

Writing ThreeSixty

Journal of Research and Creative Texts



Volume 4 Issue 1

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Letter from the Editor

This special issue of WritingThreeSixty is a true mixture of the academic and the creative, featuring works of art, postgraduate conference reviews, poetry, a book review and no less than thirteen essays from the UWC Postgraduate conference which was held on May 22-23 2018. The conference was well attended, boasting 35 presenters from various Universities and academic institutions across the country.

I would like to thank my co-convenor, Lester Malgas, and the organising committee (which included the WritingThreeSixty editorial board) for their efforts in making this conference a huge success. In particular, Prof. Kobus Moolman and Associate Professor Fiona Moolla provided guidance and direction. A huge thank you, as well, to the Dean of Humanities, Duncan Brown, along with the staff of the UWC English department who contributed to the success of the conference.

The thirteen essays featured in this issue were those shortlisted for the Stan Ridge Memorial prize. Three finalists were chosen from that list, namely, Lisa Julie, Marupeng Phepheng and Gemma Field, who was the eventual winner. Well done to Gemma and all the finalists.

Prof Gabeba Baderoon, who was one of the keynote speakers, also showcases some of her poetry in this special edition. Our featured artist, UrbanKhoi has some interesting pieces for your enjoyment.

On a sadder note, our beloved HOD, Professor Michael Wessels (ACLALS Chair 2013-2017), tragically passed away in April 2018. This sudden loss of a brilliant leader has been felt throughout academic circles in South Africa. UWC continues to mourn his passing.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and all those who had forged a relationship with Michael within and outside of academia.

Best Wishes,
Editor-in-chief
Llewellyn RG Jegels

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Postgraduate Conference: Of Words in Pictures by Shazia Salie

The Post-Graduate Conference was dedicated to language and culture, yet ironically, there are still no words to accurately describe the event. That is why the WritingThreeSixty team saw it fitting to photograph the speakers. Initially, the images were to be taken for media and archival reasons; however, the atmosphere made up by the shared connection between speaker and spectator added another level to the conference.

My aim then, was to capture the two sides which made up the event. I wanted to photograph the speakers through their actions and expressions reflecting their passion. However, I also wanted to photograph those affected by their words: the audience. The engagement between both sides acted as a declaration of what the Post-Graduate Conference wanted to do and that is to share knowledge between those learning and those willing to learn.



Organising Committee members: Ronwyn, Martina and Lester



The programme



Two South African icons in the world of literature: Gabeba Baderoon and Sindive Magona



Some of our presenters enjoying a lighter moment



Prof. Julia Martin and the Eco-criticism presenters



More audience members and presenters captivated by the presentations

Review of Postgraduate Conference by Martina van Heerden

On the 22nd and 23rd of May 2018, Writing360, along with the Division for Postgraduate Studies, hosted the Postgraduate Conference on Literature, Creative Writing, Media and Culture. The event was held in the Artspace at the University of the Western Cape. The conference presented postgraduate students the opportunity to present their work and ideas to their fellow students and academics. On the first day, after registration, presenters were greeted by Prof Duncan Brown, dean of the Arts Faculty. Thereafter, Prof Gabeba Baderoon presented an inspiring keynote address dealing with the ambiguous nature of language and words. She ended by reading one of her poems, which drew rapturous applause; a fitting lead-in to the poetry session that she chaired.



Prof. Gabeba Baderoon delivering her keynote: "Not words"

After a short break, the various parallel sessions of the day started. In total, there were eight parallel sessions on the first day, ranging in

theme from poetry to memory to ecocriticism. As one of the audience members noted: “People are really passionate about their work. Being here is inspiring”. Prof Julia Martin provided the closing message of the day.

Day Two started with a welcome by Prof Hermann Wittenberg. Prof Jane Taylor provided an animated keynote address that asked us to consider the connection between authenticity and voice, through Samuel Beckett’s *Not I*. She played a short section of Beckett’s *Not I* that had the audience spell-bound. Thereafter, Day Two’s parallel sessions started, of which there were five. These ranged in theme from exploring sexuality in various contexts, to (re)writing and feminism. Prof Duncan Brown provided the closing for the day, by giving advice to all the students and wished them “stellar pathways in [their] careers”.



Prof. Jane Taylor delivering her keynote: "Not I"

Overall, the conference was, by all accounts, a resounding success. Many memories, friendships and connections were made and it presented postgraduate students with the invaluable experience of sharing their work.

A selection of shortlisted “Stan Ridge Memorial Prize” essays presented at the UWC Postgraduate Conference

“Refuel your future”: Asphalt Afrofuturism and the Slow Violence of Water and Oil in Nnedi Okorafor’s *Lagoon* by Gemma Field

Abstract

This paper outlines a petrocritical reading of Nnedi Okorafor’s *Lagoon*, an Afrofuturist tale of alien invasion of Lagos, Nigeria. Petrocriticism, originally the study of the oil encounter in literature that has widened to include all aspects – political, economic, aesthetic, phenomenological, etc. – of its representation, is helpful in discussing Nigerian texts. Nigeria is one of the world’s biggest producers of oil, and like many other countries endowed with black gold, has a dubious colonial history that has become in the postcolonial present what Rob Nixon refers to as the —resource curse. Beyond the adverse environmental consequences of oil, it is implicated in political trickery in the West and despotism elsewhere, what Timothy Mitchell describes as —carbon democracy. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to everyday life, so Imre Szeman uses the term —petromodernity. *Lagoon* problematises this condition from its first page when a swordfish imbued with alien powers attacks an offshore oil rig, a tension that culminates in the Bone Collector, the man-eating motorway – the physical manifestation of the text’s preoccupation. Alongside the novel’s aliens are elements of urban fantasy – the road monster predates the aliens (and Lagos) - and mythology, utilising icons from Nigerian folklore. The Bone Collector is only sated when it consumes an alien, pointing to the impossibility of an indigenous solution to the issues raised by the text. Okorafor’s combination of these elements attempts to resolve the text’s oil-based anxiety - to imagine what Gerry Canavan calls —petrofuture speaks to Nigeria’s political difficulty in extricating itself from the iniquitous structures of petro-imperialism.

Lagoon tells the story of an alien invasion, not in New York or Los Angeles or London or even Johannesburg, that unfolds onto the shores of Lagos, Nigeria's largest city. The novel playfully subverts the tools and tropes of the alien invasion branch of the science fiction genre; rehashing a narrative we have come to expect from *War of the Worlds* to *Independence Day* to *Pacific Rim*, in short, a tired trope, through an Afrofuturist framework that synthesises West African history and myth with fantastic futurism. Against the ultra-urban, albeit dysfunctional backdrop of her native Lagos, Okorafor employs this framework to draw attention to the consequences of neo-imperial developmentalism in Nigeria, chiefly, the deleterious, even poisonous, politics surrounding the country's involvement oil industry that Rob Nixon (2011) refers to as "slow violence".

Lagoon follows the alien ambassador Ayodele as she establishes contact with an assortment of aquatic and terrestrial earthlings; the various intersecting plots that comprise the novel following characters (human, animal and supernatural) who undergo fundamental changes because of the "radical new possibilities" (269) that Ayodele and her people bring. Ayodele promises that her people have no malevolent designs for Earth, asking only to assimilate and offering miraculous technology. The aliens are a catalyst for change in the city of Lagos and its waters, plunging both into chaos while bringing forth new forms of life. Agu, Anthony and Adoara, three humans with extraordinary powers, are thrown together by indigenous supernatural forces. They discover Ayodele's nature and determine to get her to the President of Nigeria, overcoming a variety of fantastic and institutional obstacles to achieve their goal.

The reader also meets non-human characters with rich histories, quirks, and agendas, including a "monstrous" swordfish determined to destroy an offshore oil rig that is given the power to do so by the aliens, and a sentient, predatory highway that calls itself the "Bone Collector". This analysis will employ close reading of the rig and the road to demonstrate the political and environmental dimensions of the oil crisis have been radically re-envisioned in the novel.

Afrofuturism is a broad category of aesthetic and intellectual projects that take as their frame of reference the cultural products and history of the African diaspora, alongside African history and iconography, undertaking to envision and realise ideas of the future.

In her seminal text on the genre, *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture* (2013), Ytasha Womack defines the project as “an intersection of imagination, technology, the future, and liberation” (23). She defines it in terms of content and epistemology, cultural production that takes indigenous mythology and cosmology alongside present and future technologies to envision, describe and realise the future. It “combines elements of science-fiction, historical fiction, speculative fiction, fantasy, Afrocentricity and magical realism with non-Western beliefs...re-envisioning of the past alongside speculation about the future” (24). Academic study of the named field began with Mark Derry’s 1994 essay “Black to the Future”, Womack traces the aesthetic and ideology to jazz and funk pioneers like Sun Ra, George Clinton and P-Funk, who employed space age theatrics (that we would now associate more with Lady Gaga) and political lyrics with a cosmic theme to conscientise African Americans, tapping into the collective sense of alienation.

Womack’s definition of the project is also activist: encompassing “the role of science and technology in the black experience overall” (29), from Jimi Hendrix’s aural innovations to the underacknowledged roles of African American women like Katharine Johnson and Henrietta Lacks in the quest for knowledge of outer space and the human body. The parallels between African diasporic experiences and the SF tropes of abduction, alienation and dystopia have also proved generative for critical discussion and cultural production in the field.

Kodwo Eshun’s essay “Further Considerations on Afrofuturism”, in true SF style, set out as a thought experiment: from a future thousands of years from now where archaeologists from the enlightened and technologically superior African nation exhume and examine the cultural products of our present. “They would be struck”, he says, “by how much Afrodiasporic subjectivity in the twentieth century constituted itself through the cultural project of recovery” (287); the need to demonstrate a black presence in culture and society over time and space.

Eshun suggests that the impetus of Black Atlantic intellectual world has been to “establish the historical character of black culture” (288), a status denied by the Western imperial intellectual establish-

ment of our era. “Imperial racism has denied black subjects the right to belong to the Enlightenment project” (288), he argues.

He suggests “situating the collective trauma of slavery as the founding moment of modernity” (288): assembling an arsenal of “countermemories” (288) to resist the colonially inscribed past and taking ownership of the future. The psychological dislocation, existential chaos, dehumanization and alienation widely held to be the hallmarks of twentieth century modernism, were experienced much earlier by the victims of the Middle Passage and their descendants: the “founding trauma” (288) of African American subjectivity. These countermemories constitute “an ethical commitment to history, the dead and the forgotten, the manufacture of conceptual tools that could analyse and assemble counterfutures” (288) to the hegemonic historical archive that has erased all accounts of that founding trauma.

The emergence of the futures industry, the collective infrastructure that profits from “the envisioning, management and delivery of reliable futures” (289) – from stockbroking to Silicone Valley to election results, has become increasingly prominent in determining the course of development in Africa. Who gets to live in this future, and who is relegated to the past, is a central question of Afrofuturism. The value of information in this future-now is paramount: it “circulates as an increasingly valuable commodity” (290). For Eshun, “Afrofuturism’s first priority is to recognise that Africa increasingly exists as the object of futuristic projection” (291), from weather to resources to migration to politics and conflict. There is always a reliable trade in market projections of Africa’s socio-economic crises.

The paradoxical “resource curse” that blights oil-exporting nations bestows bountiful mineral wealth on a polity, but undiversified dependence on its revenue weakens the rest of the economy and encourages rent-seeking, as the “highly concentrated revenue stream is readily diverted away from social and infrastructural investments and into offshore bank accounts” (Nixon70, emphasis mine). Political power is predicated on “controlling the central resource [rather than] on strengthening civic expectations”; consequently, “national cohesion and stability may be jeopardized by exaggerated inequalities” (Nixon, 70) as the revenues from the nations natural wealth is siphoned off by Western companies. *Lagoon’s* Lagos is a

prime example of the “soul-crushing corruption” that accompanies oil-fuelled development: the army is a law unto itself, ordinary people eek out a living running 419 scams, but most significantly, the country’s roads have been neglected to such an extent that the motorway begins to prey upon living creatures.

The Niger Delta and the coast hold large oil reserves, but Nigeria’s mineral wealth belies a “resource curse” of persistent political instability and a legacy of widespread environmental devastation, illness, poor service delivery and corruption concomitant to development and industrialisation that Rob Nixon refers to as “slow violence”. *Lagoon* highlights the violent dysfunction in two key moments: on the offshore rig, the site of oil extraction, and the predatory highway, a combination of asphalt and oil-powered vehicles. These dramatic moments in the text call attention to the environmental and social problems of Nigeria’s oil-based society.

Okorafor’s aliens are markedly empathetic and considerate towards the natural environment and non-human actors; they “ask such good questions” (6) of the marine life, immediately establishing a rapport with the fish, pointing to an alternative to neo-imperial economics and western philosophy: the agency accorded the swordfish rejects traditional notions of subjectivity, she starts the novel and sets the whole series of events in motion by attacking the oil rig. When she encounters the alien ambassadors she asks for the power to realise her goal of destroying the rig once and for all, and “they make it so” (7).

Ayodele’s apposition with indigenous mythology and cosmology suggests that these aliens are people too, not the monstrous extra-terrestrial conquerors come to do to humankind what we do to each other best (that is, subjugate, dehumanise and exploit). Upon examining her, Adoara remarks that Ayodele “looked like a member of her own family”, and Ayodele’s appearance textually references Mami Wata, the “pantheon of African water creatures” (Womack 71), says renowned Afrofuturist Ytasha Womack. Half human and half sea creature, they are “bringers of divine law” in West African mythology. Contrary to what we expect from traditional SF, these aliens offer redemption and renewal: a chance to make a complete break with dirty sources of energy and repair the seemingly irreparable damage done to the non-human world.

There is much to be gleaned from a close reading of Chapter 19, titled “Offshore”, in which Agu and the swordfish come to a head in the shadow of the oil rig. By bringing Agu and his fellow soldiers to defend the rig from the sea creatures who have begun to violently resist the human imposition on their world, Okorafor is making a clear link between interests of international oil companies and the Nigerian government. As the swordfish reminds us, the rig is the alien in this ecosystem, an unwanted human imposition on a slick, wet world; a representation that is strengthened by Agu’s description of the “decades-old monster, a hulking, unnatural contraption of production facilities, drilling rigs and crew quarters...usually a place of noise and activity” (95). Agu and two fellow soldiers sail to the rig to check for signs of life: the vessel has ceased operation and its occupants brutally slaughtered by alien-enhanced marine life who have reclaimed their territory from poisonous human imposition. Agu’s fellow soldiers are ripped apart by the razor-sharp fins of performance-enhanced flying fish, and only his powers save Agu from the same fate.

The oil rig is a site of slow violence brought viscerally to life. Typically, the brutality towards the non-human world is “a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is not typically viewed as violence at all” (Nixon 2). Invading a country with artillery and military personnel, launching missile strikes or dispersing chemical weapons, are actions easily labelled as violent – such as the Biafran and Vietnam Wars, where the damage done to bodies could be readily linked to military imposition; they have a beginning and an end. But the long-term consequences of Agent Orange and British Petroleum on rural Vietnam and the Niger Delta – poisoned soil and failing crops; undrinkable water and unbreathable air; birth defects and cancers – that have fundamentally assaulted human and ecological matter, are discounted and disregarded; time and remoteness distance consequences from their causes. The textual presence of the rig redresses that displacement in a manner that leaves the international politics of off-shore drilling quite clear: The “spidery structure made of concrete and rusty steel, anchored firmly to the seabed by steel beams” (95) resembles a parasite leeching off a host, or at a molecular level, like a virus clamping onto

the host cell's receptors. Slow violence is marked by displacements – temporal, economic, geographic, rhetorical and technological – that “simplify violence... [and] smooth the way for amnesia”, minimizing the human and environmental costs of “turbo capitalism” (Nixon 7). The slippery and unspectacular nature of slow violence poses representational and strategic challenges; Nixon posits that the aesthetic response to the crisis “entails devising iconic symbols that embody amorphous calamities as well as narrative forms that infuse those symbols with dramatic urgency” (10); to highlight the “representational challenges and imaginative dilemmas posed not just by imperceptible violence but by the imperceptible changes whereby violence is decoupled from its original causes” (Nixon 11). By making the site of oil extraction a site of swift and dramatic violence, violence against humans by natural forces, the text reframes the slow violence of offshore drilling as inextricably dramatic and urgent crises.

Okorafor makes the aliens' position as the remedy to oil's representation slippage clear through Ayodele's broadcasted speech when the alien says that her people “have come to bring you together and refuel your future...your land is full of a fuel that is tearing you apart” (113). The aliens position themselves in opposition to the oil, the fuel of violence. They are here to “nurture your world” (113) they are going to expunge and redeem the consequences of that conflict – the environmental devastation caused by oil which have been extensively represented in the text, and the corruption and dysfunction that accompanies its extraction.

While the gruesome scene on the rig dramatizes the slow violence of oil extraction, the predatory highway that calls itself the “Bone Collector” calls attention to the serious consequences of social dysfunction in an oil-powered society. Public roadways enable mobility, but it is the responsibility of the state to maintain them to keep them safe for motorists and pedestrians. The Lagos-Benin Expressway is “full of ghosts”, a “death-trap” (189), a symptom of corruption and inequality, in contrast to the ‘Angelic’ roads in affluent Lagosian suburbs.

This “Road Monster”, like the swordfish, is based on actual events. Okorafor was inspired to write about the crisis of Nigeria's roads after a horrific accident on the Lagos-Benin Expressway, the

city's major thoroughfare. The hijacking of a luxury bus gone horribly awry, which is retold by a fictional eye-witness. He describes "mangled, twisted bodies all over the goddamn road...[it] reeked of blood and fouler things...torn up bodies littering the roads, blood, intestines, skid marks of skin, twisted torsos, body parts torn off...a brutal scene" (204). His account drives home a visceral quality that slow violence typically lacks; the vessel of human subjectivity deconstructed into its meaty components by the unstoppable velocity of the motor-industrial complex.

This portion of the Lagos-Benin Expressway "has named itself the Bone Collector...it mostly collects human bones, and the bones of human vehicles" (120). The title is ominous, the Road does not find throwaway bones, it actively accumulates them through accidents and negligence.

The predatory representation of the road is emphasised by its carnivorous greed as it "grumbled like an enormous empty stomach", and uttered "a deep, guttural growl that intensified into a roar...the angry roar of a creature denied its meal" (171). Here again the novel destabilises traditional subjectivity in according a dangerous agency to this element of the built environment that is typically taken for granted. The antagonism of this man-made creature towards its creators speaks to the text's petro-anxiety – the dangers of oil to the environment – all the environments – has been made abundantly clear. But it is the Bone Collector that emphatically dramatizes the dangers of the oil industry to humans, the fact that we are using it to destroy our true habitat is not sufficiently upsetting to make us desist – the environment actively preying upon us is much more effective at driving the message home. The slow violence of oil – the extreme weather conditions accompanying global warming are not threatening enough, so the hazards of the petro-discourse are radically re-envisioned as the monster turned on its makers as an irrefutable and immediate danger.

Shortly after Ayodele heals the president, she allows herself to be killed by a mob and disintegrates. By "inhaling her essence" (271) all of humanity becomes "a bit...alien" (268) and the novel ends on a utopic note, with the waters reclaimed and revitalized by their denizens, the president decides that oil will be expunged from the Nigerian economy, because the aliens will replace it with something

cleaner and more powerful. Ayodele's sacrifice infects the humans with a new way of thinking, an Afrofuturist epistemology, that the President's speech makes clear. Nigeria has "rolled through decades of corruption and internal struggle" (277) that could only be addressed because of the alien "tipping point" (277). "This kind of transitional shift", that has come about as a result of the alien arrival and the proliferation of changes they bring, is a "cause for celebration, not panic" according to the President. The President tells his people that the aliens bring with them "new technology...[and] fresh ideas that we [Nigeria] can combine with our own" (277). He concludes that Nigeria "will be powerful again" (278), although if oil is removed from the equation, the form and structure of the power he hopes for is completely unknown.

Utilising traditional African iconography and mythology in concert with radical futurity, Okorafor has produced a remarkable novel that challenges the assumptions and tropes of mainstream SF. *Lagoon* draws attention to political, social and environmental conditions in Nigeria. The intense, visceral quality of the two moments in the text I have mentioned establish strong textual links between oil and violences fast and slow, and the consequences of developmentalism. Dramatically re-envisioning the conditions of Nigeria's social, political and economic present to make connections between environmental devastation enabled by international corruption, and the silent trauma experienced by humans and animals in the Global South.

Eshun makes clear that envisioning the future is the first step to claiming a stake in it. If he is correct that "SF is now and research and development for the futures industry that dreams of the prediction and control of tomorrow" (291), then *Lagoon* can be situated within the catalogue of African Diasporic counterfutures. It comprises part of the intellectual and aesthetic project that seeks to redress racial and imperial imbalance in the future and the present.

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The functionality of objects in my poetry by Lisa Julie

Abstract

In this paper, I will be reflecting on the functionality of objects in my own poetry. I will discuss the process of selecting specific objects to perform certain tasks in a poem. Furthermore, I will discuss the potentiality of objects; how and why objects can be looked at as magnetic fields in poetry. I will look at the space an object inhabits and the space objects often command in poetry. Apart from the value and influence of objects, I will discuss elements of voice and structure in my own work.

My interest in the functionality of objects in poetry stems from the argument that things or objects often know more about us than we know of them. The idea of how an object can particularize a space and how it can disrupt a space are examples of the potentiality of objects in poetry. Thinking about a specific space usually involves the visualization of certain objects in it or surrounding it. In poetry, objects command their own space. In other words, objects become dynamic entities –they become magnetic fields for ideas such as memory and emotion.

In my first poem, “I left the window open” I wanted to explore how certain objects could potentially disrupt a space. There is no direct comparison between the objects in the poem and the individuals inhabiting the space. Instead, the objects are manifestations for the underlying themes of the poem; they represent the mood. The poem is about the interactions of objects and people.

“I left the window open”

Last night while we slept.
I left the window open.
The rain came in.
It damaged the book you were reading.
The one you left on the windowsill.
Black rippled pages –curved and crippled.
Like the wicks of burnt out candles.

Like the ones we used last night.
The wind came in.
It blew the ashtray over.
The one you left on the windowsill.
A heap of cigarette butts and burned out match sticks.
Like the hardened wax of used candles.
Like the ones we used last night.
The wind came in.
It tore the pictures off the wall.
The wind came in and rearranged the papers you left on the floor.
This morning before we left.
You closed the window.
You paged through your damaged book.
You found the place you stopped reading.
You folded the corner of your black rippled page again.
This morning before we left.
You picked up your ashtray.
You scooped up the dirt again.
You picked your pictures and stuck them on the wall again.
You picked your papers and again I opened the window.

My shift to the analysis of objects in poetry began with my introduction to Sylvia Plath's work. In her famous work entitled "Mirror" Plath goes beyond the norm of using an object to delineate a specific space. Instead, the mirror (the object) is in fact, the speaker. The mirror has no opinions and it only relates what it sees. Despite the mirror's objectivity, it seems to have a personality of its own. The mirror has its own history which has been shaped by everything it has seen and witnessed. Plath's ability to create a narrative from the perspective of an object is something that has inspired me in my own writing and my own selection of objects.

Something that arose from reading and engaging with Plath's "Mirror" is the question –what are the differences between objects and things? And do they play different roles in poetry? I suppose we've adopted the argument that an object becomes a thing when it no longer serves its expected function. However, objects and things often overlap in meaning and purpose. In the poem "Things and a child" I wanted to describe a room with things that the speaker has

no sense of attachment to. The ambiguity of things and objects became more apparent when I started to call these things by their actual names. The conclusion I came to was that the speaker and the tone of the poem dictates whether or not the “things” serve any real purpose. The poem therefore explores the idea that the separation of “things” and “objects” is often a subjective exercise.

“Things and a child”

I live in a room with things that are not mine.
A statue of an angel child.
A Sunday Missal.
Gifts for his first Holy Communion.
I live in a room with things that are not quiet.
Photographs in plastic frames.
Frames that don't hang straight: framed people laughing.
I live in a room with things that don't stop working.
Thirty phosphorescent stars glued to the ceiling.
Lenticular images of Noah's Arc and Jonah and the Whale.
I live in a room with things that speak.
The months of the year in Helvetica above the door.
A door that's always open.
Sounds from inside the house.
Sounds he needs to hear.
Sounds that help sleep and a neon box labeled “Mediations
for superheroes”.
I live in a room with things that move.
Two cartwheeling legs and ten sticky fingers.
I live in a room with things and a child.

The following poem explores similar ideas to “Things and a child”. The poem “Things no longer there” began as a class exercise. Our prompt was to write a poem about things no longer at the dinner table. Again, the idea of calling something by its actual name, for example, hydrangeas instead of flowers or citronella oil candles instead

of candles transformed the potential of the poem. The poem, at the end, became a poem about astute detail. It became a poem about the absence of particular objects and its effects rather than the absence of needless “things”.

“Things no longer there”

The glass of whisky.
The only one he was allowed to have.
The comedy that followed.
Whenever he was allowed more than one.
The hydrangeas in the centre of the table.
Because he no longer had the energy to work in the garden.
The sixth chair.
Because somebody needed to put something somewhere high.
The citronella oil candle.
Because Ouma couldn't take the smell and the miggies didn't bother her anymore.
The hooters somewhere down the street.
That fetched the neighbours for the night shift.
The shouting competing with the hooters.
Because the children wouldn't stop laughing and rocking on their chairs.
The neighbour's idling tow-truck.
That revved over Ouma's prayer.
Die geprek oor die Heilige Gees.
First the nodding and then the yawning and then the sinking into the chairs.
The two children.
Because the schools weren't good enough and because Ouma no longer had the energy.

The poem “Scenes” came from an exercise in which we were asked to explore a specific space. The idea was to write a poem in which humans, objects and animals have the same sense of weight. At the end, the poem seemed to be significantly symbolic. The symbolism

seemed to stem from the interchange between the animate and the inanimate.

“Scenes”

The patio:

Three fruit flies compete for a half-eaten apple that somebody threw out of a window.

The ground is stained black with the insides of blackberries.

The children never watch where they are walking.

The ants are overjoyed.

The kitchen:

The avocado tree gave us three avocados this month.

Somebody wrapped them up in newspaper.

The sun lives in our kitchen.

The ferns are dying.

