

The Daily Sun Subscribers

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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By

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Abstract

My thesis comprises interlinked short stories, verfabula, sketches, fragments, flash fiction, folktales, anecdotes, and the epistolary form. I write in English tinged with IsiXhosa. In terms of specific influences, the collection is strongly influenced by the experimental writing of Kathy Acker and Samuel Delany notably the uncompromising ways in which they contort formal grammar and sexuality, the defamiliarizing function of the phantasmagoria in the films of Alejandro Jodorowsky and David Lynch, the techniques of the picturesque as used by Amos Tutuola, and, importantly, narration in the present tense as deployed in Dambudzo Marechera's *House of Hunger* which results in negation and subversion of the narrative depiction of the past, the present, and the future. On the stylistic level, I am strongly influenced by the haunting surrealism of Sony Labou Tansi, the eccentric meditations of Julio Cortázar, and the iconoclastic rants of Lesego Rampolokeng.

To my people with tongue-less mouths and talking eyes. Lo and behold, I hear you.

For my Grandfather & Grandmother

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Wound-thieves

It likens its life to a rat, cockroach, fly, dog deemed pointless pigeonholed... susceptible to scorn unless It had a tongue to contribute to the already putrid betterment of society. The truth is, It knows, there can never be betterment, equality throughout nations, for every society needs some-thing/shit to put the blame on the rat, fly, dog, the nigger, the kaffir; if not, there would be no need for tongues, and we could all be washing laundry, fucking and partying (by osmosis). It is trussed up in the ugly garment of the black experience: It thinks of the poets:

black is not what white is not;

scars are not medals;

too black for the white kids, and too white for the blacks.

Instead of being its mind meeting-engaging the world, it is the world encroaching on Its mind – eating away at it. It is aware of the wound-thieves, nimble-men of long-hearts going around giving out tasteless foods to those with the ugly garment in exchange for their brains... pains. Here is a hard buried insurmountable truth – the black experience that is pain is unmatched. It uses the word, ‘truth’ simply cos there is also the word ‘fact’ and this is not science. It views life in prison through a tiny heart-sized window and dreams heartily of the supposedly intangible: life, love, humanity. This is where it distinguishes between space and place. It dreams of space, for the place is born twins with pain. It wants to transcend pain but somewhere under its mother is playing kite with the umbilical cord with the rest of the drunken dead throwing stones at it. Whatever is keeping the ancestors busy drinking is doing a fine fucking job while the living is relentlessly dying. It vomits every time somebody beautiful drives over a box of wine with an infant in it. Every time a student hurls himself down to the unfeeling ground and the brains splatter. Every time a couple of woman's breasts are found under a taxi seat. Every time a woman gets beaten up by a jealous lover, cuts and chews her clit in spite of what the cunt could-would do. Every time some son is burnt with his shack, dying within him a poet. Every time It reads, in prison, piles and oodles of papers by the very sadistic wound-thieves on the ‘psychoanalytical findings’ facing the ugly garment; all as a result of joblessness, drinking to beating up their wives and kids!

It is dropped from prison, arms greener than ever: R.B.N//26. Feels the pain and shame of the outside world bulging already. It is Nopali here, a name known for gore and gruesome. It's Nopali's word against the place; it is the place encroaching on his mind; then, its mind, out of frustration, marauds its way out for space... back to prison. It's yet again, the wound-thieves with the word to describe this – masochism. It asks itself what is that now. It asks around other ITs, the prisoners. It looks it up . . . Despondently, the cold weight of cement walls around him gnawing its way in its bones, mutters: – but there is nothing masochistic about prison when the very ugly garment is pre-disposed to the black experience which is unequivocally conditional. To It, the lover of pain are the very wound-thieves for writing about the jail they have never been into. Kitsch. In its cell, It imagines a universe without

margins – free of all with pure hearts and souls weaving together – an open space, meaning, no ownership &/ whatsoever. It gets into its car onto the marketplace. Shops. Finds its car gone (in this universe without fuss & farce). Hops into the next car. It arrives at home, finds it occupied with some other people. No harm. No farce here. Gets into the next house. Fucks the woman there. This goes on and on. It stops fantasizing. It is given its last bad food. It is electrocuted.

*

NoPali

At the Home Affairs Government Department, wanting to shoot me an ID. Have long locs down to my shoulders and whiskers wide as the Joker's grin. *Uhm*, she says *we can't get you an ID with that inscrutable face*. She has a glistening bald head on top of which I can discern a ruefully spinning fan attached to the roof. I once fucked a lady with a shock of hair, fidgeted with my locs a lot. One day, I asked *but why?* And then she said, *I can't imagine a bald thinker if there's nothing up there to think about*. I looked into this woman's eyes from Home Affairs... her irises, like the moon, seemed the only holes out of this hell-earth – they were empty.

In the sign language universe, there's a symbol for breasts to indicate the presence of a woman around. For instance, you point from one breast to the other (back & forth). Shadowed by my long locs. Outside the department, two men... one gesturing this sign which made everybody laugh their lungs out except for the two white passers-by geriatrics who were disgusted-freaked out such that their eyes leaped forth and their tongues dangled in the air, starting from one breast, then to the middle where the heart lives and to the last.

On my way to the open-air that is home, a snake crawls across my legs. Horror-struck, I'm up in the air for five minutes straight, deciding – instead of onto which side I must land – whether I am a patient or an agent in this world.

My name is Mawethu, it is the name that my grandparents gave me. It has a deeper meaning behind it. After my grandparents had passed away, some townshippers have brought it to my attention in a stretch, the meaning of my name. I am a vessel through which my grandparents, now ancestors, will communicate. My duty is to translate their ancestral unintelligible messages via dreams into intelligible messages that the living would be able to understand. I'm like Hermes the Greek messenger, says my intelligent neighbor and laughs it off. I began talking to myself aloud in the morning, afternoon, and night. It didn't matter, the voices in me were uncompromising. And then they started to taunt and mock me. I'd turn to look back, and see the kids following, guffawing at me. Even grown people would do this which would hurt me even more. They gave me a name, NoPali. The lone-talker. And it happened this one night that I got to live up to the full unforgiving nature of the name they've given me. My first murder happened last night. I saw seven tsotsis or amapantsula when denied the former term, saying it was *derogatory*. I proved my point and drew up on the pavement a boom box and demanded that they dance. They looked at me as though crazy, laughed. And then I drew up a long pole and filled it with long nails sticking out of it. I asked them to say my name. NOPALI! I bludgeoned them to death. My second murder took place near a church at night.

Fifteen older women were walking home from church. I appeared in front of them. I ask if they weren't tired. I drew up a bus. And demanded that they should get in. they laughed, NOPALI, haymaan wethu! I bashed them to death.

My name is Nopali, it is the name I was given by the outside people. It swallowed my identity.

*

nondindi

In Kwa-Ndancama there is a psychiatric hospital bivouacked far from the 'sane' populace. Dwarfed by a thick ominous forest with looming oblivion. Looking into it makes my eyes misty with mystery. It's hard to tell if it is real or unreal. The asylum is flat in architecture as though is being sucked from underground by a perturbed creator and spreads wide enough to make you think, existence is burdensome. There's a student from Kwa-NoKholeji, oozing tasteless soupy saliva in some ward in there, according to this big deal newspaper, which I loathe, preferring the Daily Sun cos of its creativeness, imaginativeness, and unputdownable nature. It was after an incredible escapade that took place in the same bathroom showers. It was at night. Students are freaks, liked to be fucked, cry and kill themselves in showers. Perm, says in the paper is the student's name.

This one night she goes to shower. Gets inside. Takes her clothes off, they jump up without her knowledge, into the next shower. She does not hear them settling. The water has been running. Perm hums a hymn that blurts out her teeth. The next thing, the water begins running next door. A distinct voice breaks through marveling Perm's singing.

Perm: thank you very much... I try.

The Voice (or *Nondindi* as per Perm later):

That's a very profound hymn that dates back to the 1800s.

Perm: (wonderstruck)

I didn't know about... khawtsho, what degree are you studying for?

The voice:

Ndenzi Bachelor of Arts with majors in English, History & Philosophy. Wena?

Perm: final year, Bachelor of Social Science & Humanities with majors in Psychology and Criminology... what's your name?

Nondindi:

Good for you, been here since 1921!

A loud nerve-stinking screeching scream was heard throughout the corridors and then it stopped abruptly. Perm's head was against a square of two tiles painted red with blood.

Nondindi was a ghost. One of Nokheli's first matriarchs. Nondindi even washed their dishes when they were busy with studies and/or partying. Nondindi was sad and promised to never visit her daughters after Perm's incident.

In Kwa-Ndancama on Sundays, women resemble Bibles - Red rouges. Black dresses – that were bothered to be opened.

*

NoPlate

Looking through the same fucking window, NoPlate is wearing a bloodied robe, dragged down in front by her sagging breasts. Of breasts, I learned that the name dates back to time immemorial. First, they were referred to as *rest*, a sanctuary where men could rest, dream up afro-futures wherein the black man has a roof other than the mines. But something happened: at midnight, a lonely woman, a lady, a girl, a whore, a wench, ikakakazi, (the last name I'm about to bring up changed the entire word) cooked a pot of witchcraft and flew it across houses of panting women dishing up women's rights, wreaking unrest. Dissing men with chauvinism ... this Bitch! Hence, Breast. I'm seeing one side of her like a two-dimensional picture. Eye swollen with a suspended wave of tears, protruding, unblinking. She's out of time this day – unresponsive – lost. Blood dripping off her robe. Throw a cursive glance to the left, on the floor, is my friend, Mpumzi, in frantic spasms. This stings my heart, causing a large lump to breathe in the center of my chest. Uyaxhozula exuding weird grunts in the shapes of squares and circles by the movements of his cheeks and lips, and with daubs of blood jumping out where his kidneys stay. I'm staring at him and the blood spreads wider and wider, each time I'm doing that. I panic out of the door and into the lounge. Almost fall face first. Two people are in trance there – immune to me relying on the emergent devastating news. I want to fist-fuck them all in their arse-funny faces and then suddenly am buoyant, floating on humid humor of feverish air that pushes and/or drifts me back to the room. There are one-legged footprints of blood trailing to and fro when I arrive in the room. I ask, who's the fucker with one leg? Ignored, Mpumzi rises from the floor zombie-like, pushing back the gushing blood coming out of the nose with the right hand so that he looks half-human and half-ghoul or vampire. At this point, he is a symmetrical tall stain of blood. He is a maroon color; plus, NoPlate is smirking now. I'm irritated cos I wasn't trained this way from childhood – to tolerate nonsense. I must smack shit quick! And right there, it just happens, Mpumzi transmutes to some kind of matter, like my unborn child who's growing in NoPlate's stomach. I'm looking at her in a fresh light out of the corner of my eye, however, now with an assertive shame resting heavily on my heart, broken. I brush my eyes with two fingers, from both hands, to make all things clear – little beads of tears go sideways, I can never erase the fact that NoPlate is hurting. Dying within. I'm disgusted with myself. Nausea makes me go to the toilet. I shit, pee, and vomit there. Look around for tissue and it's not there. There's a panty in one corner and it all just makes sense. Ndikhap-khapu all the way to an empty room, feeling drowsy, and put my head down. I'm a light sleeper which means I am active and engaging with every sound, movement, and motion around me. Wake up

unaware of the time and context, and my feet hurt with bone-marrow stirring bites and stretches. Not so long ago, there were kittens of cats, yanking, pulling, and sucking at my feet like they were their mothers' tits. So, I had to take off my socks. NoPlate was there too, fighting snakes gliding on walls in all the varied shapes and forms I could imagine.

My grandfather died loathing the color RED for all its freakish undertones – meaning secular. Could not understand this at first since he was an otherworldly person himself – meaning healer-herbalist. It's been roughly a year since departure. Yesterday, I dreamt that I was at the funeral and I was wearing red shoes that matched my long locs. After that I went to visit a childhood friend, inside his house it was shaking cos it was built of wood. When asked where I just come from, oddly enough I got stuck at the moment for a noticeable time and then answered: from my grandfather's funeral. I wake up sweating, my heart wanting to break through my ribs. I relay this to NoPlate who's beside me half asleep, half awake. Instead, she throws me her veiny breasts to put in my baffled mouth. She eats all the eggs and peanuts in the house. My grandfather's burial was my first time ever at a funeral. They say I will live longer than the average soul. And the rest say, no one will want to attend my funeral if I don't do the same for others. And the children say we want to live up to your imagination.

At the age of eight grandfather would not allow me to attend my sister's funeral. I was told not to cry. Grandfather taught me medicine harvesting in the bushes: to heal oneself. Grandfather never forced me to go to church. I escaped Sunday school. Grandfather beat me up if I pointed a toy gun at anybody while playing. I never touched a toy again. Grandfather gave me books to read. My first swig of brandy was with him at our goat-horns-riddled kraal. I laughed at him till he was annoyed and beat me up again. We had two neighbors: left side, it was a woman with moon-like eyes; right side, was a man of Khoi-san descent. We laughed furtively whenever he spoke. One day, my grandfather walked up to the woman and called her a witch. Little black dots formed in her eyes. I was brave ever since that day. The Khoi-san showed me a man whose colossal testicles were pregnant with the future. I never saw the Khoi-san again.

*

jesus' heathen anec-jokes

Uhm...

two dandy folks meet late at night after a big business conference. Next to each other, relaxed in their rocking chairs, doped by the mystic sky. One, a native of this place, asks the other who's not from here, what is that, pointing to the carelessly grey-shaded moon. A few seconds pass and he responds, *look man, I don't know anything about this place!*

a spirit-dampened father is followed around by his 13 kids and nagging wife for money. He storms out of the house to a crammed street. Grabs his ears, and quietly puts them in his pockets.

I'm balls-deep... if life's a bitch. Grandma says that Valentine's Day is the firm symbolism of a party of amahule.

In my studies of the human race I've come to an odd understanding that, if you go with wine to a party of coloreds, you come back home with a non-racist wife.

Desmond Tutu was tall when he was young. Only god knows what happened to him. Mandela's youthful haircut had a line... pathway to the shit house currently known as South Africa.

How does one know if an Indian couple has just had sex?

You can't. Cos, they have sex with their feet!

*

newsance

i'm part of a cosmos. trapped. prone to subscribe to self-absorbed beliefs about the indubitable doom DEATH DOES NOT KNOCK intrusive as music occupies or space. stubborn. i want to resist. along sages & renegades centuries old. & howl DEATH KNOCKS manifest herself through dreams hallucinations visions. gullible men of simple temperaments dismiss such profound insights as mere trickery. torn between belief & resistance. i've been cheating Death through windows caves & cages. whole township wonderstruck, seething with disbelief about my unprecedented escapes. i know all about Death's silly tricks... some: booby traps of faceless feisty fervent *tsotsis*...

many moons back. beer-guzzling like hell. NoPlate screams SNAKE. a stick in my hand. beer-encouraged. to the toilet. with slight trepidation throbbing in my chest. serpent flushed! a cool breeze from the broken window i vaguely recall slaps my face.

i'm tied to NoPlate's apron strings. comatose. no telling between night & day. ensnared. in this concave. my grave. mum & dumb under her influence. such wordlessness... PUSSY POWER Chief protests (says, he's never seen a woman with such striking shocking ugliness toothless mouth large breasts & hairy face - it's sickening.) i'm crazed between NoPlate & chief pulling from opposite sides. painful to choose, immanence/transcendence without infusing thought with emotion. it nauseates the brow clenches my buttocks to even think that NoPlate is behind all the madness.

*

here's why: elsewhere

frog naked. stupor. trundling to the toilet. dazed from last night of beer gluttony. i find my crotch gone. the whole part shaved clean with only a weary hairy pair of balls hanging loose. dreaded. aghast. heart flouncing. kicking. punching the air. seething. fuming. mucus bubbling plastering my sweaty face. (i can't imagine myself without the crotch - a blotched

identity and doomed dignity). think through the delirium. i hurry-scurry back our room. bang the door. hysterical. convinced that my crotch shoved in the stuff.

NOPLATE VULA LO MNQUND' OMNYANGO

taken aback. i don't recall putting a trellidor a door-bell & wallpaper with different sized penises all over my door. NoPlate opens up. frog-naked. blows me *entjie* smoke. chewing foreskin-like gum. shadows & commotion going on in the room. naked men with shiny stiffened penises in boisterous laughter dripping sweat & cum dart & dash about the room. she dangles her hands -- snakes. i'm confused. anyway, spit out UMTHONDO WAM KAKAZI bitch!

NoPlate unbolts the trellidor. points to a corner with olive-green buzzing flies,
dead open-mouthed frogs

ants as big as rodents on a toddler-tall brown-blackish heap of penises-breasts-nipples-butts-lips

FIND YOURS & LEAVE she ejaculates.

most of the penises are worm-rotten decaying with their bodies elsewhere - her conquests. i find mine. stick it back & take flight.

DEATH IS INTIMATE AS LOVE the Zimbabwean writer was right.

i'm her conquest now. pensive, bed-ridden these blemishes - follow from some drunken nights. fucks, NoPlate's marvelous penchant for taking 'shit' before & after sex. my mindless mum-ness under her influence. i'm blinded from the act - 'shoving and removing' the frog in her crotch, collecting my cum. remember, one of Chief's stupid caricatures muttering drunk about this, & SO SHE GOES TO THE TOILET. PULL THE FROG OUT. STITCH UP THE CUM-FULL FROG'S MOUTH SHUT. BURY IT. THEN YOUR CROTCH WILL WILT & LIMP TO ANOTHER WOMAN. NoPlate, you wrinkled witch! it hurts my wounds. my Oupa pops up with his ribald pathos, WOMEN WILL SELL YOU PUSSY FOR YOUR SMART ARSE! pain snaps even harder at this. in a fiendish fit, feelings bloat together into a thicket of uncontrollable pungent emotions in the chest. vacillating thoughts - who is in cahoots with Death? between Chief & NoPlate. sages maintain, better trust a rock. but the unfortunate here, to understand Chief it is through the mystic red-ganja. spirit-dampened by my uncle's sudden affinity for the docile sagacity of his age. fail to reconcile with his sudden sorry cynic stance. from whom 'ganja is the way of life' fucking hypocrites. don't deserve my respect. glad his bitch wife died. i shrink from all the consolatory looks and gestures. hypocrites, bringers of doom in the name of humanity; the insincere harrowing empathies & sympathies & the glaring gruesome grins whose fiendish motives with designs to push me to Death. Can't wait to heal:

WENA AUNTY & STUPID HUSBAND RAN ME DOWN WITH YOUR CAR!

the look on my mother's face – wish i had succumbed to Death. searing klaps cascade onto my face. Auntie hysterical, contorting on the floor in a frenzied possessed dance. i raise a horrendous demonic loud laugh, HAHAAHAHAH, receding into grave silence. suddenness, feel fresh & revamped. the whole house in frowning fright, sickened, aghast, rapidly takes flight. uncle slouched in a corner couch, discomfited; minces a ridiculous laugh. i spit in spite, a huge glob of blood - miss the bucket – daub my floor carpeted with my doodles. uncle, wordless - devoid of moral platitudes. mother's fuming stare pierces through, finding me used to pain. cogitative, lone in my sadness, longing for Chief to rock me out of this madness, bewitched by Death. sometimes, for vague reasons, think Death is a jealous, infatuated distant lover, like she pines for No Plate's side of the bed. she took my last girlfriend uNomatse.

i met Nomatse by the river: out of the blue skies, one noon finds myself by the river. filthiness arouses me. nomatse is undressing. stark struck, it crooks my eyes - never seen such colossal butt. crouched & crept forth. can't separate pain & pleasure. she grabs my crotch, shaking it up & down. i'm on & off the ground – swinging. at mid-point of cumming, and just right there! she spits a globular glob of goo across my face in a flush of anger. i'm quivering at something disgusting - not Nomatse, but myself. morning comes with heavy urgent knocks like masses applauding – dizzying. it rankles, rattles my windows. nomatse glides in with glee with a trail of four pale black crawling frolicking babies with cataract eyes; playing toys, iimoto, mud-figurines, and dirty dolls. undulating hands, yelping, tata . . . tata! dazed by their armpit smell - the whole house smelling like rancid uncooked fish. head throbbing wanting to explode. flouncing, nomatse mimics a sedative, calms me down to sit, & flattens the beads of sweat in my face. makes coffee, cold as dog-nose, weak as river-water. reasons . . . transparent. but death intrusive as music crashed her into a car, brains splattered on the unfeeling cow dung floor. our kids wailed & wailed transformed into a smothering stream. i was pushed out of the house by a grieving wave...

NoPlate is washing both pots & shoes in the sink. panties & bras there too. silence makes us seem like strangers. later, she sends me to buy ulusi & chicken feet.

bush meat

it is warm chilly outside. dense. about to storm or dusk. township revelers & spectators all over clouding my face. crowding the streets. i nudge my way through... to the meat shack. the money fastened tightly in my hand. the road to the meat plek is thin like a worm. not straight too. i'm struck by noise. an argument. two buddies: Bald & Afro. drunk, these two.

Bald

Which is greater the mouth or the anus?

(smiling, loving this)

Afro

WHICH OR WHAT?

(grinning, eyebrows jumping up & down brushing hands against each other)

i'm watching Bald head-scratching struggling for the answer. hard to find it against the rankling screeching sound of tongue & teeth of Afro... pulls out a gun. he pulls out his. they shoot each other. heads push back. because i'm interested in the story (how it ends)... i pull out my Okapi & slit my throat. taking my last breath. it coincides with Noplate shouting my name the meat & her money. now i'm in two ways. half with Noplate. half with Bald and Afro arguing & moving fast. i must catch up but not until Noplate cries. crying. i'm floating drifting. with one eye on the astonished spectators over my body. the other on Bald & Afro. i'm hearing...

Bald

all i'm saying i wanted you to answer one simply...

Afro

i got embarrassed by the crowd that was watching

Bald

what crowd? the stupid young man of ela xhekwazi Noplate?

Afro

Anyway, both are greater. must coexist to fulfill each other's roles. The mouth eats. vomits. the other shits. farts. & if we as humans can't learn from that. we are fucked up

Bald

(thinks for 3 seconds) you're personalizing the anus. thethi kaka!

i'm laughing & my blood sprays the onlookers dark red like they were playing with mud. When one laughs close eyes. i return to Afro & Bald. they are not there anymore just voices. there's a flickering light yonder of an enje. i follow the light. it's Chief and Sandla wearing black moving towards a black cargo truck. the driver is asleep. they slit the sail open. find meat inside takes a few braai packs. i follow them to the bush. on the way, they mug three drunk ladies with plastics full of drinks & Huggies. in the bush they step on dried leaves, sticks stones snails shrubs & lots of shit. trees with long dried-up twigs give silence. i see where it used to be my bhoma, a large pepper tree is there now. still. next to it, a little tree underneath is Spydolo buried vertically. shaking the tree.

they gather shrubs, plastics, papers to build fire. they take out the meat, braai & eat after. they enjoy it. Sandla, this must be pork. it's hairy. some are left uncooked cos it's plenty & fat. they drink the booze and doze off. morning comes with fat all over their faces. they

discover not only that the meat is plenty, but is the actual women vaginas and breasts. not pork. not chicken. hence the bush meat.

*

malaise

De Andrade: House-cleaning granddaddy's theories

One cannot start with the premise that all writing should/ought to follow from the title - one starts having irritations with the prolonged myopic systematic questioning of literature - for all writing is creative and originates from an autonomous individual impulse. One does not start by pissing off a prescient poet of beer, for there are always words that want to come up alive: *there is time for poems and there is time for fists*. (Bolano) I attempt the former.

This is not a piece of writing. In fact, I think of what could perfectly rhyme with peace, is shit ... in some other disturbed man's rectum. I got nothing but love for my people. Hillside is always talking, a task which not only includes mouths and arses, walls, bugs, soil, and water. It is forever killing whilst we are trying to dream. In the morning someone said to me in a squealing voice, please do not pinch but stab me, he is unsure if he has fully woken up; his feet are bleeding and he can't see the blood. Hillside shifts positions at night. Witches cannot explain this without yapping that Xundu has something to do. They want me killed cos I don't smile a lot and I got that from god and my dog. Hillside has a name other than the known one. Some call it endofaya. Some, ebakhwetheni. Some, erawa or ntshona-skhwana. Here's why the latter name: it was during my grandfather's early times. People started wearing umhlelo as vests and shirts and dog & cats' skins and shoes or slippers. Things began popping up and out of nowhere – in the air, from the ground up, and from the sky down. Some lost their eyes and other crucial organs cos of the things. One grandmother lost one of her many eyes cos a long, thin cigarette just appeared in the air and she walked right into it. So, there was a new world thing going on now. Unprecedented craft. And witches demanded ownership of it, to be the first with it. Makes sense - WITCH . . . CRAFT. These air cigars had numbers and names. They smoked them till their lungs burnt out. It's funny how an unfeeling thing like cigars gets to see the next morning flesh whilst the soul cannot. The future is a piece of weird machinery in somebody's palm. My grandfather says that one day I will have to wear his wondrous vests and shirts with pride one day in celebration of a lost original era. I have never seen these garments before but I know his cocoon somewhat smells like wet boxes or dogs or socks or foreign asses or afro or perm lotion. Grandfather is a magnanimous figure and massive structure. He eats lots of flesh: of goat, sheep, cow, fish, chicken, horse, pussy and regrettably gets his anus stretched out painfully by his own circumstantial bars of shit. And he would walk all funny and grumpily around the house and yard and reminds me every time of my useless dead parents in a high-pitched nerve-scratching rankling voice augmented by alcohol and horniness - loneliness. It sickens me that only in Hillside that there is a prodigious disharmony between men and women that each time a woman is found dead with a beer bottle stuck in her cunt I'm bothered burdened to justify myself, even in my happiest dreams of a better world.

