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**What difference does it
make who is speaking?**

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This thesis is in fulfillment of the requirements for the MA (FA) degree in the department of Fine Arts of Witwatersrand University

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Declaration

I, declare that this thesis is a presentation of my original work. It is submitted for the MA (FA) degree in the department of Fine Arts at the University of Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted at any university for a degree or examination.

_____ Date: _____

Abstract

This thesis examines the concept of authorship in literary and artistic practice by travelling the concept of authorship from literature to artistic practice. To achieve this the thesis will be guided by the questions, 'what is an author?', 'when is authorship?' and more importantly the title question, what difference does it make who is speaking? To unpack these questions and those that will follow, my research will begin by thinking through the idea of authorship and authorial voice in literature and to identify the ways in which this is performed in artistic practice. Additionally the thesis will explore the authorship and authority, particularly how the author uses the power of language to impose authority over the reader and the West language still holds power the postcolonial subject or authors. In retaliation of this authority, the thesis also looks at how postcolonial writers/artists have developed a language of power.

This analysis will be directed by a selection of theorists, writers and artists. Theorists such as Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault whose questions on authorship are the bases of my research and Miek Bal *Traveling Concepts in the Humanities*, Jacques Derrida *Of Grammatology*, Ngugi Wa Thiongo *Writers in Politics*, Walter Benjamin *The Task of the Translator* and Jean Fisher's *Embodied Subversion* as well as other supporting reading.

In addition to that, investigating methods of writing in Dambudzo Marechera's novella *House of Hunger* and Willimam S. Burroughs *The Naked Lunch* and how these ideas are reflected by artistic practice .To help envisage the idea of the 'artist as author' I look very closely at specific works of three postcolonial artist and their relationship with language. I have selected works by artists Kemang Wa Lehulere's *Some Deleted Scenes Too*, Tracey Rose's *Span I*, and Danh Vo's *Last letter of Saint Théophane Vénard to his father before he was decapitated copied by Phung Vo* as well as drawing from my own practice.

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I would like to thank my supervisor Bettina Malcomess for her continued support. Special thanks to my family and friends for their motivation throughout my years of studying.

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Introduction

Fundamental to my study of art practice is the question of authorship, particularly how as a reader through various methods of appropriation, one can take on the authorial identity of the author of a found text by altering and deleting their authority over the text and authorial voice. This notion sparked interest in the ways in which authorship can be performed in artistic practice, leading to an investigation of the concept of the 'artist as author'. To determine this entails identifying what it means to be an author or to understand the construct of authorship in literature through Foucault's question 'What is an author?', a question that he poses in an essay of the same name (Foucault, 1977).

The research for this dissertation involves a comparative analysis of this concept in literary and artistic practice. This analysis assesses whether there are similarities or differences in how the artist and the writer perform authorship. In Michel Foucault's opinion, authorship is merely a title that describes a discourse. It is a tool used by the writer to create a dialogue between themselves and the reader. In a critique of the notion of 'an author', Roland Barthes writes, 'to give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing' (Barthes, 1977: 147). For Barthes, the term 'an author' not only reduces the text to an individual reading but implies that authorship is a single identity.

To unfix this perception, the concept of authorship is considered in chapter one by using the discussions of various theorists on how writers and artists have begun to complicate and redefine authorial identity. This study's comparative analysis will attempt to locate gestures that imply authorship in *The House of Hunger*, a novel by Zimbabwean Dambudzo Marechera; in cut-ups by artist William S. Burroughs; and in specific works by selected artists such as: a) Dahn Vo's Last letter of *Saint Théophane Vénard to his father before he was*

decapitated copied by Phung Vo (1861/2009); b) Tracey Rose's *Span I*; and c) Kemang Wa Lehulere's *Some deleted scenes too*. I believe that these individuals have developed a compelling dialogue between literary and artistic practice. This combination of writers/artists was also chosen because of their critiques and rejections of colonial authority and its systems of power via language in an effort to represent their multi-layered interpretations of authorial identity.

When writing on how concepts can travel from one discipline to another Mieke Bal states 'concepts are not fixed. They travel...' (Bal, 2002: 24). This thesis then will begin by addressing the implications of the so-called 'travelling concept' of authorship from literature to artistic practice. Bal's statement implies that because concepts are unfixed they are open to the interpretation of their user; therefore, it this is interpretation that will be the focus of this study. This has also led me to propose the question, 'when is authorship?' which is meant to question if the moment of authorship can be determined.

Writing on the authorial voice, Foucault states that the author's role is to 'explain the presence of events within the text as well as their transformation, distortions and their various modifications'. These events are usually biographical or autobiographical as the writer guides the reader through the text (Foucault, 1977: 128). The writer employs these events as signifier of the presence of an author, who acting as narrator, can generate narratives that present the authors' viewpoint or the authors' thoughts (Foucault, 1997: 128), the purpose of which is to create a discourse between the reader and author.

Other strategies employed by a writer to imply the presence of an author include the use of pronouns such as 'I' (first person singular). These signifiers are employed by the author to indicate an authorial voice, or what Foucault describes as a 'real speaker' (Foucault, 1997: 129). It also implies what Derrida describes as 'mental experiences' (Derrida, 1997:11). Essentially, writing is a combination

of internal and external signs, which Aristotle reiterates in his statement: 'Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience words and words are the symbol of spoken words' (Derrida, 1997, 11).

Consequently, if artists do not use the pronoun "I" in artistic practice, how does one locate the authorial voice in this instance? In artistic practice the 'author' is present through 'touch in its formation' (Burskirk, 2003: 23), through gestures such as the choice of materials, the placement of these materials in a space, the actions within a performance work or a set of instructions set by the artist. Not only do these decisions act as evidence of authorship but also as signs of stylistic authorship depending on individual preferences. Writing on *Collaboration as symptom* Charles Green states, 'Artists appear in their art, voluntarily placing themselves center stage in self-portraits' (Green, 2001: ix). In artistic practice the work and the artist are read as an entity, and as such the artist is able to use specific motifs to code themselves within their artwork (Green, 2001: ix). However, in literature, unless biographical the writer and the speaker function as separate entities.

Although the artists and artworks selected for this study incorporate text, this is not to say the 'I' within the text signifies the artist. Instead it could merely be a device employed by the artist to complicate authorial identity. In chapter two of this study the goal is to identify the methods writers/artists use to evoke the authorial voice under the three themes: Performativity in text; Voice; and Performative Practice.

In an effort to answer chapter three's title question, 'What difference does it make who is speaking?' the study shifts the focus to the relationship between authorship and authority. It seeks to demonstrate the invisible power of language, and how these postcolonial writers/artists have used the language of power in retaliation. The title question proposes that the source of the authorial voice is

carefully considered, as it can be detrimental. This is because the power to frame, name and define identity comes about by speaking on the behalf of an individual. This raises questions such as: Who is speaking? Why does the speaker matter? Who is speaking on behalf of whom? Questions that were applied in my practice, as I was interested in exploring how appropriation can influence the reading of the original text and the 'new' text. These are questions attempt to address the impact of language, specifically how it can be used by the author to exert power and influence over the reader/audience.

This chapter also addresses the existing power relations between the West and Africa. In the essay *Art, identity, boundaries: postmodernism and contemporary african art*, Olu Oguibe criticises the West for forbidding the power of self-definition and the right to authority to African artists (Oguibe, 1999: 21). This, he states, has enabled the West to proclaim authority over the colonised, all of which according to Fanon fixes and imprisons the colonised into a collective identity that is associated with blackness (Fanon, 2008: 84). Wa Lehelere's work is explored for how this collectivism erases the individual, but also how erasure can act as a form of mark-making; whereas in Rose's work the performativity of authorship through mimesis and the ways in which language through naming distorts identity is investigated. Extending this discussion into language in the works of Marechera and Vo where the monoligualism inherent in colonial languages becomes problematic. More importantly I reveal how as gestures of defiance these individuals refuse colonial strategies of exclusion, as a form of symbolic violence, in which 'one dominates another' (Bourdieu, 1991: 167).

Marechera's frustrations and confrontation with the English language are further discussed in the final chapter in terms of the African and bilingual writers' predicament of having to choose between writing in two tongues; the mother tongue or the 'foreign tongue'. However, this is not to say all African or bilingual writers perceive colonial languages as foreign tongues. For Chinua Achebe,

English is: 'A language spoken by Africans on African soil, a language in which Africans write, justifies itself' (Achebe, 1976: 67).

With Achebe's statement in mind I provided an overview of the strategies developed by these writers to create a 'new' English that expresses the 'African experience'. The final chapter also discusses my practice, and the works produced to interrogate these questions on authorship. Additionally, the writing techniques of William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin are examined. Called the cut-up method, it is a practice whereby they cut and rearrange other author's texts at random with the stated reason being that: 'words are the property of no-one' (Robinson, 2011: 27).

A large part of my practice is related to personal research, and the purpose of this thesis is to blur the lines between this research and the practice of borrowing the selective strategies employed by these writers/artists to interrogate authorial identity and authority. This will be explored throughout the paper and in the exhibition. To begin this process 'cut-ups' will be inserted into this thesis that will be combined with my own text – a gesture that will continue into the new body of work.

It is hoped that this thesis will reveal the question of power inherent in authorship, particularly how this authority can be produced and refused by postcolonial writers/artists and the reader. These writers/artists were also deliberately chosen for this reason: to pose the problem of the existing power relations between the West and the so-called 'other', and in particular, the continuous desire by the West to re-author them. Wa Lehlere explains:

There still is the demand for black artists to exoticize themselves. The same struggle that Ernest Mancoba was having is still around and oftentimes one does not have to be told to self-exoticize; the mechanism in which people are shaped into that kind of direction is

very sophisticated, but that's the nature of power itself. I'm very conscious of it. It's also about refusing the spectacle (WaLehulere, 2015).

The purpose of the question, 'What difference does it make who is speaking?', is to expose the invisible mechanisms of power that exist within authorship, particularly how language as an instrument of the author can be used to destabilise the concept of the 'author', but more importantly how it is translated in artistic practice. In my practice the question has informed an approach to authorship and how it can be erased, disguised and distorted.

CHAPTER 1: Traveling between disciplines

Performativity (Noun) philosophy.

The capacity of language and expressive actions to perform a type of being¹

In regard to the role of the author, Michel Foucault observes that “since the eighteenth century, the author has played the role of the regulator of the fictive [of meaning] (Foucault, 1984: 119). What Foucault is suggesting is that the author, who is a construct of the writer, has played a significant role in using the authority concealed within language to distort and fabricate the narrative. In support of Foucault, William S Burroughs attempts to expose how authors use language as a tool to ‘formulate narratives’ when he states: ‘[t]he word of course is one of the most powerful instruments of control as exercised...’ (Burroughs & Odier, 1974: 33-34). Not only is the authorial identity fabricated but so too is the presence of an authorial voice through language when the reader enters a space in which language functions as a tool of distortion. Taking this into consideration, the aim of this chapter is to try and identify how authorship and authorial identity is performed and constructed in literature and in fine art practice by proposing the following three questions: what is an author, when is authorship, and what difference does it make who is speaking? These questions will then be addressed further in the next chapters within the various themes of the voice, collaboration, translation, mimicry, and methods of appropriation, such as the cut-up method and erasure methods as employed in this writer’s own artistic practice. Once authorship and authorial identities are established, focus is then shifted to the central theme that will be discussed throughout the research paper: the concept of the ‘artist as author’. This is, of course informed by the idea that

¹ *YourDictionary* www.yourdictionary.com/performativity (08. 03. 2015)

authority and authorship can exist outside of literature, and the main goal is to establish whether the 'artist author' can be seen as equivalent to the literary author. Secondly, it is to pinpoint how this occurs in specific works of certain artists like Tracy Rose, Kemang Wa Lehulere and Dan Vo. To show this, the study will look closely at Kemang Wa Lehulere's *Some Deleted Scenes Too* (2012), Tracey Rose's *Span I* (1997), and Dahn Vo's *Last letter of Saint Theophane V ernard: A letter copied by Phung Vo* (2009) and the writer's own work (once it has been determined how authorship is achieved in author Dambudzo Marechera's novel *The House of Hunger*).

Having established that authorial identity can move between disciplines, the next step will be to try and understand how authorial identity is defined in literature and then whether these definitions can be applied to fine art practice or whatever fine art practice has redefined. These questions will be discussed under the following headings:

- What is author?
- When is authorship?
- What difference does it make who is speaking?

1.1 Travelling concepts

This section, titled after Mieke Bal's book *Travelling concepts: A rough guide*, will attempt to map out how authorial identity can exist outside literature specifically in visual art practice. What are traveling concepts and how can they be put into practice? Mieke Bal's proposal in *Travelling concepts: A rough guide* proposes that concepts can travel between disciplines, in this case the concept of authorship is able to take on multiple identities depending on the discipline. Bal writes, 'concepts are not fixed. They travel...'. She then continues to say that because they are not fixed, when they travel, their usage changes dramatically (Bal, 2002: 24). Extending the notion of multiplicity, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari present a descriptive image of the rhizome in *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia* as, 'the multiple *must be made*'. They explain further that 'at any point a rhizome can be connected to anything other' (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005: 7). By this they mean that the rhizome, much like Bal's travelling concepts, is independent and is not fixed like the root (in this case literature writing). The root is what Deleuze and Guattari state 'fixes an order'. They reason that unlike the rhizome, the root is not flexible and is dependent on a single source/identity or origin, whereas the rhizome does not locate from a single origin as they multiply (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 7). What Foucault, Bal, Deleuze and Guattari suggest is that, if authorial identity is fictional and concepts are able to multiply themselves, then authorship should not be assumed to have a fixed definition as even the writer has the power to redefine the idea of authorship according to their desires. The author, as a construct of the writer, is a fictitious speaker. Writing on the author and use of the pronoun 'I' Foucault (1984: 112) states:

Everyone knows that, in a novel narrated in the first person, either the first-person pronoun or the present indicative refers exactly either to the writer or to the moment in which he writes, but rather to an alter ego whose distance from the author varies...

Foucault emphasises here that the author is a construct that is performed through language, using signs like the pronoun 'I' that indicate an authorial voice. Ironically it is this pronoun that separates what Foucault describes as the 'real writer' from the author of the narrative who is in actuality a 'fictitious speaker' (Foucault, 1984:112). It would be wrong to equate the author to the 'real writer'. However this is not to say that the author does not possess or reflect some elements of the 'real writer'. The writer, Marechera and the artist, Tracey Rose have used this complexity to complicate the notion of the writer and the author, and they somewhat confuse the perceptions of the reader/audience as to the source of the authorial voice. This is also an opportunity for the writer to use language to exercise their position of power over how the author or imagined figure is expressed and experienced by the reader, or for the writer to speak through the author by disguising themselves from the unsuspecting reader.

Bal describes travelling concepts as those that are 'always in the processes of becoming' (Bal, 2002: 51). The notion of 'becoming' suggests entities that are always in a state of transition, rather than finality. They are not fixed. This notion of the unfixed disagrees with the categorisation of authorship as it limits movements of concepts from one discipline from to another. Rather, these unfixed entities allow ideas to travel between disciplines such as the idea of authorship in artistic practice. Bal proposes that we think of concepts as 'tools for inter-subjectivity', and that they can exist between two or more subjects (in this case literature and visual art) and because of their 'unfixed' nature, concepts are able to move and be re-defined by their 'user' for their own purpose (Bal, 2002: 22). By allowing movement of concepts, the ownership is loosened and authorship is multiplied and when they do travel they 'distort, unfix, and inflect the object' (Bal, 2002: 22). Consequently, the possibility of the concept remaining the same is unlikely; rather when the concept is in a new discipline it can take on multiple identities depending on the context. At times one can reference or address how they are used in other disciplines, and in this instance the objective

in this study is not necessarily to change the concept of 'authorial identity' in literature, but rather to try and uncover whether this same concept can be applied outside literature and, if not to understand how the term or identity of 'author' is re-formed by the 'artist author'. To determine this, the following chapters will discuss language, power and translation in an attempt to focus on how the author and authorship is shaped through language in both literature and artistic practice.

1.2 Translation and power

If one accepts that the voice is intersubjective and comes from multiple sources then the act of translation should be understood as one that pushes this idea to its limits. Ngugi WaThiong'o writes extensively on the politics of writing and translation in Africa, specifically on the choice of written language and how the African language is lost in the process of being translated and substituted by the English language. In the collaborative work, *Do it like this!* Georgia Munnik and I (2013) examine Fanakalo, an instructional language developed from an attempt to translate a 'dumbed down' version of the English language to the a 'dumbed down' version of an Nguni language, in this case isiZulu used as a means of communication from white to black South Africans. We began by using a chalkboard to write English instructions, which we created that were then translated into Fanakalo using the Fanakalo dictionary and the isiZulu dictionary (a process that will be addressed and developed further in this section). In the process of translation it is apparent that neither language is equivalent to the other, that one idiom is muted by another and that translation is based on selection and a subjectivity that can be interpreted in multiple ways by any reader. This means that not only does it move away from its 'source original/voice' but that it becomes distanced by the mere fact that it creates an original of its own. In this study, the idea of how voice can be easily used, misused and taken ownership of is discussed to re-affirm that because the voice

comes from multiple sources, like translation, it can never be fixed. What one learns from Derrida's comments on the durability of writing is that:

[I]f the stability of the spoken language were superior and independent, the origin of writing, its "prestige" and its supposed harmfulness, would remain an inexplicable mystery (Derrida, 1997: 41).

Derrida, therefore, affirms that spoken language is innately unstable and that this instability influences writing. Certainly, this can be seen in how Fanakalo is arranged and created due to the inaccuracy of the spoken language. Neville Alexander (2011: 313) posits that there are two fundamental forms from which language derives its power. He writes,

the ability of the relevant individuals or groups to realise their intentions (will) by means of language (empowerment) or, conversely, the ability of individuals or groups to impose their agendas on others (disempowerment of the latter).

One sees this in the manufacturing of Fanakalo in that it was designed to suit the inability of white South Africans to speak indigenous languages, especially since it was created using isiZulu to imposing a monolingual identity on black South Africans by the subjugation of other languages. Alexander (2011:314) reminds us that,

the self-esteem, self-confidence, potential creativity and spontaneity that come with being able to use the language(s) that have shaped one from early childhood (one's "mother tongue") is the foundation of all democratic polities and institutions...[and] once erased these systems are disempowered.

Outside of Fanakalo, English takes center stage as the legitimate language of communication, a residue of the historical domination of colonial power structures. Although the indigenous language have been recognised in post-apartheid South Africa, this is not sufficient as these languages are still marginalised. Alexander (2011: 316) warns that one should not be fooled by this 'recognition' as,

it states that in a multi-lingual society, it is in everyone's interest to learn the dominant language (of power), since this will help to provide equal opportunities in the labour market as well as in other markets

This is case with Fanakalo whereby labourers were forced to address their employees in the language.

1.3 Translation and appropriation

Having identified the implications of translation in South Africa, it should be stressed that translation can come in two forms: the first being between languages, and the second, between the spoken and written forms - both of which are tackled by Munnik and I in *Do it like this!* (2013). For Pierre Bourdieu (1991: 168) in the essay *On Symbolic Power*, translation like power can inflict what he describes as 'symbolic violence' that he defines as,

the power to impose (or even to inculcate) the arbitrary instruments of knowledge and expression (taxonomies) of social reality – but instruments whose arbitrary nature is not realized as such.

When in a position of power the translator can either impose their assumed knowledge of the language of what they are translating, which as Bourdieu points out, is influenced by external forces (in this case systems of knowledge) which we see in the construction of Fanakalo, in that it is structured in such a way that it is a direct translation of instructions from the English language. It refuses to acknowledge or take into consideration the nature of isiZulu and how it is spoken and written. Rather it interprets the language using the English sentence structure, thereby disempowering the language. In *The subject and power*, Foucault (2000: 331) writes,

there are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge.

which he then states, 'suggest a form of that subjugate'(Foucault, 2000: 331).

Paul De Man (1983: 33) writes, 'any translation is always second in relation to the original, and the translator is lost from the very beginning'. It is through translation that the translator is asked to create an idea of the original text. In Fanakalo, one can see how translating dilutes the original; it has no desire to engage with English and isiZulu instead it creates its own path. In this case the speaker develops this language in an attempt to bridge the gap between the speaker and receiver and vice versa. Saussure (as cited in Derrida, 1997: 41) in what Derrida describes as an attempt to 'demonstrate the corruption of speech by writing' states that, 'languages are independent of writing'. What is evident in Fanakalo is that elements of isiZulu are used to construct an instructional language that uses elements of the English language. Representation mingles with what is represented. Language, like the rhizome, through methods like translation, mimicry, erasure, collaboration is able to mutate, but this mutation is controlled and manipulated by its author.

Appropriation, unlike translation, attempts to mimic the original text and tries to distance itself from the original by transforming the original to create a new original. However the two are alike in that they exist because of the original. In *The ecstasy of influence: A plagiarism mosaic*, Jonathan Lethem writes that in art practice appropriation is understood as a method of 'copying, mimicking and quoting the original' (Lethem, 2007: 60). Gestures that position themselves on a thin line between the reflection and the reflected let themselves be seduced narcissistically (Derrida, 1997: 36). It is this idea of creating an 'original' out of an 'original' that is explored in my own practice. Although appropriation acknowledges its origin/root, it behaves like a rhizome. However, this is not to say the 'origin' was not influenced by other works, and if this is taken into consideration, is there really an 'original'? Is it possible that the idea of an 'original' behaves similarly to that of Foucault's description of authorship as 'fictive'? American author, William Burroughs, for example, writes using a technique which he calls the 'the cut-up method', a process in which he cuts out

phrases and text from other authors text which he then assembles and collages with his own text to create narratives. Burrough's method of writing forces the selected sentences and phrases to perform a new identity within a new narrative, his thinking reflects the statement by Deleuze & Guattari (2005: 7) 'the multiple *must be made*'. Unlike Fanakalo, where isiZulu words and sentences are incoherent because of a poor translation or diluted version of the language, the 'cut-up' method's intention it to expose these systems of linguistics and create an environment where 'it is the language which speaks, not the author' (Robinson, 2011: 11). Gysin believes the cut-up method 'frees words' (as cited in Robinson 2011: 25). This is, of course, the opposite of what has happened to isiZulu through Fanakalo, where isiZulu is trapped in a singular identity that does not necessarily reflect the nature of the language in its truest form. If one accepts that travelling concepts are subjective, then through a process such as translation and appropriation in literature and fine art practice the 'author' can be engineered and stretched to suit its user.

1.4 What is an author?

It seems to me... that the "fiction" of the author enables us to locate an author of the fiction who is by no means dispersed but who in "his" notional coherence provides the means for us to grasp the text in the moment of its production²

The term "authorship" can be defined as a set of linked activities, which are sometimes performed by a single person but will be performed collaboratively or by several persons in succession³

² Geoffery Nowell-Smith, 'A note on "history/discourse" ' in *Theories of Authorship: a reader* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 200.

³ Harold Love, *Attributing Authorship: an introduction*, (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 39

The above statements suggest that the author and the authorial voice are within the text. If this is true then does it mean the author resurfaces through the reader? What about the fictive idea of 'an author' rather than 'authors'? The question 'what is an author?' draws attention to how authorship has been individualised and the status given to the author which is put into place by 'systems of valorization' that give the 'author' authority (Foucault 1977: 115). An example of this would be what Foucault described as the 'intellectual writer' who supposedly possessed the 'capacity of master truth and justice' whose writing used to be the 'sacralising mark'. Of course this identity has changed over time (Foucault, 1980: 126,127). Today, the intellectual is the one who 'utilizes his knowledge, his competence and his relation to the truth in the field of political struggle' (Foucault, 1980: 128). Unlike the individualised author, today's 'intellectual writer' participates in multiple discourses that intersect other disciplines, he/she does claim to have possession of absolute truth; however, not much has changed with respect to how authorship can be used as an instrument to advance systems of power. Further, the question of author as individualised fails to take collaboration into consideration, whereby multiple authors work together to create a single text; and it is, therefore, inferior to the idea of authors. So what is an author? Foucault (1977: 23) argues that the term author represents a title; it describes a profession and classifies a writer according to a certain discourse. He calls this the 'authorial function', suggesting that the term has two meanings: the one is the actual name of the author who produced the text; it recognises the person. The other identifies the author in relation to their discourse: it focuses on the author's 'existence, circulation' and operation of this discourse in society (Foucault, 1977: 124). It is within this particular environment that author is able exercise authority or, what Bourdieu (1991: 164) describes as 'symbolic power' over an unsuspecting reader. Symbolic power, continues Bourdieu (1991: 164),

is that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it.

But what happens when an individual is outside this setting, or as Foucault (1977: 118) puts it, 'if an individual is not an author' what then does one make of what he/she has written? This question exposes the flaws of the concept of author as it exists within particular structures and leads one back to the concept proposed in this study: the idea of artist as author. The intention is to examine whether the same authorial identity can exist within the discourse of artistic practice and, if so, to question how authority comes into play in the works of Vo, Rose, Wa Lehulere and my own practice.

