

WritingThreeSixty

Journal of Research and Creative Texts



Volume 2 Issue 2

WritingThirtySixty

Journal of Research and Creative Texts



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Letter from the Editor

WritingThreeSixty is a bi-annual, interdisciplinary journal for research essays and creative texts. 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 scholars, 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 many 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.

Volume 2 Issue 2

Welcome to our final issue of 2016!

This issue has many thought provoking features including our first isiXhosa poem, photographic research essay and portrait collections. The interdisciplinary nature of *WritingThreeSixty* presents a platform to think about the work that the Humanities finds itself interested in. The growth in the journals variety of texts demonstrates the desire for scholars to think across disciplines.

On behalf of *WritingThreeSixty* I thank all contributors, reviewers and the editorial team for all their hard work and dedication in this issue. I extend a special thanks to the Dean of the Arts Faculty, Prof Duncan Brown for providing the journal with support and the necessary funds that enables it to grow from issue to issue. Thank you to Dr Fiona Moolla, Prof. Marijke du Toit and Prof. Patricia Hayes for their encouragement and input.

We invite you to read and engage with the texts featured in this issue.

“...each community of academics, intellectuals and students must wrestle with the problem of what academic freedom in that society at that time actually is and should be...” - Edward Said in Cape Town in 1991.

Best wishes,
Editor-in-Chief
Nehna Daya Singh

Research Essays

A Forensic Approach to Constructing a Biography of Voortrekker Road, Bellville.

- Brent Abrahams



Figure 1: N. M. Du Plessis, *Die Tygerberg: Die Verhaal van die Tygerbergheuwels en die stedelike gebiede Parow, Bellville en Durbanville*. Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1998, pp. 79.

The taxi drive from Kuils River to Bellville Station rarely ceases to intrigue and bewilder me, and neither does the drive from the station to the Bellville Public Swimming Pools—or Bellville Bads, as I have always called it—where I would walk up Lincoln Street to visit a friend living in Boston. It is not, however, the congested morning traffic through Van Riebeeck and Strand Road, but rather, the peculiarity of Voortrekker Road that imbues me with these impressions. Whether from within or without the minibus taxi, the journey through Voortrekker Road, Bellville, engages my senses. What is this unique aesthetic Voortrekker Road emits—evoking visions of past ambitions and present complacency, growth and

decline, banality and vigour, alike—and from where does this reaction stem, whether on wheels or walking through this diverse road? What is this Voortrekker Road about which I so readily conjure dichotomies? As a means to do justice to this unique road, which is Voortrekker, I shall approach this enquiry from an equally unique stance, invoking Thomas Keenan and Eyal Weizman's work on Forensics, and Allen Carlson's ideas on environmental aesthetics to capture Voortrekker Road's wonder in its entirety. What do I mean when I ascribe an aesthetic to Voortrekker Road? Carlson's definition on aesthetics is useful to answer this question. He states, “[a]esthetics is the area of philosophy that concerns our appreciation of things as they affect our senses, and especially as they affect them in a pleasing way”.¹ Often solely associated with art, Carlson asserts that aesthetic appreciation can refer to anything from nature to the “bustling morning market place, [and] the view from the road”. This, Carlson calls environmental aesthetics, which is integral to my forensic approach to constructing a biography of Voortrekker Road, and Bellville to a larger extent.² Note that this understanding of aesthetics does not conflict with Keenan and Weizman's description as “the judgment of the senses”, as they agree upon one's senses being stimulated.³

Relaying the procedures that involved the identification of Josef Mengele's remains, Keenan and Weizman refers to a term coined by Clyde Snow, *osteobiography*, which denotes “the biography of bones. The bones, no longer the living human but not simply an

¹ Allen Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment: The Appreciation of Nature, Art and Architecture*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000, p. xvii.

² *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

³ Thomas Keenan and Eyal Weizman, *Mengele's Skull: The Advent of a Forensic Aesthetic*. Portikus: Sternberg Press, 2012, pp. 24.

object, bear the imprint of a lived life”.⁴ In other words, bones bear the remnants of life's rigours: Keenan and Weizman assert that we are able, through scrutiny, to discern the “entire history of life—a sequence of illness, incidents, and accidents, along with conditions of nutrition, labo[u]r, and habit—that is fossilized into the morphology and texture of bones”.⁵

Therefore, through scrutiny of the bones we are able to create a biography of the deceased individual. With this idea borne in mind, it is my belief that through a scrutiny of certain buildings, objects and places which I consider emblematic of Voortrekker Road, we are able to generate a history of Voortrekker Road's 'life' and understand my apparently subjective sensory impressions when travelling through the road.⁶ These emblems or symbols of Voortrekker Road's history, I assert, are, namely the 'Twaalf Myl' milestone, the Sunbel building, the Civic Centre and the Bellville Police Department. They have always intrigued me.

Just as the expert speaks for and interprets the imprints left behind on the human remains, I (as an unofficial expert) with the assistance of the extensive archive on Bellville's history—municipal documents, newspaper clippings and photographs—will speak on behalf of these symbols and validate them as signs of the past and present life of Bellville and Voortrekker Road. Keenan and Weizman note the importance of “documents, photographs, and medical records” in building a biography of the individual through

⁴*Ibid*, pp. 18

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 19

⁶ The subjective is significant in the interpretation of bones because—excuse the generic example—just as photographs and paintings, people, whether the expert or the layman, often attribute varying meaning and significance to the same object.

scrutiny of his/her remains.⁷ Hence my use of the archive alongside the visual presentation of the buildings and objects on Voortrekker Road. This biography will, however, not be constructed within the parameters of chronology. Instead I will examine four locations individually, despite the era of their particular emergence.

In the Masterson collection on the Bellville Municipality, 1970, a summary of the events and statistics of Bellville's growth during the 1960s is conveyed. In Afrikaans, the scribe writes a romanticised introduction to Bellville's development, stating that Bellville is "*die voordeur van die Kaap/the front door to the Cape*" and that its "*strategiese ligging is ongeewenaard en het baie bygedra tot die dorp se snelle ontwikkeling op alle gebiede/ its strategic location is unmatched and has contributed to the town's speedy development in all areas*".⁸ Development and transformation is therefore incredibly significant in the discourse on the history of Bellville.

With this description of Bellville in mind, I will now commence my investigation of the symbols of Voortrekker Road and identify what they tell us about the 'life history' of the road and the broader history of Bellville, starting with the 'Twaalf Myl' milestone.

In the rare event that I find myself walking from Bellville station to Bellville Public Library, the Voortrekker and Durban Road intersection bears an interesting imprint, a piece of history

⁷ Thomas Keenan and Eyal Weizman, *Mengele's Skull: The Advent of a Forensic Aesthetic*. Portikus: Sternberg Press, 2012, pp. 18.

⁸ Bel 37, Bellville Munisipaliteit: Algemene Statistiek 1970s, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library, pp. 1.

surrounded by the traffic lights, a bench and plants, where the 'Twaalf Myl' milestone stands erect beside a rusted oil street lamp.

The 'Twaalf Myl' Milestone or the 'Twaalfde Mylpaal'



Figure 2: Brent Abrahams. "The small stone to the right of the lamppost is easy to miss". 30 May 2016

Why, however, are these obsolete objects situated at this intersection, barely noticeable amid the dominating buildings, traffic, road signs and pedestrians? Unavoidably, we find ourselves engaged in a look into the history of Bellville.

According to *Bellville: Wordingsjare van 'n Stad – Growth of a City*, the milestone "marked the twelfth mile from Cape Town on the Maitland Road, as the Cape road was called by the middle of the 19th century".⁹ 'Twaalf Myl' was also the name for the small settlement the stone was located in, which during this period was

⁹ C. J. Scheepers Strydom, *Bellville: Wordingsjare van 'n Stad – Growth of a City*. Bellville: Stadsraad van Bellville, 1981, pp. 11.

yet to receive an official name. Although the 'Twaalf Myl' was only established, it is believed, in 1843, the outspan, Hardekraaltjie, which served as a place of rest and refreshment for those travelling to and from Cape Town, had been in existence for longer than a century at the time. Hardekraaltjie's reputation as a resting place for wagons is greatly and romantically conveyed in the municipal documents that relay the history of Bellville. Bellville's history is, therefore, entangled within the history of Hardekraaltjie's existence as an outspan, and the name 'Twaalf Myl' preceded that of 'Bellville'.

Before 'Twaalf Myl', the unofficial name for the small village, was named Bellville, by 1859 it was afforded the name D'Urban Road.



Figure 3: *Die Burger*, 19 October 1987.
(Masterson Collection)

However, as suggested in a proclamation on 18 November 1861 by Richard Southey, Acting Colonial Secretary, the village on Maitland Road would be named Bellville, in honour of Charles Bell, Surveyor-General of the Cape from 1848-1872.¹⁰ An investigation into the significance of the 'Twaalf Myl' milestone, therefore, evokes discussion on the history of Bellville

before it was the immense and expanding city it is today.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

The milestone is thus indexical of Bellville's past; an imprint of the past life of Bellville and Voortrekker Road. Speaking of Voortrekker Road, what does the milestone tell us of its 'life history'? Interestingly, throughout the prior analysis of the milestone and the history of Bellville, I referred to the milestone being located on Maitland Road. According to an article in *Die Burger*, 19 October 1984, Maitland Road was renamed to Voortrekker Road in 1938 in commemoration of the ox-wagon movement through the Road in its early life.¹¹



Figure 4: C. J. Scheepers Strydom, *Bellville: Wordingsjare van 'n Stad - Growth of a City. Bellville: Stadsraad van Bellville, 1981, p. 11*

Once again, we are confronted with the history of Bellville as a significant outspan, but also the origins and history of Voortrekker Road. Importantly, when evaluating the significance of Voortrekker Road, we can discern that it still remains a significant road today, as it was in the 19th century. This alludes to successful city planning. Despite vast development throughout the 20th century, Voortrekker Road has maintained its significance. Whereas, in the past it served as a road to and from Cape Town, and presently this has not changed, however for many people Voortrekker Road is the destination. It possesses within it economic opportunities, learning institutions, shopping centres and stores.

¹¹ *Die Burger*, 16 October 1984, Bel 40, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library.

Although Voortrekker Road has not lost its importance, the 'Twaalf Myl' milestone has. This is apparent by its appearance today. The Roman letters denoting the number twelve are covered by leaflets advertising abortion.

Bellville has therefore changed profoundly since the era of ox-wagons and outspan. By no means am I invoking any discussion on morality, but perhaps the leaflets that cover the milestone's facade represents a decline of Voortrekker Road. A monument, the 'Twaalf Myl' milestone, of such significance in the history of Bellville's and Voortrekker Road's existence, stands defiled at the corner of the intersection, yet no attempt to restore it to its former state has been made. No, this minute detail on the corner of the Voortrekker-Durban Road intersection is not the sole cause of my impressions of bemusement towards Voortrekker Road, but perhaps it represents a broader problem at hand, a problem that conjures the dichotomies of the archaic clashing with the modern; a dichotomy which is seen throughout Voortrekker Road, Bellville—dichotomies which create an interesting environmental aesthetic. The state in which the milestone is in today therefore portrays a picture of Voortrekker Road's life at the present moment.

The significance of the 'Twaalf Myl' milestone is also undermined by the reality of being dwarfed by the buildings and objects around it—towering over and enveloping it—and the overwhelming traffic that occurs at the Voortrekker-Durban Road intersection:

Waar dié historiese twaalfmyklip in die negentiende eeu 'n baken was dat die uitspanplek vir togryers langs die pad tussen Kaapstad en Stellenbosch aangedui het, word die klip vandag verdwerg deur die groot sakesentrums langs Voortrekkerweg.¹² (In the nineteenth century, the historical twelve mile stone, along the roadside became a beacon for recreation for the transport riders on the road between Cape Town and Stellenbosch. Sadly, today this stone is dwarfed by the big business centres along Voortrekker Road.)