TWO HORNY DOGS ARE FUCKING THE SPACES IN BETWEEN HER TOES.

Sometimes a dog, cat, comes around eating two balls of breasts with a rotten raisins-like brace of nipples. Houses of Hillside look somewhat horrorstruck: window here, there a door, and in between all densely black - abyss of murder intent. The seven women in the tavern, uniform in unbending voice, ask what harm has our vaginas done to you men! I have one finger in the beer bottle mouth while studying their faces, the movement of their nimble hands weaves, and drunken legs, and all this while I'm grimacing. Wincing. I know this cos some wench had to let me know that it's unexpected especially of me... to brandish such fartist face since I am of the bookish cloth. I'm an ass-soul. I am thinking of five individuals: qeli and qhuqa who are in jail with freedom at the back of their minds. runa my dead brother. It's debatable that he is dead; all of us at home have different beliefs about his case of death. I maintain that it could have been anything in that coffin: it was bigger than its whole in the ground; I felt the soil was hitting too damn hard on the box, it wanted to breakthrough/in. Aunt says the witches got him! My uncle and sister, they'd rather scratch heads and think many times till we all forget about him - And the other two whose names are keep forgetting cos of the seven women's expression-full faces. Who, the other two, having robbed a cargo truck of meat in the night. And into the bush, to braai, discovered that, in the morning, it was all shreds and pieces of vaginas.

*

house of hunger

I

One-eyed in the cold well of the night thinking of my mother to the clamor of a thousand breasts in search of a fine hole that ungodly sucks their sons underground before even saying grace. I trip over an infant on my way to the boycott. It didn't cry. I wanted to kick it again when its lips moved, with a menacing wrinkle of the brow, they read: let them wander, they are better off as memory. I bit hard on its little toes, my other eye opened, and here was my mother serving me porridge.

II

Look! Someone (who wasn't there) said, there was a man whose brains were dead and needed a transplant to calm his wailing heart. Given this, each time he sees a handsome man, the heartbeat *clitically*. The brains were of a woman. Something about the heart that's virginal, its humor of vertical lips. But the heart is loyal to the brain and un-vice versa, had it been the other way around, the would have been vertical blinking of eyes of man and crying sideways. He starts frolicking with little girls to swim in the river. Little girls play with the cock in wonderment. Boys throw stones at him in disgust. Goes home later to wonder in the mirror if it's an umbilical-cord growing to salvage the life who depends upon some man. He shows this to his father and he gives him a moerse klaap, jaws crack and bleed through the nose, ears, and mouth. He kisses men and they beat him up saying they're exorcising the bitch out of him... unknowingly. In bed swollen up, he slips into sleep. Then

she sees her daughter in an open grave and a beautiful dress in one hand. They both smile and the grave closes after them.

Asks someone (who wasn't there), between the heart and mind, what makes a man?

I dare you to bewitch me, I'll cut your head off and make a latrine out of it, cos I am a witch.

god rose on a somnolent sunday with two organs. One in his left hand, looking like a pomegranate. The other in his right hand, looking like a watermelon. We went back to washing our laundry, fucking, and partying.

*

the funereal

TatuGeneral lives in the same street as mine is short-tall-stout-&-scrawny-with-vast-eyes and one arm – or dwarfed. He has seen it all that is life within and without, all its shapes and forms. Evident throughout his marvelous physique. To think about it now, I've never seen his neck, ears, and eyebrows. Here, streets are rickety uneven – boulders, rocks, and dust between houses that somewhat look like the *Scream-Mask* with doors in between two large agape windows. Inside is void. So that when you look from an aerial view it's a tortuous river with many little islands all over.

Covered in dust, zig-zagging to TatuGeneral's place of seventeen children of the same height and demeanor – loud and unthinking. They shit on your stoep, lawn, and say it's that of the cats... of Jaiva-Seksi, they change eyes and color. I have witnessed this thrice. At night with eyes vast and grey as TatuGeneral's ones and semen-hue fur. And in the morning, they contrast that with deprived emptiness in their eyes and rough rug-like. Jaiva-Seksi has been burnt seventeen times – the number of the naughty children - over the rolling years for his hundred cats by abahlali. Jaiva-seksi doesn't die. He's got more lives than his hundred cats combined. Safe to conclude that he is non-existent as well. A ghoul. I sit next to TatuGeneral with the burning pendulous sun, chandelier-like swinging from the sky threatening to crash down on our heads. We drink our beer quietly. He's never uttered a word in the last rolling seventeen years, except for the many collaborative grunts and pantings with the grandmothers and handicaps in our street all of whom he's fucked. TatuGeneral is 90. He prefers writing the number backward. I've seen in his last voting receipt.

Face tumefied from last night's *drunken-noise* arrest by the three police: a colored bitch plus two men, black and white. The black was doing most of the beating with the bitch screaming: kick his balls out the mouth. I look inside the beer bottle; it's a black well, and slowly into TatuGeneral's eyes. I stuck there. It just makes sense. Silence makes us seem strangers until a bullet tears up the sky. The heart tries to jump out the beer quickly pushes back down. Makes the sound of a rock dropping. TatuGeneral sweat cracks his mouth open, it bleeds ... a story: the 70s were hell here... we were in war with the Boer-whites. They were massacring us, of course. We carried out funerals despite the riots because the dead must rest; caskets were passing from palm to palms on to the next others to the graveyard. Conveyer-belt style. And when it was my wife's turn with a bullet in the head, I wouldn't let go of the coffin.

Held tightly to it till I realized I wasn't moving a bit and the clamor faded away. That's how I lost my arm. Spilled blood is irremovable, it haunts, transfixed there like our uncompromising black gods hence no paved streets here. They tried to pave it up but they will never understand the revolutionary works of the dead, fisting up from under. Two houses down the street, a woman storms out to the lawn vomiting three big rats known for generating money. She drank too much last night. Jaiva-Seksi hurries out his house accompanied by his multi-colored entourage, shouting at us: Don't you ever gossip about my cats as not being useful!

*

coitus

Raining. Sounds like thousands applauding cheering me up whilst I'm fucking. On our backs, chests heaving. Watching some film bodies warm from coitus, sweat darts, and dashes intricately down to reflections. She recalls this one windy afternoon made pensive by cows' piercing stares chewing through the vagueness of day. Convivial youth frocking outside her hut-home. When it was time to call her nephew in for lunch (in our manner you don't howl at someone to come eat, rather you go close enough to let them know...). She went about and the wind stirred up violently, the cows looked, chewing broodingly. There were two of her nephews while one was fidgeting with his eyes from the wind, the other was deaf to her beckoning shouts. What should determine the real one – the last to respond is bogus. She turned to look around, dozed off old-timers with pipes cascading lazily from their ribald mouths. The cows were still watching.

People call for our names all the time in the streets, morning, at night, etcetera that, in our regretful ignorance, we open conduits for those doppelgangers, of parallel planes, who've yearned for this life to come through. For instance, every time I leave the township for school, there'll be people, of course, unaware of my departure and those who are aware. They will call for my name, think, and ask about my whereabouts. The last time I check I was at school and the next time, it hits me somewhat that I am lurking behind.

I say to her this - your story syncs well with the sound from the screen. Pink Floyd. In films, heroes take time to kill the villain... buying time for dramatized provocations. Sad, in real life villains kill, point blank, without a blink and itch. Our bodies are cold now, the film's ending.

*

meteor

Hungry from all the sex and alcohol gluttony from last night,

The shack is hot with rotting rats & smelling shoes. We then look at our baby, smiling, unaware of life taunting us with her little tongue red as a burning stove

Against the clanking sounds of empty pots & grumbling bellies.

Embarrassed by the eye of the morning, we went back to dream...

our baby has grown, walking down the street smoking a long-nailed finger, eyes popped out as if two moons were shining out of them, naked. Two horny voices disrupt the earth, pregnant as they glide into our shack, with lightning and rain going in their bellies.

*

abscess outburst

Ntshona-Skhonkwane is bloodied... menses... rancid. Raw. Rough 'round... haze maze, houses troglodytes, guttersnipes, robots, liquor-philes, bibliophiles, megalomaniacs, interlacks, tramps, maiasiophiles, necrophiles & adroits; these are tall stout beardless hairy peas-eyed with glasses big, small feet, big hands, refuse bag heavy bellied. NS is farfetched... literally, aloof. Shocking. Metonymic as is, NS ensnares. Deep. Locks one into perennial oblivion.

Mapongo is an interlack, doesn't understand the dialacks the zombies or socialites want him to be. Adroit. They call him iBhentse not cos of the alwaysness of his position in the middle of something(s), because of the gaping gash in the middle of his forehead, oozes consciousness, not menses, he explains... slurs to a couple of unfeeling robots with automated machetes ever ready to flash, swing & slice. There are necrophiles. by the dead bodies outnumbering the living and the necrophiles are made of tramps, troglodytes, guttersnipes, liquor-philes, bibliophiles, megalomaniacs, interlacks, by the robots, for the minimal fact of hate towards human flesh, that, they rot, humans like dogs. & they rust robots like brains.

They spot Mapongo drooling up the street with big pockets full of clinking air - the mockery of the robotic movements/sounds. Machetes across his face. Jittering, Mapongo, is crying six ways: 1&2 through the nostrils, 3 the forehead, 4 the mouth & 5&6 the eyes. Simultaneously, licking. Dripping. Metallically guffawing, the robots. Mugging the words out his pockets – four:

- a. Synecdoche: any representative of a specific group of people (for our context, within the subaltern community, i.e. of the blacks).
- b. Gynedoché: this one, in case, the first one is too much depressing that is, insular in aspect. Therefore, one can speak for the entire subaltern house on a global scale)
- c. Exogenous: objectification of the African subject.
- d. Endogenous: this one opposes C. and/or is the authentication of the African subject; romanticizing?

Mapongo represents the ones whose existence is starved, conditional; disillusioned by the very simple sense of drawing breath. Mapongo represents the ones whose imaginations transcends the placing of speculative (or mystery) or arcana in the banal bowels of the night, dreams & forests. Mapongo represents the resisting, resilient bending black bodies like the

million veins of a griot. Mapongo is sated with those to whom writing is just another time-killing task; it should be blood, sweat and tears. They rob him of the word. Not of the world. This is how the two conflate ... in his head:

A cauldron is boiling, lid clinking

and broth frothed up . . . dripping down.

Gathered around, are two gigantic heads,

bodiless all afloat gazing up the steaming pot.

Ground-bound grazing is goats, sheep & cattle gallivanting about. The heads: One, dickhead-baldy. One, bush-hairy. this is a mural playing in his head. Also, somewhere in the head (360 vision) there:

they tear the bag after tea,

cut hair after the death of a matriarch and/or patriarch

they KNOW; you SEE:

The madman breaks into your house

fucks your wife. & you'll be laughing at the madness of the man.

Mapongo opens his eyes and the robots are gone. he thinks of aliens. And wonders the difference. Indifference grows inside his chest for the muggers of his word and he embarks on a search. Ntshona-Skhonkwane becomes carnival; topsy-turvy now like something going in the scrotum, itching to burst – COSMOS-HYSTERIA:

Two Days clash//Chaos-abscess bursts. The search for suns & moons ensues. Shadows creeping, no bodies, penetrating mental door, tall & flickering flame-like onto the walls of his head. Feels his head burning. he trembles to think of a thing far & unknown. An enigma. He then thinks of the mural. They knock the shadows. Drop-in. like, listening to nails falling again and again. He's afraid to think that the robots were the word and world conflating into two irises in his eyes. And nothing more. He rushes home. Finds dead bodies and looks around... Ntshona-Skhokwane is him in the flesh.

*

the scratch

The blue roof – sky, is in tune with my thoughts.

It spins blue, red, and black. I think of soup looking to the sky.

Then of shit. I am never getting out of the township,

this filth, it attracts, it forces itself on you like hate, burning in a child's eyes against a swollen mother's breast. There is the desire to detach myself from here, but there's a child in my soul and it scratches and I bleed. This is desire apart from intention. I have no intention for this space but you, my love.

I will cry once I have left it because it brought us together. This filth of ours. The desire is to leave here but the intent is for us to plague in our hearts – never to forget where we come from. I can't tell. I am always skeptical towards things including myself. It is the jittering nausea; the thicket of emotions and feelings that cloud up in my skeletal chest like the feeling of incoming devastating news. All I wanted to do was to bathe in your vomit and farts. I woke up and you were dead.

*

even times

Reading a column in *Even Times* about the difference between South Africa and America in terms of demography and race relations. I pondered about it a bit before throwing it back to where it was, the paper. It's a habit, each day I pick up something to read and put it back. I'm walking to the Amakwarakwara shop to buy milk. I call them this perhaps cos, I had reacted to the column subconsciously. I get there and there are lots of cats on shelves, refrigerators, between my legs. One Kwara asks me what do I want – milk. He's chewing some green leaves. He says, they get him to calm and high. Next to one fridge is a boiling pot of tea, sugar, milk, coffee at once. We talk about immigration and xenophobia till the thing in the pot cools down. He lets me have a cup of it. It's cold as a dog's nose and weak as the river. I take a gulp, enough to hold in. And spit it all out when outside to a wounding sun. Nauseous. Back to my plek - it smells like fish. Here's what's going on in the head of a vertiginous man whose plek reeks of fish:

- a. I'll write a thesis and send it to hell.
- b. In terms of language, American English is reductive next to a church.
- c. The evolution of color has been a subconscious reason and influence of homosexuality – I will elaborate...
- d. There's racism and racialism and there's a non-racial and multi-racial society. Mind the difference.
- e. It is as much as heart-stinging being called Kwara Kwara as being called an African overseas.

To settle this nausea I need one beer, weed, and a good mind to converse with.

*

vertigo

There are voices in my head

Screaming, whining, cussing . . . dead-drunk or woke

Hard listening to one, all conscience in their urge. Dirge.

I've got two beloveds rotting deep-under

Mother and father I hate, I'm followed by guilt of not knowing what product i am of love,
lust, mistake, or rape.

If rape,

It's my implosive vindictiveness and abuse i project

If mistake,

My shiftless ram-shackled life of troubling drunkenness

If lust,

The affectation – women whose hearts I've broken and lied to

If love,

The affection is unconditional of my grand-folks. I ingratiate with the present's
pleasantries to forget about whatever my origin – past. But guilt unforgiving, stalking is
haunting me in a cringe-making megalomaniac shadow. I have died many times.

CigaRats

Bottomless ... this is Ntshona-Skhonkwane. *Home is where you drop*, Charles Beaumont said this. I lead an existential life – unkempt, that is. Crucified by parochial vagueness of the mornings, afternoons, and evenings. I dizzy my head with ganja and beer. I live in a shack in my backyard. And mother and siblings in the project house.

I cannot sleep in silence. There must be noise going on. So, I put on rock n' roll and hip-hop music, etc., accompanied by clips of writers, artists, musicians talking about the Wor(l)d, debauchery, life. I relate to this world. Wake up every day to reach for a book from the ones strewn all over my shack from the Reza Negarestani, Taban, Tansi, Breton, Frank Wilderson's, etc. This is my non-linear non-banal way of reading. Truth is that books make the wor(l)d personal. I took up a program on Critical and Creative studies to find out more - at once critical and innovative. Covid-ed times. I have to meet my staff and classmates online.

In the mornings of each week, I float through the township, passing motors, walkers, dogs, and cats, to my former high school to use the internet to meet my teachers and classmates. 30 years deep the white-Boer principal has been bothered to play around the IsiXhosa language. What makes it even funnier, she has expelled hundreds of students for the use of vulgar and explicit language. I'm here for the free internet. So, I contort my tongue to the marvelous comforts of the English language ... Ingratiating, that is. This one morning, I say to myself, *fuck all this!* I'm going back to Uni. Township is a tiny tin crammed full of sardines, rancid from without.

Morning, I pack my bags and hurry to a hiking spot before the streets flood with unquiet, ill-intentioned minds and hearts. Slightly sweaty in a car. Four persons in the back are holding a strident caucus. My lips crack with verbal diarrhea jumping out their kak-vol diaphragms. The blood in my mouth is foaming beads of sputum in the corners. Some sandwiched kid between the persons with large eyes blurts out blood through the mouth. I vomit inside my sweater. He says it's a habitual thing. I don't want to hear it, I want out! With my bags outside, thumping the air again. An ISIZU van stops. The driver grabs my bags, I follow him to the back. Puts them next to a blanketed stretcher. He sees my eyes jumping out of their sockets and the smell diving inside my agape mouth. He ingratiates with a briefcase of laughter, saying I must relax. Arms folded, with ready fists. I'm pissed off, making sure he talks alone all the way to the Uni. Now, I know what death smells like... umdepo. (Like a put-out cigaRat). Kept searching in my pockets for a put-out cigaRat. I find nothing. We arrive, he insists that I pay, although I tell him that my bags smell like death. Isn't that enough pay?

There was/is a rumored list of names who were/are to die this year. All males. This list is circulating amongst the faceless female students. Word on campus, the architect behind the list is a victim of a gruesome rape that left her with one breast. The list is dedicated to the lost breast; until it returns home there shall be no rest for men. Fortunately for me, I haven't fucked any female student this year, and if... I didn't tell them my real name for my

inscrutable reasons, for fear that it winds up in the same list. We began dying as soon as the first term commenced. Mlungisi was found hanging from his roof lamp. Tongue out long as a blue tie. It is said it has to do with his girlfriend, having been told that she was AIDS infested. (*It's a human virus* Afterall/roll... of zol. My eyes always with the red ganja when observing the world).

At first, we thought it was a refuse bag, so brushed it off with blasé. This one was seen floating in the pool, his back turned over and stomach almost touching the base of the pool. With marks of strangulation around the neck. Some say they were of a woman's necklace and nails.

The other one flew from a top floor to the ground, for the love of liquor. Brains spattered. I presume, what worsens these deaths is the fact that somebodies laugh upon the arrival of this devastating news. It is as if the one-breasted architect is hovering above our heads, reading our expressionless faces of apathy instead of showing remorse. And so, the next death happens publicly, outside a tavern, between lovers skirmishing over foreign concepts about civilization. The boyfriend is stabbed with a bottle top. Dies on the spot. The woman goes free without trial or punishment. It's gotten to our heads, these unjustified deaths of us. So, we went on an abrupt strike, and along the way, we slaughtered calm innocent grazing cows of local men who had nothing to do with these events. We demanded the BureaucRats to meet up with the local traditional healers in an attempt to settle the deaths on metaphysical levels. We should have thought about that before massacring their cows. It was an ugly presage on its own.

Stinking rancid rotten cow skins all over campus. Subsequently, a maggot-laden chopped-to-portions female body, packaged in a suitcase was discovered a month after the strike. It is the following death that drowned my heart. Made me cry blood. I learned about it in a newspaper article written by some cretin who couldn't spell right the name of the deceased. Bontsi was shot dead in his home. He was coming home, drunk, angry for he's by himself without no communal tavern whore. Got to the house, saw the house-cleaner lady awake, and was aroused. Unrequited lust. So, he ate her alive instead. The neighbors were awakened by a deafening outcry, subsequently, the police arrived. Lit the whole blood and gore blue. One of the police vomited dumplings. Bontsi was up to the last part of the maid's arm. The dumplings-vomiter says the maid-eater was speaking a language that sounded like eager staccato farts. He shot him for that too. But he kept on coming at them, this time, with a sexual uproar of a man cumming with bass. This got him even much angrier, the police went straight for the head. Months past. And I was presenting a philosophy paper on the socio-political aspects and implications of pain when asked a question by a quasi-feminist/activist about the perennial deaths of women at my school. I confessed that it was all utter sickness. Sad stuff, indeed. But then again, I felt there were much more poignant and greater calamities to be dealt with, such as cannibalism. Bontsi's case wasn't the only one as hundreds of them followed after, mostly in *that* region amidst the wake of political-spiritual reincarnations of Steve Biko, Sobukwe, and so on via the rampant Fees-Must-Fall, Women Empowerment, Land Expropriation without Compensation movements. I began experiencing migraines just thinking about these deaths. I was raised by women. I feel for them. I couldn't write about

even one death – what’s there to fictionalize about? A question to my department when it was suggested that I should try to do so. Basically, what they were implying is that black pain is equal to white pain and they wanted that to come from a black person. So that it sits right!

*

moon-burns

From the bed, I rise, still dazed from last night’s drinking and smoking. I trundle to stand before the window and swat the curtains sideways. The window is translucent with morning dew which immediately mutates into little drops of water trickling down. The birth of the sun lends a lurid red to the tips of the mountains, and orange the blue skies become. A tree with branches like human arms nearby is swaying and gyrating to the whistling morning wind. At night, this tree turns into a gigantic human form and beckons at me to come to join its madness. I always cringe at this presaging sight, cling onto the bedsheet, and mumble under my breath, perspiring, begging for sleep to come and rescue me. I wake up.

A host of strident black birds flock by, chattering ominously. The chirping beleaguers me. I’m goaded beyond sanity; heart flouncing, head throbbing from last night’s deadly gluttonous intoxication, and my hands trembling. Irritation and irascibility take turns in planting terrorist bombs inside my head.

I open the fucking window and explode, “*Voetsek . . . voetsek!*” They hurtle skywards. An avalanche of silence descends upon my outburst, emptying my lungs, beating my head with fresh air. Students on the ground, about their classes, businesses, and inscrutable outings, look up in a convulsed bewilderment at this seemingly raving young man who chides at chirruping creatures as if they are irritants shitting on his unruly shock of tortuous hair, each time he finds himself musing, reading, or defecating under their haven. I shut the window.

The stench is ambient; this room smells like burnt flesh except there is no burnt flesh.

I almost fall when I realize that I’ve just stepped on a newspaper. It is an article I was reading yesterday on Existentialism: it’s a prologue to anarchism. Below, is a column written in bold capital letters, REMEMBERING NADINE. I simply cannot read her shit. I’m sated with individuals to whom writing is just a lousy habit or some kind of time-killing process. I remember reading *Crimes of Consciousness*. What a lot of rambling. I can’t seem to get the critical and fecund revolutionary imagination which most of her staunch votaries seem to be lauding in her writings, every time a bookish discourse ensues while blunting and sickening the air with ‘friends’ which I would love to call them as thus if I wasn’t for their heads deeply encased in hypocrisy and brutal pretense, mindlessly throw labels at me out of frustration: anarchist, iconoclast, shrewd and crude without a reasonable follow-up. I refuse to call them friends.

This country hates literature! No one talks about Dambudzo Marechera, Amos Tutuola, Taban Lo Liyong, Ayi Kwei Armah or even our dear own, La Guma, Mafika Gwala, Lesego

Rampolokeng, etc... And even if they do, it is with some kind of a rancid imaginativeness inept to place them in the nowness meaning to write in the family of present-tense cos they are simply timeless act. I flung the paper down.

My watch reads 9:00 am, my first class of the day kicks off at half-past nine. I make myself ready, and brood nonsense over a cup of coffee. I can hear brooms sweeping the corridors. Aunties clamor convivially, dishing out pressing issues of the day. My cellphone is diminutive amongst a cocktail of stationery strewn all over the study desk. I pick it up,

“*Molo, mama,*” I open throat, yawning. She cuts straight to the point, “Your neighbor, once more, has disappeared, this time has left you a note and shoved it under our door. I presume at the time I was still asleep. Some depressing shit, my child.” She recites this in *IsiXhosa*. I giggle like a child and bid a bye-bye,

“I’ll call you back later, mama.” And drop the phone.

Mother lives with my half-sister and brother after a heart-rending divorce - little did she know she was married to an inveterate duplicitous lunatic, who bludgeoned her for the very first time and almost gunned her to death. If it wasn’t for her running, bellowing to a crowded street and into her friend’s house just across, I wouldn’t be receiving the call. Around the time, I was still enmeshed in the many layers of drunken dreams from another alcohol gluttony.

“*Bhuti. Bhuti. Vuka!*” little brother had screeched with trauma, his fists knuckling the door of my flat as hard as a damn policeman.

O shit! It’s half nine. I quickly wipe my face with a damp cloth and storm out to the class. I have not been attending for almost a week now. On my way to class, I swing past two men canoodling and groping each other’s buttocks in a parking lot crammed full of cars. Here, one meets all kinds of people; from the sexually ambiguous to stuck-ups, pro-Africans, Rastas, Bikoists, and others.

Surprisingly, it is bristling with students outside the auditoriums, gossiping, laughing, and fidgeting.