Roland Barthes (1977) in the essay 'Death of the author' writes that through the act of writing the author commits suicide, for Barthes this is what makes an author. Only through this death can they be recognised as an author. Nowell-Smith disagrees with Barthes and offers a different perspective. According to Nowell-Smith (1981), the author should be considered as a fictional idea, 'fiction' that we are desperately trying to locate. If this is true then the author never existed, and is imagined. The reader uses this imagined author as a tool to guide them through the text. John Caughie (1981: 200) takes it a step further, stating that the author, rather than being understood as a source that stands behind the text, becomes a term in the process of reading or spectating. This suggests that the author and language are separate, and in order to find the author one has to be able to engage with the text. However, rather than imagining the author to guide them through the text, the reader is encouraged to understand the text independently. But what happens when the author disguises him/herself within the text, and does it affect the reading of the text? The assumption that every text needs an author to explain the text limits the individual experience, Barthes seconds this by stating, 'writing, is the destruction of every voice, of every point of

origin' (Barthes, 1977: 142). In other words, if the reader unhinges themselves from the forceful presence of authors, there is room for self-interpretation.

Certainly in fine art practice, writes Martha Burskirk, the tangible circumstances in which artistic expression is communicated to the viewer may not entirely coincide with the artist's definition of what constitutes the art work as attention to the object itself has to be 'supplemented or even supplanted by information about the artist's conception' (Burskirk, 2003: 16). Unlike writing, where the writer cannot necessarily be available to interpret the text, in fine art, the artists can chose to give a brief summary of their intention behind the work. This however does not necessarily mean it is a fixed perspective. It is open to interpretation. One similarity that the artist shares with the writer is in regard to the author's function is that the name of writer/artist is legitimizes them as authors. This is because the audience can have a different analysis of a work. As an art collector, Giuseppe Panza has stated: 'The artist cannot control what goes on outside the studio. When a work changes owners, it starts on another life' (as cited in Buskirk, 2003: 42). A prime example of this is the narratives assembled using the 'cut-up' method.

Harold Love proposes that authorship is something that can be performed (Love, 2002: 39). This can take shape in multiple of ways, such as writing in the first, second or third person, which the writer can use to stand in for a 'second-self' (Foucault, 1981: 288). This 'self' is able to multiply authorship, as the author moves through characters and different authorial positions. This can also be performed through language using methods such as combining found text through collage or decoupage and translation (Foucault, 1981: 288). This will be addressed later in relation to Burroughs' cut-up method. Here language can be used as an instrument by authors to create the perception of an authorial voice. In practices like appropriation and collaboration, it is naïve to assume there is only one author; rather there is a compilation of authorial ideas that are

manipulated and given a new context. Barthes (1977:143) pushes this idea even further by stating,

it is language which speaks, not the author; to write is, through a prerequisite impersonality to reach that point where only language acts, “performs”, and not “me”.’

This implies that the writer acts as an individual who arranges language in such a way that authorship is imagined. Deleuze and Guattari, in *A Thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia* describe literature as an ‘assemblage’, this assemblage, they continue, ‘is a multiplicity – but we don’t know yet what the multiple entails’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005: 4). These multiple interpretations demonstrate the struggle to define authorship, whereas in artistic practice assemblage is a collage of found objects, layering of text and images to create multi-dimensionality. What Deleuze and Guattari are suggesting is that authorship is a gesture that attempts to ‘map’ out one’s thoughts through language in such a way that it attributes the presence of an authorial idea, or voice or identity (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005: 4). The reader is encouraged to act and to decipher the language that has been arranged by the author.

The same can be said for the term ‘assemblage’, which in fine art practice applies a similar method to the collage that ‘involves the pasting together of various materials on a flat surface’ whereas assemblage is the ‘process of joining two- and three-dimensional organic or prefabricated materials that are projected out from the surface plan; and the found object’ (Waldma, 1992: 8). This process of art making shares similarities with the cut-up method; a technique originally developed by artist/writer, Brion Gysin and famously adopted by Burroughs in the *Naked lunch*. Gysin initially developed the cut-up method to apply the montage technique already practised in visual art to text (Robinson, 2011: 22). Burroughs recalls Gysin stating: ‘writing is fifty years behind painting’ and he began the montage technique ‘to words on a page’ (Robinson, 2011: 24). Gysin and Burroughs emulate Bal’s travelling concepts, by transporting a fine art technique

to literature writing, which can be linear. The cut-up method breaks this linearity where 'time is seen spatially, that is, as a series of images or fragments of images past, present, and future' (Robinson, 2011: 22). This method of writing proposes that one thinks through the question of 'when is authorship?' – meaning how can the gesture of authorship be determined. This question assumes that there are instances or happenings (in a temporal frame) where one can locate that authorship has been performed by the writer/artist. Of course before one can locate where and how one needs to develop these ideas by looking into how Marechera appropriates the English language to inform his writing and how Vo's appropriation of Saint Theophane Vernard's letter becomes problematic in terms of how the untranslated can be used as a tool of 'symbolic violence'. This discussion will follow in the chapter below.

1.5 Authorial identity in art practice

As artists have exercised the authority to delegate aspects of production or realization, the very possibility of such fragmentation necessitates constant reinterpretation of the nature of artistic authorship⁴

How then can this idea of authorship be applied in fine art practice? Although this study has discussed how writers have used aspects of authorship above, this study will now address the main topic, which is that of the artist as author. This notion examines how artists have used strategies such as the authorial voice, collaboration, appropriation and translation to perform authorship through visual language in fine art. The subject of authorship is a contested one and is yet to be resolved. However, this is not the intention here hence the question: what difference does it make who is speaking? With this question, the aim is to focus on the practice of authorship and authority outside of literature in relation to the

⁴ Martha Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art* (London: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2003), 50

idea of the 'artist as author'. This is not to say other issues will not be addressed such as, the author whose identity for a long time has been positioned as the Western white male in relation to the non-Western author and female voice. Proposing the question of how this voice is different from these other voices, Olu Oguibe, writing on the West's limited perception of African artists states, 'African artists are either constructed or called upon to construct themselves' (Oguibe, 1999: 19). In an effort to find similarities and differences of how authority is performed in literature and fine art practice similar questions to both disciplines will be applied.

Although Buskirk (2003, 24) writes, 'over an work's history, decisions about how an art work will be presented necessarily determine the spectators' experiential understanding of it' he adds, with respect to artistic language, (2003: 50) that,

[c]ritical or descriptive language, declarative language, the language of instructions, the language of agreement and contracts – all of these are relevant because they shape the form in which the work of art will arrive at the viewer.

This interpretation of the artist, according to Buskirk (2003), is that he/she performs authorship through a well thought out arrangement of art works. Charles Green, author of the *The Third Hand: collaboration in art from conceptualism of postmodernism* seconds this use of language; however, he emphasises that artistic language is a different kind of language that is organised according 'to the rules of other sign systems and may even be [done] quite pragmatically' (Green 2001: 4). Authorship in fine art practice, it seems, is centered on a set of critical decisions made by artists that are used to help define an art work; these can range from: (a) context; (b) where the work should be located; and (c) what this location means. In addition, questions such as: how do spaces like the gallery, ad hoc spaces, public spaces and museums affect how the work will be read? How will an image be read if it is printed, painted or made into a video still? As medium is also another form of communication other

questions arise in terms of curation, such as: how does the way a work is positioned or placed in a space affect the movement of viewer and their access to the work? These are just a few examples that go into the process of art making. Furthermore, 'for works that are not fixed as physical entities . . . interpretation also shapes how the work is constituted' (Buskirk, 2003: 50). Taking Green and Buskirk's analysis into consideration, it appears that authorship in fine art practice is erratic as it is determined and defined by the artist's decisions, but that intention is not always stated. It is within this space that the artist is able to refashion authorial identity. If the authorial identity is determined by the artist, then literary and fine art authorship share some similarities, and as Love (2002) pointed out earlier, authorship is something that can be performed and part of this performance is the ability for artists to manipulate images and text in such a way that it suggests a narrative or discusses a subject through the language of assemblage.

Alexander Alberro (1999) in the essay *Reconsidering conceptual art 1966-1977*, writes that conceptual art from the mid 1960s to early 1970s was constantly filled with multiple and opposing practices, rather than a single, unified artistic discourse and theory (as cited in Green 2001: xvii). One of the main artists who represented the conceptual art movement was Joseph Kosuth and the Art and Language Group who questioned 'the nature of art should be the main concern of the artists' (as cited in Alberro 2001, xvii). Kosuth then defined conceptual art as 'linguistic conceptualism'; he would take this idea further and conclude that: 'Art's only claim is for art. Art is the definition of art' (as cited in Alberro 2001:xvii). Unlike the traditional artist who intends the viewer to attempt to decode the artwork, Kosuth's thinking found it irrelevant and dismissed the idea that art needs to be interpreted. This kind of thinking was accompanied by the move away from traditional modes of art making such as sculpture and painting, or what Kosuth regarded as 'anachronistic' methods of art (Alberro, 2001: xviii). This now meant artists were open to developing and experimenting with other

mediums that, to some extent, echoed Marcel Duchamp's (1957, 28-29) philosophy that:

If we give the attributes of a medium to the artist, we must then deny him the state of consciousness on the aesthetic plane about what he is doing or why he is doing it. All these decisions in the artistic execution of the work rest with pure intuition and cannot be translated into a self-analysis, spoken or written, or even thought out.

One mode of communication that artists like Kosuth and the Art and Language group used was language and text, which were exhibited in the format of newspapers, essays, wall text and books.

Artist Allan Kaprow adds that, over time, conceptual artists began to create the 'unreal' artist, a concept that supplemented the now conventional image of the 'death of the author' (as cited in Green, 2001: 46). This is not too far off from Nowell-Smith's (1981) and Foucault's (1977) fictional author. A conceptual artist's use of the word 'fiction' in their artist's statements allows them to question and reinvent the artistic identity (Green, 2001: 46). Here the artists were able to use methods such as collaboration, appropriation and mimicry to erase the traditional characteristics of artistic authorship such as including a 'signature style, a studio-garret workplace, sole manufacture, and most important, individual authorship' (Green, 2001: 46). For example, collaboration - which includes two or more artists working together to create a single work—meant that artists were able to merge multiple 'signature style or identities' into one, and not only were they able to do that, Green writes, but collaborations meant the manipulation of the signature style itself (Green, 2001, xiii). Artists then introduced an interesting dynamic: not only were they able to camouflage themselves, they complicated the viewer's ability to decipher or allocate a work to a single artist. Such appropriation meant artists were not only able to use and restructure other artist's works but that they could also take ownership of these works. In response to collector Panza purchasing artist Dan Flavin's fluorescent lights, he stated, 'you

have no right whatsoever to recreate, to interpret, to adapt, to extend, to reduce them' (as cited in Buskirk, 2003: 43). This is what appropriation enabled artists to do. Appropriation meant artists could manipulate authorial identity, although the 'new work', whether referenced or a copy of the original work were recognised as being made by two separated artists. In regard to the copy and conceptual art, Burskirk (2003: 43) writes that the copy is the basis for the conception of,

art-making in which artists incorporated increasingly subtle and layered references to the history as well as other sources without necessary relying in their techniques or materials.

This newly founded authorial identity and independence that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s meant artists were able to duplicate themselves and perform acts of 'speaking for someone else' (Green, 2001: xiii). The disappearance of the individual author allowed artistry to be seen as a collective effort rather than an effort by a single individual, or also as an attempt to shift idea of glorifying a single artist. The question arises, however, if the individual author is irrelevant, is the question 'what is an author's relevance? How should collaborative (voluntary or involuntary) gestures like appropriation answer this question? The idea of the 'artist as author' finds the definition of author an irrelevant one, instead it shifts its focus onto how authorship is produced.

1.6 When is authorship?

*You never quite know if they invented you or if you invented them...
Funny, talking to you, like I'm talking to myself. I do that sometimes,
talking to myself I mean.*⁵

Can the moment of authorship be determined and, if so, how? Barthes (1977: 148) suggests, that the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the

⁵ Dambudzo Marechera, *The House of Hunger*: (1978: 61) From a novella he wrote while studying at Oxford University, which he describes as an autobiography set in the historical context of Rhodesia now Zimbabwe.

author, and for Barthes, only then can the moment of authorship be determined. In the opening statement to this section above, Dambudzo Marechera, a Zimbabwean writer, author of *The House of Hunger* depicts authorship as autobiographic; a recording of personal events that are at times woven into narratives. Here authorship is determined by the writer's need to document events, similar to that of a diary entry. Ngugi wa Thiong'o describes authorship as 'writing about somebody for somebody' (wa Thiong'o, 1981: 4). Wa Thiong'o reveals that although writing can be an intimate and personal gesture it is intended for a reader/s. Could this be when authorship begins? What about the idea that authorship can be located? The terms 'determined' and 'location' offer a different interpretation of authorship, reiterating how terminology changes as we move from literature to fine art practice. While the one suggests it is resolved, the other aspect speaks of place, space or position that is not necessarily resolved or fixed. The concept of location suggests that rather than trying to fix authorship, there should be an effort to try and find moments or processes where authorship is performed. When reading Barthes, the reader is directed towards thinking about the how authorship has always been defined (or tries to define authorship) whereas the question 'where is authorship?' tries to identify moments in which authorship or authorial identity is actual performed.

In appropriation, for instance, a work can reference an author/s or what Edouard Glissant describes as the root. Glissant writes, 'the root is not important. [m]ovement is', for example, Burroughs' use of the 'cut- up method' (Glissant, 1990: 14). Although the found text has original author/s, through the process of appropriation it is re-mixed and given a new authorial voice. Here authorship can be described as it continues an infinite process, a process that can have multiple roots. Glissant writes that Deleuze and Guattari criticised the notion of the root, and being rooted, instead they proposed the rhizome, which maintains the idea of rootedness but challenges the totalitarian root (Glissant, 1990: 11). Like the rhizome, determining the moment of authorship can lead to multiple sources

instead of the idea of a single source. The rhizome, unlike the root, is not dependent nor does it wish to go back to its source, instead it sees each trajectory just as a possible root. Glissant describes this as a kind of 'authorial nomadism' (Glissant, 1990: 11). This is similar to collaboration, whereby artists and writers work together, performing the rhizome. Here information is passed on from one writer/artist to the other, which is then edited, erased and expanded on. Through these performative processes it cannot be said to belong to a single author nor can it be determined. For instance, Deleuze and Guattari (2005: 3), authors of the *Anti-Oedipus*, reflecting on their collaboration, write,

since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd. Here we have made use of everything that came within range, what was closest as well as farthest away. We have assigned clever pseudonyms to prevent recognition ... [t]o make ourselves unrecognizable. . .

In other words, by behaving like the rhizome, because their individual voices cannot be identified in the text, there cannot be a beginning or end of their individuality. The same can be said for processes like the 'cut-up method', which by 'cutting and splicing the various texts at random' time and location are altered (Robinson, 2011:25). By making a collage of text from various authors complicates the idea of location and aborts the ideology of the individual author.

In an essay discussing the idea of the appropriation in art practice, Lethem writes that in art practice appropriation is a method of 'copying, mimicking and quoting the original' (Lethem, 2007: 60). Appropriation, it seems, thrives on moving away from one original to another. It is a method that seeks to question the notion that there can only be one author, although it borrows from an author. It proposes that even its 'original' sources maybe influenced by another therefore there is no such thing as an original. This applies Panza's belief. Take for example in a work I made titled, *What difference does it make who is speaking?* The work comprises a script written by Samuel Beckett titled, *Not I*, with its consonants removed. The aim of this work is an attempt to take ownership of Beckett's authorial voice,

erasing his voice and replacing it with the artist's. Can this be seen as the moment of authorship? However the question 'where is authorship' assumes authorship is locatable but this is not the case. I propose that this question be considered in conjunction with the question, 'when is authorship'? This question proposes that in this context the moment of authorship should be defined as initiating new discourse through gestures that re-mix already existing ideas or text to create a new 'original'. This is further complicated by processes such as collaboration where a singular authorial gestures or signatures cannot be located. Such processes challenge the assumption that authorship is temporal and can be determined or fixed to a single moment or gesture. In this instance collaboration proposes that we consider the question 'when is authorship' rather than 'where is authorship'. This question proposes that we look at the series of gestures or decisions that perform authorship. Authorship should be seen as a continuous process of intervention that is either open change or forced to change.

Going back to Marechera's statement above: 'you never quite know if they invented you or if you invented them', suggests that authorship cannot be determined (Marechera, 1978: 61). Rather methods like appropriation and collaboration refuse to recognise a single root. Burroughs takes it further; he considers his work separate from the original idea, although as Marechera suggests, to some extent it is invented by its reference. This raises the question of whether this 'new original' would have existed if it had not been for the 'original' idea. It seems the moment of authorship is a process. Performativity cannot be located. But 'located' is an interesting word choice here as it is a spatial, not temporal indicator.

Locating authorship is tricky especially when there is no single author. Even then, to assume that the 'original' text has not been influenced by another sources is naïve. Walter Benjamin writes that the use of reproduction allows the original to meet the beholder halfway 'by putting 'the copy of the original into situations

which would be out of reach for the original itself' (as cited in De Man, 1983: 65, 66). This removal from the root/original means the two cannot be seen as one as they are not one. The root, unlike the rhizome, 'is unique, a stock taking all upon itself and killing all around it' writes Glissant (1990). It strives to be an individual entity that is permanent. It does not behave like the nomadic rhizome that is constantly in motion, and because of this movement it affirms that there are multiple moments of authorship. This is dismissive of the idea that authorship can be fixed to a single moment, whereas the root applies the old ideology of the single author. The rhizome has attributes of what Glissant, in *The Poetics of Relation* speaks of as 'relation', which he writes is 'not made up of things that are foreign but of shared knowledge' (Glissant, 1990: 8). However, is this exchange equal or does one kind of knowledge dominate and erase another? Glissant (1990: 7) also re-imagines the voyage of the slave trade from Africa to America, which was far from an exchange; rather, he writes, there was a feeling of erasure:

[Like] feeling a language vanish, the word of the gods vanish, and the sealed image of even the most everyday object, of even the most familiar animal vanish. The evanescent taste of what you ate. The hounded scent of ochre earth and savannas...

How then can relational knowledge be applied in this instance? Should this knowledge be reserved for the willing explorer? What does this dislocation mean for the relocated especially in regard to issues of language and authorial voice? How have artists and writers extended their authorial identity by camouflaging themselves through multiplicity? These questions will be explored throughout the study by identifying how processes like erasure affect the authorial voice, especially in regard to the translation and author-ity of the non-Western artist

CHAPTER 2: Performance and Performativity

[T]he visual experience of looking in a mirror is instantaneous, the writer and his reflection can only speak to, answer, each other in turn⁶

This chapter will discuss the ways in which the writer and artist carefully construct and manipulate language in such a way that it suggests a presence of the 'voice' through conjuring an authorial voice that Foucault characterises as fictive. As mentioned earlier, what is meant by fictive is that the authorial voice and the character's voice are produced and implied through pronouns such as 'I' that give the illusion of a speaker. Derrida (1997:7), describes writing as a 'supplement to the spoken word' and a system of 'hearing (understanding) oneself speak through the phonetic substance'. Writing, it seems, like the fictive author, attempts to reproduce a voice or audible speech that suggests there is a presence of a 'being'. In this way, writing is able to camouflage itself as 'non-external' or 'nonworldly' as it presents itself as:

the nonexterior, nonmundane, therefore the nonempirical or noncontingent signifier – has necessarily dominated the history during an entire epoch, and has even produced the idea of the world, the idea of world-origin, that arises from the difference between the worldly and nonworldly, the outside and the inside, ideality and nonideality, universal and nonuniversal, transcendental and empirical... (Derrida, 1997: 7,8).

In addition to these binaries, Derrida suggests that writing is the product of logos; of being as in 'Thought obeying the Voice of the Being' (Derrida, 1997: 20). Thoughts that are visualised through signs and signifiers are used to manifest the presence of a voice/speaker and the illusion of 'being'. It is through these devices

⁶ Lucien Dällenbach, *The Mirror in the Text* transl by J. Whiteley, & E. Hughes (UK, Polity Press, 1989), 17.

that writing is able to disguise language, propelling Derrida to pose the questions: 'where and when does writing begin?'. What these questions do is try to locate the authorial voice. This study will attempt to answer both questions in terms of literary practice, relocating them within artistic practice. However, unlike literature where the voice is suggested and identified through the use of pronouns such as 'I', in artistic practice the 'voice' of the artist is suggested through their authorial identity and signature as evidence of the artist presence. As noted earlier, the presence of the artist/author can be located through the manner in which the artwork is made and curated, the materials used, how objects are arranged in a space, and the way a performance or video is directed. These are among the many methods artists use to insert their 'voice' into the work. It is also these internal and external factors that determine the artist's hand or touch which act as evidence of the work's authenticity (Buskirk, 2003: 26). Green claims artists appear in their art by,

voluntarily placing themselves center-stage in self portraits but also at the margins of all their works, constructing themselves through brush marks, in signature style, by individual preferences and through repeated motifs –in short, from the intersection of subjectivity with medium (Green, 2001: ix).

With this in mind, the goal of this study is to distinguish and compare the differences between the literary 'voice' and the artistic 'voice' and to identify how this voice is performed in both disciplines. This chapter will begin by discussing performative text in which an attempt is made to locate how language is assembled in such a way that it can infer or stage meaning. Once this has been established, the next step is to examine the ways in which language is used to manifest and imply the presence of an authorial voice in literary and artistic practice. To aid my investigation will be an examination of Dahn Vo's *Last letter of Saint Théophane Vénard to his father before he was decapitated copied by Phung Vo* (figure.1), and Tracy Rose's *Span I* (figure.2). I will show the authorial

voice is elusive and takes on multiple facades as both Vo and Rose attempt to multiply and complicate authorial identity. Duplication, as Dällenbach writes is, 'dependent on the decoder's ability to make the substitutions necessary to pass on from one register to another' (Dällenbach 1999: 44). What can be learned from Dällenbach's statement is that the power of duplication is not reserved for these authors but also for the reader. Like the rhizome, because interpretations of text and artworks can vary, both mediums can transform outside their intended meaning. Marechera and Wa Lehlere's demonstration of the authority that the author can possess over the voice, and how this voice can easily be silenced through various gestures of erasure will be discussed in chapter three.

In this section the intention is to address the following two questions:

- In regard to power, can the voice be subjugated especially if the voice accordingly comes from an external source?
- What happens when the voice is multiplied through devices such as the disguise?

An attempt will be made to answer these questions through the analyses of Vo and Rose's works. Further, these works will be used to identify and locate the moments in which authorship is performed audibly or through visual signifiers under the following sub-sections: *Performative Text*; *The Voice*; *Performative Practice*; *Working with Words* and *Span I*.

2.1 Performative text

*[T]ext is experienced only in the activity of production.*⁷

*[A] narrative text is a text in which an agent or subject conveys to an addressee ('tell' the reader) a story in a particular medium, such as language , imagery, sound, buildings or a combination thereof.*⁸

What is performative text? I will explore this through a reading of the work of writer Marachera. Roland Barthes (1974) in the text *S/Z* proposes two types of text which he describes as 'writerly' and 'readerly' text. He defines writerly text as 'ourselves writing'; it is a product of writing that can be written and rewritten by the reader (Barthes, 1974: 4). This kind of text, he argues, creates a reader who is a consumer of text who is unable or too lazy to access the 'magic of the signifier' (Barthes, 1974: 4). Unlike the writerly text, the readerly text is 'what can be read, but not written'; this kind of text has no singular interpretation but multiple ones, like the rhizome, it is 'produced' by the reader. Barthes (1974: 5) adds,

the networks are many and interact without one of them being able to surpass the rest, this text is a galaxy of signifiers... it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one

The notion of the performative text attempts to address how the author/artist uses language (which can come in the form of images, sound and text, to name a few), to perform (subjectivity) or create a narrative. Barthes also suggests that text performs when it is produced, but does this mean that performativity begins when the author arranges languages in such a way to suggest the presence of a speaker/s or that it is performative when the reader interprets it? (thus returning to the notion of the writerly and the readerly text). In this section an attempt will be made to address the performative aspects of authorship specifically focusing

⁷ Roland Barthes, *From Work to Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 157.

⁸ Miek Bal, *Traveling Concepts in the Humanities: a rough guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 5

on how language or text is statically choreographed to create personas or imply the presence of a voice through signifiers, which Barthes believes are activated by the reader (Barthes, 1977: 158). The study will also investigate how the signifier, text or object, if not understood or translatable, can become mute/silent to its reader and take the form of an image/object. This study will also investigate how this concept of a performed text is interpreted in fine art by taking Lacan's theories of 'reality' and 'the real' into consideration whereby 'the one is displayed and the other demonstrated' (Barthes, 1977: 157). Bal in *Narratology* writes,

the difference between narrator and author, carry strategic weight. They help disentangle the different voices that speak in the text to make room for the reader's input in judging the relative persuasiveness of those voices (Bal, 1997: 17).