The buildings around the milestone are a testament to the growth and development of Bellville and Voortrekker Road. One can only imagine the extent to which the milestone's significance as a historical monument has diminished, due to being overshadowed by development, since the quote was expressed in *Die Burger* in 1984. Bellville and Voortrekker Road have indeed transformed themselves since their inception.



Figure 5: "Milestone". 30 May 2016.

¹² *Die Burger*, 19 Oktober 1987, Bel 43, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library.

Therefore, the 'Twaalf Myl' milestone, an emblem of Voortrekker and Bellville's life, tells us of its beginnings and its progression—from an 'outspan' to a municipality, from Twaalf Myl to D'Urban Road to Bellville, and from Maitland Road to Voortrekker Road.

Although the milestone's significance has shrunk immensely, its mere presence at the intersection creates an aesthetic which briefly provokes an enquiry— 'What is this?'—amid the bustle and noise of Voortrekker and Durban Road. Interestingly, to emphasize its loss of significance, the milestone resembles a cemetery headstone, as if made in remembrance of an era forever lost.

Scrutiny of the milestone reveals a plethora of information on the history of the life and transformation of Bellville and Voortrekker Road. Whereas the 'Twaalf Myl' milestone educates us on the change since 19th century, an immense amount of transformation would occur in the 20th century. The abortion advertisements are therefore also a symbol of this change; a sign of the values of the past being undermined by that of the present. Another such symbol in the transformation and progression in the life of Voortrekker Road is the Sunbel building.

The Sunbel building



Figure 6 "Sunbel Building". 30 May 2016.

In the booklet, *Bellville: Feesjaar – 1960/Festival Year – 1960*, City Engineer, M. T. De Waal expresses his ambitions for the municipality of Bellville. He relays in Afrikaans:

As die regte balans behou word tussen die woonbuurtes, die ontwikkeling van die sake- en nywerheidslewe, en gesorg word vir die geestelike en fisiese ontspanning van die inwooners, is die grondslag verseker van 'n gelukkige gemeenskap.¹³

(If the correct balance is maintained between the neighbourhoods, the development of the business and industrial life, and the spiritual and physical relaxation of the inhabitants are cared for, the basis for a happy community is ensured.)

My analysis on the 'Twaalf Myl' milestone alluded to the economic development prevalent in Bellville, but particularly in Voortrekker Road. I will now address De Waal's comments on the '*ontwikkeling van die sake- en nywerheidslewe*' to depict how the Sunbel

¹³*Burgemeestersverslae 1948 to 1960. 'Bellville: Feesjaar – 1960/ Festival Year – 1960', Bel 35, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library, p. 23.*

building is representative of the economic and business life of Voortrekker Road. Despite its late emergence in Voortrekker Road's history—opening to occupants in January 1985—Sunbel's twelve-storied, octagon-shaped aspect is an oddity and therefore, a distinct and unusual symbol of Voortrekker Road's life throughout the years.¹⁴

The Sunbel building represents the city-planners' ambitions for Voortrekker Road, that is, a building offering more space to conduct daily business and economic pursuits. The Sunbel building could justifiably grab one's attention, as towering over you—motorist and pedestrians alike—making it particularly hard to overlook. The Sunbel building is an emblem of economic progression which began decades earlier. 'Economic progress' is a recurring theme in the 1950s and 1960s newspaper articles, wherein they celebrate plans to establish new buildings to maintain Voortrekker's economic growth. A *Sunday Times* article titled "Booming Bellville will get R1m Building" asserts that the "business progress of Bellville is regarded as symbolic of the economic progress of the Afrikaner generally".¹⁵ Another article from 1967 also speaks of a R1m 13-storey building, with a graphic of the intended design.¹⁶ Despite countless travels through Voortrekker Road, Bellville, I have not noticed these buildings.

Whether they came into being or not, that I am not able to easily identify these ambitious buildings, says something about Sunbel's existence.

¹⁴ *Die Burger*, 19 September 1984, Bel 40, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library.

¹⁵ *Sunday Times*, 24 May 1964, Bel 13, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library, p. 6. Afrikaner, a racially charged term, will be encountered and better accounted for in my analysis of Bellville's Civic Centre.

¹⁶ *Cape Times*, 18 May 1967, Bel 13, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library.

It makes Sunbel a success story in the pursuit of economic progress in Bellville—Sunbel is therefore a symbol of the ambitions for Bellville and Voortrekker Road. The Sunbel building and the pursuit of building more buildings of its immense nature also encourages us to engage in an important reality: that buildings of Sunbel's ilk are the extreme on the spectrum of the manifestations of economic progress.

Today, economic pursuits in Voortrekker Road are seen on a much smaller scale, and are much less formal. These are apparent in the diverse shops and businesses in Voortrekker Road, Bellville; from R5 stores to internet cafes, barber shops and salons, fast-food stores and market stalls. This contrast makes for an interesting aesthetic and thus validates my impressions. An aesthetic of vast and various colours, designs, modern and archaic, and buildings of diverse shapes, large and small.

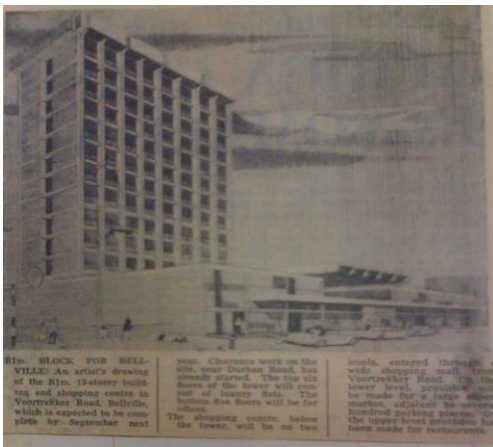


Figure 7: Cape Times, 1967, Bel 13, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library.

The Sunbel Building therefore provokes questions around the economic growth of Voortrekker Road throughout its life, and the manifestations of this growth, but also invokes themes of racial and class dynamics. N. M. Du Plessis's book, *Die Tygerberg*, published in 1998, determines the percentage of professional and semi-professional businesses in Bellville.¹⁷ He presents a percentage for fourteen sub-sections in Bellville. However, to avoid cluttering this essay with too many

¹⁷ N. M. Du Plessis, *Die Tygerberg: Die verhaal van die Tygerbergheuwels en die stedelike gebiede Parow, Bellville en Durbanville*. Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1998, pp. 80.

names and numbers, I have calculated the average percentage of professional and semi-professional businesses for the entire area: 40,4 percent.¹⁸ This statistic from 1998 gives us an idea of the economic development throughout Bellville. The Sunbel building, being the most recently erected of the emblems of Voortrekker Road I focus on, has not changed in appearance, although the buildings around it has.

Bellville Civic Centre

Here it is appropriate to review an excerpt from M. T. De Waal's sentiments in the booklet *Bellville: Feesjaar – 1960/Festival Year – 1960*. He relays in Afrikaans:

As die regte balans behou word tussen die woonbuurtes... en gesorg word vir die geestelike en fisiese ontspanning van die inwoners, is die grondslag verseker van 'n gelukkige gemeenskap. (If the correct balance is maintained between the neighbourhoods... and the spiritual and physical relaxation of the inhabitants are cared for, the basis for a happy community is ensured).¹⁹

The Civic Centre, the cultural hub of Bellville and located on Voortrekker Road, ushered in an added facet of the growth and



the fulfilment of ambitions—relayed by De Waal—of the municipality when it was finally complete in 1957 and opened to the public on June 14th. As mentioned by various articles,

Figure 8: "Bellville Civic Centre". 30 May 2016.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 80.

¹⁹ *Burgemeestersverslae 1948 to 1960*. 'Bellville: Feesjaar – 1960/ Festival Year – 1960, Bel 35, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, p. 23.

the Civic Centre symbolised the continued growth of Bellville. Amid the widespread economic development—as represented by the Sunbel building—the Civic Centre was unique in that it held a municipal theatre, the first of its kind in the Union. Furthermore, it boasted a “banqueting hall, dance hall, stage, modern council chamber... a Mayor’s parlour” and provided accommodation for the municipal staff.²⁰ An article in the *Cape Argus*, 1957, validates the above description whilst opening an interesting avenue. The article describes Bellville as the “cultural home of the Afrikaner in the Western Cape [and the] focal point of these aspirations is its beautiful new civic centre”.²¹

Indeed, the Civic Centre is the cultural heart of Bellville. However, let us explore the notion of the “home of the Afrikaner”. By virtue of the sentiments expressed above, my attention is drawn to the racial demographics of Bellville at the time the Civic Centre was completed. Amid the racial tensions garnered by apartheid and the Group Areas Act (GAA)—and it is essential to note that the GAA only came into fruition in Bellville in 1959 — Bellville was fundamentally comprised of a white majority. The municipal documents convey the population for 1960 as follows: White, 17,509; Coloured, 9,841; Bantu, 472; Asiatics, 102.²² Bellville was therefore still relatively small, but, when compared to the population statistics of 1952, the amount of growth it experienced is very noticeable.²³ These statistics do, however, convey a decline in the Bantu population, likely due to the GAA.

²⁰ *Cape Argus*, 14 June 1957, Bel 12, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library, p. 96.

²¹ *Cape Argus*, 31 October 1957, Bel 12, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library, p. 112.

²² Bel 37, Bellville Munisipaliteit: Algemene Statistic 1970s, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library.

²³ White: 9,200; Coloured: 5,600; Bantu: 2,500; Asiatics: 100.

The Coloured community, according to the 1959 – 1960 minutes of Mayor W. F. van Riet, could flourish in Bellville as Bellville-South was proclaimed a Coloured Area.²⁴ The issue of racial dynamics in relation to the Civic Centre is further amplified in an article in the *Cape Times* on 22 May 1957. Addressing the preparations for the coming launch of the Civic Centre, the article asserts the reality of racial segregation: "There will be full segregation of races, with separate doorways, lift and stairways".²⁵

Of course, racial segregation is not unique to Bellville, as this was an issue in the whole of South Africa at the time, but a look at the Civic Centre does tell us how it impacted Bellville in its cultural life, quite outside of the overwhelming economic growth around it. The Civic Centre therefore conjures up the racial realities present in Bellville and Voortrekker Road in the 20th century. Although its physical aspect does not convey this, the archive does, and as conveyed by Keenan and Weizman's work on Forensics, the archive is an integral aspect of constructing an osteobiography, or in my case, a biography of Voortrekker Road.

Furthermore, the Civic Centre's physical presentation unavoidably impacts the environmental aesthetic I perceive. Its unique clock tower is mesmerising along the drag of Voortrekker Road with its disorderly traffic. In a 1982 article in the Supplement to *The Argus*, a photograph of the Civic Centre and its clock tower is captioned as "Bellville's modern clock tower and civic centre are symbolic of the young city's progressive outlook".²⁶

²⁴ Municipality of Bellville: Minute of His Worship the Mayor Councilor W. F. van Riet, Year 1950 – 1960, Bel 19, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library.

²⁵ *Cape Times*, 22 May 1957, Bel 12, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library, p. 93.

²⁶ Supplement to *The Argus*, 6 September 1982. Bel 39, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library, pp. 1.

Today, however, the clock stands still. This not only signifies its loss of purpose, but also, I believe, its loss of significance in the era we live. In the past, it symbolised Bellville's development. Perhaps the extent of development has rendered the clock tower obsolete.

Furthermore, the word 'Theatre' on the Civic Centre's front has not only lost the second 't' but the first 'e' hangs at a slant. Once more, this alludes to a reduced importance to the inhabitants of Bellville. Despite this, as a symbol of the life of Bellville and Voortrekker Road, and with the help of the archive to substantiate my claims, it becomes apparent that the Civic Centre evokes a discourse on apartheid and the growth of Voortrekker Road as not merely an economic and business sector during these times.



Figure 9: Brent Abrahams, "The missing 'T' and the hanging 'E' signifies a diminished pride in Bellville's Civic Centre", 30 May 2016.