I stand alone, ensnared in the scorching sun. However, I soon elude and ensconce myself under a cool tree, under which - already in couples, trios and quadrants - students have flocked. The tree dwarfs me. Flowers seem distant in the searing sun of Alice.

“*Uphambene!* What was he thinking?” one student shrieks, heavily accented, from a flock of students.

I quickly attune into a pertinent assumption: it’s about the student who hurled himself from a top floor down to the unfeeling ground – brains splattered. The news has perturbed the entire school. Each time I turn the radio on, there have been mysterious cases of suicides here. These fucking kids are wicked, possessed by some kind of fiendish spirits. I have seen

their eyes turning crimson in the night. I recall coming from a friend's, one night, stumbling, tripping on invisible stones, talking to myself. And suddenly two trees appeared in my way, muttering something about the abundant wealth and beauty underground. As I rotated 360 degrees to find a witness, there they were: students with crimson eyes on a corner gawping at me, flashing their yellowish teeth like ravenous dogs. This whole fucking school is satanic with its prim bureaucrats, not to mention the nasty parochial political parties, daubing the scene with putrid hues of blue, white, black, red, yellow, and green. It's nauseating. They are all the same in one big black refuse bag of bullshit.

The tree, like a secret eavesdropper, puffs out a gust of wind frowning upon the latter. It smells like semen. A lively scrotum-shaped leaf floats in the air, slowly succumbing to the indomitable force of gravity. A scrawny-looking white woman with steely eyes ambles past, staring at me like I'm here by miraculous accident; or this putrefaction of a woman walks past, farting aloud. I shake my head, quite miffed. The sun stings relentlessly in the desolate sky. My nostrils reek of dry blood. I beg for day to slant down soonest and night to rise. I miss the moon – the theatrical dance of those grotesque caricatures that rocks me to peaceful sleep - a rest from dreams of blood and gore, ghostly animist creatures always coming at me. Running, I fall deep down gloomy holes of my threatened existence to wake up on the discovery that I've piss-drenched the sheets. I'm about to leave when my eyes meet Nhapi, trudging like a pituitary giant through another throng of blabbermouths.

He greets, "*Eksé, Mntan'eNkosi.*" I nod mindlessly, pondering the legend on his rankling white t-shirt, JESUS HATES HIP HOP. The smell of dagga snatches me from the conduit of thought. Nhapi is high and swamped in disjointed fantasies, and frowns a lot, intermittently fidgeting with his nose as if something is newly eccentric about it. Watching him infuriates me because I'm not high. The same smell of weed tantalizes my spirits. We are not friends, we met through an English group assignment . . . a callow prick, who stubbornly believes that all trees are green, all that glitters are gold and the rainbow nation is a democratic melting-pot.

"Ah, mfethu, remember ---?" I quickly butt-shut my mouth like I had done to the window, so as to let the mind pay – once again – a fleeting visit to the hatchet, however not buried, memory. It runs as follows: the pandemonium ceased, the lecturer over there at the pulpit looked ridiculous in a flowered tie and pink shirt. Chest high. Head up. Cleared his throat and began, "Writing Back. Writing Black, can we achieve a uniquely South African curriculum?" It was just after my plangent boredom-yawning in the front row.

"Ah, is there something you wish to say, mister?" I was shut. Glued. A shower of laughter followed thereafter which, on the contrary, annoyed every living shred of sanity out of me. I answered the question inwardly, thinking that the word 'unique' ruined the essence of the question and rendered a vile mix of authenticity and disgusting condescension. So, I rephrased the question to "Should we depose English for a mother tongue to achieve a South African Philosophy?"

No. There is a stubborn, irremovable concoction of racism and colonialism deeply embedded in our history. That alone we cannot deny. The permanent stain that stinks of black pain and suffering; the black blood that meticulously paints – in a defeatist vein – murals of black bodies being ruthlessly dragged by their necks out of the land. In return for what - democracy? But then again, my temper slowly sank to the feet. I thought. Yes. Like in Greek Mythology – when the nosey goddess Pandora rushed to open the prohibited jar there came out all kinds of evil and diseases. And only hope had remained loyal to the jar and never forsaken humankind. Our hope lies within *their* English language; to channel *it* into cradling and conserving the black experience: the folklore, legends, myths, and ethos. In this regard, I had found myself thinking of those master storytellers, the other from Sudan and the other from Nigeria. So, my silence there was an appeal to the lack of authenticity, flexibility, and transformation. Who suddenly decides after decades of smoking to stop for cancerous reasons?

“*Ek sé!*” a stinging feeling sinks in the left shoulder. Nhapi retrieves me from the trance, the way an impish lad retrieves water from the well. Still dazed, I shake my head back to reality. Reality is bleak, agonizing as Black Death in the gutter.

The tumult is now waning, crowds scattering. We decide against the Poetry class; to go stand elsewhere and besides, I cannot stand Dr. Moolman’s racist outlook and scatological humor.

“*Guuier naader*, the fucking zoo is open!” The blacks were having fun, uncaged, chattering, politics left, right, and center. I was somewhere in the din beaming, furtively poking at her podgy thighs. Ah, Nondyebo! Whenever I drink water she asks, do you like water. Do you like the beer? Do you like the weed? There is fear somewhere lingering in her temperance. I see it, whenever I flip pages, curse out, “social death!”, “fucking whites!” she asks, do you hate Whites. Black people are angry and I’m fine with it.

Nhapi is silent throughout the way to the Faculty of Arts’ entrance. It’s astoundingly quiet enough to hear bugs buzzing about the highest twigs, dried leaves scratching on the surface under my feet. Nhapi furrows his brow ladles the tongue in and out his mouth and makes the mood moist and slippery. We stand with our backs turned against the entrance, facing the Law Building. Thinking in the silence.

“Lighter?” he mumbles, fag in between his index finger and the other. I remind him I don’t smoke cigarettes. He lights it anyway. I watch clouds of smoke find their way to the sky. Thinking: Why do we hit rock bottom to reach heaven? A question whose perennial attempts have been to harangue, to brutalize Western mysticisms. However, I’ve grown weary of that thought and passed it by like a teenage phase. I perused the Bible, it made me laugh, take a shit. It is soft as toilet paper. It whirled down, covered in the black-shit of an angry African barbarian.

The sky is unwonted and missing something. I spray a mouthful of saliva into it and wait calmly for its return to my face. A habit that I have newly acquired since the long treacherous

absence of rain. It reminds me of rain but now with a tinge of the bitter taste of yesterday's frothy waters. He wipes his face off and whiffs out little tolerance.

The man clumps through - like a belligerent elephant - between us, hastily snatches the cigar, hurling it far away, and then trekking past. Nhapi, confused and embittered, ejaculates, "But I want cancer!" to the man with no face, only a baldy shiny back-head, "Stupid cunt!" Just when he thought the 'rainbow nation' was a euphemism for the uncompromising exercise of freedom. The law, like a compulsive rapist, was poised in a corner to fuck him up. For fuck's sake can't I be left alone in peace with my beer and weed? The world would make perfect sense without the tramp. We are tenants in Motherland reduced to abominable seeds mowed down every time we raised a fist of resistance. Yet Nhapi was raising a fist, perhaps against the limited freedom.

I WANT the unsparingly rigorous freedom that Mandela had died fighting for. I shiver at this thought then dismiss it with a strident scoff that reverberates through our immediate environs.

"It is not out there but within. Freedom is solace derived from imagination." I blurt out.

Astounded. Nhapi cranes his neck to look, stealing a surreptitious glance, the way a child does when two people are kissing.

"Dear imagination, what I love most about you is your unforgiving nature."

"What?" he asks, carelessly, with a finger dipped in one nostril.

"Breton . . . Andre Breton." And silence erupts, regretting myself for being 'laissez faire' with the democrat. Humanity begs me to apologize. Fuck it too!

There is something amazing about how thoughts, when spoken, suddenly cause outrage and havoc. A picture of Steve Biko sodden by rain hangs pathetically on a wall like an identikit in a police station.

We drift quietly under the scorching sun to the shops. Rastas pass and greet in Poqo custom. I snigger at the forced deprivation. I snigger at the imperious behavior. I snigger at the tawdry mishmash of the dress. I snigger at the raw stench, far-fetched theories about the long-lost history of Ethiopian relics. But Nhapi is quiet, just his movements doing the talking - spewing green globs of smelly goo that messes with his shoes, shuffling, jabbing, and mumbling. He cups the air, side to side - shaking his head as if forced to show his genitals in public by some creepy creature. Silence makes us seem like strangers.

The smell? . . I form an expression as though the sun is hitting directly into my eyes. *The smell* . . . like fresh semen.

The atmosphere somehow carries a resounding enigma, no birds chirping or people prattling. The trees, in a standstill, motionless and placid. In the parking lot, the cars are all black with

the concrete wet and the dull smell of rain hanging in the air. Vertigo. Head swimming. I look at him, grimaced in semen smell, he's been taken away - fading like ashes in the wind. Contorting. Twisting like a whirlpool. I trip, falling flat on my face; the earth shakes hands with the sky in a frantic gesture. Behind my shuttered eyelids dangles the black sheet of lost consciousness. A fading voice echoes afar, "Mthuzi. Mthuzi!" It's the *fading man* calling out. Unconsciousness closes me.

I wake up three times before the actual time. The first time, I'm watching myself hurrying to the kitchen thinking that the pots are melting. The second time, I'm crying with two fingers down my throat – wanting to vomit, because I've just eaten a whole head of sheep with its trotters in a dream. The poison could spill over to reality. The third time, which is the actual time - I'm feeling my body and insides are sore – am waking up to good news... I have been accepted to study the cultural shifts and creative studies program at some school hopefully different from this one. Attached to the text message is the program introduction, a prospectus, a catalog, and orientation dates to commence soon. So, fuck this school!

I'm leaving this institution on two deeply imbedded personal grounds:

- a) Intellectually, it has become too exhausting a place. Soul draining and Spirit dampening. Nothing is intriguing anymore. I'm too familiar with the space – its customs, schemes, schedules, culture & heritage. It's no longer a challenge. I was reduced to a commodity. As a good friend and brother of mine would say, Over-familiarity is worse than Bantu Education.
- b) Metaphysically, I am sick and tired of the long chain of deaths. Walk a mile in a parent's shoes – sending a child to school only to come back in a body bag. It would have been, at least, explanatory this way: if the child comes back home pregnant after not heeding the parent's call – to call look after her back... when in truth the penis comes into the front. After all, there is EAT in Death.

However, I must admit that this Uni. has truly taught me the essence of survival – of enduring pain other than the physical. I have witnessed friends, without exception, succumbing to narcotics. I stuck to my ganja to this day . . . well, to this minute. That this Uni. sadly enough, defines the true nature and scope of what that black French psychiatrist calls *The Fact of Blackness*. Just thinking about it now, what kept me creeping back to this institution for all these years, was the hunger for more women's round buttocks. Which, at the time, was an elusive thing embedded in the subconscious. Nothing is left for me here. The plagues and the statues of the black heroes somewhat look depressed. I've questioned the name of this institution. I've spilled tears and blood right through to the ground to shake up white bones that insult the black existence of this institution. I've seen the ghosts – Victorian statues. Back to the township.

*

cum, cry...

I'm with the monkeys swinging on chandeliers, yanking, twisting, spinning, dizzying the established existence below, for the aim is to ascend or transcend; to go grab Christ by his shirtfront or his balls even, to make him come down and cry when we are de-familiarizing the earth.

It is imminent that you find two convivial black women in a Somalian-owned supermarket, breaking us men down, in other words, *building* us up – that, the woman must dig up a hole in the ground by his shack. For each day you sleep in his place, make sure that your morning sputum & mucus & feces, and his condom-cum don't go to waste instead you go deposit them in that hole. You will talk. Incantate! over the hole as though fervently praying to a god of life. Only in this case, it is about wanting him to be only yours – under your spell and in your *holy* vagina.

It sounds like a buzz of bottled flies & one bee. It's ill-intent, this sound only my left could hear it. I go outside to check: on a bunk-stool is clear water in a round basin that has been sitting there for quite some time, still. I stare at it for a while. Get distracted by shadows moving about leaning on walls, basking in the sun; it's the neighbors. Door hinges screeching with primitive jazz notes. Gradually, noise & voices are pouring out to the streets – school kids, workers. Back to piercing into the water. Mother calls me for tea. The process of making tea brings me back to the water. I conclude that there are houses & people living under water. & if it weren't for the dampened hearts and mourns of his family, my friend would have returned home from the river.

Between me and my freedom

Stands a white woman, pink-faced, with the shiny tip of her nose,

Morose with my presence,

With a parrot on the shoulder – and it said, kaffir, and laughed off!

The door opened and in came a sorcerer, a priest, a grandfather, and a grandmother. They sat on our beautiful sofas. I put the television on, some lovers were kissing – canoodling their arses in our faces. The priest winched. The grand-folks asked, was it the sorcerer farting? The door cranked. We all laughed. There was peace that day.

*

janus-faces

If I'm an intellectual, I can't be sexual? – Common

It's just jargon here. One is otiose after use of the other – *word*. Or better, one is coeval with the other. All arbitrariness. A tree is Plant. A plant is Tree. Man coined - NOT made – those words but god - The last man to diss god doggy-style was face-fist-fucked to purgatory when her sin was suddenly forgiven ... face tumefied, shiny, god laughed dropped her down to the unfeeling ground, last seen: bomb-clouds rocking to the cracking of her limbs into a couple of pieces. Half prosthetics now. Legs and left arm. Here is this woman, seeds of weed in her hands ... this tree cricketing, rolling topsy-turvy in-between fingers lines - and says, she sees faces in the clouds, melancholic and peaceful-pensive when it's raining. She bathes in it... soothed by clouds. It feels better than the penis.

She burns her tree... weed, puffs to my face, bomb cloud like an unkempt afro... she reappears after moments, smiling... she ejaculates, *clouds are the holiest, move the earth without noise*. Seeds in her hand – feel like heads of men on the other side of the street, lessening, sinking to no more than a bitter steam of mirage. She says, two of the men are her mother and father; they are the faces in the clouds.

I call her Lo-mnqund 'akagqibeki. Some people are sick!

II

god if i partook of jesus' flesh-bread could i too raise the dead – Ramps

There are preludes to blackouts. Motives to that cocoon, to be once more with the mother of my son (dead), to hold her tight to a tiny star and whisper in her, god exists through you... For us, is ever the night, not a night. We fuck to Gregorian chants blowing from our child's thumb under two moons shining out his eyes in ineffable touch. On top, she turns into this sinuous nubile with expressions of a virgin, then to the true fiery eyes of the mother of my son - the woman of clouds and soothing rain. I do not want to wake up, to be reminded of her disturbing death, killed for her blood dripping menses taken to be eaten... rejuvenates geriatric white folks. It is said that the magic is in that blood full of life of babies yet unconceived; it's the way menses drip when drenched to the mouth, takes its time next to immortality. She died with our son inside.

*

decay-spit

The street where I grew up they say, if you are not heavily guarded-guided by the ancestors... unyile! That is to say, it is homogeneous...relatively. Notice here, I have opened this with a sentence in English and fervently dumped isiXhosa further-where, hence relatively *homo*. But in my street, we have coloreds too. And for those of you to pontificate about; to question, *but HOW – whereas it's homogeneous?!* I will then say go fucking consult your dick-clit-tionary, *naaiier!* I'm from the streets! I've suffered your confusion myself before when I consulted a colored about *what* COLOUR exactly was it. I have two missing front teeth now. So I am a colored by mouth and Xhosa by heritage. See the gap in my mouth... inside are a thousand

haunted voices all at once battling for the spotlight – me. I talk in my sleep. Two of these voices are very articulate and convincing in their speeches – both claim that they know where my teeth are rotting or on whose neck they’re hanging, and at least one. I have heard about one tooth where it’s hanging or better yet get Mranqonqo – who has ever since been vomiting after seeing two heads being dismembered in front of his eyes – following the trails and traces of vomit-shit-toe jam I catch him stinking licking in every orifice raving roving around the turf begging with empty eyes aggravating the sun to ask the whereabouts of my rotting and hanging teeth. He points to the graveyard, to a spaza-shop, to frolicking post-apartheid guttersnipes, to a dog, to someone’s arse, and to his protuberant eyes brandishing emptiness. I tremble. Of the dismembered heads one was of the teeth-kicking colored and the other of a priest. Someone once told me that this must be the wickedest *plek* next to a bitch’s cunt, better prison than this shit, and stormed out to drive a bottle head into the neck of a random standby.

In a tavern, I think of my teeth – from neck-hanging to rotting; that am never getting my teeth. I must bury my teeth for them to grow again. And just when I’m sunken deep into the absurdity of it all - marooned in the thoughts and voices; a communal vagina wants to fuck my brains out.

I begin this again, the street where I grew up is unreal as a nun’s aroused breasts. Absurd as god’s vomit. Enervating as unrequited lover’s cum. This is my Hillside *where dreams come to die*.

*

byzantine

With NoPlate, walking up in a long steep street to a tavern. We find it closed. People flocking around. She trips over and we roll down the street. We can’t see anything but our dizzied faces and spinning phones around a well of darkness, because there’s a blanket all over us. I haven’t been to a church in over a decade. We come to a crashing halt. We check our phones. Both cracked. We listen in a haze – heavy clunking footsteps closing in. They grab the blanket and reveal our bruised bodies. It’s a continental pillow-shaped body of a man, round afro and suited up with pointy look-at-me shining shoes. He points us to the left – a church. We follow him grating-grinding our teeth in nervousness. Into this church. I’m also suited as the man. We sit down and the whole church laughs boisterously cos I walked in wearing a cowboy hat. When I take it off, NoPlate is nowhere to be seen, just the fucking laughing children around me. There across from me, on a bunk stool, is a man who looks exactly like me. He blinks his eyes when I blink mine. And gives me a middle finger when I give him. When I cross my legs and wiggle them, he does the same thing. He’s me in the flesh. Nauseated, I storm outside and blink as many as rice grains till my eyes are sore. No one seems aware of my presence despite my clinking shoes. Head to the tavern and drink till I want to beat up NoPlate when I see her. The man-pastor-preacher from hell comes looking for me, to fetch me. Taverners gawk and smirk at him and wet the whole floor with spit, one even throws a fiery matchstick at him but it dies a whiff before it touches because he’s slippery-shiny with Jesus’ teeth. I tell him to go piss in a chalice somewhere, with my red eyes. Drunkards cheer up. And it was raining beer and sputum on his way out.

Beating up your woman is wrong, indubitably. I don't care what you say!

Unconscious in the arms of NoPlate. Think, hector except I'm in the arms of a woman in fetus position and she's not crying but dying... inside, looking pensively outside a fist-sized window with one purple eye and two teeth are sunken deeply below her right eye bag... swollen. Behind my back, there's the humongous arm of a gigantic creature. When I look up, this is true, the roof is torn out and a mad three-armed creature overcrowds the clouds, oozing vomit-mucus and blood from a lost part. Furious, it's coming at me with zigzag fingers like broken cigars. It can't reach me; the bed is swerving. NoPlate is holding me tight but I can't seem to feel her arms. I'm begging, eyes-closed wrinkles-like, close to two raisins. Butt clenched. Many people are cursing, throwing tongues, nipples, anything they can find. NoPlate is mum, looking through this window. One gentleman comes through the door. I'm unsure of his complexion, looks Italian. He comes to my defense, calming the angry creatures. I'm begging NoPlate for forgiveness. She looks at me with empty eyes. I jump out the bed, fisting my way out from the crowd. It's sparse outside. It's a corridor, closed and opened doors side-to-side receding to narrow oblivion with noises and grunts. One animist-creature comes out of one door. Chases me down the corridor; yellowish and muscular with large tusks popping out of its mouth. Thudding behind rattles the floor to the brink of collapse. The body tenses up and spits out goose-bumps. It reacts to goosebumps and melts the floor wet. Something breaks its foot and shout in pain, *Ma se poes!* About to fall and something grabs me. It has a human face and the body of a dolphin. It cranes my neck to the back and there are plenty of them. But it can't help me by itself, instead, it looks up to a purple-pink sky and something jumps up of its stomach, condom-shaped with gooey semen inside; it enlarges up there and comes back splitting the floor, bouncing and squashing the heads of those things that want to devour me whilst I'm trying to get back to my NoPlate. Right before reaching my room, one of the things comes up, morosely. And begs for a hug from me. I doubt it, terrified. Hug it anyway. Right after this, there's the Italian guy who gives me a floppy disk with many buttons retrieved from a tongue-less cow's head with Chinese eyes. Each button does a unique trick when pressed. The one that looks like the real eye of a cow releases blue lines of lasers to make me invincible to my prey. The other button has clit-like performance (I question this one) and it squirts out red lasers that kill my prey. I think of a computer mouse when I see a clit – in between your right and left finger as vagina's lips. The Italian laughs cos he can read my brain within our given proximity. NoPlate's room is closed now and distant. Gone is the Italian. A Mammoth comes oozing grease, fuming hot air, speeding my way. I press the cow's eye button but it's strong and heavy so it pushes me till I shift breaking things on the floor: dolls, cigars, beer bottles, and biscuits. One guy there, long-nosed, seems mentally disturbed, has a jelly-like silk penis; its head is a shape of a heart. Two girls, I can't see their faces, are fighting over it. Scratching all over each other's faces. It's a sperm-bloody mess. One creature on the side of the bed is worn out with cum all over its belly. I think to myself it's dying: its cum, like acid, is driving down through to the other side. Outside the room. I'm seeing an extra horde of creatures. Things like midgets, knee-high and amoeba-dough-shapeless rats fighting together for one rotten carrot. I come close to them; then back off quickly. I don't want to lose my toes. I'm hit in the head by a large foot dangling above. It's the giant's, hanging; lynched by an irritated

cloud wanting to come down. They were moving with it slowly to the dream. So, the feet were demolishing the building. Every creature pack-by-pack scurrying out. I'm thinking only of NoPlate. She's still there brooding over the fist-sized window. She ignores me for a while until the eye-hurting gust blows away, she turns to me, tears cascading and heaving, asks: but why? There are voices suggesting knives, scissors, and nails must drive through my neck. Seeing the teeth in her blue eye bag. I argue that this world is vast, unpredictable; anything can happen. You have read my stories: I have people escaping through marble-sized windows by using toilet paper, others lynched with intestines, animist-caricatures that read the world from their big balls. This world of imagination must always come fresh with vigorous technicality. My characters float in the air with heavy grocery bags, yapping spitting stars with sputum or mounting on ants, hunting frogs for food, etc. see, at least you try, you have teeth under your eye.

I hear the thunder that makes my ears release blood and eerie heads coming out the walls, floor, and in the air with nails, panga, matches, okapis, stones. My feet itch so that I clap the floor with them - running for my life, am chased by livid midgets with large round eyes like a 2-burner stove – scorching red, spiraling with a spell to make me nauseous and fall to the ground which is now black – and all sorts of other creatures – crabs, figurines and totems. What I could not understand is that there is a rippling dizzying line between fiction and non-fiction. Each time I turn to look back at them, they are becoming smaller and smaller like an image with lots of noise. In my mind I observe and hear these wisdoms throughout:

Donkeys cry and horses bray. When donkeys cry their tears, like two parallel wires, drift to the skies so that they may return as rain.

When horses blink tears, unlike those of humans, they are vertical, like those of a vagina, except that pussies do not.

Tortoises cry when they encounter a colored person because they are going to be eaten.

Female baboons give out sex to hunter-gatherers, regardless of the language barrier.

The easiest way to kill a pig is to crane its head skywards. Cleanliness is next to godliness.

In one sentence, you cannot write *Racist White Supremacist...* (It cancels out ~~white supremacist~~); ask the left-wingers when writing about some pig-faced chump. Google is pro-white, putting Carl Gustav Jung beneath Sigmund Freud. Corrects my name in an uncompromisingly patronizing manner – reduces me to nobody. An error in the face of the earth. What a shame!

Time or TALENT? (It's a rhetorical question).

Sqhazola, a five-year-old, is admitted to a school. First task: to draw up a duck swimming in water. Draws the duck and colors it with an emphatic black. Mistress comes, looks over him. Chides him about the vulgar incorrect color of a duck. He then asks, have you ever seen a YELLOW duck?

Today, Sqhazola, his uncle, and I smoke weed together and laugh about the theatre of the absurd, life.

Cockroaches are UFOs or government surveillance since I have not seen or heard about any insecticides that eradicate them forever.

Watching my shit falling, dick-balls swinging, and the water rippling. It's a dizzying scene.

There's only one white cockroach among all of the brown ones. It represents the one percent of poor white/colored in a black neighborhood.

Someone shouts *shit equals to shit. No more. No less.* Heard another one ask, then what if mixed with aromatics... becomes aro-kak? Then an irritated gun-shot or knife to the cranium?

The church that I'm passing by is crammed full of people with a singular pointy pimple on their foreheads.

*

shower shit

The cats in Kwa-Nokholeji fuck in style with hearty humane sentience which lacks in youth today – missionary acrobatics, legs skywards, and fervent shrieks and pantings calling upon the next generations of *good* cats. The thing is this only happens at night. Most students are even frightened to even go to the toilet for the fear of the inevitable look at these marvelous acts. Instead, in the mornings, we wake up to the dead bodies of babies in black garbage bags. For some inscrutable reason, my heart will decide that it is the cat's baby.