What this distinction does is to identify the author as the creator of the narrative and the narrator as the imagined voice of the author. But how does the author persuade the reader into believing that the author and narrator are one voice? Aristotle (1997,11) argues, 'spoken words are symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbol of spoken words', how true is this statement? Katja Kellerer believes that despite *The House of Hunger* being interlaced with autobiographical elements, it should not be read as an autobiographical work (Kellerer, 2012: 143). This is because Marechera constantly re-invents and recreates his identity and competing identities, consequently developing different versions of his life-story (Kellerer, 2012: 143). If, as Bal points out, narrative text is a tool the author uses to tell a story to the reader then is it possible that the author is able to persuade the reader through imitating or imagining a reality using signifiers. In Marechera's case the reader is fooled into believing that he/she had chronicled accurate events, mixing the abstract with the concrete. The author is able to construct a 'reality' the reader can relate to – what Bal calls a story. Marechera once stated, 'I write for the reader who is exactly like myself and [who] has experienced what I have experienced and has got the same

feeling as I have' (as cited in Viet-Wild, 1999: 311). But what is reality? Slavoj Zizek suggests,

our approach to reality is always supported by our a priori assumptions and perceptions about the world, even if we do not yet realize this at conscious level (Zizek, 2005: 2).

What Zizek is suggesting is that the writer/author uses this knowledge from the existing world and, through language, constructs an image that the reader imagines (a virtual world) to be 'real' or familiar in attempt to 'represent reality' (Zizek, 2005: 2). It is within this 'virtual world' that writer is able to manipulate their presence or 'persona' and disguise themselves as characters. This space is also where the author, through the process of writing, allows his/her voice to exist in a second space in which he/she can develop a persona, this being a second voice or an 'other'. The persona loosely defined (unlike identity that is largely dependent on external factors) can be said to be internal and determined by internal desires and beliefs, largely determined by free will and personal choice due to preference. It is like being one organism living off another.

Unlike literary texts where pronouns can be used to suggest the presence of a persona, in fine art practice where language comes in the form of objects, signifiers are used to suggest the presence of an authorial identity. This is the 'I' or 'I's who speak. However the artworks chosen for this study are produced using text. How is this 'I' different or similar to that of the literary writing? Lucy Lippard argues that in artistic practice the persona can be

equated to the self, which is first determined by the body that in turn determines how the body projects itself externally or projects itself to other external bodies (Lippard, 1999: 28)

This persona or extended self can be performed through the use of 'the one who speaks' or first person pronoun 'I'. It is like a diary entry in which the reader imagines the author speaking, or the characters voice (Benveniste, 1971: 197).

The 'I' at times can be autobiographical or give an illusion of a first-hand experience; it is the self, writing. The second and third person are defined (using a definition from the Arabic grammarians) as *al-muzatabu* 'the one who is addressed' and *ai-yJ'ibu* 'the one who is absent' (Benveniste, 1971: 197). The author uses these devices as a form of ventriloquism to make present or imply the presence of an addressee, a real person, who is personified through using the second the third person 'you' and 'she'. The intention of text written in the second person is to address the reader directly, for example in theoretical essays, whereas text written in the third person is performed by a speaking agent who is not mentioned itself in the process (Bal, 1997: 21). This enables the narrator to give information to the reader about someone else, in this case the character. Thus, how are these personae performed in literary and artistic practice?

Performance, writes Bal 'connects the past of writing to the present of the experience of the work' (Bal 2002, 176). If performance is 'to speak' and performativity is 'giving voice' then pronouns such 'I', 'you', 'me', 'my' and 'we' give the impression that the narrative or written text has an origin or a 'real' voice (Bal, 2002: 180, 181). Clearly, the intention of performativity and performance is to give the impression of a subject speaking, whether he/she is speaking of or to someone or something. Take the letter copied by Danh Vo's father, written in the first person by Saint Théophane Vénard to his father before he was decapitated, Vénard writes:

A slight sabre-cut will separate my head from my body, like the spring flower which the Master of the garden gathers for His pleasure. We are all flowers planted on this earth, which God plucks in His own good time: some a little sooner, some a little later... I, poor little moth, go first. Adieu.⁹

⁹ Adrian Searle, 2015. *Art among the ruins: Danh Vo's perverse empires*
<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/jan/21/danh-vo-marian-goodman-gallery-review-encounter> (15.10. 2015)

When asked about the work, Vo's reply was:

The work consists of my father copying the last letter of the appraised Saint Théophane Vénard to his own father before he was executed and decapitated by Vietnamese officials in 1861. My father doesn't know what is written in the letter, but is happy for the money I pay him for each. He should get 150 € for his work.

It's a favourite work of mine. It's a drawing since he knows the alphabet but doesn't understand what he is writing¹⁰

In the letter Vénard uses the first, second and third person to address his reader. The pronouns 'my' and 'I' indicate that he is the author of the letter and 'His', (capital 'H') indicates that he is speaking to God, a 'rhetorical figure'. The use of 'we', addresses the reader in the second person by sharing a philosophy. Replacing Vénard's handwriting or 'signature' has not replaced Vénard's voice, rather the reader is given two options: to read the letter as an image or, as Vo says 'a drawing', or to approach the text as a readerly text and to try to interpret or translate the letter (this is of course for non-French speakers). According to Charles Green, collaboration, in this instance Vo's collaboration with his father and an involuntary collaborator Vénard, Vo deliberately alters his artistic identity from individual to 'composite subjectivity' (Green, 2001: x). Although Vo does not actually write the letter, he does play the role of director by commissioning his father to write the letter. In the work, one encounters Vo's voice as the artist, with Vo's father and Vénard as collaborators.

These traits can also be identified in Rose's *Span I*. The text written on the wall, reads:

When I was young . . . I hated my mother not because I thought she was evil but I feared her.... she had light eyes a light brown murky colour ...

¹⁰ Peephole 'Dahn Vo' <http://www.peep-hole.org/ph/danh-vo-02-02-1861> (15.10.2015)

This first person account like Vo's letter is a performative work written by Rose but not performed by her, instead Rose positions herself as a ventriloquist and speaks through the prisoner, who is instructed to transcribe her childhood memories. Green writes, 'many artists have thought carefully about the way they code themselves into their art, manipulating the way they appear' and this is evidenced here in Rose's work (Green, 2001: ix). The story according to Bal,

is the content of that text, and produces a particular manifestation, inflection, and "colouring" of a fabula; the fabulais presented in a certain manner (Bal1997: 5).

The fabulais are a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors (to perform actions) (Bal, 1997: 5). Are they all chronological? Marechera opens *The House of Hunger* with, 'I got my things and left'. This statement comes before a series of events that are later unveiled to the reader throughout the book; the narrative is therefore not linear. In fact, Marechera did not believe in linear narrative. He believed that these narratives were of the coloniser and not indigenous to African storytelling (Shaw, 1999: 11) In an effort to defy the structure of the English narrative he is quoted as saying, 'thoughts that think in straight lines cannot see round corners'¹¹. Using Marechera's statement as a vehicle, one can see Marechera's attempts to diarise what he believes to be events that have occurred not only end up reinventing new versions of the story but also in reinventing himself. In each version Marechera is able to create 'doppelgangers' that resemble the writer, as this is, of course, unknown to the reader who is not familiar with his work.

Barbara Johnson's (1986) essay 'Apostrophe, Animation and Abortion' proposes the idea of the 'rhetorical figure'. Johnson defines the 'rhetorical' as 'language that says one thing and means another' (Johnson, 1986: 29). Johnson believes the 'rhetorical device' is synonymous with the voice, which she then equates with the apostrophe (Johnson, 1986: 29). The apostrophe, according to the *Oxford*

¹¹ Dambudzo Marechera, *The Black Insider* (Harare: Boabab Books, 1980), 37.

dictionary, is 'a sudden exclamatory piece of dialogue addressed to someone or something, especially absent'. Johnson gives a more detailed description, defining the apostrophe as a 'direct address of an absent, dead, or inanimate being by a first-person speaking' (Johnson 1986: 30). This is demonstrated in Wa Lehlere's chalkboard work titled '... so do the writing on them' and the sketch 'The one tall enough to see the morning'. The reader is unsure as to whether Wa Lehlere is speaking or someone else, where this voice is coming from and who is the voice or speaker addressing? Who is 'the one tall enough to see the morning'? Is this an idiom? This 'rhetorical figure' and apostrophe is also experienced in Marechera's *The House of Hunger*, in which he admits to the fictional nature of the narrative and writes,

I was by this creating for myself a labyrinthine personal world which would merely enmesh me within its crude mythology (Marechera, 1978: 17).

It is within this space that the reader experiences fragments of Marechera, which are also interlaced or merged with the characters he creates in the narrative. Certainly, some of these characters were products of hallucinations. Flora Viet-Wild reveals that:

[W]hen he was starting to develop his creative and intellectual personality, he suffered from hallucination, hearing voices threatening and persecuting him (Viet-Wild, 1999: 56,57).

This is suggested in his description of *The House of Hunger*, a metaphor for how the then Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) manifested itself in a condition of alienation and double consciousness (Taitz 1999: 23). Taitz writes: 'The House has now become my mind; and I did not like the way the roof is rattling' (Taitz, 1999: 24).

By equating this mind to the 'House', as a metaphor for not only Rhodesia but also the house in which he was raised, Marechera places emphasis on his inability to escape it. He comes to the realisation that the 'House' is not just physical but psychological. On his use of the English language he writes:

'Shona was part of the ghetto demon I was trying to escape ... This perhaps is in the undergrowth of my experimental use of English, standing it on its head (Hart 2012: 137).

In agreement with Marechera is African American writer Ntozake Shange who writes:

I can't count the number of times I have viscerally wanted to attack deform 'n maim the language that I was taught to hate myself in (Hart 2012: 137).

If apostrophe is a tool the writer uses to make inanimate objects animate, like 'The House', Marechera and Shange metaphorically visualise the English language as an individual, which they can attack, disfigure, dismember and reassemble to serve their own purpose. The perceptions of English which Marechera and Shange share seem in line with Žižek's definition of the superego, which he defines as 'a traumatic voice, an intruder persecuting us and disturbing our psychic balance' (Žižek, 2005: 57). Žižek, contrary to the Derridean idea, believes that writing supplements the voice; not that it is the voice that supplements writing (Žižek, 2005: 57). But what does this mean and where does this voice come from? Again going back to Wa Lehlere's chalkboard work '...so do the writing in them', where the audience/reader is given the impression of a voice speaking. This voice seems to recognise or identify a subject or it is implied that it is speaking to someone, or as Žižek posits, it 'transforms the individual into subjects' by an operation which he calls 'interpellation' (Žižek 2005: 59). What Wa Lehlere does through interpellation is speak to individuals who are already subjects. On this Žižek writes, 'strictly speaking, individuals do not "become" subjects, they "always-already" are subjects' (Žižek 2005: 60). If the subject is already present, could it be that they are located or made visible through the use of pronouns such as 'I', 'me', 'you', 'my', 'we' 'she', used in Vénard's letter, as well as Rose and Marechera's text, or are they metaphorical names such as

'His', 'The House' and 'amnesia', used in the works of Vénard, Marechera and Wa Lehlere?

If performativity is to 'give a voice', artists Marechera, Vo, Rose and Wa Lehlere offer a myriad of methods as to how to manifest this voice. It is also within this space that the writers/artists, which Green proposed, are able to choreograph their presence and carefully position their voices under a disguise, whereby the reader is unable to locate the origins of the voice or is fooled into believing a fictional speaker. In this 'virtual world', the reader is asked to reconsider or take part in the reproduction of 'reality'. Not only can the writer/author stretch, reconfigure and rewrite their identity, but also that of others. In Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson's work, *Performing the body/Performing* they posit

the notion of the performative highlights the open-endedness of interpretation, which must be understood as a process rather than an act with a final goal (Jones & Stephenson, 1988: 1).

Similar to the Barthes' readerly text, the complex nature of performativity leaves room for both the writer/artist and reader to explore themselves within the text. This will be developed in this chapter through an analysis of Vo and Rose's work in conjunction with looking at power relations produced through the multiple performances of the authorial function. This theme will continue into the next chapter this time in an analysis of Marechera and Wa Lehlere's work.

2.2 The voice

*Spoken words are symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbol of spoken words.*¹²

The voice is an object that consists of an arrangement of signs, both images and language, that when put together begin to formulate ideas of the spoken word. If

¹² As cited in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (The John Hopkins University Press: USA, 1997), 11

text is inanimate, does the presence of a reader make it animate? Does this mean the authorial voice disappears into the reader? If there is no voice, whose voice is it? What we learn through writing, according to Derrida, is that the written voice is between 'the wordly and the non-wordly', because language is assembled to evoke audible speech (Derrida, 1997: 8). The concept of writing, he continues, is a 'signifier of the signified'; in this case it is the voice that is a 'supplement of the spoken word' (Derrida, 1997: 7). Using a 'system of notation' like language it seems that what writing makes possible is the experience and replication of speech (Derrida, 1997: 9). But is the idea that writing can imitate the voice convincing? Does all writing mimic a spoken voice? Is it not really a 'spoken voice' that is produced - but an analogue of that? Derrida's subtitle 'The signifier and truth' proposes that the notion of logos is defined as follows:

[I]t inaugurates the destruction, not the demolition but the de-sedimentation, the de-construction, of all the significations that have their source (Derrida, 1997: 10).

What does this mean for the signifier? He writes that the voice or 'original' and the written or *phone* are inseparable (or have always been linked), the phone he continues, it is like 'thought' as logos relates to 'meaning' and produces it, receives it, speaks it and 'composes' it. (Derrida, 1997: 11). In this case, the writer can arrange and manipulate language and symbols in such a way that it mimics attributes that signal the voice. For instance, when writing a narrative, the author may choose to write in the first, second and third person. In all these methods the voice is constantly shifting, from the author's voice to the character's voice and vice versa. This is also one way the authors can insert themselves in the narrative. In the first person, we experience the author as individual with the pronoun 'I'. Here the pronoun is used as a signifier to perform the signified, in this case, creating the perception of a voice that is conscious implying a 'person'. However, what then happens when the signifier is not understood or translatable? Does this mean the voice becomes mute to its reader? And how

does this work in fine art practice, where although there are aspects of writing there are elements of visual images? This will be discussed later in this chapter.

Barthes states that writing 'substitutes language itself for the person who until then had been supposed to be its owner' (Barthes, 1977: 143). Writing, it seems, is a gesture that uses language to give rise to a 'person', the presence of an author in the text. Is this then a 'fictional' author? This supports Barthes' theory that without an authorial death there can be no author and therefore no authorial voice. In the place of the author the reader inherits a text that is representative of authorship. However, what is the authorial voice and how is it performed in artistic practice? Emile Beneveniste maintains that the pronoun 'I' should not only be seen as pronoun but also as a verb, therefore two persons (Beneveniste, 1971: 197). These two persons can be involved a discourse that both use the term 'I'. The one represents a speaker and what Beneveniste states: 'at the same time implies an utterance about 'I' '(Beneveniste, 1971: 197). The Swiss critic Georges Poulet, describing the invasion of the reader by the written narrative, has written:

[H]ere I am thinking a thought which manifestly belongs to another mental world, which is being thought in me just as though I did not exist... . [T]his thought which is alien to me and yet in me, must also have in me a subject which is alien to me... Whenever I read, I mentally pronounce an "I", and yet the "I" which I pronounce is not myself (as cited in Lydenburg, 1978: 420).

Not only does Poulet demonstrate how 'I' implies the presence of an authorial identity and authorial voice but he reveals how this 'I' is used by the author to create the illusion that the author's 'I' is the reader's voice. In the second person, 'I' is replaced by 'you', whereas in the third person there are no predicates (Beneveniste, 1971: 197). When writing in the third person, the authorial voice disappears into the characters; the character's voice/s in the narrative replaces the authorial voice. Instead the author acts as a non-personal narrator; unlike the first person narrative whereby the writer gives autobiographical accounts, or the

second person narrative where the writer speaks directly to the reader, the third person speaks for the characters. The writer is used to communicate the character's voice.

In *Of grammatology*, Derrida describes the personification of the voice as the voice being heard and understood, 'closest to the self as the absolute effacement of the signifier' (Derrida, 1997, 20). This suggests that the closer the voice gets to a kind of 'realness' or 'humanness' the further away we move from the physicality of what is written, that being text. The voice erases the text and disappears into an actual audible voice. Derrida argues that this voice 'is the unique experience of a signified producing itself spontaneously, from within the self, and nevertheless, as signified concepts in the element of ideality or universality' (Derrida, 1997: 20). These factors play a role in producing the illusion of speaker and convincing the reader that the voice comes from a 'being'. To continue this discussion on the voice, the idea will now be explored through the work of Vo and Rose, focusing specifically on how both artists speak through other 'voices'.

In the *Last letter of Saint Théophane Vénard to his father before he was decapitated copied by Phung Vo* is a commissioned letter transcribed by Vo's father Phung Vo, a skilled calligrapher. A French missionary originally wrote the letter in 1861 on the eve of his execution for the crime of proselytising Christianity in Vietnam, not yet under French colonial domination (Robecchi, 2012: 124). This gesture by Vo attempts to push the past into the present; we are able to experience Saint Vénard's voice in the present. Phung Vo's inability to speak French also shifts the work into another sphere whereby the work can be read as an arrangement of symbols. Derrida writes, 'the reading of the hieroglyphs is for itself a deaf reading and mute writing' (Derrida, 1997: 25). Saussure writes that writing 'exists for the sole purpose of representing speech' (as cited in Derrida, 1997: 30). Vo's choice to use his father who does not speak French is representative of this. Language is transformed into what Derrida describes as

the 'representative', a 'signifier of the first signifier', that is representative of the self-present voice (Derrida, 1997: 30). However because of Vo's father's inability to experience Saint Vénard's voice, he remains distant from the missionaries' voice; it is muted and this means the voice of the source is not heard. An audience that is unable to read or speak French also shares this experience. Instead they encounter a stylised text whose voice they cannot access, which results in the erasure of Saint Vénard's voice. If the apostrophe is a form of 'ventriloquism through which the speaker throws voice, life and human form into the addressee, turning its silence into mute responsiveness', then for the non-French speaker this addressee's voice remains absent (Johnson, 1986: 30). Derrida argues that the mark of deletion is not a 'negative symbol' (Derrida, 1997: 23). Instead 'under its strokes the presence of the transcendental signified is effaced while still remaining legible' and is destroyed while making visible the very idea of sign (Derrida, 1997: 23). What one learns from Derrida is that although Vo's refusal to translate the letter acts as a 'cancelation' of the Saint Vénard's voice, this 'crossing out' does not necessarily remove the presence of a voice.

If the voice is considered to be an independent entity that is spontaneous and self-generative then, like sound, it can be muted. This muting can take the form of translations (Gartenfeld, 2012). Here the voice is appropriated; it recognises its root but acts like a rhizome, creating an 'original' out of an 'original'. The notion of the 'original' assumes that there is one authentic idea and that this idea is independent from external influence. This is not true, as there could be external influence that is simply unknown. This also speaks to the complex layering or reference and quotation that characterises contemporary art. In this case the Saint Vénard's letter (the original) is duplicated multiple times to create other 'originals'. Although the text remains the same each letter is an original because it is handwritten differently. Vo complicates the work even further by allowing collators to commission the work. One then encounters multiple

collaborators or what Johan Cage describes as co-authors (Shapiro & Cage, 1985: 108). In the title he recognises the original author of the text (*Last letter of Saint Théophane Vénard*), but does this reaffirm that the authorial voice remains the same because the content has not changed? In the second part of the title he uses the word 'copied', implying that the text has been reproduced. Here Vo acknowledges a kind of appropriation. However, through this re-presentation, could it still be said that the reader experiences a single authorial voice? Instead of appropriating the voice, Vo appropriates the authors' handwriting, in a sense his signature. Although the content remains the same, Vo seems to ask the question: how does one determine an author's voice if the source is not the writer? Should the writer be considered as the only source of the authorial voice? Gartenfeld (2012) writes, 'If multiple, then the voice can belong to many sources'. The work engages with three types of narration; one is told the letter was originally written by Saint Vénard who in this case is 'I'; Vo instructs his father, who in this case is 'you'; Vo's father then performs in the third person, reproducing Saint Vénard's voice. This notion of the multiplication and erasure of the 'voice' will be explored further in relation to power in chapter three.

Rose in *Span I* uses a similar method to Vo's, except in this case Rose commissions a prisoner to write her own letter. *Span I* is a performance work by Rose in which a man dressed as a prisoner engraves a text on a wall. The prisoner is asked by Rose to inscribe memories from her childhood, many of which have to do with black hair politics and racial marking (Fleetwood, 2011: 31). By commissioning the prisoner, 'Rose employs the prisoner to perform her confessions' (Fleetwood, 2011: 31). The engraving seems to suggest the permanence of these memories/confessions. As confessions, they suggest a present speaker, an individual's voice, an imaged voice, which in this case constitute Rose's 'symbols of a mental experience' (Fleetwood 2011: 81).

Unlike Vo, ne experiences a voice vicariously through Rose, this implies that the source of the voice is unknown. Rose could have simply created a character to reiterate her own memories. Echoing Gartenfeld's claim that the voice can come from multiple sources. This is further complicated by the visual act of the prisoner who uses language like Vo's father who is used as a producer of signifiers. The only difference is that the prisoner has access to what is he inscribing, Rose's voice is available to him. He is not separated from the text. Derrida writes that the written word is 'outside, the exterior representation of language and of this thought-sound' (Derrida, 1997: 31). Derrida suggests that one should think of language and the voice as two separate entities: language being the external and the voice being the internal. In order to experience the voice one first has to understand the language/signifier. This experience is lost in Vo's work. Derrida clarifies the writers' role as that which arranges text and information in such a way that is a metaphoric representation of speech. The audience is given the impression of Rose speaking. Her voice is imagined, she is, 'I'. However in Rose's work, the prisoner performs authorship as he performs the act of inscription of language while Rose is the assumed source of the voice. From this 'collaboration' and Vo's we learn that the authorial voice, it seems, does not necessarily always come from the writer. The writer, like language, can be used as tool to evoke a voice.

Barthes argues, the author should be considered a voice not a person; literature he writes is a 'trap where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes' (Barthes, 1977: 142). If one removes Rose, one is left with a voice, an anonymous voice that is independent of its source. One can then say that both Vo and Rose's work propose that one considers whether the origin of the authorial voice is important and whether it is her voice that is speaking. What then is the role of the writer? Is the writer a producer of symbols that are eventually converted into a mimesis of the spoken word by their reader? This work suggests that the reader is an agent that activates the voice; if Rose's work

performs the separation between the language/signifier and voice. The one is the voice while the other performs a voice.

Lucy Lippard in her essay 'Scattering selves' calls out some preconceptions that have dogged identity. Identity, she states, has always fallen under the umbrella of a formal categorisation with its function to separate one 'thing' from another: gender, race, class and even religion (Lippard, 1999: 28). Not only is it categorised but it also falls under the trap of being a predetermining identity, fixing it to a 'thing', object or person, a singular mould of identification. The identity referred to here is that of the African artist, of whom Oguibe in 'Art, Identity, Boundaries' writes:

[W]ithin the scheme of their relationship with the West, it is forbidden that African artists should possess the power for self-definition, the right to authority. It is forbidden that they should enunciate outside the gaze, and free of the interventionist powers, of others. (Oguibe 1999: 20).

By prohibiting the African artist's ability to define him/herself, the authorial voice is silenced, and the act of narration is then an attempt to control in an effort to redetermine her identity. This silence is specific, argues Oguibe, as it is accompanied by the constructs that come with 'Otherness':

[T]he native's utterances are not speech. They occupy the site of the guttural, the peripheries of sense, the spaces of the unintelligible where words are caught in a savage struggle and sounds turn into noise, into the surreal mirror-image of language... In this void of incoherence, utterance becomes silence because it is denied the privilege of audience, (Oguibe, 1999: 18).

Here, this control over the author-ity of the Other's voice reaffirms a Eurocentric gaze on the Other as object and not subject. Marechera attempts to distance himself from this 'incoherent utterance' by choosing to break the English language so that it is forced to behave and possess some idioms of the African language. His writing breaks the standard of 'Western' realist, linear narrative texts and is considered to be 'experimental' even while, as he himself noted,

linearity and closure were not indigenous to African storytelling but were imposed as part of an enlightenment project (Shaw, 1999:11). By this Oguibe highlights how indigenous modes of storytelling have been erased and how this denial of African artist's voices enabled the absence and erasure of the African artist's voice. In the next chapter the problem of how these systems of power have marginalized the voice of the so-called Other will be covered.

What is evident in Vo and Rose's work is the relationship between the voice and language. These works ask that one reconsiders the origin of the voice, which one learns does not exist without language, nor does it necessarily come from the writer. How then does the reader/audience participate? The reader/audience can be said to be someone who activates the authorial voice. It is the reader/audience who acknowledges the presence of a voice or at times a muted voice, it is the reader who is the interpreter.