Figure 10: Bel 37, Foto's van Stadswording 07/09/1979, Special Collections, Bellville Library. The celebration of Bellville being proclaimed a city. This photograph conveys the clock tower's significance in the past.

Bellville Police Station

Finally, we are brought to Bellville Police Station, a building which now stands behind the greenery of trees, and whose inception is as equally mysterious as its appearance, for it is known to few that



Figure 9: Brent Abrahams, "Façade of Bellville Police Station". 30 May 2016.

this building, now a Police Station, was once the first official school for Bellville's White population. The history of the Bellville Police Station derives from two separate initiatives to establish

a flourishing public school in 1898.²⁷ These respective initiatives—informal schools—soon engaged in discussions to establish an official public school. The result was the development of three classrooms.

The façade of the building, as seen on the photographs, bears the inscription 'AD 1912', signifying the construction of more classrooms, and thus, the expansion of the school. Scheepers Strydom cites: "*In 1912 het dit weer nodig geword om klaskamers aan te bou*/In 1912 it became necessary again to build classrooms."²⁸ Today these classrooms are indexical of Bellville Police Station, located on Voortrekker Road, Bellville. The building's architectural design does not only signify its place in Bellville's history, but the inscription points to a particular history—the history of education in Bellville and Voortrekker Road.

²⁷ C. J. Scheepers Strydom, *Bellville: Wordingsjare van 'n Stad – Growth of a City*. Bellville: Stadsraad van Bellville, 1981, p. 69.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

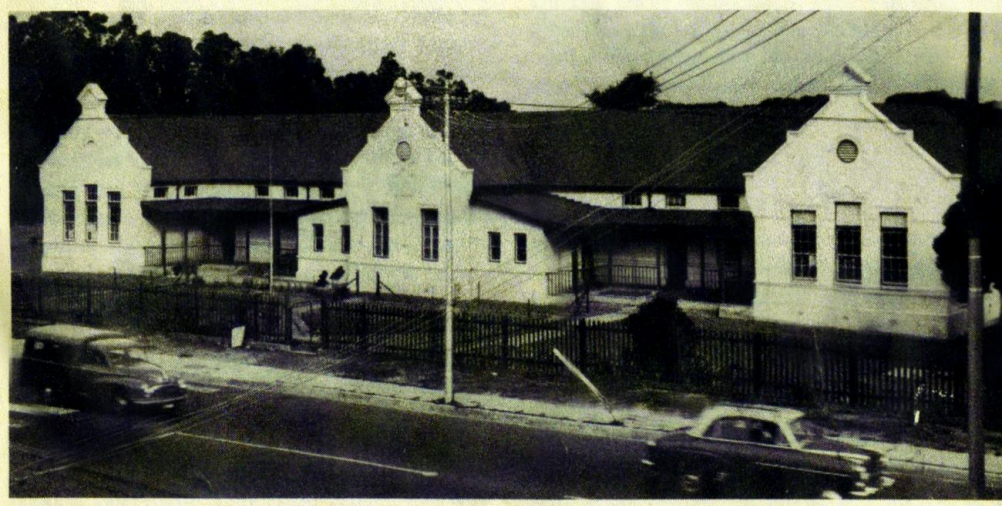


Figure 10: C. J. Scheepers Strydom, Bellville: Wordingsjare van 'n Stad – Growth of a City. Bellville: Stadsraad van Bellville, 1981, p. 69.

What was once a school, is now a police department—this is truly a testament to Bellville and Voortrekker Road's transformation. Since the very first initiative to make public schooling an added element of Bellville's development, public schooling has become widespread. Municipal statistics of the 1970s convey the presence of six primary schools and three high schools for the White population - they also state the existence of three primary schools for non-whites and one high school.²⁹

Therefore, an analysis of Bellville Police Station brings about the life history of Bellville and Voortrekker Road, where Voortrekker Road, in the late-19th to the mid-20th century, was thus an emblem of education in Bellville. This building adds to the environmental aesthetic which had earlier been established. The architectural design contrasts with many of its surrounding buildings, once more evoking the dichotomies of the old and the new.

These dichotomies are perhaps also relevant in the photograph above and the one below. The older photograph—the one

²⁹Bel 37, Bellville Munisipaliteit: Algemene Statistiek 1970s, The Masterson Collection, Special Collections, Bellville Library.

above—exudes an overtness which emphasizes its importance within the community, and the importance of education. The present-day photograph is peculiar in that at first glance there is little indication that it is a police station. The photograph below depicts a hidden and mysterious aspect induced by the trees, and although admirable in a building-dominated road, that the police station is not evident could suggest that trees are unkempt. It is therefore quite contradictory that in an area and road, Bellville's Voortrekker, renowned for its crime, the police station is obscured.

Therefore, a focus on Bellville Police Station as an emblem of Voortrekker Road's life, conjures questions of community values, then and now. Education, important to the Bellville community in the past, was emphasised by the building's eminence. The police



Figure 11: Bellville Police Station.

station, although bearing the school's character, is lost among the surrounding trees and buildings. This loss of eminence happens to coincide with the road's crime problem. This is,

however, not a judgment on the police's work and efforts to curtail crime in the area, in fact, according to the *TygerBurger*, earlier this year, the Bellville police held a meeting with local business authorities to discuss ways in which to prevent crime and improve safety in the area.³⁰ An analysis of this emblem representative of the life of Voortrekker Road, Bellville, is therefore a look into the transformation of education and crime in the area.

³⁰ *TygerBurger*, 20 January 2016, Town and Cities, Bellville, Bellville Library, pp. 13.

Therefore, through analysis of the buildings and objects which I believe are emblematic of Voortrekker Road, I am able to construct its biography. Not only this, but through scrutiny of these signs in pursuit of a biography, I have come to better understand Voortrekker Road's environmental aesthetic. In the process, I have come to grasp my own impressions, amazement and misgivings with regard to the Road, as a daily commuter. The milestone, once important to travellers, has become a surface to advertise abortion.

As Voortrekker Road has developed, the milestone has lost its function, not only to indicate the location, but also as a means to commemorate the past. The Bellville Police Station, similarly signifies Bellville's and Voortrekker Road's past life. The building was once the location of a school, and thus, also bears the remnants of it—seen in its architectural design and its inscription. Though it points to Bellville's history of education, in its current life, it tells of law and crime.

The milestone and the police station are clearly emblems of Voortrekker's earlier life that also evoke thoughts on its contemporary existence. The Sunbel building and the Civic Centre represent a more modern perspective on Voortrekker's life and are thus also symbols of the past's transformation. These two emblems of expansion tell us of Voortrekker Road, Bellville's, economic and cultural life—a life carried out during the racial tensions derived from apartheid. Although the continued transformation had an indiscernible effect on the appearance of Sunbel, the Civic Centre's clock tower tells of a different life. Additionally, the letters denoting the Civic Centre's 'Theatre' have come loose. The Civic Centre has perhaps lost its significance, and

the pride once shown in it by the community seems to have diminished.

Voortrekker Road, or Maitland Road as it was known in the 19th century, progressed from a dirt road through the outspan, to a road at the economic and cultural centre of Bellville—Bellville, which, as of a 2011 census, hosts a population of 44 209 people.³¹ In the past, Voortrekker Road and Bellville were home to a white majority, which it still is today, according to the census. However, growth and transformation can be observed by the increase of non-whites across the racial range. These realities emerge through an analysis of the symbols I emphasize — through visual perception and the archive which validates what I see. These buildings, which I assert are emblems of Voortrekker Road, Bellville, assist me in constructing a biography of Voortrekker Road and Bellville.

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Post-Fanonian or Not? The 'Yellow Bone' Factor and Re-Writing Blackness in Popular Culture

- Sinethemba Bizela

Racist ideologies have generated a deep sense of alienation and self-hatred among black people. Pseudo-scientific categorizations of race and skin colour have placed dark-skinned Africans in the lower echelons of the social hierarchy which has meant that the lighter one is or becomes, the better one's social status. As a result, a fair complexion is still desired, particularly by many black women, because light-skinned women are afforded more job and romantic opportunities than their darker-skinned counterparts. The obsessive consciousness of skin colour, in black communities is so pervasive that there is a term, "yellow bone," for the naturally light-skinned black women, specifically in the United States. Therefore, those who bleach their skin, such as the Kwaito singer Nomasonto "Mshoza" Maswanganyi-Mnisi, automatically become yellow bone by virtue of lightening their skin, albeit unnatural ones. The term has been popularised by the highly politically charged American cartoon series, *Boondocks* and is now accepted and widely used in black South African communities.

Skin-lightening practices differ according to social class. Most importantly, it is based on race, class and gender because it is black women who are engaged in skin-lightening practices. Among those who are affluent, especially celebrities from the United States and South Africa, it has become a strategy to climb the social ladder. It is worth mentioning that the less risky procedures are the most expensive ones because they are

performed in surgeries, unlike the cheaper and more harmful skin-lightening measures that are taken by poor women and which can cause skin damage. I examine Mshoza's skin bleaching story – as widely publicised via various media platforms – and, by examining the general perception of 'yellow bone', I explore the ways in which Mshoza's case can signal post-Fanonian black consciousness. In this case, Post-Fanonian black consciousness connotes a shift of mind-set about blackness as an identity, one that uncouples history as an *a priori* in defining one's racial identity. Fanonian blackness is thus an anti-thesis of such, because it encompasses excessive self-consciousness, inferiority complexes and it is neurotic in nature as an identity defined in negation. The question that I pose, then, is: does the 'yellow bone' syndrome or skin bleaching constitute a re-writing of blackness, and are these practices to be read as a subversion of the discourse of race or simply an affirmation of Fanonian blackness?

Frantz Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), sees language as the foundational basis of racism and how Blacks conceive their bodies and others. He states that language is "one of the elements in the coloured man's comprehension of the dimension of the other" because "to speak is to exist absolutely for the other" (8). Fanon is of the view that language mediates our experiences of the world, and even for how we perceive the self/other dialectic. He goes on to argue that "mastery of language" affords one power because language, as per the European Enlightenment, is associated with reason. Since the language of the coloniser is presented as superior, the language of the colonised has to be subjected to subordination. This means that a conquered culture is equivalent to a defeated culture which means that the colonised are never seen as having their own culture and language.

As a result, the colonised are taught the coloniser's language as soon as possible. Laden with political implications, such language is bound to alienate and dislocate the subject of colonisation. Therefore, Fanon's thoughts on the relationship of black people to European language(s) appear to overlap with their relation to whiteness.

European language, culture and thus whiteness become to be viewed as superior by the colonised and as such they aspire to be like the colonisers. According to Fanon, there is always a lack in blackness, that which cannot make the black individual fully human, because racist discourse maintains that "the negro is the link between monkey and man – meaning, of course, white man" (18). Fanon suggests that racist ideology places black people in the intersection of animal and human, rendering them nearly human. To master the coloniser's language, then, is to become white or "putting on the white world" (23), because "to speak a language is to take on a world, a culture" (25). How does this, then, relate to the 'yellow bone' factor and skin lightening, and how can Fanon help one understand such practices? The body itself is articulated through language and therefore, the desire to master the European language is the desire to whiten oneself. Therefore, I propose that those Blacks who speak whiteness "whitely" or "white-like" (Gordon 4) or, in other words, those who imitate whiteness through language also fall in the same category – for appropriating whiteness – like black women who lighten their skin. Most importantly, these practices can, then, enunciate the ways in which black people as a group are entrapped in a system built on inequality, one that preys particularly on women. It should be noted that skin-lightening is a gendered practice, because women are the target market of such products.

Such practices, then, may communicate something about women's social position, especially one that sandwiches them between race and gender.