And I'm right, check here, same mornings, aunties come to clean, yapping out pressing issues of the subaltern, one of which is of this morning... there is a sighting of a large shit in the middle of the shower and the student to be seen coming out the toilet shortly after that was my dandy neighbor, Ndo. For humiliation's sake, he was called in for a residence meeting to be held down in the openness of a stadium. There he argued that, just because the shit was impossibly black like him it wasn't his shit; that he knows his shit very well! In fact, he knows... it was that of the cat. He quickly pointed out to something passing through swiftly - a black plastic bag suspended in the air. The crowd turned to look back at him. He was a thin slice of bread in the wind. We never saw Ndo again.

*

nimbus

Transient transsexuals of my time,

Driven to dread by a thin needle of shiftless pride. Betrayed by their distinctiveness and *uncompromising* thought. They want transcendence: to eat without a careful prayer; pontificate about freedom.

If only they were not drowning in their revolutionary parlance, If only they were not throwing stones at a naked man on a street bewitched by his own wife. If only they were not calm during the burning of an old woman in the blazing sun.

*

fusillade

At my spot lazing to the bathroom, under the door two little foot moving left and right, wearing flops. Me ask with eyes widening, creasing my brow, who's that. It jumps up like from the trampoline, on top of the wall occupying a 13 inches space that separates this wall from the zinc roof. Squatted there, this unkempt vagabond with toe-jam smeared unlikely, big eyes, prancing in that little space for prey, me. Its nosey clit like a yardstick keeps making a point towards, counting on my feverish steps. Voetsek! Says me. It chunks out a loud laugh that unscrews the screws of my door hinges. Throws at me a rusted shaving blade slightly cuts the tip of my left index finger and goes right beyond to stick into the wall behind me. Throws an empty toothpaste, an ass-crack-smelling toothbrush, and a fragrance spray can. It hits me in the head, dizzying me then quickly jumps for my neck. I turn to the bed for help from a woman who's dangling legs, seemingly unaware of all this violent invasion-attack – simply minding her own shit - or is it me not seeing things, moving her lips, including the vagina's, without a sound. It descends from the neck to my arm and twists my wrist. I think of clothing caution: Do Not Wrangle Hard, feel my bone bulging about to break. I run for the woman's hand in bed, she grabs mine back. The little kakakazi retreats back. There's impepho stashed crunched in a bookish corner, burn the incense chagrined, to this brat's delight, guffawing derisively and asking rhetorically does it work? Then wets it with a stinking spit of a witch's arm-pit and dances to its dying smoke. Same time it disappears. There's a small biblical quote placard on the kitchen wall hung by the previous tenant. I have always wanted to take it off. Here, this moment now I'm reading it aloud.

*

DISS-CLAIMER:

It is with deep regret and sadness that the under(mine)lined words will not be expressed/explained for the author's own inscrutable stylistic/imaginative provocations. As a piece of him dies all the time doing so.

*

the gutter

It is Saturday noon and I have been here since the morning. James Joyce's *Ulysses* makes you want to burn the dictionary and visit the nearest bar. I needed something to make my head feel dizzy. I've overstayed my welcome. Sis'Thozi over the counter looks at me and shakes her head in utter shame and disgust. I pretend to be wearing horse blinkers and ignore the unspoken insults, thrusting my eyes towards a couple on a corner talking about what black people want: love and dignity, whichever comes first. I'm down to my last bottle of beer, and a little prickly pain insults my heart. I spend weekends, if not reading, then debating over social calamities or Blacks' stolen property, or simply carousing at Sis'Thozi, sometimes with a friend. At home curtains dangle with the ennui of insanity. The place is literally sick, and harrowing.

The sun glints through the pores of the claustrophobic bar and strikes my eyes perniciously. I try to shove the stubborn sun away with my hand, yet, like hunger and other mental breakdowns, it still bugs me. The bar is clustered with shiftless ordinaries, others pouring in, presumably for the same reason, to drink away perennial guilt. There are little kids, smoking, guzzling beer, and contorting with the truth darkened with morbid obscenity. We are not here to teach birds how to fly. I cast my eyes over the multitudes of faces for a beer buyer and in exchange for township narratives and lavatorial humor to keep the day young. Home is not a place to be.

A guttersnipe in rags glides to the jukebox and slips in an R2 coin. It takes a minute for Brenda Fassie to blast through the speakers like she owns this place and she's letting every drunkard know. Infants on their reckless mothers' backs hang perilously, each bruise and gash tell a dramatic story involving many blackouts and irresponsibility. Something is disturbing about the guttersnipe's pose, and his drooping pants, as he sings along, "*I'm your weekend special*" to the beer-laden table. The atmosphere is dense with smoke, dust, or both combined.

"I bet she was good in bed, too."

A guttural voice blurts out from behind. It's a tiny man, with missing teeth in the front, pulverizing a white pill. Sis'Thozi is nowhere to be seen. I have never seen him around. He must be one of the coloreds from the township, Dal. He goes on to talk about books in which he mentions two writers from this other fucking town I don't wish to name. This intrigues me, I begin to listen intently as he launches into a flatulent analysis of these writers' works.

"There is always this one thing which incredibly disturbs me - the idea of many characters. I don't like it. It distorts the theme and scatters the reader's focus. One or two characters is enough."

He pauses, and gulps a glob of saliva, looking to the roof for a few minutes. Two flies dance drunkenly on a dimly lit lamp.

He continues, "And another thing is *their* 'prim' English. The fucking racist honkies love that, it works to their advantage. They even sell them overseas. Ours is gutter English. Great literature comes out of discomfort and harsh conditions. They are too relaxed and comfortable in their writing. Many a book I couldn't finish because of that shit. Anyway. How have you been finding October, thus far?"

My mind freezes for a few seconds before melting into salty sweat while tears bug out of my left eye. The floor is uneven underneath my feet, with phlegm, bottle tops, broken glass, and cigarette butts. I'm too drunk to join in his madness. I walk off, marveling about the truth this strange man has said. What's with South African literature anyway? I quickly dismiss the thought and tell myself tomorrow is another fucking day in the gutter.

*

god

i think of a polar bear & dalmatian

with a couple of black dots

i could think more but am dying.

*

fragmencture

It is the defamiliarizing tropes of the phantasmagorical that interests me in the films of Jodo. I'm saying this to Nomkhita. Two monstrous talking shadows darken our drinks in disgust of the *Holy Mountain*... straining their eyes... brains drained. These are our guest poets ... [only] at the back of their heads!

Tonight we switch our bedsides and dream that we are inconveniencing a dog giving birth with our loud laughter and it asks us if we could simply get gone. We go back to our normal sides and secretly I dream, Mkhitha giving birth already, me prodding the thing with incest stick – it stinks.

After her soul has just run out with torrents of blood from her vagina; I remind Mkhitha of our first beautiful encounter I had burnt a finger, screamed, and kicked the air that day for better breasts to rest my lovelorn heart on, and there she was at the shop by the bandages. She looked into my burnt finger... felt its pain of longing. You healed me that day, Mkhitha. Now, let me get back to your soul.

She asks if I have two hearts after my hands have gotten warm between her thighs. She once whispered to my wet mouth that over-opinionated people are easily irritated. I felt this was the best review ever given to a thinker because I was horny at the time. She is not the one if your noses touch and it messes with your breathing patterns.

I sit with old men and watch their mouths open & close with talks of politics and for every missing tooth I want to fill my stories with their uncompromising vigor. I will write that Chris Hani was a soul-savior who found his way to South Africa on a crocodile's back.; Biko is dead, let that god rest before we breed a whole generation of Ace 'tamas.

In the heart of the dark, it frightens me that he might appear and greet me with his voice. Growing grey hair - his greatness. I want to pen my grandfather a poem but then again it is the pen that breaks.

I was wrong for thinking that sound was the head colliding with concrete when in fact it was one of us heartily pronouncing ALL OF A SUDDEN with all its resounding syllables.

To miss someone deeply - dearly - they must have died first. The living is full of shit.

*

our (Christmas) father

Two local old-folks 62 both, one is a stout hermaphrodite pregnant with the unknown, the other is tall and lean. They are the township beer guzzlers with lots of tales to tell, no money to buy beer. It's the month of December in the morn nearing Christmas. The tall & lean text the pregnant saying that there's a job offer at Shoprite; they are looking for a father-Christmas figure.

*

danile

It's feverish, moves sinuously with morbid intent. It is all over the place, like something circular and we are in the middle of its hand... palm. And there is no escape. It moves with the steady stealth of the criminal! It robs us of our loved ones. So we cry and moan this dirty death. There is "eat" in death. This makes sense and then we sigh in defeat however hopeful of another life. We *dream*... I have put much thought into death (next to the water, the bush, and night), a thousand times without escape. I am convinced that death does *knock*, manifests herself through dreams, visions, and hallucinations as opposed to *death does not knock*. I anthropomorphized death as a female with her emotional-driven hate towards men. I think she is a jealous lover, who was never there, in your life, in the first place, in your times of melancholy and sadness and she doesn't care. So, she shits on your glee and watches as it rots away in your eyes, shrinking your heart in a river of tears streaming down to wet your feet under which rests these loved ones, whispering to you deceitfully that everything is going to be alright, I exist through you. This is the last thing my grandfather said to me.

I did not weep when he died. *Oh, fucking death! Thief of gullibility and weakness and the rewarder of wisdom. You burn my tears and stoned my heart to make me look strong and undisturbed in front of mankind whose intentions remain vague.* Again, I did not weep when my grandfather died. My grandfather once said to me that he hated the color 'red' and kept quiet thereafter with a feverish vagueness of everyday life. *Red* alludes to blood or mess and our people cry, cringe, and frown when they encounter the blood. Blood is death.

So I retreated to his quietness and watched many heads of women and men bent down weeping in uniform somewhat without uniqueness and fervency in their crying. It is how we let death into lives, this pretense, and hopelessness. That preaching. Inasmuch as the preacher's voice was genuine his commitment to it was a loophole to let death in. He kept

saying 'but', 'the afterlife...' I dozed off. Someone fainted in the crowd and later that day was announced that she had died. I could have expected this from my grandmother at least. But her eyes are strength! At the time of throwing soil in the coffin, she had said: I'll follow you, my love. My knees shook and I sank both toes in the soil in resentful defeat.

I see my grandfather a lot in my sleep, always looking down in search of something and as a dreamer my heart is dripping with frustration because I can't see his face, touch his skin and listen to him telling his wild tales with underlying morals. Look at where he is lying now?! *Life plays us many jokes* as Lewis Nkosi puts it. And death laughs at these jokes alone in her red gown. I would then wake up bitter with lots of emotions in my chest all fighting for the spotlight, feeling angry towards death, and because it's a *she*, I will then retreat. My grandmother raised me well with gallantry.

My heart is hurting while writing this. It is personal. It makes me want to go out to the nearest bar and drink till I hear my grandfather speak. I have a recording of him speaking. I play and cry. This is for my grandfather:

whispers...

take a solitary stroll to the river

stand precariously on its callous bank

gaze!

a grotesque caricature floats

undulating beckoning

silences close after me.

The Daily Sun Subscribers

after(a)zol

I have been finding my head. The writing must come from within when from without is driving mankind sick. Between me and insanity there's beer; a book. Breasts. The holy trinity. I listen to the *DEATH* and that fucking genius Dave is the truth, betrayed by his own callous brothers whose heads were, all the time, stuck up their asses while he was showing them, god.

At Kwa-Nokheleji I had learned that one makes an unshakable premise, there's no writing without a 'scrupulous' politics. I say this, it is the people who make writing & art politics.

Politics is the science of government, and that science is a complete bombardment of facts.

When Makahaza was hacked to death, brains daubed the dung and the floor all red, of our uncle's heart. This death. It took a few months for that curious shepherd brother of yours to barge through some shrubs to Makhaza fucking one of your father's goats. Horrorstruck, flew down zig-zagging to our house to shout, struggling between his wheezing breaths that Makhaza is alive . . . only with no tongue and his dick circumcised!

Makhaza was re-buried last December. Today it marks four years since his second death.

Point in case, Makhaza's case was discredited in court for *witchcraft*-related crimes in our Cowntry are deemed unjustifiable. This witchcraft happens to be the black lived experience since the dawn of time which is me and you, mfethu.

In other words, it is your life's worth against that of Mr. Government.

Our experience (writing) against *the* politics. We are fucked!

I left that **institution** or dropped out – out of exhaustion, of being too familiar with that space. Overfamiliarity is worse than Bantu Education as you would say. Now, back into the entrapment, Hillside. This bug... bites. Anemic here, fasting for fresh eyes to look into the word-world of god. Isn't it Beaumont after all, who said, home is where you drop?

*

pendulant raps

Some works of literature want to make me storm out to the nearest tavern. Burn the dictionary &/ question the very existence of man. Head on fire! Running down a naked street screaming god is dog to the barking river of consciousness. This is poetry. Not of Cesaire that which reduces the African to pussy (temperament)... without the soul to rationalize for herself against the dangers that came with the wind and the night of whites in ships to steal. All through coercion of course. Not by a mirror for a cow. This poetry somewhat philosophizes ... conditionally, puts the heart before the soul and not even simultaneously. Says the man who wanted to French-ize Africa. The bigotry!

Given the relation between culture, context, and identity, can there be a unique African Philosophy? And *Mucus* Garvey died of a broken heart ... off just the insult. And that mucus stretched down to his stomach. It had a ball of black people and that was the Africa he never got to touch.

This obsession with the romanticization of Africa must be stopped. The same goes for the publication of books by 11year olds in SuckerAfrica must be prohibited. Jokes aside. It cancels out critical thinking. As a friend would say, Aime Cesaire and them, betrayed an opportunity to assert a socio-politico-aesthetic space for an enduring decolonial African epistemology during a critical period in the history of Africa's relationship with the Western. As a sad consequence, cretins – professors and doc-turds (via ramps) who can't read; whose histories of the novel go as far as Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. The question is, WHAT IS (a) NOVEL? Without mentioning Tutuola's *Palm-Wine Drinkard* and Fagunwa That's novel! Something fresh from the teller of tales' mouth told with vigorous imagination and technical narrative techniques that keep one spellbound between the ghosts of the past and aliens of the future with the two taking turns in being the conscious and the nightmare of the reader. You can teach them to string a decent sentence together but not imagination. I'm sated with individuals for whom writing is just a matter of time-killing exercise. A trivial.

I came to writing in search of an alternative universe in which the dead exists in the family of present tense. That is, they are immortal, can speak through me and come alive and set my head on fire. Most times I conflict with the characters of my creation, not one of them wants to end up dead. Thus, for me, the dead and living must co-exist in a manner in which they raise a bizarre enigma. Transcendence. A tale can move with only two characters, one from within and the other from without. Too many characters take away much of the tale, for imagination is intimate. This is novel and anything is possible with less overuse of the bush, the night, water of course.

I'm perusing through the stack of books from under my bed all basic and common in their placement of the speculative – the phantasmagoria into the bush, the night, water, and wind. Whilst in my township one is stabbed, shot in the head in broad daylight and we carry on with our daily trivialities. And the children have never been as relieved as that before.

*

throwing punches

Now if our literature students can't scan a line of poetry ... what justification have they for taking up literature and walking away with a B.A Literature? – some Sudanese master storyteller

Dear Danile,

The heart beats on the right in case the mind decides to go left. I'm at the brink of madness, wincing at what's below there on the buttresses – at once MAGNETIC and ENIGMATIC. What's already sad about this, even in your

most sincere and serious existential paining self, are the contemptuous reductive ‘systematic mockeries’ within the English language (There are twenty-six letters in the English Alphabet, all mimicking and recycling each other) The very mockeries that drove that brilliant French writer, out of utter frustration, back to writing in his rich mother tongue. Fortunately, for us, we have our very own iconoclastic word-slingers both in and out of contexts who broke away with these limitations, such as Thabs, Mangu, and Kaptain, that even English language itself felt silly. It said that Beckett was guzzling beer when he took notice of the word LISTEN was parodying and recycling another fellow word SILENT. Just recently, I also mistook CONTROL for ALCOHOL at first glance which made perfect sense. Alcohol gave me control over my fears. Haggard from last night’s alcohol gluttony, I read a chapter from Mr’ Chinaski’s *Women* and a chapter from the Punk pornstar-writer’s *Hannibal Lecter is My Father*, which concludes that Buk is a grumpy old fucker who knows shit about a woman. And then it struck me right there – the outrageous paucity of technical vigor in American English versus the exciting nature of the British English language. Take, for instance, the American way: *X is walking on sidewalks*

British way: *X is walking on a pavement*

American way: *X is riding on a horse’s back*. For fuck’s sake where else would one ride a fucking horse anyway? On its large cock?

We were colonized by Britain. Acculturated in the language with its horrendous praxis and experience. I’m in Kwa-Ndancama now for this ‘retardation’ program, I call it. I must tell you, people walk and talk funny here, as compared to Kwa-Nokheleji, with a contrary attitude towards radical intellectualism. That is, here you cannot be a thinker and writer all at once; otherwise, it defeats the purpose of being an imaginative storyteller. My argument is this: how then do you separate or split up the entire human brain and expect it to still breathe. My point is this: the human body is made up significantly of the heart and the mind. The heart is the poet/storyteller and the mind is the critic/thinker. Both must co-exist. Nothing more. Nothing less. In other wor(l)ds, every writing is creative. Be it scholarly, journalistic, or fictionally.

In the past, I survived all the unthinkable horror. I was 10 meters away when a student hurled himself from the top floor to the unfeeling ground. Brains splattered. When that trussed-up infant was found dead in the trash can eaten by cats, I never vomited or even fold. I stood strong; never flinched. Desensitized. And I betrayed all that in one short dream when I cried cos that could be my baby.

Neither have I told you that I've just met with the literati or ignoramuses of the retardation program and my fellow proto-writers participating in the course.

I introduced myself as Xundu. They are Vince Wool, Fiska, Heide, Langa, Xoli Yeza, Mthunzi, Vili, Ntshinga, Paul Calvin, Lucy, Herry, Leroux, Nahoon. They all differ in voice, tone, and shades. They are well-versed in their independent respects. I like the spirit of FeleFele, Anele, Lufefe, Leana, Lydia, Mvaba, Konke, Sammy. They are, not one, but many reasons for me to write and live and to reflect on the wor(l)d.

Invigorated, excited about reading. Reading and writing, for me, were born twins – one cannot exist without the other. To become a better writer, one must have interests in other people's works – to engage, gauge, dissect, and interpret these, critically. However, I may like your reading taste and dislike your writing. The staff is here to make sure that the latter does not happen ... at least, consciously. And that, we could use both writing and reading to challenge the worldly established setting.

I took out a large zol and went to simply laugh outside and an ugly child saw and terrified at once. Thinking that it wanted me to tell what I was laughing at.

The given catalog is crammed full of book titles & authors from cover to cover, cosmopolitan and technical in its nature and intent. I sat with it during my time here and read it the whole time I was doubtful of its existence and presence here. I sat and thought. Sometimes blacked-out. You see, I was never the ever-ready type. I brainstorm first, think things through. But they kept drifting away ... fading in Kwa-Ndancama to reappear in my quietest of dreams.

I wanted to say something. I could not. My voice was fucked on top of my habitual stuttering. I listened and watched the teachers' mouths closing and opening into a vast dark well of belittling whiny voices up my face again and again. *look into the publishers too.*

This is a research course.

also, try something different from your used style . . .

see how this affects your writing

We are here

to learn.

I could also hear some fuckers pathetically defending their writing: *I like that we are all treated equally - no talking-down undertones nonsense whatsoever here.*

Heide speaks a bunch ... extemporaneously about literature. I feel her. It excites me. Nathan is elaborate with the word. Speaks freely from the top of

his head. I fucking like that. Ntshinga, Xara is quiet and observant like they are watching a Charlie Chaplin flick or a circus. I observe back.

These free-writing sessions are exhilarating, releasing the nerves. We are given prompts on an ample amount of time to pour our hearts out on paper in a faucet fashion – to let it flow. During which, in my mind, there are my classmates and just one pen amidst us all. The rush gets me to write madly like I want my possessions back!

Paul Calvin says to me, *I like the visceral component ... it's surreal*. Fiska likes my writing but wants it lengthier, says don't *be ashamed, or afraid to feel stupid*. I like my classmates' writing too. I can't write like them for obvious reasons, we are cut from a different cloth in terms of our schools of literature and styles. I don't wish to even write like Anele, Mvaba, FeleFele, Lydia, or Kunene. They are all unique in their respects. Anele says *I like the session/s very much for a simple fact: they are genius and marvelous. I would even go as far as to publish them one day*. Langa likes to smile, to think that *our literature is safe! This writing is promising, in fact, it is the future, which is now*. Vili likes to let us know she's present or active (narcissism perhaps). She says to me, *let it flow, now it just appears very meditated, well-constructed with striking imagery*. She then shows me a five-minute page of freewriting. Pathological liars are the best storytellers. I give my thanks anyway.

Tired to the brow, I go back home with writings to read and reflect upon. The readings are fine and precise ... the likes of Tutuola, Galeano, May Hall, etc. I am interested in style, imagination, and language and how these bend our supposed existence to our own unique individual needs. We are expected to engage the given texts to read with the already assumed exuberance of an aspiring writer.

I am interested in the writings that should learn to breathe when in actuality that's just all pig-shit. They can't breathe simply because of the mere fact that they are born out of unbearable claustrophobic social existence experience – death. This is how I felt throughout the entire session while they were yapping right left and center about the great writing. Writing will be the death of me.

Enough with that, Danile. I'm seeing an older woman who seems to know me better than I know myself – she hacks into my dreams from time to time as a younger salacious lass in a ruse to see if I could be trusted around her daughter. She's a future for us. She's beginning to trust me with her whole heart. My concern is should my mind decide to go left, with all its uncompromising madness. What then? Beer contains a fleeting solace that vanishes completely with that one mindful decision you make.

Amidst these meditations: the farce of the English language and the vagueness of my everyday life. For my thesis, I want to write it in English tinged with isiXhosa, our mother tongue, for there are inside words that could not be

transferred anywhere. It builds around that story of Makhaza... Need I remind you he was ax-hacked in the head to death on the eve of his initiation, months past, people forgot, and just out of the blue bushes, he was seen by our local herd boys? Ntsiza and Thiza. Shortly after, he was captured by the curious local men of power, brought back home bewilderingly without his tongue and a ready circumcised penis. Piringi his sister said, in an interview that appeared in some paper, that she still smells his blood & brains; sometimes that wetness underneath her feet.

Now, this is just a synopsis. Therefore, I want to embark on an expedition in search of his organs via the vast world of the imagination. Having found the organs. To be his tongue in an attempt to narrate what transpired from the minute of his captivation until his return. My thesis wants to take the shape of a novelization of this phenomenon. Makhaza was laid for the second time in the winter of 2011. I will see how this goes. Will keep in touch.

Awe!

Xundu.

*

unquiet mind

fart through quietly and

watch them speak from the

bottoms of their empty hearts.

*

RE:

Dear Danile

Back at it! I'm between a rock and a hard place, so to say, am between conservatives and liberals' hands. I'm fucked relentlessly. Being reduced to tears of frustration. I have decided against the idea of writing about or investigating the marvel and wonderment of our dear Makhaza. It's the white anxieties! That's all I'm saying. Afraid that the black man might show and burn their eyes with a magic wand. They say that what I pitched to them is unsound, unreal, and farfetched. A myth! Thinking to myself... so is creative writing then. I had stomped the ground hard to say myth is narrative that *you* (whites) are inherently biologically superior to black people. They looked at me like I was mad; like I just woke up from a dumping site. And then I told them about the late mystery man, uBab' uKhotso (the first black millionaire

sangoma/overseer) to whom the very instrumental architects of Apartheid, that is, *your people*, were consulting to maintain the absolute reign over black people. That didn't happen, so you killed him. What the fuck does creative writing mean anyway?

