean and safe homes for whom? Toilets for whom? Safe neighbourhoods for whom? Labour that secures life for whom? Policing and security for whom? Education that is edifying for whom? Knowledge production for whom?

In a place where the engineered suffering of the majority of people, who were racialised as black, was ignored and rendered meaningless, what categories and theories have postapartheid theorists of disability developed to think with? How have they reckoned with their lack of knowledge and the historical legacies of the knowledge traditions they have inherited? How have they thought about enslavement, and the differential, racialised worlds it sought to create through maiming and brutality? White ideologues and apartheid engineers sought and deliberately engineered black attrition, through policies of mass torture, mass terror, and thus mass black death-disability-debility. How have postapartheid theorists accounted for the massification of black vulnerability to death-disability-debility? As I have shown, the scale of oppressive violence is horrifying and endemic. How this very obvious fact of South African life and history can be evaded, requires research.

Negotiating death-disability-debility as a human being doing research in the present

I have tried to name an epistemic position that starts from an ontological imaginary in which black death-disability-debility is normal, ordinary, and not exceptional, the Scholarship of the Obvious. This expresses a locatedness and an ontological position in which someone like myself shares some of the conditions of oppression which are viscerally and palpably obvious. The scholarship of the obvious also expresses liberatory desires, and seeks to understand multiple, ordinary violences and formations of power that produce death-disability-debility. Though I focused on my own negotiation of traumatising research and its debilitating effects, I have begun to wonder whether the disavowal of black death-disability-debility by a great many white scholars may too be an epistemic defense, and a means of warding off debilitation. Nonetheless, it was exceedingly hard having to witness and try to understand this scale of brutality, stretched out across time and space, and expressed in ways that sometimes intensified and exacerbated violence. Human beings harming other human beings.

I believe fervently that we need programmes that support researchers through research on violence, and that do not take our affectabilty for granted. Every researcher I have spoken to about how debilitating my research was, and who has done work on violence, has affirmed the difficulties that I experienced. It was wonderful to learn that I was not alone; it was painful to learn that I was not alone. That so many did not think that their responsiveness was an epistemic relation, or that there should be structural solutions, reasserted how ableist the academy is. My research has shown me that we mistake events of disablement and experiences of debilitation as individual and not structural, which was underlined by what I learned from feeling debilitated. I am aware that the chronicity of my intellectual debilitation may be brief in the space of a life, but these conditions are embodied and the longer chronic health effects are ongoing. Ontological erasure extends to the conditions of the academy that are vastly exploitative, and have increasingly become a narrowed space for flourishing where the production of death-disability-debility is present.

In the end, I found succour in the life histories, the affirmation that people, even with few resources, will find ways, for however long it is possible, with whatever they have, to make lives, and to live those lives with a sense of being fully human. Even, and in spite of others believing and acting otherwise. I decided to use a feminist trickster and outlaw epistemology to generate questions, and not focus on the life histories as generators of analysis and abstraction for discussion. Rather, the life histories were offered as a counterpoint to enlarge and humanise the space I was crafting, to think about death-disability-debility as fundamental to racial governance. The life histories offered me spaces of feeling/thinking for this project that reminded me that, even as history lives within us and its forces shape lives, history does not always determine the texture of that life, or how love and care move in unexpected ways. Lives are shaped by events, lived in structures, but are made every day. Some participants struggled greatly, and much more structural change and support needs to be effected so that their live can flourish. They were not just the participants' struggles, though; they were made of multiple relationships, aspirations, desires, regrets and more than is possible to represent in a few pages. You may have noted that some of the summaries were longer than others. I was surprised that one of the participants I cared for deeply was hardest to summarise, and it was hardest to parse what is public and what is private through how much I loved visiting with their words and ideas, and how much courage it gave me to continue when I longed to stop. This unevenness does not make the life histories any less valuable, any less 'Knowledge,' that furthers how we understand disability. The specificity of disabled lives in South Africa, and how they are entangled with racialised histories of becoming, have a wealth of insight to offer, and do not necessitate hiding from the difficult truths that are revealed. I turn now to the final section of the thesis, to offer some questions for future research.