Fanon tells us that racism has blackened the people of African descent to the point of nothingness. Therefore, black people have tried to escape blackness by appropriating whiteness, albeit in problematic ways, so as to retain their personhood. The ways in which they attempt to retrieve their sense of being comes by taking on a European language or by desiring white (wo)men. For black women, however, their desire for white men can be said to be the desire to be like white women, since the social position of the latter is above both black men and women. Similarly, skin lightening practice is racist and sexist at once, because it does not only exploit black women, but it also renders their race and gender illnesses that must be cured through such means. Although Fanon instantiates black men's desire for white women as symptomatic of resenting blackness, his analysis is amenable to women who lighten their skin. One could say that skin lightening practices may depict black women as envious of white women's social position. Fanon asserts that the black man believes that to be loved by a white woman "proves that [he is] worthy of white love" (45). Put differently: to be loved by a white woman affirms his personhood, that he is a human being like the white man. Therefore, one can go as far as to say that black women lighten their skin so as to negotiate their way up in order to be desired like their white counterparts.

Fanon shows the internalisation of white supremacy among black people and how they have internalised their subjugation. The desire for white women is a metonym for the desire for whiteness:

to marry a white woman is to marry “white culture, *white beauty*, white whiteness” (45, emphasis mine). This implicit resentment of blackness is dramatised in mate selection where the yellow bone is preferred by black men over darker-skinned women. Therefore, the burden is put on darker-skinned women because they become a constant reminder, if not a symbol, of worthlessness, and, therefore, of Fanonian blackness. The desire for whiteness, seemingly, has not disappeared; instead, it is now dislocated and directed to yellow bones. This is evident in the way black men valorise a fair complexion which seems to perpetuate normalisation of whiteness, making it an ideal beauty.

The state of “objecthood” (82), according to Fanon, is the “feeling of nonexistence” (106) which leads darker-skinned women to fall prey to skin-lightening products. He maintains that:

For several years, certain laboratories have been trying to produce a serum for “denegrification”; with all the eagerness in the world, laboratories have sterilized their tests tubes, checked their scales, and embarked on researches that might make it possible for the miserable Negro to whiten himself and thus to throw off the burden of that corporeal malediction. (83-84)

Even though Fanon speaks about black men particularly and while he may have intended to use the term ‘man’ as a universal term to refer to black people, it does not whitewash the fact that skin-lightening is gendered, because it is black women who are indulge in this practice. Moreover, what Fanon gestures to is the way in which racism and the denigration of black people has generated an industry of skin-lightening products. This also illustrates the nexus of colonialism, patriarchy and capitalism which results in the exploitation of black women. He holds that to whiten the “Negro” suggests that blackness is pathologised – a kind of sickness or what W.E.B. Du Bois calls a ‘problem’ – thus the

“disease” of being black needs to be eliminated by skin lightening products. However, this endeavour does humanise black people, because according to racist ideology, being black runs deeper than the colour of one's skin. Being black is a set of associations such as ‘savagery’, “cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships” (Fanon 84-5). Thus, skin-bleaching could be said to have triggered this line of thinking – the desire to “denegrify” black people – but it is, of course, an extreme measure. Skin bleaching is, therefore, a consequence of this kind of thinking. However, bleaching one's skin cannot erase the historic meanings inscribed on the black woman's body, because it cannot transcend blackness as a racial construct, but can significantly disturb the semantics thereof – so as to loosen the fixated meaning of blackness.

It appears that the need for black women to re-write and redefine their identity has everything to do with a history of denigration. Susan Bordo recounts the stereotypes that perpetuate the objectification of black women. She maintains that black women have been misrepresented as “amoral Jezebels who can never truly be raped, because rape implies the invasion of a personal space of modesty and reserve that the black woman has not been imagined as having” (6). This alludes to the ways in which the black woman's body is objectified and sexualised for the purposes of reproduction and men's pleasure. And also, Bordo reveals negative gender stereotypes which construct black women as whores who have no sense of respect and ownership of their bodies. This view, moreover, suggests the dehumanisation of black women and renders them ‘animal-like’, which means, in many respects, their objecthood becomes a justification for the physical and sexual violence they suffer. It is the “legacy of slavery

[that] has added additional element to effacements of black women's humanity," due to the fact that during colonialism and "slavery her body [was] not only treated as an animal body but [it was] property, to be "taken" and used at will its status approaches that of mere matter, thing-hood" (6). Burdened with this sordid history on her body, the black woman has to find ways of re-writing her Self. She has to write back her body into personhood, but the question is: how does she achieve that? Does she re-write her Self through marrying a white man, as Fanon indicates, or bleach her skin white in order to attain a sense of self-worth, of personhood?³² What does whiteness mean to her, then? Attempting to answer these questions, I am persuaded to believe that the ultimate goal for black women in resorting to such practices is the underlying desire to eliminate their sexualisation, to retain their worth and, hopefully, happiness. Therefore, whiteness becomes the means to an end, the end being desire, because the meaning of whiteness is loaded with connotations such as social mobility: romantic and job prospects. This also indicates that blackness, too, is not entirely restricted in its historical meaning. Therefore, skin-lightening practices may be the way black women re-write blackness, one that refutes the system which placed them in the denigrated position.

The intervention of Black Consciousness, then, spearheaded by Steve Biko, has played a significant role in redefining blackness in South Africa. Through the slogan, "black is beautiful," he argues that one is "challenging the very deep roots of the black [woman's] belief about [herself] ... you are saying you are okay as you are, begin to look at yourself as a human being" (115).

³² In this case, Fanon's gendered terms are based on the chapter, "The Woman of Color and the White man," where he analyses the black woman's desire for the white man; the subsequent chapter does similarly so on black men and white women.

Biko refers to blackness as a social class and a political identity. He might also be reproducing the historical meaning of blackness, here, one that defines itself in dialectical terms with whiteness. However, one cannot take away its subversive spirit, the way in which black consciousness attempts to overturn the historical meaning of blackness by instilling self-pride in the minds of black people. However, considering the prevailing desire to become white through skin-lightening, it seems that there is a need for a new black consciousness, one that is not limited by self-negation. In this case, desire, even for happiness, plays a crucial role in how black women (re)imagine their bodies. Therefore, Mshoza is one case in point in South Africa who seems to be gesturing beyond race, albeit problematically, by deciding to bleach her skin and be proud and vocal about it. The *Atlanta Black Star*, an American online magazine, paraphrases Mshoza claiming that “her new skin makes her feel more beautiful and confident” (“Celebrities Bleaching their Skin”). She seems to be aware that the dark skin is associated with ugliness and inferiority, thus skin bleaching becomes her strategy to climb the upper echelons of the social class. In the same magazine, Mshoza maintains, “I have been black and dark-skinned for many years, I wanted to see the other side.... to see what it would be like to be white and happy.” Her association of whiteness with happiness which can suggest that skin-lightening for her is a pursuit of happiness, perhaps, since to be black is to be miserable. It is here that the practice of skin bleaching becomes complex because it appears to move beyond race, tapping into the realm of the symbolic. By this I mean the focus seems to shift into connotations of whiteness. It thus illustrates the meaning of whiteness in imagination of black people which mingles whiteness with wealth and, therefore, with contentment.

In *Rolling Out*, an online magazine, she has been quoted saying she wants to be “Christina Aguilera white” because she is “tired of being ugly”. Clearly, Mshoza unambiguously desires whiteness, and her specificity in the kind of whiteness she desires tells us that she conforms to the widely-accepted standards of what it means to be beautiful which are mostly defined by the mainstream media. According to her, white is synonymous with beauty. Mshoza claims that her decision to bleach her skin “has nothing to do with [her] esteem and issues with being black”, but it does suggest that she resents her blackness. The act of bleaching her skin indicates the ubiquitous negative perception of blackness among black people themselves. Such indoctrination means black people look at themselves through their oppressors’ eyes, even going so far as to perpetuate their own denigration unaided. This shows the power of racist ideology, especially its ability to reproduce itself. The statement, “I’m tired of being ugly,” could be read as an indirect lamentation, if not a metonym for desiring to be white. In other words, she is saying “I’m tired of being black”. According to Fanon, such a frame of mind is symptomatic of the colonized mind-set, because the colonised “becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle” (9). Thus, whiteness gains currency in the act of rejecting the black identity. Fanon’s diagnosis, here, may illuminate the ways in which to understand skin lightening practices, because skin bleaching is not only a sign of dissatisfaction of one’s phenotype, but also, simultaneously, an indication of both shame and desire simultaneously. In other words, it suggests the shame about one’s skin colour which is misguidedly perceived as ‘ugliness’. Therefore, the desire for a fair complexion is interpreted as the desire to be ‘beautiful’, due to the notion that the ‘yellow bone’ has become synonymous with beauty and attractiveness.

The difference, then, between the 'yellow bone' and the skin bleaching woman is that the 'yellow bone' is perceived by the society as the ideal beauty and therefore the ideal partner, since she is regarded as close to whiteness. On the other hand, the dark-skinned woman is made to believe that she is ugly and the only way of attaining beauty is to lighten her skin. Due to privileging of light-skinned women, the society passes the racist ideology – which maintains that black is ugly – on to dark-skinned women until they no longer view themselves as possessing any beauty. Consequently, she has to desire the 'ideal' beauty and this is precisely what we are persuaded to believe in the case of Mshoza.

Therefore, her conception of beauty reveals desire, not necessarily of belonging to the white race, but of the privileges that come with being white in South Africa. Fanonian black consciousness, then, may after all be undermined by the practice of skin bleaching, especially in South Africa where whiteness is synonymous with wealth, beauty and happiness in black communities³³. Nevertheless, if Fanon maintains that black is associated with "Black magic, primitive mentality, animism, animal eroticism", does that mean that desiring whiteness is driven by the urge to escape blackness? I doubt that such consciousness is prevalent in this day of 'high culture', one that is marked by consumerism. The capitalist system exploits darker-skinned women by selling whiteness and fair complexion as the 'norm' and the ideal beauty to which darker-skinned women must aspire. It is the same system that defines the ideal beauty by using media as its

³³ I realise that it is the second time I am applying the plural when referring to black communities; I use it to indicate their linguistic, cultural and economic heterogeneity. By economic heterogeneity I mean structural inequality and class difference or simply the social strata.

vehicle to carry the message that says 'become light-skinned and be closer to whiteness or stay ugly and unhappy'. However, this is not to say that the capitalist system is devoid of racist ideologies, because it still renders blackness inferior to whiteness. It would not be presumptuous, then, to say that blackness in South Africa becomes a token for social class, perhaps, due to the prevalent structural inequalities. Therefore, desiring whiteness is seemingly the means to escape disenfranchisement that darker-skinned women are subjected to. The culture of consumption – that the capitalist system breeds – constructs whiteness (and fair complexion) as a product to be sold to black people, and particularly to darker-skinned women.

Similarly, television programmes and advertisements almost always portray fair-skin and whiteness as the ideal beauty. As a result, dark-skinned women fall victim of such hegemonic beauty. For example, the former soap opera actress, Maggie Benedict, who plays the role of Akhona on *Generations*, has been brutally insulted on social media for being 'ugly' until Duma Ndlovu, the renowned South African playwright, intervened by writing an open letter on his Facebook page. He makes these interesting remarks, relating to one viewer who complained on Facebook about Benedict:

The "Dear Mfundi Vundla" posts that have been doing the rounds (about Akhona) are downright hurtful, humiliating and insensitive. Some people on Facebook think that they have the blanket licence to comment about people's looks. In fact, there is a growing number of people who display a dangerous sense of self hatred, criticizing anything that is not fair skinned....Black consciousness taught us to be proud of our blackness, and our culture and heritage, those that are still left behind in the doldrums of appreciating anything that is white and light, are themselves victims and slaves of their oppression.