It is either I bend to their formatic conservatism or my black arse is dust. And then I thought of the many hearts that have thrust their trust in me. My grandfolks! I thought of Makhaza, that I should perhaps let him rest. Another reason to let Makhaza rest in poetry has to do with a similar uncanny encounter, not so long ago, with a friend's grandmother here in the imel'emntwini Township far from the mental asylum. I've introduced myself this time, as QondaQala Mawethu and remained comatose with nervousness on the sofa until a bottle of brandy showed up. We both drink. While the others, including my friend, cheered up for Chief and Pirates on the other side of the house. Glass in my hand, occasionally taking shy swigs, throwing cursory glances at her moving toothless mouth. She asks, leaning towards me, where I'm from and what my clan is with bloodshot eyes pending fire. Shot with brandy in the head, I tell her that I am eSgodini-born and Ntshona-Skhokwane-based, that I have never met my father till his death. I don't hate & feel anything towards him and my clan name is Krwaqu. She presses out a thin-lipped smile. Coughs. Sips. Her throat jumps. Curtly up and down and says, there was once a man who lived just down the street (I feel stupid for wanting to see through the walls), 11 houses from here, who had that clan name. He had long locs like yours but grey with immovable eyes pensively piercing the air. And this man was your father! He went missing for straight seven months and was seen in the bushes by wood packers hugging a tree so tightly like his arms were about to slice through the trunk. But what differentiates him from Makhaza, Danile, is he never got out of the bushes until he was never seen again. Tranced in her sinuous mannerisms and gestures that bring the narration to life, I'm carefully listening, rubbing my elbow, mouth beak-like with a warped brow while thinking:

Life began in Africa and the Greeks took that away from us, arguing that Africa must provide written evidence to validate her argument. I have spent many times, read hundreds of outrageous papers, in attempts to answer this soul-stinging outright insult: Who Am I and my purpose in this hellhole? Kanti the most profound and truest answer is right in front of me in the flesh ... I'm philosophy; my purpose is storytelling. A phenomenon that requires an attentive ear and mouth both taking turns in being the speaker and the listener. I tell the grandmother, in our occasional intervals, that I'm also a film-enthusiast... off the head, I name Jodo's *Holy Mountain*, Shyamalan's *Unbreakable* that freak Kubrick's *The Shining*, madman Lynch's *Eraser head*, Tara's *Pulp Fiction* blah-blah-blah... and gave her a synopsis of each. She says that is all a nonsensical fat lie. They are all thieves, it all started here. *Wound-thieves*, I think to myself. There was an event that took place in the

tumultuous 60s, a train smash, and everybody died except for this one colored child who was spat out to a treetop. Rescuers found him there laughing. He's out here now with an unkempt beard to the knees picking beans in the air, speaking an archaic-cryptic language unknown to mankind. But I know it! She boasts hysterically. As for the Shining, it's basically about what the heart can do... she looked right into my glistened irises with wonder. At this point, I couldn't think of anything but to refill my glass. And then she says, let's drink to that. We need to wet our throats first.

I left that house refreshed as never before. Hugged the grandmother tightly, told her that god lives through you. Abruptly, one of her sons came up to me and told me that he's a writer as well. I simply laughed.

My point in case, I'm writing to you to let you know that I've devised a plan to let the *fuckademics* know that, no matter, all writing is creative. Henceforth, this paper I will send to you in three pieces: the first part is the HEAD which refers to the soul and/or reason. The second part is the CHEST which refers to the heart and/or temperament and/or the spirit and the last part is the ABDOMEN which refers to desire or lust (as opposed to last). Out of all the thinkers I could think of, I have used uTatuGeneral, the first finest master storyteller to come out of our dear Ntshona-Skhonkwane as the force to drive my motives towards what writing is supposed to be technical in any case. I have all his unpublished manuscripts. Something he was proud to give me before he dies. TatuGeneral is mystically slick with the pen... like we always argue that he is better a critic than a writer! But *Talk with Fire* makes us think otherwise cos of the simple fact that it is a masterpiece above all his other books. I have even heard you say that it is an obvious rip-off of that fucker, Thando's *Purple Heater* and TatuGeneral is a sell-out just off the language, meaning is very white. You were completely out of your fucking mind, of course. Sometimes your arse-licking of celebrity writers makes me sick and I would ask myself, who sent you? Next to what exactly is FUCKING creative writing?! The truest bitches are the lousy critics. Let me not dwell too much on this shit, it makes me angry. So I'm trying to defend TatuGeneral and the other greats who are the saviors of creative writing that is imagination and thinking. So here is my paper or (Eh-say) in three parts as said:

soul

We are at this other house, enthusiastically called the dungeon of dangerous minds. There are five of us, all fuckers/thinkers in our marvelous respekts. It's 8:31 pm. We are dangling our feet. Silent faces of stinking shoes. Waiting for the booze to engage the heads.

Mathe: *fuck! I wonder iphi lekakakazi*

Nqaw eThambo: interjects and says, *ifun' ukhatywa anye*. He's the violent type with thousand scars on his face. Some of the scars are the first time seeing them.

Jiki-zinto: *perhaps she's got into some trouble of sorts*.

I: *Ja ne!* Not caring too much preoccupied with questions: which of these fuckers can talk literature in their dandy outfits. She comes in fuming, sweating, and smelling of armpits.

Vivian: *almost got raped by midgets*. We do not laugh but stare at her drunk face.

Nqaw eThambo: *mxim! Suthethi kaka maan, khupha utywala!*

Mathe: *how many were they... the midgets?* She's already forgotten about the story. I wanted to laugh but am sober. So we begin drinking. Beer takes time to kick in amongst strangers. I got issues of trust. Music starts to play - sounds like ghosts or bees trapped in a cylinder. Vivian keeps staring at me. I keep turning it down. She hardens my crotch. She's experientially beautiful. By that I mean she knows how to lure men like flies to shit. I would love her to fuck my brains out. 30 minutes flies meanwhile starrng at an odd painting, drinking and thinking of TatuGeneral. Vivian asks if the beer in my head is half full or half empty. And I ask, about the midgets cos I've never seen them around town. She's got six kids all of them named manically and hastily. One of them is *Nola* (from a Mayonnaise brand). The other one is *Minora* (from a razor blade brand). The rest of the names made me even laugh more than I peed a little so I forgot all about them.

I daintily grab her by the neck and got in her ear as drunk as I am. Tell her my plans to write about TatuGeneral. She sees the tears in my eyes:

I got a defense to lodge for TatuGeneral's literary commitment and his vision... I intend to demonstrate *that in South Africa Talk with Fire seems to have been an interloper in the historically 'whites only' territories of literary avant-gardism and critical writing*. In other wor(l)ds, *Talk with Fire* breaks with traditionalist methods of history as a heroic narrative and subverts any literary conventions, and draws greatly on modernism. And mind you, TatuGeneral is old as tree bark. He's the afro future. Vivian is smitten, touches her thighs non-religiously. This little book proves to be the epitome of independent and transgressive writing that is, writing that threads against the canon; writing that demands answers from the questions it poses. The book is fucking untouchable. It Proves S.A's education is all pig-shit! It is only interested in literature that can be prescribed in schools and universities mainly for its paramount, significant content that contributes to cultural-national discourses.

Vivian: Meaning, *the contents must highlight or capture a 'historicization' or history as a determining mechanism and circumscribing force in narrative discourses*. I'm impressed and go on to say to her, all this historical writing what it fucking does is to reduce art to history creating both consciously and unconsciously culture-wars. This book (I want to cry talking about it, she extends her hand around my waist) in my township it is remarkably received and critically acclaimed moving from the best intsomi to come from a one-eyed elder to becoming the best text to emerge from Ntshona-Skhokwane by a laconically dwarfed arm storyteller to be the most wanted by local teachers for publication. He told them to fuck themselves in one sentence. The *Even Times* and *Iliso leSizwe* wanted more of the *legend* even went further to wanting to kill the god-teller of stories at one point, threatening him to give up the manuscript or they will kill him. Black people are truly a commodity.

(The music has become transparent to our engagement and they were all looking at us, wanting to engage as well).

Vivian: *so it confronts boldly and imaginatively the strange interplay of bondage, desire, and torture inherent in interracial sexual relationships within the South African prison house of apartheid very possibly the finest novel by a South African, black or white, about the terrible distortion of love in South Africa*.

I say, yeah something like that. Thinking to myself, she must be a black liberal but how did she manage to know that TatuGeneral lost his wife during that time (apartheid) and lost his arm as both result and reason for the book? Anyway, I carry on nervous and struck by their loud staring eyes...

Although the novel was written amid apartheid, it refuses to be confined under structures and labels of 'protest' or 'struggle' literature for its significance and complexity that responds with both the vigor of the imagination and sufficient technical resources, to the problems posed by conditions in S.A. Hence TatuGeneral and *Talk with Fire* remain a classical literary shock treatment for its refusal and subverting of literary conventions and nationalist arguments of patriotism. It's because of the novel's *'breaking of linguistic and literary norms through the power of imagination, the smashing of social taboos through the explicit aggressive presentation of sexuality, are all facets of the same thing: an attempt to undermine and abolish the violence inherent in the social system*. A true definition of a classic!

Mathe: *so what do you make of all his writing, mind & shit since you've been the closest person to this old fucker?* I want to punch him but don't want to show weakness in front of Vivian. I want to fuck her.

Me: Ah well, According to TatuGeneral, this is all due to the triteness of journalism which has a primary obsession with the cultural-nationalist arguments and which rampantly paraded the South African/township writing.

For that, TatuGeneral is no party follower or considers himself a nationalist or patriot. He likes to say, *when is it literature and not journalism? ... There is a lot of committed literature which is simply bad literature and our commitment as writers is a commitment to craft, to be good writers.* His writing has skepticism about the lifeless journalistic narrative which infringes upon the aesthetic vigor and creative value of a writer by pigeon-holing literature by race or language or nation. This is a transcendental modernist, in his own words, *from early in my life I have viewed literature as a unique universe that has no internal divisions. I do not pigeonhole it by race or language or nation. It is an ideal cosmos co-existing with this crude one... Walk with Fire* subverts racism and reimagines a society without it. Beyond its underlying message, *it's a good exemplar of a modernist touchstone text, inventive in its syncretic complex modes and tropes that break with any literary traditionalist conventions. It rebels and rejects reductive methods of engaging and interpreting literature. Walk with Fire* haunts, disrupts, and provokes all the senses in terms of morale and ethics on thinking of it as just an imperative realist text that demands fixed descriptions and explanations. It breaks with realism and makes up experimentalism and modernism. Meanwhile, on the other hand, the contemporary South African literati and its authors are over busy with a dull formalism that singlehandedly retardates the entire country.

Jiki-zinto: shouts Mo Mfowethu! Looking straight into my eyes, grabs my hands so tightly and belligerently attests, *it sets rules about a certain topic and a certain language suitable for literature . . . There is a tendency within traditional processes of creating fiction to expect things to start from one point to another point following a straight line. In real life, none of this is true. . . The contemporary South African literature is not an interrogation and exploration of existence but, a narrow and poor journalistic representation of the complex network of life. It proposes no revolutionary ways of looking at and thinking about the modern world. Most of the fiction read-alike. It is as though it originates from the same source. It is dull and it doesn't disrupt in any imaginable or/and imaginative way. In other wor(l)ds, the work of contemporary South African literature does not go beyond the limitations, expectations, and literary conventions to create something animating. It does not transcend or challenge the system and/or the culture. Hence, it's not as refreshing, innovative, and remarkable as Walk with Fire. Literature is a wide and great world.*

And then he takes a full beer and gulps it all in one take. He burps. Farts and laughs. I'm irritated cos Vivian has her hands stubbornly on my waist and advances to brush and rub my cock...

spirit

I storm outside for air. It is weirdly quiet, feverishly drizzling out here as though somebody is making it, amidst my observation, a frog approaches

seemingly exhausted of all the world, puffing a tiny cigarette the size of a match-stick, leans against the wall. I rub my eyes so hard they push inward but Mr. Frog is still there smoking. I waited for it to speak so I could scream. It did: *never mind me, man, I heard you talking your shit from a mile away. I was touched and decided to gather around...* I bulged inside, sweaty as Barton Fink's walls, and inside the dungeon, they were all dancing to Sade. Went straight to the kitchen and combed it for salt and folk. Frog's fries and melts to salt. I wanted to watch and fork it till it burst out loud. Came back outside and Mr. Frog is walking away. I watch his tough buttocks doing what's best – moving up and down, unbothered by the rain and even worse, me. Found myself reliving this one experience with my friend Chief: he just escaped from prison through a fist-sized window with Vaseline. He knocked so hard at my door while I was taking shit that I thought the whole house was bouncing on a trampoline. I was reading a newspaper and the police kicked the door shortly after and Chief, my dear friend, shoved us into the paper and we became Zapiro's cartoons and watched them stupidly search the entire house and burn my bible full of the red ganja.

desire

After Mr. Frog walked away. I got back to the house and uNyoka or Nqawe Thambo as they've been calling him is standing up miffed with both hands from and frustrated behind his head, breaking down from the stupidity oozing inside the house. uNyoka perhaps cos of his god's nuts-scraping height or because you may never know what his eyes are thinking and mind's eye is looking at is a complete enigma on its own. I must squint my eyes raisin-like for me to get a glimpse of where his teeth are supposed to be. An independent galaxy is where his face is located... full of freckles (not stars). When meeting people for the first time, I take a 31 minutes' precautionary silence and delve into their (un)disturbed spirits. Look into mine. Compare. For god and dog are anagrams for each other. A freckle from the galaxy. I watch it till I blackout.

Best,

Xundu

*

noises

to the sounds of violence, i found myself dancing

on floors bloodied susceptible to scandal,

drinking doping debauching

yet i paused

to wince at my companions

dubbed 'pain' & 'shame'.

*

Imvula

12-07-20

i did not weep

grandfather defies gravity

retreats to my head... whispers

i can walk water, those who weep heads bent, are terrified of the sea. & drown

hence so many deaths and only one birth of the sea-whisperer.

*

In a Day

Reading Amos Tututola's *Palm-Wine Drinkard*, with my head sticking out of the window, like a suicidal man, I occasionally throw cursory glances at the trees and students going about their business below outside my residence. A brooding aura hangs in the air for no particular reason.

There is a tumultuous construction going on in the adjacent building: the noise of metal clanging reverberates through my skull and obtrudes upon my thoughts. There's a smell of dust and wood, along with an odor of glue which tenaciously tingles my nostrils. Tutuola telepathically travels with me through thick and terrifying bushes with amazing and horrifying creatures. I've seen them, they come to visit me during vigil hours as strange winds, bees, or glowing flies spiraling the lamp even if it's off. A gale comes heavily and contorts the trees which exude sounds like two people fucking furtively on an insalubrious corner. The book flips over in the wind loses touch with my hands and lands on the foot of a passer-by. A white young man with a pale skin tone like that of a pig wearing a huge Panama.

He looks up, infuriated and clutching, squinting his eyes as though the sun is hitting directly against his delicate face – he sees me gesturing with my hands to please quickly return the book, reinforcing this with unsuccessfully apologetic facial expressions. A huge shade of tree dancing above as the only witness to this bitch. Contempt dawns upon his sallow countenance. He pounces forward, sullen and gauche, picks up and ruthlessly tears it apart and flings it back to the ground, indistinctly blathering something wicked. Pain and anger strike my heart, yet refuse to unleash the host of invectives my mouth carries. A lump forms in my throat.

Mama warned me about these persons, who hate without reason, and advised me to stay away from them. The latter of course is impossible, as we wander wondering about where our dreams and hopes lie, only to find them at the feet of these hating-for-no-reason beings, obliterators of dreams. There it goes, my dream of possibilities, torn apart like my book. My whole life is literature.

I wanted to chide this vexatious turd, piece of shit, and hideous accidental creatures with red necks and Yankee hair, destroyers of dreams, who had come into existence through some crazed conduit. But something through strange divinatory has miraculously arrested my umbrage from exploding. When I looked around for the keys to unlock, in the very unkempt shock of bushes with all the horrifying creatures, they had already devoured the keys. I begin to saunter to the door of my room, thinking of all the baneful bullshit which has beset me through the week, as I try to salvage the remnants of my book. Oh, my sweet book! You, fucking honky, I wish you die before the sun even slants down.

*

since the womb days

Promise me

When I'm at last nearing madness

And people have failed to understand

When the whole world seemed smaller than my head

When the leaves have become dull and brittle,

The trees have lost shape and vigor

When the sun sets behind mountains

With a color different from orange

When the birds have finally given up their wings to humans

Promise you'll stay by me

*

the exit/epilogue

What brought me to literature is for the same reasons that motivated this question in the first place. Amongst these reasons is the wish to de-mystify the ongoing notion of poetry as an insular enigma in literature. What constitutes literature is the picture! Both still and moving – past and present. This is poetry and prose for me. The future. Like philosophy, literature stems from its creative impulse to raise questions that disrupt, itch, and challenge the established apparatuses. Literature manifests itself in many ways through the crafts and arts

of film, theatre, music, painting, etc. I was brought to literature for the same reasons Mario de was, as in his *An Extreme Interesting Preface*: to write without thinking; to cause mental aneurysms:

howl

i am one short frantic poem

unhinged style & manner, with an unkempt substance that

shits on the triteness of *fuckademia*

wipes with the pathetic hopelessness of the civilized.

'Mr. Celebrity-Writer' repels it soon after the line:

in the past tense, you kill the narrative!

i am the renegade-poetry. & feast with black absurdist-anarchists.

i am the rat to creep up on *food* for thought, & hurl the bowl back in the face of the philistine.

like, *who's the guardian angel that fixed this (sic) shitty insipid platitudes if it's not my charlatan-cretin-critics?*

i have a black-ghost idea & it's called,

writing without thinking!

A Portfolio submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Creative Writing
of
Rhodes University
By
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G21m1205

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PART ONE: REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Reflective Journal Week 1

I arrived at Rhodes University to start my MA in Creative Writing in February 2021. I was very excited but also very worried because I had difficulties connecting to the internet, finding a place to live in town, and close enough to the University for full access to the internet, etc. And there was no way I would go to that godforsaken township of mine! The Covid-19 lockdown restrictions meant that we had to conduct our studies via Zoom – an online video conferencing platform. Also, I found it very difficult because I was working in a study room at the library which meant silence at all times whereas the studies required every student to participate/engage in the seminars. Still, I found many of the seminars very refreshing.

The first seminar was all about the narrative and how within which the word is bent out of conventions and strictures. It was all about the anti-story stories; the kind of narratives that do not subscribe to the normal and/or traditional way of writing. These narratives do not have the beginning, the middle, and the end and if so, they are not in any predictable manner. In other words, they do not necessarily follow a generic order that is, from point A to B, etc. The monologue style was the best way to illustrate this – the reaching of many ideas at once.

According to Paul Mason, this style is: *Writing with and against narrative conventions*. Monologues can be in a form of musings or thinking out loud, like writing in a journal. They take both spoken and written into context. The following were the texts covered in class to better our understanding of the monologue style:

Stages of the hero's journey

Hero's journey: *The Verdict*

Armah extract

Beckett extract

Marechera extract

Foreword to Sanatorium by Galchen

Schulz *Sanatorium under the hourglass*

And two snippets from *Trainspotting 1 & 2*.

I enjoyed more especially the extracts from Marechera's *House of Hunger*, the extracts of Beckett and Armah. They confirmed my point, that indeed philosophy and literature were born twins, and the monologue is the best example of that - a self-conscious voice yearning

for life. It is Philosophy meeting literature. Marechera was the best to ever engage existence in a very pessimistic manner yet with optimistic vigor and intentions with literature. In other words, when reading Marechera, the writing is phenomenological - it unfurls from the first-person point of view of the world. This way, his writings became mature with time and became authentic because nothing was left out. The extemporaneous nature of the monologue was born out of frustration. So, a monologue breaks away with convention both unconsciously and consciously.

Tuesday is Reading Group sessions with Paul Wessels. I read Kofi Laing, an extract from *Achimota Wars*. To me, he was one of the best and most imaginative with technical and vigorous flare writers to ever grace the page. 'mega-language' he called it, the paying of specific attention to even the most neglected or marginalized dialects and languages and utilize them in an attempt to build a world of infinite imagination. I guess this was his way of saying cosmopolitan must go fuck themselves. I was interested in this kind of writing: inventive, mysterious, and speculative. Fresh imagination never got old. I liked *Achimota Wars* with its intricate and subtle socio-political meditations simply because of its language and style which was striking, hard to ignore and it kept me excited till the end he carries out his socio-political message subtly like this. For example, I did glean from it the fiasco in Ghana post-independence. More, the cryptic spelling of certain words asserted that nothing came fruitful with independence but disillusionment and corruption. The story had no particular form and/or plot... as was Ghana – shiftless?

Wednesday. I spend the day reading *Practicalities* by Marguerite Duras, *Mad Love* by Andre Breton, Avant-Pop fictions from Ricardo Cortez Cruz, Samuel Delany, Kathy Acker to Harry, and Marc Anthony's *Year of the Rat*, etc. for excitement to write in preparation of the forthcoming assignment. I can't focus on one book, I like to read a chapter here and there until I finish them all. It is my definition of non-linearity. All of these writers I have mentioned are very talented, technical, vigorous, and full of excitement. Take, for instance, Marc Anthony, I likened *Year of the Rat* to *Mating Birds* by Lewis Nkosi (next to Reed's *Flight to Canada*) not for its subject/theme (although perhaps) rather for its style, tempo, and thread which was meticulously fine, moving with the stealth of the sharpest knife. It cut deep me both psychologically and imaginatively that I was left greedily wanting more . . .of the filth. Squalor. Gore and burdensome - black existence. At once philosophical and phantasmagoric i.e., personal – I could tell that the text was essentially informed by the subaltern experiential experiences of alienation and negligence of this widely anti-black world. I could use these texts at any time as a boon or tool for my writing. I just read and watch classic pictures. For me, film is literature because it all begins with the wor(l)d and later manifests itself in a picture, in other words, coming to life. Visceral. For instance, elsewhere in *Waking Life* by Richard Linklater, (a very experimental film), there was a character explaining why scripted films are bad because they were slavish to this literate/literary idea rather films should be about the Holy Moment when all of the sudden,

impromptu an idea just comes together, the imagination, to life. Then at night, I tried to write down my fragmented thoughts and ideas.

Thursday. I developed an idea for the assignment. In one sitting, it dawned upon me that the story is already here. Whenever I came to writing there was no definitive thought of what I wanted to do between poetry and prose. I even never bothered to draw a line between them for experimentation provocations.

Friday. It was a feedback session. I titled my story, *Wound-thieves*. It was a monologue. I always carry my dead ones, deprived and repressed with me whenever I wrote and the *Wound-thieves* was no different. I titled *Wound-thieves* to pontificate a philosophical notion of the recurring pathetic idea of trying to generalize and equate the black experience with the *others* thus 'stealing the wound'. Paul Mason said the piece was a gut-head text, that it was very strong and completely what he had expected of us - to bring about the mystery, the monologue, and the anti-story story technique to fruitful use.

Reflective Journal Week 2

The teacher is Mishka Hoosen facilitating under the topic of *Desire and Derangement*; in the most sensory and/or imaginary way. He kicks off the seminar with the song by Hozier called *Cherry Wine*. At first, reading the lyrics and listening, I didn't instantly grasp the meaning of the song, because of the way it is put together. It needs more time to soak in. anyway, the song laments a toxic and violent rapport between two lovers. More, the song tells a tale of an abusive relationship conversely revolving at once, around desire and pleasure. What I could gather from the song's title, *Cherry Wine* is built around the contradictory nature of an oxymoron. Cherry is a fruit red as blood. And Wine is enjoyable alcohol. Fruit is healthy whilst alcohol is not, making the title a contradiction. The lovers that the song talks about they can't let go of each other because it's pleasurable to them despite its pain. Ineffable as it may seem it's striking beautiful imagery. One of my classmates says that the song has something to do with what's been termed BDSM: *Bondage and Discipline, Sadism, and Masochism*. According to which, describes a desire to abdicate control or gain control in exchange for sensation – pleasure, pain, or a combination thereof.

Mishka moves on to the next text, Anne Carson's *Bittersweet* which the title alone reiterates what's been mentioned above. For example, liberalism is bittersweet an ideology. Liberals most commonly fall in love with the idea of, or around a thing however not with really the actual thing! Carson's *Bittersweet* has inspired by Sappho who was a Greek writer and poet of Lesbos – known as Lesbianism as per today's terminology. Back then, that was forbidden which maddened Sappho to fight the machine – patriarchy for women's sexual freedom. *Bittersweet* reads as a strawman's hat polemic in defense of the woman race and urges that

sexuality be rather viewed as a complete non-binary spectrum, meaning, women must do whatever they wish to do about their sexuality/bodies.

Under Reading Group with Paul Wessels. I enjoyed most of the readings:

The gone children they said tell us a story, J.A Tyler

But, Kim Addonizio

Lidia Yunkvitch, *Daguerreotype of a girl*

Melusina's Book, Albert Camus

Gerry LaFemina, *Fairytales*

Brother Grimm, *The Star Coins*

The Whore Raft, Kuzhali Manickavel

Bessora, *The Milka Cow*

Lily Hoang, *The Story of the Mosquito*

I did not enjoy Brother Grimm's *The Star Coins* simply because of the outright conventional style, linear and predictable narration. It is not my cup of tea. It is a much common and known story/folktale without any attempts to disturb. Folktales must evoke wonder and terror to make them rather, shock-tales. Therefore, a story no matter the theme is should electrify, disrupt and disturb me like Bessora's *The Milka Cow*. In this story, for instance, there is no shape or form but there is rhythm; a fine thread with which the narrator takes as a wand to put the reader under a spell till the end. Nothing in the text is left out to sterility. It is a myriad of colorful imaginations. This kind of literature is saving my life. I could have got killed long ago by the township. All I want is to write and read.

