Book Review
Intergenerational Learning and Transformative Leadership for Sustainable Futures.
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'The story and the story teller both serve to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story'. (Smith, 1999:145)

'A good leader can engage in a debate frankly and thoroughly knowing that at the end he *and the other side must be closer and thus emerge stronger. You don't have that when you are arrogant, superficial and uninformed'.* (Nelson Mandela)

A brave book in turbulent times

Emerging from a revolutionary two weeks (19–30 October 2015) that rattled the very foundations of tertiary institutions in South Africa has awakened my engagement with this book. The call for #feesmustfall revolt was an intergenerational lesson in action forced upon the elders of institutes of higher learning and the government of South Africa, mainly the Department of Higher Education and Training. My commentary in this review is coloured by this context and experience.

Intergenerational learning is usually conceived of as a top-down learning process, and an education that is loaded with experience tested over time that is shared to the young by elders (see Spannring, 2008). Lessons derived from the young by elders, most particularly in the community context have not been documented extensively except in the fields of computer science and electronics and hence the relevance of this book. The two quotations of Smith (2004) and Mandela (undated) above, embody my conceptions of intergenerational learning and transformative leadership and some of the ultimate destinations we have to arrive at if we are determined to weave the story of the land with people while connecting the past with the future. I am of the view that we do have to be frank in our reflections and analysis of that past if we are to emerge stronger and reach sustainable futures. The authors of the book under review edited by Peter Blaze Corcoran and Brandon P. Hollingshead carefully negotiate the past, storied lands and the people. They pose difficult, engaging questions to be debated on if we are to emerge stronger. Most of the chapters have left me with a constant niggling feeling and deliberation on whether the context I am working in has the attributes necessary to achieve positive results or how possible it is to assemble all the necessary components to yield sustainable results for the youth where others have been less successful. The Million Belay Ali project in Ethiopia reported on in the book resonated closely with the work I do and gives me hope.

Intergenerational Learning and Transformative Leadership for Sustainable Futures is a groundbreaking and brave book because it is the first to tackle the involved relationship between intergenerational learning and its potential for composting transformative leadership and successfully does that best.

Difficult Concepts for Important Topics

Intergenerational learning is not an easily definable concept and is loaded with mammoth complexities, some of which are located in the debates on/for indigenous knowledges (Masuku Van Damme & Neluvhalani, 2004; Smith, 1999; Santos De Sousa, 2009; O'Donoghue, Shava & Zazu, 2014; Spivak, 1988; Paraskeva, 2012) and interweaves into areas concerned with socio–cultural learning (Rogoff, 2003) and postcoloniality (Andreotti, 2011) etc., and can be taken for granted yet has its tentacles in many areas of learning in home and school contexts and in oral histories. These interrelations came out very clearly in the Maclean, Kocherthaler & Hoogesteger and Belay Ali chapters. Hollingshead, Corcoran and Weakland in the introductory section point out that they purposely did not define intergenerational learning in the brief given to the authors, a wise decision as this comfortably allowed the writers to define it through the work and projects they are involved in, which brought in the richness of the concept which a definition could not have captured. The long reach of the concept and the diversity of its definition is audible throughout the book. There is strength in that, particularly for those who have engaged with its processes.

The concept of *Transformative Leadership* is equally complex and leads many to very broad uncomfortable and marshy terrains, which Fien in his chapter alludes to. For me it goes as far back as the transformation of the Zulu empire by Shaka, to Foucauldian debates of power and knowledge (Shava, 2008), the financially poorest President of the world Jose Mujica of Uruguay to Archer's morphogenesis (see Shava, 2008). My take is that there is also no convergence in thought and in reality within the different disciplines in the conceptualisation of what is termed '*sustainable futures'* (see Hattingh, 2003). The debates in the chapters of this book inflate hope into our deflated prospects of the future we see with dwindling possibilities and escalating unemployment. Intergenerational learning has the ability of narrowing the boundaries or blurring them between what was conceptualised as domains of knowledge generation and recipient fields of application. It would be interesting to more into the complexities of knowledge sharing in the book's case studies, particularly those delving within the complexities of the sharing of knowledge solidified in time as that is held by elders and the fluid and changing knowledge by the youth for what Bhabha (1994) considers the 'cutting age of translation and negotiation' of knowledge centred within the boundaries of difference (young and old), which he called the hybrid third space. Transformative leadership suggests what Bhabha (1994) calls the shifting of fixities and what Paraskeva (2011:173) refers to as an 'act of becoming' that is achievable through teaching and learning strategies likely to yield better results for the youth. This is no less than an act of arriving at a deterritorialized state and 'a posture that constantly slides amongst several epistemological frameworks', according to Paraskeva (2011:151).