The miggies are overjoyed.

The window:

Three children are playing with a PVC pipe and stone.

Somebody threw it out with their dirt.

The guinea fowls are fighting back.

The children surrender.

The poem “Brother” began after a discussion about transitional objects in psychology and naturally, a discussion about children followed. I was beginning to think about how children play and the sense of deliberateness that children have when they choose toys. The whole idea of imaginative play is quite serious and I wanted to explore this idea in the poem.

Furthermore, I wanted to create a poem about imagination and at the same time –a poem about watching a child play.

“Brother”

He covers the moon with his left thumb

I don't have enough fingers for all the stars.

He holds my abalone ashtray against his ear

I can hear the waves.

He pulls his shoes out from underneath the bed
I don't think they can breathe.
He leaves his toy soldier in front of the door
It will keep us safe.

The final poem in this portfolio, explores the potentiality of objects in a noticeably different manner. The poem "Conversations" began as a response poem to Rosa Myster's collection of poems, *Modern Rasputin*. The collection deals with topics of friendship, romantic relationships, precocious children and much more. Despite the comical and often sardonic tones as well as the cosmopolitan themes, the collection is quite personal. I decided that I wanted "Conversations" to explore an "odd" familial dynamic. The poem, on the surface, seems to linger on random events and random conversations. However, I needed to be very deliberate in my selection of objects in order to qualify certain moments. In other words, the objects in the poem were selected to stimulate specific feelings.

"Conversations"

I wanted to tell you about our conversation on the beach
when he asked me to ask you for coral shoes.

I asked him if he wanted them to keep the sand out.

Or the water?

I wanted to tell you about our conversation at the bank when
he refused to take anything but R10 notes from the cashier.

I asked him if he liked the feeling of a pocket size bible in his
pocket.

I wanted to tell you about our conversation in the lounge
when he asked about the red stain on the carpet.

I asked him if it would ease his mind if I positioned that part
under the chair.

Or painted it black?

I wanted to tell you about our conversation in the car when
he made me play Lisa se clavier on re-peat.

I asked him if he once had a friend who drank apricot tea.

I wanted to tell you about our conversation outside the
church when he asked me if the wine was diluted.

I asked him if he thought God would disapprove of such an offering.

Or Peter and the rest of them?

I wanted to tell you about our conversation at the library when he asked the librarian to turn down the lights.

I asked him if he understood Heart of Darkness.

I wanted to tell you about our conversation at the dentist when he insisted on wearing sunglasses through his procedure.

I asked him if halogen causes cataracts.

Or sunstrokes?

I wanted to tell you about our conversation in the garden when he told me I drove my mother to in-sanity.

I asked him if he knew why a raven is like a writing desk.

I wanted to tell you all of these things because they seem to end right there.

Or is it that they never end?

In closing, the selected poems in this paper share at least one common feature. The poems all explore the interactions between objects and people. Instead of lingering the functionality of objects – what an object can do I wanted to produce a collection that deals with the common and not so common relationships of subjects and nouns, the relationship between people and things and things and places.

Transnational Dis-locations and Re-emplacements: Finding Home in NoViolet Bulawayo’s “We Need New Names” by Maruping Phepheng

Abstract

Drawing on the novel *We Need New Names* (2013) by expatriate Zimbabwean author NoViolet Bulawayo, this paper examines the altering impact the host-land can have on the diasporic, and how factors prevailing in the new spatial setting can be constitutive of new identity and the reconstruction of memory. Central to this paper are themes of (un)belonging, of inclusion and exclusion, of assimilation and re-emplacement, of dis-locations and home in the diaspora. Scholars of the novel have suggested that *We Need New Names* is not a migrant novel in the traditional sense of the term: instead of focusing uniquely on the dislocated condition, the novel intertwines specific Southern African localities with the American diaspora. Bulawayo depicts harsh conditions at home - fractured families, disease, hunger, and death - rendering mobility a necessity. The novel’s treatment of mobility is not restricted to migration, but can be understood in a broad way to pertain to locality in terms of people’s dreams and hopes of a home elsewhere. Also examined is the use of online and cyberspace communication between host-land and homeland. The paper attempts to establish whether this form of communication has the effect of collapsing divisive borders. Centrally, this paper examines the transformation of memory and identity in the diaspora through the lens of space and place.

Home is a notion that only nations of the homeless fully appreciate and only the uprooted comprehend. (Wallace Stegner, *Angle of Repose*).

NoViolet Bulawayo, like Tendai Huchu, Charles Mungoshi, Yvonne Vera, and Shimmer Chinodya, to name a few, is a prominent Zimbabwean author. Born Elizabeth Zandile Tshele, Bulawayo was born 12 October 1981 in Tsholotsho, Zimbabwe. She was a Stegner Fellow at Stanford University and was recognised with a Truman Capote Fellowship. A winner of numerous awards, Bulawayo wrote *We Need New Names* (2013). “Hitting Budapest”, the opening chapter, is the short story that won Bulawayo the 2011 Caine Prize for

African Writing. In *We Need New Names*, Bulawayo intricately tells the story of her lead character, Darling, and her peers Bastard, Godknows, Sbho, Stina, and Chipso. Darling travels to the United States to live with her aunt on a tourist passport and continues to live there illegally after the visa's expiration. This story is about a struggling African country and the suffering of its people, and the immigrant experience in their adopted country. It is a story where the main characters accept that their best chance for a better life lies elsewhere. In this paper I argue that Darling, the main character, in imagining her environs as temporary, seems to be rejecting "meaning" and "experience", preferring a disconnect with her new spatial reality.

I agree with Anna-Leena Toivanen when she observes in her 2015 paper that *We Need New Names* is not a migrant novel in the traditional sense of the term: instead of focusing uniquely on the dislocated condition, the novel intertwines specific Southern African localities with the American diaspora. The novel's treatment of mobility is not restricted to migration, but can be understood in a broader manner as pertaining to locality in terms of people's dreams and hopes of an elsewhere ... (4)

We Need New Names is a work which gives voice to those who want to imagine themselves some-where else, effecting their own mobility. The first half of the novel is troubled by the children's ideas of more favourable elsewhere. Their dreams of "mobility" are intertwined with the unbearable condition of the here-and-now, but, as Bastard's account of Darling's aunt's migratory predicament in the US suggests, sometimes the miserable, traumatising and oppressive conditions follow the migrants that leave the troubling country behind. Toivanen further explains that what motivates this kind of mobility is the "longing for an elsewhere, accompanied by a sense of disillusionment" (5). This is "closely connected to mobility; it is longing that motivates mobility" (5). Apart from the realisation that the reality of the host country is not what the migrant had imagined, disillusionment also takes the form of recognition that the hosts have equally imagined ideas, often stereotypical, about migrant home countries.

Inescapable here are themes of acculturation and adaptation of immigrants in their new space and place, themes of which are a

function of displacement, disintegration, longing, isolation, and reformulation of identity. Bulawayo's novel has such multiple implications. She demonstrates different aspects of immigrant people and their experiences, including the paradox of belonging and yet not belonging. Bulawayo explores the notion of home, roots, and cultural identity. Reflecting on her writing in a Caineprize.com interview Bulawayo offers that "[y]our race is never an issue (when you are at home) because you're living in a space where everyone looks like you." She continues: "Then going out, you realise, I'm not from here. I'm this other thing." This "other thing" is not always at home in a space that can be both welcoming and marginalising. Reflecting on life away from the homeland, and on longing for home, Bulawayo accepts in *The Guardian* interview that "life outside the homeland is a story of perpetual mourning for what is gone." She also accepts that "the simplest things can trigger that melancholy, from walking down the street and hearing on the car radio a song from home, to the smell of food, to a face that looks like somebody's face" (*theguardian.com* interview).

One of the most common ideas in immigrant novels is the idea of assimilation, but, interestingly, what stands out regarding Darling is a melancholic attachment to a previous life. At home, she already anticipates her future life in the United States. This longing for an elsewhere is made clear by Darling prior to her move: "when that time comes, I'll not even be here; I'll be living in America" (10), "it won't be long, you'll see" (14). When in Detroit, Darling laments that "[s]ome things happen only in my country, and this here is not my country; I don't know whose it is" (147). So, for Darling, much like Tendai Huchu's Magistrate in *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician* (2014), Detroit is not anything like her country: neither the people she knows nor the spatial setting she is used to are in sight. This lends credence to Elizabeth Mavroudi's assertion that "traditional definitions of diaspora centre around the creation of boundaries (of identity, community and the nation state) and a focus on roots and the homeland" (2). It is winter when Darling arrives in Detroit and unaccustomed to snow, she hopes to see the known and familiar when it melts: "Maybe I will finally see things that I know, and maybe this place will look ordinary at last" (159). That Darling understands her new space and place to be transitory brings to mind

Kelly Baker's assertion that "being-in-place [is] understood as an embodied practice, which, both mental and physical, is constantly evolving through everyday encounters" (24). Darling is faced with her everyday lived experiences which are meant to be constitutive of her new spatial setting, but she somehow imagines it to be a passing impermanence. In *On The Move: Mobility In The Modern Western World* (2006), Tim Cresswell argues that "[a] place is a center of meaning - we become attached to it, we fight over it and exclude people from it - we experience it" (3). Yet, here, Darling seems to reject both "meaning" and "experience".

Darling finds that her envisioned life in the United States does not correspond to her reality. She reflects that "this place doesn't look like my America" (150) and does "not feel like my America" (188). In the United States, Darling compares her surroundings to her past life in her idealised Paradise. For instance, in the beginning of the novel while Darling is still in Paradise, her friend Bastard wears "a faded orange T-shirt that says Cornell" (12). Later when Darling is in the United States, this t-shirt is once more seen, this time worn by an American, which makes Darling think that this girl "is wearing Bastard's Cornell shirt" (267). So, in the diaspora, Darling keeps a close attachment with her past and therefore in a sense collapses the spatial barriers imposed by her new environs. Almost anything makes her miss home. An example is when Darling hears her friends on the phone and she begins to think and reflect about what she would do if she were home:

Time dissolves like we are in a movie scene and I have maybe entered the telephone and travelled through the lines to go home. I've never left, and I'm ten again and we are playing country-game and Find bin Laden and Andy-over. We're hungry but we're together and we're at home and everything is sweeter than dessert. (205-06)

Darling is continually caught between two different cultures – different "meaning" and "experiences" - and is temporally trapped in-between the idealised past in Paradise and the future oriented "My America." Although her past was filled with poverty and hardships, she only reflects positively on this life compared to how she thinks about her so-called "America." Darling concedes that "[t]here are two homes inside my head: home before Paradise, and home in Paradise; home one and home two" (191). What is notable is that, in

terms of “home-home” (220), the United States is not mentioned at all. This adds to the sense of the United States being a temporal spatial setting. In fact, Darling never accepts her life there as home: “In America, roads are like the devil’s hands, like God’s love, reaching all over, just the sad thing is, they won’t really take me home” (191).

Darling experiences moments of existential community during her life in the United States. When Aunt Fostalina invites Uncle Themba, Aunt Welcome, Aunt Chenia and others over - like Huchu’s Magistrate, who heavily depended among others on food and language to “remember” home - they make Zimbabwean food and sing and dance to music from their homeland. During one of these occasions, Darling “belongs”, and concedes that “the reason they are my relatives now is they are from my country too - it’s like the country has become a real family since we are in America, which is not our country” (161).

Online and cyberspace communication is prominent in *We Need New Names*. It is Darling’s way of maintaining contact with the homeland, including with her new American friends who are frequently connected to the cyber space with their smartphones. So, at various levels online and cyberspace communication collapses borders, giving rise to “new” communities. This form of communication becomes a site on which the illusion of “home” is constructed. Additionally, having access to online and cyberspace communication cannot hide the fact that Darling has lost touch with her old friends. Contact with “home” is lost because neither the host-land particularities nor the old friendships correspond to an ideal – her diasporic life is far from alluring, and her former friends’ naïve zest over her way of life simply leave her ill at ease. The “awkward silence” (207) that punctuates Darling’s interactions with her former friends encapsulates this double-edged awkwardness.

Although migrant literature is constructed on the idea of home and host countries, digital information communication technologies and media “bridges” and conjoin home and host spaces. In her 2006 paper, scholar Victoria Bernal argues that cyberspace offers the possibility “to bridge distance or at least render it invisible, making physical location irrelevant” (168). Darling uses the laptop to contact her mother back home in order to “bridge” the distance and to make

“physical location irrelevant”. When Darling asks through a Skype call about her other friends - in the process, and as Bernal would put it, forming a “national space within the cyberspace” (169) - Chipo says that, just as Darling, most of them have left the country. From the beginning, there is an unsettling element in the Skype call, with the interlocutors not knowing what to say next. Darling then starts to feel guilty about her comparatively advantaged position, feeling sorry for Chipo, who is stuck in the crisis-ridden post-colony. Chipo points out: “But you are not the one suffering. You think watching on BBC means you know what is going on?” (285). So Chipo denies Darling her national identity, and when Darling claims that it is her country too, Chipo accuses her for leaving: “What are you doing not in your country right now? ... If it’s your country, you have to live in it and not leave it” (286). Chipo’s words hurt Darling, who “hover[s] the mouse cursor over the red phone thingy” (286) wanting to hang up. Chipo, however, goes on to tell Darling that she has a “stupid accent” (286) that is not natural. At this point, Darling ends the call. She throws the laptop against the wall. The laptop - significantly unlike Huchu’s Maestro who had in his flat no objects from “home” - hits an African mask that Darling has placed on the wall. The objects fall simultaneously to the ground, illustrating Darling’s sense of diasporic non-belonging: she is at home neither in the over-branded and over-technologised American culture, nor can she identify herself in the nostalgic idea of traditional Africa represented by the mask. 8

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The stickiness of shame: tracing the affect of shame on the body through the medium of performance by Abigail Wiese

Abstract

The research practice follows an autoethnographic, affective and practice-led methodology. It is a process driven research practice as the practice folds into the research and the research in turn folds into the practice. Being autoethnographic and working in an affective methodology, the work is coupled with a strong self-reflective awareness, highlighting and speaking to the subjective/affective relationship in the process of research. The research aims to articulate the body's affective and visceral responses to shame. In order to do so, I use performance, a medium affectively charged and reliant on observers making meaning often through non-verbal and embodied ways, as a way into my research. I hope to use the affective charge rendered in performance to catalyse thought regarding shame; how shame is processed, engaged and stuck on to bodies through bodies and by bodies. The research relies on three fields of thought, performance studies, affect and shame theory. The investigation looks at the similarities within these fields to trace a new pattern of thought.

Bruno Latour surmises, "If the opposite of being a body is dead...to have a body is to learn to be affected; meaning 'effectuated', moved, but into motion by other entities, humans or nonhumans. If you are not engaged in this learning, you become insensitive, dumb, you drop dead" (emphasis in original, 205). This statement by Latour is specifically poignant in relation to my own research. Our bodies are in a constant relational state of being 'effectuated' by affect. When this relational state between affect and effect ceases or is numbed the human becomes insensitive, lifeless. The attention Latour places on the word 'learning' I find particularly interesting as there is an education that needs to take place about how our bodies are affected, and the role affect plays in shaping our body. In trying to further understand how our bodies are affected and in a relational co-motion, my research uses performance, a medium that charges and activates the body as a locus of feeling, understanding and meaning-making to catalyse conversations around affect in relation to shame.

Following on from the ideas of Body and Affect theorist, Lisa Blackman, who argues that much of what constitutes communication is difficult to see, understand and articulate I use the curated space of performance to highlight and draw attention to the meaning-making that passes in the in-between (138). This paper starts to trace the intersection of performance in relation to the affect of shame. I also look at how the patterning of thought between affect, shame and performance can foster alternative ways of seeing, hearing and feeling, in order to unlock new ways of knowing how bodies interact and are acted upon by bodies and objects. When considering performance as a catalyst in probing an articulation for the affect of shame on the body, removing performance from the enquiry would be a paradox. To do so would limit the study to the exact problem I seek to question; the inarticulate, the invisible and the unseen of how bodies feel, process and make meaning. It is for this reason I started the paper with a short introduction of a performance piece I am hoping to explore further. I use the short performance piece as an entry into a discussion around how the audience responds in embodied ways in meaning-making.

My interest in affect theory started gradually, at first, unidentified as affect due to my own lack of knowledge and understanding about it. This introspection brought with it many 'clicking' moments. Some of these discoveries started to shape the course of my PhD journey and were as follows. Affect exists in the visceral, in-between and pre-cognitive domain of experience. The affect of shame has a powerful visceral sensation and is acted out on the body in relationship. Affect often falls into the in-between of meaning-making. Performance exists in the liminal space, it is visceral, and catalyses affects. Performance, like affect, exists in relation. Affect in performance remains in the body after the performance has finished. Shame too remains in the body.

Affect in performance opened my perception to understanding its role, power and formative shaping on my life in increasing measures. If this was what was occurring during a restricted and constructed performance how else was this happening in my every day interactions with the world around me. Performances identified that centralise the

body of the performer and the audience member in meaning-making are namely, *Every Day, Every Year I am Walking* (2006) by Magnet Theatre Company, *Blood Diamond* (2010) by Brett Bailey and *Stumbling Block* (2011) and *Elegy* (2016) by Gabriella Goliath¹.

Sara Ahmed's description of affect as something sticky, is a description that offers a strong visceral and visual description of how the encounter of shame is worked out on the body (91, *Affective*). Affective experiences in the shaping of our narratives and perspectives stick onto us. In sticking there is a gathering, an altering and a readjusting. Ahmed states that the stickiness creates a binding and a blockage (91, *Affective*). Something that sticks is also hard not to notice, it impacts on how we interact with the world around us. A very simple example would be how your relational engagement changes once you have glue on your shoes, or superglue on your fingers. I think this visual and visceral description represents affect in a more tangible and material way, granting the in-between encounter more 'presence' when understood as 'sticky' in how it interacts in the meaning-making process. Affect is thus always in relation to something. Affect binds encounters and highlights how certain experiences get 'stuck' forming blockages in order to establish new affective patterns. The blockage thus creates a flow of affect that returns to the same end point, re-establishing the path of the affect. Ahmed further explains affect as "what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values and objects" (29, *Happy*). I feel this description again helps to articulate the intangible and hard to pin down thinking-feeling of affect. Affect is indeed preserving, in its connection to memories, objects and experiences. The affective relation to an object or memory is what enables us to remember it because it sustains and preserves it. In my analysis of performance in relation to affect, the performances which remain are those which connected to me affectively, thus getting stuck in their stickiness and hence preserving the memory.

¹ These performative pieces act as inroads into my research and are explored in my thesis.

Shame is central in my research as I believe our understanding of how it affects and thus alters the body-mind² is silenced and in need of articulation. The lack of discourse around shame and its ramifications on the shaping of individuals in their relational interactions and understanding of self requires current focus and redress. Shame is one of the most body-centered of affects and is extremely visceral de-forming and re-forming the body in space (*Cultural*, 103). Elspeth Probyn similarly describes shame as a profound “bodily intensity” (Blush, 64). Shame, unlike other affects, is the most “disturbing to the self” and most central to our “sense of identity” (Kaufman, viii). Shame relates to the self and the reaction to the affect of shame is to hide, conceal, void and silence the self. Therefore, there are numerous parts to our individual narratives which are knowingly or unknowingly voided by shames affect in the shaping of our body-minded self³. The shame experience does not require language. As a result, language alone cannot be used to articulate or repair the experience. It is for this

² Body-mind reflects on the thoughts of Antonio Damasio who follows from Jacques Derrida’s rejection of the Cartesian split and states “no body, never mind” (*Looking*, 202-3). He sees the mind and body as integral parts of each other. The mind is all encompassing of the body, whereas the brain exists as a body part, an organ. Damasio reflects on ‘the body-minded brain’ as an entity that encompasses mind and body (*Descartes*, 2). His discussions explain how the body is integrated into the neurological processing and that the body is intrinsically involved in the neuro-cycle of meaning-making. Damasio’s work supports the findings of affect theorists used in my research. Damasio’s idea of images that have their origin in the sensory modalities of the body acts as a tool in my investigation into understanding both how bodies are affected and how bodily narratives are unlocked. In his paradigm, images are not located in, or formed by, the brain alone – the brain, the body and the environment are fully involved in the generation of an image (*Descartes*, 2).

³ The body-minded self in the meaning-making process undoes the binary between cognitive and embodied cognition, and between written text and performance text, as the body decodes and is part of the processing of meaning.

reason I look to performances that do not primarily use language as a means of communication in grappling with the effect of shame.

A working definition of shame for this paper is expressed by Sandra Bartky who writes “shame is the distressed apprehension of the self as inadequate or diminished” (86). She goes on to describe it as a “pervasive affective attunement to the social environment” (85). The affect of shame induces a secrecy, breeding an action to hide and thus further deepening shame’s effect. Shame in relation to guilt, embarrassment or humiliation, is often not as clear in delineating. The terms do leak into one another, with guilt transitioning into shame and embarrassment into humiliation. However, my focus is not towards obtaining a distinct definition, but rather to open up conversations regarding the inability to articulate the felt sensory experience of what happens when shame passes on and in the body. When asked to describe the ‘what’ of affect and how it occurs and performs itself on and in the body, it is a challenging description for most. Further still, this struggle to make sense of the affect of shame can be said to reflect on a wider struggle to be, and to make sense of being. In reaction to not knowing how the affect of shame is performed on the body there is often a numbing of the sensations, a learning to not be affected by it, or to be less affected. In doing so there is a forgetting, a silencing.

The performer’s instrument is not a script, a stage, or advanced technical resources, instead it is the body. The body is central in generating and relay-ing meaning. The role the body plays in processing and generating meaning is often pushed aside and left misunderstood. Equally so, performance will continue to remain in the rehearsal process without someone present as witness; in relation. In this discussion it is interesting to note that Silvan Tomkins, a leading thinker in affect theory, began his academic training not as a psychologist but first as a playwright. This is particularly encouraging to me as I too have seen affect theory through the lens of a dramatist understanding people, their relationships and the ways meaning-making occurs from a position of embodied knowledge.

Performance, I suggest, pulls into question how affects in the everyday transition between bodies and objects, and how bodies and objects exert agency in their ability to affect in the process of meaning-making. A performance rooted in a bodily and visual form of communication encourages the sentient⁴ body to feel, think and make meaning. It thus activates an affective awareness of the body and its role in meaning-making. These affective tangents produced through performance can touch the audience in differing and new ways, granting an opportunity to reconfigure the past so those absences which passed beneath mention can be made visible, seen and brought to the surface. “To touch is to share. This sharing takes place as a trace, a detour, an erring. When I touch you, I do not contain the experience within a preconceived narrative. To touch is to open us to a story we have not yet heard, to an unworked work” (Manning 13). Probing the affective touch through performance has the potential to reveal “aspects of our embodied experience that have been submerged and forgotten” (Blackman 133). Stephanie Arel proposes that the affect of shame is stimulated and modulated in relationship and it is thus through relationship that it is repaired, hence I will consider how performance can be used in this process of reparation (32). She also states how affects are immediate in altering the body, urgent and uncontrollable (32). Affects are “indistinguishable from the body and, therefore, are autolectic” meaning they “exist for their own sake” (32). Hence, shame deeply influences relationships and relationality, implicating how the self perceives itself and how others perceive the self (32).

Both performance and shame are stimulated and modulated in relationship. In attempting to understand the embodiment of shame it is for these reasons that I use the medium of performance as a catalyst in charging the affective exchange. Performance as a medium repositions bystanders as witnesses of affect. The affective encounter rendered in the performance can occur articulated or unarticulated on

⁴ The term sentient in this paper is defined as the sensing body, that thinks through and with the senses. The intelligent bodily knowing.

the bodies who witness it. I am interested in how performances that are centered in the body constructing and processing meaning through: dance, physical theatre, *mis-en-scène* and soundscapes that focus more on embodied cognition, can be used to articulate a dialogue around sensory encounters that remain silenced in their lack of articulation.

Furthermore, performance offers an alternate avenue of knowing and a potential space where the problem in question can be magnified, distilled and engaged with, in a concentrated and focused manner. A performance exists in a relational state and is dependent on the encounter and point of connection between the performer/performance and spectator/witness. The performance space is “a space not of the here and now or of the years to come, but a world created and shared by you the audience/participant and the performer – an encounter only shared and exchanged by and through your mutual witnessing of each other” (Di Benedetto,21). During a performance, embodied knowledge is harnessed actively. The viewer is thus active in the relationship. Stephen Di Benedetto terms the viewer the ‘attendant’; “implying presence and participation, attending to internal and external charges” (126). The term ‘attendant’ transitions the attendee of the performance to an active role wherein they are aware of the conventions of performance and their relationship to it. In giving meaningful embodied attention to a performance and its effect on the body affectively, the attendant transitions into a position of agency, aware of how the performance generates and stirs certain reactions and actions.

Body-centered performances, where the body is used as a medium of communication as opposed to the more readily used form of words, offers a space ‘beyond language’ (Fisher 114). If the affect of shame remains outside of words other avenues of communication have to be used in generating an articulation around it. A body-centered performance, not only places the performer’s body as central in the creation process, but also makes the audience as attendant active in the creation of meaning-making through an embodied, affective and sensory way. Josephine Machon describes the term visceral as “those perceptual experiences that affect a very particular type of response where the innermost, often most inexpressible, emotionally sentient feelings a human is capable of are actuated (197, note 1). Machon suggests that visceral experiences are ‘pre-linguistic’ and ‘primordial’ (1). In creating

performances that draw on the sensory and emotive, the focus is therefore less about what the performance is telling us and more about how it makes us feel “which is much more complex, provoking and implicating” (Fleishman 21). In other words, as Fleishman argues, “the body in performance communicates as part of an assemblage of elements that together produce an affective force”. (21) The visceral experience is worked out on the audience “directly by means of their own bodies and is then carried away in the body so that when the experience is recalled the same visceral responses are felt again” (Fleishman,21).

In activating an articulation and an awareness of the affect of shame, through performance, it is hoped that conversations around how shame is experienced and processed will occur. Performance is used as the catalyst in drawing people’s attention to recognising the ubiquitous presence of the affect of shame in their lives and to be spurred on to question and confront it. The research therefore attempts to undo the “somatophobia that continues to bind so many of us in shame in our contemporary culture” (Bouson 183). In doing so, I look to follow and unfollow the patterns of affect, to make and remake, and in the remaking, to see what might actually exceed conventional modes of perception.