And then, I read *The Whore Raft* by Kuzhali Manickavel who is Indian. She is very aware of her history as an Indian and puts that very well into use as the story is concerned. Metaphorically and imaginatively, the tale is about how Indians got into America; the Americans' treatment of Indians, and generally about other peoples of migration. For there is this truth: the difference between black people and Indians in America is that Indians moved to America and the blacks were forcedly taken to America. So *The Whore Raft* is an imaginative revisionist tale about the Indians movement to America and the suffrage faced along with it. For example, Sully a character in the tale is like the Master, while Clubfoot and his friend are portrayed as subservient or slaves. The story alludes to and/or reads, according to me, like some kind of an allegory of primitive immigration comparable to the slave trade which is not right - the slave trade was incomparable; Africans were bullied to America whilst Indians willingly moved to America - the 'love' they have for Sully is compromised because they fear him. Stylistically, I like the weirdness that comes with the

narrative, e.g, when the narrator describes one whore on the raft as, " harelipped," then proceeds to say that "and [it] has hiccups". I love this grotesque narration!

Wednesdays are free, I listen to Music: *Zik Zak* by Ancient Astronauts. I have just discovered this band, their music makes me jump out of bed to clean around which is a task I rarely have time for. It's a hip-hop band with afro-reggae production. Also, I like jazz music in particular Gibson Kente's music and there is this one jazz song; classic-masterpiece – *Saduva*. It makes me realize his outstanding importance in the jazz and theatre of South Africa. This man was transcendental, he went from town to town to stage plays that were unscripted in most cases and this was during the tumultuous times in South Africa (Apartheid) wherein bullets were going off like ringtones. I mean he's responsible for honing the talents of actors such as Ndaba Mhlongo and Mary Twala - Somizi Mhlongo's parents.

Reflective Journal Week 3

The week began with devastating news. Mangaliso Buzani lost a family member. Therefore, the seminar is canceled.

Under Reading Group with Paul Wessels. We read the following texts:

Mia Couto, *The Stain*

Micah Dean Hicks, *Crawfish Noon*

Lidia Yuknavitch, *Daguerrotype of a Girl*

Barry Hannah, *Water Liars*

Margarita Karapanou, *Kassandra and the Wolf*, etc.

The above-mentioned writers are all gifted in their respect. Different styles and personas. But I am moved by a couple of pieces... Lidia's *Daguerrotype of Girl*, which is at once philosophical and literary; this piece, is a stream of consciousness. I'm moved by the beautiful way she gets or jumps in and out of worlds, imaginaries, and consciences, it's as if she's swimming – out of the water to catch a breath and then again back into the seismic weight of water i.e, the world... on her shoulders. A very strong piece.

I read also *Kassandra and the Wolf* by Margarita Karapanou. It is a trickery piece at its finest. There is an audio of Marechera talking about a story similar to this one: there was this beast (Wolf), that promised Kassandra that it would leave her alone forever only if she would kiss it first but instead it spat into her mouth, giving her the immortality powers of seeing the future and of which according to Kassandra were equally dreadful and torturous.

The story is captivating and marvelously dizzying because it is plotless. This way, makes the piece unpredictable and refreshing. For instance, my outlook on religion and/or church

is unkind/unorthodox. Clarity here, I do not hate the church but the content. I have always fantasized about a church wherein Steve Biko is the preacher. I'd attend all day, every day, and every week. This text has a very beautiful effect on me. Moreover, I like the equal attention and effort the narrator gives to prose and poetry. Meaning, he sees both prose, and poetry as equal entity requiring/given the same amount of time, thought and intellect.

Wednesday, I wake up early and tell a friend back at home, via messaging, that the infrastructure in Makhanda is very colonial, and what's worse the roofs seem to be caving when I'm really trying to stand strong and tall in these turbulent times. Shortly after, I read in the paper the debate on ways to kill criminals *justly*. Ethics and morals. My response:

It's all slick gentrification because they know who exactly are the criminals (blacks); the bastion of the world and civilization. Sad matter. As Fanon puts it, it's *The Fact of Blackness*.

His response:

Yes. I would think so, to be fair, at face value. But this article-writer seems to make moral debates about justifiable killing. And my interest is in us in SA or the colonized areas concerning police brutality. So, *The Fact of Blackness* applies to us that the situation needs to be escalated for there to be a justification. But if that logic is put into question, we realize that it's not justified after all. To cause something to escalate means being implicit in creating something more than what it was. Just like the Marikana massacre. The justification was based on pangas/machetes while the police incited the violence by unjustifiably shooting grenades and tear gas.

I tell him that I am studying MACW here. In fact, I'm reading *The Seven Solitudes of Lorsa Lopez* by Sony La'bou Tansi at this moment. I go further to tell him that, it's slightly, if not, ineffably concurs with our chat; in that, it is simply a master-piss on the traumas which came with postcolonial Africa but put grotesquely and brilliantly in a carnivalesque and surrealist manner. "...his head gnawed by a large pair of ears." p. 20, such surrealist imagery. "Reality and dreams can be negotiated. Truth, never. It always lays down inexorable conditions". The whole novel is an interesting debate on its own thus, engaging.

I have a long reading list plus books strewn all over my room. On a Friday, Paul opens up the class with caution on drugs. I want to chuckle but shortly feel stupid for that. John Coltrane locked himself up in a sanctum (not even his lifetime partner could enter) for days on end, contemplating about his flawed past, trying to amend but the world insisted on wondering why. Tansi puts it well, "They don't realize that a mystery is the best explanation in the world".

Reflective Journal, Week 4

We must choose to write between prose and poetry for our theses. At first, I'm indecisive and ambivalent because I love both forms; I refuse to separate them from each other. And if I'm to go with prose poetry must be the edifice upon which the prose rests. I'm confident that this can be done. Something in the lines of Aime Cesaire's *Notebook of A Return to the Native Land*, Julio Cortazar's *Cronopias and Famas*, Sony Labou Tansi's *The Seven Solitudes of Lorsa Lopez*, and Andre Brink's *Madlove* to name a few are good examples of the poetic-prose forms.

Stacy Hardy is the facilitator for prose seminars. We read proses from anthologies in the reading list catalog that speak to us personally and creatively. I select to read from the *Anti-Story: An anthology of experimental fiction* edited by Philip Stevick. The stories in there are attention-grabbing and entertaining. I'm interested in their assertion that reality is always a jump-off point to experimentalism. These are stories against mimesis – fiction about fiction; against 'reality', against event; against subject; against the middle range of experience; against analysis – the phenomenal world; against meaning – forms of the absurd and stories against scale – the minimal story. *Life-Story* by John Barth and Julio Cortazar's *Blow-Up* sum up the experimental narrative form. And *The Killers* by Kathy Acker. I consider her as one of the best writers to ever do it. Hands down. The best female modern raconteur and sharp anarchist. When Jesus said, *Let there be light*, Acker spat: *Say PLEASE!* A literary recalcitrant of the highest note and a scourge to conservatives, and most significantly to the puritanical. *The Killers* is a fascinating syncretic read that interweaves fiction, theory, and criticism.

Further, the *Unincorporated Poetic Territories* by Craig Santoz Perez. It's a Third World outcry for a formidable and uncompromising resurgence of the subaltern poetics following from the parochial acts of colonization and globalization. It is all subaltern politics. It's quite a familiar trope most common in the speculative nonfictions and fictions of Luis Borges, Nathaniel Mackey, Louis Chode-Sokei, Kodwo Eshun, Gabriel Marquez, etc, writers from the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa and Diaspora; achievable by the use and utilization of subversive literary techniques, methods, and modes such as fantasy, the uncanny and phantasmagoria, etc.

Insert: December 2021:

I've been doing a lot of thinking concerning my thesis. I want to write a collection of interwoven short forms of fiction: sketches, monologues, short stories, flash fiction, and fragments. All stimulated by the power of a gut feeling, achievable through a phenomenological lens of the 'I' or present-tense narration in an attempt to bridge the gaps between the past (emotion), present (intellect), and the future (spirit). Merleau-Ponty called this type of approach, Phenomenology – that is, writing and seeing from the first point of view of the world; to move and shift the world with your mind and the result is God –

surrealism, transcendence and to normalize these as part of the black lived experience because nothing was the same after slavery, colonization, etc. in summation, I want my thesis to be the ghost of the past that haunts the present and cums on the future.

Reflective Journal Week 5

We (MACW students) meet with Dr. Allia Matta who is a Creative Writing teacher at the LaGuardia Community College in New York, USA as part of the COIL – Reading/Writing in a Community project. We are going to conduct workshops with the undergraduate students from Dr. Matta’s creative writing class. As MACW students are divided into three workshop groups. My group will present last.

The first group kicks off the workshop under the topic: *Writing under Harsh Conditions produces innovative writing*, while we sit back and listen. It goes pretty fine although I find it to be quite basic and mundane without any mentions of Casey Motsitsi, Todd Matshikiza, etc, the innovative writers. Also, the mention of Lewis Nkosi’s *Mating Birds* as a struggle novel is far-fetched and a stretch. Okay, to be fair. It’s more than just a struggle story. It’s psychological fiction at its finest, timeless as racism in its language use and theme. The late comedian Patrice O’Neal once said, (I’m paraphrasing) the reason that racism is so powerful a subject is because we chose colors! *Mating Birds* meticulously exposes this. Whilst I was still at the University of Fort Hare I wrote a short fiction with only two characters: the narrator and an albino – ugly and repugnant. Check what happens next – they said I was wrong for using an albino it will only perpetuate the hate crime against them. So It was suggested to me that, I switch the albino to a white person so that it makes sense - racism! *Race Matters* by Cornell West raises the issues of racism interestingly in the chapter, *Black Sexuality: The Taboo Subject*. The white anxieties –the fear of black people because of their strong and resilient bodies are the. In pornography this is true but through hate: white man fucking the black woman with dastardly motives.

The second workshop group under the topic *Silence, Quietness, and Stillness*. I don’t like this topic, it prioritizes wildlife and puts humankind as a mere background to whiteness and geography. Moreover, I hate the view that writing is/ought to be therapy when in fact it’s not. Perhaps, shopping, gossiping, taking a shit, etc is therapeutic but not writing. I can’t even sleep in silence. I need noise and sound to write.

We are the last workshop group to present under the topic:

Surrealism is a 20th-century avant-garde movement in literature that sought to release the creative potential of the unconscious mind, for example by the irrational juxtaposition of images. In this seminar we will be looking at surrealism in African literature and how African writers present the dream realm in their poems and prose whether inspired by hunger, anger, or mourning.

What’s wrong with the cockroach anyway?: Speculative forms of the surreal/ity

We are aware that we all come from different background frameworks and that this Workshop will not necessarily stick to “African” or “Diasporic”... surrealism but as a jump-off point, so never mind the prefixes. Importantly, focus on the notion and concept – on the idea of surrealism (or even *surreality* if the -ism confines) as a universal lens. A human being is a universal (conditions, contexts, and circumstances that make a man a relative case) thing, so as much as that within *it* ... soul, heart, and spirit. We have all suffered, rejoiced both uniquely and individually. This is a writely genuine approach. Philosophers like Merleau-Ponty have called this type of approach, Phenomenology – that is, writing and seeing from the first person point of view of the world. Move and shift the world with *your* mind and the result will be that of the surreal (here comes along, fantasy, phantasmagoria – the speculative). Because we all imagine a world of our own original creation. Ever heard of “I want to make me a world” I’m sure. So we yearn and long for *this* world, climate, and/or language against the backdrop of the overwhelmingly established existence. Look at the, and even think into the dialects? They were not born out of logic and peace instead they were born out of frustration with conventions. *Bad Faith* is what Jean-Paul Satre refers to it that we were into *Bad Faith* (convention/burden) and hence we should move away from and transcend it. In our context, move away and shift with imagination. Write from the gut. Write from despondence.

Reflective Journal Week 6

I was looking forward to the seminar just by its excellent and phenomenal topic. The seminar was canceled due to being not feeling well. I have some of the works by Masande and excerpts from his latest offering, titled *Triangulum*, a novel of the science-fiction genre set in an apartheid-era and/or around the times. His debut novel, *The Reactive* is not science fiction but a work of beautiful lyricism. And that resulted in the novel winning some awards, like the *Sunday Times literary award* for the best fiction to come out that year – 2014. *The Reactive* is written in the family of present tense or in a progressive tense that is, in the now-ness with I and We as a narrative technique. I read the text some years back while still an undergraduate at the University of Fort Hare. I liked it then for the most part although it weakened the story towards the end and became lesser and lackluster in imagery. Other than that it was a fine work of prosaic poetry. A case in point here: I was very interested in how he would have defended it against similar criticism, why he decided to switch to science fiction in his latest material; and how his newly-found genre has impacted and influenced his imagination and writing. I was interested because my writing also deals with the experimental, subversive and transcendental. I wanted to hear all about that from him as someone more experienced and widely published. I wanted simply to listen and engage him both intellectually and creatively and take from everyone the best constructive commentary in preparation for my adventures and journey into the experimental, the subversive, and the transcendental. So I moved on to kill time by doing some reading: *The Age of Wire and*

String: Fictions by Ben Marcus, *Spare Parts Plus Two* by Gail Scott, *ten flapping elbows, mama* by our very, Khulile Nxumalo, and *Sometimes I got back to that Bizzaro Fiction* edited and compiled by Cameron Pierce. All these works are wonderfully exceptional and imaginative in their respective. You got Nxumalo who terms his unique poetry, psychonarration – writing that is aware of style and format at all times, especially when trying to make language do new things. You have Gail Scott, a very phenomenal writer, and thinker, and combines both abilities to create the extraordinaire. Writing at the time in which the non-linear style was frowned upon and even much worse coming from a woman in a men-controlled universe. I used some of her writing to prepare for our workshop too. Because she touches very beautifully on the experimental and/or the speculative which our topic is based when she says: ... Precisely those elements that trope the vaguely comic autobiographical conjunction of semiotics, semantics, gossip, what she now thinks of as prose; ‘experimental’ since implying a failure to represent the universal, linked to class, gender, sometimes race, but also to the pleasure of sounding out, kin to poetry. Sometimes she watches, regretfully, as her little tales float, textured, suggestive, by the averted eyes of certain poets she admires. Who, along with lovers of more conventional fiction, persist in reading ‘experimental’ prose for or ‘voice ‘alone... The mid-career writer, on her platform, tries to explain how *Wild Strawberries*, seen at seventeen in a repertory cinema, made her feel so free she floated out, past trashcans, toward a future of broken narratives.

Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion by Rosemary Jackson; goes into deeply from Theory to Texts of different fantasies: from the Gothic to Victorian fantastic realism. For some inscrutable reason, Africa is left out. But Debra Spark in *Curious Attraction* does point out what might be the reason for the omission of Africa it has to do with white anxieties and fears for being dubbed cultural colonialists. Also, I read *Practicalities* by Marguerita especially chapters: *Alcohol, Men, The black block, Writers’ bodies*, etc. it is sincere writing. There is no way that she was happy or in good spirit. I conjure that she was lone empty and lovelorn from an existential perspective/s. each time I pass through passages of her darkness, I could almost see her, brazen-faced. Morose knowing the simple fact writing is hell. Writing life. I read *Fixions and other stories* by Taban Lo Liyong for wisdom. *Horns for Hondo* by Lesego Rampolokeng for vigor and the maestro Sony Labou Tansi for imaginativeness.

Reflective Journal Week 7

We have Carol Leff for this week’s seminar. The seminar goes very well and is as interesting as the last one. It is under the topic: *Re-Imagining Place*. Meaning re-envisioning, re-visiting place. This could be a street where I grew up, a house/home, a setting, an atmosphere, etc. I was touched and inspired by the texts and extracts that we read for this seminar and with which to use to get the focal point/s across. We read extracts from the following brilliant writers: *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (I always have respect for Mpe as a poet than a novelist)

by Phaswane Mpe; *The Street* by Bandele Biyi; *Every day is for the Thief*; *Thirteen Cents* by Sabelo Sello Duiker; *Blue White Red* by Mbanckou Alain; Chris Abani Lagos, 1983 and Schonstein-Pinnoch Patricia's *Skyline*; *Pensive on the bus ride home... want for a dual-tone* by Alfred Woodard via YouTube.

I always liked Phaswane Mpe as a poet more than a novelist, I read *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* first and foremost, as prim writing by its use of liberal conservatist English ('by a black writer') with its journalistic tropes and tendencies, and Lewis Nkosi once asked beautifully that when is it literature and not journalism? And for the fact that Phaswane Mpe was with the ideology that a great writer's skill/talent can only be achieved through Education that is, academia, which is utterly untrue. Imagination has nothing to do with academia. A lot of great writers are self-taught in writing (styles, techniques – the craft). Having said this, He's rather a poet than a writer because with poetry he puts himself in a certain sphere – the reimagined one. Sello Duiker is a good example of a talented writer because he puts both heart and mind into the craft rather than debating what and what Education does with writing, he puts that energy into crafting with a precise and cutting focus or perception. Hence, I say it is was a good seminar, and the readings captured the essence of it all – Re-imagining Place. Teju Cole is also good with that and sometimes his writings read like travelogues and historical accounts which require this percipient ability to re-imagine place at all times and vividly and stylistically. By the end of the seminar, I already had the idea of how I wanted to go about my assignment with the help of reading *Skeptical Erections* by Dolla Sapeta which is a beautiful keen observation of the skin of Port Elizabeth where he grew up with all its squalor and briefcases of glee and innocence. For one reason there are similarities between me and Dolla in the terms of our township life, what I could say separates us are the times, I'm a generation/s younger than him but that should not mean the squalor and the violence of the township have improved since then. It has worsened over the decades. 1994 changed nothing.

It is dog-eat-dog in my township like literally one would see a dog ravaging the bowels and flesh of the other dead dog. That alone makes it the reason to leave the township, be it in my undergarment, I don't care for as long as I'm scurrying away from heaven's arm which is death, my township. I took this as a jump-off point to this surrealism that perfectly describes my township.

Even in the reading group, I made sure that I read something in accord with the seminar for inspiration which was from J.G Billard's *Atrocity Exhibition*. The description of place and characters in that little book are just amazingly explosive. They come to full to life that you have to pop your own eyes out just off the stark grim and psychologically cutting reality. I like J.G Billard, he is a hell of an imaginative speculative writer. So I began drafting my assignment at midnight. For this time is best to think and write. That oddly quiet and almost whispering wind... just makes sense to me. By dawn, I was done with the first draft.

Reflective Journal Week 8

It's the second seminar by Stacy Hardy who is heavy enthusiastically wide read and genuinely shows in her engagements with literature whether it is from Africa and the Diaspora or America or Europe, or the Caribbean or Latin America, she is vast and that is just one of the other qualities I admire about her. This week, she digs deep into the poetics and politics of the world of punctuation to magnify some of the greatest forms and styles to have come out of the school of poetics and politics. This week's seminar combines two topics that are, Auto-fiction/writing and Epistolary Writing. As students, we are given the chance to choose between the two forms or aesthetically collide them both. For me, Auto-fiction is the fictionalized sibling of auto-biography. If it's *auto* that writing will be about oneself first and foremost. Auto-fiction is self-centered. But there are also some different views on auto-fiction/writing. Writing that happens automatically without many errors and re-writings. It becomes an instant classic! It moves at equal speed with the mind in one sitting. It is said that one of the writers that have done this is Andre Breton.

The other form presented in the seminar is the Epistolary Writing which according to Stacy can be explored through poems, prose, and novels. By definition, the form is one made up partly or entirely of documents – typically letter and diary entries, but also newspaper articles, and in recent years through emails and instant messaging. Epistolary texts offer the reader the proximity of a self-consciously first-person account (and all the unreliability that entails), but also the ruse of being some kind of formal record, a trove of documents fixed in time and place.

This is one of my favorite forms of writing because it describes and/or appeals to me. I love to imagine, to zone out to other worlds. I love to think through things, to be critical about the universe. So what happens is, I jot down my ideas and conspiracies whilst in the process am also creating an imaginary figure or a beloved who has long died to communicate to/with. I like to exaggerate which is not to be confused with lying. To exaggerate is to leave seemingly the unbelievable part for future debates in an attempt to freshen minds – to broaden thinking. This is how to breed the next generations of great thinkers. Imagination is best. So the Epistolary form meets me with my ideas, people, and voices. I am well understood here. For instance, my definition of an interview, should not be a face-to-face thing. It's auto-fiction, more especially if it is executed well. An interview I liken it to a written word. It's writing more than speaking like a letter to a lover or foe. So in the seminar, we read poems, letters, and articles in this form. From Dambudzo Marechera, Rimbaud, Susan Sontag etc.

The epistolary form is much closer to the heart - it is sincere, genuine, and sentient in whatever shape or form it has chosen to be. By this time I knew what I wanted to do with my assignment. I was going to write a letter to an imaginary being. A dizzying humbug with a strange stream of consciousness pulls it together. A disjointing of thoughts. Something like

the Letter to Samantha by Dambudzo Marechera. Speaking of which, I have always wanted to do something about the genius and brilliance of Marechera but I could not find it within the confines of the academia of which his talent superseded that. I felt there was no way I could thank him with academia, e.g. via research and/or dissertation. It just didn't feel deep down in me. It was more like a spit in his face. This course was a perfect chance to do so – something to him or write him something. So for my assignment, I was going to write him a letter from a point of questioning, a point of arguing, and a point of admiration. This was my way to show much respect to this man.

On Tuesday during our reading session, I read something in the line of the assignment in an odd way. I read Tsetlo by Wally Serote, art cover is done by the late great fine artist Dumile Feni, and it is a portrait of a contorted figure in the strain as though secular forces are tearing him or it from within. It is a wild image. Disturbing for a true artist so that it can be excited to write. The poems in that small book are larger than life raging from emotions and thoughts around love, loss, land, to what it means to be free. As the title entails it is a mysterious bird that lures one to oblivion or luck. The bird's voice is mesmerizing for sure. I want to believe that those who listen and follow are the chosen ones even if it means they are never to return instead they will transmute into Tsetlo and continue their quest so like the black people.

Reflective Journal Week 9

It is a second seminar by Jo-Anne Bekker if my memory serves me rightly. Truth be told this seminar is amongst my best favorite seminars. So I am happy I lived to witness it. The seminar is about the art or writing of FRAGMENTS. According to standard definitions of the term, it means, scattered bits of ideas, thoughts, meditations that are written down at which point, I could easily think of a mind-map, how it is drawn up and illustrated – it is like the actual brain; the four lobes or chambers all churning for a common goal. How and where each different thought comes about to merge at the end of the whole process. The following texts or extracts elaborate and demonstrate very well this kind of style of writing. A few of them are fragments by our very own local writers and teachers of the Masters of Creative Writing program:

I'm standing in the middle of the road by Vangile Gantso;

From *A naked bone* by Mangaliso Buzani

From *Notes from the Smoke* by Lesego Rampolokeng

From *The Lost Writings* by Franz Kafka

Five fragments by E.M Cioran

From *I remember* by Joe Brainard

From *Native Life in the Third Millennium* by Masande Ntshanga

From *My Diaries (2006-10) in Alphabetical Order* by Sheila Heti

Kaleidoscope by Presno Naidoo

From *The Pink Institution* by Selah Saterstrom

From *A Bestiary* by Lily Hoang.

Having read the above-mentioned works it then dawned upon me, without a doubt, both consciously and unconsciously, that this style of writing is indispensable it foregrounds most, if not, every creative writing. This style of writing is building blocks to the form and shape of writing, be that, a novel or novella, poem, and thesis because every writing begins with a thought, an idea that is unclear and fragmented and from there it gradually builds up. All books were ever written (at least that I know of) were all composed by or were borne out of fragments or disjointedness. Fragments are percipient observations. Fragments are punchlines. Fragments come from the gut. It is gut-writing. Towards the end of the seminar, I am already brainstorming volcanoes of ideas and thoughts ... for instance, am looking into the political, social, economic, and philosophical transitions from former Grahamstown or Rhini to the now Makhanda. I can say this right now that, so far and ever since I have arrived here, there has not been a (blatant) change like 1994 changed nothing and this has tremendously informed my writing however spiritually, intellectually, and creatively. So when I approach the assignment there will be fragments coming left right and center – from the spiritual, intellectual, social, and creative realms. If I were to be asked now and my proposal would attest to this: my thesis is composed of largely fragments through forms of short stories, sketches, flash fictions, epistolary, one-liner punchlines and rants, raps, and rambles. This is how I am going to do the assignments via the known themes yet complex to engage vigorously, from birth, adult, marriage, to death. For birth, I was born unconsciously on a sofa around raving dogs that linked my feet instead. For adulthood, I fucked women who could not count up to a hundred because of shortness of in their breath or their fingers just weren't enough to make a point. For marriage, I cannot trust it for a mere fact, it is a union of many expressionless faces counting scars and warts around my bare body. For death, it knocks first before entering your house, you won't hear this if you cannot dream, envision hallucinate and talk in your sleep. An hourglass symbolizes the fine line between the dead and living by just a turnover, we are all the same. From closing your eyes to opening your eyes; you have been to both ends of life. Earth is round like an eye.

On Tuesday in our Reading Groups, under the seminar, I then read my dear friend's which I regard as seminal and brilliant work of fragments, *Nopopi: Notes towards anarchic writing* in which every fragment matters and cuts deeply into my heart based on the piece's sincerity and authenticity and genuine (e)motions behind the words of Thabo Jijana. One thing about Jijana which I have noticed throughout his body of work is that he is simple yet complex

with a very keen eye for sharp articulation. Which is an actual sense, he critiques and ridicules the so-called arcane and/or abstruse writing, arguing that it is, not about reading the dic(k)tionary rather, the power is in the beautiful use of language; to bend it to your will, to paint your world in which you are the dictator or master and captain of your ship. His language is mesmerizing, poignant.