2. 3 Work with words

Visual language is a term used for eye contact, avoidance of eye contact, depth of eye contact, eye movement or lack thereof¹³

If the written word imitates the spoken and written form of language by representation of sounds with visual symbols then the inability of Vo's father to translate, read and interpret the French language puts him in a position in which he is unable to access the spoken word (Wa Thiong'o, 1968:14). What Ashcroft describes as 'meaning' in his statement, "*meaning is meant* by the person who utters it and is *taken to mean* something by the person who hears it" (Ashcroft 2002: 298). This inability to 'hear' the speaker alienates Vo's father from the presence of a speaker, and therefore he is unable to 'reveal' or decode what is

¹³Thomas Maroukis, *Oppressed/Oppressor: Visual Language as Metaphors of Separation in La Guma and Writing* (African World Press: Trenton, 2002), 155

written in the text (Ashcroft, 2002: 298). The text remains silent, forcing Vo's father to read the text as an image. Vo's behavior is reflective of what Foucault describes as a 'conductor', who 'leads others and ways of behaving within an open field of possibilities', the 'others' being the audience/reader (Foucault, 2000: 341). This 'open field' gives the audience/reader the autonomy to engage and respond to the work from multiple viewpoints; it induces 'a set of actions or possible actions' (Foucault, 2000: 341). It is unlike the closed field which through violent imposition 'forces... destroys, or closes off all possibilities', refusing the subject, who this power is exerted upon, to be enclosed within a set of fixed or permanent structures without room for flexibility (Foucault, 2000: 340).

Similarly, having orchestrated how Saint Vénard's letter is exhibited and presented Vo controls how the letter and work is interpreted. The audience is then compelled to ask why Vo has chosen not to translate the letter from French to English, why he has chosen this specific letter and what is written in the letter? In this section the aim is to identify whether there is any validity to Caughies' (1981) theory that the term 'author' is used to apply to the process of reading and spectating and Barthes' argument that it is in fact language that speaks and not the author. The focus of this study will be on how Vo's silencing of the French language mimics the symbolic violence of monolingualism.

Ashcroft claims words are not simply as we perceive them to be; they have multiple meanings. These meanings vary in every culture and mother tongue depending on how they are used (Ashcroft, 2002: 298). Each language possesses an idiom and nuance, which translation struggles to imitate and which are sometimes 'held to be the key to the incommunicability of cultural experience' (Ashcroft, 2002: 300). Benjamin agrees with Bhabha's theory of 'the same but not the same', when Benjamin asserts that the translator can never do what the original language did, it will always come second to the original (Benjamin, 1985: 35). In James McGuire's opinion, the fundamental dilemma of the translator

resembles that of the bilingual author; just as the bilingual writer betrays one language in their choice of the other, so the translator misrepresents or is unfaithful to the original (McGuire, 2002: 79). Benjamin also makes a very important observation, regarding the difference between art and translation. Translated by Zohn (1968: 75), Benjamin states: 'Although translation, *unlike* art, cannot claim permanence for its products...' (De Man, 1985: 35).

What he proposes is that in art translation processes such as appropriation transform the translated into a new work that is independent of the original. It is argued in this study that it is a new work and not a copy of the original, and therefore here Bhabha's theory of 'the same but not same' does not apply - it is not the same. This is evident in Vo's appropriation of Saint Vénard's letter.

Vo's 'silent' text could be said to perform what Thomas Marouks describes as the reflective dichotomy between the oppressor/oppressed that is parallel to visibility/invisibility (Marouks, 2002: 157). Invisibility he writes, is a counter-point to visibility, similar to the pass laws used in apartheid South Africa to control the movement and invisibility of black South Africans, whose visibility meant danger (Marouks, 2002: 157). Marouks quotes Alex La Guma's (1972: 82) (an American writer) book *In the fog of the season's end*, in which he re-enacts a dialogue between white authorities and an African without a pass, he writes:

You will be nothing, nobody, in fact you will be decreed. You will not be able to go anywhere on the face of this earth, no man will be able to give you work, nowhere will you be able to be recognized; you will not eat or drink; you will be as nothing, perhaps even less than nothing.

If the body is a metaphor of language, La Guma reminds us of the relationship between the body and language, specifically of the violence that language can inflict on the body (or a person) through naming that renders the colonised invisible. Fanon in *Lived experience of the black man* posits that this perception of the colonised is an 'image from the third person', that negates the body of the

colonised (Fanon, 1967: 90). This is interpellated through words such as 'nothing', 'nobody' and 'nowhere', which are spoken in an authoritative and instructive tone. The African is warned that the oppressor determines their existence or visibility, which can easily be 'decreated'. Similarly, Vo's father's inability to 'voice' the speaker evokes this notion of the invisible African. His inability to hear 'nothing' and 'nobody' and to translate what the speaker is saying leaves him in limbo. However Vo uses his father's deafness to his advantage, the letter is appropriated into roman signs and symbols that refer back to a colonial history. In an interview regarding the work Vo states:

Vietnamese is the only Asian country that during French rule converted their written language into roman letters. Traditionally a skilled handwriting would in Vietnam enhance the possibilities of getting "better" jobs.¹⁴

Vo does not seem interested in translating the text, rather his interest lies in the letter as an object, an object that can not only be copied multiple times but also attempts to 'erase the time gaps between the 1860s, 1960s and 2000s, and to illuminate a semi-obscure chapter of Vietnamese history' (Robecchi, 2012:124). Vo's father's deafness is reflective of Vietnam's resistance to Christianity by the Vietnamese (Robecchi, 2012:124). By making the letter (object) visible, Vo opens up the conversation on the politics of language and colonisation. Wa Thiong'o believes colonisation's success depended on two aspects of the same process:

the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their arts, dances, religions, history and geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizer (Wa Thiong'o, 1968: 16).

He adds:

But since the new, imposed language could never completely break the native languages as spoken; their most effective area of domination was the third aspect of language as communication, the written (Wa Thiong'o, 1968: 17)

¹⁴ Peephole 'Dahn Vo' <http://www.peep-hole.org/ph/danh-vo-02-02-1861/> (15. 11. 2015)

Vo's work reflects this dichotomy between the refusal to use the French language and the adaptation of the roman letters, a residue of the colonial histories of both countries. By choosing not to translating the language, Vo not only negates the language but he exerts power over the language. Instead he chooses to 'silence' the text which is, of course, the same experience as for non-French speakers. Those who can read and understand the language are petitioned to engage with the colonial history of Saint Vénard, Vietnam and France. However for Vo's father the work performs a closed field of possibilities as it imitates the isolation and deafness that comes with the inability to understand or translate a language, which essentially disempowers his father. Vo therefore enacts what Bourdieu describes as 'symbolic violence', a power strategically structured to ensure that 'one dominates another' (Bourdieu, 1991: 167). Vo reproduces the conditions created by colonialism. Similarly, Neville Alexander in *After apartheid: the language question*, claims that languages, just like cities or families, can be planned with the intention to 'suit the interests of different groups of peoples' (Alexander, 2011: 313). In the context of apartheid South Africa, the enforcement of Afrikaans and English as dominant languages of communication meant these languages were imposed on black South Africans, disempowering indigenous languages. Alexander argues that this denial of the use of their mother-tongue was the very means of oppression (Alexander, 2011: 314). However, in post-apartheid South Africa, English would become legitimised as the dominant language or language of power (as French and Portuguese were in former colonies within Africa) and as the more suited and valued language of communication, it fostered monolingualism and marginalization of the 'local languages of the people' (Alexander, 2011: 316). Vo reproduces this relationship between the powers of language and uses French as a language of power by choosing to not translate the letter for his father. In an attempt to confront these hierarchies he uses his father's disempowerment to make the systems of colonial structures visible.

2.4 *Span I*

*I hated my mother not because I thought she was evil but I feared her she had light eyes a light brown murky colour yet almost translucent in their lightness does that sound impossible translucentlightmurkybrown but such were eyes they were different eyes for a coloured woman to have yet remember a dark person with eyes like that he was coloured but blackcoloured you know ... very very dark with my mother's murky brown eyes and he was evil he was very very bad- I remember thinking that if he wasn't so black he wouldn't be so evil I think everyone must have thought that because they call him black Shawn...*¹⁵

Exhibited at the National Gallery in a show curated by Colin Richards titled 'Graft', *Span I* is a performance work by an ex-prisoner commissioned by Rose to transcribe on a gallery wall. Annie E. Coombes describes the work as 'art work by proxy' (Coombes, 2003: 257). Coombes identifies similarities between Rose's narrative and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) testimonies. The TRC hearings, chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, were first held in 1996 to 'investigate gross human rights violations between 1960 and 1994' in an effort to 'heal the wounds of the divided society' (Coombes 2003: 8). Perpetrators, in exchange for amnesty, were given the opportunity to disclose their crimes to victims through oral hearings. However, the hearings were heavily criticised for the compromises made in the name of 'national unity' and reconciliation in that the TRC allowed many perpetrators to walk free (Coombes, 2003: 8). One of the main reasons was that the TRC assumed that their disclosure of the 'truth' would empower the victims. Coombes argues, however, that this was not the case as many of these perpetrators benefited from the structures established in apartheid South Africa that left many 'non-white' South Africans powerless and living in poverty (Coombes, 2003: 8). This is still a reality in post-apartheid South Africa. Rose's work reflects on these TRC oral hearings, as they documented the individual memories and experiences of witnesses, perpetrators and victims – all

¹⁵ abstract from Tracey Rose video *Sticks and Stone*, 1997

of which were assumed to be 'truthful'. But memory can have many flaws, as it is a subjective experience that can be fragmented and disconnected, therefore it is unreliable especially if the witness, perpetrator or victim's memory is traumatic. Culbertson in 'Embodied memory...' suggests that there is a distinct difference between narrative and traumatic memory in that trauma is,

full of fleeting images, the percussion of blows, sounds, and movements of the body-disconnected, cacophonous, the cells suffuse with the active power of adrenalin or coated with anesthetizing numbness of noradrenalin (Culbertson, 1995, 26).

In an attempt to mimic the oral TRC testimonies, Rose's text is written in the first person singular to create the perception of the voice. In addition she uses language to perform the presence of a voice and trauma by not using punctuation to separate her memories, and in doing so she performs what Coombes describes as a 'stream of consciousness' that is presumed to be unedited and unmediated (Coombes, 2003: 257). If we accept Derrida's argument that language and the voice are separate entities, language being the external and the voice being the internal, then Rose's text is carefully structured with consideration of the relationship between two. From the external there is the appropriation of the English language and disregard of structure and punctuation; from the internal the text tries to evoke a disorientated speaker in a hurry to explain and describe their memories in the fear that they might forget by creating words like 'blackcoloured' and 'translucentlightmurkybrown'.

Transcribed by a prisoner whose crime is not disclosed to the audience, Rose's memories could easily be mistaken to be his or alternatively, he could be a witness. The term witness suggests that these memories, like Marechera's memory of his father's death, are experienced from the prisoner's viewpoint, or a persona in history. In *Witness and memory: the discourse of trauma* Ana Douglas argues that:

[The] acts of witness are required to establish an event as worthy of witnessing. The “event” that interpellates its witnesses must be an atrocity, inflicting on them trauma that makes them members of that category (Douglas & Vogler, 2003: 10).

This is strategically achieved through the words such as ‘feared’ and ‘evil’ used in the text. But to gain further knowledge of the witness Foucault posits that the next step is to,

account for the fact that it is spoken about, to discover who does the speaking, the position and viewpoints from which they speak, the institutions which prompt people to speak about it... (Foucault 1978: 11).

This notion establishes that the text abstracts from Rose’s memories as a child in apartheid South Africa. Instead the text is shaped to reflect on identity politics, race and naming as used in apartheid South Africa and which still exists ‘post-apartheid’ South Africa. For instance the term ‘coloured’ in the apartheid era was used to label people of mixed race origin. Rose questions this naming by creating descriptive words such ‘blackcoloured’. By merging the two terms she reiterates the popular view of the ‘coloured’ identity in South Africa, which is neither white or black but a product of what Mohammed Adhikari describes as ‘miscegenation’ (as cited in Perlus & Isaacs-Martin, 2012: 90). The term blackcoloured speaks to the social divisions between those who were considered black (because they were dark skinned) and those light skinned coloureds (who could pass as white). Rose remembers, ‘he was coloured but blackcoloured you know ... very very dark with my mothers murky brown’. However Perlus and Isaacs-Martin warn of the danger of reducing the coloured identity as a result of race mixing, rather they propose that in order to dismantle this misconception of the origin of coloured identity that one recognises that coloured identity is,

the result of the agency of coloured people themselves who have blended elements of South African and other cultures and fashioned them into a creative identity (Perlus & Isaacs-Martin 2012: 91).

It is this Creolisation of identity that Rose attempts to document for the reader by writing, 'but such were eyes they were different eyes for a coloured woman to have yet remember a dark person with eyes like'. She describes the wall text as confessions: 'The text is a series of personal memories, the secrets that you don't tell during a confession. As against the "white lies" I've told priests' (Coombes, 2003: 257).

The skill of the autobiographical writer, notes Levin and Taitz, entails a combination of two narrative genres, fiction and history (Levin and Taitz, 1999: 163). In support of this theory is American sociologist Michael Schudson's observation of memory: that '[it] is not the property of individual minds, but a diverse and shifting collection of material artifacts and social practices' (as cited in Klein, 2011: 117). Memory like the autobiography, it seems, is not immune to the influence of external factors that impact what is perceived, remembered and how it is remembered. The cautionary note of Schudson, and Levin and Taitz is that the danger of memory is that it is a 'convenient repository in which the past is preserved inviolate, ready for the inspection of retrospect at any future date', in other words it is open to re-interpretation (Levin and Taitz, 1999: 168). Rose uses the uncertainty of memory to question and reiterate the flaws of the TRC. The work also suggests that there is possibility that those who testified could have been coached into giving false statements or 'white lies' (Levin & Taitz, 1999: 169).

As previously stated the relationship between Rose and the ex-prisoner is a like that of a ventriloquist and a puppet that performs a voice. Green proposes that

artistic collaboration by couples have the propensity to create what he describes as a 'third artistic identity' that is superimposed over and exceeds the individual artist's identity (Green, 2001: 179). This third identity is a result of what Freud posits as 'doubling' of the self, this doubling is "marked by the fact that the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he/she is in doubt as to which his/her own self is, or he/she might substitute the extraneous self for his/her own. In other words, there is 'a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self' (Freud, 1919: 234). But how does this apply to Rose's work, especially since it is not a collaboration? It seems Rose is the conductor. The 'third identity' is based on mimicry in that the collaborating artists perform the same gestures, this also the same in Rose's case except it is not the gesture that is performed but the narrative and the voice. Rose doubles herself through the prisoner's reproduction of her memories. She is in control of the narrative; the prisoner is used as a 'go-between' or phonograph between Rose and the audience. The audience experiences what Taussig describes as 'a copy of the master's voice', Rose's memories are replicated by the prisoner (Taussig, 1993: 224,). In an analysis of Francis Barraud's painting *His Master's Voice*, in which a dog is depicted 'talking' into a phonograph, Taussig proposes that the dog performs a kind of mimesis in that it uses the phonograph to teach itself how to 'speak' by reproducing the sound that comes out of the phonograph (Taussig, 1993: 211). However, the relationship between the dog and the master's voice is interdependent. The dog's imitation validates the master's voice. This 'controlled mimesis' writes Taussig, 'is an essential component of socialization and discipline ... in which colonialism has played a big role' (Taussig, 1993: 219). In *Of mimicry and man: the ambivalence of colonial discourse*, Homi Bhaba describes colonial mimicry as 'reformed, recognizable Other', that 'fixes the colonial subject as a "partial" presence' (Bhabha, 1984: 127). If mimicry rejects the identity of the colonised while; imposing and promoting the identity of the coloniser. Colonial structures fix the colonial subject as a 'partial' presence writes Bhabha and 'by partial presence I mean both "incomplete" and "virtual" (Bhabha,

1984: 127). To 'rid' him/herself of this, the colonised subject has to incorporate some elements of the coloniser, such as adopting Christianity or English mannerisms. By dictating the 'Others' behaviour the coloniser exerts power through control, which can affect how the colonised is perceived and represented. However mimesis can also work in favour of the colonised subject who can use it to interpellate, mock and appropriate.

In summary, this discussion of the voice above has revealed the strategies used by the artist/author to determine the presence and experience of the voice through the performativity of language. This, as seen above, can be performed through various disguises. Through rhetorical devices the author is able to produce a subject who speaks, or one who is spoken for and a subject that is addressed. Vo demonstrates the authority that the author can possess over the voice, and how this voice can easily be silenced through various gestures of erasure. Rose's *Span I* interrogates the relationship between power and language, how it can be manipulated, first by Rose's decision to employ someone else to write her narrative, the second by questioning the ethics of the TRC testimonies, the exclusion of other narratives (hers and the personal experiences of others that were not included in the hearings) as well as the identity politics enforced by apartheid. This ability to erase the voice one learns from Oguibe, has enabled the West to deny African artists the right to define themselves, to speak for themselves. The next chapter will continue to explore the voice, the disguise, and erasure of the voice in the works of Marechera, and Wa Lehlere in terms of the erasure of the colonised. The intention is to identify how these artists/authors counter and subvert erasure.

CHAPTER 3: The subject and power

[P]ower, the ability to possess unquestionably, to exercise uncontested authority and manipulate at will... (Ougibe, 1999:23)

What happens when individuals exert power over others? Foucault in his essay 'The subject and power' defines power as the 'relation between individuals or between groups' (Foucault, 2000: 337). To answer this question Foucault proposes another question: how is power exerted? Before one can understand how the individual or group uses power, one has to identify the different forms of power. Foucault addresses two kinds: the first is violence. Violence he writes 'acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it breaks, it destroys, or it closes off all possibility' (Foucault, 2000: 340). Bear in mind that this kind of power operates within fields or systems that are created by those in positions of power, such as laws, economics, institutions and ideologies. However, for these systems to possess and implement this power one has to recognise that power functions in relation to a subject that is acted upon, it exists only through application, or as Foucault says, 'only when it is put into action' (Foucault, 2000: 340). One of the ways power can be 'put into action' is through communication, of course there are diverse forms of communication but the focus of this study will be on how language performs power. For instance, Foucault proposes that in language power is exercised through 'the production and exchange of signs'; in literature through language (text) and in fine art practice through various signs such as text, video and performance art, mixed-media (Foucault, 2000: 338). In expanding on the notion of power, Pierre Bourdieu in the essay 'On symbolic power', proposes that one should consider power as symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991). This power, he writes, is:

[I]nvisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subjects to it or even that they themselves exercise it (Bourdieu 1991: 164).

Bourdieu's theory forces one to rethink the power relations between signs and language and the audience/reader, who, unsuspecting of the invisible powers of 'production and exchange', can fall victim to reproducing the same conditions. Foucault reiterates this by stating, 'power is not a matter of consent', and this is where violence comes into play (Foucault, 2000: 340). This asserts that power violates and infringes on the freedom of the subject upon whom power is exerted. Bourdieu describes this as 'symbolic violence'. The systems within these power structures, he writes, are controlled in such a way that they ensure that 'one dominates another' (Bourdieu, 1991: 167). For example, during the time of segregation between races (black, white and coloured) as created in apartheid South Africa and the US segregationist states the terms 'Kaffir' or 'Negro' were used to label black people. As such, the violence of translation erased 'the ranges of "nuance" and "connotation" which are sometimes held to be the key to the incommunicability of cultural *experience*' (Ashcroft, 1995: 300). But how does this power exist? Bourdieu reminds us that language, like any system, is a structured system that 'has to be restructured in order to account for the constant relation between sound and meaning' and if 'symbolic structures' are instruments of communication then they have to exist within a structure (Bourdieu, 1991: 166). A structure's formulation is based on hierarchies that are designed or put in place to enable power to be 'put into action'. But what happens when these power structures are opposed?

Apart from tackling power, this chapter will examine themes such as the relationship between: violence and language; violence and the body; translation and monolingualism in an effort to locate how these forms of power are confronted, performed, reproduced and resisted in the works of Marechera and

Wa Lehlere. The study will also be addressing the polar opposite of 'relation between individuals or between groups'; the power that Foucault describes as a 'power relationship'. The intention is to question how authorial power is implemented, especially with regard to the methods used by both the writer/artist through signs and signifiers to 'conduct' specific narratives. If the author is the 'conductor', how can the author exert power?

Before these questions are addressed this chapter will begin by examining the ways in which language is used to manifest and imply the presence of an author in literature and artistic practice. To aid this investigation, firstly an examination of Dambudzo Marechera's novel *The House of Hunger* will attempt to locate how this Zimbabwean writer uses his authorial identity and authorial voice to disguise himself through his characters to suggest a fragmented identity. Like Marechera, by shifting from one discipline to another in fine art practice. In Kemang Wa Lehlere's *Some deleted scenes too* this study looks at how the artist uses erasure as a form of mark-making but most importantly how his work addresses the erasure of the voice. This will be followed by a discussion dedicated to identifying the relationship between authorship and authority in Marechera and Wa Lehlere's work.

3.1 Performative practice

*when we submerge
you into me and I into you
when we vanish
into me you and into you I*

*Then
am I me and you are*

-Anonymous

[P]erformance being the arrangement of word and performativity, 'as the power to speak, to 'do' (Bal, 2002, 188)

The persuasive nature of authorship is dependent on a clever use of language. Not only can language be arranged to communicate a narrative but it can also be used to insert hidden messages. As creator, the writer can put his or her own subjectivity into play by projecting it into the interiority of the character enmeshed in the social world represented in the novel. Wa Thiong'o in *Writers in politics* likens the writer to a wordsmith. According to him the writer/author tries to persuade his readers to not only envision a certain reality but also form a certain perception of a reality. What Wa Thiong'o seems to be suggesting is that the writer/author's ideas function under a 'disguise'. Bearing in mind the idea of disguise is a concept borrowed from artistic practice that this writer herself applies to literary writing, it is within this disguise that the author can take on multiple personas as narrator and characters. The author supposedly occupies an imaginary space in the simple sense that she does not 'exist', either on the plane of reality in the story or of the book. It is within this space that she is able to take on these multiple personas, hiding in plain sight. It is therefore suggested here that it is through this disguise that the authors are able to insert themselves into their narratives.

Linguist Ferdinand de Saussure states, 'writing veils the appearance of language; it is not a guise for language but a dis-guise' (as cited in Derrida, 1997: 35). What Saussure suggests is that writing itself is already a manipulative medium. John Brenkman further suggests that through writing the author takes part in what he describes as 'implied authorship'. He writes,

an implied author occupies a perspective; an author engages in an act of writing. Narrative theory in effect reduced the act of writing, that is, the actual author's practice, to nothing more than the process of creating the implied author (Brenkman 2000: 284).

For Brenkman, authorship is a clever arrangement of words that imply the presence of a narrative, voice and persona. If its user is not aware of this, it is easy for the reader to not only be fooled by the authorial voice but also the text. Derrida emphasises that the dis-guise is fluid by the complex relationship between the 'outside/exterior and inside/interior',

the meaning of the outside was always present within the inside, imprisoned outside the outside, and vice versa (Derrida, 1997: 35).

If meaning cannot be rounded down to one source and if the source was already inside and not necessarily outside then one can be easily fooled into thinking that meaning is only from the outside. This creation of an imaginary space of narration is a complex stylisation, a kind of rhetorical zone in which the narrator 'recounts' events, actions, emotions, and thoughts as though he or she has 'observed' them (Brenkman, 2000: 284). Creative methods applied by Marechera who in his narratives takes on the persona of characters, personas situated inside of the character: the character being the body while the persona is the soul of the character. In this space he experiments with the idea of authorship as shifting identity and how he – by splitting himself – he performs the roles of part author, narrator and character, reinventing himself, shifting and exchanging one

role for another throughout the narrative. This means that not only does he originate the narratives but he also becomes the subject matter of his work. Like Rose, he fuses his life and his work, bonding the two into life-as-work or life-in-work (Buuck, 1997: 120).

Jean Fisher in *Embodied subversion* writes,

the trickster performs the role of thief, liar, glutton, libertine, agent provocateur and shape-shifter, whose tropes circulate around language, ethics and social change (Fisher, 2004: 59).

In Marechera's work, the trickster is located in his skillful use of the pronoun 'I', the 'I' that speaks for him and his characters who claim to have their own voice outside of their maker. However, can this idea of the disguise be associated with fine art practice? In the works by Rose, Wa Lebulere and Vo there is no specific 'I' that functions like that of the writer, instead attributes of the trickster can be seen in performative gestures –whether it be through their roles as producer, director and the objectification of the art work. In both Vo's and Rose's work the authorial voice is complicated, for instance the audience can be fooled into thinking that Vo or his father are the original authors of the letter and that the prisoner is transcribing his own memories and not Rose's. The character and this anonymity, combined with the voice's 'feeling' and the personal but not private meanings of the words, writes Bal, 'literally stages subjectivity' (Bal, 2002: 189). Unlike literary writing, in fine art practice, processes like appropriation and collaboration move away from the individual author, leaning towards a combined author with limitless authorial voices. This is present in Vo's process when he curates an involuntary collaboration between the French missionary and his father. Earlier, Green had pointed out that conceptual artists use of the word 'fiction' in their artist's statements allowed them to question and reinvent the artist's identity (Green, 2001: 46). Part of this reinvention meant artists could perform the act of 'speaking for someone else' (Green, 2001: xiii). In Vo's case,

however, although the narrative remains the same by instructing that Saint Vénard's signature be replaced with calligraphy, there is an element of erasure. Derrida's proposes that one thinks of the last writing as the first writing, implying that within erasure there is a kind of mark-making that does not necessary delete what was being written over or rewritten, instead it enhances its visibility (Derrida, 1997: 23). This is the case in Vo's work, where for the non-French speaker Saint Vénard's voice/message is reduced to an alphabet, transformed into a decorated image and a wordless text. Demonstrating Vo's authority over the letter, which dictates how the reader experiences the letter and Saint Vénard's voice.