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Establishing the Mezzaterra on Ritual and Myth: Ahdaf Soueif's Appropriation of the Sacred in "The Map of Love" by Christine van Deventer

Abstract

The Map of Love, by Egyptian author Ahdaf Soueif, is set in a space that is a cultural meeting ground. Ahdaf Soueif is described by many to be a "hybrid" writer as her work seeks to occupy a ground common to Arab and Western cultures alike. Soueif coined her own name for this concept. She calls it Mezzaterra, which translated means "middle ground". This paper is about how Soueif anchors the idea of Mezzaterra in the sacred realm at a point in the past that stretches beyond the origin of Christianity and Islam, by referencing the Egyptian Creation Myth of Isis, Osiris and Horus. In this way she establishes it as a reference for the legitimate acceptance and interrelatedness of the abovementioned religions and cultures. By using Mircea Eliade's Myth of the Eternal Return, I study how Soueif uses the repetition of the ritual in *The Map of Love* to confer a reality upon events. The reference to The Sacred and The Profane allows me to study how the sacred is shown to interact with the real in *The Map of Love* and how the real is placed on the same level as the sacred and thus made sacred, especially through the employment of a hierophany in the text. Thus the Mezzaterra is established as a sacred ideology that has its roots in Egypt's Creation Myth - the overarching and informing Creation Myth.

"I do very much believe in commonalities, in the 'common ground'", Egyptian author Ahdaf Soueif states in an interview conducted with her by Jamal Mahjoub (58). In that same interview Soueif's preoccupation with Egyptian mythology comes to the fore in that she shares with Mahjoub the main preoccupation of her upcoming novel – "the figure of Ma'at in Ancient Egyptian mythology" (58). The discussion of Ma'at in this interview raises a main concern for Soueif – "let go of your past and you'll be lost" (58). This is the translation of an Arabic proverb which summarises one of the key principles of Ma'at: "live in the present, looking and working towards the future, but always fully cognisant of the past" (58). For her, as an Egyptian, pharaonic Egypt and the mythology of the Ancient Egyptians is an

intrinsic part of her past – part of what shaped the land she lives on, the culture that surrounds and shapes her, and the person she has become. It is therefore no coincidence that Ancient Egyptian mythology plays a very integral role in *The Map of Love* and is used as a metaphoric device by which Soueif displays commonality between the West and the Middle East. Just the thought of Egypt conjures up the idea of the pyramids and pharaohs in one's mind – more so than its modern historical or present realities do. Soueif taps into this past in the contextual portrayal of Egypt found in *The Map of Love*, which stretches far back into ancient times. By way of myth, she subtly introduces this past to her reader and uses it to break down ideological and religious barriers that separate. In this paper studying the myth inherent in *The Map of Love* is the focus, or, in the words of Vickery, I intend to “isolate latent elements, which, like those of dreams, possess the force that vitalizes the manifest pattern” (ix).

Amin Malak quotes Edward Said in his essay *Arab-Muslim Feminism and the Narrative of Hybridity: The Fiction of Abdaf Soueif*: “No one today is purely *one* thing” (140). Within the context of hybridity which Malak investigates in the writing of Soueif throughout this article, this statement inverts the idea that hybridity is something extra-ordinary. It endows each person with an aspect of the Other in his/her being. Through *The Map of Love* Soueif brings this statement of Said to life by employing the Egyptian Creation Myth as an archetype for her characters to re-enact in order to “destabilize entrenched exclusionist ethos” (Malak 140) as they interact cross-culturally and give birth to new generations who embody the hybrid. The Egyptian Creation Myth follows the actions of four Egyptian gods as they manifest a united pharaonic Egypt of the past. The image of Isis together with the mythical tale including Osiris and Horus, comes to the fore in a central image in the novel – that of the tapestry woven by Anna, Isabel's great grandmother. The tapestry that Anna wove consists of three panels which get lost and found over the course of the novel. It is the overarching image that anchors the role of the myth in the family relations in *The Map of Love*. The tapestry, with its Pharaonic iconography and Islamic text forms part of a “motif of hybrid metaphors” (Malak 157) presented in the novel. Some of the others are the monastery of St Catherine in Sinai which harbours a mosque inside its walls – both holy places provid-

ing protection to each other during times of conflict; the 1919 flag of national unity on which is displayed a crescent and a cross to symbolise unity across religious borders; the fact that Egypt follows three different calendars at the same time: the Gregorian, Islamic and Coptic calendars. All these hybrid metaphors in some way link to the imagery on the tapestry.

For the purpose of this study, the work of historian of religion and philosopher Mircea Eliade is highly relevant, and I am focussing specifically on his *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (1954) and *The Sacred and the Profane* (1959) with regards to coming to terms with the role myth plays in culture. This understanding of myth and its re-enactment in real life also provides an insightful commentary on the significance of the use of myth in *The Map of Love*. Has it not been the way of humankind to make myths part of our existence throughout the ages “to create a meaningful place . . . in [the] world” (Vickery ix)? I suggest that the result of Soueif’s employment of myth is twofold: firstly, it entrenches her work deeply in its cultural roots and secondly, it allows Soueif to make a spiritual claim about the centrality and importance of Mezzaterra.

Eliade states that “the way in which a reality came into existence is revealed by its myth” (*The Sacred and the Profane* 76) since myths provide humanity with “divine models” of “how the cosmos came into existence” (*The Sacred and the Profane* 77). This is the kind of myth that we encounter in *The Map of Love* – one which is revelatory of the cosmogony in the Egyptian context. The myth in *The Map of Love* is furthermore tied to religious aspects of Christianity and Islam that will become apparent. What we see in *The Map of Love* is the strong symbolic reference to the Egyptian Creation myth as well as re-enactments of that myth as Soueif portrays “the mythical event” as becoming “present once again” (*The Sacred and the Profane* 77). My first endeavour is to provide a definition of myth and then to study the relevance of portraying its re-enactment. For this purpose I refer to Eliade’s “most embracing” definition of what a myth is in *Myth and Reality*:

Myth narrates a sacred history; it relates an event that took place in primordial Time, the fabled time of the “beginnings”. In other words myth tells how, through the deeds of Supernatural Beings, a reality came into existence, be it the whole of reality, the Cosmos,

or only a fragment of reality... Myth, then, is always an account of a “creation”; it relates how something was produced, began to be. Myth tells only of that which really happened, which manifested itself completely. The actors in myths are Supernatural Beings. They are known primarily by what they did in the transcendent times of the “beginnings”. Hence myths disclose their creative activity and reveal the sacredness (or simply the “supernaturalness”) of their works. In short, myths describe the various and sometimes dramatic breakthroughs of the sacred (or the “supernatural”) into the World. It is this sudden breakthrough of the sacred that really establishes the World and makes it what it is today. Furthermore, it is as a result of the intervention of Supernatural Beings that man [sic] himself is what he is today, a mortal, sexed, and cultural being. (5-6)

The above definition touches on a vital characteristic found in myths, especially the one found in *The Map of Love*, and that is the recounting of a “breakthrough of the sacred” into the natural world. This definition is what Eliade himself stated is what he found “most embracing” of the idea of myth, yet he specifically points out that myths are always “accounts of a ‘creation’”. Of course, there are mythical tales that do not fit this description, but for the purpose of this study, since the myth that Soueif employs is a Creation Myth, it is applicable. It provides a lens through which to study the myth portrayed by Soueif in *The Map of Love*. What is relevant is the fact that the reader of the novel is transported back to “the ‘beginnings’” thus providing the time when Mezzaterra was established. The Egyptian Creation Myth, as will presently become apparent, reveals how a United Egypt came into being through the actions of supernatural beings who are the protagonists and antagonists of this myth: Isis, Osiris, Seth and Horus. What is more is that the “creative activity” of the divine beings is re-enacted in *The Map of Love* by the protagonists of the novel, who through the re-enactment of the myth also bring into being a new reality. Through displaying the breakthrough of the sacred into the contemporary world within the novel in the establishment of a united Egypt and through establishing the Mezzaterra by means of the re-enactment of the characters in the novel, the formation of the Mezzaterra is placed on the same sacred plateau as that of Creation and is turned into a sanctified and

religious activity. Before continuing it is important to know the significance of the re-enactment.

In *The Sacred and the Profane* Eliade states:

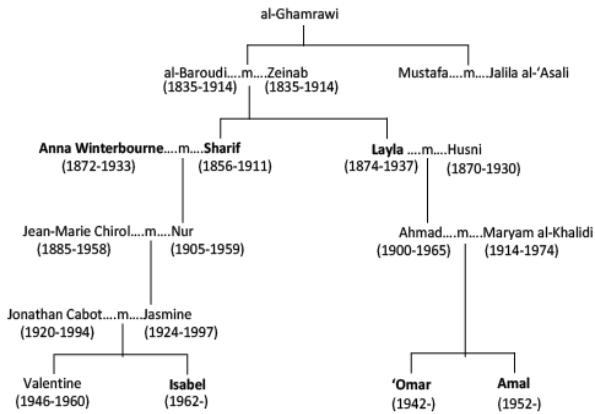
To reintegrate the sacred time of origin is equivalent to becoming contemporary with the gods, hence to living in their presence – even if their presence is mysterious in the sense that it is not always visible. The intention that can be read in the experience of sacred space and sacred time reveals a desire to reintegrate a primordial situation – that in which the gods and the mythical ancestors were present, that is, were engaged in creating the world, or in organizing it, or in revealing the foundations of civilization to man. This primordial situation is not historical, it is not calculable chronologically; what is involved is a mythical anteriority, the time of origin, what took place “in the beginning,” *in principio*. (91-92)

“[B]ecoming contemporary with the gods” and “integrate a primordial situation” – these concepts are of concern in this study, for *The Map of Love* displays a situation where the characters are portrayed as “contemporary with the gods” and hence bringing to the fore the concept of “creation”, of a new beginning and of a “primordial situation”. In the midst of the historical context that Soueif portrays, through the re-enactment of the myth the reader is transported back to a primordial time, a time of creation. The creation and primordial time is the time when things were as they should be, the original intent of the world was present and the potential of its realization was tangible. It is at this time that we encounter the concept of unification in the myth. The “hierophany” at the centre of the novel, where Isabel encounters Jesus, as well as the strong parallel that is drawn between Isabel and Isis, together with the symbolism of the names, shows that Soueif portrays the characters as interacting with the gods. Thus, through them she is able to bring into being the sacred concept of unification, which, as I have explained in the previous chapter, lies at the heart of Soueif’s philosophical and political project.

In *The Sacred and the Profane* Eliade illustrates how “archaic cultures” re-enacted the mythical event on an annual basis in order to “recover original sanctity” “with each new year” (75). In *The Map of Love* the reader is presented with the re-enactment of the Egyptian

Creation Myth twice at the turn of a century – first at the beginning of the Twentieth Century by Anna and Sharif and secondly at the beginning of the Twenty First Century by Amal, Isabel and Omar, and with each re-enactment is established a new dimension of Mezzaterra. Eliade points out that the repetition of myths had a meaning for archaic men and women, since, in the imitation of the archetype, “the exemplary event”, a reality is conferred upon events (*The Myth of the Eternal Return* 90). Thus not only through the re-enactment of the myth, but also through its repetition twice at the turn of two centuries, does Soueif anchor the idea of Mezzaterra as that which is willed from the beginning and which must be brought to consciousness. As Eliade points out this imitation “of the gods” has a two-fold outcome, a person “remains in the sacred or reality” and “the world is sanctified” (99), which for the purpose of this study means that Mezzaterra is the will of the sacred and it alone is the true reality (for the purpose of the novel) and it establishes sanctification where it is brought into being so that from there it can multiply.

The interwoven myth provides the ideological context within which the historical representation can be understood. As part and parcel of the historical representation, the creation myth is the historical point of reference in *The Map of Love* and acts as a living and guiding inspiration to the characters in the novel as they repeat actions from the myth yet not on purpose. The historical representation, as mentioned above, is brought into being by Soueif through the family: The family is a type of the creation myth as they symbolise the birth of a new “nation” – the “mezzaterra nation”; and, through the family members and their interests Soueif is able to portray the historical context. Soueif centres her narrative around one family, the family of al-Ghamrawi. At the very start of the book is a family tree diagram that plots out the entire family for the reader. Below is a recreated version:



The relations of the main characters (marked in bold) to each other become apparent when studying the above diagram. While Amal and Isabel are not direct cousins, they are related.

In an essay in *Women: A Cultural Review* titled “History as genealogy: A.S. Byatt, Tracy Chevalier and Ahdaf Soueif”, Mariadele Boccardi investigates the way in which genealogy is used to establish continuity as opposed to narrative continuity in *The Map of Love* and two other novels. She finds that “the central theme of the plot” is “not the family history but the individual’s encounter with that history, and therefore with the narratives that convey it” (Boccardi 201). It is relevant to this study that she points out how “from the sequence of generations the historical consciousness is born and time is understood as a linear manifestation of genealogy”, since this establishes the primary role that the family plays in the novel as a means of providing a historical representation (Boccardi 202). Boccardi further points to the fact that even though “a genealogical continuity” is recreated, *The Map of Love* “undermine[s] the very concept of family line that is [its] model, by subverting the certainty that it should be ‘patrilinear and primogenitive’” (202). It is this finding that I want to explore further by bringing to the fore the most astounding way in which Soueif establishes the women as taking possession of the continuation of the family line and its survival, not only for the family that they represent, but also in the

broader context of the nation of Egypt. Boccardi very aptly points out at the end of her essay that “genetic succession is the prerogative of the female members of the family line” (203), and finally she hints at “the potential of this female strategy”, which, for this study, is a starting point:

When Isabel and her new-found cousin Amal discuss the etymology of Arabic words derived from ‘mother’ and ‘father’ and conclude that the former ‘goes into politics, religion, economics’ (Soueif 1999:165), which is to say all the categories of history, while the latter has no etymological descent (Boccardi 203).

The predominant role of the female in ensuring the survival and continuation of the family is also echoed in the myth. Through the image of the tapestry and the allusion that it appropriates with the Egyptian Creation Myth in which a female god plays the role of securing the genetic succession of the “middle people/nation”, Soueif manages to suggest that just as Isis is mother to a unified Egypt, Egypt is mother to the true “middle people/nation”, religion is no grounds for difference, and the continuation of the idea – the seed – of the beloved is possible through the woman. For through being impregnated by it the woman can allow it to take form and in and through her contemplation of it can give birth to something that is a living representation thereof.

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Becoming-Animal: Negotiating Insider/Outsider Politics in Leah Chishugi's *A Long Way from Paradise* by Maureen Amimo

Abstract

Mobility practices in the postmodern world have enhanced free circulation of people, objects, ideas, and services. In the same vein, surveillance and boundary policing has also emerged. Narratives of forced flight exemplify this surveillance in detail. In this paper I explore the complexities of becoming-animal inherent in political crises that exploit insider/outsider trajectories. I employ Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-animal to tease out the nodes of becoming-animal in Leah Chishugi's *A Long Walk from Paradise*. To do this I focus on how the image of the 'inyenzi' (cockroach) is conceptualised by the different entities within the 'war machine' of Rwanda genocide to validate insider/outsider surveillance and status. This study furthers the conception of becoming-animal by teasing out the affective connections emergent from becoming-cockroach and what this form of becoming allows the narrator to negotiate. This paper concludes that while becoming-animal is a tactic of extermination employed by the war machine, embracing-animal allows for a troubling of the insider/outsider relations at the centre of such logic as well as understanding of human and animal relations.

Narratives of mass killing in forms such as genocide, force readers to explore the conception of becoming-animal in its many variants. While it is easy to explore this from the perspective of the perpetrators losing their humanity, becoming-animal as conceptualised by Deleuze and Guattari encompasses much more than such literal meanings. It does not hinge on the idea of humans resembling animals in behaviour nor does it hinge on the idea of humans imitating animals. The fact of becoming is a complex multiplicity as this paper will explore.

A Long Way from Paradise by Leah Chishugi documents the escape of the narrator (Leah), her son Jean-Luc, and her maid Donata from Rwanda. In the moments preceding the genocide, the narrative points to the pervasiveness of tribal slurs aimed at Tutsis, but the

presence of a peace accord signed by the leaders of both the Hutus and Tutsis and the United Nations, makes people not expect the genocide when it begins (40). During the genocide, the narrator points to the Interahamwe manning roadblocks and invading villages in search of the Tutsis. The Tutsis are condemned as ‘inyenzi’ and hacked to death. The narrative explores how due to the brainwashing, “Hutu fathers murdered their Tutsi wives and children” (57). Those who could not do it are killed after their families are murdered. In such instances, the “killers stopped being human, they had become animals” (57). The narrator struggles to camouflage her Tutsi nature in several ways. She transforms herself and is seen in several sections sharing an affinity with the cockroaches. Her reflection on the genocide even after the end of the war when she visits Rwanda, demonstrate her compelling identity with the ‘inyenzi’ that she and others like her are shunned to be.

This narrative fits within narratives of war that utilize de-humanisation as strategy to segregate people. The state and society have always employed animal characteristics to classify people (Deleuze and Guattari 239). This is through the spread of ideologies that propagate de-humanisation. Common cases include the imperial mission’s use of the Darwinian and Linnaeus system of classification to justify the de-humanisation of the Other². The Jewish Holocaust

¹ In subsequent mentions, ‘inyenzi’ and cockroach will be used interchangeably to refer to the same thing.

² See Anna McClintock’s *Imperial Leather* for exploration of how the ‘Tree of Man’ propagates racism through categorization of the racial purity of the Aryans versus the rest. The black man is at the bottom of the tier. This segregation assumes the closeness of the black man to the animal. McClintock extends her argument to demonstrate how becoming-animal thus extends to becoming-woman (McClintock 21–75). See also Mary Pratt’s examination of the imperial mission’s logic of ‘planetary consciousness’ where she explains that the Linnaeus system of naming was instrumental in determining that the other was the antithesis of the white man. While the white man was civilised, the other resembled animal- was animal (Pratt 15–36).

is an exposé on how the ‘war machine’ rationalised the extermination of the ‘impure’ race. The marking of the Jews as impure and the belief in purity of the Aryan race is used to justify the massive killing of Jews in concentration camps. Ideologies that propagate racial impurity are also at play in the Rwandan genocide and the historical space of Rwanda. While imperialism is seen as a big contributor to such ideologies, to assume that such machinery of war owes their beginnings in imperialism and colonialism is to miss the historical realities of Rwanda. In their case, traces of such categorization of Other as animal are prevalent even in the period before colonialism as Mahmood Mamdani’s exploration shows³. Mamdani suggests that the imperial mission in Rwanda only enhanced existing separatist ideologies to champion the colonial mission. At independence, the buck fell onto the new governments, which instead of dealing with the historical realities of seeing Tutsi as alien turned a blind eye hence the continuation of the propaganda that represented one tribe as foreign. It is such continuation that fuelled the civil war of the 60s hinted at in the beginning of the narrative—the narrator and her parents are living in Zaire due to being attacked during the civil war of 1959-62 in Rwanda—and the genocide of 1994 which is the focus of the narrative.

The prevalence of such propaganda is explored in the narrative when the narrator points out that at a young age, one of her sisters kept trying to “widen and flatten” (14) her nose because she did not enjoy being bullied in school for being Tutsi⁴. At this point the connection of Tutsi to aliens is visible but not yet explosive. The Interahamwe – “those who attack together” (41) as the narrator translates, work in packs. They brainwashed their members to believe that the Tutsis were cockroaches. This propaganda gained

³See Mahmood Mamdani’s *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*

⁴ The bullying is pegged on the fact that the physical features of the Tutsis is different from that of the other tribes. When the narrator’s sister attempts to change her nose, she is trying to come to terms with the bullying in her own way.

appeal among the pack due to the contagion simulated within pack mentality. Such packs act as 'war machine' where even though utilised by the state, their becoming appropriates a reality beyond the state. They have the capacity to transform into an epidemic that forcibly extends borders and spread this mentality (Deleuze and Guattari 242-243). In the narrative, the Interahamwe is seen in all aspects of society. The media as a central element in this contagion is represented by a presenter called Cantono, who on the radio is seen repeatedly stirring hatred for Tutsis (58). The connection of Tutsis to *inyenzi* is not accidental. The narrator asserts that in Rwanda it was necessary to keep the home clean. She cites that cases of cockroach invasions were a menace that forced the occupants of a house to invite fumigation teams to exterminate the pests. The reference to Tutsis as cockroaches plays into the narratives about purity of race and outsider politics that have been experienced elsewhere such as Germany. It positions Tutsis as outsiders in Rwanda. When the Interahamwe talk of Tutsis as cockroaches, the idea invites thoughts of disinfecting the masses.

The way the killing of the Tutsis was done furthers this view of them being animal. In one instance, the narrator points out, "after the Interahamwe killed people they ground them into the earth by putting their foot on the dead person's stomach, in exactly the way you would crush a cockroach underfoot. They genuinely believed that we Tutsis had no human qualities at all and were vermin that needed to be destroyed" (78). In the mind of the Interahamwe, Tutsis were not like cockroaches, they had become-cockroaches. One perpetrator tells the narrator, "the terrible thing about killing is that once you start it's hard to stop. I was in a trance and it actually felt good at the time to see the blood spurt and have the power over life and death. Things got to the point where I genuinely believed that you were all giant cockroaches. As you know, it is easy to kill cockroaches by stamping on them" (269). The concept of becoming-animal is ingrained in the war machine to the point that perpetrators cannot differentiate human-animals from other animals – they merge as one.

In the Rwandan genocide, this happens as the narrative points out that even though the civil war of 60s had ended in 1994, it is the same mentality and propaganda that sustains the war. This is also

extended to 1998 when the narrator's brother is killed as well as in the post 2000 period when the genocide effects are still felt in eastern Congo. The pack simply morphed and advanced different multiplicities for the different periods and spaces they find themselves in. In the current dispensation, while Rwanda thrives, the effect of the Interahamwe is still wreaking havoc in eastern Congo⁵. Such realities demonstrate the need to understand the rhizomatic interconnections and possibilities of understanding the 'war machine'. Since many post war nations do not explore these rhizomatic contagions, a stop to such ripple effects is a mirage and the constant wars become an everyday reality. While this is an important element to tease out regarding the concept of becoming-animal, this paper centres its argument on the victims and perpetrators of such segregated politics and how they negotiate positioning as well as their becoming-animal.

The first face-to-face interaction with the label '*inyenzi*' for the narrator is monumental. This happens when together with friends, she is followed by an Interahamwe leader on their way from visiting the Congrès National de Développement, a site where the RFP soldiers were stationed. When the Interahamwe leader calls her '*inyenzi*', the narrative describes her reaction thus, "My legs started to shake uncontrollably and I tried desperately to keep them still. I was breathing very fast and opened my mouth to speak but no words came out" (43). When the initial shock subsides, the narrator is angry at being compared to a cockroach and reacts by comparing her attacker to "a big, fat mosquito heavy with human blood" (44). This instance entails "projection and introjection" (Punter, 146) which the narrator simply extends from the Interahamwe. In this instance, the reality of the becoming is not necessarily felt as both the perpetrator and victim are projecting their hatred out through animalisms.

⁵ See Mahmood Mamdani's exploration of the Banyamulenge war in eastern Congo. Mamdani asserts that the same mentality of reducing people to animals applied in Congo where the Banyamulenge who are ethnic Tutsis are alien. Chishugi also explores this ripple effect of the genocide when she traces the presence of Hutu militia in eastern Congo propagating the civil war in the region.

Although the narrator assumes she is justified, in borrowing the dominator's language of de-humanisation, she propagates the continuous reference to becoming-animal hence is colluding with the war machine's ideology.

In reflection of being named as animal, the narrator later indicates that such views sickened her (45). The narrator thus sees that becoming-animal is a negative thing. She assumes that being animal is being lesser than human. This instance was a marker of awareness and the reality of the war. While hiding in Hotel Mille Collines, the narrator hears the Interahamwe arguing with the UN peace keepers about the presence of *'inyenzi'* and she points out that "the word *'inyenzi'* was no longer hurtful to me. It had become a word that meant 'my people'. If I see a cockroach scuttling across the ground now I cannot kill it because I feel like I'm killing a member of my own family" (69). At this point the "block of becoming" is real. The reality here is that the narrator does not imitate the cockroach, neither does she become a cockroach. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, "a becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself; but also, that it has no term, since its term in turn exists only as taken up in another becoming of which it is the subject, and which coexists, forms a block with the first" (238). The block of becoming is a multiplicity, a heterogeneity through "involution". It is a creative in-between from the human and the cockroach. We should not read the narrator's statement as a point of finding affiliation with the cockroach. To do that would be to reduce the process to resemblance or imitation; in this narrative strain, becoming is a multiplicity formed out of contagion with the cockroach.

Such an understanding allows the narrator to negotiate positioning. In her escape from Rwanda, in many of the roadblocks she manipulates her becoming-animal to cross over. In one instance she laments about the *'inyenzi'* causing trouble for the Zaireans in need of crossing over to their homes. She doubly acquires performance of disdain and admiration to make the Interahamwe to clear the way for her. At the border at Gisenyi, the narrator gets her stomach cut open by the Interahamwe as she is seen as the damned cockroach. The perpetrators indicate that they know cockroaches do not die easily and as such they must stamp them again and again to compete the process. Another form of becoming emerges at this point. The

narrative points out, “I knew with certainty that I had many dead bodies above me and even more below me. I was some sort of *macabre sandwich filling, a crumpled-up bit of breathing* tangled into the dead” (100, *emphasis added*). This transformation is what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as becoming-animal transforming into becoming-molecular (248). Science fiction captures these forms of becoming-molecular well in several texts such as, Isserley’s end in Michel Farber’s *Under my Skin* (Dillon) and becoming animal extending to becoming -music in Coetzee’s *Disgrace* through David’s opera for the dogs (Herron).