It wants to make me write; it itches me to get out of my comfort zones. It is written in bits of 3 to 5 lines and sentences that wholeheartedly encapsulate both the internal and external turmoil of the post-colonial politics and poetics around literature and artistry. It is a sad painting that needs no pity or sorry as it also suggests ways towards a solution that can be archived through revolution. It is an eye-opening text and like I have said Jijana holds a powerful prowess that simplifies the complex with vigorous language.

From Wednesday, I began thinking, observing, lazing around for the assignment; for the right words to describe my feelings and emotions towards Makhanda and within. I began by writing the following: to miss someone they must have died first. The living is full of shit. My late grandfather is always with me.

PART TWO: BOOK REVIEWS

Book Review 1

The Seven Solitudes of Lorsa Lopez by Sony Labou Tansi Heinemann, 1995

Women are also men.

You're in the same world whenever you go ... Murder accompanies you everywhere. They think they'll solve the problems of the Coast by killing me. They're mistaken. I'll be tougher dead than I am alive. They'll realize this very clearly. Alive, they can negotiate with me, but dead, I shall be God. - Estina Bronzario/ the woman of Bronze.

The Seven Solitudes of Lorsa Lopez is a beautiful, poignant and masterful piece of art by the talented writer Sony Labou Tansi, next to the *Anti-People* and *Life and a Half*, at least in my opinion. Imaginative in its stylistic and linguistic pyrotechnics; it is my Bible, meaning, I'll defend it till my last breath. As the master Bolano says, there's time for poems and there's time for punches. This little book speaks volumes about the complications facing black Africa post-independence that are deeper than the eye could see. Not only is it the black people in the world but the black people versus themselves.

The Seven Solitudes to me alludes to the vagueness and mystery of everyday life. Anything is possible under the sun. You would find that seven is a significant number throughout the text, years and deaths include having this number in the count. There are seven days of the week. Seven colors of the rainbows. Sevens towns from Valtano to Valencia. It's a self-conscious narrative.

It is a satirical socio-political commentary/report on the internal historical implications and ramifications of colonialism from a subaltern perspective, precisely of a woman in Patriarchal post-independent Africa. It questions the notion of independence if the women are still oppressed, even worse by their very own counterparts. There's only one path to earth and that is through the legs of a woman and if men cannot imagine a world without women then it is only right to listen to her story (in comparison with his-tory). Written in a past-participles that linger between present and future tenses in an attempt to restore and preserve the power and philosophy of the text. I had to understand why it is even written in modes of surrealism and speculative realism because there is no way on earth that one could see things the same after the psychological disaster and trauma caused by colonialism and oppression of blacks. A soldier after the war comes back heartless from all the blood and gore it has seen. His reality somewhat becomes disrupted, real, therefore, surreal for Tansi. This is not the narrative of celebration for, reconciliation with the colonization of Africa. So I take the language and style to be a perfect embodiment of revolutionary and resistance towards the division brought about by western individualism against our communitarianism, "with us, it

must be said, conscience is a community matter, honor too". Tansi maintains this throughout with Gracia (is a percipient observer, impartial in judgement and analysis of the events happening in all seven towns of the Coast, the narrator who is telling the story using: We as to accentuate this community effect against the backdrop of this individualism demonstrated by blatant grudge and sex strike (no peace, no pussy) led by the main character, Estina Bronzario or woman of bronze who is the stronghold and matriarch holding together Valancia – a village of honour but all that is overshadowed by the rampant deaths of the locals for instance, the bizarre death of Estina Benta who is killed by her husband Lorsa Lopez for reasons inscrutable and ends up going crazy followed by her wife's cry, "help. He's killed me!" the dead doesn't rest in peace because the police never comes, because "Independence changed nothing..." however, suggests Sarngata Nola, from the rivalling Nsanga-Norda, unfamiliar with so much deaths, sees stupidity and insincerity in this, "Stop being so bloody stupid with your bleeding hearts and yours wooden words. Leave poor Benta in peace. Stop using the dead to titillate your emotions." I want to agree to this sentiment and say it is exactly what's happening in South Africa especially in the atmospheres of the politics (meaning poly-ticks & lice). You have your politicians calling themselves the Bikos and Sobukwes etc. No wonder the country doesn't move forward because there are no sincere authentic thinkers to move the country forward. Let Biko and Sobukwe rest! For them to enrich the soil as they have done before... all the FeesMustFall movements were them reincarnating through the youth. It's there in I Write What I Like. The same politicians who claimed to have read these books with a deeper understanding than the average person are the same people who look at other black people as mere commodities. And I will say this, it is also there in Black Skin, White Mask (The Fact of Blackness).

I look at The Seven Solitudes of Lorsa Lopez as a profound political manifesto written a language of mystery and Afrofuturism. Tansi suggests that Africa cannot be salvaged if only one benefits and the other does not, hence, writing from a point of view of a woman. Same as Biko and Fanon have suggested the youth is the savior of Africa if we first and foremost equip them mentally. Unfortunately, this did not happen, hence patriarchy. We are a messed people, us men and it will take the very same people who brought us into this world to get us right, hence, Tansi's texts, in all of the women are the driving force. He bends their bodies to otherworldliness.

This is where it gets even much more interesting at the part in which when Fr Bona gets missing (dead?) is then replaced by The Reverend Father Roguerio from Europe. An argument emerges here, instigated by hungover cranky Manuel Yeba when he charges,

"Whites came a little later into the world . . . They danced to Bob's music but didn't get much out of it. It's all [Rene] Descartes' fault. He turned them into thinking machines. And now they can't be anything else. The poor buggers are made of concrete, stuck in an outlook that has either head or tail. God save us from the crude gimmickry of an existence based on mathematics, nitrogen, and carbon! An existence dressed for going to town, ironed, folded

in four, soaked with perfume. Streaked with weary hopefulness. Well, may humanity thank them for the services rendered, sister! – They’ve had prophets like Pizarro and Hitler! They’ve lost the sixth and seventh senses, and they refuse to come into the world!”

This is a nice argument here, the author agrees nonchalantly for that matter, that whites claim their masters of reason. It is okay for us, as in Africa we have been insulted before. But humanity is more than reason – they lack the Soul which includes the heart and spirit. They are just unfeeling machines. So they have been doing what they have been since colonization: confusing killing us with killing our ideas. Therefore, his notion of humanity/mankind concurs with that of that great French poet and thinker, Aime Cesaire:

It is an error to believe that knowledge, to be born, had to await the methodical exercise of thought or the scruples of experimentation. I even believe that mankind has never been so closer to certain truths than in the first days of the species. At the time when mankind discovered with emotion the sun first, the first rain, the first breath, the first moon. At the time when mankind discovered in fear and rapture the throbbing newness of the world. . . Mankind is not only mankind. It is the universe.

Tansi must have read Cesaire. And that just makes sense. Whites are just thinking MACHINES completely oblivious to the wondrous twists and turn into which find God, Love, and Humanity.

The text is undeniably unputdownable from cover to cover spews all over with timeless streams of consciousness. Quotes. Anecdotes. Jokes. Wisdom. Aphorisms:

Man is stupid and woman is power.

What a beautiful poem are a woman’s fingers.

Man only has words to say what even can’t say.

... But killing’s for fools. Killing’s for cops.

Love can only do two things: save or kill. Etc. all this wisdom coming from a woman.

Another fascination about the text is the uncut authentic experimentalism in motion: the manner and timing he just throws in characters. Simply transcendental as though he was writing off the head. He’s truly a trickster. Everything that he could think of is at play here: the sculptor, journalists, filmmakers, scholars, photographers, painters, scientists, etc. Moreover, it’s cosmopolitan with all the Chinese, Portuguese, Italians, French, Arabs, Indians coming to marvel, prod into the marvelous fabric of Africa. Also, time and space are very fluid in the text, if not, entirely non-existent. As though all the characters simply exist in one roof, the toilet being Nsanga-Norda; the kitchen being Valencia, etc. He kindly defies what Kathy Acker tries to accomplish with, or in *The Killers*... there is no ‘fictive time’ or

time triad whatsoever in *The Seven Solitudes of Lorsa Lopez*. Everything is a theatre of the absurd, for instance in a chapter where they trial a goddamn bird! "... to our great surprise, Fartamo Andra informed us that the court was going to trial [investigate] Lorsa Lopez's parrot . . . for spreading the rumor about the lap lice and this obliging Lorsa Lopez to commit his crime." Simply, this text is a master-piss on what so-called post-colonial/post-modernist literature. No school can teach you how to be imaginative!

In summation, Sarngata Nola, and Estina Bronzario ended up tolerating each other. More, loving one another. Their relationship symbolized a true resurgence of black unity. They are the earth and the sea coming together once again fulfilling the notion and concept of humankind/humanity. Because what *The Seven Solitudes of Lorsa Lopez* teach us, is the greatest of all – "Love is the exact science of human science".

Book Review 2:

***The Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad Blackwood's Magazine, 1899**

1899 marks the year of astounding literary shock treatment – the *Heart of Darkness*, a novella by Joseph Conrad which tells the story – via unnamed narrator – of Marlow's serious time as the captain of an ivory-hauling steamer on the River Congo, "the very antithesis of River Thames". The text takes the form of Conrad's own-actual & personal experiences as captain and sailor on River Congo. The story paints a sick image of the exploitation of Africa & the horrific tyranny of Belgium's colonial rule. The vignette has caused a wild stir & fuss, for this reason, has become one of the most-assigned & most-discussed pieces in the canon.

I'll be checking Western psychology & how the text reveals colonial & racist attitudes & the extent to which Marlow's modernizing vision is a cloak for racist ideology. For one I think that Marlow is a *thoroughgoing racist* but then again he's a fair great stylist & moral isolationist.

Colonialization & racism are inseparable extremes & hateful notions. And racism, the edifice upon which exploitation and alienation rest. Here's why I say the text is racist: *Black rags were wound round their loins and the short ends behind waggled to and fro like tails*. Racism is a very weird thing, brings about preconceptions; I can tell that Marlow doesn't know anything about the country. He's confused at worst. Some parts here & there in the text, show that he condemns colonization but doesn't condemn racism.

Conrad isn't the first to write about Africa as the *other world* & mid-society crammed full of savages, cannibals, niggers, dogs, barbarity, strange witchcraft, diabolic evilness, rudimentary souls, darkness, & *a violent babble of uncouth sounds*. This willful lack of information, lack of factual knowledge, & sheer arrogance are evident in his predecessors' writings amongst which is

that goddamned British philosopher David Hume who declared that Africa doesn't exist. So on it was an established perception that Africa & Africans don't form part of humanity.

He's half to blame for this; this is the psychology he takes over from his forerunner's mentality. British & European people were/are racist by nature which makes Marlow inherently racist. This kind of cruel grotesquery lumps in with all the other distasteful, ugly things Marlow sees in the Congo. & carries through in the other superficially sympathetic portrayals of African men:

Black rags were wound round their loins, and the short ends behind wagged to and fro like tails. I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck and all were connected with a chain. . .

Here, Marlow describes the unhappy savages as one might describe any other thing sickly grimaced upon, deathlike with less dignity, particularly when he describes their rags wagging like tails, as though they were starved dogs or slaves. Nothing & nothing in the passage leads a reader to believe that the Africans Marlow has encountered are, first and foremost, human beings.

*They passed me within six inches, without a glance, with that complete, deathlike indifference of unhappy savages. Sad stuff & devastating. An African black reader like myself feels a need to agree that indeed *travelers with closed minds can tell us little except about themselves. But even those not blinkered, like Conrad with xenophobia, can be astonishing blind* – Achebe.*

On the other side, a reader might come to the knowledge that amid the controversy and scathing criticism, however, Marlow does expose the incapacity of Europeans in civilizing/modernizing Africa and somehow is against the colonial rule and the reader has been introduced to a range of varying portrayals of Europeans as arrogant, entitled, corrupt men of little skill and even less wisdom, example: Eldorado Exploring Expedition. Because, somehow, Marlow condemns colonization yet it does not suffice to allay the rage.

To the African and black reader (like myself) the 'brilliant' price of Marlow's eloquent denunciation of colonization is the recycling of racist ideology and notions of the dark continent and her people. Those of us who are not from Africa, like Marlow and his forerunners may be prepared to pay the price as usual. The arrogant and 'erudite' Marlow's mission, he has, in keeping with times – past and present, compromised and depersonalized African humanity and stature to examine the European psyche. The novella is arguably racist as one would normally expect from a nineteenth-century writing/text about Africa to be. Conrad miscasts European's as the victims of colonization in addition to its perpetrators. To wit, the willfully vague and mysterious descriptions that the narrator uses to describe the people and places he encounters on his trip serve to present, rather than a particularly negative portrait of Africa and its people, no portrait at all. Take, for instance, the African woman Kurtz's concubine; she is being described and objectified voluptuously as a prostitute. Hence, Marlow does nothing new but to re-affirm the common narratives of Europe's superiority over Africa.

However, on the other end of the argument, many members of literature have risen in defense of Conrad and argued that he and the story were products of their time and thus should not be judged in the unforgiving light of modern racial morality. Traditionalists' criticism of Conrad falls short and quite unfair – mixing water and oil: traditionalist vs modernist. Although intriguing and compelling is a traditionalist's criticism, it cannot be accepted as gospel and universal moral law. But, be condemned for its political correctness and narrow-analysis. It is poorly generic, limiting, and unimaginative to dissect the book from one point of view that is, racism. Marlow is a modern storyteller, a symbolist prone to artistic values: imagination and her uncompromising nature.

All works have their limitations and to expose limitations of creative work is not to 'attack' or accuse someone of incapacity but it is a tactic of opening up avenues, cutting open more veins, to allow a forever-flowing of diverse and fresh-sobering perspectives be it on the same subject of exploration. We must be extra careful of being overly generous or incestuous to the point that the sense of perceptiveness and judgment is clouded – taking side or Achebe as gospel. *The Heart of Darkness* tends to be more than reading – it is writing. It is an amazingly imaginative book and breaks limitations and conventional ways of looking at art, especially of writing.

Great writers like James Joyce and F. Scott Fitzgerald sometimes peppered racial slurs into their writings, and poor attitudes toward women abound throughout the history of literature, but we cannot forfeit – not in the name of art – loathe to give up *Ulysses* and *The Great Gatsby*. When does a particular depiction or representation go from temporarily distasteful to potentially destructive? How do we dissect the politics of a work of art in a way that's fair to both author and reader? Do we read simply to be entertained, or do the books we read subtly sculpt our worldviews? Whether history ultimately decides that *Heart of Darkness* is too racist to be great literature or too great to be racist, we can at least thank it for forcing readers and scholars to confront their assumptions about literature. We need literature that is in engaging and mind stimulating.

Book Review 3

Lexicographicide by Taban Lo Liyong African Writers Series, 1969

Elsewhere Debra Sparks cleverly asserts that “The opening is what entices a reader into a work. It doesn't matter how great the middle and end are if the reader never gets there, and is what the reader is left with, an impression of the whole that, ideally, resonates long after the book is closed . . . that [the] closings stick in a reader's short-term memory and that openings stick in a reader's long-term memory. . . my real lessons about writing came from my elders and were about cocktail parties. Rule number one: It's always nice to make a good first impression, to handle yourself well for the short term of the evening. Rule number two: It's always nice to depart before you make an ass of yourself, to leave a favorable long-term impression.”

Lexicographicide gets you there effortlessly. *Lexicographicide* sticks to the longest of memory, beyond Zed island and still it would come back even more marvelous and absurdist than ever. I

can't get enough of *Lexicographicide* – it embodies an avant-garde aesthetic. *Lexicographicide* is yet another thoroughgoing masterful piece of the *infra-ordinary* quality from the complex mystic Sudanese and Ugandan raconteur, to borrow from Raymond Queneau... *Lexicographicide* is *Exercises in Style*. The opening is the title on its own. It's enticing. It's a word-play and even more interesting it is a compound word comprised of (1) lexicographer which defines, the one who compiles a dictionary, and therefore, in all, it means the murder of the lexicographer and (2) as the suffix (*cide*) is concerned. This lexicographer is the victim found dead – Tutuola next to six notes mysteries as Taban himself is. He's a griot. Nobody is sure as to when exactly he was born somewhere between '39 and '38. This absurd mystery defines to the core the mentioned text. *Lexicographicide* is a situational eulogy and requiem for a dream (of Amos and the possibility of the Zed island) differed.

What makes me go crazier about the text is its meticulous approach or examination and study of styles in storytelling. As I've suggested the text is *Exercises in Styles*. From the formal traditional and/or journalistic to the innovative, refreshing, and post-modernist style of writing. This is interesting to note as the story moves on while at the same is keeping the reader enticed. The story opens up with a punchline – a resounding event – a stimulus to, after, ask then what happened? A first style is introduced: formal grammar, sincere enough to set the mood of traditional journalism of seriousness: *Here is his biographical background: At the age of seven, he left school on the ground that being in school was a waste of time.* I notice the third-person narration until it abruptly becomes more intimate to indicate a change of/in style: *The next piece of information comes from me.* Enters the 'I' – judgments and observations now from the first-person point of view/narration: *... because I used to go visit him*". A new style/form is being introduced now which is personal and informal from the formal. He wears the victim's skin becoming the ears, eyes, and consciousness of Tutuola, *Why weren't they published? Editors wouldn't dare print them. When I failed even to have a look at them, I turned to cursing our editors who are so sales-conscious and government-control conscious that they would never print an extraordinary or extraordinarily written story?* which is then answered both conceptually and stylistically with the story of the Zed island. On a political tip, despite its opening cynical nature, diction, or depiction, Zed is suggestive of a harmonious communitarian and egalitarian society: *Communication between our people and yours (capitalistic and traditionalistic) are very infrequent for no commercial and other interests pull foreigners to our island.* This afro-futuristic African dream would mean that Africans would live together peacefully with no external pressures. Furthermore, on a serious/stylistic level what even strikes more about this beautiful piece is its defiance of, and resistance to time – bridging the gap between the past and the future and willingness to open up one to the future-tense hence afro-futuristic: *... It was (he used the word is, while telling me) to be different from all others on these grounds: (notice the future tense/afro-future): It [will] was going to be the only dictionary for our island: everybody [will] was to be issued with a copy at the beginning of our year – in May, that is: everybody [will] was to use only words (even grunts) printed in the dictionary or else face death.*

Notes 1 – 6 are thoroughgoing explosively amazing and imaginative exercises in styles. As I said before Zed is egalitarian. Nobody owns to themselves anything. This is shown by the deliberate absence of ‘I’- another narrative technique in the ever-evolving skin of post-modernism. And dreams are a post-modernist trope and in Zed island, you can be part of them by simply inserting the ‘I’ to be the eye! *Been to the sports house today. Saw fighters: boxers. Didn’t like it . . . 10 p.m. Was at the beach today – bathing . . . 3 a.m. Feeling tired after writing my theory . . . 3.30 am. Fell asleep. Cannot continue narration above coherently and chronologically . . . 4.30 a.m. Being evicted, walking home, halfway through the journey, accosted by four masked men . . . 5 a.m. Had a long dream tonight. Dreamt was in a classroom – professor (my ambition in childhood).* This cut-up technique (William Burroughs) engages the reader/ me with the text beyond my control and I love every bit of the process. And because Taban learned from Amos the most important thing, the greatest being that the most important virtue is courage – transcendence.

Book Review 4

Miscellaneous Reflections on Reading Certain Books this year

I

Forest of A Thousand Daemons by **D.O Fagunwa**, is a timeless classic masterpiece work this continent has ever seen and it continues to inspire writers to this day. Published in 1939 during the country’s harsh times with the colonizers. One can argue that, despite its fabulist tone and texture, it is a work of resistance and protest. The novel is written in the Yoruba language and was translated into English by another prominent Nigerian writer, Wole Soyinka. The generational gap between Fagunwa and Soyinka proves that the text stood the test of time and that it is as relevant today as it was yesteryear.

II

I first learned about Louis-Ferdinand Celine during my second year as an undergrad at the University of Fort Hare. It is an autobiographical text. One can tell by its sincere and genuine tempo. He was a medical doctor in real life but with writing talent. The debate between skill and talent. When reading *Journey to the End of the Night* one gets a clearer difference between the two. For the former, it means the soul is a patient. And for the latter, the soul is an agent. He chose the latter of course ... with all its implications.

III

According to David Atwell, Beckett stopped writing in the English language after he discovered that it was full of “systematic parodies”, strictures, and confining conventions. Nonetheless, Samuel Beckett is one the most influential writers of all time. The fact that the man wrote *Waiting for Godot* out of boredom ... is an explosively existential beauty! After all, what the hell is *Godot*? It is philosophy meeting literature at its finest.

IV

I have always been interested in the experimental literature. The kind of experimental literature that is not infatuated with the 'truth' not 'fact' however with the keen interest to CONVINCING the reader. To convince is a two-way communication; both parties take charge in being the speaker and listener: the reader engages text. Unlike the truth-fact seeking texts always patronizing-intent retreat to the teacher/authority-learner environment to infringe upon the reader. *Wittgenstein's Mistress* by David Markson is a fine example of a convincing text. The reader is convinced that the woman is all by herself on earth. Both metaphorically and otherwise. Vonnegut's *The Breakfast of Champs* moves in the similar direction of cynicism. *Wittgenstein's Mistress* was rejected 54 times before publication in 1988 by Dalkey Archive Press.

V

I liken *Year of the Rat* to *Mating Birds* by Lewis Nkosi (next to Reed's *Flight to Canada*) not of its subject/theme (although perhaps) but of its style, tempo, and thread which is meticulously fine, moving with the stealth of the sharpest knife. It cuts deep both psychologically and imaginatively that one is left strangely wanting for more . . . the filth. Squalor. Gore and burdensome, that is black existence. At once philosophical and phantasmagoric i.e., personal – the text is essentially informed by the subaltern experiential experiences of alienation and negligence in the widely anti-black world.

PART THREE: POETICS

Poetics Assignment

He has already invented a whole new fauna that walks, flies swims, and fills the earth, the air, and seas with its wild galloping, with its cries and its moans – Vicente Huidobro

In defense of the experimental, transcendental, surreal, and/or subversive literature – that which disrupts, disturbs and dismantles all conventions and strictures of established norms about literature. The kind of avant-garde writing that,

. . . should feel it can use any tool at its disposal but that it will use it carefully and systematically, with the impression of purposiveness. The avant-garde that I most admire, and that I participate in, believes that you have to make some effort to depict a surface before you disrupt it if you are to get readers to experience that disruption in more than just an intellectual way. It is engaged in an intense and motivated critique of systems that create value and meaning and is interested in destabilizing those systems to complicate our relation to them permanently once we have put the book down (Evenson, p. 75).

Hence, this present essay intends to demonstrate other technical and vigorous ways and approaches to the ‘preposition/composition’ and ‘creation’ of a new novel as Vicente Huidobro (*Creationism*) and Raymond Ferman (*Surfiction: A Postmodern Position*) suggest. In other words, this essay breaks away with the traditionalist methods of history as a heroic narrative and subverts any literary conventions, and draws greatly on post-modernism and post-colonial discussions of art and literature. That is, it will thread against the canon. The term ‘canon’ with its original religious roots describes a “general rule, fundamental principle, or standard . . . collection or list of the books of the Bible accepted by the church as genuine and divinely inspired” (Macmillan Dictionary, 1979, p. 144).

In the case of World Literature and/or narrowly of African literature, canon has become literature that is prescribed in schools and universities mainly for its paramount, significant contents that contribute to cultural-national discourses. In short, canon is historical writing, however, that reduces art to history creating both consciously and unconsciously culture-wars. Thus, the present essay aim at the kind of writing that, “acquires international proportions, it becomes Poetry [literature], and it is accessible to all people and races just as much as painting, music or sculpture” (Huidobro, 2020, p. 49). This is a transcendental modernist attitude: “From early in my life I have viewed literature as a unique universe that

has no internal divisions. I do not pigeonhole it by race or language or nation. It is an ideal cosmos co-existing with this crude one” (Marechera, 1987, p. 99).

The objective of this essay, however, is to examine by all means possible, not a jaundiced or biased view of the poetics, rather it is to strike a close look into:

In all other art forms, there are always three essential elements at play: the creator who fabricates the work of art, the medium through which the work of art is transmitted, and the receiver (listener or viewer) to whom the work of art is transmitted. It seems that in the writing of fiction only the first and the third elements are at work: the writer and reader. Me and you. And the medium – and by the medium, I do not mean the story or the mental cinema one plays while reading fiction, but the language itself – is forgotten. It becomes absent, or rather it is absented, negated by the process of reading as if it were transparent as if it were there only to carry the reader into the realm of illusions. It is because while reading fiction one does not think of the language as being auditory or visual (as in music, painting, and even poetry) that it merely serves as a means of transportation from the author to the reader? From me to you, from what I supposedly meant to what you supposedly understand of my meaning? This obsolete form of reading devaluates the medium of fiction, reduces language to mere function (Ferderman, p. 41).