Many Chapters with Many Voices and Perspectives from Diverse Places

The book under discussion is an initiative of the International Intergenerational Network of Educational Centres (IINC) and is presented in 32 chapters by 82 authors from 26 countries and six continents with an aim of fostering intergenerational learning and transformative leadership. It is an assemblage of academic and practitioners' initiatives, institutional voices, advice and visions of globally organised views of state parties who are signatories to conventions under the United Nations agencies such as, UNESCO, UNEP and the IUCN. It also compliments the work of the Wangari Maathai Institute of Peace and Environmental Studies and Obguigwe's work on Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities. In the opening pages Hollingshead, Corcoran and Weakland maintain that transformative leadership is a task that we must all work towards. They call upon us not only to recognise ourselves as agents of change but that we play a determined and particular practical role to enhance transformative leadership skills. Their call is strengthened by invoking the voices of Africa's departed Nobel Prize recipients. They cite Wangari Maathai who said in 2004 that; 'Those of us who have been privileged to receive education, skills, and experiences and even power must be role models for the next generation of leadership' and this is possible if 'we start with our own children' says Lotz-Sisitka through the words of Nelson Mandela in her chapter. The introduction generated an excitement and expectation of a more engaged and detailed discussion on the work of Wangari Maathai, but I felt let down with such an absence. It would have been good to hear more about the work of the Wangari Maathai Centre and how her efforts are being sustained into the future.

What seeded this book was a concern by practitioners in the field of environmental education and sustainability education about environmental leadership and the role/extent that institutions of higher learning play in creating transformative leadership. The other concern was the plight of the youth and the seeming inability within the fields of environmental education, and sustainability education to identify the necessary experiences, skills and research areas to pass on as well as train transformative leaders who can open up the means and paths that lead to the sustainable employment of the youth and alleviate poverty. The editors asked the diverse authors of the chapters from diverse places around the world to pay particular attention to the following questions, which had the potential to respond to the concerns alluded to.

1. If safe-guarding the continued viability of people, organisms, and natural processes is the central ethical challenge of our time, what role might intergenerational learning and transformative leadership play within education for sustainability?
2. What are the methodologies, curricula, and tools necessary for advancing and strengthening education for intergenerational sustainability learning and leadership?
3. What are the roles of centres, networks and innovative programs in main streaming sustainability in universities and communities?

Is Higher Education Leading with Transformative Leadership?

Sterling's chapter in the book provides an assessment of the times we are at 'as a decisive fork on the road'. This is not rhetorical as our leading scholars in Africa have noted that there is little deliberation on why we are engaging with educational discourse, the manner in which we teach and learn; and there is little clarity on what the purpose of our learning is and what it seeks to achieve. This relates to defining clarity on how we envision the future and what our preparedness strategies are (Mamdani, 1993; Hoopers, 2005). Sterling's discussion focuses on the facilitation of change in Plymouth University and the struggles to cross the structural and systematic barricades of institutions of higher learning. His approach to learning about learning within higher education is insightful – he considers three phases at which institutions are dealing with interventions aimed at addressing learning relevance within the changing times. The depths of learning which may be encountered are: a) accommodative; b) reformative; and c) transformative. The accommodative approach considers a conservative adding on of new courses or modules which do not upset the tempo of the institution nor challenge the values and are thus accommodated. The second one is the reformative approach which questions the values, assumptions attached to learning and practices, policies and the curriculum and this is a process that is carefully built in. The transformative approach is, 'a shift in culture and a mindful redesign of organisational purposes, and practices towards sustainability, involving whole institutional change over time' (Sterling, 2014:140). These resonate with the South African post-apartheid experience where institutions of higher learning have been using an accommodative approach for 20 years. Contemporary anxieties and impatience have ushered the youth into the reformative approach which was either too slow or was met with resistance from higher education institutions. In the past few weeks, the impatience has resulted in a revolt of mammoth proportions captured in the #feesmustfall protests which erupted around the country, and students are demanding that the transformation of universities be sped up at lightning speed. Such urgency within times of looming elections and to effect the careful and necessary transformative response as articulated by Sterling is not possible. Since 1994 state subsidies have greatly dwindled and were not pacing the increasing demand by those who have been locked out of the doors of learning by the apartheid system. Lecturers have been reduced to fundraisers and left at the mercy of industrial cooperates whose concerns are maximising profits rather than creating transformative leaders who can address the issues of poverty they are familiar with and grew up with.