In Chishugi’s case, the becoming extends to both molecular and things imperceptible. The bodies around her mark the one end of becoming through death. However, the rise of the narrator after being hacked, opens a threshold into zombification and vampirism (101). The reaction of the Interahamwe left to deal with the undying confirms this. The narrator’s rise from the rubble of dead bodies makes the Interahamwe to see her as some form of undead. He says, “you who can be found alive after all this: if you can’t die with all these bodies I don’t want your blood on me” (101). The narrative points to the fear the Interahamwe showed and his belief that the narrator possessed some strange power that could curse him on the spot. While this alludes to the becoming that Deleuze and Guattari conceptualise as supernatural (totemism), it is real. The rhizomatic nature of such becoming is explored well when Deleuze and Guattari in *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* point out that this is an “ensemble of states, each distinct from the other, grafted onto the man insofar as he is searching for a way out. It is a creative line of escape that says nothing other than what it is” (Qtd in Dillon 149). When the Interahamwe sees the narrator as possessing some strange power, her becoming echoes a becoming-woman that is which is seen as proceeding from sorcery (Deleuze and Guattari 248). The transformed becoming is important here as it acts as a means of escape for the narrator. It allows the Interahamwe to leave her alone and necessitates her escape into Zaire. The connotation with her being possessed allows her to be seen not just as alien but also a dangerous alien who embodies powers beyond their machete. In this case, her becoming serve as her escape.

In the rest of the narrative, the obsession with cleanliness echo the narrator's need to purge certain ingrained connotations about becoming-animal. At one point the narrator says, "during our journey out of Rwanda getting clean was the last thing on my mind, but ever since I'd fled I had developed an obsession with getting clean and staying that way" (163). The constant connection with cockroaches indicate a change in perspective about animals. Furthering her stand on animals is her decision to stop eating meat once she gets to safety. Is it respect for animals or is it a consequence of the open machete killings that demonstrated to her the lack of mercy humans have? Having been equated to animal by the war machine and its attendants as well as experiencing the careless flow of blood of those seen as animals make her question her humanity and the ideas of specialness from other animals. This is a conscious decision reached at after an understanding of the relations humans and animals share was exposed to her through the de-humanisation in the war.

This study has explored the different forms of becoming in war literature and the effect on the relationship between man and animals. In such scenarios, the role of literature becomes paramount not only to expose the way politics is ingrained in the 'war machine' but also to interrogate the versions of becoming and the transformations they allow for a rethinking of human-animal relations. In this case, writing is an act of testimony as well as a form of becoming. When Deleuze and Guattari conceptualise the literary writer as a sorcerer they envision writing as a form of 'involution' as well as a becoming that delves into the heterogeneities of becoming. By centring the victim's embracing of becoming, avenues for negotiation of belonging and survival are teased out.

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Decoding the ‘new’ culture of roadside memorialisation in South Africa by Michael Eric Hagemann

Abstract

Roadside memorials are such a common sight on this country’s roads that they barely warrant a second glance from passers-by, yet there was a time in recent memory when this was not the case. The increasing occurrence of these humble shrines indicates the entrenchment and expansion of a relatively “new” cultural practice that invites critical attention. In this paper, I intend to demonstrate that the emergence of this phenomenon in South Africa is a local adaptation of similar memorial traditions found elsewhere. By unpacking the forms and functions of these memorials as markers of private grief in public spaces, I will suggest that they reflect a secularising trend that in itself mirrors the demographics of our post-

<i>Figure 1 "Joe Whitehurst"</i>	<i>Figure 2 "Marco Dos Santos"</i>
	
<i>Figure 3 "Preston"</i>	<i>Figure 4 "JFGR"</i>
	

apartheid society.

Roadside memorials are now a common sight on South Africa's urban and rural road networks. These silent markers of private grief in public space appear soon after the detritus from a fatal road incident is cleared away. The trauma associated with the erection of these shrines is contained within the physical structures themselves such that they seem to be absorbed by the landscape, becoming a part of it. Indeed, this transition is so seamless that most road users do not consciously register the deeper import of the passing flash of colour and the angular dimensions of the small structures. The existence of these informal memorials is well documented elsewhere and explored by scholars in disciplines as diverse as cultural geography and trauma studies. In South Africa, the practice is less well researched and there was a time in recent memory when roadside memorials were not a part of South Africa's cultural landscapes. My purpose is to examine the origin of these phenomena, analyse their characteristics and speculate on their significance both as objects of trauma reconfiguring vernacular memorialisation and as evidence of an evolving cultural performance that reflects something of the socio-demographics of this nation and a change in the trajectories of expressive grief.

The origins of roadside memorials are intriguing. They are reported to be common in the Anglophone and European nations with a Christian civil religion heritage and an established public road network (MacConville 34). Collins and Rhine suggest that roadside memorialisation is fundamentally a cultural cross-pollination that has its roots in the considerably older *descansos* tradition – a Catholic funerary rite common in Latin America and long practised in those states that border Mexico (222). They further submit that this vernacular memorialisation, so infused with articulating private grief, has been adopted in recent times as a cultural practice by the general population of the United States (225). The direct linkage of the practice with road deaths logically suggests that it quickly spread throughout the USA thanks to an extensive road network and an

annual traffic death toll exceeding 35 000¹. Quite how it crossed the oceans is open to speculation, though Bolton and Olsson argue a good case that the spread of American popular culture “took place, and still takes place—both inside and outside the U.S.—through the propagation of U.S. media and consumer products” (18). This cultural transmission, energised by modern media and entertainment forms, has eased the way for a once localised tradition to rapidly find resonance globally. South Africa, particularly in the post-apartheid digital era has not been immune to adopting multiple cultural traditions from the United States. We see, for example, the rapid uptake of the “trick or treat” celebrations associated with Halloween, the restyling of school dances as “proms” and the influence of American music genres such as rap, hip-hop and rhythm and blues on the local music scene. It is young people as first adopters of new media technologies who initiate cultural change and embrace these imports and the same is true of roadside memorialisation.

As we look carefully at South African roadside memorials, it becomes apparent that they closely mirror trends already described elsewhere. Hartig and Dunn determined that these shrines are predominantly erected in memory of young adults, the majority of whom seem to be male, so opening “contradictory discourses condemning and condoning youth machismo” (5). That certainly seems to be the case with the limited field work I have conducted, where of the five memorials close to my home, four are dedicated to male victims. The death of any youth, however, has a particular destabilising effect on traditional trajectories of grief. A young person’s sudden, traumatic end is perceived almost universally as cruelly untimely and, by extension, a deeply tragic waste of a life brimming with potential. The epitaph on

¹ In 2016, 37 5461 fatalities were recorded on US roads. By way of perspective, the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington DC contains the names of 55 000 American casualties from the 12 year long war. Source:
<https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812451>

“Preston’s” memorial poignantly reflects this: “Our son, loved with a love beyond all feelings, missed with a grief beyond all tears”. The psychic void created in tragedies like this is so grief laden that it begs for assuagement and the erection of a roadside memorial is one way that the grief stricken attempt to describe and somehow contain their sense of loss. However simply constructed the memorial might be, complex and highly nuanced grief performance rituals accrete around the structure.

Scholars point out that roadside memorials tend to take two forms. The first are the spontaneous memorials that arise at the scene of a fatal incident usually within hours of the event occurring. Typically, these memorials take the form of floral tributes symbolising as Erika Doss suggests “beauty and the brevity of life” (299). Bouquets are normally placed by the friends of the deceased as an “active sacred engagement with the dead” (Doss 304). These tributes are sort-lived and are habitually abandoned where they wither and decay. Shortly thereafter, the immediate family erect a permanent marker at or as close as possible to the scene of their loved one’s death (Klaassens and Huigen 191). Characteristically, these memorials tend to be wooden or metal versions of the Latin cross and are inscribed with the victim’s name and date of death. It is common, too, for votive offerings such as items of clothing, favourite possessions, photographs, poems and letters or indeed anything closely associated with the deceased to be left within the now private and informally consecrated space of the memorial (Collins and Rhine 230). The simple wooden cross erected in memory of “Joe Whitehurst” for example, contains his name, dates of birth and death and two empty beer bottles are embedded in the ground at the foot of the cross. In this case it appears that the bottles are not roadside litter. Instead, their deliberate placement suggests that libations were poured here. The context and individual significance of this performative act is, however, cordoned off from passers-by who may approach this space, but cannot access its hidden significance. A powerful dynamic is at work here.

The erection of a roadside memorial, whatever its size or form, is effectively an unsanctioned expropriation of public space by private mourners. The “expropriation” I refer to may also be read as an attempt by the mourning families to wrest control of the trauma

narrative from the cruel hands of fate. As Hartig and Dunn suggest, roadside memorials instantly become sovereign spots of sacred ground “because they commemorate death and *command reverence*. Unsanctioned behaviour in or around such a landscape is considered sacrilegious” (10, emphasis added). The act of “expropriation” of public space to claim a site for the expression of private grief is heavily nuanced. Spaces so deeply symbolic and invested in acts of memorialisation thus ironically may also become sites of potential conflict.

Whilst these shrines are of deep significance to the families, their reception by others is often mixed. Motorists passing by a memorial may barely register its existence, but for some, their presence may be an annoyance. The roadside shrine erected in Edgemead in memory of “JFGR” for example, drew the ire of a neighbour who objected to a visible Christian symbol. Similar concerns are noted in other countries, but most “complaints” are directed at the eyesore quality and the apparent proliferation of these shrines. Collins and Rhine (230) note that memorials tend to be visited by families on significant anniversaries such as “birthdays, the anniversary of the fatal event, Christmas and Valentine’s Day” which would seem to mirror the previous customs of visiting gravesites. In between these times, the memorials are not maintained and suffer weathering, accidental damage, vandalism and even theft. Thus one can see how people might well perceive them as blots on the landscape. The attitude of road maintenance agencies is also a tricky one to navigate. In this country, the South African

National Roads Agency is opposed to the erection of roadside memorials and as journalist Vusumuzi Ka Nzapheza discovered in 2008, SANRAL would prefer the practice to be outlawed. This has not occurred to date, suggesting that the emotional power invested in them is sufficient to halt the hand of potential legislation drafters. Local authorities in South Africa seem to adopt a more relaxed attitude to roadside memorials, removing them only if they pose a danger to the public or seriously impede routine road maintenance.

The obvious sanctity of these private memorials is something that intrigues. It is beyond the scope of this present work to fully investigate the issue, but it is worth noting the online work of Keith Suter who suggests a link to the emergence of war grave curation, a

phenomena he suggests arose during the Great War with the work of Fabian Ware² who pioneered the “recording of the graves of fallen soldiers ... and took photographs of the sites for the next of kin”. Ware’s purpose was to commemorate, dignify and try to make some sense out of the untimely and astronomical loss of so many young lives. The same motivation, so Suter suggests, easily segued into contemporary society where road accidents and not war are now the main reasons why young people die traumatically. But while war casualties are today accorded formal recognition and appropriate memorialisation in specially consecrated spaces, the fact remains that road accident victims are seen in a different light. Although many more people in this country (and elsewhere) perish on the roads annually than have died in times of war, road deaths are seen as mere public statistics³. Accident victims become tallied numbers, the stock of those grim accountants whose job it is to record the carnage on our roads. The erection of roadside memorials is partly explainable, therefore, as an attempt by the bereaved to counter this depersonalisation and declare the humanity of the victim. Yet even as we narrow our focus on roadside memorialisation, a troubling issue arises. Roadside memorialisation appears to reflect our nation’s demographic profiles too.

I am acutely aware that any deference to arbitrary classifications based on racial grounds is hugely problematic. This is especially so given this country’s oppressive past and the ongoing battle to forge a

² Ware eventually became Vice Chairman of the Imperial War Graves Commission. The mandate of the Commission is to “mark and maintain the graves... build memorials to those who have no known grave ... and to keep records and registers, including of the civilian war dead.” Source: Suter, Keith. "Roadside memorials: sacred places in a secular era." *The Free Library* 22 March 2010.

³ In South Africa, over 135 000 people died in road accidents between 2008 and 2017. Source:
https://www.wheels24.co.za/News/Guides_and_Lists/sa-road-deaths-national-crisis-134-000-killed-over-10-years-aa-20180424

non-racial, postcolonial society. Yet bearing this in mind, Willem Schoeman's analysis of South Africa's religious demography based on the 2001 census and the 2013 Household Data Survey has applications germane to our discussion. Regarding reported religious adherence, he notes "[t]he 2001 results for the white and coloured population groups indicate a decline but the percentages of Christian in the black and Asian population groups were still growing" (2). Schoeman's research, coupled with anecdotal evidence that roadside memorialisation is unknown in South Africa's black population suggests then that the practice is specifically confined to the secularising sections of our society. There are interesting dynamics at work here.

As people move out of the orbit of Christian denominational adherence, they break with the practices traditionally associated with a Christian funeral. Formalised mourning rituals and church services conducted by professional clergy that culminate in burial are giving way to non-denominational or unscripted secular "life celebrations" all followed by private cremation. Whilst the latter practices may serve the function of giving mourners relative freedom of expression in their initial throes of grief, the tendency towards cremation means that the vital connection to a grave site in a formally consecrated place that serves as the final resting place for the loved one, has been eliminated as the apex of the grief trajectory. This creates a disruptive lacuna that stalls the trauma narrative and impedes grief recovery. Put simply, after the disposal of the mortal remains, the family have nowhere to go to in those deeply private moments when they wish to reconnect with their loved one. A plaque in a dedicated wall of remembrance (itself often regulated in terms of form, size and inscriptions) is so impersonal and so physically small that it cannot contain the memory spectrum attached to the deceased. These practises, divorced from traditional religious funeral customs, have so few tangible links with the loved one that families feel the need to make that connection with the precise spot where their loved one was last alive. The place of death ironically becomes the place where they sense the enduring presence of their loved one most acutely.

While roadside memorials may seem macabre to some casual observers, they are spaces of deep, if sometimes contradictory significance to the families. Collins and Opie (110) acknowledge this

dilemma, noting “if agency is given over to the site, how does the individual gain control?” Their resolution of this is salient. They posit that roadside shrines can be regarded as examples of Foucauldian heterotopias in that they open up a parallel space that somehow limits the initial trauma’s psychic hold (110-111). Accessing the shrine thus becomes a conscious performative act: it involves a journey or pilgrimage and culminates in stepping into the memorial’s sacred space to re-engage with the deceased and the circumstances of his or her death. Strangers passing by have no knowledge of the victim and are excluded from the knowing implicit in this space and cannot navigate the complex psychic web of trauma recall that settles over the memorial. For many families, the shrine becomes the epicentre of their trauma narratives; a place invested with healing agency.

The roadside memorial becomes, therefore, more than just a collection of material objects. In its sacred space, families are able to marshal their thoughts and may, with time, reconstruct a memory framework that reconciles them with the trauma they have suffered. The observable fact that some roadside memorials are ultimately abandoned and left to merge into the landscape suggests that for some, at least, a life-affirming readjustment is attainable. For others, the recovery from the initial impact of the incident and its trauma is tied to an enduring connection to the shrine. Life may go on, but they continue to derive some comfort from having a revered place to return to – a site where they can connect with and remember their loved one. It is a small consolation, but the shrine’s existence in effect partially negates the absence occasioned by sudden death, and ritualised site visits become agency appropriating acts that form an ineffable part of an ongoing trauma narrative.

In closing, roadside memorials are now a permanent feature of South Africa’s public landscapes. They may be augmented by other non-traditional “new” modes of mourning, such as online memoriali-

sation⁴, but their proliferation suggests the emergence of a secularised, post-Biblical culture in South Africa; a culture imported from the “North” and readily adopted with minimal local adaptation. It is highly unlikely that road authorities will ever be able to proscribe the practise because of the sense of sanctity invested in the sites and potential pushback from an increasingly emboldened public. This “new” culture of memorialisation is rewriting mourning rituals as people search for alternative ways of navigating the grief and trauma of sudden death. The essence of roadside memorials remains. These objects are rooted in that deepest of human needs and emotional reach: the necessity to pause and remember, an act so poignantly captured in the closing lines from Shakespeare’s Sonnet 55:

“So, till the judgment that yourself arise, You live in this, and dwell in lovers’ eyes.”

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⁴ Personal Facebook pages, for example, are often maintained as memory albums by families for some time after the owners have passed away.

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Illustrations

Hagemann, Michael Eric. "Joe Whitehurst". 7 April 2018.

Hagemann, Michael Eric. "Marco Dos Santos". 7 April 2018.

Hagemann, Michael Eric. "Preston". 7 April 2018.

Hagemann, Michael Eric. "JFGR". 27 April 2018.

Mother, Father, Lover: A creative look at how relationships with influence future intimate relationships by Musawenkosi Khanyile

Abstract

Inspired by the Object Relations perspective in Psychology, which posits that humans are relationship-seeking beings whose early relationships with primary caregivers' influence future relationships, this paper demonstrates through the use of poetry how early relationships with parents shape future intimate relationships. The poetry used focuses on the dynamics in three different kinds of relationships, namely the relationship with the mother, the father, and ultimately the lover. These dynamics are observed in tandem to demonstrate how the way we function in intimate relationships is impacted by our past experiences from our relationships with parents.

What do the poet and the psychologist have in common? They both believe, whether consciously or unconsciously, in the power of words. It is easy to see how poets embrace the power of words, because poetry is the art of gathering words. Psychology, on the other hand, is embedded in the belief that words have the power to heal. Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, realized that patients who came to see him were able to cure themselves by talking. This came to be known as the talking-cure, or what Freud's colleague, Joseph Breuer, famously referred to as catharsis. Even to date, Psychologists do not prescribe medication, but instead facilitate a non-judgmental space that allows patients to freely talk themselves out of emotional pain. Words, for both poetry and psychology, are powerful.

I became a poet first before I became a Clinical Psychologist. I chose poetry as an adolescent in Grade 8. Life chose psychology for me after I had finished matric and didn't know what to do next. Now when I reflect, it is probably my passion for words that made me fall in love with psychology. When I learned that healing in psychotherapy is attained through words, a part of me that had fallen in love with poetry in previous years and was already accustomed to the idea of healing itself through words, resonated with this. A

couple of years ago I stood in front of Grade 10 and 11 learners during a Career Guidance Day outlining what psychology is. My attention had been drawn to a learner who asked questions enthusiastically and seemed interested in what I was saying. It was only after she had asked how psychologists treat patients and I had explained to her the basics of psychotherapy, that I began to see disappointment sit on her face. I thereby deduced that she belonged to a group of those who underestimate the power of words, those who choose a different path to poets and psychologists.

I have begun by outlining a common ground for both poetry and psychology since this essay seeks to bring these together in exploring relationships. This essay seeks to demonstrate, through the use of poetry and ideas borrowed from psychology, how early relationships with primary caregivers' influence future intimate relationships. It is no surprise that psychology, a field that has dedicated itself in understanding human behaviour, has studied relationships extensively. It is also no surprise that poetry, an art form through which people observe and narrate the intricacies of life, has given people a platform to celebrate relationships, mourn them and also preserve memories associated with them. Poetry became an outlet for me to release the negative emotions emanating from strained relationships, as well as the reservoir of memories associated with these relationships. Psychology helped me connect the dots, to understand the dynamics of relationships, particularly how relationships with parents become templates for future ones, and also to process the emotional trauma caused by failed relationships.

One of the greatest shifts in the field of psychology was the idea that human beings are object-seeking, instead of pleasure-seeking. Perhaps the term "object-seeking" is a bit confusing, now that it is never used to refer to human beings. Contrary to the common usage of the word, in this case "object" means the other, or if you like, another human being. The idea that human beings are object-seeking, or rather relationship-seeking, falls under what has come to be known as Object Relations Theories. Freud argued that human beings were driven by the need to reduce tension, which inadvertently led to pleasure. Humans, therefore, were seen as pleasure-seeking beings. This was until William Fairbairn came into the picture, a

Psychiatrist and Psychoanalyst writing in seclusion from the popular psychoanalytic community, was the first one to propound the idea that human beings are not motivated by pleasure, but rather by the desire to build relationships with one another. It is this idea that has him lauded by Otto Kernberg as “the most radical proponent of an object relations model” (11). Like any other new idea, the suggestion that human beings are driven by the need to build relationships with one another was warmly embraced by some and rejected by others. Edward Khantzian’s assertion that “pleasure is momentary and not unimportant, but human connection and the comfort we derive from each other is more sustaining and lasting” (276), epitomizes the echoes of those who warmly embraced Fairbairn’s idea. It is noteworthy that Fairbairn did not completely disregard the notion of pleasure but emphasized human connection as the ultimate goal. If human beings are driven by the desire to build relationships with one another, what happens then when this desire is met with rejection? According to Fairbairn, that’s where you should start when seeking to understand human pain. Fairbairn believed that many problems arise early in childhood, specifically from mother-infant relationships.

Human beings, it would seem, learn everything, including how to function in relationships. Our knowledge of how to love is imprinted in our minds as early as infancy. John Bowlby, arguably inspired by what Fairbairn had theorized, went on to study the attachment behaviour of infants. What he found culminated in his theory of attachment, popularly known as Attachment Theory. At the heart of this theory is the argument that individuals, based on their early interactions with their primary caregivers, particularly mothers, develop a mental representation of their caregivers, which later shapes their relationships. Jude Cassidy puts this more clearly when she writes that “according to Bowlby, based on the experiences with the mother, the child develops a mental representation (Bowlby calls this a representational model, or an internal working model [IWM] of the mother” (123). This mental representation of the mother shapes how the individual will function in future relationships, including intimate ones. Michal Einav notes that “it appears that children internalize and later apply the interactional models of self

and other exemplified in their relationship with their parents to their own expectations about intimate relationships” (426).

Perhaps what all this means is that if one wants to understand their inability to maintain relationships, they should reflect on their childhood relationships as an attempt to locate the origin of their shortcomings. This is probably why Psychologists are renowned for asking individuals to describe their relationships with parents, even if those individuals are only seeking help regarding problems they are facing in their current relationships with their intimate partners. In Robert Berold’s poem, entitled “Visit to my mother”, we see a hilarious opinion held by the speaker regarding the tendency of psychologists to link people’s present problems to their upbringing, or more specifically, their parents:

“Why did you go into psychotherapy?” he asks me. We’d started talking about this yesterday when he fetched me from the airport. My mother answers “Therapy is when you pay a lot of money to someone to tell you that you had bad parents.” (57)

I have already described poetry as an outlet that I have used since adolescence to release the negative emotions caused by failed relationships, and also to store memories associated with these relationships. Perhaps my writing poetry has been, similar to how psychotherapy commonly unfolds, an attempt to trace the origin of my struggles with relationships in childhood. The following original poems demonstrate my attempts at tracing the origin of my challenges with intimate relationships by reflecting on my relationships with my parents, and also on the difficulties that I have faced in my past intimate relationships. I begin with the poem entitled “Reflections”, which can be viewed as a synopsis of these difficulties, and then proceed to poems falling under the respective themes of “Mother”, “Father”, and “Lover”.

“Reflections”

In grade 8, my hand landed on the delicate parts of a classmate.
This did not look anything like me:
a well-behaved boy who always wore neatly
and performed well in class.
She reported me.

One teacher said I needed to cut down on cheese.
Back home there was only my father-
a man who lived within himself.
We turned the house into separate homes;
our hearts never came out of our rooms.
We met briefly on our coincidental walks to the kitchen.
Also in the lounge when soccer was playing on TV.
That is the only time we ever spoke.
Even when we drove a distance
we listened to the humming of the engine.
I learned to store his voice within me for the silent days
like ants store food ahead of winter.
Mom had gone to live in a rural area,
in a house that dad built on the conviction that men
should retire away from the restlessness of the township.
She'd taken my younger siblings with her.
I was in primary school.
Mom raised me with a loud voice and a short temper.
I remember her pressing me against the ground,
hitting me with all the energy she possessed.
I remember swinging back and forth
from loving to hating to tolerating her.
A part of me was happy when she left.
Now she calls to complain that I never call.
I grew up in solitude.
Learned to enjoy silence.
Got used to keeping myself to myself.
Found poetry in high school and hid myself there.
Girls came and went.
Relationships slipped through my hands.
I couldn't hold them long enough.
Maybe because I never learned to share myself.
Maybe because of mom and dad and silence.
The psychologist in Hilton asked me:
who then taught you affection?
and then scribbled down a note when I couldn't answer.
That was the last time I saw her.

“Mother”

Dad built a house in a rural area.
He didn't want to die in a township,
he thought his soul wouldn't find peace
in such an unsettled place.
You left to stay in this house.
I was in primary school.
Now many years have passed.
You are worried that you left
even where you should have stayed.
We have a sad relationship;
we starve of each other for months
and when you can no longer bear it,
you call for what seems like reassurance.
My heart feels heavy inside my chest
when after months
you call to ask if I still love you.

“Mother II”

I should have known that I could never run away from you
You visit me now in the guise of a lover
In her beautiful eyes I see you
Through her soft touch I'm forgiving you.

“Father”

Your love was like road signs.
I only read your face to understand
when to stop
where to go.
We did not need a voice to love;
love was quiet and enough.
Things have changed:
now you want to speak more

like a man desperate to leave something behind
before he goes.
Your thirst for conversation
draws you out of your room.
Sometimes I want to shut you out
even if it hurts.
Sometimes I want to avenge
all the silent years.

“*Lover: this is why I fail at love*”

Love is wanting to hold.
Relationships are arms we hold each other with.
I am a man without limbs.

“*The wandering man*”

For T

My love poems always sound like obituaries,
always mourning someone that got away.
I told you this before you gave me your heart
but took care to not make it sound like a warning.
I am haunted by our memories:
Our long drives to beautiful landscapes
listening to James Bay;
my morning and late night drives
to and from you.
I am haunted by your smile
and your innocent-looking thumb-sucking
like a 5 year old.
I could have opened up my arms
to shelter you forever
but I'm a hopeless wandering man.
My heart is a hotel room up the stairs.
They're always walking up and down
looking for a home.

These poems demonstrate a pattern of struggles in relationships, beginning in childhood. If a psychologist studied these poems, they would probably argue that the hopeless view of the speaker as “a man without limbs” who cannot hold relationships, originates from him being raised by a mother with “a loud voice and a short temper” and also by an emotionally distant father who “lived within himself”. These poems illustrate the growth of an individual from a boy who endures the short temper of his mother and learns to live with the silence of his father to a man who is now struggling with intimate relationships, but is somehow hopeful that current relationships may heal the wounds of past relationships; that the wounds of being raised by non-affectionate parents can potentially be healed by an affectionate lover, evident in the line, “Through her soft touch I’m forgiving you”, from the poem entitled, “Mother II”. This hope is consistent with the argument in psychology that negative emotions from past unstable relationships can be replaced by positive emotions from stable relationships characterized by love. In the above poems there is a pattern of failure to hold relationships, where the speaker feels that his heart is “the hotel room up the stairs” where lovers are “always walking up and down looking for a home”. The idea of a heart that is vacant, where lovers do not stay long enough, corresponds with the idea of a mother who “left” even where she “should have stayed”. In these poems there is a link between difficulties in early relationships with parents and difficulties occurring in intimate relationships at a later stage. In other words, there is a common ground between what we see in these poems, and what has been argued in psychology, specifically by Fairbairn and Bowlby.