If performativity is the 'power to speak and to 'do'', then the artist/writer, as demonstrated in the above discussed examples, through a strategic arrangement of signifiers can replicate or perform fictive or personal narratives through repetition, editing, mimicry and erasure – methods that can be invisible to an audience. In this space of performativity the artist/writer is able modify a persona through translation, erasure, doubling and appropriation.

3.2 Skill and complexity: disguise and self-erasure

*I myself am the doppelganger whom, until I appeared, African literature
had not yet met me¹⁶*

Marechera's life and his work are closely intertwined. Written while he was studying at Oxford University, *The House of Hunger* is a novella that consists of a compilation of short stories, all which seemed to reflect on his childhood and the political status of the then Rhodesia. In a description of *The House of Hunger* Katja Kellerer writes, 'despite being interlaced with autobiographical elements [it] cannot be read as an autobiographical work' (Kelleler, 2012: 143), this is because, argues Kellerer,

¹⁶ Dambudzo Marechera, *The House of Hunger* (London: Heinemann, 1978), 35

[t]he author constantly reinvented and recreated his identity and explored competing identities. Consequently he developed different versions of his life-story (Kelleler, 2012: 143).

Using Kellerer's statement as a vehicle, if Marechera's work weaves truth and fiction is he, like the reader, able to separate fiction from reality? How does Marechera use this ability to merge fiction and reality to disguise himself in the narrative? Friend and lover Flora Viet-Wild, who has written extensively on Marechera and his work, believes that the book not only projected a fragmented society but also fragmented memories and reflections whereby 'the boundaries of time and place shift constantly, flashbacks and streams of consciousness blur the line between dream and reality (Viet-Wild 1992,187). It is within this space that Marechera is able to insert himself into the narrative and fuse himself into his work that one is left to question the nature of the autobiography.

The House of Hunger is used as a metaphor that is not used to describe his upbringing and a literal description of home but also describe the status of the country governed by Ian Smith that segregated impoverished blacks from whites, who then lived in high-class suburbs. Therefore, with the opening statement of 'I got my things and left', the reader is taken on a physical and mental journey where Marechera explores issues particular to his experiences as a black African living in Zimbabwe and in then in British exile. While living and writing in the diaspora he begins to question his use of the English language as his medium of expression, but instead uses Shona, his mother tongue, stating 'I felt gagged by this absurd contest between Shona and English', (Marechera, 1978: 43). In an attempt to rid himself of this dilemma he devises a plan whereby he decides to deconstruct the English language, manipulating it to suit him. Stating 'to have harrowing fights and hair-raising panga duels with the language before you can make it do all that you want it to do' and 'standing it on its head, brutalizing it into a more malleable shape for my own purpose' (as cited in Viet-Wild 2004: 4). He also questions the identity of the African writer. When asked in an interview how

he responds to the criticism of being a 'European writer' and whether he considers himself an African writer, Marechera responds: 'Frankly, I don't. For me, a writer is a writer' (as cited in Viet-Wild 1992: 39). Andre Magnin believes this focus on the identity of the author forces a separation between the artist and their work. This 'split', as Magnin puts it, effectively depletes individual credit to the artist, refusing recognition of the African artist and credit is rather given to ethnographic factors such as authenticity (as cited in Oguibe, 1999: 14).

To discuss these issues Marechera, using real characters like his brother Peter, also introduces new characters of which the reader is not entirely sure are real or fictional. These characters are used to speak for Marechera or pretend to remember events that might have occurred in Marechera's life. Laurice Taitz and Melissa Levin compellingly state that he creates characters 'that resemble the author himself, or a facet of the author's identity' (Levin & Taitz, 1999: 143). In a sense, Marechera copies himself into the narrative, narrowing down the ability to differentiate himself from characters, applying methods of 'construction and deconstruction' (Levin & Taitz, 1999: 143). Echoing the notion of the doppelganger in his 'twins' one sees elements of dysfunctional, inconsistent and edited storytelling. For example, in the book in an interview with Allen Lansu, he explains that his father was mysteriously killed by the army (as cited in Viet-Wild, 2004:12). However, according to Viet-Wild

The version of his father's death has not been confirmed by anybody else. The general version is that his father was run over by a car when he walked home in the road at night (Levin & Taitz, 1999: 43).

Marechera's writing seems to share traits of a distorted memory that he simply cannot remember or it was distorted over time from the author's 'particular point of view at that particular point of time' (Levin & Taitz, 1999: 164). Admitting to his playing the part he stated, 'Sometimes I will act insane because that's what they expected me to do' (Viet-Wild, 2004: 37). Marechera clearly has what Kellerer describes as a 'heightened self awareness' in which he could play author that he

himself constantly manipulated and modeled. Certainly, his methods of writing question the assumed validity of an autobiography, which at times has a ghostwriter or an author who, in the process of writing, can edit and construct truth and memories. Is there then the possibility of the author getting lost in the space between fiction and reality? In response Marechera writes:

I was by this creating for myself a labyrinthine personal world which would merely enmesh me within its crude mythology (Marechera, 1978: 17).

In admitting to a self-mythification, a myth that he mined throughout his career using his own experiences as sources for his work, he begins to obliterate the conventional line between fact and fiction (Buuck 1997, 119). It is within this space that he is able to disguise himself. Veit-Wild described Marechera as a writer who strategically embellished and re-invented his own biography both with his work and within the subsequent construction of the “Marechera myth” (Buuck 1997, 120). The reader is left unable to sieve the truthful from the fictitious as the narrative is written as though the dialogue and the episodes were well diarized. His disguise is amplified by the shared violent characteristics in the characters, this of course alluding to the violent nature of the ghetto of which he grew up in. For example in a violent episode from his brother Peter, Marechera recalls, “Peter threatened to crunch the sky into nothing” (Marechera 1978,12), with threats like “I’ll beat it out of you yet” to his girlfriend Immaculate (Marechera 1978,14) as the community watched on. Annie Gagiano in *Achebe, Head, Marechera-On powers and Change in Africa* likens the communities behavior to a mirror, mirroring the peoples own impotence and their way of disguising the knowledge of degradation from themselves (Gagiano 2000, 211). They too begin to reflect Marechera instability as well as the psychological state of the country. Including himself, Marechera writes, “he was hitting me like way a hailstorm destroys a garden flower”, this self inclusion links him with the downtrodden abused members of his society blurring the line of author- narrator and character,

demonstrating that he was not only a spectator but a victim of the violent nature of his environment. (Marechera 1978, 39)

However violence was not only physical but also psychological, Peter reflects:

“Life is a series of minor explosions whose echoes dying out settle comfortably at the back of our minds” (Marechera 1978, 39).

In the above quote, Marechera’s choices of words are centered on violence, alluding to destruction or self-destruction, whereby if the character is not participating in violence physically, they participate in it psychologically. Metaphorically situating the *House of Hunger* in the physical and psychological body. The escape from the house is made even more difficult as it not simply through removing oneself from the house physically, but also about psychologically being able to erase ones memory of the mannerisms that came with living in the house of hunger that are later revealed in the narrative as Marechera disguises the house as a physically body. He also reveals the house to symbolize the chaotic silhouette of Rhodesia, enabling him to strategically comment the faults of leadership and reflect on the psychological state of a generation that is the byproduct post colonialism (Buuck 1997, 119)

In Marechera’s writing, it can be said that authorship can be located in multiple instances; the first is the assumption that the novella claims to record actual events that took place (some of which might actually be distorted memories); and the second is how he duplicates and disguises himself in his characters and still plays the role of narrator and author. He uses the voices to create the illusion of the presence of a character and narrator to persuade the reader into trusting the narrative and the narrator's voice, reaffirming Foucault's argument that the author is 'fictive', that in actuality the author is an 'ideological product' whom one would like to believe is 'a genius, as a perpetual surging of invention' and so dismiss Barthes 'death of the author' (Foucault, 1977: 119). Here the author does not

experience a death, but rather the authorial voice and identity is reinvented and extended into the characters whose identities represent fragments, or constructions of the author (Levin & Taitz, 1999: 164). In the work *Span I* not only does Rose position herself as author, she also becomes both narrator and character. Like Rose's transcriber who can easily be mistaken for the author, Marechera is able to disguise himself behind his characters. This mask enables him to double himself throughout the narrative, creating multiple identities and voices which like the persona the new characters 'take off and lead their own lives' (Lippard, 1999: 34). Writing on feminist artists and performance art in the 1970s, Lippard points out that the disguises were,

seen politically not as ways of hiding the self but of extending the self and at the same time redefining the identity by destruction of stereotypes (Lippard, 1999: 35).

Marechera disguises himself in the assumed factuality of the biography whereas he re-invents himself in his own biography. Though existing in an imaged frame these characters are so well written into an immediate reality that it is easily accessible to their reader. His work does this to represent hybridity and the fragmented postcolonial identity.

Marechera employs a similar method to Plato who in *Phaedo* writes about the late Socrates (under whom he was a scholar) by writing him into a character. He then tactfully uses Socrates to insert himself into the text, in a dialogue. When Socrates says, 'but Plato is ill' (Goldhill, 1993: 137) the reader is aware of Plato's role as author and character, although he disguises himself here as the voice of Socrates. In this way, Plato uses the disguise to double himself, and the reader is tricked into thinking Plato and Socrates are not one person. Deleuze and Guattari employ a different strategy: in *Anti-Oedipus* they merge into one, and the reader is unable to differentiate whether Deleuze or Guattari is speaking as their intention was 'to reach a point where one no longer says I, but the point where it

is no longer an importance whether one says 'I' (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005: 3). The pronoun 'I' is absorbed by a double voiced 'we' which, when stated, can present itself as a single voice.

Speaking on how their collaborative work created an authorial character, artists Komar and Melamid state:

We invented that third person, the third artist, but we never specifically named the third artist (Green 2001: 179).

This merger of the two artists and writers' voices and identities produces a self-erasure, whereby the origins or source of each voice can no longer be located. This supports Foucault's question 'what difference does it make who is speaking?' In Gysin and Burrough's works, like Deleuze or Guattari the reader encounters multiple voices; however, unlike Deleuze and Guattari, Gysin and Burroughs collage countless voices that are cut and edited then merged with others. What the reader encounters are incomplete fragments, which in their new context can serve to produce new meanings. What Marechera demonstrates is the authorial identity can come from various fragmented sources, which at some point have been collected and borrowed from other sources and like the rhizome, the authorial voice is unpredictable and therefore quickly dismisses the idea of the 'original' and singular.

3.3 Deleted scenes

In *Some deleted scenes too* Wa Lehlere 'engages with the space between personal narratives and collective history, between processes of amnesia and archive' through chalk and paper drawings¹⁷. In his description of *Some deleted scenes too* Wa Lehlere states:

¹⁷Stevenson.info, Kemang Wa Lehlere *Some deleted scenes too*
<http://www.stevenson.info/exhibitions/walehlere/index2012.html> (15.10.2015)

[This body of work] dances with the idea of uncovering, writing and erasing of narratives both factual and fictional. Because of the possibilities and yet limitations of this endeavour, I have chosen to treat the drawings, texts and performances as both deleted yet 'working scenes'. So that the work, though in progress and development, is treated as material to be discarded. This method and strategy ... allows for an open exploration of the body both as archive and as a site for choreographing future narratives. As such the drawings function as forms of sense making and 'sketches' for other mediums including performance, installation, video, writing, and vice versa.¹⁸

In the work Wa Lehulere illustrates a series of scenes in which characters are constantly in transition. These characters are faceless bodies or body parts, bones, combos and graters: recruiting motifs in his work. As Wa Lehulere has pointed out, these 'sketches' are never resolved, he articulates this through the titles of the scenes, for example *Bearings for a second visit (4th Draft)* (figure.3) and *'Draft 1 for Dog Sleep' (Text)* (figure.4) and 'A few cross-sections for a profile' and others. They are constantly in transition, rewritten or reworked by the artist. Ian Burn, speaking on his own work 'Notes for mirror reflexes', states that in an attempt to 'free' his work from 'contingency', that:

All diagrams are made after the work; they are literally invented, from fiction following a fact: the invention methods-of-viewing art. Diagrams serve to project away from factual/physical work into a context with multiple dimensions (aspects): it is not important even that the diagrams be correct, accurate or necessary, but only that they are conceivable (as cited in Green, 2001: 40).

Burn's statement echoes Wa Lehulere's interpretation of his 'sketches'; however unlike Burn, his 'diagrams' or 'sketches' are the work. They give the audience a glimpse of the artist's thought processes through an array of notes and instructions scribbled around the sketches. In 'Familiar Face' the artist explains

¹⁸ *ibid.*

the character Familiar Face's relationship with characters, Thulang and Sleep Dog. In some instances the notes are a complication of thoughts, it is not clear whether these are the artist's thoughts or a collection of phrases and statements. This is complicated by artworks titled '*...so do some writing in them*' (figure.5) written in second person authorial voice. The voice addresses a figure and raises questions such as: who is Wa Lebulere speaking to? Is it Wa Lebulere speaking or is it a character? Is the voice addressing the audience or a character? What is being animated? Johnson writes that the 'rhetoric of calling makes it difficult to tell the difference between the animate and inanimate' as anyone can answer (Johnson, 1986: 34).

What Wa Lebulere does is create an imaginative response from an unknown source that, Johnson argues, keeps this figure alive to avoid erasure (Johnson, 1986:34). In addition to this, Wa Lebulere uses his titles to admit to his amnesia ('Tracing amnesia's footsteps') and in effort to excavate deleted memories he uses these sketches as a memory board. To help him remember he creates inanimate characters such as 'amnesia' and 'Sleep Dog' through the playful ambiguity of language. He then gives these inanimate characters, what Johnson describes as, 'a voice, the throwing of the voice, the giving of animation' (Johnson, 1986: 31) by using apostrophe. This animation enables these characters to evoke the voice of a 'being' whose voice and identity for Wa Lebulere are designed to problematise erasure, select memories/histories, the problem of remembering and the desire to remember.

This notion of erasure and memory is repeated throughout the work as text is scratched out and smudged, a gesture that is taken even further in the chalkboard drawings where characters experience erasure. Like the individual sketches, in the chalkboard drawing *Remembering the future of a hole as a Verb 2.1* (figure.6), Wa Lebulere maps out a series of spliced scenes that resemble Rose's wall text and Marechera's narratives, they have no chronological order.

They can be read from the center, from left to right or vice versa. As they are temporary they can be erased, rewritten and redrawn, for example *Remembering the future of a hole as a Verb 2.1* was first exhibited at the 2010 MTN New Contemporary Art Award. It is a revised version of *Remembering the future of a hole as a verb*, (figure.7) so that the audience is forced to revisit their memory of the previous work; their failure to remember forces them to experience amnesia. Speaking on his practice he describes his methods as 'performative gestures of unearthing, discovery, destruction and erasure' (www.stevenson.info, 2012). As a result in each wall drawing Wa Lehlere like memory are unfixed.

Wa Lehlere's interrogation of amnesia shares some resemblance with Marechere's inability to locate his memories. As previously stated, it is demonstrated through his fragmented and distorted accounts of his Father's death. Using a similar method as Marechera, it is when he is in this state of amnesia that Wa Lehlere 'choreographs' his memories and in this space there is the possibility of 'discovery, destruction and erasure'. This means that in the narrative there is a thin line between truth and constructed truth – it is never fixed (www.stevenson.info, 2012). Marechera's text, like Wa Lehlere's work if it was ever revisited it can be developed further or material can be discarded or reshuffled.

By using the chalkboard to record and sketch out possible narratives, Wa Lehlere as 'artist author' creates a narrative that can be erased and only redrawn by him, (i.e. replacing the one with another, because wall drawings can exist for a limited period of time). Through the gesture of erasure he too experiences multiple erasure, first by simply being the author; however, his death is 'temporary', as Lippard would put it (Lippard, 1999: 128). By redrawing the narrative or replacing it with another he is able to 'resurrect' himself and the characters, just as wall drawings can be duplicated at another site. Here the artist

uses his authorial powers not only to determine when the authorial voice comes in but also when and how the characters in his narrative feature.

Derrida, in an examination of how language can be performed, describes writing as 'the insubstantial double of a major signifier, the signifier of the signifier'. Something that signifies movement of language that ironically erases itself in its own production (Derrida, 1997: 7). The documentation of personal narratives as seen in both Rose's and Wa Lebulere's work opens up the possibility for these events to be mimicked and then translated into visual art; like traveling concepts, their movement could mean that in their new context they can be redefined. Vo's work, on the other hand, points directly to this idea of the 'the signifier of the signifier' by copying a private message, translating it into a decorative form of writing and then 'publishing' this authorial gesture to collectors. What is common in such artist's work is how erasure is used as a device to control the perception and experience of the voice, whether it be their voice or the character's voice.

3.4 Authorship and authority

*Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free*¹⁹

*The white settlers were most afraid of the Africans who refused to be the Other, "the educated cheeky Africans".*²⁰

Foucault argues that in order for power to be recognised and exerted as power the 'other' needs to be 'free', but, he asks: what does this freedom entail? He suggests that freedom can be defined as the access of individuals or collectives to 'a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behavior are available' (Foucault, 2000: 342). In literary

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, *The subject and power* (The New York Press: New York, 2000), 324.

²⁰ Flora Viet-Wild, *Writing Madness: Borderlines of the Body in African Literature* (Academic Press: USA, 2007), 15.

and fine art practice this 'freedom' cannot only be achieved by the readers' interpretation of the text/art work but, like the reader, the writer/artist can use methods such as: appropriation, collaboration, translation, 'rhetorical figures', and the apostrophe to create multiple narratives in which they are not tied down to a single mode of articulation and representation of themselves. This is evident in Marechera's doubling as author, narrator and character, and Vo and Walehulere's roles as 'conductors', while Rose addresses power relationships. What is interesting in all of these authors' works is how language is not only used to perform power but also to question and refuse power. One sees this in Marechera's refusal to be chastised for choosing to write in the English language and to mimic the language; in Vo's refusal to translate Saint Vénard's letter for his father and his audience; as well as in Rose and Wa Lehelere's efforts to 'rupture the traditional forms of writing' (Wa Lehelere, 2012). But how does this concept of 'freedom' apply to mimicry? Mimicry, as previously stated by Bhabha mimicry is 'reformed, recognizable Other', that 'fixes the colonial subject as a "partial" presence' (Bhabha, 1984: 127). By rendering the Other 'incomplete' or 'virtual', this not only infringes on the Other's autonomy and authorial identity, but it posits that in order for the Other to be recognised as 'human', the Other has to mimic and perform the 'masters' identity (Bhabha, 1984: 127). In commenting on Thomas McEville's interview with African artist Ouattara, particularly McEville's question, 'Where and when were you born?', Oguibe claims that this question is designed to define how Ouattara's artistic practice is framed according to colonial ethnography. These questions, he continues, are not intended to 'reveal the artist as subject, but rather to display him as object, an object of exoticist fascination' whereby he is destined to be defined as Other (Oguibe, 1999: 18). What McEville's perception of Ouattara does is imprison his identity, which in effect denies artists like him the possibility of self-articulation outside of these constraints that, in turn, silences and erases the authorial voice. This relationship between Ouattara is reflective of the power relations between the West and the colonised, whereby the colonised is policed by a Eurocentric gaze.

In this section the goal is to discuss the ways in which the so-called Other has used mimesis and erasure to their advantage. This will begin firstly, by discussing Marechera's identity as an 'African writer' – a title he refuses. Secondly, this will be followed by a discussion of Marechera and South African dub poet Lesego Rampolokeng's relationship with the English language. Thirdly, a further discussion follows to examine how Wa Lehulere uses fact and fiction to pose a problem for the concept of collectivism and erasure.

3.5 The House of Hunger

By refusing to be identified as an 'African writer' Marechera escapes the danger of falling captive to a history of colonial ethnography whereby the African artists have been refused a position for self-articulation, self-definition or a right to author-ity (Oguibe, 1999: 13). Lippard highlights that this focus on identity imposes or arrives at the collective (compressed between internal and external), which is a compression that both male and female African artists have fallen victim to (Lippard, 1991: 30). Oguibe writes, 'African artists are either constructed or called upon to construct themselves (Oguibe, 1999: 19). To avoid a singular identity Marechera performs what Buuk describes as 'refraction'; he invents refracted selves by taking the roles of author, narrator and character (Buuk, 1997: 121). This is just one of multiple strategies Marechera employs to reclaim power from colonial structures. He also does this by refusing to conform to the 'grand narrative' created by colonial structures as a form of decolonisation. So how is power performed in Marechera's work? Before this question can be answered one needs to address the notion of decolonisation. Franz Fanon, in *Les damnés de la terre* writes:

Decolonization never goes unnoticed for it involves humankind, it fundamentally modifies humans, it transforms powerless, non-essential spectators into privileged actors, caught up in a quasi-grandiose manner by the range of History. It introduces its own special rhythm into the human, a formula of new (wo)men, a new language, a new humanity.

Decolonization is a true creation of new beings. But this creation does not obtain its legitimacy by way of a supernatural means of power: The colonized thing becomes (wo)man through the process of freeing itself²¹

If decolonisation gives the 'colonized being' power to reinvent themselves outside 'quasi-grandiose' narrative of colonialism, this freedom, as Foucault states, enables the individual (in this case the African writer/artist) to not only re-imagine Africa, which Simon Njami writes 'since the dawn of time is fantasy' but also to re-imagine their identity (Njami, 2012: 1). Marechera, who has experienced colonialism and postcolonialism, attests to this in his autobiographical fictional narrative. The autobiography, write Melissa Levin and Laurice Taitz entails,

a combination of two narrative genres, fiction and history. It is these narrative genres that seek to impose definition on literature and its contents, endowing events with meaning and creating a framework within which the writer attempts to construct his/her identity (Levin & Taitz, 1999:163).

The freedom to move between these two virtual spaces has enabled Marechera to create an 'unstable, fluid, and ever-changing' identity, an identity that is constantly reconstructed through text (Levin & Taitz, 1999: 163). Fluidity has provided the writer with the means to fragment and rearrange his memories (or what he claims to be factual events) to undermine the notion of objective truth (Levin & Taitz, 1999: 164). This is evident in the discrepancies between the two versions of his father's death: Marechera accuses ZANU (PF) soldiers of his father's death; however, Michael Marechera (his brother) dismisses this version. Flora Veit-Wild, recalls, 'Michael Marechera (Marechera's brother), who also went to the mortuary, says that there was no sign of bullets and that he had not been killed by an army officer' (Viet-Wild, 2004: 11). This could simply be mistaken as a distorted memory or simply a particular point of view from the writer at a particular time; however, Marechera repeatedly toys with the idea of

²¹ Franz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*. Paris: Maspero, 1979. [Trans. C. Farrington, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967.], 40

fiction verses fact throughout *The House of Hunger* (Levin & Taitz, 1999: 165). In his defense Marechera asserts:

[H]istory is not a well-ordered path leading from cause to effect [:]... it is rather a psychological condition in which our senses are constantly bombarded by unresolved or provisional images.²²

As an 'African writer', Marechera's work confronts colonialism and colonial structures in that it questions the linear narrative and his use of the English language (Levin & Taitz, 1999: 171). He writes: 'Straightforward things leave no room for the imagination; they allow no perspective' (1990: 49). This confrontation results in violent acts of splitting and rearranging the English language. Bill Ashcroft (1995: 300) posits that language in postcolonial societies (characterised as it is by complexity, hybridity and constant change) inevitably rejects the assumption of linguistic structure or code, which can be described by a colonial distinction of 'standard' and 'variant'. In order to adopt the English as an African language he undoes and fragments the language. Like the translator or translator he relishes in the ability to be 'unfaithful' to the language, one of the many ways to exert power over the language. In an interview with himself Marechera writes: 'the language is very racist; you have to have harrowing fights and hair raising panga duels with the language before you can make it do all that you wanted it to do' (Marechera, 1978: 7). Unlike Vo whose power is exerted by refusing to translate the letter, Marechera's power is exercised through violence. His violent relationship with language is evident in his choice of words, for example, the word 'panga', which is defined as 'a large, broad-bladed African knife used as a weapon or as an implement for cutting heavy jungle growth, sugar cane, etc.; machete'²³.

²² Dambudzo Marechera, "Soyinka Dostoevsky: The Writer on Trial for His Time," *Zambezi* 14, no. 2 (1987): 111

²³ <http://dictionary.reference.com/> (10. 11.2015)

Here, the body becomes a metaphor for language; Taitz makes the observation that the metaphor is prevalent in Marechera's work because text, like the body is a cultural artifact (Taitz, 1999: 28). It presents in all the sites that make up Marechera's 'house'; the family, the community, the nation and the state (Taitz, 1999: 24). Marechera accentuates this when he compares his writing to stitches on a wound, which unlike the panga are meant to 'connect that which was previously unconnected' (Taitz, 1999: 28). He writes:

My head seemed encased...;but when I explored with my head, ripping off the bandages and feeling around the wet stinging wound, it was only the cold cold stitches they had used on the gash. Stitches enough to weave webs from one wall of my mind to the wall of the House of Hunger...Afterwards they came to take out the stitches from the wound of it. And I was whole again. These stitches were published. (Marechera, 1978: 38-40).