   Mamdani's (1993) prophetic guidance and cautioning in his lecture on *Universities in Crisis: Reflections on the African Experience* challenges Holmberg's view (one of the authors in this book), and a generalisation on the high degree of autonomy in universities. Holmberg's view that 'Universities have strong traditions and a high degree of autonomy' (p91) is in contrast and contradictory most particularly to African universities which are struggling to assert themselves and rooting themselves in African soil as African universities. His view might hold truth for universities in Sweden or the West.

Transformational Leadership and Intergenerational Leadership

We move on to explore transformative leadership and its relation to intergenerational leadership as dealt by Fien in the book. Fien's discussion on leadership is illuminatory of the vastness of definitions and approaches to leadership. He points out that the usual missing link in most definitions, applications and approaches to leadership is 'responsibility and integrity', particularly leadership with an educational purpose aimed at sustainability. Such leadership is an ethical purpose to achieve a commonly shared goal. In his examples of leadership he uses the metaphors of the bee and the locust and he compares how they are likely to approach leadership. He gives credence to 'bee' leadership, as critical if we are to reap the fruits of education for sustainability. Bee leaders should be critically reflexive individuals and change agents who consider social and psychological processes and explore issues in their totality with a set of illuminatory lenses, he asserts. Holmberg's discussion on Challenge Labs is in synch with the processes of leadership that Fien advocates. On the subject of Challenge Labs, Holmberg looks at how education, research and innovation are integrated, through a collaborative mechanism with particular stakeholders to address complex challenges in a context of Swedish universities that have strong and almost unshakable traditions and values. The Challenge Labs are complex and need commitment from other structures of the university. The most important aspect of Challenge Labs, according to Holmberg, is that it centres the student and brings out leadership traits they feel comfortable with to bring into group work and add value to achieving the goal set out by all. Another insightful component is the interest by stakeholders, even those in the business sector in interacting with the students and learning from them. Fien and Holmberg both advocate that practitioners consider double loop learning processes and an evaluation of the learning processes and results. In the context of Sweden such loops in Challenge Labs are considered by Holmberg as critical in the struggles to integrate education, research and innovation, most particularly because universities have traditions that are almost immovable.

Sterling, in his chapter, draws generously on Parkin's 2010 and 2013 work, and Barrineau and Kronlid also reflect on useful insights on the subject of sustainable leadership in institutions of higher learning. Sterling posits Parkin's critical question (2013:xviii):

> Will universities offer the intellectual leadership needed to shift our civilization off its self-destructive course and on track for a sustainable future? Obviously they can if they so choose.

This is a question that is highly critical in southern Africa where the call for curriculum transformation and a discourse on the use of our public spaces, littered with colonial public sculptures in academic institutions, is rife. As stated in my introductory paragraph these granite-solid questions seem impenetrable and niggling and require a revisit as the complexities of our lifestyles become more and more tangled and confused, the sale of education and mind-crippling matters such as climate change and wars that rob people of their human rights.

Calls for Participation, Hope and Ways Forward

Lotz–Sisikta in her chapter advocates that the status quo of a dominant socio-economic system in the neo-liberal capitalist trajectory that values fragmentation and frowns on collective actions in its search for profits is challenged. She calls for collective aspirations and action towards a politics of hope and possibilities rather than allowing the forces of commodification to push us into a corner of hopelessness. Lotz-Sisitka poses a question on what an agenda that considers children first should look like, a question that many in society are grappling with. In southern Africa teachers and lecturers continue to dish out content from colonially inherited curricula and a number of historical practices which are regarded as the current norm. She recommends that we search beyond the barriers that makes us see and accept the 'normal' which shadows the positive possibilities in education for sustainability and also recommends that we deliberate with the arguments advanced by leading African philosophers such as Mbembe, Mamdani and other critical scholars such as Badiou, Zizek, Barad, Bhaskar and Spivak as they speak out strongly on matters of integrating the social sciences with the natural sciences and matters of of an interdisciplinary nature.

Tassome and Wals in their chapter, discuss the *Educate Yourself in Empowerment* (EYE) tools that are aimed at moving debates from the rhetoric of participation, to agency and empowerment. For the EYE tools to succeed they are to be used in a learning environment that allows dialogue that is reflexive and is safe and trustworthy. Lotz-Sisitka in her chapter draws on research that reports that in South Africa it has been reported that teachers are responsible for 33% of rapes of minors in schools, which makes such schools disabling and violent environments for children to learn in. Aggression can also be meted out by the state as Mamdani (1993) points out, referring to the force and aggression that the state unleashed in Uganda in the 80s when student protests arose with demands for transformation in institutions of higher education. In their chapter Kocherthaler and Hoogesterger (p236) also maintain that protective intergenerational relationships are critical in an environment of learning so that 'perceptions, feelings, and values can be shared freely in an emotionally protected environment, where persons are respected and accepted'. I found the Kocherthaler and Hoogesteger project very interesting, complex and brave, yet very clear and detailed on the learnings that happen between the elders and the children as a two-way learning process.