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Positive Representations of Asexuality in Contemporary Young Adult by Smangaliso Simelane

Abstract

According to Stacy Pinto, asexuality is one of the most under-researched, misunderstood, under-represented sexual identities of the 21st century (331) despite the fact that there currently exists—a small social movement, perhaps akin to the gay rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which has brought together a diverse group of people who identify as asexual (Bogaert 244). Due to the limited awareness of asexuality, relatively few asexual characters exist in literature and even fewer could be considered examples of positive representation. Instead, asexual representations in media tend to serve as—denial narratives (Przybylo 189) which invalidate the asexual identity and render asexuality illegible. The absence of positive asexual characters can have an alienating effect on those who identify as asexual and find themselves in a culture which promotes sexuality as a necessary part of human existence. A rise in fantasy novels that feature asexual protagonists may challenge the trend of asexual erasure and problematize prevailing notions of human sexuality. In the following thesis I investigate how the fantasy genre can facilitate the awareness and normalisation of asexual identities. This will be done by introducing and contextualising asexuality before discussing the effects of past negative representations of asexual characters in literature and popular media. Following this, I analyse two contemporary young adult fantasy novels, namely *Clariel* by Garth Nix and *Quicksilver* by RJ Anderson, that feature positively portrayed asexual characters to determine how the fantasy elements and concepts such as identification with the protagonist (Varsam 205) effectively depathologizes queerness.

Literature can influence the beliefs and behaviours of readers. Used correctly, it serves as an effective vehicle for combating negative stereotypes and inspiring cognitive changes. One of the ways literature achieves this is by encouraging the reader to identify with a protagonist who exposes them to new perspectives. Examples of this can be found in the recent bubbling of young adult fantasy novels

which provide positive representations of queer identities. To explore this further, I shall be investigating how the fantasy genre effectively uses the reader's identification with the protagonist to make commentary on and affect the real world. This will be done by analysing *Clariel* by Garth Nix, a novel which features an asexual heroine who, rather than being pathologized, is given a sympathetic narrative that allows one to relate to her experience.

To begin this exploration, one must first understand the mimetic qualities of literature. Plato described art as a form of mimesis which represents nature. This can be illustrated by borrowing a metaphor proposed by Keith Oatley which compares literature to a computer simulation. Just as a computer can run simulations based on models of reality, so too does the human mind run literary simulations of fictional realities when reading. Oatley claims that during these literary simulations our "emotions do not just mirror those of the character. Though the plan is simulated, the emotions are our own" (68-9). Hence, through literature, one can sympathise with and take on the feelings of the characters created by the author. This sympathetic link allows identification to occur, a process whereby the reader "empathizes with the character and adopts the character's identity" (Cohen 252). Identification, especially with protagonists, can have long-lasting ramifications. According to John Tchernev "identification involves taking the perspective of someone else, and therefore perhaps seeing a new viewpoint on an issue. This can lead to changes in the audience member's subsequent attitudes and behaviours" (7). To bolster his case, Tchernev references Michael Slater *et al* who theorize that persuasive narratives "may lead to at least temporary acceptance of values and beliefs that represent a shift from the individual's existing beliefs" (5-6). Similar conclusions are drawn by Anneke de Graaf who claims that "as identifying readers simulate or imagine the events that happen to a character in their imagination, they may gain greater understanding of what it is like to experience the described events and beliefs may be influenced accordingly" (77). De Graaf *et al* demonstrate this in a 2012 study where participants were given a story in which the perspectivizing character was either for or against euthanasia. The results revealed that after reading, the participants were more likely to side with the perspectivizing character of the version they had received. Drawing

on this data, de Graaf insists that “identification was responsible for the influence on attitudes. When readers identify with a character, their attitudes shift in the direction of the ones implied by the character” (77). Based on these claims, I argue that identification can be a vital tool for introducing a plethora of minority or marginalised communities to the public and normalising their experiences. To demonstrate my argument, I shall investigate how identification used in contemporary young adult fantasy novels effectively depathologizes asexual identities.

According to Stacy Pinto, “asexuality is one of the most under-researched, misunderstood, under-represented sexual identities of the 21st century” (331). This is despite the existence of “a small social movement, perhaps akin to the gay rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which has brought together a diverse group of people who identify as asexual” (Anthony Bogaert 244). Studies in Britain have revealed that between 0.4% (Catherine Aicken *et al* 125) and 1% (Bogaert 242) of the population experiences no attraction to any gender, a trait of asexuality which has been pathologized both medically and in popular culture. Nicole Prause *et al* point out that an asexual “seeking guidance from a clinician may be diagnosed with hypoactive sexual desire disorder or sexual aversion disorder, or may be referred for medical evaluation” (342). Furthermore, in literature and other forms of media, relatively few asexual characters can be found and only a small percentage of those could be considered examples of positive representations. Ela Przybylo has investigated portrayals of asexuality and highlighted the negative stereotypes that can be found in media such as the medical drama “House” where the titular Doctor House maintains that it is impossible for his patient to be asexual. Similarly, examples of asexuality in past literature are dominated by characters such as Marty South of *The Woodlanders* who, according to Shanta Dutta, is built up as “an asexual, almost disembodied creature, with no human desires or frailties” (74) and Mary Turner of *The Grass is Singing* who Meral Çileli claims is plagued by a “wish to disprove that she is asexual” (72). Such portrayals, Przybylo argues, serve as “denial narratives” (189) that invalidate asexual identities and render asexuals illegible. Hence, the absence of positive asexual characters can have an alienating effect on those who identify as asexual and find themselves stuck in a society which

enforces compulsory heterosexuality. Additionally, denial narratives also propagate stereotypes, reinforce sexual assumptions and feed the popular belief that sexual attraction is a necessary part of being human. This can have a harmful influence on the behaviours of people, as seen in an article by Dominique Mosbergen which contains accounts of asexuals being disbelieved, viewed as less than human and subjected to corrective rape.

Since the turn of the millennium there has been a rise in the number of young adult fantasy novels which push back against asexual denial narratives. This includes texts such as *Quicksilver* by RJ Anderson, *Every Heart a Doorway* by Seanan McGuire and *Banner of the Damned* by Sherwood Smith. I argue that this influx is made possible by the fantasy genre's ability to serve as a particularly potent means of identification capable of inspiring changes in the attitudes and real-world beliefs of readers. To elucidate, I look to Plato's student Aristotle who once claimed that in effective mimesis there must be some distance between the depicted world and reality as this "allows us to learn from representation, whereas we might respond emotionally to the actual experience" (Matthew Potolsky 37). One of the ways this can be achieved is through defamiliarization. This is a term coined by Viktor Shklovsky and is described by Julie Kaomea as a technique employed by art which forces one to "look at a familiar object or text with an exceptionally high level of awareness" (15), thus vividly renewing one's view of reality. Shklovsky claims that when one becomes habituated to the world they perceive it tends to automatically enter the unconscious. Thus, familiarity can make sensation unobtainable and cause one to be incapable of 'seeing'. According to Shklovsky, a function of art is to turn the familiar unfamiliar and, in doing so, once again "make the stone stony" (162). Fantasy is particularly adept at providing defamiliarized worlds which serve as reflections of our own reality in ways which do not simply mirror real life but instead dynamically transform certain aspects. The depicted worlds are made strange through the author's reimagining of time, space, physical laws and other dimensions. However, they often retain enough of an analogous relationship to ours for meaningful parallels to be drawn. Therefore, when one is engaged in a fantasy literary simulation where they identify with the protagonist, cognitive changes inspired in the fictional world can be brought into

ours. As seen in the lessons one can learn from the treatment of house elves in *Harry Potter* or the greed of Smaug in *The Hobbit*, fantasy has constantly achieved the feat of balancing the familiar with the unfamiliar and consequently admitting readers a safe emotional distance to engage with certain aspects of reality.

To demonstrate this, I turn to *Clariel*, the fourth entry in Garth Nix's "Old Kingdom" series. Within the literary simulation provided by the text, readers are introduced to the eponymous Clariel, a seventeen-year-old girl who has moved with her family to Belisaire. Despite expectations for her to join the Academy and be apprenticed in a trade like her parents, she wants nothing more than to "live in the Great Forest, be a Borderer, and be left alone!" (102). Her constant craving for independence makes her an especially identifiable protagonist for the teen and young adult target audience and imbues her with relatable characteristics that assist in making her a sympathetic character. Inspiring sympathy is a necessary step in the process of identification because, as Oatley claims, "in sympathy a mental link is made to another person" (61). This mental link between reader and fictional character can be exploited to open possibilities for greater empathy both in the literary simulation and in the real world. As Oatley puts it, "your sympathy comes to rest first with one character then another - and by these means your emotional understandings are extended. Those aspects of the self that are imported through the membrane are enlarged by understandings of people in the imagined world and then, perhaps, also of people in the ordinary world" (61). Therefore, by being relatable and sympathetic, *Clariel* allows the reader to identify with her and thereby introduces an asexual perspective that might otherwise remain illegibly foreign. The asexual aspects of Clariel's identity are revealed through her interactions with some of the male characters who proposition her, forcing her to reveal that she's "just not... not interested in men" (251) or "women either" (251). As previously stated, however, the mimeses of literary simulations benefit from maintaining some distance between themselves and the real world. The fantasy elements of Nix's novel do this in an ingeniously subtle manner. Clariel's struggle for independence, for example, is made strange through her insistence on mastering the dangerous powers of Free

Magic instead of the Charter Magic pushed onto her. Likewise, her asexual experience also incorporates fantasy elements. She starts off feeling out of place in Belisaire and opposes her arranged marriage to the Governor of Belisaire's son. When she tries explaining herself to her father, she is told that she is too young to know what she wants and simply has not "met the right young man" (42). Through this, we are introduced to the heteronormative notions held by the people around her. Much like real life, there is an expectation for people to remain within the confines of heterosexuality, thus when Clariel reminds her father that her aunt never married anyone, he claims she is "not a *usual* person" (42). To combat this, Clariel strives to return to the Great Forest where she intends to live in solitude - by her own choice, she is careful to add - and become a Borderer despite Mistress Ader's insistence that this is not a viable option "not now, perhaps not ever" (60). The Great Forest is quite literally a sanctum from the pressures of conformity in Belisaire and thus represents a place where Clariel can truly be herself. As Clariel constantly reminds the reader, she cares little for marriage or Charter Magic and feels imprisoned in the city. Parallels can be drawn between her narrative and observed trends of asexual identity formation. Nicholette Robbins *et al* have explored asexual coming out narratives and, using interviews from 225 participants, characterised it as a process beginning with identity confusion and ending with identity integration where one reaches "a stage of self-acceptance and even pride in the asexual identity regardless of their choice to come out or not. They are no longer hiding their identity from others or acceding to sexual-normative expectations" (759). The process often features the discovery of other asexuals through avenues such as online forums. This, Robbins *et al* claim, "validated their experience" (756) and assisted their exploration of self-identity. One could argue that by using the protagonist's goal to reach the Great Forest, the novel makes the asexual coming out narrative strange through fantasy. This "estrangement" (Shklovsky 152) forces the reader to, perhaps for the first time, analyse elements of compulsory heterosexuality that might have otherwise gone unnoticed when hidden behind the mundaneness of everyday life. It is much harder to ignore the insidious heteronormative pressures of real life when they are overtly represented as an arranged marriage in a fantasy world of magic. There-

fore, by allowing the reader to identify with Clariel and experience her journey of self-realization the asexual identity is made legible which consequently opens possibilities for increased empathy and acceptance. This experience is mediated by fantasy elements that create a comfortable emotional remove and make these ideas more readily digestible. There is evidence that the cognitive changes inspired by narratives such as these have consequences outside of literary simulations. Cohen argues that “identifying with media others allows us to experience social reality from other perspectives and, thus, shapes the development of self-identity and social attitudes” (246). Alfredo Martínez-Expósito demonstrates this in their investigation of how literature in Spain has contributed to the normalisation of LGBT identities. Similarly, positive portrayals of asexuality, such as in *Clariel*, may challenge assumptions about human sexuality and catalyse the mainstream acceptance of asexuality.

It is important to have a diverse range of identities depicted in media. Alice Walker once wrote that “models, in art, in behaviour in growth of spirit and intellect – even if rejected – enrich and enlarge one’s view of existence” (69). *Clariel* does this by providing a positively represented asexual character that validates the identity, negates stereotypes and debunks the illegibility implied by denial narratives. As I have demonstrated, this is achieved by, firstly, establishing a literary simulation. The simulation uses the fantasy genre to estrange reality and shed light on aspects of society that, through familiarity, tend to be invisible. Within the simulation the reader is introduced to an identifiable protagonist who allows them to empathize with her asexual experience. From this, it is apparent that good fantasy literature is more than just the product of an overactive imagination. Instead, it holds up a mirror to reality, reveals flaws with stark clarity and expands the boundaries of our empathy.

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Zoë Wicomb's *Playing in the Light*: Home, Homesickness, and Race as Place by Sarah Yates

Abstract

Marion's journey in *Playing in the Light* can be read as a metaphor for South Africa in general. This is evident in three aspects of the novel: firstly, the anxiety surrounding post-apartheid racial identity and the meaninglessness of categories once —pot-bellied with meaningll, secondly the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as a trigger for this anxiety, and thirdly the idea of the repressed resurfacing to haunt the present (Wicomb, *Playing in the Light* 106). Wicomb's protagonist goes on a journey of discovery after seeing a picture of a woman who resembles her childhood domestic worker in a newspaper. Her parents' past comes back to colour her current identity and understanding of her past and that of her country. This resurgence of the repressed mirrors not only the trauma of Marion's past, but also that of South Africa in general during the transition from apartheid to democracy, and specifically that of coloured people. Through an exploration of the resurgence of the repressed and race as place, Wicomb navigates and deconstructs whiteness and race in general. By reading the novel as diasporic in terms of the way Wicomb uses motifs of home, belonging, homesickness and un-belonging as a spatial metaphor for race, this paper argues that *Playing in the Light* has implications for the ways in which we read race, particularly in a postcolonial context.

Playing in the Light can be read as a microcosm of South Africa's transition into democracy. Firstly, there is the anxiety surrounding post-apartheid racial identity and the meaninglessness of categories once "pot-bellied with meaning" (Wicomb, *Playing in the Light* 106). Secondly, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) serves as a trigger for this anxiety. Thirdly, there is the idea of the repressed resurfacing to haunt the present. Wicomb's protagonist, Marion, goes on a journey of discovery after seeing a picture of a woman who resembles her childhood domestic worker in a newspaper. Her parents' past comes back to colour her current identity and understanding of her past and that of her country. This resurgence of the repressed mirrors not only the trauma of Marion's past, but also that

of South Africa in general during the transition from apartheid to democracy, and specifically that of coloured people. Through an exploration of the resurgence of the repressed and the use of place as a metaphor for race, Wicomb navigates and deconstructs whiteness and race in general.

For Wicomb, the historical memory of coloured South Africans is fraught with issues of shame, ambiguous identity and the often-traumatic legacies of the colonial encounter. In her essay “Shame and Identity: The Case of the Coloured in South Africa”, Wicomb argues that the historical efforts of the coloured community to establish their “brownness” as a pure category is a “denial of shame” (92). By “shame” Wicomb means those connotations and implications of violence and miscegenation which surround slavery and racial mixing with the coloniser. The pursuit of a pure “brownness” therefore, is a denial of the multiracial origins of coloured South Africans. Minesh Dass argues that Marion’s mother, Helen, is an example of Wicomb’s subversion and reversal of these connotations and implications, as Helen exchanges sexual favours with Father Gilbert, the priest at her local church, to become reclassified as white. In this instance, therefore, miscegenation “[produces] whiteness and purity, not browned and degeneracy” (Dass 139). During an analysis of Homi Bhabha’s theory of postcolonial liminality in “Shame and Identity”, Wicomb argues that coloured identity is its own distinct identity rather than a liminal space between whiteness and blackness. Colouredness does, however, function as a liminal space for Marion in *Playing in the Light*. For Helen, colouredness functions as a pure category to be escaped. Marion’s experience of her identity as a space of travel, of “unremitting crossings” is evidence of the mutability and fluidity of her identity as she shifts from whiteness to an ambiguous state of colouredness (Wicomb, *Playing in the Light* 107).

Through her discovery of her parent’s coloured origins, Marion discovers the realities of life during apartheid. One of the central ironies of the novel is the contingency of the apartheid government’s definition of whiteness as given in the 1962 Population Registration Amendment. Helen and John’s ability to fit into this definition is further evidence of its contingent and constructed nature. Here, whiteness is defined in terms of what it is not and what it is perceived to be rather than any essential or irrefutable fact:

A 'white person' is a person who (a) in appearance obviously is a white person and who is not generally accepted as a coloured person; or (b) is generally accepted as a white person and is not in appearance obviously not a white person, but does not include any person who for the purposes of classification under this Act, freely and voluntarily admits that he is by descent a native or coloured person unless it is proved that the admission is not based on fact. (Wicomb, *Playing in the Light* 121)

The circular phrasing of this definition brings attention to the contingent nature of race in general, and of whiteness in particular. That this contingent language comes from a white supremacist regime emphasises this contingency even further, as even those who would argue for and rely on the essential and concrete nature of race struggle to define it in concrete terms. Marion's entire identity hinges on this nebulous and precarious definition. She is unable to retreat even to the relative stability of her parents' coloured past:

My parents were the play-whites; *they* crossed over; but if those places are no longer the same, have lost their meaning, there can be no question of returning to a place where my parents once were. Perhaps I can now keep crossing to and for, to different places, perhaps that is what the new is all about – an era of unremitting crossings. (107)

Significantly, Wicomb points out that, in Marion's research, "whiteness itself, according to the library's classification system, is not a category for investigation" (120). Dass maintains that through her literary interrogation of race through the historical narratives which created whiteness and, in turn, colouredness, Wicomb "cracks open the door of the closed home that is race, exposing that home to a critical light" (145).

Due to the placement of coloured people right below white people in the racial hierarchy of apartheid South Africa, as well as their shared first language with the dominant Afrikaans nationalist culture, coloured people were offered some opportunities to assimilate into the dominant regime. The early Afrikaner nation identified with the narrative of Israel wandering in the desert under the leadership of Moses. According to Susan Newton-King, the early Afrikaner nation felt "a sense of ethnic calling, an identification with the Israel of old, and a theologically grounded contempt for people

of ‘heathen’ origin” (7). This Calvinistic sense of nationalism within the early Afrikaner community is ironic, given the creole-like origins of the Afrikaans language and the initially cooperative relationship between the Dutch loan farmers and the people they found already living in South Africa. There was, of course, violence between the Dutch, the Xhosa and the Khoesan, but it was not, at least not initially, systematic. Afrikaans was necessarily created not by those who identify themselves as white Afrikaners today, but dialectically through contact between the Dutch and those they found in South Africa.

Due to the similarities in lifestyle between the early Afrikaners and the Xhosa, there were many instances of intermarriage between the two groups, as well as between the Xhosa and the Khoesan. White nationalism in South Africa was therefore accompanied by a profound sense of doubt about national and racial identity which necessitated the creation of an Other in opposition to which the Afrikaner nation could define itself. Coloured people in particular then, due to their proximity to the Afrikaans, were particularly alienated in the definition of white Afrikaans nationalism. Their access to the dominant culture emphasised their inability to completely assimilate.

One of the main strategies of the apartheid government, due to its status as a minority population, was to divide up the majority. Through the separation and ordering of different racial groups, the apartheid government was able to create tension between the oppressed groups which prevented them from presenting a united resistance against apartheid. The ambivalence of coloured identity allowed coloured people to be “co-opted by – and even [adopt] – an exclusionary white nationalism, or else identifying themselves with an oppositional black nationalism, while nevertheless remaining marginal to both groupings (Jacobs 77). The necessity of claiming black nationalism in order to resist white hegemony points to colouredness as a form of black subjectivity.

Wicomb, through Marion, identifies race as performative. Marion’s experience of race is based on how she is perceived and misrecognized by her society and herself, rather than any essential part of her being. In her unwitting performance of whiteness, Marion *is* white. The very process through which her parents become

white begins with an instance of misrecognition. Her father John is mistakenly identified as white when he, ignorant of the racial requirements of the post, applies for a job as a traffic officer. It is also the perception of Mrs Murray – her host during part of her investigation into Tokkie’s identity – which initially confirms Marion’s suspicion of the truth: “O gits, it’s like seeing a spook, because from down here with your face tilted like that you look the spitting image of Mrs Karelse, my dear!” (97). Wicomb’s portrayal of race as performative and perceived in this sense argues against essentialist notions of race and ethnicity.

The ways in which race shifts depending on interpretation and context in *Playing in the Light* supports Michelle Wright’s theory of epiphenomenal blackness, as Marion and her parents are variously interpreted as either white or coloured depending on who perceived them and at the moment in which they are perceived. This reading is supported by Andrew van der Vlies’s argument that Marion’s unwitting performance of whiteness is the same as being white (590). By treating race as performative, Wicomb emphasises the contingent nature of its use as a way of categorising the world. Her interrogation of racial categories is accomplished through her use of geography as a metaphor for race.

Wicomb uses the home as a microcosm for the landscape of race. The various homes in Marion’s memory serve as symbols for different things. For De Michelis, Marion’s immaculate flat is “an emblem of Marion’s state of denial concerning her origins and misidentification with whiteness” (73). It is significant that the novel begins with a disruption of this space, and therefore of her state of denial. Not only is Marion’s balcony intruded upon by a dead guinea fowl, but her own furniture has begun to stifle her as her four-poster canopy bed becomes the site of recurring panic attacks. These panic attacks are the first instance of repression and resurgence in the novel. The description of the bed as a house within a house is indicative of the ways in which Wicomb uses the motif of house and home throughout the novel, as the bed becomes a space of crisis within Marion’s denial. The other houses and homes are symbols for the different parts of Marion’s identity: her father’s house is the home of her childhood memories, her childhood home is a claustro-

phobic space of unrelenting performance, and the old farmhouse of her father's childhood is a symbol of her origins.

As Marion moved between homes, she experiences the same shift in racial definitions as South Africans in general during the novel as a previously essentialised and taken for granted part of her identity is rendered mutable and unstable. According to Sarah Nuttal, "In South African literary and cultural scholarship there has been, since the mid-1990s, a departure from earlier work in which race was largely left unproblematised and was treated as a given category in which difference was essentialised" (11). Wicomb is part of this literary turn to the problematisation of race. *Playing in the Light* can be read as a microcosm of the national identity crisis which accompanied the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Significantly, it is the photograph of Patricia Williams – a victim of police brutality who had just told her story at the TRC – that triggers Marion's curiosity about the identity of Tokkie. While the TRC sought to address some of the atrocities committed during apartheid, it only accounted for individual acts with individual victims and perpetrators rather than addressing the wider social structure. According to Patrick Harries, the TRC largely ignored the private sector's role in the "[exploitation] and [impoverishment]" of black South Africans (128). Just as the TRC was tasked with the exploration and mitigation of historical oppression, Marion must reverse her parents' pursuit of whiteness "in competition with history" (Wicomb, *Playing in the Light* 152). Her retreat to England and consumption of South African history and literature is evidence of Marion's reliance on history and memory in her exploration of race. She searches for herself within this literature: "how many versions of herself exist in the stories of her country?" (191). Marion does not find a home in England, but rather a "place to cry" (191). It is from this place that she searches for a home within descriptions and images of South Africa.

Harries argues that the TRC functioned in part as a way of repressing those memories which may have continued to separate South African society along racial lines. He attributes the coloured repression of slave history to a similar reconciliatory effort:

During the struggle against apartheid, individuals repressed the memory of their slave origins for various reasons. For some, slavery was a social stigma best forgotten; for others, the memory of slavery

threatened to divide the opposition to apartheid along racial lines. For whites who could be associated with the old slave-owning class, the memory of slavery was a source of guilt and pain that merely served to push 'coloureds' into alliance with African nationalism (133).

Wicomb, however, argues that this repression may have more to do with shame. The social stigma of slavery is particularly significant in the South African coloured community given the desire to assimilate into whiteness, as, although likely a slave owner, any white ancestry would be valuable to those coloured people who chose to buy into the racial hierarchy of apartheid society. Dass argues that Wicomb uses an exploration of shame and coloured identity in *Playing in the Light* to "[crack] open the door of the closed home that is race, exposing that home to a critical light" (145).

Wicomb, therefore, through the motif of home and the concomitant ideas of belonging, homesickness and unbelonging, uses *Playing in the Light* to interrogate race as a method for categorising the world. By drawing on the history of racial definitions in South Africa and the trauma of the colonial and apartheid past, Wicomb posits race and specifically whiteness and contingent and constructed categories, as well as argues for the inclusion of colouredness in a discourse which is too often only concerned with blackness and whiteness.

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The WhatsApp Profile Photo: Identity Representation and Visual Rhetoric in the Digital Age by Nsima Stanislaus Udo

Abstract

The convergence of the camera and the phone has changed the way images are produced, appropriated and circulated. According to Mikko Villi, camera phone has shifted image accessibility and consumption from a future anticipation to a near real-time connection. With internet facilities on a camera phone, images can be transmitted almost synchronously between the sender and the receiver.¹ Photographs through the camera phone are able to transmit information to receivers which was intended by the sender in the form of —visual language. This essay examines —the social life [and agency] of photos² and how images used as WhatsApp profile reflect and bear witness to events, identity, people, experience and individual conceptions not recorded in words. Do images —write our past? Do they represent our feeling, our emotions and our sentiments? Does the image we choose to post as the WhatsApp profile reflect our philosophical and ideological standpoint? How do images as used on contemporary social media and messaging applications as status or identity profile reflect and evoke our identity? The essay tries to argue that though WhatsApp profile images are meant to authenticate the identity of the users behind the chat on both sides, these images also describe and illustrate important social and psychological details about the users in visual form. Thus, while images are meant to act as profile, they exude more of individual Identity representation, as well as a form of visual rhetoric in the digital age.