Clearly, Ndlovu is referring to Biko's BCM – to which he too once belonged – because he sees its relevance to the prevailing self-denigration one can observe, especially in the black South African youth. What I find equally intriguing is that Maggie Benedict is the only dark-skinned woman on *Generations*, and that one of the reactionary comments, says that she should join *Muvhango*. What is different about *Muvhango* is that its chief characters are mostly darker-skinned, perhaps since the main focus of the show is the Venda royal family³⁴. *Sunday World*, the online newspaper, published a story in 2012 about a listener of YFM (the youth radio in Johannesburg) who made a complaint to Broadcasting Complaint Commission of South Africa (BCCSA) against the radio broadcaster for insulting Benedict. The concerned listener “alleges that [*Generations*] actress Maggie “Akhona” Benedict was branded as “ugly” and that her looks were likened to those of US movie star Wesley Snipes” (Malatji). The remark shows the self-hatred that is projected on dark-skinned women. The relevance of Akhona's case is that it provides one with insight into what it means to be a dark-skinned woman in a society that does not appreciate dark-skinned women, not even on television. How much more, then, for those women who are not on television screens? Therefore, it becomes understandable, albeit corrupting to young black women who look up to Mshoza, when she wants to be “Christina Aguilera white”, so that she, too, may attain happiness and most importantly, acceptance.

We learn that skin lightening tends to be harmful to poor women who buy “R15 tubes” (Shota 12), since they cannot afford to go to surgeries like Mshoza. Babalwa Shota, in *Sunday Times* (2014),

³⁴ Among South African soaps, *Muvhango* is still the only show that unequivocally celebrates black cultures through Venda culture. Also, Venda people is one of the ethnic groups of South Africa that is mostly darker-skinned, and it is rare to find a fair skinned Venda person. Perhaps, this is why some viewers think Benedict is suitable for *Muvhango*.

reports that cheap products “can cause skin sensitivity in mild cases and cancer in severe ones” (12). She believes that such dangers are overlooked by these women. By doing so, they privilege beauty and its immediate benefits over life. Shota asserts that she has “interviewed women with disfigured faces, blotchy sores and black burn marks” (12) that were caused by cheap skin whitening products. Even though Shota seems to emphasise these women’s victimhood – in their efforts in trying to turn into yellow bones,’ she also acknowledges that “being black and a woman is hard enough,” due to “the reality ... that many a dark-skinned girl, just like in the movies, will mostly be cast as sidekick in real life too” (12). The question of agency or lack thereof becomes a complex one, because victimhood and agency appears to be entangled. Therefore, dark-skinned women’s conformism to ‘ideal beauty’ is justified by their social upliftment resulting from the skin-lightening practices, albeit with a price, because the disadvantage is permanent skin damage and health risks.

I want to reiterate that skin whitening practices should not be read as a form of “denegrification” because such a reading neglects significant factors that inform the practice. Seemingly, black women do not necessarily view skin-lightening as a race-based elevation, but as a way of reimagining their space in society. Susan Bordo, writing about the health implications of breast implants, contends that women have manipulated stereotypes and hegemonic beauty standards to their own advantage by “having implants purely to enlarge or reshape their breasts” (12). She argues that these women are willing to risk their lives as long it is “worth the resulting boon to their self-esteem and “market value”” (12). She goes on to assert that:

These women take the risk, not because they have been passively taken in by media norms of the beautiful breasts ... but because they have correctly discerned that these norms shape the perceptions and desires of potential lovers and employers (12).

Bordo suggests that women are never simply victims, because in their victimhood there is agency, one that manifests in their manipulation of established norms of beauty. Their conformism is informed by the desire to be desired, while at the same time increasing their chances of finding employment. The same mechanism proves to be apparent in skin-whitening practices, because it means that darker-skinned women can now contest for their space in romantic affairs and in job prospects. Therefore, in a society that bases beauty (or one's worth) on fair skin, the darker-skinned woman does not have much of a choice but to play by the cultural rules in order to survive. Thus, the re-writing of her blackness comes in a form of symbolic whiteness: desire.

It is history that accords light-skinned black people a superior status over their darker counterparts. Consequently, the desire to lighten one's skin colour becomes a way of desiring privileges that a fair complexion affords. This can explain why the 'yellow bone' is most desirable to black men, and it shows how the nexus between 'yellow bone' and whiteness is formed. However, it appears to be the black man who perpetuates the predicament of dark-skinned women, because their obsession with yellow bones seems to be an indirect desire for white women. This also could be interpreted as the way in which black men seek to re-write their own blackness, so as to reverse their denigration. For Fanon, racist ideologies have forced black men into effacement. As a result, they sought to write themselves back into personhood by desiring whiteness and white (wo)men. If Fanon believes that

“the white man injects the black with extremely dangerous foreign bodies” (23), then the black man gets ‘un-homed’ in his own body, due to the fact that it is constantly invaded by external forces: the violent convergence of self-perception and projected inferiority. This all becomes complicated in the case of the black woman because her body plunges into the intersection of race and gender; thus, she faces double denigration. To whiten her skin should be read as an attempt to relieve herself from the historic weight of blackness while she simultaneously has to deal with the implications of gendered identity. This may, after all, be a gesture towards the “envisaged self” that Biko talks about in finding ways of writing themselves out of the denigrated position. However, this subversive writing of blackness, as depicted by women like Mshoza, is rather palimpsestuous because while it bears the aesthetic value, it does not entirely erase the historic inscription. In this light, skin-lightening practices render the black woman’s body a shadow of both blackness and whiteness. Perhaps, this is definitive of the post-Fanonian phase – albeit laden with its own complications.

In conclusion, the desire to become a ‘yellow bone’ and, therefore, white – through skin whitening practices – can prove to be socially compensating on the individual level. However, skin bleaching remains problematic because it is misleading to think that beauty can only be found in whiteness. Such practices undermine the historic fight against the denigration of black people and, particularly, black women. Moreover, it appears to reinforce white supremacy, while, simultaneously, rendering blackness inferior. Inversely: if Mshoza is one of the black women whose voices have been exhausted by the excess of ‘black is beautiful’ sloganeering – by desiring to be Christina Aguilera *white*

– re-writing their bodies, then, means re-writing their identities and, therefore, taking ownership of their destinies. One has to consider that Mshoza identifies with Christina Aguilera on the basis that they are both women celebrities. She might, after all, be gesturing towards post-Fanonian blackness, and therefore, skin-lightening, the 'yellow bone' factor, might be a metaphor for the wrestle with white privilege.

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Photography

Portrait collection I, II, III – Bellville Magistrate's Court

- Wilton Schereka

Bellville Magistrate's court

I spent five days at the court trying to get to take pictures inside the hallways, but it was a real struggle as soon as people and security saw the camera. On the last day, I then decided that I would just take the pictures outside and see how they came out. I wanted to do portraits of my parents, who both spent lots of time here during the 80s. My dad, under arrest, and my mom, looking for him. In the end, convincing security that I had no motive other than to do these pictures for a university assignment proved futile. So, I decided to place my parents and the building in context of the road.

I also met a man who lives around the corner from the court, who insisted on calling me Robbie and refused to give his name. Despite me saying I am only a student, he believed deeply in the power of the photograph to tell his story. He said the police and security kept removing his bags with clothes and blankets. He asked that I please take a picture of him so that people can know he is there.

LANDDROSKANTOOR

MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE
BELLVILLE

I OFISI KAMANYI



DROSKANTOOR

MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE
BELLVILLE

I OFISI KAMANYI





Saturday Morning, Voortrekker Road, Maitland

- Margaux Vessié

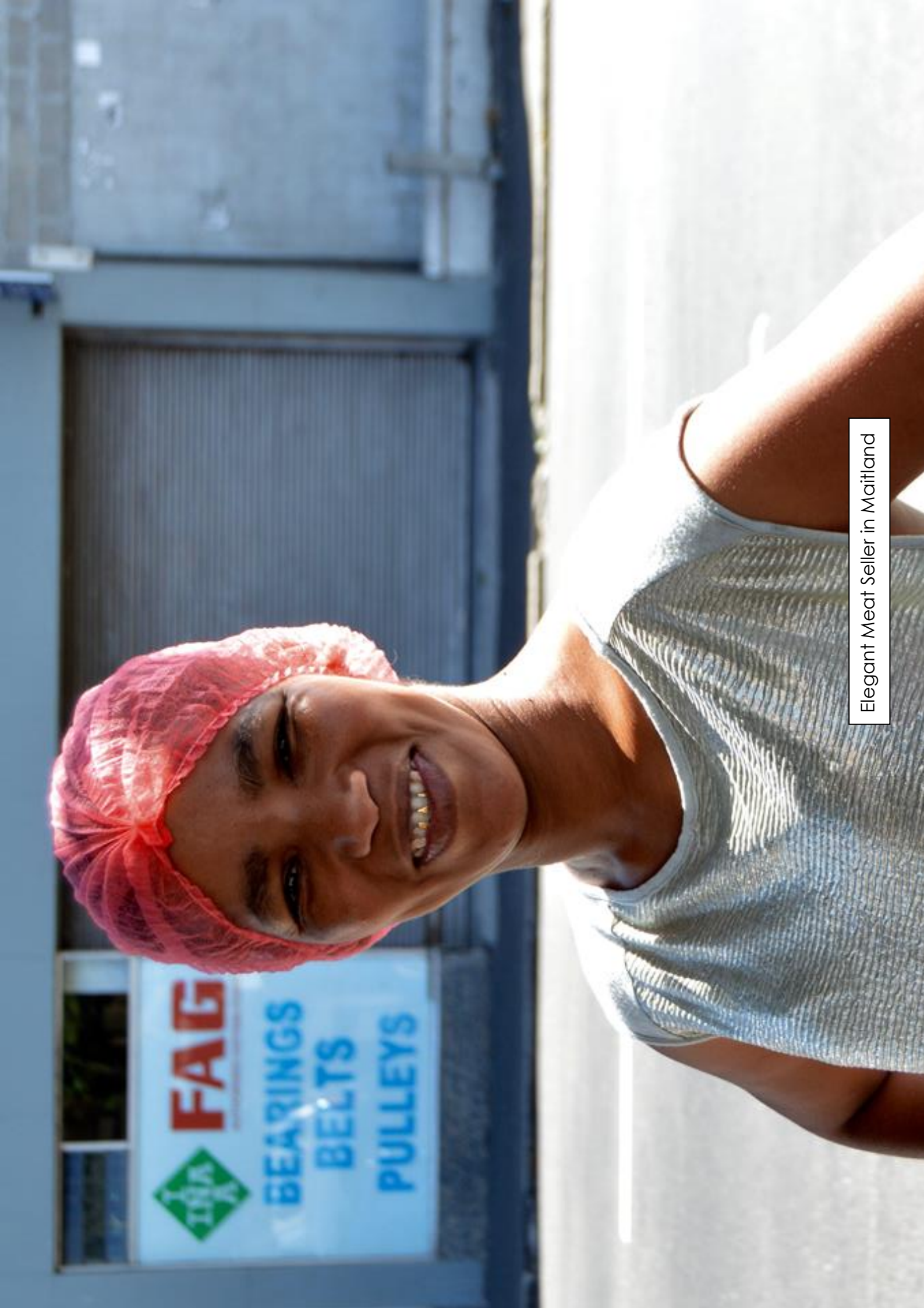
These three portraits are the results of an excursion on Voortrekker Road with one of my classmates, Clotilde, who is also from France. I have to say that it took a certain amount of bravery for us to get there, two white female foreigners in this neighbourhood that was not ours. But this special Saturday morning was bright and sunny and people were enjoying the sun outside. We were just walking on the road, hiding our cameras in their big black bags. But once they were out, people came to us, asking to be photographed.

At the meat shop, one lady even recognised us from our last excursion on another section of the road (probably in Bellville). Then, her colleague came and asked us to take a picture of her. It's the picture that I called "Elegant meat seller" in Maitland because she was very elegant! She was posing and smiling under a tree, a spot that she chose. She even took out her work jacket and she had this fancy top underneath. You could see she was happy to be photographed.

A few meters from there, there was a factory with a man sitting in front of it. He saw us passing by a few times and I guess he was really wondering about our presence there. We went to speak to him and he agreed to being photographed but he did not talk that much, he just said that his name was Ayanda and that he was living in Nyanga. The third picture was taken at Maitland Station where we were standing for a while, chatting with a Congolese woman. The taxi driver stopped a few second to drop a passenger and asked us what we were doing there. He also asked to be photographed and left right after, the whole scene lasting less than a minute. Thus, I do not know his name.