Questioning death-disability-debility

1. What is the nature of South African reality? In other words, what ontologies of South African life are in operation in a text, or a research project?
2. What imaginaries of death, disability and debility in South Africa are we able to perceive? How does race, gender, class, sexuality and other vectors of identity figure in an imaginary? How do imaginaries of death-disability-debility come into confrontation, overlap, contradict and play out intersectionally?
3. What is the relationship of race, racialisation and racism to death, disability and debility? Racialisation here is not just blackness, but also Colouredness, Indianness, Whiteness. In postapartheid South Africa, processes of racialisation, and the use of apartheid race categories, is ongoing and in constant negotiation.
4. Given how endemic violence is in South Africa, how does it materialise as death-disability-debility? How can we use death-disability-debility as analytics to understand violence in its multiple formations?
5. The links between masculinity and violence have been well-researched. How does masculinity, race, violence and disability materialise under different conditions?
6. How does masculinity produce risks of disability?
7. How is disability-debility experienced intersectionally, and what are the specificities of disability for different racialised population groups?
8. What is the spatialisation of race and death-disability-debility? How do communities under siege in spaces of urban warfare understand and experience the racialisation of space and production of death-disability-debility? How do city planners, police, and public officials understand their responsibilities for normalising and ignoring the racial spatialisation of death-disability-debility? What are the histories of spaces and their transformations, that contribute to worlds in which urban warfare has been normalised?
9. Conversely, in formerly and largely white and middle-class neighbourhoods, where a measure of security has been achieved, how are death-disability-debility imaginaries at work in managing security?
10. What are gangsters' death-disability-debility imaginaries? What are the experiences of former gangsters who have become disabled? How do we prevent violence in black neighbourhoods to stop gangsterism? What strategies are needed to combat gangsterism?

11. What are the effects of drug and substance abuse, and how do they contribute to and produce death-disability-debility? How do we prevent the production of death-disability-debility because of drug use? What programmes are needed to combat substance abuse?
12. What is the relationship of labour to death-disability-debility? What are the gendered, racialised and other identity dynamics within the workplace? What are the histories of death-disability-debility? There are studies required in places like mines, farms and factories, but also within white-collar professions such as universities, where ableist, debilitating and punishing performance requirements are normalised and even valorised.
13. What kinds of organising are required to ensure safe workplaces that do not produce death-disablement-debilitation as a consequence of their operations? What kinds of multifaceted interventions are needed?
14. What were the experiences of disability by population group under apartheid? For example, what was the experience of disability in the former Bantustans? What were the experiences of disability in the black townships or within specific townships? What were the experiences of disability in white neighbourhoods? What are the possibilities for historical studies of death-disability-debility prior to apartheid?
15. How does poverty contribute to the production of death-disability-debility and experiences of disability-debility? What are/were the imaginaries of death-disability-debility of architects of impoverishment, such as city planners who carry out evictions and render people landless? How do they connect the housing crisis with disablement?
16. What kinds of imaginaries of death-disability-debility do enforcement personnel, such as police and private security, have? How does their work contribute to their own deaths-disablement-debilitation?
17. What kinds of imaginaries of death-disability-debility are deployed by healthcare workers, people in helping professions, and researchers of violence, when they perpetually confront the effects of structural violence? How does the work they do contribute to their own deaths-disablement-debilitation?
18. What death-disability-debility imaginaries animate the salespeople, marketers, academics, engineers and designers of crowd control and other technologies that produce death-disability-debility?
19. What studies of debilitation are possible?
20. What is the aftermath of mass events of torture, such as crowd control tactics? How can we think with death-disability-debility towards the abolition of the police, and the cessation of a politics of terror as a means of capitalist and state control?