The convergence of the camera and the phone has changed the way images are produced, appropriated and circulated. According to Mikko Villi, camera phone has shifted image accessibility and consumption from a future anticipation to a near real-time connection. With internet facilities on a camera phone, images can be transmitted almost synchronously between the sender and the

receiver¹. Photographs through the camera phone are able to transmit information to receivers which was intended by the sender in the form of “visual language.” Drawing on Tina Campt’s exegesis on family photograph as a historical model for reconstructing the history of European blacks², this essay examines “the social life [and agency] of photos”³ and how images used as WhatsApp profile reflect and bear witness to events, identity, people, experience and individual conceptions not recorded in words.

Tina Campt asserts that a photograph captures a specific moment in one’s life with the intent of creating an image of ourselves as we want others to see⁴. Christopher Pinney also avows that photography can become the prism through which we consider and reflect the questions of identity, and historical (or ideological) consciousness⁵. Here, the profile photo on WhatsApp is meant to serve as a means of pictorial self-identity of users, “where people would have their statuses (expressed in the form of a photographic image) next to their names.”⁶

Image representation as a means of identification of self and profile has moved into the digital world. But WhatsApp profile photos have been appropriated beyond facial self-identification. It has become a point of social intersection, an embodiment of philosophical, ideological, aesthetics and affective discourse, and a

¹ M. Villi, “Distance as the New Punctum”, in J. Larsen and M. Sandbye (eds.), *Digital Snaps: The New face of Photography*, (New York: I. B. Tauris Press, 2014), pp. 47 – 66.

² T. Campt, *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe* (Durham: Duke University Press 2012), Part 1.

³ *Ibid.*, Part 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Part 1.

⁵ C. Pinney, “Introduction: How the Other Half”, in C. Pinney and N. Peterson (eds), *“Photography’s Other Histories”* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2003), 1-16.

⁶ WhatsApp Success Story, <https://successstory.com/products/whatsapp>, accessed 4th June 2017.

performance of sociality⁷. In other words, photographs have gone beyond the surface index of authentic self-representation, to generate some intrinsic messages that allude to the multifaceted sociocultural connotations of their users.

For this essay, interviews were conducted through oral recording and online chats with six friends and colleagues on WhatsApp. The questions asked centered on how my respondents use images on their WhatsApp profile column. What purpose does the users intend when posting a certain image or photograph as his/her profile? Do images write our past? Do they represent our sentiments? Does the image we choose to post as the WhatsApp profile reflect our philosophical and ideological standpoint? How do images used on contemporary social media and messaging applications as status or identity profile reflect and evoke our identity beyond facial outline?

One of my respondents uploaded a romantic sample of graphic art on her profile (Figure 1). When I interviewed her on why she chooses the art image rather than her portrait as her profile, she retorted, “Well, I love art and this appeal to me because I am romantic at heart. It is a representation of love to me”⁸. The image she uploaded on her WhatsApp profile conveys her affective mood, and serves as a means of expressing her amorous feeling within the particular moment. The image profiles the performance of her emerging social identity and feeling within that moment. The image becomes the expression of her infatuation in visual language.

⁷ J. Larsen and M. Sandbye, “Introduction: the New Face of Snapshot Photography” in J. Larsen and M. Sandbye (eds) *Digital Snaps: The New Face of Photography* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), pp. xv – xxxii.

⁸ WhatsApp chat interview with Robin King-Lee on 3rd June 2017.



Figure 1: Graphic art: a representation of romance. Credit: Robin's WhatsApp profile photo, 4th June, 2017.

WhatsApp Profile Photo and Visual Language

The 21st century digital age accentuated the creation and invention of several instant messaging applications. And images have become a dominant form of online message dissemination. My focus here is how profile photos represent the diverse identities of the users on WhatsApp. Pictures and images have become some form of “visual language,” expressing the original or purported intent of their owners, and “speaking” to the now, how things are at present as well as the psychological moment of the user. WhatsApp profile photos have been appropriated by users to express all forms of self-identity, perception, ideals, and philosophical, psychological as well as cultural and political inclinations.

In studying the meanings embedded in advertising images of his time, Roland Barthes in his essay “Rhetoric of the Image” asserts that image use is significantly intentional, and as such, the rhetorical

meanings they convey are “frank and emphatic”⁹. I argue that WhatsApp profile images are intentionally posted by users to convey emphatic meaning in the form of visual rhetoric. Robin reaffirms that she does not only use personal snapshots as her profile because there are several parts of her life that she loves to represent on her profile. Thus, she tries to express her identity, and her multiple and changing social moments through her profile photos.

Gillian Rose has argued that family photos encapsulate mainly those celebrative and exiting and leisure moments¹⁰. This is also reflective on WhatsApp profile. There are several profile photos depicting and showing users in their celebrative and happy moments. Robin in one of the days uploaded photos of herself, her friend and her cousin, when they went out for leisure in an expensive restaurant in Cape Town, an opportunity that is rare and momentary.

⁹ R. Barthes, “Rhetoric of the Image”,
<https://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Barthes-Rhetoric-of-the-image-ex.pdf>, pp.269-285.

¹⁰ G. Rose, *Doing Family Photography. The Domestic, the Public and the Politics of Sentiments* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), Chapter 2.

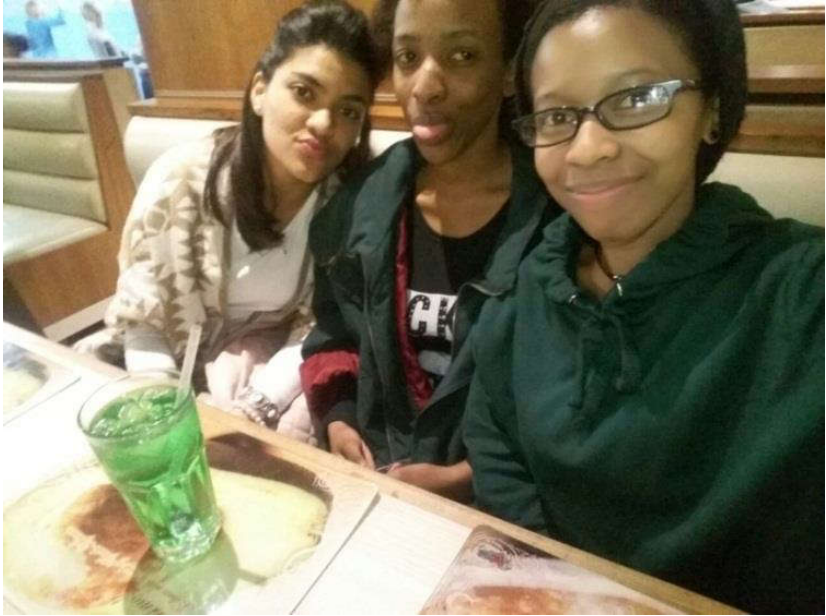


Figure 2: Robin with her friend and cousin in a restaurant in Cape Town. Credit: Robin WhatsApp profile photo, 2nd June 2017. 5

Mikko Villi argues that photographs sent or uploaded from a camera phone are closer to text than they are to printed photograph¹¹. Profile photos convey the temporality of the user's diverse identities. WhatsApp profile photos changes and are transient, depending on the disposition of the user. This is common with many users of WhatsApp Messenger. Within weeks, one of my respondents changed her profile photos (Figure 3). The first photo expressed the celebration of her new enrollment in our photography class, where she poses gallantly with her camera. This was followed by a photograph of her graduation ceremony. In the second picture (Figure 4), she poses very excitedly with a wide smile and facial mien

¹¹ M. Villi, "Distance as the New Punctum", pp. 47-66.

depicting confidence and accomplishment. Her mother, the second person in the portrait possesses a bold, confident and calm figure. The image speaks to her achievement, celebrating herself as she triumphed through the ivory tower of academia, and her family who has stood behind her during her study years. She is inviting her contacts to share in the fun through the image.



Figure 3: Zaiba posed with her camera after being enrolled for a photography class. Credit: Zaiba's WhatsApp profile photo, 7th April 2017.



Figure 4: Zaiba posed with her mother during her graduation ceremony: Zaiba's WhatsApp profile photo, 16th May 2017.

Others use WhatsApp profile photo to celebrate important and admirable personalities in their life. It could be a relative, a spouse, a model or a public figure which they admire and want to convey what they stand for and what they mean to them. In other words, profile photos are transcendental, communicating presence in the moment

of absence¹².¹² Akindele, a Nigerian postgraduate student left his wife, Bola in Nigeria to come to study in South Africa. He changes his profile photos intermittently with photos of his wife and daughter. As we discussed about his WhatsApp profile photos, he pointed to his profile photo:

Here is it, the photograph of my wife. The reason why I always placed her picture there is for her to know how important she is to me, and how much I love her. In short, I am showing my unbroken contact with her by using her photograph as my profile even though I am not there with her physically¹³.

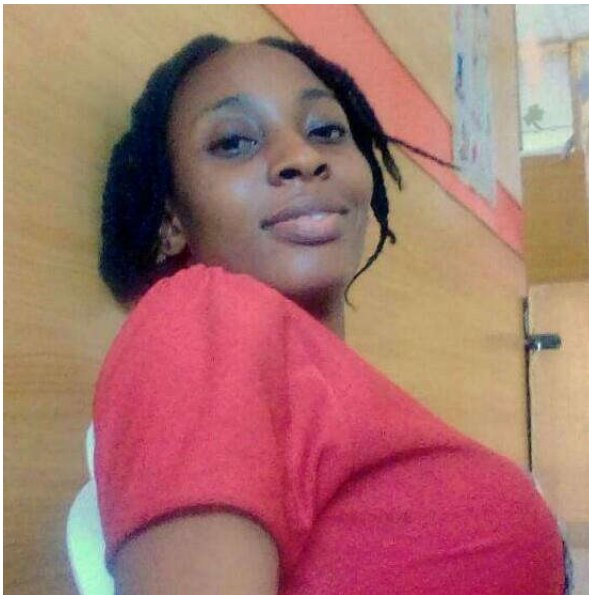


Figure 5: One of Bola's photos posted as Akindele's WhatsApp profile, 5th June 2017. Credit: Akindele's WhatsApp profile photo.

¹² M. Villi, "Distance as the New Punctum", pp. 47-66.

¹³ WhatsApp chat interview with Akindele on 7th June 2017.

How do these images impress on Bola and affirm the constant communication Akindele always have with her? The image seems to authenticate Akindele's claims of fidelity and commitment to his wife and family, even when he is not present with them: "the will to overcome absence in space".¹⁴ At the other end of communication, accessing the WhatsApp platform of her husband who is far away from her, and always seeing her photos as his profile, somehow connects the wife in constant keeping with the husband, and allays fears of dishonesty that distance could provoke in a filial relationship. WhatsApp profile photo becomes the agency for a sustained and well-preserved relationship. WhatsApp profile photos thus constantly remind the wife and authenticate her husband's vow of loyalty in marriage, saying: "see me! I am here for you, for better for worse." Thus, visual images on screen speak to, and provoke deep emotional connection between the poster and the viewer in familial range, promoting "unbroken contact" among families and friends.

WhatsApp profile photos also speak to and represent the philosophical, political and ideological conceptions of users. By engaging with an individual's WhatsApp profile image, one can easily decode what political and philosophical orientation the user stands for. Rubinstein and Sluis argue that image representation goes beyond viewing a picture, but foregrounds "a condition of possibility that allows one to grasp the world as an image."¹⁵ WhatsApp profile pictures allow one to communicate her/his world views in imagery form.

Vuyani Sokhaba a former student President of the Student Representative Council of University of the Western Cape in trying to represent his Socialist and Marxist-Leninist political ideology and his anticipation for a completely free and united Africa in post-colonial and post-apartheid Africa, posted a photograph of President Kwame

¹⁴ M. Villi, "Distance as the New Punctum", pp. 47-66. 8

¹⁵ D. Rubinstein and K. Sluis, "The digital image in photographic culture: algorithmic photography and the crisis of representation" in M. Lister (ed) *The Photographic Image in a Digital Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 22-40.

Nkrumah of Ghana and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia at the first OAU meeting in Addis Ababa, in May 1963 as his profile photo (Figure 6). For Sokhaba, “the unity that was displayed at that meeting sealed Kwame Nkrumah’s hope of having a Pan African continent that worked together towards its own development through the leftist ideology of Socialism.”¹⁶



Figure 6: President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia at the First OAU meeting in Ethiopia. Credit: Vuyani Sokhaba’s WhatsApp profile, 15th March 2017.

Though the Nkrumah dream has not yet been fulfilled, Sokhaba’s expectation of a completely decolonized and a socialist Africa is

¹⁶ WhatsApp chat interview with Vuyani Sokhaba on 7th June 2017.

embodied, and represented and expressed within the WhatsApp profile he chooses to post. WhatsApp becomes the agency for airing ones political philosophy, and a contestation against the status quo within a limited space.

Another fascinating representation on WhatsApp profile photo is the use of graphic arts as poetic images and metaphors. When I encountered these images on WhatsApp profile, it suggested to me the kind of identity that the users possess. Thus, metaphoric images surreptitiously profile the identity of the user. Art works sometimes possess allegorical persona that leave viewers to grapple with.

Samuel, a friend, uses metaphoric graphic images as his WhatsApp profile, and I engaged with him to break the ice about it. The first image he posted on his profile is a piece of graphic art that shows a tiny headed blacksmith raising his brain-edged sledgehammer high up to smash a hot-tong-clamped heart already scorched red in the fire and smoking profusely (Figure 7). I first grappled with what message Samuel is passing through to his contacts. When I interviewed him, he responded: “*Pelo e Iwana le makutlo* (the heart is fighting feelings).” He says the image depicts a jazz song by Budaza, “at times when you *wanna* do something your heart says no”¹⁷. So, the brain wants to beat the heart into order to agree with its intention. This is a metaphor of human reality depicted in visual language: reasoning fighting emotions. Samuel seems torn between responding to his emotions or attending to what is reasonable.

Samuel’s next image (Figure 8) in the following weeks mirrors his reconciliation with his tensions after the supposedly unsettled weeks indicated by the previous image (Figure7). Here, he uploaded a graphical image where the heart leads the brain somewhere, with the caption, “me and you need to go somewhere quiet where we can talk and agree on things”. He seems to find ways of balancing his emotional turbulence with reasonable actions. These fluctuating experiences of Samuel are depicted through his changing WhatsApp profile images.

¹⁷ WhatsApp chat interview with Samuel on 17th May 2017.



Figure 7: *Pelo e Iwana le makutlo* (the heart is fighting feelings).
Credit: Samuel's WhatsApp profile, 23rd March 2017. 11

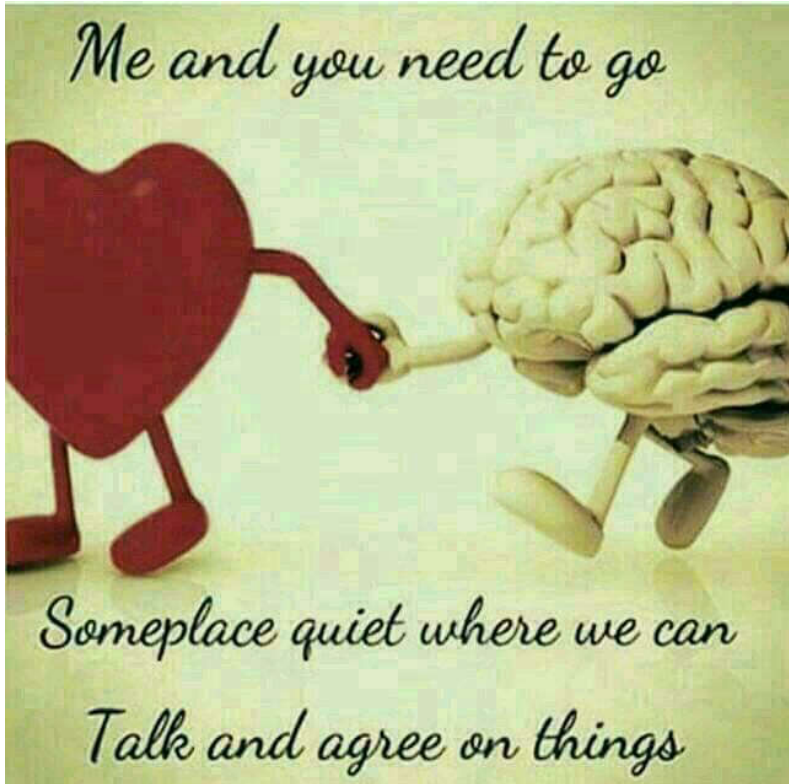


Figure 8: A red tensed heart leading the brain somewhere for amicable negotiation. Credit: Samuels WhatsApp profile photo, 7th April, 2017.

Satirical and metaphorical images are common place on WhatsApp profiles, and there is need to engage them and their meaning. Ozzman one of my student colleagues downloaded a satirical photograph of people pushing their mobile zinc-built shacks on a wheelbarrow, with the caption, “the bank said I should bring proof of residence”(Figure 9). Ozzman said he has been unhappy with the unrealistic social policies of the government of South Africa that have not alleviated poverty in the country. His WhatsApp profile image, though satirical becomes an avenue to express his

political activism against unreliable governmental policies. The caption is a mockery of sometimes unrealistic and unreasonable banks' conditionality for loans and other commercial transactions, without consideration to the housing challenge prevalent in the country. At the same time, the image portrays a humanitarian photography depicting the level of poverty among blacks in the country.



Figure 9: A satirical profile photo. Men pushing their zinc-build shack with a wheelbarrow. Credit: Ozzman's WhatsApp profile, 15 March 2017.

Given the multiplicity of ways photographs and images are appropriated as WhatsApp profile photos, and given the limits of this essay, I will conclude with two ways that images are represented on WhatsApp profile. Despite the ubiquity and unimaginable proliferation of image production since the era of digitization and slick camera phones, some contacts still choose to maintain one single photo or image as their profile, while others choose not to present any image. The single monopolistic profile photos over a long period lacks aesthetic appeal and are monotonous to the viewers. The image simply profiles the user's identity which cannot be mistaken. Their experiences, thoughts and other forms of identity are kept outside the photographic domain. The second category here is those that do not upload images at all. For want of interest, some people tend to be "photophobic", not as a medical condition but from a lack of interest in the freak of photographic hyperactivity prevalent in today's digital era. Their WhatsApp profile photo facility has not been utilized, at least not for a very long time. Having no image at all still represents photographs; these are those profile photos which represent emptiness, and which can be classified as "empty photographs,"¹⁸ and thus challenge the expectations of those whose contacts they belong to and who always expect to see something new.

Conclusion

The amalgamation of digitization, the internet and the camera phone has dramatically changed the way images are produced, appropriated and circulated. Photographs and photography have come a long way. From the times of the daguerreotype to analogue photography up until the digital age, images remain meaningful, representational, evocative, affective and complementary to other forms of communication in the everyday lives of humanity. As the internet expands into

¹⁸ P. Hayes, 'The uneven citizenry of photography. Reading the political ontology of photography from Southern Africa' in *Cultural Critique*, Vol. 89, Winter 2015, p. 189.

multiple usages, instant message applications have appropriated aural, textual and visual messages as a means of communication and social interaction among people. The WhatsApp Inc. founded in 2009 has created a facility on its instant messaging platform for which users could upload their photos as a way to speak to their identity and profile.

Consequently, different users have appropriated this facility to communicate their various identities, experiences, sociality, philosophical and political ideology etc. to their contacts and viewers. These are done through the framework of “visual language,” communicating one’s thoughts, expectations and intentions through the medium of the visual. WhatsApp profile images express users’ affective mood, establish unbroken contacts among relatives and showcase celebrative moments among their familial range and other viewers. Profile images have gone beyond physical identity specifically, to incorporate frames of individual world views in imagery form which challenge political inefficiencies and the status-quo. When engaged with, WhatsApp profile photos can reduce tension, incite laughter and relieve stress when satirical and comical images are posted, and at the same time open up new areas of engagement for viewers within limited space. WhatsApp profile photo facility has become a channel through which users represent their various identities and vent their thoughts through images, at least to their nearest constituency who share in those intriguing moments: those familial or close contacts that are in their WhatsApp contact lists, enabling “sociality from a distance.”

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Between Two Kings: Rewriting Michal from a Jewish feminist perspective? by Yael Barham-Smith

Abstract

Judaism, for all its many cultures, ethnicities and denominations, is predominantly a patriarchal religion. Following the Jewish traditions of interpretation and exegesis of the Tanakh⁴ (Hebrew Bible), some Jewish feminists have advocated biblical reinterpretation as a way to improve women's standing within Judaism. Rewriting a biblical story from the position of a previously objectified or silenced character can expose the biases that may have been obscured in the original version because of its focalisation through male characters. Exploring new points of view in a well-known narrative can also be an effective way of turning a monologic discourse into a dialogic one. In these ways a text can create new reading positions for a reader, countering the domination of one subject position or one ideological stance. *The Secret Book of Kings* by Yochi Brandes (2016) and *Queen-maker* by India Edghill (2003) are two texts that rewrite the story of the rise and rule of King David. Both seek to destabilise the perceived heroism of the second king of the Hebrew people. These two novels focalise the story through the character of Michal, daughter of Saul and wife of David, giving her a voice and, perhaps, some measure of agency. By focussing on this heroine, rather than on the male figures who are traditionally central to the plot, the texts seek to create a female implied reader, one that occupies an active subject position that is missing from the original biblical version of the story.

Alicia Ostricker writes to Judaism I am marginal. Am woman, unclean. Am Eve. Or worse, am Lilith. Am illiterate. Not mine the arguments of Talmud, not mine the centuries of ecstatic study, the questions and answers twining minutely like vines around the living Word, not mine the Kabala, the letters of the Hebrew alphabet dancing as if they were attributes of God. These texts, like the Law and the Prophets, are not me. (Quoted in Gubar 299)

The experience of being Jewish is one that is fundamentally influenced by gender. In Judaism, the male is always privileged over

the female. Male experience is the normative experience of Jewishness; it is through men that Judaism is defined (Plaskow 1). The male Jewish identity, centred on but not limited to masculine religious duties, differs vastly from the Jewish female experience and the limited roles that underlie it in traditional Judaism. This is because Judaism values prayer and study and these have traditionally been the reserve of men. Women have historically been confined to non-religious roles within Judaism, excluded from full participation in their own religion and tradition.

It is the critique of this subordination of the female Jewish experience that is at the heart of Jewish feminism, part of third-wave, multicultural feminism that emerged in the late twentieth century. Jewish feminists explore Jewish religious and secular culture, highlighting patriarchal dominance and seeking to make it more inclusive and accepting of women's experience. Jewish feminists working in different fields have proposed different methods of effecting a change in these patriarchal modes of thought. In literary studies, Jewish feminist scholars highlight the invisibility or objectification of female authors and characters in Jewish literature written in English and other diaspora languages, analysing texts that display a potentially Jewish feminist discourse and evaluating their effectiveness in representing a less androcentric representation of Judaism.

For a Jewish story to be successfully feminist, it needs to be a dialogic text: constructing different 'subject positions' or different ideological standpoints for an implied female reader and thus representing multiple ways of being a Jewish woman. This is in contrast to a monologic text whose underlying ideology constructs only a traditional representation of Jewish female identity.

A way of constructing a more dialogic representation of Jewish womanhood is to recreate or recapture the voices of previously silenced or marginalised female characters in the Tanakh¹, the central text of Judaism. Alice Bach, among other feminist biblical scholars, has pointed out how biblical portraits of women tend to perpetuate patriarchal stereotypes, (1), thereby objectifying female characters who become silenced figures in a male story rather than viable subject positions for the female reader. Rewriting a known Biblical story from the position of a previously objectified character can thus be an effective way of turning this patriarchal discourse,

with its monological reader positions, into a dialogic one. Texts 1 The canon of Jewish holy texts, comprising of the Torah (the Five Books of Moses), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings). Together they form the basis for the Christian Old Testament. that rewrite biblical narratives from female points of view can give Jewish cultural heroines a voice they do not have in the original versions of their stories. By focussing on the female characters of a story, rather than on the male focalisers, these texts can create a female implied reader, one that is missing from the originals. In doing so, these new versions can effectively challenge the traditional interpretation of the Tanakh, on which so much of Jewish identity and culture is based, thus countering the domination of one subject position or one ideological stance.

Two recent novels, *The Secret Book of Kings* by Yochi Brandes (2008/2016) and *Queenmaker* by India Edghill (2003), both rewrite the biblical story of King David from the point of view of Michal, his wife. In Judaism, the Davidic saga is central to the formation of a unifying Jewish identity because of David's transformation of Israel from a tribal culture into a centralised, hierarchical monarchy. Retelling this story through a female focaliser allows for a re-examination of David's status as a hero and of the patriarchal, hierarchical kingdom he founded.

The accepted version of the story of King David is that which is told in the biblical books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles and Psalms. During the reign of Saul, the first king of Israel, the Philistines invade the kingdom and Goliath, giant champion of the Philistines, issues a challenge to single combat. Saul's court musician, a young shepherd named David, accepts. He succeeds in killing Goliath using only a sling and a small stone. The killing of Goliath leads to the demoralisation of the Philistines and they are defeated. As a reward, Saul makes David commander of his armies. Saul also rewards David with the hand of his daughter, Michal, in marriage. David's growing popularity with the army and with the nation of Israel, however, turns Saul against him and the king plots David's death. David flees into exile. After years of conflict, Saul and David finally reconcile and Saul proclaims David his heir. When the Philistines attack Israel again, Saul and his son Jonathan are killed in battle. David is then anointed king of all Israel, captures Jerusalem, makes it his capital

and brings the Ark of the Covenant to it. David rules successfully for decades and is succeeded by his son, King Solomon.