Ayanda from Nyanga in Maitland



Elegant Meat Seller in Maitland



Taxi Driver at Maitland Station

NDINGA

Ewe ndiyabulela!

Ndinga ndingafana no Abheli

hayi uKhayeni.

Ndibenombulelo, ndibey'intsikelelo

empilweni yakho.

Ndinga ndingafana noSolomon

hay'unyana wolahleko. Ndibenombulelo

ndiyibethelele kumacwecw'entliziyo yam imfundiso yakho.

Ibesisonka sam semihla-ngemihla, ibeliculo lam

kananjalo intonga yam umsimelelo wam.

Kunga kungathi nokuba ilizwe liyatshatyalaliswa, kodwa wena

ungasuswa kum kub'intsingiselo yobomi ndiyazi ngcono xa

ndinawe.

Xa bendikhangela ilitye lembombo kobubomi

wena uvele sowuyi mbokodo ikakade.

Phantsi kweentshutshiso, iimbandezelo, amajing'iqhiwu

obomi wena uncame konke ukuqinisekisa mna ndikhuselekile.

Wena uxela iSikhukukazi ukundikhusela.

Kaloku asililo ithemba kungengayeza, kodwa uthando lomzali.

Ukhethe ukundipha igama elingu "Luzuko" ukuze ubukho bam

bube luzuko kuThixo osenyangweni.

Uswazi lwakho mna ndiyalubulela, noxa maxa wambi

bendisithi makube awundithandi, phofu ndibethwa bubuntwana.

Kanti lonk'elixesha undihlangula kwiindlela zobumnyama

ilizwe lakwaphalaphala. Nomlom'ubomvu uyatsho ukuba

xa umbetha umntwana awumbulali,

kodwa ugubungela inkitha yezono umhlangula ekufeni.

Xa bendizifanisa nabanye ndifuna ukunxiba ezikaNokutsho,
phofu ndiswele ukwazi. Wena undifundisile ukuba imizi

ifana ngeentlanti kuphela. Undifundisil'ukuba ayikho indlela
yokuqabela intaba ngaphandle koyinyuka, ingekho neya
empumelelweni ngaphandle kokuzingisa.

Tyhini ndatsho ndaqond'ukuba umzingisi akanashwa. Kananjalo
usoze akabekwa ngoba izicwangciso zezomntu kodwa izigqibo
zezikaBawo.

Ndinga ndingayikhumbula loomfundiso nokuba sele
itshoba lilel'umbethe, ilanga litshonile nobusuku bufikile.
Kunga kungalixa aph'uyakuth'ukuzala kuzolula,
konke kuziziqhamo zengqeqesho yakho. Namhlanje
ndichul'uk'nyathela ndiyakwazi okuhle nokubi, ndiyamazi
u "Hayi" no "Ewe" ngabakulobani.
Namhlanje ndingumntu ebantwini ngenxa yakho.

Kulomhlab'umagad'ahlabayo, kulomhlab'ugcwel'impoxo,
kambe kumaxesha anje, ndinga ndingangakuphoxi.
Ndibamba ngazo zozibini ndisithi ngxatsho ke, Maz'enethole
kuwe mama wam!

- Ngu L.V. Mnyanzeli.

My Room

There was always light in the little room. It came through the lonely window above the bed I shared with my sister and brothers. It had only a big enough gap for everyone to move between the three beds that occupied it. Ma slept on the narrowest bed between mine and that of her two youngest daughters who weren't much older than I was. I shared a bed with my younger brother, John, my older sister, Gertrude and my older brother, Frank. That was not their real names.

We had special names for each other. John was Mantis, Gertrude was Gertie, Frank was called Flash and I was called Pinky. We called each other by the new names when we were alone, but my grandmother didn't like it because it wasn't very Christian. When she caught us saying these names, she would make us fetch red peppers from the garden and eat them raw in front of her, but Frank never got any peppers. Ma found out Frank liked peppers and that he would get caught saying our special names on purpose to get them, so she started washing his mouth with soap instead. That made Frank more careful when he called us.

The furniture in the bedroom was older than me, but still looked and smelled like new wood. Ma would spend the best part of her Saturday morning polishing them with the very expensive beeswax polish that she bought from a store in town to which only white people could afford to go. She bought the polish with the money she made sewing dresses or seaming the legs of pants for our neighbours. The big dresser and cupboards we all shared were built by my grandfather just before he and my grandmother

moved into the house on their wedding day. She was so proud of it because he made the exact set for the rich Malan's who owned the dairy and farms in Paarl. She always touched the handle of the cupboard before she knelt to pray with us each night.

Sometimes when it was cold she would let me sleep in her bed and quietly tell me stories about him. Ma always smelled sweet like flowers and a little dirt mixed into it, from working in her vegetable garden every day. Falling asleep next to her gave me good dreams. I would just lie there and listen to her speak till I fell asleep. "Pappie was too nice a man" she told me one night. "When he was a prison warden and had to take an inmate to the magistrate, he would bring him home with him for a night and make me cook my carrot stew for them. At night, he would boei (handcuff) them to the kitchen table, but before they left in the morning he would let me make them an English breakfast first. Some of those prisoners who got released would come here to say thank you, because he was always so good to them". Smiling she turned to me and said: "You must find yourself a good man, Charmaine, someone just like Pappie," and kiss me goodnight.

She never did that with her own daughters or Gertie, only with me, but at least Gertie never seemed to mind it. Waking up in her bed always made me so happy, which is why what happened that morning felt so terrible and wrong.

I was seven years old when he came back for us. Ma came to wake us up, but her usual playful anger wasn't there and I knew, we all knew that something was wrong. She didn't let us go and wash like we normally did first thing Saturday mornings; instead she made us get dressed in our church clothes while she put our clothes in old suitcases. We knew what it meant. Her eyes looked

shiny, like the tears she wouldn't let out were gathering in protest. Even little Mantis saw it and when he cried, we all joined him.

How we must have looked to her; her three coffees and me, her little tea with milk, standing sleepy-eyed, drool-faced and half-dressed with tears rolling slowly down our cheeks.

She cried then too, left our clothes and held all our hands in her own. Then one by one, she hugged us and whispered her goodbyes in our ears as tears rolled down her face. I could not make out what she said to them but her words to me buried themselves in my heart.

"I am so sorry" she said. "This is my fault. I had too many children. Your twelve uncles and aunties never got the love I owed them. It was difficult raising so many children and loving them after grandpa died. I knew I was a bad mother and that God would make me pay for it one day". One of her tears rolled into my mouth and I could taste the sadness that was leaking out of her as she continued.

"When they were all old and you came to me, I loved you. You were my second chance from God. It's not right that you should pay for my sins."

"Why can't I stay with you Ma?" I interrupted, but it only seemed to make her tears flow faster.

"Your father is here to take you away, but he doesn't have love in him" she continued. "I made him like that. Don't become like him. Remember love. Remember I love you Pinky". She got up then and left to attend to her guests.

When we had all finished getting dressed and packing, in the room I thought could protect us from anything, we walked into the living room to meet them. Gertie walked in front, she was the

oldest, then Flash, myself and Mantis. I didn't look when the stranger sitting on our couch with his new wife said my name. Flash nudged me and then I remembered I was also called Charmaine.

The stranger who called himself our father looked familiar. Four years ago, when I last saw him in the hospital he had a welcoming, handsome face and a smooth head of straight black hair. The man in front of me looked as though he was going bald, even though he had combed his long hair to the front to try and cover it up. His frowning eyebrows reminded me of the white police who always came looking for my uncles, but I knew it was him. His face was my own, and that of Ma.

The smile he gave didn't seem right. It was the smile you give to a stranger you see in the street not one you give to your daughter. But I was a stranger to them. Since that day in the hospital when my mother died giving birth to Mantis, he's been gone and now he didn't know who we were anymore. It must have been stranger for Mantis as neither one of them had ever seen the other. Mantis prayed every night that our father should come back and take us with him so we could live together, but by the look on his face I could see that he wanted to take back all his prayers and stay in our room.

His new wife was next to him. She looked like someone from a magazine. She smiled and waved at me and all I saw were the layers of gold on her fingers and the fancy necklace around her neck. When she told us to call her "mommy," I felt sick. Her narrow eyes and long fingers made me think of pictures of Judas Iscariot, that I had in the Bible storybook that Ma bought me. He was a bad man who gave Jesus to the people who wanted to hurt him

and I took her looking like him, as a sign. Ma told us that our mother was an angel now, and this Judas Iscariot looking woman could never be an angel. I decided that she wasn't to be trusted and that she would never be my mother.

We sat down on the couch opposite them in the living room. Between us there was the little table with the gramophone that we weren't allowed to touch. They, my father and his new wife, spoke to us but while Gertie and Flash were nodding their heads at their questions nervously, trying to cover their shaking legs with their hands, I looked around the little house. I wanted to remember every little inch of it forever. I looked at the little ornaments of Jesus and the nativity on the windowsill and sent my goodbyes to them in silence. I looked at the brass that Ma usually let Gertie and me clean on Saturday mornings and said my goodbyes in silence.

When the little teacups, the ones we never used, were empty we followed our father and the woman to their car. Flash and Mantis got into the car first after Flash put their bags on the roof. Gertie was doing the same, but there was no way I was going to be able to put my suitcase on the roof. It wasn't that I was too small or too weak or anything. It's just that while my suitcase was standing there alone and everyone was wondering why, I was already down the road, passing the Bhai's shop and around the corner, far away from that car and the people who wanted to steal me from my room.

- Robert La Vita

Book Reviews

***Submerged* by Louis Wiid: A Review**

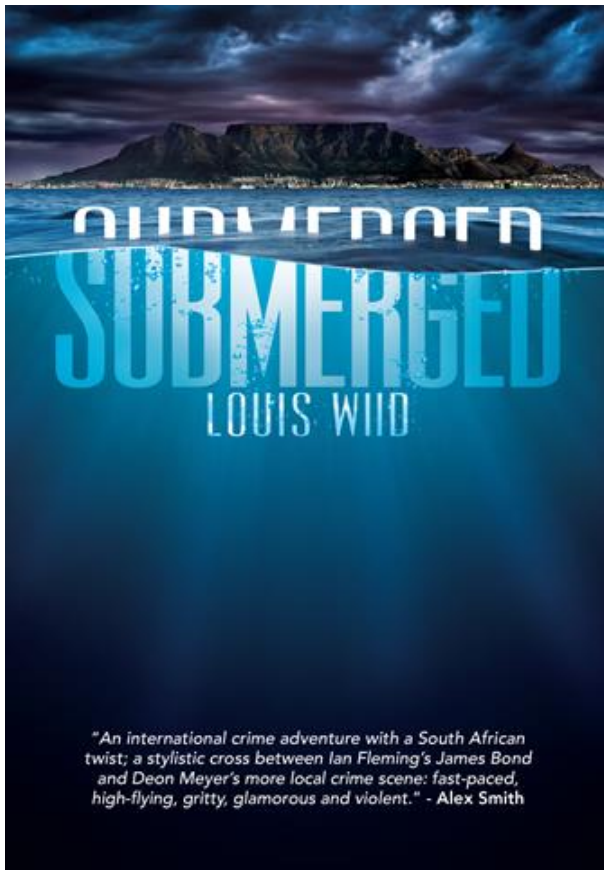
***Submerged* by Louis Wiid**

Jacana Media, 2016

428 pages

ISBN

R220



Submerged, the debut novel of South African novelist Louis Wiid, is an enthralling look into the world of international organised crime, filled with violence, addiction, sex and corruption. The novel explores the darkness of human nature in a cutthroat corporate setting, where people are used as pawns in international power games, and self-

worth is based on one's position in the corporate hierarchy and the size of annual bonuses. The characters are doing what needs to be done in order to survive the shadowy world that they inhabit, and they numb themselves with substances to get through it. The first few chapters introduce Franklin Benjamin who is a coloured

gangster living in Cape Town, trapped in his life of crime and brutal violence. While the authentic voice of Cape Town is never fully present in these early sections, and the vernacular in the dialogue often comes across as awkward and forced, the world is still one that begs exploration. Franklin is an intriguing character, a gangster with a tragic past that immediately makes his character striking and memorable. He jumps off the page, an early sign of the author's skill of infusing real humanity into his often-larger-than-life characters. Franklin is at odds with the leader of the gang, Eldon, who had been financing Franklin's soccer training before Franklin suffered an accident that ended his sporting career before it began. These chapters offer a rare glimpse into life on the Cape Flats from a South African novelist, a subject that deserves to be reflected in fiction more often. It was refreshing to see the dynamic setting of the Cape Flats explored with a cast of colourful and multidimensional characters.