21. How can the crises represented by protests be used as dense epistemic sites, but also spaces that demand forms of solidarity towards the cessation of a political economy that normalises black death-disability-debility?
22. How can the use of death, disablement and debilitation, as techniques of settler control, be brought into histories of enslavement? How can debilitation as a process of subjugation, and thus a technique of governance, be brought into contemporary analyses of race and the making of South Africa?
23. How can South African disability studies refigure categories and concepts towards thinking, not just with what attritional warfare has wrought on South Africa's black majority, but also what it entails to think of disability, and its relationship to death and debility, from a majority rather than a minority perspective? What are the epistemic shifts needed to think about disability as process and historical product rather than only as an identity?
24. There are innumerable questions about ethics and justice contained within many of the questions above. What does it mean to be ethical, to be a good person, whilst at the same time being complicit in processes that produce death-disability-debility for impoverished black people? What does justice mean, and the capacity to apprehend justice from an epistemology of ignorance that is insensible to the suffering of a majority of people who are cloaked through historical amnesia, and ontologically erased? Epistemic justice matters, but so does actual justice that is materialised in people's worlds. What does it mean to consider oneself a good person, and yet not be able to viscerally perceive the deadly-disabling-debilitating effects of the staggering scope and scale of black suffering that is the legacy of settler colonialism and white supremacy?
25. And finally, how do we produce the conditions that ends the massified and continual production of black death-disability-debility to bring to fruition worlds in which every life is cared for and where the presence of disability can someday be merely an expression of human diversity.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

University of the Western Cape
Faculty of Arts
Women's and Gender Studies Programme
Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535
South Africa

Information Sheet

Project Title: Intersecting Disability: Towards a Decolonial Feminist Disability Studies

What is this study about?

This study seeks to explore the life histories of people with disabilities to understand how gender, race and disability influences their identities.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

You will be invited to share your life history with me. We will have conversations about your history in multiple meetings over the period of at least six months or until you decide that you have shared all you are willing to about your life history. Our conversations will be as long as is comfortable for you, and the decision in regards to how often we meet will be made by you. Our conversations will take occur at a place that you determine.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

Your information and participation will be confidential and your identity will not be revealed in any published, public or presentation material. Your identity will be protected by using a different name and your personal details will not be included in the stored data. Data will be password protected and only the researcher will have access to the information that links your identity to the collected data. If we require the assistance of a sign language interpreter or helper, they too will keep your information anonymous and confidential.

What are the risks of this research?

There are no intended risks. An unintended risk might be that some of the experiences you share are painful or traumatic which may cause you emotional discomfort or distress. If you feel distress at any time you may inform me and we will stop. In that instance and if you become visibly distressed, I will refer you to the appropriate counselling services.

What are the benefits of this research?

There is not a lot of research about people with disabilities. Sharing your life history will allow a glimpse into the lives and experiences of people with disabilities. This may help to produce better academic understanding and possibly lead to more appropriate and socially just policies and theories about people with disabilities.

Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?
Your participation is voluntary and you may cease participation at any time. There will be no penalties or bad feeling amongst us if you decide to no longer be part of the research.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?
A counsellor will be made available to you.

What if I have questions?
Kharnita Mohamed is conducting this research under the supervision of Prof. Tamara Shefer (tshefer@icon.co.za) of the Women’s & Gender Studies Department, UWC. Kharnita Mohamed’s details are on this information sheet and the consent forms. You are welcome to contact her to ask questions or report any problems you have experienced related to the study.

If you would rather contact **an independent staff member,** please contact:
Prof Lindsay Clowes
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Appendix 2

University of the Western Cape
Faculty of Arts
Women's and Gender Studies Programme
Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535
South Africa

Informed Consent Form

Project Title: Intersecting Disability: Towards a Decolonial Feminist Disability Studies

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand my identity will not be disclosed and I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and this will not negatively affect me in any way. I also understand I will receive no rewards for giving this permission, and there will be no penalty for refusing to give it.

Please select from the list of options below:

☼ I agree to be recorded with a digital video recorder
☼ I give consent for that recording to be used by the researcher
☼ I agree to the participation of a sign language interpreter, if applicable

Participant's name ……………………................
Participant's signature ……………………............

Date………………………

Researcher's Details
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