In *The Secret Book of Kings*, the story of David's rise to power is told by Michal, daughter of King Saul and first wife to David. In this text David is not the hero of Jewish legend, but a treacherous usurper. Michal watches as David steals the kingdom from her father and her brother. Once David's treachery becomes apparent to Saul, he annuls David and Michal's marriage and gives her to a new husband, Paltiel. Years later, despite this separation, David claims Michal for his harem when he finally becomes the undisputed King of Israel. Michal spends the rest of her life locked away in his palace, away from Paltiel and their child. Although she is initially intensely loyal to David, Michal's love for him cannot survive his repeated betrayals. Despite his vows to the contrary, David eventually kills Paltiel and murders the remaining heirs of the House of Saul including Michal's son, Nebat. By the time David dies, Michal is left isolated with no hope of escape from the royal palace. Michal's only chance of survival is to feign madness. She does this for twenty years, throughout the reign of King Solomon, in order to conceal the existence of her grandson, Shelomoam, son of Nebat, the last remaining scion of the House of Saul and true heir to the throne of Israel.

In Brandes's text Michal narrates her own life and the story of King David. This narration forms the middle section of *The Secret Book of Kings* and is embedded in

Shelomoam's narration of his birth, life and eventual, unwilling assumption of the throne of Israel. The characterisation of Michal is central to Brandes's representation of Shelomoam as a worthier alternative to David and his heirs, Solomon and Rehoboam. Before Michal's section, Shelomoam is a callow youth, self-involved and petulant. Hearing Michal's story changes him and allows him to become a just ruler. Through her, he is able to expose and heal the trauma inflicted on his family and the kingdom by David's usurpation. Michal's negative portrayal of David justifies Shelomoam's leadership of the rebellion against David's heirs.

Despite having a voice to tell her own story in *The Secret Book of Kings*, however, Michal's agency is constantly undermined in the text. In the Bible itself, Michal appears and speaks only twice, once to

alert David to Saul's plot to kill him and to help him escape (I Sam 19:11-17), and once to berate David for dancing in front of the Ark of the Covenant (II Sam 6:20-23). In both episodes, Michal displays bravery and confidence. One therefore has to wonder at the authorial decision to portray Michal as a powerless witness to her own destruction in *The Secret Book of Kings*. Michal may tell her own story here, but she is denied the power to defend either herself or her family against David's ruthlessness. Michal's victimhood is especially problematic when one considers that she is the main female focaliser in the novel. In identifying with Michal, a female reader is required to identify with a position of powerlessness and this has clear implications for the construction of an active female subject position in the work.

Michal is ultimately silenced in this book. In her section of the text she is able to narrate her own story, her words unmediated by any other character. In retelling her story, however, Michal concludes that it is her propensity to speak her mind that is to blame for the destruction visited upon her family.

A sober, painful assessment of my few and failed years of marriage led me to the conclusion that I'd been to blame for everything. Had I taken care to hold my tongue like a mature, responsible wife, none of the damage and destruction would have occurred. Merab and Abner had managed to infect Father with their hatred of David only after I'd given them the poisoned arrows with my own hands. (Brandes 190).

Silence is seen here as a fundamental characteristic of a good wife and, by extension, a good

woman. Michal attributes the breakdown of her marriage to her inability to keep silent, not to any fault on David's part. These self-recriminations give rise to an anxiety in any reader who identifies with her. The implied reader in Michal's narrated section is an ambivalent one who internalises Michal's guilt while at the same time being able to see through her self-deception and recognise David's culpability.

Although she narrates her entire life-story, once this section ends Michal speaks again only to support Shelomoam and his decisions unreservedly. Because of the first-person narration of Shelomoam's second section, "The King," the reader is no longer privy to Michal's

thoughts. This is an unavoidable result of this kind of narration, but it serves as a way in which Michal is silenced and obscured. The vibrant, tortured voice of the woman who has suffered so much becomes subsumed by the two-dimensional character of the pliable grandmother Shelomoam perceives her to be. Apart from telling him the truth about his ancestry Michal takes no other active part in Shelomoam's rise to power.

Michal's words are also often misconstrued, misquoted or overshadowed by the male characters throughout the text. The most glaring example of this occurs during Michal's public confrontation of David as he celebrates the arrival of the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem. This episode is central to the text's portrayal of David's manipulation of historical events and his entrapment of Michal within his version of reality. Michal's sole motivation in this episode is publicly to shame the king into granting freedom to her and her son. David reacts by signalling to his heralds to alter the words she speaks to him. Instead of a plea for freedom, her speech, unheard by the vast majority of the crowd, is changed into the contemptuous, sneering criticism recorded in II Samuel 6:20. Michal may have meant to force David to free her, but she succeeds only in further destroying her reputation and her father's legacy (Brandes 231-233).

Michal is not only silenced by the male characters, she is likewise rendered voiceless by her own plots too. Central to her masquerade as a madwoman is her paralysed silence alternating with wordless screams. The safety of her grandson rests on this disguise. This is silence by choice, but one she is forced to continue until the end of her life in order to protect Shelomoam and his growing family.

It is significant that neither Michal, nor the other the female characters, can escape their entrapment in a male-dominated society. They all remain subordinate to male rule, immobilised by their circumstances and unable to develop their own potency. True, Michal, who is virtually voiceless in the books of Samuel and Kings in the Bible, is given her own voice and undermines the received patriarchal belief in the heroism of David; but she tells her story from the centre of her own imprisonment. Her storytelling is the only resistance available to her. Eventually even her voice is repressed and silenced by the more active male protagonists of the story and she dies quietly off-stage. She cannot effect change and so

has no real agency. *The Secret Book of Kings*, therefore, is unsuccessful in creating an empowered female subject position because of its compromised portrayal of Michal. Thus, it ultimately fails both as a feminist rewriting of history and as a dialogic representation of Jewish womanhood.

Queenmaker by India Edghill offers a more positive adaptation of the Michal / David story. As with the Brandes text, *Queenmaker* details David's rise to power and his usurpation of Saul's kingdom. The reader is again afforded a front-row seat to the great events of the books of Samuel and Kings, focalised this time *only* through the first-person view of Michal. Like *The Secret Book of Kings*, Edghill's work presents a revisionist version of the Davidic story, constructing David not as a hero but as a shrewd and ruthless usurper. Moreover, in representing David as having control over the historic record, *Queenmaker* also destabilises the biblical story, calling into question its veracity. It is in the narrative differences between the two versions, however, in Michal's status as queen and how her infertility is portrayed, that *Queenmaker* succeeds in creating a more empowered subject position for the implied female reader.

The biblical story of David is one of rampant patriarchal power: one king, supported by a male priesthood, usurps another's throne and forges a vast kingdom through war. *Queenmaker* portrays Michal's limited subversion of this patriarchy through her attainment of power in David's harem and in her subsequent manipulation of the royal succession. Michal cannot restructure her society, she cannot rewrite the rules of patriarchy to emancipate herself. She can, however, gain a measure of control over the fate of the kingdom and this allows *Queenmaker* both to represent (marginal) female agency and to reimagine how patriarchal success may be dependent on the ability of one woman to wield limited power.

Throughout *Queenmaker*, Michal is under the control of men who have the power of life and death over her. She passes from one form of patriarchal control to another and has no ability to influence her own fate until right at the end of the story. For David, Michal symbolises the crown of Israel: to own her cements his claim to the throne (Edghill 248). But in this novel, David wants more than just Michal's hand in marriage. He wants to own her entirely (Edghill 152), to suppress her identity. David's emotional abuse of Michal is

calculated to render her completely submissive to him. He uses his position of king and husband, with the power of life and death over her and those she loves, to ensure that he becomes her 'everything' (Edghill 373). It takes the entire text for Michal to understand that David's motivation has always been to control and dominate her life. Only at the very end is she able to let go of both her love and hatred for David. With him no longer possessing an emotional leverage over her, Michal is finally able to free herself and gain a mental independence from him (Edghill 366).

While it may seem that Michal is completely at the mercy of the patriarchal power structures which surround her, she does exercise a degree of agency. She alone is able to use her bitterly-won status as queen to manipulate the succession to the throne of Israel. She is able to ensure that *her* candidate becomes the next all-powerful king. Moreover, she does this by making use of a quality traditionally regarded as a female handicap within a patriarchal world-view. Michal is barren.

In contrast to *The Secret Book of Kings*, *Queenmaker* stays true to the biblical narrative in that Michal is never able to bear a child (II Samuel 6:23). Infertility traditionally equates with a lack of female power and status in a patriarchy. If a woman's function is to bear sons and if she cannot perpetuate masculine rule by doing so, then she has no place in a male dominated society. But rather than a disadvantage, in this text Michal's infertility becomes an unlooked-for source of power. Crucially, she is able to deny David a son of the blood of king Saul to legitimise his dynasty. David's constant hope of begetting a son on her and his continued attraction to her non-pregnant body mean that Michal is able to subvert the traditional fate of the infertile woman. Her barrenness actually guarantees David's interest and so Michal never loses her position as his chosen queen. Without a child of her own Michal is ideally placed to become step-mother to the future King Solomon. She carves out a position of power as the surrogate mother of the future king within an overwhelmingly patriarchal society and so is able to manipulate the very system that would seek to dominate her.

Because of Michal's authority and influence as queen, then, Edghill's *Queenmaker* presents a more powerful subject position for the implied female reader. This text, however, cannot be considered

a perfect feminist retelling of the Davidic saga. It is true that Michal is able to appropriate a traditional site of female disempowerment (infertility) and use it to her own advantage. There are, however, limits to the power she can actually wield. She can influence the succession to the throne of Israel, but, as in *The Secret Book of Kings*, it is only to replace one patriarchal regime with another, however benign. The right of men to rule and the power men hold over women within the narrative is never challenged.

Neither of the versions of the Michal story that have been examined here can therefore be considered as entirely successful in constructing a dialogic subject position for the implied female reader by portraying an emancipated, powerful female agency. The representations of Michal in both these books fail to construct a really powerful female character. The cultural construction of women within these texts remains that of subordinates within a patriarchal system, one they may influence but one they cannot fundamentally change. While *The Secret Book of Kings* and *Queenmaker* both retell Jewish history from a female perspective, neither of them is ultimately successful creating a truly feminist narrative.

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“Those who travel, see”: A critical reflection on visibility and the teleological ambiguity of FEMRITE by Ted-Allan Ssekimpi

Abstract

Through hosting and facilitating writing workshops which work to produce the publication of fictional and non-fictional books, FEMRITE has, since its inauguration in 1996, been behind the emergence of women’s literature in Uganda in recent years. At the core of FEMRITE’s socio-literary project is the —the promotion of [women’s] literature and literacy inside Uganda rather than in any other African country³. However, FEMRITE has also become synonymous with household names in Ugandan literature such as Doreen Baingana, Monica Arac de Nyeko, Beatrice Lamwaka and others who have won globally recognized literary prizes. While several of these writers may not have learned their trade exclusively through FEMRITE, it has nonetheless become a signpost that directs the exchange of various forms of capital – symbolic, social, cultural, and economic – in the global and local literary market. It is at this juncture, the site of contested ‘regimes of value’, between FEMRITE’s role in promoting women’s literature in Uganda and how it functions as a sign of symbolic consecration in the global literary sphere, that FEMRITE’s teleological ambiguity begins to surface. This paper seeks, through metacritical analysis, to elucidate on the doubly nature of FEMRITE and other literary NGOs with regards to their purported aims of creating new avenues for local literary production while engendering new globally recognized literary traditions and forms - and thus a new canon’.

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core of FEMRITE's socio-literary project is the "the promotion of [women's] literature and literacy inside Uganda rather than in any other African country"¹. However, FEMRITE has also become synonymous with household names in Ugandan literature such as Doreen Baingana, Monica Arac de Nyeko, Beatrice Lamwaka and others who have won globally recognized literary prizes. While several of these writers may not have learned their trade exclusively through FEMRITE, it has nonetheless become a signpost that directs the exchange of various forms of capital – symbolic, social, cultural, and economic – in the global and local literary market. It is at this juncture, the site of contested 'regimes of value', between FEMRITE's role in promoting women's literature in Uganda and how it functions as a sign of symbolic consecration in the global literary sphere, that FEMRITE's teleological ambiguity begins to surface. This paper seeks, through metacritical analysis, to elucidate on the doubly nature of FEMRITE and other 'literary NGO's' with regards to their purported aims of creating new avenues for local literary production while engendering new globally recognized literary traditions and forms - and thus a 'new canon'.

To begin, according to Pierre Bourdieu, "the only legitimate accumulation, [...] consists in making a name for oneself, a name that is known and recognized, the capital of consecration - implying a power to consecrate objects (this is the effect of a signature or trademark) or people (by publication, exhibition, etc.), and hence of giving them value, and of making profits from this operation." Consecration and who has the power to consecrate the artist are vital in understanding who ultimately produces the work. Here Bourdieu postulates a new mode of production that is specific to the field of cultural and literary production - "a new definition of art"². Hereby, an artist doesn't merely enter the field and gain their audience by virtue of their own luck. It is, as he has gone to prove, the work of

¹ Strauhs, Doreen. *African literary NGOs: power, politics, and participation*. Springer, 2013.

² Bourdieu, Pierre. *The rules of art: Genesis and structure of the literary field*. Stanford University Press, 1996

the field that produces positions that new entrants come to occupy. Within their occupation of these positions, symbolic capital is accrued by way of consecration. Thus, what happens to a work of art once it enters the field is a process of remaking. It is not restricted to a single entity that holds all value relating to it³. It is instead “made hundreds of times, thousands of times, by all those who have an interest in it, who find a material or symbolic profit in reading it, classifying it, decoding it, commenting on it, reproducing it, criticizing it, combating it, knowing it, possessing it.” What Bourdieu ultimately aims to demonstrate here is that this labour should not go unaccounted for because “the work of material fabrication is nothing without the labour of production of the value of the fabricated object.”⁴

Doseline Kiguru in her essay *Literary Writers Organisations and Canon Formation* notes that the circulation of value in African novels is located in their ties to prizewinning organizations and literary organisations. Award bodies such as the Caine Prize and the Commonwealth Prize ensure that they oversee a significant amount of the production process, involving themselves in “the pre-writing process to writing, publishing, awarding and post-award sales”⁵. Writers benefit from these award bodies as they grant them mobility to circulate within the global literary market, a benefit that is a consequence of the “value conferred through the award”⁶. Both the Caine and Commonwealth Prize have been instrumental in changing and shaping the African literary scene, with their most recognisable contribution being the rising popularity of the short story form. Moreover, these awards have provided a platform for young,

³ The discourse on the work is not a simple side-effect, designed to encourage its apprehension and appreciation, but a moment which is part of the production of the work, of its meaning and its value.”

⁴ *Ibid.*, 172

⁵ Doseline Kiguru (2016) *Literary Prizes, Writers’ Organisations and Canon Formation in Africa*, *African Studies*, 75:2, 205

⁶ *Ibid.*, 203

undiscovered talent and have thus “set a trend”⁷ whereby young writers depend on these awards to leapfrog their careers. The charm of prize money for the winner is often equally as valuable to the ‘exposure’ and literary mobility that the award provides – often the catalyst for young writers to move from short stories to novels, local to global, independent to contracted.

The unequal distribution of cultural and economic capital has led to misrepresentations, lack of access, and a miniscule presence of African literature in the canon. Therefore, it has been the work of literary organisations such as *FEMRITE*, *writivism*, *Kwani?* and others to remedy this unequal playing field by offering workshops, publishing and networking with major industry players (such as publishers, and award bodies) to writers who may not have access to economic and cultural capital needed. These literary organisations form part of the cultural capital accrued by these award bodies. Their affiliation has ensured “that international prizes have filtered through to the production level”⁸ as the award bodies act as ‘producers of value’ usually deflecting from the quality of the writer’s text. Kiguru, citing Marx, mentions that the text as a commodity with a ‘perceived value’ results to fetishism. The value of the text is painted over by the value that the award has bestowed upon it. In other words, its commodity value - a direct result of the award – is marketed, sold and circulated over and above its cultural value. Kiguru uses Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Jumping Monkey Hill* to explore the power and influence exerted by international award bodies on African literature. Adichie’s story illustrates “the unevenness of the distribution of economic and cultural capital and its effects on the literary text”⁹, more specifically, the African literary text. Kiguru notes that Adichie’s awareness of the “global positioning of postcolonial literature as well as the frameworks through which this literature is produced”¹⁰ also brings to

⁷ Ibid, 203

⁸ Ibid, 203

⁹ Doseline Kiguru (2016) Literary Prizes, Writers’ Organisations and Canon Formation in Africa, *African Studies*, 75:2, 205

¹⁰ Ibid, 206

mind Sarah Brouillette's notion of 'authorial self-consciousness' wherein postcolonial literature is dependent on this self-consciousness of its own production and circulation.

Kiguru calls for the involvement of international award bodies into the production and canonisation of African literature to be viewed in the lens of "cultural and economic value"¹¹ as cultural/literary value does not occur in isolation to political, economic, and social power. In other words, Kiguru notes that these awards and their writing programmes are "highly influential and dependent on the material conditions of the literatures production and consumption."¹² To elaborate on this, Kiguru turns to the influence of MFA creative writing programmes and qualifications, and the effect they have had in instilling cultural capital onto authors of African literature. Kiguru notes that there is a lack of such programmes in African universities and so it has been the task of local literary organisations to fill in that gap. They do this by providing the necessary cultural capital "to link writers to prize organisations and publishers and therefore to global visibility"¹³. It is to such an extent that creative writing programmes are co-run by award bodies and literary organisations. This collaboration is affirmed through the preponderance of awards being won by writers from these organisations. Kiguru concludes that this phenomenon "reflects the conscious effort to lend the cultural capital accumulated from the award bodies for the development of literary culture on the continent."¹⁴

In my own thesis I have looked at the life of two texts affiliated with FEMRITE that have both occurred two markedly different trajectories. Looking at Doreen Baingana's *Tropical Fish*, the Commonwealth Prize Winning novel and FEMRITE's 'true-life' testimonial collections, *Farming Ashes* and *Tears of Hope* my study sought to illustrate how Doreen Baingana's *Tropical Fish* had all the aesthetic criteria necessary to gain an audience outside of Uganda while, on

¹¹ Ibid, 206

¹² Ibid, 207

¹³ Ibid, 207

¹⁴ Ibid, 207

the other hand, *Farming Ashes* and *Tears of Hope* did not achieve global recognition. A handful of factors contributed to this. In the case FEMRITE's 'true life narratives': they were written by multiple authors; while falling into the category of humanitarian literature they did not conform to the traits of the genre; and perhaps the most important factor being that they were intended to be circulated within Uganda. Meanwhile, in the case of Doreen Baingana's *Tropical Fish* this was partly due to Baingana's social and cultural background – raised from a middle-class family; travelled and lived in the United States of America; received her tertiary education in United States of America. Furthermore, while her background influenced and informed *Tropical Fish*, it was the prestige of the Commonwealth Prize that eventually led to her consecration.

Regarding their aesthetic strategies, *Tropical Fish* presents a collection of short stories that chronicle the lives of the Mugisha sisters. The chronological order of the stories, traversing from childhood to adulthood, depict the coming-of-age of the Mugisha sisters. Moreover, the interconnectedness of the short stories gives the impression that *Tropical Fish* can "sometimes be read as a fragmented novel"¹⁵. Set in Entebbe, a small town just outside Kampala, *Tropical Fish* is notable for its 'travelling', that is, for the disparate locations, spatial and temporal, that connect all the sisters to its overarching premise as embodied in the Kinyankore proverb Baingana includes in the beginning of the book, "those who travel, see"¹⁶. As this proverb suggests: the traveller is the one who sees, an idea that permeates throughout the book and is evinced in the multiple perspectives, pertaining to age and place, which the short stories depict.

¹⁵ Spencer, Lynda Gichanda. "Writing women in Uganda and South Africa: emerging writers from post-repressive regimes." PhD diss., Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University, 2014

¹⁶ Baingana, Doreen. *Tropical Fish: Stories Out of Entebbe*. Cape Town: Oshun Books, 2005

Linda Gichanda Spencer notes that there is “a sense of discontinuity in *Tropical Fish* because each sister narrates a different story”¹⁷. These multiple perspectives are also carried over to the cover art whereby the edition of *Tropical Fish* published by Oshun Books contains three different covers, each cover representing each sister – thus, each perspective. Therefore, these strategies, literary and otherwise, form part of the self-awareness that is characteristic of the anthropological exotic¹⁸. In other words, in order to circumvent the reader, presumably located in the West, from accessing the texts ‘ethnographic’ data Baingana instead chooses to depict different and conflicting perspectives. This strategy prevents the same power relations seen in anthropological studies of Africa by the Imperial West to surface in *Tropical Fish*.

This strategy that is employed by FEMRITE resonates well with Graham Huggan’s anthropological and postcolonial exotic. Evident in *Tears of Hope* and *Farming Ashes* is the kind of ‘discursive conflict’ that places it within the postcolonial. They are at once texts that replicate Western discourses pertaining to humanitarianism while in the same instance, work to subvert these very discourses by changing the format and thus imbuing their narratives with an ‘ironic self-consciousness’. This ‘ironic self-consciousness’, “designed as much to challenge as to profit to consumer needs”¹⁹, exists in the texts’ humanitarianism and how it is used to lure the Western reader into worlds of its storytellers yet also severs the compunction of such a reader to act from their position of privilege. On the blurb of *Farming Ashes* the reader is given a sense of what to expect from the text. Expectation here is coded as similar to that of any literary text –

¹⁷ Spencer, Lynda Gichanda. "Writing women in Uganda and South Africa: emerging writers from post-repressive regimes." PhD diss., Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University, 2014.

¹⁸ Huggan, Graham. *The postcolonial exotic: Marketing the margins*. Routledge, 2002.

¹⁹ Huggan, Graham. *The postcolonial exotic: Marketing the margins*. Routledge, 2002

“cogent and explosive tales”²⁰— yet is also well aware that it is within the genre of texts that compel readers to act to change or better the situation of its protagonists: *Farming Ashes* offers cogent and explosive tales of the LRA exploits that are disturbing and baffling in the extreme and leave the reader asking the question: ‘Why?’ and longing for ‘the world of no war’, as one of the storytellers puts it.²¹

The ideal world that the reader in contact with humanitarian discourse would strive for is not made accessible to this reader. As the blurb notes this “longing for ‘the world of no war’”²² speaks to the world of the storyteller. The interjection made by the writer of the blurb ensures that as much as it’s the world of the storyteller that the reader would like to see come to reality, the process of making this world is a shared, collective process. It’s a process shared by the storyteller, the listener who transmitted it, and the reader who consumes it. However, given that *Farming Ashes* and *Tears of Hope* both subverted the ethnographic and anthropological tropes familiar with humanitarian literature (thus showcasing the tenants of the anthropological and postcolonial exotic), they never gained the kind of transnational visibility and prestige as Baingana’s *Tropical Fish*.

In summation, what my study aims to address was the popularity of *Tropical Fish* in contrast to that of FEMRITE’s *Farming Ashes* and *Tears of Hope*, texts that are virtually unknown outside of Uganda. While both texts share a handful of similar characteristics, thus dispelling Bourdieu’s notion of ‘pre-established forms’ as well as Huggan’s ‘aesthetic strategies’, my study argues that the trajectories of these texts in the global literary market have ultimately been determined by factors outside of the texts themselves. Furthermore, in doing so, this study hopes to elucidate the significance of the case of FEMRITE in troubling Bourdieu’s two modes of literary production (commercial, and ‘pure art’) due to its teleological ambiguity having produced prize-winning texts for global circulation as well as

²⁰ 20Barungi, Violet, and Hilda Twongyeirwe, eds. *Farming ashes: tales of agony and resilience*. African Books Collective, 2009.

²¹ *Ibid.*, backcover.

²² *Ibid.*

texts aimed exclusively at addressing socio-political issues specific to rural Ugandan women. The shortcomings of Bourdieu's theory of symbolic production in a postcolonial context are further corroborated by Sarah Brouillette. However, where this study differs from Brouillette is that it argues that FEMRITE, functioning as a publisher and a locus of symbolic and cultural capital, stands in place or in juxtaposition to the author's biographical information insofar as it works to market the author's identity as part of the political situation in Uganda for a global audience – while also signalling the author as part of Uganda's second literary generation and the implications it confers on style and content.