His frustrations with language and his choice to write in English appear in his narratives. He further explains:

I did try to tell her something of what was oppressing my mind: more than half of all English words directly and indirectly slur blackness-and I was teaching the bloody language and the bloody literature and also actually writing my novels in it (Marechera, 1978:111)

I took to English as a duck takes to water. I was therefore a keen accomplice and student in my own colonialism. (Marechera, 1978: 7)

He admits to his own hybrid identity and ambivalent relationship with the language: one that resents his acquaintance with the language and the other that has embraces it. The choice to write in English is heavily criticised by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in *Decolonising the mind*. Wa Thiong'o condemns African writers who have chosen to write in English, French and Portuguese, or what he calls 'borrowed tongues' (Wa Thiong'o, 1986: 7). He argues:

The choice of language and the use to which language is put [is] central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to the entire universe. Hence language has always been at the heart of the two contending

social forces in the Africa of the twentieth century (Wa Thiong'o, 1986: 4).

These languages, he continues, were not only used as a means of communication, they were used as a vehicle through which,

power fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation (Wa Thiong'o, 1986: 9).

The word 'bullet' points to the violence and force used to impose the language on the colonised. By choosing to write in these languages Wa Thiong'o believes African writers began to lose an image of their world, which was narrated in their mother tongue (Wa Thiong'o, 1986: 11). However, Wa Thiong'o's theory is challenged by African writer Chinua Achebe who, in his speech entitled 'The African writer and the English language', said:

Is it the right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else's? It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling. But for me there is no other choice. I have been given the language and I intend to use it.²⁴

In another statement Achebe argues:

I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings²⁵

By embracing the language, Achebe and Marechera perform what Bhabha describes as 'colonial mimicry' or 'mimic man', which he defines as a 'the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite' (Bhabha, 1984: 126). This reformed Other can act as a 'go-between' or translator between colonial authority and the colonised. But this does not render them powerless, as they have the power to twist the words that were

²⁴ The paper is in Achebe's collection of essays *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, (New York: Anchor 1975).

²⁵ Ibid.

given to them (Viet-Wild, 1999: 16). Marechera's refusal to adhere to the 'rules set by old men', of 'one-dimensional thinking and writing' influenced South African dub poet Lesego Rampolokeng, who believes that the 'liberation that we really need is from anything that oppresses imagination' (Viet-Wild, 1999:99). In an effort to 'write back' to the coloniser Rampolokeng uses homophones as a weapon against the English language when he raps:

that i rime is not a crime
i don't mime my wrinkled time
long-lost in the distance of slime
i only shoot the british
with bullets that are english²⁶

Rampolokeng diminishes and re-appropriates the English language by spelling the word 'rhyme' as 'rime', which speaks to the concept of hybridity. His use of creole for the 'master's- language' is an important element of postcolonial writing (Viet-Wild 1999: 83). He toys with the idea of mimicry, which according to Bhabha is the sign of double articulation, 'a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which "appropriates" ' (in this case language) (Bhabha, 1984: 126). This enables Rampolokeng not only to ridicule the English language but also complicate its identity as 'rime'. According to the Oxford English dictionary, 'rime' is ice formed by rapid freezing or a slimy coating. Bakhtin describes hybridity, as the 'ability of one voice to ironize [meaning to make ironic] and unmask the other within the same utterance' (Viet-Wild, 1999: 98). This is the case with Rampholokeng and Marechera whose work is similar in that both writers perform a carnival-like parody of the English language. The intention of a carnival-like discourse is to,

break through the laws of a language censored by grammar and semantics and, at the same time, is a social and political protest. There

²⁶ Beginning of piece "Rapmaster" in the album "End Beginnings," Shifty Music, 1993.

is no equivalence, but rather, identity between challenging official linguistic codes and challenging official law (Kristeva, 1986: 36).

By using symbolic violence to counter colonial violence, Rampholokeng and Marechera are essentially attempting to refute colonial structures of monolingualism entrenched in the oppression and suppression of non-Western indigenous languages. This monolingualism legitimised English (or French and Portuguese in other African colonies) as the ideal language of communication. Like Marechera, Rampolokeng uses rap songs to interpret his 'misuse' of the language as a violent act of shooting at the coloniser. Foucault has argued that the exercise of power is not a violence that sometimes hides; this is evident in Marechera and Rampolokeng's literary work (Foucault, 2000: 341). The two writers use 'postcolonial critic speak' or what Bhabha describes as a 'forked tongue' that is not concerned with trying to articulate the English language imposed by their colonial masters, but rather to find ways to confront the inherent power structures that are entrenched within the language (Bhabha, 1984: 126).

3.6 On erasure

*What does it mean to erase or to be erased?*²⁷

Mary Ruffle describes erasure as 'the creation of a new text by disappearing the old text that surrounds it'²⁸. The title of the painting *Some Deleted Scenes Too* suggests this erasure but instead of 'disappearing the old text' he combines the old text with the new text by drawing over the old text. In the work, Wa Lehulere's

²⁷ Athi Joja 2012 'The indecisiveness on thought in 'Some Deleted Scenes Too' *Artthrob* http://www.artthrob.co.za/Reviews/Athi_Mongezeleli_Joja_reviews_The_Indecisiveness_of_Thought_in_Some_Deleted_Scenes_Too_by_Kemang_Wa_Luhelere_at_Stevenson_in_Johannesburg.aspx (12.11.2015)

²⁸ Mary Ruffle 'On Erasure' <http://www.suerainsford.com/wpcontent/uploads/2014/10/Mary-Ruefle-On-Erasure-.pdf> (12.11.2015)

erasure is explored through various methods such as performance art; incomplete and faceless figures; imperfect sketches that he describes as scenes; and his impermanent chalkboard drawings. Speaking on his sketches, he states, 'I think of the smaller ones as frames for a film, so they work directly as scripts', he continues, 'They're like scenes or shots from a screenplay or stage play... because that's how I think with my work' (Perryer, 2012: 61). Like the screenplay or stage play, Wa Lehlere toys with the idea of the rehearsal and repetition as metaphors of the work that is constantly evolving, so it is indeed not fixed. Part of this evolution takes place through deleting, adding, substituting, re-staging and rewriting, 'so there are various forms of rehearsals that you don't see in the finished product' (Perryer, 2012: 62).

Situated in such a way that it is surrounded by music stands propping up sheets of blank paper, Wa Lehlere sets a page alight and repeats this gesture a few more times (Joja, 2012). This gesture of erasure takes on another image, it is followed by the violent act in which Wa Lehlere grates the spine of the book and scatters the pages (Joja, 2012). Here Wa Lehlere uses erasure as metaphor of amnesia as well as the erasure of language, knowledge and the narrative that are associated with the book, whereas the sketches attempt to recover memory. As memory is fragmented, these sketches sit between fact and fiction, and Wa Lehlere's re-working and re-drawing of these scenes in an attempt to 'remember' affirms this. Christina Kennedy claims the work explores 'personal and collective stories, memories and histories'; these are, of course, interpreted from the artist's perspective (Kennedy, 2012). Erasure can also be implemented through omission. This is employed by Wa Lehlere's grating of the blank paper reiterating amnesia. Vo and Wa Lehlere demonstrate the authority that the author can possess over the voice, and how this voice can easily be silenced through various gestures of erasure. But how is this authority excised? For Oguibe erasure is synonymous with the West's framing and perception of African art and African artists: 'This frame has its origins in colonial ethnography and the

colonial desire for the faceless native, the anonymous' (Oguibe, 1999: 20). Anonymity that imprisons and refuses to recognise the native's individual identity, instead it pigeonholes the native into a collective that is based on sameness whereas individuality is reserved for the West. Oguibe observes that:

Until recently, works of classical African art were dutifully attributed to the 'tribe', rather than to the individual artist, thus effectively erasing the latter from the narrative spaces of art history (Oguibe, 1999: 21).

By denying the African artist this individuality, the artist is anonymous. It is this anonymity that disconnects the work from the artist, 'deleting the author-ity of the latter, or by constructing the artist away from the normativities of contemporary practice' (Oguibe, 1999: 21). This relationship between the self and the 'other' is reflective of what Foucault describes as a 'power relationship', or 'the one over whom power is exercised' (Foucault 2000: 340). In this instance the native is subject to the authority of the West. Wa Lulehere addresses this anonymity of the Other by defacing the characters Thulang (meaning silence), *Familiar face* (figure.8), and *The one tall enough to see the morning* (figure.9). Instead they take the form of recurring motifs in his work such as the bone and comb (Perryer, 2012: 61). For Wa Lehulere the bones are site of memory, a residue from *Ukuguqula iBatyi 3*, 2008 (figure.10), a performance that took place in Gugulethu where Wa Lehulere, in the process of digging a hole, found the skeleton of a cow. Throughout the performance Wa Lehulere uses an Afro comb as a tool to 'dig' or excavate. The comb speaks back to *Ukuguqula iBatyi 1* (figure.11), in which the artists inserted pencils into a person's hair. This, of course, refers to the 'pencil test' much ridiculed in apartheid South Africa as a tool to assess identity and separate racial groups, especially whites from coloureds and blacks.

The "pencil test" decreed that if an individual could hold a pencil in their hair when they shook their head, they could not be classified as White²⁹

²⁹ Amanda Uren 'Signs of Apartheid' <http://mashable.com/2015/06/20/apartheid-south-africa-signs/#umMuJorDOKqJ> (11.02.2016)

This recalls Ougibe's argument of the 'faceless native' and anthropological framing of the native whose identity is determined by collective attributes, in this case hair. Regarding why his figures are 'not completely human or complete whole bodies' (as cited in Perryer, 2012: 51) Wa Lehlere states,

they don't have any age or race and there's no class. Of course I'm trying to play with the power dimensions within that, but I'm also trying to evoke a sense of collectivity (Perryer, 2012: 62).

However Wa Lehlere recognises that there are flaws within collectivism, when he asserts:

[T]he idea of collective or community is supposed to create a bond amongst a certain group of people, but at the same time collective excludes that which is not part of that community. (Perryer, 2012: 62)

The above statement is supported by Oguibe's criticism of the Western representation of African artists and African art, which was categorised as 'tribal' or collective. Unlike the 'individual genius', which was reserved for Europe, the 'others' identification with the collectivity perpetuated an 'anonymous production pattern that inscribes primitivism' (Oguibe, 1999: 21). This authority over erasure and authorship meant the colonised was confined to singular identity that could at any moment be altered to suit the West, a strategy used to silence the colonized. This silencing is reflective of La Guma's *In the fog of the season's end* (1972), whereby the African is not only silenced but is made invisible. Expanding on this concept of invisibility Athi Joja (2012), in his review of Wa Lehlere's *Some Deleted Scenes Too* quotes Ralph Ellison's invisible man. Ellison wrote: 'I am an invisible man and it placed me in a hole- or showed me the hole I was in, if you will – and I reluctantly accepted the fact.'

For Fanon in *Black skin white masks* erasure comes with having being called a Negro, 'Look a Negro!' (Fanon 2008: 82). This naming he writes, had woven him 'out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories', all of which had fixed and imprisoned him into a collective identity that was associated with blackness

(Fanon, 2008: 84). Fanon recognises how his visibility (the colour of his skin) has made him invisible, to escape the racial historicity that is associated with the black body Fanon writes, 'I slip into corners, I remain silent, I strive for anonymity, for invisibility. Look I accept the lot as long as no one sees me!' (2008: 88).

Like Ellison's invisible man, Fanon is awakened to the 'hole' or 'confinement' that comes with being black/Negro, which he describes as the 'fact of blackness'. However, unlike the invisible man who does not relish his invisibility, it is a kind of erasure, and Fanon uses his invisibility to escape erasure. Erasure that has confined and fixed blackness and has 'objectively that cut away slices' of his reality, omitting and substituting narratives by imposing constructed perceptions and representation of blackness (Fanon, 2008: 87).

What these two examples demonstrate is the power and implication of authority and authorship, and they recall Foucault's question, 'What difference does it make who is speaking?' The difference here is that this factor decides who gets to speak and what is spoken or determined of the 'other' which, as one understands from Fanon, has the power to fix and imprison those who cannot speak or those who are spoken for. Fanon stresses the power of the relationship between speech and visibility, when he writes: 'For it is implicit that to speak is to exist absolutely for the other' (Fanon, 2008: 8). Spivak in 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' describes the oppressed as the 'the silent, silenced center', whose 'itinerary has not been traced so as to offer an object of seduction to the representing intellectual (Spivak, 1995: 27). This 'silencing' has resulted in a subject who not only has no history but is not heterogeneous and conscious. To overcome this, Spivak insists on the importance of acknowledging the consciousness of the subaltern changing the question to, 'With what voice-consciousness can the subaltern speak?' (Spivak, 1995: 27). She comes to the conclusion that in order to avoid the erasure or silencing of the subaltern the

'receiver' (author or historian) must 'suspend the clamor of his own consciousness' so as to not 'freeze' the subaltern's voice-consciousness into an 'object of investigation, or worse yet a model for imitation' (Spivak, 1995: 28). These are the flaws of collectivity, especially when there is a singular dominant narrative that is enforced on the so-called 'other'. It is one of many forms of erasure and amnesia that Wa Lehulere visits by refusing to give his characters racial and gendered identity, instead he uses motifs such as the bones, grater, comb and chalkboard to speak back to the notion of amnesia, memory and erasure. Drawn using Indian ink and written in the second person singular or 'the one who is addressed' his sketches document instructions one might receive in preparation for a performance (Benveniste, 1971: 197). For example, in *Rehearsal for personal energy number* (figure 12.), a voice repeats 'give, give yourself personal energy'. Unlike Rose and Vo, the origin of this voice is unknown, instead the text pushes the reader to ask questions such as: what is personal energy and how do they give themselves 'personal energy'? Barthes does not find this problematic as he writes, 'to give text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing' (Barthes, 1977: 147). In other words the text is open to unlimited interpretation. Reiterating the Foucauldian question, 'What difference does it make who is speaking?', Wa Lehulere begins to question speaking and modes of speaking. One example is the common characteristic within the sketches that is the transparency of the text that disappears and reappears, mimicking his chalkboard drawings. Even the figures live in this in-between space of solid and transparent lines, this is repeated in the dismemberment of body parts whereby in *Act 1 Scene 2 (Draft 3 from Text)* (figure. 13) Thulani's body is reduced to an arm whereas maps are represented or suggested using mark making as seen in *Untitled One; Bearings for a Second Visit (A Map)* (figure.14). For Wa Lehulere erasure has enabled him to create new forms of representation that speak to the inability to remember, such as repetition and unfinished sketches to aid the processes of remembering

and to address the displacement that arises with erasure, operating as metaphors and metonyms of erasure.

In an interview with South Africa curator Lerato Bereng, Wa Lehlere explains his choice to use chalk and a chalkboard,

for me chalk is an impermanent material, because it's about time and transition as well ... things are always changing and moving and our perspective of the past is always shifting depending on where we are, how much we've moved or how much we haven't moved at all (Perryer, 2012: 57,58)

This notion of a 'perspective of the past is always shifting' is a recurring theme in Marechera, Vo and Rose's work. But what is interesting about Wa Lehlere's work is how he tries to retrieve and revisit history through repetitive gestures of rehearsals and sketches which are meant to document his 'process of creating' (Joja, 2012). Like Marechera's fragmented narratives Wa Lehlere declares that his work 'doesn't follow a linear trajectory. I like to take funky turns' (Kennedy, 2012). He is not interested in the 'final product', only the steps taken to create what is perceived as the 'finished product'. In this way, the work also questions the idea that a work can be 'finished'. For example sketches are scenes from a script written by Wa Lehlere detailing the journey of two characters, Thulang (meaning silence) and Familiar Face. He has developed these characters over the years in a process that requires rewriting and deleting and is described by Wa Lehlere as a 'a way of erasing' he continues,

in the same way that I erase in the drawing - to remake, but also that erasure becomes a mark in itself and deleting the scene becomes a statement, a strategy to move forward (Perryer, 2012:61).

Titled *Remembering the Future of a Hole as a Verb 2.1*, the chalkboard drawing has been redrawn and edited by Wa Lehlere over the years with each version depicting dismembered characters and text that is smudged or scratched out, demonstrating the authority Wa Lehlere has over his work. As a black

chalkboard written in white chalk, the work strategically addresses Fanon's fears of visibility, in that this visibility is burdened with a constructed history about which he had no say. The blackboard is used a metaphor for the black body whose identity is inscribed on, corrected, edited and erased only to be reconstructed by the coloniser and imprisoned to this identity. A coloniser that speaks for the colonised, who desires the 'faceless native, the anonym. The faceless native, displaced from individuality', this frame "deletes her claims to subjectivity and works to displace her from normativity' (Oguibe 1999: 20,21). Similar to Rose's work, the board/wall attempts to reiterate the impermanence of their history, for instance, unlike the TRC testimonies, that were recorded and can always be revisited, Rose's memories are erased with the removal of the work, as though they had never existed, this is same with Wa Lehlere's narrative. They are not invisible as invisible suggests that they are hidden from the reader, but erasure deletes any evidence of the subject. Oguibe describes it as 'an act without a trace' (Oguibe 1999:17). How then would Barthes' 'death of the author' apply here? Does Wa Lehlere's erasure of the text mean the erasure of the author? Reflecting on Wa Lehlere's statement regarding how he uses erasure as form of mark-making, one can say that the author/artist does not experience a death but rather is preserved by the erasure. He is re-inscribed through erasure.

In the performance work 'What difference does it make who is speaking?', I use erasure as strategy to evoke Marechera's comparison of writing to a stitched wound. The work is divided into two parts; the first part consist of a text transcribed from an oral recording of a Senegalese language called Soniki from a subject who claims has never been written. The language is transcribed using isiZulu phonetics as a guide. In the second part, using Marechera's analogy is a performance piece in which a needle without thread is used to stitch the transcribed text constructed from the English alphabet onto paper, replacing the alphabet with form of 'braille'. This 'stitching' is recorded through a microphone

that is meant to amplify the sound produced from the gesture of stitching. The intention of the work is to investigate modes of translation and the erasure that come with translation.

However, as Wa Lehlere points out, erasure can also function as form of mark-making that can rewrite a narrative, in this case rewriting the form of the English alphabet. In returning to Joja's question, 'What does it mean to erase or to be erased?' in Wa Lehlere's work, erasure is used to revisit and excavate memory, it is also used to rewrite and is form of mark-making that is impermanent. Its intention is not to remain fixed but to be used as 'strategy to move forward'. But in the authority and authorship of the 'other', erasure for Oguibe, Fanon and Spivak is a tool used by imperialism to silence and imprison the 'other'. This is how power is exerted over the other.

What is parallel in the works of Marechera, Vo, Rose and Wa Lehlere is the desire to question and re-examine the notion of authorship and power. This is demonstrated in Marechera's rejection of the singular identity imposed on the 'African writer', the linear narrative constructed by colonialism and his restructuring of the English language. In Vo's work, authorial strategies are employed to address monolingualism and Vo's decision not to translate the text evokes the notion of accessibility and exclusion and visibility and invisibility. Then, like Vo, Rose examines the notion of 'uncontested authority' by performing the role of an invisible instructor who assigns the prisoner to transcribe particular narratives. Narratives, or memories that confront the exclusion and omission of other individuals outside of the TRC and the identity politics imposed by the colonial and apartheid structures. Wa Lehlere takes this notion of omission a step further through his study of erasure and excavation. Aware of the history and danger of erasure, Wa Lehlere employs his authority to use erasure as a tool to rewrite histories and refuse single or fixed identity by defacing his

characters. In all these artists' work there is clearly a desire to pose a problem for authority and authorship.

CHAPTER 4: The language of power

There is no creation without destruction/ there is no destruction without creation (Ferez Kuri, 2003: 136).

In this concluding chapter links will be drawn between literary authorship and my fine art practice in which authorship and authority over text are central themes. This is because this research is concerned with the ways in which the reader can perform authority. By reader, it is meant that this writer/artist sees herself as a reader of Samuel Beckett's *Not I* or any other found text. A reader who uses devices such as translation, collaboration and appropriation attempts to transform him/herself into an author by deleting the author-ity of the owner of the text and appropriating their authorial voice with the intention to question authorial authority and ownership. In this respect, this study shares Burroughs' and Gysin's philosophy that 'words are the property of no-one' (as cited in Robinson, 2011: 27). They are there to serve the purpose of the user, for this reason they remain unfixed because the user can at any moment redefine their identity. These are themes that are discussed throughout the dissertation to investigate the implications of authorship within two spaces, literature and artistic practice – particularly in the works of postcolonial writers and artists. This is done by locating the ways in which authorship is defined outside literature, bearing in mind that power can be exerted through authorship. However, as Foucault reminds us, this power exists 'only when it put into action' (Foucault, 2000: 340). These actions are therefore identified in the works of Vo, Rose and WaLehulere.

The intention now will be to shift the focus from these artists to discuss the work produced by the writer of this study and the work which she intended to produce as a continuation of the themes that focus specifically on the power of language and the language of power that is rooted in authorship. To help determine the

validity of this concept, this chapter will explore Burroughs' cut-up method, a technique that has travelled from artistic practice to literary writing whereby Burroughs appropriates found text, that he then rearranges and integrates with his own writing to create new narratives. The intention is to examine the ways in which Burroughs 'cut-ups' speak to Barthes' claim that 'it is language which speaks, not the author' (Barthes, 1977: 145). For Bourdieu, this gesture of 'cutting text' performs 'symbolic violence', and demonstrates its aggressive distrust of language and form (Lydenberg, 1978: 414). In the essay *Cut-up: negative poetics in William Burroughs and Roland Barthes*, Robin Lydenberg writes,

by disrupting the conventions of narrative and logical sequence through cut-up prose, the fiction writer and the critic are merely practi[s]ing in an extreme form that challenge tradition (Lydenberg, 1978: 414).

If one accepts that words are arbitrary signs and that they come to us empty (Lydenberg, 1978: 419) then what the cut-up method does is use language to force open the closed field of possibilities to create an open field in which Burroughs can impose and remove meanings of words. To borrow this term of 'cutting', Burroughs' work will be interpreted alongside the work *Not I* where 'cutting out' performs erasure.

By continuing this discussion on the relationship between language and power, the study will also address the question of language for the postcolonial bilingual writer, a discourse headed up by WaThiong'o; particularly the dilemma African writers face in their choice of whether to write in the foreign tongue (English, French and Portuguese, languages of the coloniser), rather than in their mother tongue. This question will be discussed in relation to the collaborative work *Do it like this!* (figure.15) where Georgia Munnik and this study's author/artist pose the dilemma about the issue of one language versus the other, and the erasure a language experiences when 'dumbed down' or translated. The reason behind this exercise of revisiting the previous works (*Not I* and *Do it like this!*) is to establish

where this questioning of authorship began and to demonstrate the ways in which other writers and artists have been challenged by the authors' authority over language. Burroughs' experimental cut-up methods are a good example of this practice, an approach this author/artist intends to borrow to create the new body of work.

Since a large part of this author/artist's practice is supported by research, this dissertation continues to think through questions on authorship, language and power, with the intention to extend this conversation into a new body of work.

4.1 The cut up method

The idea behind the work *Not I* stems from trying to find ways to solve the problem of the title question, 'What difference does it make who is speaking?' This question raises other questions such as, 'Who is speaking and how do they speak?'. In an effort to answer the title question Burroughs collected various sentences and phrases from newspapers and magazines and rearranged them at random to create incoherent narratives. Similarly, I collected text written by other authors and Samuel Beckett's *Not I* (figure 16.) was part of this selection. Then, by first establishing which text to engage with, the author is located and identified by the ways in which the authorial voice is suggested. The script is written as a monologue detailing incidents from a woman's life that is narrated through the autobiographical first person singular, that then changes to a narrative through a third person speaker. The script was then performed on a pitch-black stage illuminated by a single spotlight on the performer's mouth. Once the authorial voice or the pronouns that evoke a speaker were located, the next step is to challenge the authority of the author and the speaker by shifting the position from reader to author. Unlike the cut-up method where Burroughs physically cuts text and rearranges it at random, applying montage techniques already practised in visual art to text (Robinson, 2011: 21), I began to appropriate Beckett's signature by 'cutting' out consonants from the script deleting them, so distancing the 'new' script from its original.

On writing about cut-ups, Robinson explains that when removed from their original text 'the ordering of the fragments creates a surreal sequence of images, which, despite their lack of connection, combine curiously well.' (Robinson, 2011: 24-25). However, although not as fragmented as cut-ups, my removal of consonants transforms the word 'a' and the pronoun 'I' into vowels, deleting the authorial identity and authorial voice. This means that the reader is unable to

locate a speaker, the woman's voice or the woman. As part of a performance work in which the new script is read out loud, the script is transformed into a series of speech sounds. Writing on the relationship between speech and language, Derrida explains that the word 'is a unity of sense and sound, of concept and voice'; it is 'of the signified and the signifier' (Derrida, 1997: 31). In circumstances where the word is made of consonants and vowels (as not all words have vowels) the removal of consonants strip the word of meaning - although there is still a 'voice' (which means sound is produced from sounding out the vowels but with no speaking, it does not produce 'thought-sound'). This is ironic as the title *Not I* suggests that Beckett is not the author, neither is it the character and performer's voice, that there is no subject speaking but a voice whose origin is still unknown but it could be an author's voice. Beckett also implies this in his script, which he begins with the word 'Mouth'. This word is not removed in the appropriated text so it is not clear whose 'mouth' the text is referring to - it could simply be a character.