Maclean and Million Belay Ali's work shows the importance of the use of participatory research methodologies. Million Belay Ali's work is on participatory mapping to restore environmental knowledge and awaken memories of relationships with the land between the youth, elders – male and female. Maclean employs participatory research techniques to facilitate approaches that improve the management of the biophysical environment through the interpretation of images and artwork with the Aboriginal people of Australia. What comes out clearly from the Maclean chapter is the intergenerational and intergenerational learning that takes place in the research she was involved in. Maclean and Million Belay Ali both agree that researchers need to engage with participatory methodologies if they want to support intergenerational learning and that this can mainly happen when according to Maclean, (p167) 'we listen to the diverse stories of place and culture that were silenced in the writing of

colonial histories'. To achieve this would demand an engagement with post-colonial feminist critique, Maclean maintains. She argues further that the necessity of employing such critique results in capacity building between generations and in the co-production of knowledge. Million Belay Ali concedes that such methodologies when employed on awakening traditional ecological knowledge allow for the negotiation and renegotiation of identities, which 'includes adaptability, mobility, transformation, innovation, hybridisation, incorporation of non-formal fragments, sensitivity to surrounding factors, and fragility in the face of globalisation and revitalisation efforts = contributing to socio-ecological resilience'(p219). This would include collective forms of agency. The photographic representations of the Ethiopian project featured on the cover of the book captures the concentrated, and involved ownership of the meaning making of their knowledge of the landscapes they are layering and transforming with paint and brush, bringing out their experiences of the landscape. It would be interesting to know whether their interpretation was gender informed in a society that operates and lives within defined gender spaces.

Call to Engage with Policy, Practices and Innovation

Leicht examines the Global Action Programme an initiative by the UN's Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. In the face of all these well-articulated UN theorised strategies and ideas, my question was – who will implement them and monitor their implementation if state parties divert their budgets towards imperatives that are non-educational? Some of the stories in the book address this question. For example, Schudel, explores a relational perspective from the local to the global, school and community, time and space contexts using access to nutrition and food, a basic human right. This relational perspective mobilises local community knowledge collapsing the barriers that exist between school and home as learning contexts that illuminate intergenerational learning. Schudel's conclusions are consistent with the discussions by Million Belay Ali, Osano and Adam as well as Maclean in their focus on local and traditional knowledge. The chapter by Osano and Adam is concerned with the low use of modern technology in farming, the loss of interaction between youth and elders and the growing lack of interest by the youth in sub-Saharan Africa on African farming. They mention a strong disconnect between formal education and rural farming which does not allow for the transfer of values, aspirations and narratives which should ideally cover all aspects of rural life and traditional institutions, systems of farming and land as well as filter into policy. Formal education and rural farming should have a symbiotic and mutually benefiting relationship as they address sustainable livelihood strategies, they maintain.

There is rapport between the chapter by Fien on transformative leadership and on the chapter by Kafka, Sehgezzi, Villaronga, Blome and Althoff as they engage with the character of leadership that is critical if we are to achieve global sustainability in the management of biodiversity aided by equitable economies. They point out that such leadership should recognise that 'not all environments are conducive to innovation, and not all innovations are conducive to the environment' (p203). I am of the view that there is no environment that is not conducive to innovation as there currently is no environment that one can claim is being

managed optimally to respond to all environmental challenges. There is need to delve deeper into the kind of innovation that is of congruence to particular contexts and there is no one size fits all. Which goes back to the point made by Maclean that we need to explore feminist and postcolonial critique and its methodologies in search of innovations that are congruent. The team Kafka, Sehgezzi, Villaronga, Blome and Althoff propose that there must be 'readiness to reflect, deconstruct, and let go of established ways of doing things' (p203) in their chapter, which resonates with the Mandela quote at the beginning of this review. The team further argue that innovation cannot be planned, a point that I do not agree with as I consider that innovation needs planning, within community members in their community and that it is about creating enabling environments for the necessary innovations. All the techniques that the authors allude to, such as dialogue and co-learning, point to the fact that not all innovation sprouts from nowhere but is a planned and potentially educative process.

An Invitation to Read Further

Considering the fact that the book has at least 32 chapters it was extremely difficult to present all the views shared by the authors and I therefore leave it to other readers to explore in detail. My final comment is that engaging with this book was a rewarding experience and I am left richer.

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