In short, if listening is a skill, so as well is reading. The two must co-exist harmoniously for one to fully grasp the importance of language as not just a mere function of transportation but as an indispensable quality to engaging the text both affectively and intellectually. “The work of art has its cradle these two elements which also constitute a parallel duality: feeling, which is the affective element, and imagination, which is the intellectual element” (Huidobro, 2020, p. 51). Lewis Nkosi had shown frustration toward the cretin behavior around *The Mating*, that while they were determined to find fault with the book, they overlooked the most crucial thing – the love and beauty of language. The following point/s will illustrate much better the intricate relations between language, reading, and writing. Also the manner and style in which they carried out, will demonstrate the experimental, subversive, and/or transcendental that is the focal point of this essay.

Published in 1969 *Hermeneutics* is a book by Richard E. Palmer comprised of contributions from Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, Betti to Gadamer, all of them with varying views and contemplations about the vast theory and/or study of interpretation that is, hermeneutics. Amongst these thinkers, Emelio Betti (an Italian historian) and the German philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer stood out the most. The following is a summary of their respective thoughts on hermeneutics with regards to the novel–writing and writer/reader relationship.

For the former, hermeneutics is essentially about the explication of the text. Betti cancels out the aspect of subjectivity (of the reader) in interpretation. According to the Italian historian,

understanding should serve as a deconstructive process that involves the reader's own experience of the world. Therefore, the text exists independently from the reader:

Reader | Text

On the contrary, Gadamer the reader, and the text collide and conflate into each other two. According to Gadamer, there is no escape from one's own understanding and experience. Therefore, understanding becomes the relation of mutual interpretation between the reader and text through mastery of that language. Further, text involves the application to the present (or 'present-future according to the surfictionist:

In other words, we as fiction writers must render language concrete and visible so that it will be more than just a functional thing that supposedly reflects reality. Thus, not only the writer will create the fiction, but all those involved in the typesetter, the printer, the proofreader, and of course the reader will all partake of the fiction . . . the reader will no longer be tempted to identify with the characters. Instead, the reader will participate in the creation of the fiction to the same degree as the creator or the narrator, or the creature of that fiction. All of them will be part of the fictional discourse, all of them will be responsible for it" (Ferdeman, p. 45).

In *The Beautiful Voyage*, Guest asserts otherwise, "Never "negotiate" with the reader by projecting the reader's aims the poem, such as a "desirable subject . . . Poet [writer] and reader perform together on a high wire strung over a platform between their *separated selves*" (2015, p. 78 - 79). Of course, Guest falls into her trap: to want to make a poem carry a *specific* meaning (that which is attached to the title in this context) throughout, this on its own is normative and hence didactic. Didacticism deals with lines being drawn between A and B to make C. ". . . that I do not feel the usual sense of the *subject* in poetry to be of much use. . . I feel that 'subject' is at best material of the poem and that poems finally derive from some deeper complex of activity" (Creeley, 1989, p. 486). Guest relies on the Scientific Knowledge anchored in the triteness of inductive and deductive strictures. According to Cesaire in *Poetry and Knowledge*:

What presides over the poem is not the most lucid intelligence or the most acute sensibility, but an entire experience: all the women loved, all the desires experienced, all the dreams dreamed, all the images received or grasped, the whole weight of the body, the whole of the mind. All lived experience. All the possibilities. Around the poem about to make, the precious vortex: the ego, the id, the world. And the most extraordinary contacts: all the pasts, all the futures. All the flux, all the rays. The body is no longer deaf or blind. Everything has a right to live. Everything awaits. Everything, I say. The individual whole is churned up by poetic inspiration. And, in a more disturbing way, the cosmic whole as well" (1944 – 45, p. 18).

And all this packaged together refers to the *Duende* of Federico Garcia Lorca in *Theory and function of the Duende*.

In the same breathe that, one should erase the supposedly existent line between poetry and prose. The supposedly existent bridge between the writer and reader. Both areas and entities make up literature – wherein one falls short, the other takes over. Hence, prosaic-poetry/poetic-prose in Rimbaudian manner. Also, Brian Evenson, stresses and asserts - as if literature and philosophy are completely separate worlds when in fact they are interchangeable like heart and mind. The latter put in context: to memorize it by heart. A case in point: one cannot exist without the other. Philosophy as one's lived experience and literature as imagination to transcend that reality. From the "Afterword" in *Altmann's Tongue: Stories and a Novella*, Evenson is chastised by society – for writing 'radically' about his religion while in simple fact he was being free developing his original personality – to be true to himself (Marechera, 1987).

This is just one part of the argument of its many. The other one is to critique Aime Cesaire, beginning with his geographical position – that is France and his ancestral position – Africa via the Negritude movement (Senghor, Fanon, etc). Like the rest of western Africans Cesaire was no exception to their nostalgic writing of Africa. The romanticization of Africa. Beautiful as it is, this epistemology overlooks one fundamental thing – what constitutes human. Which is not the emotion only . . . applied by Cesaire when he writes:

It is an error to believe that knowledge, to be born, had to await the methodical exercise of thought or the scruples of experimentation. I even believe that mankind has never been closer to certain truths than in the first days of the species. At the time when mankind discovered with emotion the first sun, the first rain, the first breath, the moon. At the time man discovered in fear and rapture the throbbing newness of the world (1944 – 45, p. 13).

No wonder Africa is the third world; no wonder the insulting question to the bone: Is there an African Philosophy in the first place. No wonder David Hume called it a 'place of darkness and barbarism'. Prof Abraham, interviewed by Lewis Nkosi and Wole Soyinka, ridicules Cesaire and the likes when he says, what makes an African not to know what is above the eyes. Of course, they are eyelashes. Emotion did not inform that but reason. This is the unwillingness to break away with the reflexivity into which we were all born and somewhat 'stuck' with Africa. What Satre calls the 'Bad Faith'. Africa must be captain of its ship (pun unintended).

"For myself, articulation is the intelligent ability to recognize the experience of what is so given, in words" (Creeley, 1989, p. 487). This 'dread,' Hooks accentuates ". . . of the collective reality of black people . . . aggressively demanding recognition" (1991, p. 53). It demands critical and careful studying. A phenomenological close-look into things as one would, for instance, into pain; using all the lenses and microscopes at his disposal – the common-sense view; perceptual view; representational view, etc., to diagnosing the real matter at hand - that for one, racism has been entrenched by our very political figures both subconsciously and consciously. That post-colonial theories such as afro-futurism need careful reconsideration before claiming. For instance, afro-futurism is a feel-goodism; selling a pathetic hope through pettiness that puts

black alone in the future. Afro-futurism is racism transported through technology. White people own technology.

As a friend would say, Aime Cesaire and the rest of the Negritude Movement betrayed an opportunity to assert a politico-philosophical, socio-economic space for an enduring decolonial African epistemology during a critical period in the history of Africa's relationship with Europe.

Enough with the politics. There are times to be aggressive and reflective. One precedes the other in a dizzying investigation of good creative writing. So to bring the discussion at home - to get personal about my writing and endeavors that is, its futures - one as to notice that, first and foremost, up to this point the above writing has been suggestive of the kind of writing that in and out of consciences and realism bonded by a fine tread of curiousness. The writing doesn't give too much to the reader. It exercises the reader that to read is to engage. For instance, its structure, narrative form, meter, and content. In some parts, it reads scholarly (maintains the simple belief that all writing must be creative, irrespective of genre and form), philosophically (it is engaging, makes one think) and in other parts, it reads hermeneutic-phenomenologically (the mind's eye meets the world and observations from the first person basis or point of view). And this is making writing a curious phenomenon. Inquisitive. It seeks to know everything. It demands this. It wants to be in the practice of the theory and stance it is contesting or advocating for - fresh writing. I can think of *The Killers* by Katy Acker here. She is committed to her theory and stance towards transcendental - vigorous writing. This is the *Condition of Creation* (by Marina Tsvetaeva) which is *Experimentalism* (of Camile Roy) and/or *Use this word in a sentence: experimental* (of Ann Lauterbach) so much that when you read throughout *The Killers* one gets the feeling of a sort of a theory-fiction-criticism kind of writing. Hybridity.

Much is closer to home. During the writing and publication of *Fever Dream* (a short story that I had written whilst still a student at the University of Fort are. While I was doing my honors at that godforsaken institution). I had to die many a time to recover from the sum of silliest, ignoramus, cretin criticisms around the story. Unsure why was this, especially coming supposed scholars. Anyway, what happens in the tale is simply story-telling. In every sense of this craft. Art. There was/is an intended performative act of telling the story. In a broader sense, there is the story for a written language and telling for purpose of orality/orature. *Fever Dream* is an *iintsomi*. Iintsomi is in a folktale with a postmodernist flare and touch to disrupt senses on more philosophical and language/linguistic levels. It is the kind of a tale that you would recite to the children and adults with love for wisdom and art by the fireplace, tavern, or in a taxi. This is the kind of story asserted and addressed by Shammas: The rise of the novel and the invention of print triggered the decline of storytelling. For what distinguishes the novel from the story, or more exactly from the tale, is its essential dependence on the book . . . while the novel as isolated itself, the storyteller depends on the listeners . . . the uncounseled novelist, on the other and, cannot counsel others. His alleged wisdom comes from the information, as opposed to the intelligence, of the storyteller (1991, p 79). For this reason, *Fever Dream* is a tale.

Hence I say that criticisms completely miss the point where that *Fever Dream* is a tale and of speculation at best. Nothing must be fact-checked as tough in a lab with rats. No science. For instance, in the story, there is a character by the name of Pastor, who gets killed by disgruntled and jealous husbandry. Anyone can stipulate that the pastor is sick with HIV and that the men, killers contract it through the stones with which they use to kill him. So what was silly about some of the criticisms were with its determination to find fault in the story, so much that they had to go to the highest level of stupidity to ask me that, to go out to research how long does it take for the contaminated blood exposed to air to lose effectiveness. This is pointless as far as the folktale imagination is concerned.

The other sickening commentary was that why can't I cane at least one character to be white to *balance* the story – to give it *freshness*. At this time it was clear that some people hate imagination and make art political were as it shouldn't be the case at times, if not at all. This is the issue in *How Subject Dictates Narrative Form* by Tiff Holland.

I want my writing to be of hybridity - The subversive form of this hybridizing tendency is most apparent at the level of language itself [as it] destabilize[s] and carnivalize[s] [...] the nation-language of master-discourse – through strategic inflections, reaccentuations, and other performative moves in semantic-syntactic and lexical codes (Mecer, 2003, p. 245).

In summation, I have nothing much against those who rather prefer narrative forms, styles, and techniques different from the ones that speak personally and internally to me. I have gathered up that they are part of building blocks to great literature. That they are the foundation to the revitalizing debates of postmodern writing.

COIL REPORT

Writing/Reading in Community Report

From its start to finish, I must confess wholeheartedly that, it was quite a refreshing experience. I learned that, cultures, races and heritages can work together towards a greater goal and they can see past their differences. I was able to engage with other races and cultures without being morally and ethically judgemental towards, and infringing upon others through sharing each other stories about the world. Sharing stories it also helped and encouraged me to find my way to my unique voice and style. I have also learned that what's important is the heart that listens and the mind that doesn't discriminate because this is what makes good writing. And that one mustn't take their cultures as sacrosanct gospel over others.

So Coil was an exchange between Rhodes Masters in Creative Writing students and 2nd-year Creative Students from CUNY LaGuardia Community College, NY. Both coordinators Dr. Allia Matta and Vangi Ngatsho were very supportive and understanding and for this, they created comfort for everyone.

As per the program, we were asked, to first and foremost, address each other as respectfully as possible. Secondly, to briefly introduce ourselves – I told them that I am a fiction writer and a poet from Umtata and Cradock both are places located in the Eastern Cape province. Also, I'm interested in the defamiliarizing function of the phantasmagorical in the writing of subversion, this kind of writing includes forms, tropes, and styles that are eccentric, experimental, transcendental, and genre-defying.

Because, this was an exchange program, we were also asked to share our own writings including those from the African-Caribbean origins to familiarize and make aware CUNY students of our taste and style and the writerly atmosphere around Africa. Divided into groups of three, each group was assigned to give a seminar/representation around their unique relative idea about writing. The first group (Workshop 1; Week 1) presented under the following truncated topic: *Writing under Harsh Conditions*. It read like an introductory course to South African literature because of its focus on writing that waged war in the then against Apartheid Government. This kind of writing was labelled as protest or revolutionary literature because of what it was fighting against at the time, which is the oppression of black people. Few typical authors were mentioned, including Phaswana Mpe, Serote, Sipho Sepamla, and oddly enough, they called up Lewis Nkosi's *Mating Birds*. Personally, Nkosi has never stricken me as a blatant traditional writer predominantly writing against oppression. Well, perhaps 'yes' to some degree but that has to be looked into the many lenses of phenomenology for us to quickly assume that his writing belonged to protest literature. Nkosi is an interesting case. However, it was a great seminar as far as the American students were concerned- giving them the backstory to the contemporary [South] African literature. And as a response in a manner of a task: assignment, I tried to interest

things and wrote around race and/or culture subtly rather than dramatically/demonstratively. Following, was the second group (Workshop 2; Week 2) under a placid topic: *Writing for Peace, Silence and Quiet* or writing to create the latter. It was pretty a cool seminar. I just felt it was more driven by or at least measured by one's prim eloquence and fluency of the English language in terms of speaking it, for especially when they bought up Mxolisi Nyezwa for whom I think he greater than that, as their jump-off of sense-making and an example. Think: If you were to throw a stumbling man like me to present here, it would have been, called 'disrupting, cruelty' or anything similar to an obtrusive nature. Point in case, it lacked musicality and vigour. As for the CUNY students, it was a good engagement chance to look differently into such sensitive themes such as race, culture, and sentience from their individualistic points of questioning.

Week 3, it was our group (Xolani Mahe and Thobeka Kunene). We thought of what was absent in the last seminars and this was the surreal (found within the perimeters of experimentalism) which comes sincerely from a 'gut feeling' as opposed to realism. We then titled our presentation: *what's wrong with the cockroach anyway: Speculative ways of surrealism*. Meaning:

We are aware that we all come from different background frameworks and that our Workshop will not necessarily stick to "African" or "Diasporic"... surrealism but as a jump-off point. Importantly, focus on the notion and concept – the idea of surrealism (or even *surreality* if the -ism confines) as a universal lens. A human-being is a universal (conditions, contexts and circumstances that makes man a relative case) thing, so as much as that within *it* ... soul, heart and spirit. We have all suffered, rejoiced both uniquely and individually. This is a writerly genuine approach. Philosophers like Merleau-Ponty have called this type of approach, Phenomenology – that is, writing and seeing from the first person point of view towards the world. To move and shift the world with *your* mind and the result will be that of the surreal (here comes along, fantasy, phantasmagoria – the speculative). Because, we all can imagine a world of our own original creation. Ever heard of "I want to make me a world"? I'm sure. So we are always in a perennial request to yearn and long for *this* world, climate and/or language against the backdrop of the overwhelmingly established existence. For instance, look into, think into the dialects? They were not born out of logic and peace instead they were born out of frustration with conventions. *Bad Faith* is what Jean-Paul Satre that we were born into this *Bad Faith* (convention/burden) and hence we should move away from, in fact, to transcend it. Write from the gut. Write from this point!

RESPONSE TO THE READER REPORT

Let us all agree that if LISTENING is a skill (contrary to the natural ability of HEARING) so is READING as well. This is self-explanatory. What I mean is that we could all be given the same book however what we take from that same book will differ between all of us... by style and intellectualism. Sadly some of us will produce lackluster analyses and some others will give curious and invigorating analyses. For the latter, the reader knows very well his/her duty, that is, to be able to tabulate the intricate difference between fiction and non-fiction in their traditional senses. Secondly, a lot goes into reading and this includes dissecting, analyzing, and examining the text. In phenomenology, they have discovered two reader/writer relationships. One maintains that the reader is excluded from the world of the writer, meaning none of he/she culls from a text has to do with the writer. They must make up their mind about that text. The other maintains that both parties must come together like two conflating circles. At this point, there is a fine line between fiction and non-fiction.

I have read the Reader's Report from start to finish with close and generous carefulness, looked into its agitations, concerns, and excitements to try and situate the writer into some dim psychological spectrum. Suggesting that this is principally a work of experiential imagination and/or imaginative experience. For instance, I once found a fresh pile of feces in the cutlery drawer. I could not understand this, because it was only me living in the house. One may even say that the discovery of it all was simply poetry or prose (patronizingly) but the fact that I saw it with my own eyes and under my roof makes it no-fiction. Whose experience is being ridiculed here? Mine as a black person living in very disillusioned post-Apartheid conditions. Therefore my life is bound to be a joke. So, I prefer the word writer for its universal qualities that defy fixations to any specific label, genre or practice. In the same way, I insist on not wanting to differentiate between narrator and author. And as soon as we pay no time drawing lines between poetry, prose, commentaries, etc., we could all be doing creative writing and avoiding cultural wars of racism and stereotypes. I would like to share what Sony Labou Tansi profoundly says about art:

Art is the strength to make reality say what it would not have been able to say by itself or, at least, what it might too easily have left unsaid. In this book, I argue that there should be another center of the world, that there should be other reasons for naming things, other ways of breathing ... because to be a poet nowadays is to want to ensure, with all one's strength, with all one's body, and with all one's soul, that, in the face of guns, in the face of money (which in its turn becomes a gun), and above all in the face of received wisdom (upon which we poets have the authority to piss), no aspect of reality is swept into the silence of history. I am here to speak on behalf of that part of history that has not eaten for four hundred years. My writing will be shouted rather than simply written down, my life itself will consist of groans and screams and being pushed around,

and never being swallowed simply to live. I am going in search of a man, who was once my brother; in search of the world and of things, who were also once my brothers.

This is a foreword to *The Seven Solitudes of Lorsa Lopez*. I agree with this sentiment fully. Or as Marechera puts it (I paraphrase) you say that you've read my work. Make up your mind then and just leave me alone and let me write. Moving on, the opening paragraph I would say, it is 'okay. The reader makes pretty determined and/or daring observations towards the thesis by saying and quoting passages from the thesis as his/her proof that is 'personal', 'true', and 'honest'. I liked it because I found it to be clever and yet quite untrue. The thesis is true as far as it's the author's brainchild, other than that I can't agree. The style of it works independently hence it comes off mostly subversive because it experiments with different modes and forms of writing. Anyway, it is a good paragraph and it encourages me to write even more through these representational and perceptual senses of seeing wor(l)rd. Meaning, the first-person narration in my stories is tricky because I am writing on behalf of the many fellow creatives and thinkers with whose pains and visions I empathize with. Further, the trick of it all was to lure the reader to soak into the beauty of the language, narrative techniques, the ethos and bathos, and most importantly the resounding nature of the imagination and which all of this when packaged equals to style. I don't blame the reader we all read works of people with our embedded ethnic and cultural anxieties in mind that sometimes the given text makes it hard to look at it impartially because they corner our beliefs. So that the reader will become naturally defensive when attacking the given work. What I'm trying to get at, it can't be simply viewed as 'personal' just because the thesis contains passages of debauchery, vulgarity, sex, poverty-stricken townships. This is unfair. One may want to recall Lewis Nkosi when he was rebutting some white critics dismissing his book because it transcended the typical expectations of a township novel. What they could not see is that he was experimenting with the language to a point it baffled many as to what ethnicity or race he was. These I call white anxieties. This proves not everything has to be overtly political. It is a people who make our art the political thing for their escapist provocations – to hinder the full exercise of or the reign of imagination.

In Byzantine, the writer/narrator is fully aware of the art of not giving away too much to the reader. I think this is where subtlety has been achieved. The moment where the narrator is in the arms of NoPlate sets up deliberately the famous political allegory: Sam Nzima's photograph of a dying Hector Pieterse in the arms of Mbuyisa Makhubo by adding a twist or trickery. Only in the story, Makhubo is replaced by a *dying* woman's arms and who is NoPlate. It is my rebuttal to critics and commentators who have been crucifying my work as being sexist and/or misogynist when in pure fact is the opposite – a homage of all the women. I am inspired by women. I cannot even imagine a world without women. So this was generous misuse of reading.

All writing is creative and critical. And our stories must have a duty to fulfill this. Our readers should not expect the writings just because they are set up in some squalor ghettos and therefore they are ought to mirror those environments (of course) with the absolute exclusion

of intellectualism and creativity. We do not have the time to discuss contextual relevances. Life does not work that way. Nothing is 'straight developed' or cohesive about life. Dura's *Alcohol* and Janice Lee's *Damnation* can attest to this. Every writer has a right to an individual impulse.

For me, there is no difference between poetry and prose. They require an equal amount of time, commitment, and strength to the writing them. There is no shift between them. For instance, to write poetry, one has to go to a quiet breath-taking mystic rendezvous or the beach at night. And to write prose, one has to scroll to the rowdiest of places in the gutters to carouse with drunks. Both epithets require imagination and for the most part that is in one's mind. They are both parallel to each other that when one flounders, the picks up from there like philosophy and literature; like dance and music. Comparing and contrasting these it seems it is something that academics and politicians would love to do – they'll be saying things 'because of too many commas and adjectives such and such makes it poetry/prose etc. Such flimsy intellectualization.

At some point, the reader commands the imagery of the work for its subversive and transcendental achievements in poetry 'or' the fabulous and which that in hindsight sort of throws it unconsciously in a quandary state of whether is there a really necessary difference between poetry and prose anyway! It weakens its previous argument that there is a difference between the two. So, the reader succumbs to my latter argument, proving this with a quote from *Bush Meat* that it is "genre-bending". Meaning poetry and prose are like two conflating bubbles; as all writing should. This is exactly my point. Other than I like the reader's point here, it is refreshing even more when it proceeds to see the stories in the thesis are 'excellent riddling philosophies', some are 'a three-way Western duel', some are 'horror' and some stories are even 'Nollywood style'. I liked the review very much. It is encouraging. I was rubbing my hands against each other with a smile. I enjoy Western pictures (Clint-Eastwood), the surreal horror-thrillers of David Lynch, especially the likes of *Mulholland Drive* and *Blue Velvet*, and the Nollywood styles of Nigerian film. All these are crazy, witty, and most importantly imaginative stuff. I was touched especially by the quotes as proofs:

Whatever is keeping the ancestors busy drinking, is doing a fine fucking job while the living is relentlessly dying // with lightning and rain going in their bellies // Grabs his ears, and quietly them in his pockets // many people are cursing, throwing tongues, nipples anything they could find // I trip over an infant on my way to the boycott. It didn't cry. // at home the curtains dangle with the ennui of sanity. // door hinges screeching with primitive jazz notes // chewing foreskin-like gum and so on.

Such reportage goes to show that indeed there is more to just reading. It's about soaking in, engaging, dissecting, analyzing, etc.

According to some points made by the reader is about the lack of subtlety in the thesis and this comes as a result of the very reader's constant preoccupation and willingness to draw the

between author and narrator hence, I beg to differ. I mean one informs the other and vice-versa; they co-exist, in the same sense that humans have two ears for balance and without one balance cannot be achieved. Secondly, we have seen writers using their actual environments and contexts and specific naming/mentions in their writings without taking away from their craft and aesthetics. The most important thing to note here is that the imagination must get the better of the context. Transcendence must be the focal point. *House of Hunger* and *Bird-Monk Seding* achieve this very well. After everything person is entitled to their opinion, more especially about place and time. And which makes everything seem arbitrary. The argument is plain flat and reductive. I wouldn't be surprised if the reader would say, this so-called 'fabulous/fantastical writing' or the fictive world of mine is unsound because it lacks the specific time and place of a fictive world. Meaning to say, it can only be called such, if the settings are at night and in the bushes, water, etc., and if I ask what to do make of my experience when the police come and storm in a house and start shooting innocent people at broad daylight? Alas, you will then ridicule and reduce it to a myth or condescendingly surrealism. As for Nadine, I simply cannot read her work (titled to my own opinion). I have used to term 'folklore' as a mockery of radical or revolutionary considering the time and space at which she was writing – apartheid.

And even if they do talk or speak about Marechera, Tutuola, Gwala, etc., it is mostly without any technical vigor and excitement, meaning, they speak/write about them through an anachronistic or reductive lens: in the family of past-tense. Rarely do these forms bring their brilliance to life so that we could relate those to the present times. Hence, I like writing in the family of present-tense.

Problematic Language

This is debatable. Anyway, if one looks at the writing with an analytical eye, I am suggesting ways and solutions to any of these derogatory. I am aware of sensitive readers. For instance, the case of Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* was simply because some African/Black writers were so damn short-sighted they couldn't simply see the beauty and style of the book without pulling the race card. So the question is, what merits/qualifies white writers to speak/write about race and/or Africa?

Therefore, it is within my right to hold unequivocally onto my impulse – my writing. Here, I'm referring to the so-called problematic language of my writing. The reader also has the right to take the jokes in whatever fashion it wants to. In summation, I agree with most of the reader's report especially with the recommendations he has put together for the structure of my thesis and the abstract.