Burroughs' cut-ups complicate this notion of the voice as cut-ups are a collection of different authorial voices (provided Burroughs' intention is to construct a narrative with cut-up phrases and sentences from special authors) to entice the reader into locating the origin of these sources and their meaning. In circumstances where cut-ups are a collection of spliced words, Burroughs treats these words like objects, whose placement can determine the reader's experiential understanding of the narrative (Buskirk, 2003: 24). This is the interesting dichotomy in cut-ups, they are not designed to be understood by the reader and yet Burroughs perceives them as narratives, the only difference is that they do not follow the rules of linguistics. So how does one practice the cut-up method? Firstly, Burroughs reminds us that 'cut-ups are for everyone' (Burroughs & Gysin 1978: 31) and the reason is found in the following instructions:

Take a page of text and trace a median line vertically and horizontally./ You now have four blocks of text: 1,2,3 and 4./ Now cut along the lines and put block 4 alongside block 1, block 3 alongside 2. Read the rearranged page (Burroughs & Gysin, 1978: 7)

Other methods include 'fold-ins' and permutations. Fold-ins are described as follows:

A page of text, my own or someone else's, is folded down the middle and placed on another page, the composite text is then read across half of one text and half the other. The fold-in method extends to writing the flashback used in films, enabling the writer to move backwards and forwards on his time track.... This method of course is used in music where we are continually moved backwards and forwards on the time track by repetition and rearrangement of musical themes (Hibbard, 1999: 15).

Whereas permutations started by Gysin involve,

the rearranging the words of a single phrase in every possible arrangement or permutation. This could be achieved by systematically moving the first word to the end of the row and moving each subsequent word one place to the left, hence A B C D E becomes first B C D E A, then C D E A B, and continuing until all of the variations had been exhausted (as cited in Robinson, 2011: 30).

By taking a page written by another author and dividing it into multiple sections, Burroughs and Gysin challenge the idea that authors have ownership over words. Without the author/s consent the cut-up fragment of the original narrative defies copyright and ownership, disobeying the regulations of boundary structured by the publishing canon, their argument being that words are the property of no-one, that 'the poets function is to free words', highlighting the presence of these structures (Robinson, 2011: 27). Having discovered that Burroughs had incorporated snippets of other writers' text into his writing Lethem describes Burroughs technique as actions he knew his teachers would have called plagiarism (Lethem, 2007: 60). In Burroughs defence the cut-up methods should be seen as a borrowing from the original; once selected the text is then fragmented distancing it from the original. It might mimic the original text in that

the words are arranged the same but when placed in different contexts the meaning changes, or as Bhabha puts it, it is 'almost the same, but not quite' (Bhabha, 1984: 126). Burroughs takes this a step further by a combining these cut-ups with his own text, making sure the reader is unable to differentiate the 'found text' from his own. However, this is not always the case, since at times he encourages the reader to identify the origins of his cut-ups. For example, in this cut-up he uses text from the bible:

Morning priests counsel death. Bound feast delivered Pontius Pilate governor. Judas repented thirty pieces of potter's field and hanged himself. Accused answered noting the governor marveled greatly. (Burroughs et al. 1967: 48)³⁰

If we accept that words are arbitrary signs they come to us empty, then the cut-up method should be seen as reiteration of this claim made visible (Lydenberg, 1978: 419). In defence of appropriation, Thomas Jefferson once said: '[H]e who receives an idea from me, receives instructions himself without lessening mine; as he who lights his taper at mine, receives light without darkening mine' (as cited in Lethem, 2007: 64). However, this might not sit well with systems that have rendered writing or artwork the intellectual property of an individual and therefore find that methods like appropriation or borrowing infringe on these rights. In defense of the cut-up method, therefore, Lydenberg argues, 'cut-ups defy copyright and ownership, transgressing the regulations of boundary and convention' (Lydenberg, 1987: 47). In other words, this is the nature of cut-ups and the intention of their makers. In artistic practice appropriation can serve as a reference or copy of the original in an attempt to critique and question the quoted artwork, this is the case with *Not I*. Buskirk defines this kind of copy as,

the basis of conception of art-making in which artists incorporate increasingly subtle and layered references to the history of art as well as other sources without necessarily relying on their techniques or materials (Buskirk, 2003: 65).

³⁰ William S. Burroughs & Brion Gysin, et al. *Minutes To Go*. (San Francisco: Beach Books, Text and Documents, 1967), 48

The difference is that in artistic practice cut ups do not produce a copy of the original rather they erase the possibility of the reader being able to locate the original. Words are used to create 'new' writing by reconfiguring 'old' writing; and so Burroughs uses these cut-ups to critique originality (Robinson, 2011: 13). He reiterates Foucault's question, 'What difference does it make who is speaking?' In addition to this he distrusts the notion that there is an 'original text' when he states:

[I]n a world which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through masks and with voice of styles in the imaginary museums (Jameson, 1998: 13).

In his defence Burroughs insists that the intention of cut-ups is not to disregard copyright rules but for the purpose of 'exposing' the text's meaning. In other words, for him it is not necessarily about the narrative it is about revealing the 'formula' or the methods used by authors to manipulate words. He explains that what happens during this process is that, 'a text may be "found out", exposed as empty rhetorical gesture or as a system of manipulation', making the strategies that might be used by the author visible to the reader/audience (Robinson, 2011: 26). Seconding Burroughs' philosophy is Saussure who reminds the reader that writing, 'is not a guise for language but a dis-guise', (as cited in Derrida, 1997: 35). Cut-ups demystify the dis-guise of language, revealing it for what it is; a weapon of oppression. Burroughs proposes that cut-ups should be embraced as a move tailored to 'breaking this down' in order to free ourselves from the oppressive nature of language (Burroughs & Odier 1974: 33-34). But author Louis-Ferdinand Céline does not support this exposure. He argues,

[t]he reader is not supposed to see work involved... he, the reader, is a passenger, right?... He's paid for his ticket... He's bought his book... In other words, he's paid for his ticket... Fine, he's paid for his ticket... He doesn't worry about what's happening in the engine room, he doesn't worry about how the ship is run... He wants to enjoy himself... There's pleasure to be had... Fine... He's got his book and he's supposed to

enjoy himself... And my duty is to see to it that he does enjoy himself...
And I work at it.³¹

For Celine, the cut-up method works against the systems designed to keep the hierarchies between author and reader separate; strategies employed by the author to persuade the reader into believing the narrative as one sees in Marechera's fictional autobiography. But what about the claim that these cut-ups, unlike cohesive narratives, are 'a literal representation of what actually happens in the human nervous system'? (Robinson. 2011: 22). If one reflects back on Rose's work, one can see how memory is represented as fragmented sentences assembled to produce or present a disorientated speaker's memories. To highlight that these memories are not cohesive Rose omits punctuation, ignores grammar and re-organises words to create new ones. Her methods are not too far removed from Burroughs' cut-ups and her memories are splices of thought combined to create 'streams of consciousness'. Timothy Murphy³² believes the cut-up method offers a 'way to evade conscious and unconscious patterns of thought' (as cited in Schneiderman & Walsh 2004: 39). This is because the text is arranged at random; distancing itself from organised and traditional modes of writing. This technique enabled Burroughs to demystify systems of power in media that elude the reader. As stated, the cut-up method is founded on the philosophy that 'words are the property of no-one', and Burroughs and Gysin believed authors manipulate words just as they would other media such as paint (FerezKuri, 2003: 141).

Permutations are good examples of this as the reader is able to identify how text is re-organised to create new text, unlike traditional narratives the text's meaning is unfixed. Because of this Ranjee Gill posits that cut-ups are a representation of an 'apocalypse language', like the rhizome it is not concerned with rootedness by

³¹ Louis-Ferdinand Céline 'Vous parlez' *Leur œuvre et leur voix*. [recording]. (France : Paris, 1957-1961)

³² author of *Wising up the marks: the a modern William S Burroughs*, 2002

movement or a single authorial voice, it is forced into 'authorial nomadism' (as cited in Schneiderman & Walsh 2004: 60). The sentences and phrases are cut 'to hear a new voice off the page' so that 'a dialogue breaks out' (Gysin 2001: 126). Such a dialogue is not carefully structured by the author to flow and follow the rules of narrative structure. There is also the possibility of the reader hearing multiple voices.

4.2 The third mind

Introduced by Napoleon Hill in the self-help book *Think and grow rich* (1937) the concept of the 'third mind' suggests that when two minds are put together through processes such as collaboration there is 'always a third mind... a third and superior mind... as an unseen collaborator' (as cited in Burroughs & Gysin 1978:17). Robinson defines 'the third mind' as merger between individual authors into one powerful Other in possession of a 'third mind' (Robinson, 2011: 29). This is similar to Green's concept of the 'third hand', whereby an extra identity is created through a collaborative work (Green, 2001: 179). However, the third artist exists through the doubling of the artist, whereby artists behave almost like twins repeating and mimicking each other's actions, 'folding themselves into an exclusive extra identity' (Green, 2001: 180). Whereas text produced from a 'third mind' is based on what American artist John Cage describes as 'a one-sided collaboration'; which is unlike the conventional collaborations whereby there is an agreement between two or more artists (as cited in Shapiro, 1985: 108). If one thinks of the text produced by this 'third mind', one sees that is fragmented and abstract, and reflective of the combination of more than one authorial voice, each trying to assert its own authorial voice and authority over the text. Burroughs and Gysin believe that their collaborative work and cut-ups have enabled them to gain access into this 'third mind'. They conclude that cutting up Rimbaud's images, represents collaboration between Burroughs, Gysin and Rimbaud or, as Burroughs puts it, collaboration with 'writers living and dead' (as cited in

Robinson, 2011: 29). In a collaborative project between myself and Geneva-based artist Julia Sas, in the artwork titled *An image of thought* (figure.17), text is selected from Edouard Glissant's text *Poetics of relation* and appropriated with the aim of creating a rhizome-like book. In this book text is deleted, scratched out, repeated, rewritten and written backwards in effort to re-enact themes addressed in Glissant's text such as transparency and opacity, errantry and exile, and the rhizome. Like cut-ups this rhizome-like book is a collaboration between Sas, Glissant and myself and although the text produced is not identical our methods are identical. The same cannot be said for Vo's work, in which he collaborates with Saint V ernard and his father, as unlike cut-ups it can be traced back to each individual. But this is what has made cut-ups a successful medium as the authorial identity is hidden and at times erased as sentences and phrases are spliced even further (which is, of course, to free and unfix the text from the authority of the individual author who initially fixes text). Employing 'symbolic violence' Burrough's and Gysin's goal is to create a field where authorship is flexible in which they can 'rub out the word' (Robinson, 2011: 29). In spite of this, the erasure is not detrimental to the word/text, instead it opens up the word/text to a new context in which it can be interpreted differently 'continuing until all variations have been exhausted' (Robinson, 2011: 30). Like rhizomes, cut-ups reject a singular identity, and like the postcolonial literature they exhibit a fragmented identity.

From the onset Burroughs and Gysin's cut-up techniques have used erasure as a device to rewrite and break down the conventions of language (Robinson, 2011: 11). Their intention is to demystify and unfix language, to question and demonstrate the ways in which the author can exercise authority over language. Through collaborative contributions they are able produce multiple authorial voices that are strategically disguised as a single voice, a third mind. However as a result of symbolic voice in this 'third mind'/'third artist', these authors experience erasure. And subsequently, the text no longer belongs to an author,

shifting the focus from the authorial identity/voice to the performativity of language. This cutting up and cutting out of language leads to the next point: the erasure/cutting out of the mother tongue in favour of the foreign tongue and the tough instinctive war between both.

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Search for my mother tongue³³

You ask me what I mean
by saying I have lost my tongue.
I ask you, what would you do
if you had two tongues in your mouth,
and lost the first one, the mother tongue,
and could not really know the other,
the foreign tongue.
You could not use them both together
even if you thought that way.
And if you lived in a place you had to
speak a foreign tongue,
your mother tongue would rot,
rot and die in your mouth
until you had to spit it out.
I thought I spit it out
but overnight while I dream,

it grows back, a stump of a shoot
grows longer, grows moist, grows strong veins,
it ties the other tongue in knots,
the bud opens, the bud opens in my mouth,
it pushes the other tongue aside.
Everytime I think I've forgotten,
I think I've lost the mother tongue,
it blossoms out of my mouth.

³³ Sujata Bhatta

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4.3 The power of language and the language of power

This section is a continuation of the theme addressed in chapter three regarding the dilemma that African writers face: that of choosing to write in English or the mother tongue which the bilingual writer/speaker is forced to do. This interest in the relationship between the foreign tongue and mother tongue stems from a collaborative work titled *Do it like this!* in which Munnik and I pose the problem of dealing with Fanagalo, a pidgin language in South African largely based on isiZulu and developed by English colonisers to simplify communication with black South African workers. This project would later influence a body of work produced during this writer's residency at Rhodes University that was inspired by Sujata Bhatta's poem *Search for my mother tongue* (see above). The poem is focused on the idea of the tongue and multiple tongues, on erasure and how speech is performed. In the poem Bhatta articulates the dilemma of the bilingual writer/speaker who has 'two tongues' in their mouth, she writes, 'You could not use them both together, even if you thought that way'. This research is a continuation of these themes but now the focus is how African writers or bilingual writers have responded to the division between the two tongues.

In the essay 'Forked tongues, marginal bodies' by James McGuire he describes the bilingual person as one who is 'perpetually adrift between languages, vacillating from one to the other, subject to a permanent indecisiveness' (McGuire, 2002: 75). How then can this predicament be resolved? Why should the bilingual writer write in his/her mother tongue? In agreement with Wa Thiong'o, Penina Mlama, emphasises the importance of writing in the mother tongue, by stating:

Language is the heart of a people's culture and... the culture of advancement of the African peoples and the acceleration of their economic and social development will not be possible without harnessing in a practical manner indigenous African languages in that

advancement and development (as cited in Olubunmi Smith & Kunene, 2002: 2).

By choosing to write in the mother tongue Mlama and WaThiong'o believe the so-called African writer is able to communicate with their community at a grass roots level; however, what this argument fails to acknowledge is that in these communities oral communication is the predominant mode of storytelling. In addition, many African languages exist in one nation, and choosing one over the other can give rise to ethnic politics making the writer's mother-tongue the language of the oppressor (Mlama, 2002: 10). Therefore, choosing to write in one's mother tongue might not only exclude an international audience but also other African communities. Writing in the foreign tongue like English, French or Portuguese (languages of the coloniser), however, enables readership for a wider public. But what happens when the bilingual writer chooses to write the foreign tongue? Can he/she write in both tongues? How does he/she escape the demise of the mother tongue? The aim is to examine the African writers' relationship with the foreign tongue and mother tongue and to identify the devices they developed to use both tongues to their advantage.

The choice to write in an African language is often a choice for obscurity and a renunciation of the international limelight that writing in English, French or Portuguese could offer the writer (Mlama, 2002: 11). As cited in the introduction, the mother tongue serves as a constant reminder of one's culture, which Wa Thiong'o believes the African writer risks losing as 'an image of their word' if they choose to write in the foreign tongue. (Wa Thiong'o, 1986: 11). In Mlama's opinion writers who chose to do so 'belong to a class of writers who are willing to take a risk, who respond to the challenges posed by the realities of our African society today' (Mlama, 2002: 11). One of these challenges is that the English, French and Portuguese have become legitimised as languages of communication in most postcolonial countries in Africa, as is the case in South

Africa, where English is considered one of the official languages (although unlike the other eleven languages, English has taken centre stage as the preferred language of communication among South Africans). This is no coincidence, posits Alexander, who states that the language of the oppressor (English in addition to Afrikaans), 'became the language of aspiration and eventually the language of national unity and of liberation for the black elite' (Alexander, 2011: 312). In addition, observes Wa Thiong'o,

European languages were seen as having a capacity to unite African peoples against divisive tendencies inherent in the multiplicity of African languages with the same geographic state (Wa Thiong'o 1986: 285).

Once these European languages were accepted as languages of communication the next step was the written format. This is how African writers began to write in these European languages. However, Wa Thiong'o finds this problematic in that by writing in the 'foreign tongue' the 'African writer' enriches these languages, rather than enriching the mother tongue, leaving it to 'rot'. In support of Wa Thiong'o, Fanon emphasises the importance of language by stating:

To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization (Fanon, 2008: 8).

This implies that the African writer is forced to perform what Ashcroft describes as a 'linguistic structure or the code which can be described by the colonial distinction of "standard" and "variant" ' (Ashcroft, 1995: 300). These are factors that are embedded or carried within the language that the 'African writer' can fall victim to; however, as seen with Marechera's and Rampolokeng's work, the postcolonial African writers appropriate the language as a strategy to escape these structures. Fanon supports the claims of Mlomo and Wa Thiong'o that language is a carrier of the experience of one's culture; and this is the power of language. But can this experience only be expressed through one's mother-tongue? What happens when thoughts cannot be expressed in the mother-

tongue? Lewis Nkosi explains that whatever the language of choice the writer cannot escape this problem:

In a way, any writer always falls short of his true ideal: his struggle with his materials, the attempt to wrestle from language the true meaning of the world he seeks to depict, is always endless and incomplete. Incomplete, because in describing the true lineaments of what the writer sees with his inner eye language can only approximate the shapes and figures of his imagination. In this respect, therefore, the situation of the African writer is not unique. It is the same struggle with language (Nkosi, 1981: 6).

The predicament of a bilingual writer is then how to express or evoke the experience of the mother tongue when writing in the foreign tongue. McGuire proposes that for the bilingual writer to write, they must experience what he describes as the 'freedom of linguistic exile', and only then can they truly write (McGuire, 2002: 74). This separation allows the writer room to express writing 'between a double existence'; that is, a characteristic of a postcolonial writer who is a 'self translator'. But as seen in *Do it like this!* translation comes with the risk of being untranslatable (McGuire, 2001: 81).

Fanagalo or Fanakalo originated out of conditions on the South African mines. The term, poorly translated into English words means Fana (looks like) – ka (of)- lo (this) or Fana (do)- ga(like)- lo(this). The language functioned as a language of instruction between white employers and black employees. In 'The origins of Fanakalo' Rajend Mesthrie states that the language is used between employer and employee in some urban working places, farms and gold and diamond mines (Mesthrie, 1989:11). He describes it as a pidgin language 'based on a master-servant discourse' (Mesthrie, 1998: 305). Munnik and I became interested in this relationship particularly in how the language could be used as a language of instruction, hence the title *Do it like this*. To accommodate the English/Afrikaans speaker the language was constructed using the simplest form of these languages and then converted to Fanakalo, as formulated from a diluted version of isiZulu. We asked what happens when one language is converted from one to

the other? We began to record this relationship between the translated and untranslatable on a chalkboard, colour coding each language for the audience. We then decided to construct sentences in English but, unlike the instructive English of Fanagalo, we created sentences that discussed the project and our thought processes. We then proceeded to try and translate them into Fanagalo using the Fanagalo dictionary and isiZulu using the isiZulu dictionary. In instances where words (like employees, kitchen) were not found in the Fanagalo dictionary we used empty brackets to express this impossibility to translate. For example:

English: speaking
Fanagalo: kuluma
isiZulu: ukukhuluma

English: English
Fanagalo: singisi
isiZulu: isiNgisi

English: employees
Fanagalo: ()
isiZulu: isisebenzi

English: kitchen
Fanagalo: ()
isiZulu: ikhishi

What we found during in this process is that some isiZulu words like 'ikhishi' in Fanagalo appropriated some English terms, for example, the word 'kitchen'. For those who speak 'pure' isiZulu, like the bilingual writer, Fanagalo forces these bilingual speakers to experience a double existence (where, Bhatt claims, that if they live in a place where people only speak Fanagalo, their mother tongue

would 'rot'). This is yet another dilemma facing the bilingual writer. For McGuire, however, the real struggle of the bilingual writer is not what language to write in but rather 'how to write in two languages simultaneously, how to write a life lived between languages' (McGuire 2002: 81). In other words, where the foreign tongue and the mother tongue can exist in the same space without one erasing the other. In this space neither language is superior to the other; rather each language performs a certain role and suggests a particular meaning.

However Joseph Mbele cautions that this meaning is never certain, as the reader can never assume to receive exactly what the writer had intended (Mbele 2002: 50). For the Moroccan-born bilingual writer, Abdelkebir Khatibi, the French language is 'is not the French language: it is more or less all the internal and external languages which makes it up and undo it' (Khatibi, 1983: 188). These 'internal and external' languages act as codes for the bilingual reader, as each word or idiom is encoded with a particular connotation that can be excised by the bilingual reader as it holds the key to the non-communicative aspect of cultural experience (Ashcroft 1995: 300).

How can the African writers use these signifiers? Chinua Achebe proposes that 'Africanity can be conveyed through the use of African proverbs and idioms in European languages' concluding that 'it is not necessary to write in an African language to create an African literature' (as cited in Mphande, 2002: 59). Taking it a step further he rejects the division between the foreign tongue and the mother tongues, for him English is an African language, it is, '[a] language spoken by Africans on African soil, a language in which Africans write' and therefore it 'justifies itself' (Achebe, 1976: 67).

If we accept that English is an African language, in what way have African writers used it alongside other African languages? Writers like Marechera, Rampolokeng, Achebe, Nkosi, just to name a few, are aware of the criticism

inherent in choosing to write in English, but they have not been deterred from using the language. Instead it has pushed them to use politics to destabilise the 'borrowed tongue'. For Achebe, in order for English to express the 'African experience' it needs to be transformed into a 'new English' that is 'still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings' (Achebe, 1975). One way to do this is to insert ideophones into bilingual text. The writer C.M Doke describes ideophones as 'vivid representation of an idea in sound' (Doke, 1935: 118). Mphande explains that these are prevalent in the prose, poetry and drama of African-languages (Mphande, 2002: 59). Like 'internal and external languages' they infuse sound and meaning, which can be deciphered by the readers' knowledge of the language (Mphande, 2002: 61). To avoid muting the text for the monolingual reader the bilingual writer provides a glossary that translates the ideophone into English. However, for Mphande, the claim that ideophones can be translated is problematic; he believes ideophones, unlike African proverbs and riddles, are distinctly African and therefore untranslatable (Mphande, 2002: 65). It could be argued, however, that although they might be untranslatable, they can be described to the reader. For instance, in the novel *Things fall apart* Achebe uses phrases, idioms and ideophones and provides the reader with a glossary of Ibo words and phrases (see three examples below):

"**Nnaayi**," he said. "I have brought you this little kola. (Achebe, 1994: 29)

"This year they talked of nothing else but the **nso-ani** which Okonkwo had committed." (Achebe, 1994: 40)

" Umuofia **kwenu!**" roared Evil Foreset, facing the elders and grandees of the clan (Achebe, 1994: 95)

Glossary:

nnaayi: our father.

nso-ani: a religious offence of a kind abhorred by everyone, literally earth's taboo.

kwenu: a shout of approval and greeting

The glossary translates or defines the terms for the bilingual reader. However, unlike this glossary *Do it Like This!* examines the grammatic structure of Fanagalo in comparison to isiZulu. It does not attempt to translate one language into another language but to demonstrate the refusal to translate. Other strategies include experimentation with the language 'standing it on it head, brutalizing it into a more malleable shape for my own purpose' (Marechera, 1978: 7). This symbolic violence attempts to reproduce the violent means in which the English language was imposed on the colonised through colonial subjugation. In Marechera's opinion subverting these colonial structures might mean,

discarding grammar, throwing syntax out, subverting images from within, beating the drum and cymbals of rhythm, developing torture chambers of irony and sarcasm, gas ovens of limitless black renounces (Marechera, 1978: 7).

These methods resemble the objective of the cut-ups to 'free words' meaning to undermine the authority of the word (Lydenberg, 1978: 419). Marechera pushes it even further, for him and Rampholokeng it is about liberating themselves from the tyranny of the language. For Marechera 'freedom' means inflicting violence in such a way that 'it forces, it bends, it breaks' the language (Marechera, 1978: 7). Marechera and Rampholokeng employ what Alexander describes as 'the language of power', or the ability of the relevant individuals or groups to realise their intentions (will) by means of language (empowerment) (Alexander, 2011: 313). This is all in tune with the invisible symbolic power of language, which can be subverted and, like cut-ups, inflicted on unsuspecting individuals by undermining the authority of the language.

This appropriation of the European language has enabled African writers to represent the fragmented identity of the postcolonial subject, who like the

bilingual writer, exists in double or multiple spaces. Achille Mbembe, in the essay 'On the post-colony' claims postcolonial identity is characterised by a,

style of political improvisation, by a tendency to excess and lack of proportion, as well as by distinctive ways identities are multiplied, transformed and put into circulation (Mbembe, 2001: 102).

It is this improvisation that African writers use to mimic the multiplicity of postcolonial identities. While it is inevitable that a language will be omitted by a writer as the unresolved difficulty of being a bilingual writer as well as an African writer, the advantage of bilingual writing is that it creates a third space in which indigenous languages and European languages start to interact with each other, distancing itself from the monolingual reader and producing a bilingual reader, or what Hills (1937) calls 'a third voice'.