But, sadly, this captivating setup disappears for most of the novel. Rather than creating an intriguing backdrop for what follows, and energising the rest of the narrative, this early introduction to life on the Cape Flats only frustrated this reader, seeming so disconnected from the lives of two wealthy, worldly and white characters that occupy the central focus of the narrative, who seemed to mostly fall into trouble of their own making rather than facing the real danger that Franklin does. While it provides for a satisfying ending once the characters return to Cape Town, the lack of focus on Franklin until the end of the read makes him too peripheral in a way that does not do justice to the character. The gritty realism introduced in these early sections is tantalizing, but it is undercut by the less engaging depictions of the other settings and characters.

Leon Jacobs and Sophia Papov, the two characters who are the main focus of the novel, are often painfully uninspiring as they stumble through their 20s under the thumb of Sophia's malevolent father, Bogdan Papov, a Russian billionaire and crime lord. The main characters are initially young and impulsive, seemingly directionless and motivated only by their whims as they suffer through their indecision and angst. While Sophia's struggles with mental illness and drug abuse are interesting and important topics to explore, these struggles do little to elevate her character. Clearer motivations for these characters and a bit more agency from both would have made them easier to root for.

Leon and Sophia meet when Leon travels to Jameel in Egypt and works as a diving instructor. After Sophia suffers a near-death experience on one of her dives, Leon rescues her and they form an intimate relationship. The diving incident is meant to highlight Sophia's self-destructive and reckless character, and both Leon and Sophia feed off the ennui of each other. Leon is nothing more than a drifter, with very little motivation in the novel other than a vague goal of finding himself, and thus Sophia's enigmatic presence is enough to draw him to London where she offers to help him find a job. Sophia is a rebel trying to break free of the control of her father, a man who, in the classic villainous trope, is implicated in the death of her mother. It is inferred that Leon might be able to rescue her from her descent into the darkness of her mind and her past in the same way that he rescued her when she descended into the waters of Jameel.

These characters delve deeper into self-destruction for the majority of the first part of the novel, despite their intentions to better themselves. Sophia's role is often relegated to that of a plot device, firstly to get Leon to London where the main thrust of the

narrative takes place, and then forming a link between the male characters through their mutual hatred of Papov in order to propel the narrative into its final showdown. Leon doesn't seem to make many choices of his own, and it is unclear why he is even hired at the financial firm where he works in London or how he keeps his job despite coming off as unsuited for it. Sophia, at the start and throughout most of the narrative, is shown to be in need of Leon or another male's rescue, and both Leon and Sophia are cast into cliché roles of scrappy hero and damsel in distress. But despite these initially limiting roles, the characters begin to develop much more depth towards the end of the text, and there are redeeming moments that justify spending so much time developing these two characters, especially once Franklin is reintroduced at the climax of the novel.

The main focus of the narrative is the period where Leon works at Papov's corporation, PapovBank, in London. The section draws the reader in and is written in a compelling, taut style. The other employees at PapovBank, Isabella, McHenry and Wilkinson, are shown to be working on secret, high-stakes deals and broadly represent cutthroat and backstabbing characters who will sacrifice anything to get the job done. Leon is pushed to his limits to become a company man just like the rest of these characters, and the evolution of his character is interesting to follow. He becomes damaged, tainted and darker. Simultaneously, Sophia begins to unravel, losing all semblance of the innocence that she seemed to have at the start of the novel. The author shows that he is willing to take risks with his narrative, and it is rewarding for the reader. These moments and the thrilling ending were evidence that *Submerged* is a worthwhile read for any fans of action-packed corporate thrillers.

The novel takes some very unexpected turns, with characters making decisions that cannot be guessed from the start. This adds to the complexity of the narrative and makes the novel much more appealing in the second half, despite the constant nagging feeling that there is too little narrative focus.

There were some clear signs that Wiid is still a developing novelist. The writing style is often perfunctory, and there is a lot of “as you know...” writing interspersed in the narrative as the author demonstrates his research into the various subjects covered in the text. The information often feels extraneous to the story being told and detracts from the flow, robbing many potentially exciting moments of their impact. This is evident when lengthy descriptions of Sophia's nitrogen narcosis during her ill-fated dive detract from the danger and thrill of the moment. Nevertheless, the writing style greatly improves later where the writing is tighter and more powerful. The action scenes later in the narrative are much more impactful because of this.

There are also some problematic tendencies in the novel, such as the tired trope of making the early villain, Eldon, an ostensibly queer character merely for the ‘othering’ effect this creates rather than as a way to make him more interesting – a trope lazily repeated with Sophia's father Papov later in the text. The villains, generally, are one-dimensional caricatures who offer little intrigue; they are not even interesting enough for the reader to hate them, but they are merely an annoyance in the text.

The only villain with some complexity is Papov's henchman, Sinovich, but his characterisation is often too erratic to make him a round character. Despite the sophisticated tone of the writing and the sensitive way it often deals with substance abuse and

mental health issues, the reliance on overused tropes is grating to a modern reader, even for the genre of crime thriller. There is an unfortunate tendency to fall into archaic depictions of gender, sexuality and race in ways that detract greatly from the story being told, especially for readers sensitive to these issues and those who are accustomed to much more nuanced depictions in modern fiction. More original characterisation would have been appreciated.

Another one of the unfortunate shortcomings is that the complex relationship between Sophia and Leon, so central to the narrative, is only ever elliptically explored. The reader is told that Leon and Sophia have deep conversations and that there was a strong connection between them, but this is never really shown satisfactorily. There is little humour or humanity in their connection, and it seems doubtful that Leon would have gone to such great lengths to follow Sophia or allow himself to be manipulated by her based on their seemingly flimsy bond. Their vacillation between being intimate and being friends is confusing for the reader rather than building on the complexity of their connection. In fact, at one point it is stated that they had not seen each other for many months, even though Sophia was still, to paraphrase Leon, sort of his girlfriend. There are long sections where they do not seem to truly care about one another, despite keeping in touch via emails, and this makes their eventual reconnection much less impactful. It was extremely confusing why Leon would stand idly by while Sophia spiralled almost into obliteration, and why Sophia would allow Leon to become so deeply absorbed into Papov's world of corruption without so much as a warning.

The narrative picks up steam in Part 2, where the characters have reached rock bottom in more ways than one. Leon and Sophia

have compromised much in order to achieve the heights of fame and wealth, and, as is often the case in fiction, they have nowhere to go but down. After tragedy and failure rock both Sophia and Leon's lives, they return to Cape Town to face their demons. There is real character growth here and the novel reaches an interesting conclusion when their worlds collide with Franklin's and the showdown with the villains can take place. The action scenes at the end were well executed and the ending was genuinely surprising and satisfying. In fact, a lot of this reader's expectations were subverted, which is always refreshing.

Overall, Wiid is a welcome and unique voice in South African crime fiction, and his debut novel shows tremendous promise. If he can refine his craft, and focus more on the compelling South African setting like he does in the opening and closing sections of this novel, he will undoubtedly emerge as a highly-respected novelist in this genre.

Submerged is currently available from Jacana Media for the retail price of R220.

Reviewer: Grant Andrews

A Review: *The Wrath and the Dawn* by Renee Ahdieh

The Wrath and the Dawn by Renee Ahdieh

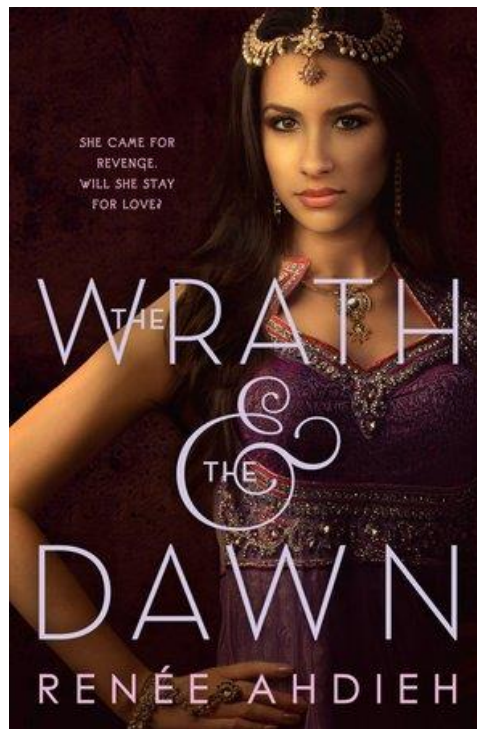
Speak, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2016

395 pages

R135

ISBN 978-0-14-751385-4

Lately the Young Adult Fiction market has seen an increase in popularity in the love for retelling classic tales such as *Arabian Nights* and the classic fairy tale and fables such as Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel and Snow White as seen in Marissa Meyer's science fiction/dystopian series *Lunar Chronicles*. *The Wrath and the Dawn* by



Renee Ahdieh is one such retelling and finds its inspiration in Sir Richard Burton's translation of *Arabian Nights*, also known as *One Thousand and One Nights*. Both the *Arabian Nights* and *The Wrath and the Dawn* are based on the premise that a young Caliph takes a bride every day and by the end of the night that bride is executed. When Shahrzad becomes the Caliph's new bride, she devises a plan to stay alive until such time she has the opportunity to kill the Caliph; she does this by telling him stories and never finishing the stories on the night she begins them, thus forcing the

Caliph to keep her alive for another day. The hype surrounding this particular novel within the YA book community was rather overwhelming about a year ago, and with the release of the sequel *The Rose and the Dagger*, the hype escalated once again, thus urging me to finally read it.

It was unsurprising that I enjoyed the novel as I do enjoy fantasy inspired by middle-eastern mythology. I can definitely understand the appeal of the novel. Ahdieh's prose is beautiful and elegant and her world building quite detailed. I was particularly fond of the fact that Ahdieh did not completely abandon the elements that make *Arabian Nights* a well-loved classic. It was suspenseful, mysterious and romantic; the characters were likeable for the most part and I quite enjoyed the portrayal of a strong female protagonist. However, it was not without its weaknesses.

As much as I enjoyed the novel, there were a couple of things that bothered and frustrated me, and honestly, interrupted my reading experience. The more I read, the more I realised that Ahdieh did not use more than two types of characters. If we consider the three female characters within the novel, you will notice that all three of these characters possess the same three dominant traits. They are strong-willed young women who are stubborn beyond reason, extremely intelligent and all fall in love with men that they cannot be with or shouldn't be with. Regarding the male characters, we see a similar pattern, once again they are strong-willed men who are impressively skilled in particular weaponry, intelligent beyond wit and extremely broody. While the banter between these characters, who often clashed in their opinions, made for interesting and rather witty dialogue, after a while it became a little annoying. This is the kind of thing that literary critics tend to latch onto. While there might be a lack of diversity in the

characters used within *The Wrath and the Dawn* it should be noted that this is not the common case in YA, in fact the genre tends to have extremely diverse and complex characters across all its subgenres. The fact that this particular novel does not, is exactly why I find it frustrating because I expect the cast of characters to be more diverse in terms of characteristics.