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Featured Artist: UrbanKhoi



Figure 1 Connect to the Light



Figure 2 Connect to the Light



Figure 3 Heel in my tjat (all up in my grille)



Figure 4 Humbled, Gangans



Figure 5 Nat agter die ore



Figure 6 Oom wat kyk

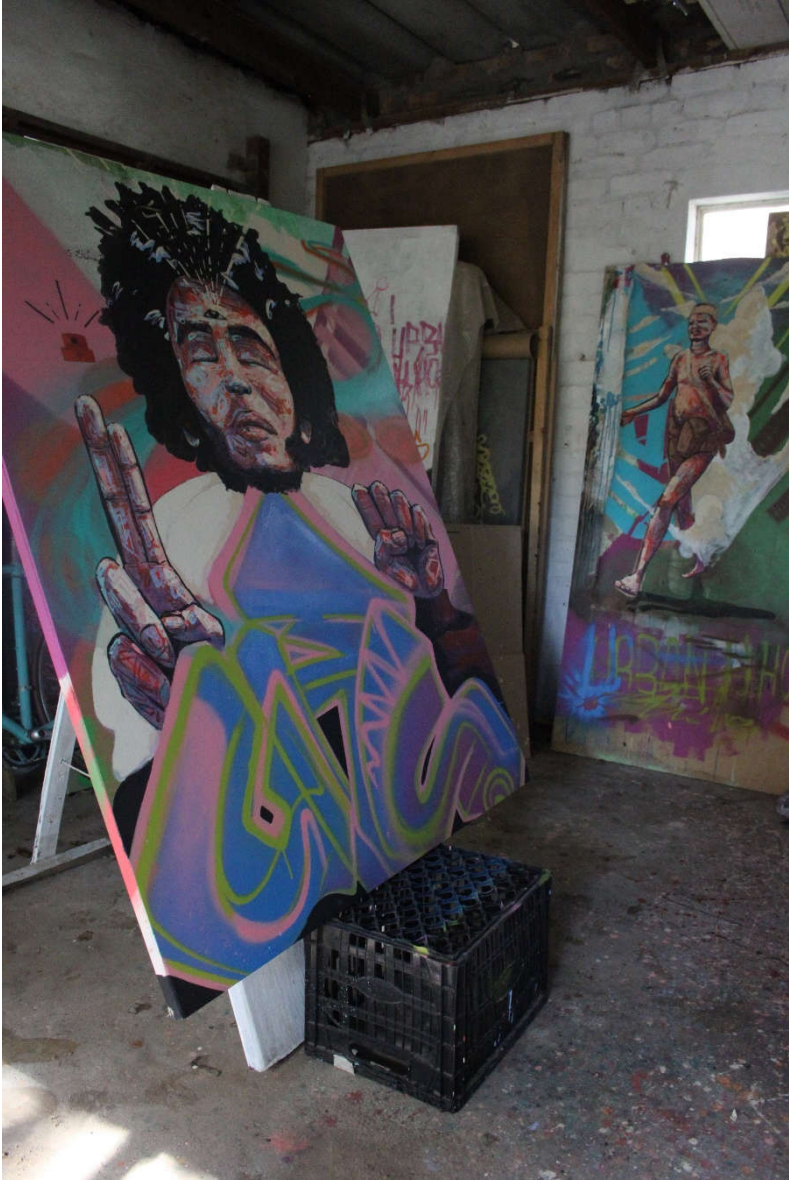


Figure 7 Studio



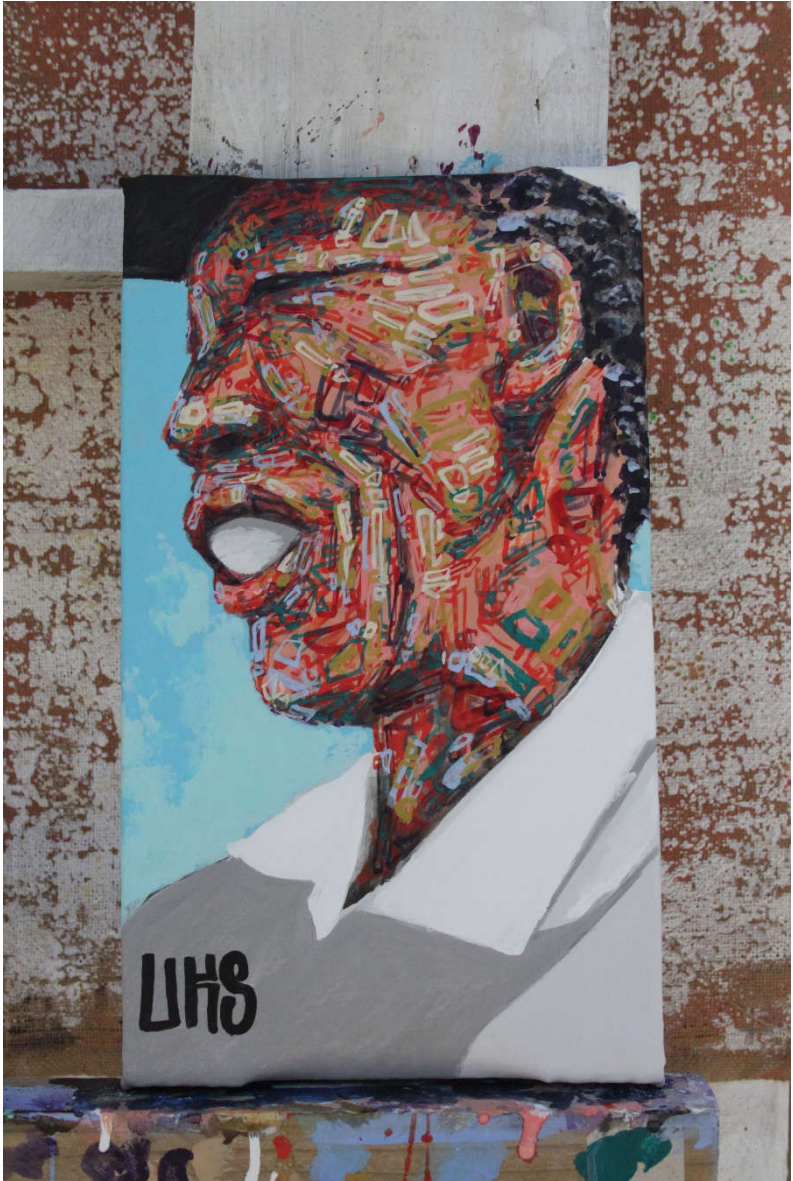
Figure 8 Pak uit















Poetry by Prof. Gabeba Baderoon

Ghost Technologies

On button. Red light we learn the meaning of.

In 1976, the Soweto student protests are erased from the black and white television that arrives that year in the front room and from then a line is drawn between what happened and did not, what is real and is not.

Each night, the children eat hurriedly in the next room, our eyes already sidling through the door to the blank screen. Just before six, waiting on chairs facing the new centre, we watch an intuition pulse through black and white snow. It flickers then hisses and turns into the high whine of the test pattern that on the dot of six becomes a face.

Prayer starts the evening as prayer will end it at midnight with the Epilogue.

The continuity announcer's lips slide suddenly into sidelong fractions till we jiggle the bunny aerial and prop it upside down against the wall behind the screen.

My parents make a timetable. No watching after the 8 o'clock news, so *after the news* becomes a genre for grownups. No TV on Sundays when the state teaches you to become Christian.

Telefunken, Fuchsware, Tedex – the names next to the On button change as our TVs break over the years. The single channel alternates between English and Afrikaans, then the government creates new stations in Zulu and Xhosa. We are trained into separate realities.

The first time I see a black woman on TV is in an advert for dishwashing liquid in which a white woman praises her domestic servant for choosing a new detergent. “Betsy, you’re so clever,” to which the black woman responds shyly, “Oh, madam.” Even as a child, I can see this is not about cleaning dishes, but some other kind of labour.

We watch to become ourselves.

TV teaches us good black voices. The black people reading the news sound as though they are sitting inside glass, and come from nowhere we know.

In 1982, my mother buys a Phillips video cassette recorder with semi-remote control at the Rand Easter Show and one day someone trips over the 12-foot cord and after that the VCR only works with the cord plugged in.

In *Live and Let Die*, my eyes widen when James Bond has sex with Rosie Carver, a desire apartheid seemed to make almost biologically impossible. I press rewind on the semi-remote and watch again.

My brother buys an Apple computer with a green screen and orange cursor he hooks up to the TV. We play tennis and the ball sounds hollow but urgent, our fingers sore from slamming the arrow keys, the beginning of games that hurt and where only the screen makes a sound.

In the early days of the internet I navigate with arrow keys and DOS and in 1994 choose my first email name, gab. Messages sent to it still reach me today. In 2002 I move for a year to England, the centre of the real, and have to queue in person at the bank because their online world seems not to exist. Down here, we rejig every technology and accelerate the virtual in the absence of the physical.

But capital is watching and tells us *airtime* is as necessary as oxygen, a perfect philosophy of the real. In our houses ghost technologies run down the prepaid electric meters.

Precise injuries of the neck, thumb and eye create a new kind of body. The machines we hold close prompt infinite new desires and an infinite hunger for newness.

We don't notice when the category of the evening disappears – the word for *after 5*, an Off button that once brought the day's work to a close.

Interval

Parsing my words in his office at the back
of the building, Archie Markham breathed in
and leaned toward me. Something is missing
from your poems -they need, he began
then halted, a stillness ringing
with movement. They need,
eyes creasing, head shaking back
and forth across a small span
. . . mmnhh . . .
the sound quick but not harsh,
his hands opening upward toward me,
chest tilted forward, spilling
out the breath of it, not metaphors,
not images, but . . . mmnhh . . .
he who lived in words refused
a word, or words at all,
shoulders folding inward
around the necessary absence,
not better ideas or forms, he insisted,
the quick compass of his gaze falling
on the breach at the heart of my lines,
but life and roughness and
. . . mmnhh . . ., he exhaled, half-rising
from his chair with the not-word.

Every gesture and jagged phatic
of that single hour of his long existence,
which began in Montserrat and took him
to Sheffield, Maputo and Paris,
writing them all and the interval
between them,
is with me still.
Groundbreaker, you leapt
without scaffold.
That you leapt,
and sometimes fell,
revealed the interval
and what breathes there,
the jagged, the not-yet,
the core.

The History of Intimacy

I.

You remember it because it's a wound.
A cut, twenty cuts, the name
for the canings on the palm,
on the knuckles, on the buttocks,
a finely graded order of pain
that we who should not exist
were assigned for our failures.

II.

You keep you white, nuh,
Mike shouts in 1987 across the heads
of students sitting on Jameson Steps
and the sudden white silence shows
we are no longer in uniform in the quad
at Livingstone High, teasing hey, why
did you look through me
as though I don't exist. And this slipping
from being we called keeping you white,
but saying it out loud reveals
how we have learned
to measure our existence.

III.

In the video store after I've ordered a film,
my cousin elbows me, Why you putting on?
Putting on. Transitive verb. Putting on what?
Putting on skin, putting on
not nothingness.

IV.

When the Group Areas Act is abolished,
my mother aches to go back
to the street she was removed from
and it is we, grown attached
to the scar we call home, who say, No,
we don't want to live in a white area,
this time ceding it ourselves.

V.

In 1988 at Crawford train station, my brother and I find a blue plank hand-painted in yellow letters:

“Non-Whites Only” on one side

“Whites Only” on the other

thrown away by the fence next to the tracks.

Picking it up, we see the two sides

of the sign lay back to back,

each half resting against its opposite,

intimate and inverse

but unknown to each other.

We knew this was history

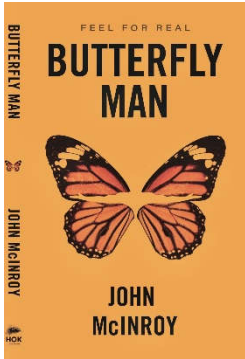
someone had made by hand then hidden

and tried to forget. We bring it home

and come across it sometimes in a corner

when we're looking for something else.

Book Review by Ronwyn Bentham



Book: Butterfly Man
Author: John McInroy
ISBN 9780620789479

Feel for Real

“This is everyone’s story. This isn’t just a book. It’s a guidebook to a healthier new world. It’s part of an educational initiative that seeks to inspire others to look for more honest answers, to see through the institutions that have made us sick, and find the energy to create our own solutions.”

As readers, we may have many fascinating stories to share about our reading experiences; be it fairy tales, novels or autobiographies. At times, we may even find ourselves at a loss for words when attempting to describe these experiences. These stories augment our appreciation for reading. For this review of *Butterfly Man*, written by John McInroy, I can only attempt to describe my journey with the book and its author. How I came to this book, or rather, how this book came to me, has certainly contributed to my experience of reading it.

It was a sunny Saturday afternoon and I was spending my leisure time beside a hockey field. I was drawn to a barefooted man with long hair, wearing a dungaree. To me, he was the definition of freedom. In between watching the hockey game, it was hard not to glance over and notice how colourful he was. A friend noticed my interest and mentioned that the colourful man had recently written a

book, *Butterfly Man*. Needless to say, I was curious. After the game, I introduced myself and shared that I was interested in reading his book. He accepted a short interview on another day to share more about his book. I was not as prepared for the interview since I had not had the opportunity to read the book; however, we agreed to keep it casual and allowed the conversation to flutter where it may.

Any feelings of anxiety had disappeared upon greeting John. My interview with him was the beginning of my reading of *Butterfly Man*. While not everyone may have the opportunity to meet the author, I would propose that reading his book comes close enough. It's difficult to define the genre as it is part memoir, autobiography, poetry, and in some sense, it is a conversation. Nevertheless, it is the true story of John McInroy. The ways in which he delivers the truth about himself, is contentedly raw. He uses simple vocabulary to express his deep pain, and for the reader there is no way to shy away from this. The language is uniquely South African, embedded in a poetic style. Reading *Butterfly Man* may even invite you to a new definition of love – not in a romantic or sexual sense, but the love that connects us as human beings. It invites you to an understanding that is free of judgement towards ourselves and others.

John describes who he was as, “a digital form and I left the human part behind”. John was a star athlete, actor, model and founder of two social movements. He was possibly living the life many young men aspired to live, but these accolades did not express who he really was, and, in a sense, they were further away from who he now is. For John, writing the book was a cathartic experience, and sharing it took courage. When I asked him what had inspired him to write, he said “the words inside of me are heavy and words outside of me are less heavy”.

John expresses that his “medical defect” had brought him to a place of self-loathing and suffering, as there seemed to be no place in our society to express who he really was. While the “defect” he mentions is at the core of his story, it highlights how we not only hide from others, we hide the truth from ourselves. There are pages in his book where he scribbles words which signify how the words appear in his head. Often, we have words that scream at us, but it is only loud enough for us to hear. The fear of speaking these words

aloud or writing them down is our fear of letting others know how we truly feel about ourselves.

In my opinion, *Butterfly Man*, is one of those books that are more than a collection of words on page, it is the human - who not only liberates himself, but each reader that finds the book in their hands. He also unashamedly addresses real concerns in our world. In a way, *Butterfly Man* is a protest to conforming to structures which are harmful to a human being. It is a voice of its own, enabling the voices of many who are afraid to face their fears and ignominies. This voice echoes Ubuntu and invites one to feel for real.

John spent 15-days in two different locations to write this book. He wrote 77,000 words on his cell phone. He praises his editor, Emile Raymond, who contributed to this work of art; highlighting how he invites collaboration into his world.

I conclude this review by saying that when a caterpillar undergoes its stage of transformation and grows its wings, it is no longer named a caterpillar, but is seen and known as a butterfly. To the writer, Bodhi, thank you for having the courage to fly and for sharing your story to inspire others to be brave enough to do the same.



Tribute to Prof. Michael Wessels

FOR MICHAEL

Taken from Professor Hermann Wittenberg's tribute at the memorial service held 14/5/2018.

Many of us will remember the time when Michael joined our department mid-2015. It was the first week of term, and we had organised a departmental conference to share our writing and scholarship, and also to help introduce Michael to the department so that he could get to know his new colleagues and the research context he was getting into. You will remember



him from the conference: listening intently and carefully to each of our presentations, always afterwards asking questions, being interested in what everyone had to say, wanting to know more, and making links to other book and other fields of knowledge. In short, from the start, Michael was a highly engaged colleague.

This is also how I remember him when I first met him at a conference some three years earlier, in Grahamstown. I admired his wide knowledge, and his easy, open manner in which interacted with people, and we soon became friends. We talked about our different universities. UKZN was at that time in the special circle of hell, also known as the institutional merger and transformation plan, and Michael, newly appointed to academia, clearly did not have an easy time in such a toxic and negative environment. I spoke about UWC and the English department in glowing terms, and talked about an engaged university which took teaching seriously as well as research

excellence -- and that we were all working together here as a team, as academics, administrators and managers. I must have painted a vision of an academic nirvana, for Michael's eyes glistened, and I think this was the moment when the seed was planted that he would one day join us, here at UWC, in this city surrounded by the wild oceans, and the great mountains of the Cape. I must say that I've always appreciated it that Michael never reproached me misrepresenting the much harder reality of teaching here, especially when after taking up the responsibility of chairing the department, he had to deal with considerable bureaucracy. He would just sometimes mildly shake his head, and make remarks about the paperwork, and the many forms he had to sign.

Another memory from the early days: Michael's books. It's perhaps telling that Michael's books arrived here before he did. When we started making practical arrangements about his arrival, Michael asked about space for books in his office. I let him know about the standard government issued glass-fronted bookcase, but it turned out that Michael needed space for more books, a lot more. So we decided to get a cabinet maker in to put in proper shelving, and Shirley very quickly arranged quotes and raised an order number for the job. When the time arrived, Winny kindly agreed to manage the logistics. I think it was on a Friday or even Saturday, when the big removal truck arrived, and box after box was hauled up to the third floor. There seemed to be more books than furniture on that removal truck. On Monday, when I was in the office again, there was some consternation and even some dismay about the volume of boxes. Why would he need so many books? But the books were Michael's identify, and who he was as a scholar. Many of us have memories of being in his office, seeing an interesting volume of the shelf, and finding ourselves talking about the book and then wandered on to talking about other things.

So the way Michael engaged with us at that first conference, and the library of books that he set up in his office, were signifiers of who he was: a serious scholar. Yes, he had an easy-going, warm and disarming personality, but he also gained the respect of his colleagues through his formidable scholarship: both wide-ranging, and eclectic, and always grounded in his deep knowledge of the English literary canon.

But let me say a few words about his scholarship. He was not just rooted in the canon, but as we know, Michael was also a traveller who traversed many countries, crossed many boundaries -- and likewise in his scholarly interests. He was always interested in the new, and doing something different than traditional English literary studies (which he loved) but also transcended in significant and ground-breaking ways. He did excellent postcolonial research, but he was not really just a postcolonial scholar. He was interested in Indian, Japanese, and African literature, but his approach would not easily be captured by the now fashionable term World Literature. He compared literary texts from various languages and cultures, but he was not just a comparativist. What I think drew Michael to a wide variety of literary texts outside the traditional canon, was - like his travels - a curiosity about different worlds, cultures, states of consciousness and being. The metaphors he read in these texts were like fissures in the surfaces of language that allowed him to glimpse different, strange worlds and encounter new ways of imagining them.

This is, I think, what drew him to the study of the San archive, an archive that his not dead and buried in a university library, but written in the rocks of the mountains of Southern Africa, and still alive in the stories of the people that live in the Drakensberg and the Karoo today. Michael was drawn to these other worlds, imaginative worlds that existed outside of the colonial scripts, worlds which were both entangled with colonialism and the English language that came with it, but also maintained a vital and sometimes enigmatic autonomy that preceded coercive cultural influence. Michael immersed himself in San story-telling, treating it not as history nor as an anthropological record, but took the archive seriously as stories, as imaginative, creative engagements with the world -- in other words as literature.

Perhaps if one can find one line that threads itself through his scholarship, it is the idea of Indigeneity. What is Indigeneity? It is not the cultural rubble left in the wake of colonial violence, nor is it an ossified traditionalism surviving in our contemporary world. Rather, as Michael would have seen it, it refers to the complex and fluid ways in which indigenous people negotiate the cultural scripts of modernity, rewriting them in their own terms and asserting their own histories. The idea of indigeneity underpinned his San research, but it

also connected him to a wider world, establishing networks of scholarship with colleagues as far away New Zealand, Canada, Germany and India. This engagement was also visible in ACLALS, a conference he shaped and chaired so admirably. It is also visible in the impact he had on Wendy Woodward's recent *Animal Studies* book, in which he published the lead chapter, and whose title and cover design reflects the imprint of his ideas.

Michael threw himself into his academic career here at UWC with enormous energy and commitment, as reflected in his publications, by raising big research grants, leading inter-national teams of scholars – and even, somewhat reluctantly, administration.

Linzi: you will know that this made more and more demands on his time, but I think he also revelled in his work, these many hours in which he worked so hard and built a formidable academic reputation. He came into his own here at UWC, and we would like to thank you, Linzi, and also Yao and Akira for sharing him so generously with us for these remarkable years.

Contributors

Professor Gabeba Baderoon

Gabeba Baderoon is the author of *Regarding Muslims: from Slavery to Post-apartheid* and the poetry collections *The Dream in the Next Body* and *A hundred silences*. Her new collection, *The History of Intimacy*, is forthcoming from Kwela in August 2018. With Alicia Decker, Baderoon co-directs the African Feminist Initiative at Pennsylvania State University, where she is an Associate Professor of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies and African Studies. She is an Extraordinary Professor of English at Stellenbosch University, a member of the editorial board of the African Poetry Book Fund and a Fellow of the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study.

Gemma Field

Gemma Field is a scholar of the Energy Humanities. Her cultural and political interests in Energy dovetailed in her undergraduate dissertation in English Literary Studies, which is going to be published in an upcoming issue of the South African Journal of Literary Studies. Using Frank Herbert's *Dune*, a mid-twentieth century science-fiction classic, as a discursive springboard to launch oil into outer space, the paper reads the fantastic energy source of the novel from an oil-based society.

Lisa Julie

Lisa holds a BA and Honours degree in English Literature and is currently completing an MA in Creative Writing at the University of the Western Cape. Her focus subject and research is poetry which includes the influence and functionality of objects in poetry.

Maruping Phepheng

Maruping is an author of five books. Based in Witbank, South Africa, he holds a Master's Degree (Creative Writing) from Rhodes University. He is currently completing PhD studies at the University of the Western Cape. His focus is diasporic memory and identity in

selected novels by Zimbabwean /Rhodesian expatriate authors through the lens of space and place.

Abigail Wiese

Abigail recently graduated with a MA in Theatre and Performance Studies at UCT exploring how affect acts as a catalyst in performance-making and in generating narrative. She followed a practice-led re-search methodology devising a theatre performance and an expressive arts workshop. The research focus for her PhD studies looks at affect in performance specifically in relation to shame. She uses the medium of performance to catalyse an articulation of how affect is experienced and charged on and in the body, specifically in relation to the affect of shame.

Christine van Deventer

Christina is a BA graduate specializing in Journalism at the University of Pretoria in 2005. She also completed her BA Hons degree at the same University in 2007, specializing in English Literature. Christine is currently completing her Masters in English at Stellenbosch University. Her current research interests are history and narrative, the idea of the sacred, myth and ritual, and translation.

Maureen Amimo

A PhD student in the department of English Studies at Stellenbosch University. Her research interest is life writing and literatures of mobility in Africa. Her PhD thesis focuses on politics of representation in contemporary African travel writing. She is concerned with examining how texts negotiate the burdens of genre and histories in re-mapping limits of travel.

Michael Hageman

Michael was school teacher for 30 years before deciding to work full-time on his PhD. He completed his dissertation on the Rhodesian war poetry of Chas Lotter in 2017. Michael is extending his engagement with that conflict to include a critical investigation of a vast archive of previously unpublished photographs and ancillary images that derive from the liberation war.

Musawenkosi Khanyile

Holds an MA in Clinical Psychology from the University of Zululand, and is currently studying towards an MA in Creative Writing at the University of the Western Cape. His current research project explores, through the use of poetry, how identity is shaped by place.

Nsima Udo

Nsima is a MA student at the Department of History and a fellow at the Centre for Humanities Research, at the University of the Western Cape. His research interest lies in visual history. His MA thesis is querying the quasi-subjective appellation; fattening room, ascribed to a particular women's rite of passage of the Ibibio/Efik people of southern Nigeria, where the ritual's main philosophy goes beyond the body. He considers how visibility can be appropriated as a veritable historical source to probe existing colonial historiography, particularly around African culture.

Sarah Yates

Sarah is a second year MA student at Rhodes University. Her research focuses on the differences between African American and African

Diasporic authors define and navigate issues of race and authenticity, especially in terms of blackness. She is particularly interested in the ways in which Africa has been historically and continues to be homogenised.

Smanga Simelane

Smanga is a MA candidate at Rhodes University. His areas of research include African dystopian literature and African science fiction.

Ted Ssekimpi

Ted's research interests, in many ways, reflects his own personal narrative - namely, that of being a first generation South African having to grapple with ideas of belonging, citizenship, and authenticity. He graduated with his Honours and his focus was the politics of distance and its residues in schemes of representation in film. He is currently completing his MA and his research interests concerned

with the politics of visibility and cultural capital in the literary organisation, FEMRITE.

Yael Barham-Smith

Yael graduated from Rhodes University with a BA (Hons) in 1998 and from the University of Roehampton with an MA in 2005. She is currently completing her doctoral thesis on the formation of female cultural identity in Jewish YA literature at the University of Pretoria. Her research interests include feminist theory and writing, Jewish literature and children's literature.

Featured Artist's biography

UrbanKhoi is a Graffiti artist that hails from Cape Town, celebrating and bringing into remembrance his/their Khoi-African Roots. Determined to use art as a tool to inspire the youth to develop their skills, and abilities to the best of their capabilities as a means to create more conscious leaders, leaders with integrity and independent, uncompromising characteristics. With economics as a constant obstacle, the absence of actual spray paint, is what lead to my style of painting. I basically mimicked what I though graffiti lines would look like in the style of a painting, before I could even paint with a spray can.

“Nat agter die Ore”

It is a play on words with the Afrikaans idiom that suggests inexperience. Although the idea is a direct inspiration I take from myself, being within Multiverse of infinite wisdom and knowledge, where it seems like the learning process never ends, even until my very last breath.

I can see this idea within a different context when reflecting on world affairs and politics. World leaders are supposed to be the ultimate example of “Grown-ups”, yet they express much immaturity in their characteristics and actions towards humanity in relation to corporate expansion. What do you think a mature leader would do? Therefore, act!

Editorial Team

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Editor in Chief

Llewellyn is a Mellon Foundation Fellow of the Center for Humanities Re-search. He is a published novelist whose academic focus lies in the area of life-writing (auto/biography), memory, the contemporary novel, poetry, post-coloniality, re-narrativisation of history, cultural identity and legacies. He is also the editor-in-chief of *Writing360 Journal of Academic and Creative Writing*.

Martina van Heerden

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Martina has recently completed her PhD in English Studies. Her research interests include academic development, academic literacies, feminism and science fiction. She also tutors and lectures in various courses within the Discipline, including English 111/121, 311/321 English for Educational Development – CHS and Science. Martina serves as Copy Editor for the postgraduate online journal *WritingThreeSixty*.

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Robyn is currently working towards her MA in the English Department at the University of the Western Cape. Her research interests are in children's literature. Robyn also teaches English as a foreign language to students online.

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Ronwyn recently graduated with an Honours in English at the University of the Western Cape. She is currently living and teaching English as a second language to students in Chengdu, China. Ronwyn also has a keen interest in writing and traveling.

Shazia Salie

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Shazia is an MA student in the English Department at UWC, focusing on reading visual and textual representations of the African American slave, Sojourner Truth in, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*. She is also a fellow at the Centre for Humanities Research at UWC.

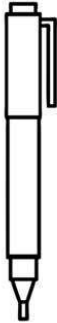
About the Journal

WritingThreeSixty is a bi-annual, interdisciplinary journal for research essays and creative works. First launched in 2014 as an initiative of the English department at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), WritingThreeSixty now forms part of the broader community within the Arts Faculty and Humanities at UWC. This journal maintains the standard of peer review and wishes to provide a platform to develop a culture of publishing among postgraduate and emerging students, as well as established creative artists within UWC and South Africa at large.

WritingThreeSixty also forms part of co-curricular graduate culture at UWC that affords students the opportunity to develop professional skills through the voluntary leadership and service positions created through the journal. These positions include the management of the journal and its team, editorial outputs, as well as our digital marketing efforts that are presented through social media and our online website.



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**Submissions for our next issue:
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