There were also inconsistencies with particular characters and I found it rather strange that a character like Shahrzad, who is portrayed as strong-willed and stubborn, would give up on her revenge plan so easily. There were also scenes in which Shazi would make an important decision and, only pages later, something would happen that would cause her to react in the complete opposite way to the decision she had just made a few pages ago. This happens more than once throughout the novel and can become increasingly frustrating.

Despite the few problems I had with the novel, I did enjoy this retelling and I applaud Renee Ahdieh on her debut novel. I would recommend this to anyone who particularly loves romances novels with a light magical element. I would also recommend this novel to any who loves novel set and inspired by Middle-Eastern mythology. You can order this novel online at razu.co.za for R135 or place a special order for the novel from Reader's Warehouse and Exclusive Books.

Reviewer: Abdeah Davis

Book Launch

UWC publishes home-grown poetry

24 August 2016



Figure 14: Wendy Woodward opens the book launch

The University of the Western Cape's writing programme has been so successful in its first three years that it has yielded a fully-fledged poetry anthology, heading straight to the Mc Gregor poetry festival a mere month after its launch. The anthology launched on the tenth of August to a packed room at the Hive in the Old Arts Building at UWC. The audience was treated to a reading by the poets themselves and to a viewing of the evocative cover artwork in real life.

The painting by UWC's very own Zulfa Abrahams, entitled "Harvest" inspired the title of the anthology. In August, the anthology travelled to McGregor's annual poetry festival where one of the festival's prime slots on the Saturday evening, was allocated to the poets and their publication.

The anthology is the product of renowned poet and Emeritus Prof



Figure 12: Authors preparing to read their poetry

Wendy Woodward's nurturing of her crop of aspiring creatives in the poetry module that she taught for the last three years as part of UWC's Masters in Creative Writing. The MACW programme is co-ordinated by published author, Dr Meg Vandermerwe, who teaches prose, with the poetry being taught, as of this year, by

prize-winning poet, Dr Kobus Moolman. Poets in the anthology include Jolyn Phillips who has been published to critical acclaim, as well as other published writers among whom Gahlia Phillips, Christopher Kudyahakudadirwe and Sandra Hill who completed their MACW Cum Laude; Hilda Wilson, Delia Meyer and Jana Ferreira who have all completed their MACW; and Phyllis Orner and Ethne Mudge whose MACW is in process. Ethne is also credited with publishing and editing the anthology on behalf of the English Department while Eben Grobler is responsible for the beautiful layout design with such attention to detail as illustrations of each poet.

At a retail price of fifty rand, the anthology is available at the Arts



Figure 13: Poets pose for a group photo

through the poetry of our home.

bookshop on UWC's campus as well as at select bookstores across Cape Town and is a must-read for anyone who knows that all too often we can only understand our world

Author: Ethne Mudge

Photographer: Nehna Singh

A Tribute to Adam Small

The recent passing of Adam Small aroused feelings of remorse connected to not knowing much about his work. However, I recently discovered that I had heard one of his poems years ago, which I had failed to recognize the meaning of. When I had my first boyfriend, my father read this poem to me. At the time, all I remember thinking was why my Indian father was attempting to speak Afrikaans. Adolescence is accompanied by a tendency to make naïve decisions. As I vigorously rebelled, the significance of a father trying to protect his daughter was overlooked. Reading this poem at present, I realized the effort it must have taken for my father to convey this message to me in a language he only partially understands. His knowledge of my love for poetry made me appreciate how he utilised it as a method to relate to me. As I relay this story to people, the share of diverse perspectives that emerge encourages further learning regarding my existing principles. Through the moral value embedded in Adam Small's humour, it became clear that only he could grasp the essence of my father's lesson, and make it sound lyrical.

Oraait young lovers, nevermind by Adam Small

Oraait young lovers, nevermind
young lovers, nevermind
love net young lovers
moenie care nie,
kô's alles kô tog op 'n end
Life?
'Is 'n sinkplaat ma, 'it word ytgepluk
easy
deurie bulldozers of assie wind ruk
So love young lovers
love ma net
love ma net en moenie care nie
love ma net en nevermind
love hy is mos blind

- Micayla Vellai

Contributors

Angie Lazaro

Angie worked as a journalist at Independent Newspapers and Business Editor at iafrica.com after graduating with a Masters degree from the Department of Journalism at Rhodes University. She left Journalism as a career and focused on Photography. She worked for Fairlady and Top Billing Magazine as Senior photographer for a decade (collectively). Angie is currently a freelance photographer and also teaches photography to Bachelor of Arts, Visual Communication students at Red & Yellow School of Logic and Magic whilst studying for a Bachelor of Visual Arts with Unisa. (www.angielazaro.com)

Brent Abrahams

Brent is registered for an MA degree in Forensic History at the University of the Western Cape. His research is focused on missing MK member Nokuthula Simelane. This year he graduated for Honours in History, his mini-thesis focused on residential transformation in Kuils River after 1991. He is currently working as a junior research assistant for Prof Dhupelia-Mesthrie. Brent is a lover of poetry and cricket, William Blake and Dale Steyn, respectively.

Sinethemba Bizela

Sinethemba Bizela was born in a small township in King Williams town, Phakamisa. He attended basic education at Phakamisa Lower Primary, then Masikhanyise Higher Primary and later went to Nosizwe High school. In 2010 he enrolled at the University of the Western Cape and obtained his BA in English Studies and History. He holds BA (Honours) in English Studies from Rhodes University. His research interests are Decolonial Literatures, Archaeology of the Black Intellectual Thought, Orality, Black Feminism and South African Literature. He is currently studying towards his MA in English at the University of the Western Cape. He writes short stories and poetry, and has performed his poems around the Western Cape and Eastern Cape. Recently, his short story was included in *Prufrock* writing magazine.

Wilton Schereka

Wilton is a Masters student at the University of the Western Cape. He seeks to focus on an alternative genealogy of black musicology that does not rely on what has become the normative narrative during the course of his project. His project will include three sets of musicians from the USA, Nigeria and South Africa. As his research is not only a historical account of these moments in music, he would like to view them as events, not merely as anthropological ethnomusicologies. The normative trajectory of black musicology, especially in the USA, tracks black music from 'negro' spirituals, to the blues, through jazz, funk, soul, r and b, to hip hop. He fears that this genealogy misses the importance of electronic music in the 80s that reshaped the future of popular music both in and outside of Nigeria, South Africa and the USA (specifically Detroit). These musical genres include afro-funk, electro-funk, disco, techno and bubble-gum pop.

Margaux Vessié

Margaux is a 21-year-old French and Belgian woman. She is currently based in Paris but lived for one year in Cape Town when she studied Gender studies, Theatre, isiXhosa and History at the University of the Western Cape. At the moment, she is writing a play about the land in South Africa, drawn from her experiences in Cape Town and surrounds. She is a feminist and is interested in the concept of intersectionality.

Luzuko Vincent Mnyanzeli

Luzuko is interested in literature and loves writing poems since he was in high school. He is currently an undergraduate second year student at the University of Western Cape. His plans for the future are to become a medical doctor and he believes all is possible through hard work and planning in advance.

Robert La Vita

Robert graduated from the University of the Western Cape in 2014 with a major in English Literature. His passion for Literature is what led him to continue his studies as he is currently enrolled in the MA programme in Literature where his research includes analysis of Ousmane Sembene's films. Robert is also a fellow with the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship and the Centre for Humanities Research situated on UWC campus.

Grant Andrews

Grant Andrews is currently a postdoctoral fellow at Stellenbosch University. He completed his PhD at the University of the Western Cape under the title Representations of Fatherhood and Paternal Narrative Power in South African English Literature. His research interests include queer studies, masculinities and South African literature.

Micayla Vellai

Micayla Vellai is an English Honours student at the University of the Western Cape, working towards a career as an editor. As the first in her family, she has completed her BA degree with English and Geography majors, thus able to respond to a vast array of topics. Her familiarity with the works of Roald Dahl served as the platform for her fascination of literature. With her interests in 19th century literature, Children's literature and Post-colonial literature, she wishes to further her knowledge through pursuing a Master's degree. As a volunteer in the community, she has managed social crime prevention campaigns which aim to improve conditions in poverty-stricken and gang-related areas. This constitutes encouraging the importance of education and empowering individuals. Her passion for sports stems from believing that an active body is the key component to a healthy and focused mind. Her love of animals, however, requires no motivation. She dreams of owning a smallholding one day, big enough for all her animals and all her books.

Editorial Team

Social Media Manager

Abdeah Davis

Abdeah Davis is an English Literature Honours student at the University of the Western Cape. She is pursuing a career in social media and digital marketing and hopes to one day work in publishing. She spent her teenage years playing guitar and bass in a couple of alternative bands and has always had a love for reading and writing. She has a special place in her heart for South African alternative music as well as South African authors and tries her best to show support in these communities. She enjoys both reading and writing speculative fiction – that is, everything from Young Adult Science Fiction to Urban Fantasy, High Fantasy, and all its sub-genres. She also runs a book blog which focuses on YA literature and Fantasy literature, called Under the Midnight Sky (www.underthemidnightsky.com).

Copy Editor, Web Editor and Type-Setter

Llewelin Jegels

Llewelin is currently registered for a Masters at UWC starting 2017 with a focus on contemporary memoir and legacy-making in post-apartheid South Africa using Zayn Adam, an iconic music star in the Western Cape in the 70's and 80's, as a case study. He is also a Masters Fellow of the Centre for Humanities Research at UWC. He is a published novelist, editor and poet. He also works in the indie publishing, film and media space. And in his spare time, he is an avid Scrabble and chess player. His interest in competitive Scrabble has helped him discover a fascinating subculture of word fundis from all over the world.

Copy Editor

Dmitri Jegels

Dmitri Jegels is a Communication Skills lecturer at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. He is a PhD candidate in the Department of Linguistics at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), and is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Multilingualism and Diversities Research at UWC. His research focus is on the semiotics of violence and contestation, the discourses of protest movements, turbulence, mobility, space, place, linguistic landscapes, and linguistic citizenship.

Creative Texts Editor

Mike Hageman

Mike Hagemann is currently doing his PhD at The University of the Western Cape. He is researching the poetry written by Chas Lotter, a Rhodesian soldier who served throughout the duration of the war, a war he also served in. He completed his MA at UWC in 2004 / 2005. He has taught high school English, Geography and Tourism for thirty years before deciding to take an extended sabbatical. His academic interests are art photography, comix, humour and queer studies. He has published several poems and short stories locally and internationally.

Research Editor

Martina van Heerden

Martina is currently working on her PhD in English Studies, which focuses on feedback practices in the discipline. 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, English for Educational Development – CHS and Law.

Editor-in-Chief

Nehna Singh

Nehna is currently doing research for her MA based in the English Department at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Her work focuses on the aesthetic education in novels by Amitav Ghosh. She is also a fellow at the Flagship on Critical thought in African Humanities at the Centre for Humanities Research (CHR) where she worked as editorial assistant on the forthcoming (2016) publication *Design for Change* by Jon Berndt. Nehna tutors English 111/121 and English for Educational Development at UWC. She has a keen interest in leadership and social development and presently serves as the secretary for the international organisation, Women in Black South Africa (WIBSA).

Artwork by Angie Lazaro

The title of the artwork featured on the cover of this journal is *Refusal*. This artwork is part of a collection of works. The figures in these art works, in essence, retain an ambiguous gender identity although female. Exploiting the visual gender cues would detract, and place the argument into a biological narrative and an acceptance of the body biology as being more important than the psychological factors.

The work is a refusal and a resistance to the imposition, placed on the female individual, of conflicting gender identity descriptions; the multiple definitions; the realisations and expectations assigned upon her as a social being.

The paint has been scratched and scraped onto a layered surface of dripping paint where expectations and solid foundations dissolve. As much as the figures resist, they quieten in the language of knowing and imprisoned by their existence within society's patriarchal machinery as the on-going debates persist.

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