If power, as Foucault posits 'is not a matter of consent' then methods such as appropriation, translation and 'involuntary' collaboration exemplify that. Each of these methods deletes, adds, substitutes, re-stages and re-writes authorial authority and the authorial voice. One sees this in the development of new forms of literary writing that Burroughs uses to 'free' writing from the author-ity, by appropriating found text and how he exercises authority over this text. Then he merges it with his own text while translation erases and omits language. McGuire suggests that there are similarities between the translator and the bilingual author, when he states: 'Just as bilingual writers betray one language in their choice of the other, so the translator misrepresents or is unfaithful to the original' (McGuire 2002: 79).

In defense of the translator, Benjamin argues that the translation is bound to be unfaithful to the original, stating: 'The translator can never do what the original text did... it is always second in relation to the original, and the translator as such

is lost from the very beginning'³⁴ (De Man, 1985: 33). How do we solve this problem? McGuire proposes that we accept that it is not the translator who is at fault but language. In agreement with McGuire, Nkosi (1981) reminds us that, language can only approximate the shapes and figures of the writers' imagination.

In my opinion, cut-ups successfully confront the power of language over authors. By splitting words and removing them from their 'original imposed order' they reveal subtexts that might be hidden in a word (Robinson, 2011: 27). By forcing the reader to reconsider the role of words in a narrative, the authors use mechanisms to construct narratives and to disregard their preconceived notions of linear narratives that are grammatically 'correct'. The reason that cut-ups have the tendency to produce fragmented incoherent narratives is due to the fact that cut-ups are a 'randomised sum of a number of consciously created original parts, drawn out of their original context and placed in a completely new context' (Robinson, 2011: 25). It is this disorientation that it is intended to experiment with in the new body of work, particularly the ways in which cut-ups can erase the origin of the text, the originator of the text or through the 'third hand' reference of a particular decolonisation of the English language. In addition, there is also the dilemma of the bilingual writer, the postcolonial writer's multiple 'I', how cut-ups rewrite syntax and the central themes of authorship and authority.

4.3 Authorship as process

Using the above research to inform this body of work. The purpose of this residency was to think through questions on authorship, language and power through themes such as the relationship between the foreign tongue and the mother tongue; the power of language verses the language of power, translation,

³⁴ de Man's rereading of Walter Benjamin's, "The task of the translator"

bilingualism and William Burroughs writing technique 'the cut-up method'. Continuing what I have already started in this research paper, in the residency the concepts of authorship were 'travelled' from literature to artistic practice through various textual/visual gestures. I use the word residency to describe my occupation of The Point of Order (Wits Division of Visual Art's gallery space) because although artworks were exhibited in the space I considered them to be textual/visual interventions that could be developed throughout my occupation of the space. Part of these developments included introducing new work, and removing and replacing work.

Reiterating Cage's notion of involuntary collaboration and Burroughs proclamation that 'words are the property of no one', the textual/visual gestures consisted of a series of text and audio recordings from a number of authors whose texts and voices were edited or appropriated to create collaborative works. In each of these works I acted as the conductor by controlling how the works would be experienced in the space, commissioning individuals to make a work and instructing my 'collaborators' to perform certain acts. The audience was also invited to respond the works. For example in the works titled *Context 4, a collaboration with Adrian Piper* (figure18), which was later replaced by *Context 4.1, a collaboration with Adrian Piper* (figure19), I developed a set of requests and invited the audience respond to them in a notebook. These signs reference American artist Adrian Piper work *Context #7* in which she invited the audience to participate in a survey of modern art. In a sign hung above a notebook Piper asked the audience the to response the artwork:

You (the viewer) are required to write, draw, or otherwise indicate any response suggested by this situation (this statement, the notebook and pen, the museum context, your immediate state of mind, ect.) is the page of notebook benefits this signs.

This information entered in the notebook will not be altered or utilized in any way

Using an adaptation of Piper's words, the audience was asked to respond through writing and drawing. *Context 4* stated,

You (the viewer) are requested to write, draw, or otherwise indicate any response suggested to situations when your use of spoken English has caused some problems.

The information entered in this notebook will not be altered in anyway.

Context 4.1 stated,

You (the viewer) are requested to write, draw, or otherwise indicate what use of spoken English entails.

The information entered in this notebook will not be altered in anyway.

These text works were intentionally designed to reflect on the recent university strikes at the Stellenbosch University and the University of Pretoria (#Afrikaansmustfall) regarding students' refusal to accept Afrikaans as the medium of instruction. Instead, students proposed that English be the preferred language of instruction. *Context 4* and *Context 4.1* question this alternative. These works propose that the audience reconsider their relationship with the language. They also attempt to expose the power relations inherent in the legitimisation of European languages as the preferred mode of communication as discussed earlier in the paper. These responses would later be framed and displayed in the space. *Context 4* was removed and replaced with *Context 4.1*.

In another work I commissioned a sign writer to paint a wall text with the phrase 'I thought we had this conversation in 1976' (figure20). This phrase is taken from a

protest sign written by a student who participated in the 2016 #Afrikaansmustfall protest. The irony of this phrase is that it makes reference to the June 16, 1976 Soweto youth uprising which saw black students protest the introduction of the Bantu Education Act in 1953 that declared Afrikaans and English would be enforced as compulsory mediums of instruction. Like Vo's letter, it pushes the past into the present.

Additionally to addressing the politics of language, certain works focused on the relationship between the foreign tongue and the mother tongue, one work in particular is titled *Bilingual Blues* (figure 21), a title taken from a poem written by Gustavo Perez Firmat. However, the work consists of a poem originally titled *Search for my mother tongue* and written by Sujata Bhatt. The poem was reduced in size and displayed in the space. The audience was provided with a magnifying glass that signalled the audience to use it to read the text. Many found the text inaccessible, which was the intention of the work. Although the magnifying glass could magnify some parts of the poem, it made it difficult for the audience to read the entire poem. Despite being written in English, like Vo's letter the inability to access the poem in its entirety has made the poem mute.

This is countered by the work *A Yoruba proverb* (figure 22), which consisted of eight screen prints by Alex Vosloo. The first print is a Yoruba proverb and the other seven are attempts by multiple authors to translate the English translations. What these translated texts expose are the imperfections of translation as each version distorts the first version and the next. Not only does each translated text move away from the original source, each text creates an original out of the original. This is evident in the incoherent syntax of the English language. However, Burroughs does not consider this problematic; this is evident in his application of the cut-up method and his refusal to follow the rules of linguistics. Using Burroughs philosophy in the work *Moving the Center, a collaboration with Ngugi wa Thiong'o* (figure 23), originally a video recording of a presentation by

wa Thiong' o at the University of California titled *Moving the Center* in which he addresses the politics of language, particularly the relationship between the foreign tongue and the mother tongue. This video recording was reduced to an audio piece in which I used Burroughs cut-up method to splice, rearrange and fragment wa Thiong' o's speech. What this gesture does is create "new writing" by reconfiguring "old writing" and as a result changing the meaning of the wa Thiong' o's words. The audience is invited to make sense of this text. Unlike Burroughs whose cut-ups are comprised of written words that act as 'symbols of spoken words', this video turned audio piece takes it a step further in that it combines two modes of textuality, the written word and spoken word. Although wa Thiong'o is the original creator of the narrative, splicing his speech has altered his role as creator and repositioned him as narrator. The audience experience wa Thiong'o as the imagined voice of the author.

In an untitled work described as '*Whitehead & Jack, Walter Boring Specialists of Salisbury, (Rhodesia) In a form of a letter, the ad begins,*' (figure 24) This is a work that consists of two adverts, one written English and then translated into Fanakalo, each ad begins in a form of a letter; I commissioned a calligrapher to write these adverts. The purpose of these two adverts was not only to invite the audience to try and identify how the English advert was 'translated' (it is not clear whether this translation is successful) into Fanakalo but also to illustrate bilingual writing. This is evident in the Fanakalo advert that is written in multiple languages such as English, Afrikaans and Shona. The text performs what McGuire describes as the experience of writing in 'between a double existence'. Like Vo's letter and the poem, for the monolingual reader accessibility to the advert is limited. In an attempt to help the audience access the Fanakalo advert is the work *So you want to learn the language? A Fanakalo pronunciation guide. A collaboration with Abri de Swardt* (figure 25). For this collaboration I instructed Abri de Swardt to read a text piece titled 'A Fanakalo guideline for tourists'. The guide consists of English alphabets and instructions as to how they should be

pronounced in Fanakalo. This was presented in a form of a video work layered with a voice recording of de Swardt reading these instructions as each alphabet appeared on screen. The audience was invited to try and mimic or correct de Swardt's pronunciation in attempt to learn Fanakalo.

My final intervention explored secret languages as such tsotsitaal. Tsotsitaal is slang based on a mixture of multiple South African languages such as Afrikaans, seTswana and isiZulu. The sole purpose of tsotsitaal was to insure secrete communication through words or phrases encoded with various meanings, isolating those who don't understand. This intervention attempted to illustrate the strategies employed by the bilingual speaker to use the power of language as a tool to navigate spaces as tsotsitaal was spoken amongst prisoners to avoid prison guards from listening in. To mimic this strategy, a tsotsitaal prayer titled "How to write a tsotsitaal prayer" (figure 26) originally written by Vakele Manquthu was transcribed on a wall. This was accompanied by a set of tsotsitaal cards (figure 27) with a selection of Afrikaans, seTswana, isiZulu and English phrases. The audience was invited to decode them. Unlike the Fanakalo guide which tried to help non Fanakalo speakers understand the language, the prayer and phrases were not translated to the audience leaving the 'internal and external' coding only accessibly to those know the language.

Titled *What difference does it make who is speaking?* the intention of the residency was to think about this question through these textual/visual gestures. In each intervention this question is complicated by the appropriation of other authors' text and the strategies I employ to dictate how these textual works and these different authorial voices are experienced by the audience/reader. My intention is not necessary to answer this question but to encourage the audience to think about how the author/s and the source of the authorial voice can exert power through language.

CONCLUSION

A central aspect of this my practice is research, and as a continuation of this practice the purpose of this dissertation is to think through questions of authorship, language and power by 'travelling' the concept of author from literature to artistic practice. To achieve this, the dissertation is guided by the questions, 'What is an author?' 'When is authorship?' and the title question 'What difference does it make who is speaking?' These questions play a significant role in comparing the concept of author in both literature and artistic practice by focusing specifically on how authorship is performed in both disciplines. To illustrate this, the study attempts to identify the strategies employed by writers Marechera and Burroughs and how they are used in the specific works of three artists Vo, Rose and Wa Lehlere to unpack the authorial identity and the authorial voice under themes. These themes include the voice, performative text and performative practice throughout this analysis. The study is then able to determine the various ways in which authorship can be performed through disguise, mimesis and erasure. These strategies also reveal the ability of the selected artists and writers to manipulate language in such a way that it evokes another author, so demonstrating the subject author's authority over language.

In artistic practice this 'author-ity' is articulated through selective and at times repetitive gestures. One can see this in how Wa Lehlere uses motifs such the bone, comb and grater as characters in his drawings. Similarly, Rose uses strategic choreography of the performance and Vo uses control over the image and distribution of the letter. In literary practice this is shown by the way the authors' authority is expressed through dismantling linguistic systems, and both Marechera and Burroughs demonstrate this by rejecting linear narratives. They hold that such narratives fail to reflect how fragmented reality can be and their rejection is extended to their relationship with words, which they believe should be at the mercy of the writer who, at any given time, can unfix their meaning and

function. However, what all these individuals in their disciplines have in common is the desire to distance themselves from the previously prescribed definitions of author and to develop new approaches to the ways in which authorship can be articulated.

Once they are identified, the techniques used by these writers/artists to speak through language and to gesture through text and drawn images, the focus of the study then shifts to answer the title question. In considering the implications of the source of the authorial voice the relationship between the colonisers and colonised is addressed, particularly how language is used as a weapon of oppression in this relationship. What this means is the silencing or erasure of the colonised by the coloniser, who by refusing the colonised the autonomy to define themselves, reinforces their invisibility. It is argued that it is in circumstances like these that the source of the authorial voice is important, as it is the speaker who determines how the Other is defined. This relationship between the self and the Other demonstrates the power of language. This is revealed firstly, by examining the works of Marechera, Burroughs, Vo, Rose and Wa Lehlere to see how the authorial gestures employed by these postcolonial writers/artists to resist colonial authority are demonstrated. These works also demonstrate how the various devices used by the coloniser to erase and silence the oppressed are enforced. Secondly, the study discusses how these same strategies are employed as a counter-attack against the authority of the coloniser. Particularly, in how Marechera's 'panga wars' with the English language force the language to be more malleable for his own purposes – while also being an act of symbolic violence. Similarly, one sees this in Burroughs' distortion of syntax in defiance of linguistic systems, and in Rose's presentation of multiplicity in postcolonial identity by doubling herself to react to the relationship between the master and the master's voice through mimesis, Vo poses the problem of monolingualism by refusing to translate the French language for his father, while Wa Lehlere interrogates systems of erasure inherent in collectivism. Oguibe criticises this

collective identity for not only excluding other communities, but also for being employed by the West to imprison and frame African art and African artists.

Once the symbolic power of language is exposed, the study then addresses the ways in which these writers/artists begin to challenge this power by subverting language through resistance to symbolic violence. Marechera and some other bilingual writers accomplish this by reinventing the English language to create a 'new' English that expresses Africanness, Vo reinforces monolingualism by dictating the accessibility to the French language to the reader/audience. Rose tackles identity politics, race and naming while Wa Lehlere uses erasure to remove identity – and so challenge a single identity or voice for the postcolonial artist.

In the final chapter this writer's own practice is discussed by focusing on what sparked an interest in how authorship can be performed in artistic practice. This begins by looking at how one starts to interrogate the question of authorship, and gives examples of artworks produced and the devices used therein to take ownership over text authored by other authors. To accomplish this it is argued that the author's identity and the authorial voice of the original author needs to be erased and replaced with the new authorial identity and authorial voice. This is the intention of the work *Not I* which is spearheaded by the question 'What difference does it make who is speaking?' It further complicates the notion of authorial voice by declaring that there is no speaker, it is neither like Beckett's work the characters in the script or even this writer personally. Rather, it questions the ways in which the author exists. If it is 'not I' speaking then who is speaking? Once the consonants were cut out, words were reduced to sound, stripping the words of meaning, so that at this point there is no speaker via speech sounds. Here erasure is taken a step further to a point where there is no language but only the units of a language.

As stated earlier on, the purpose of this thesis is to begin to think through ideas within my exhibition. These include the predicament of the African and/or

bilingual writer, particularly how this kind of writer is able to express the experience of living in two worlds by merging languages. Not only does this gesture address the question 'What difference does it make who is speaking?' but it also illustrates the ways which these individuals begin to speak. Here the difference is that these writers are able to articulate postcolonial identity to avoid the erasure of monolingualism that reproduces single identities. This tug of war between the foreign and mother tongue is explored in the exhibition. Furthermore, by borrowing Burroughs' philosophy and writing technique cut-up sentences from other authors are used throughout the thesis.

In treating the thesis as an extension of fine art practice these insertions begin to practice Bal's theory of travelling concepts by merging authorship in writing and art practice. These cut-ups are purposely unidentified and hidden within the text disguised as the authorial voice, so illustrating the power of language: particularly its ability to adapt to its new environment; unfix its former identity; and, more importantly, to free itself from the authors' authority. This is further complicated by their new environment as they are forced to take on the new authorial identity imposed by author, so undermining their original authority. All that then remains is to reiterate the statement by Burroughs and Gysin and link this with the title question: that if words are the property of no-one then 'What difference does it make who is speaking'?

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Appendices

20 janvier 1861.

J. M. J

Frère cher, très honoré et bien-aimé Père,

Puisque ma sentence se fait encore attendre, je veux vous adresser un nouvel adieu, qui sera probablement le dernier. Les jours de ma prison s'écoulent paisiblement. Tous ceux qui m'entourent m'honorent, un bon nombre m'aiment. Depuis le grand mandarin jusqu'au dernier soldat, tous regrettent que la loi du royaume me condamne à la mort. Je n'ai point eu à endurer de tortures, comme beaucoup de mes frères. Un léger coup de sabre séperera ma tête, comme une fleur printanière que le Maître du jardin cueille pour son plaisir. Nous sommes tous des fleurs plantées sur cette terre que Dieu cueille en son temps, un peu plus tôt, un peu plus tard. Autre est la rose empourprée, autre le lys virginal, autre l'humble violette. Faisons tous de plaire, selon le parfum ou l'éclat qui nous sont donnés, au souverain Seigneur et Maître.

Je vous souhaite, cher Père, une longue, paisible et vertueuse vieillesse. Portez doucement la croix de cette vie, à la suite de Jésus, jusqu'au calvaire d'un heureux trépas. Père et fils se reverront au paradis. Moi, petit éphémère, je m'en vais le premier. Adieu.

Votre très dévoué et respectueux fils.

J. Thiéphane Vénard

m. s.



Figure.1

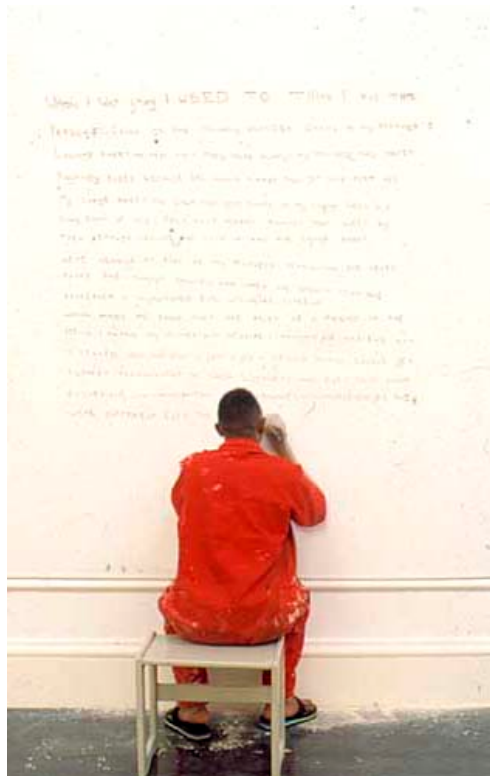


Figure.2

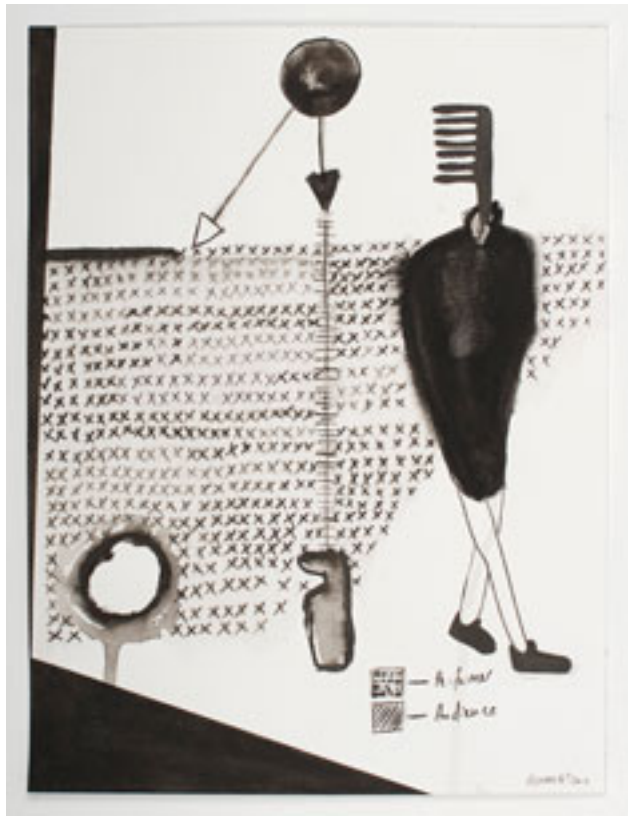


Figure.3

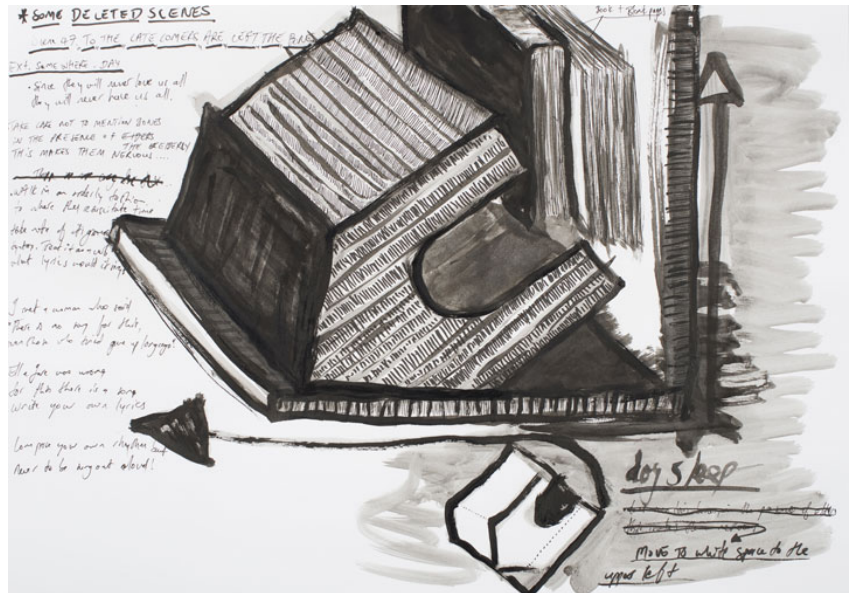


Figure.4



Figure.5



Figure.6



Figure.7



Figure.8



Figure.9



Figure.10



Figure.11

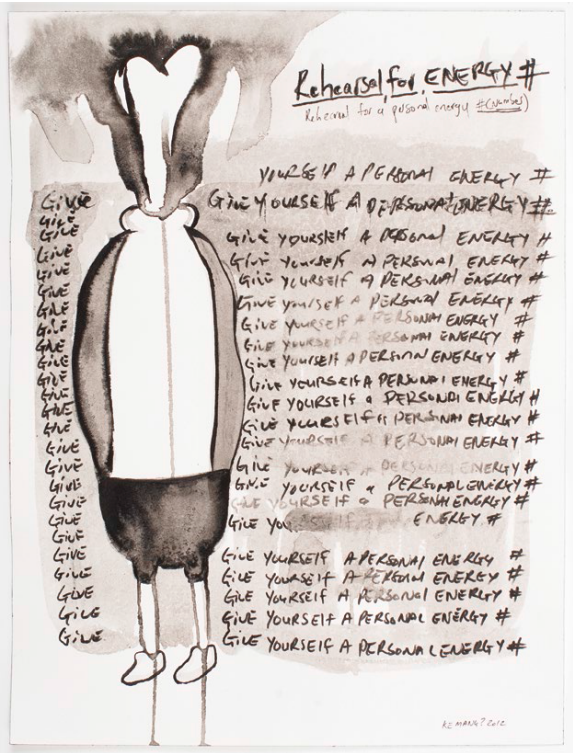


Figure.12



Figure.13

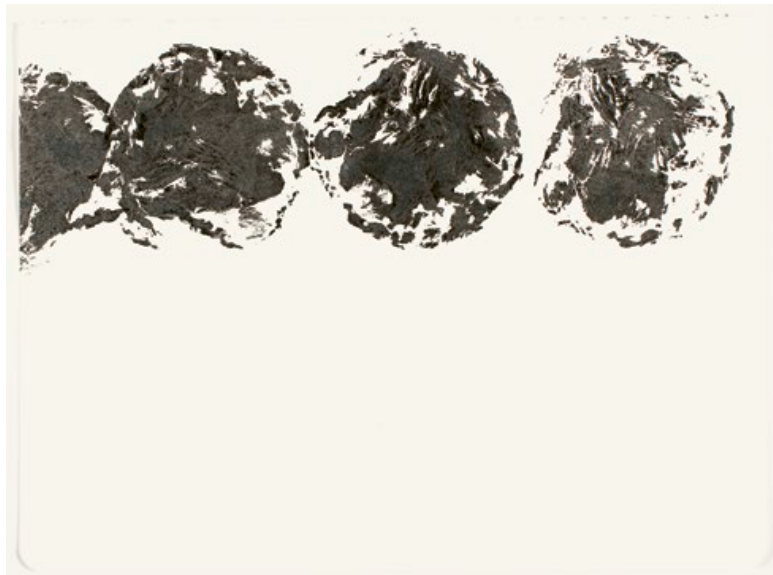


Figure.14



Fanakalo comes from the Nguni phrase: amaqala to = like all that's done like this
 (Fanakalo) started in colonial South Africa. How it began is unknown, but some have
 It may have started in the early, mid or late 19th century.
 It is possible that it began between Nguni-language speakers and English and Dutch
 settlers, it is also possible that it began between Nguni-speaking miners and English and Dutch
 miners on the diamond and gold fields of the Witwatersrand.
 Fanakalo is the only pidgin language in the world based on an African influence.
 It is based on Nguni.

Figure.15



Figure.16





Figure 18 and 19



Figure 20

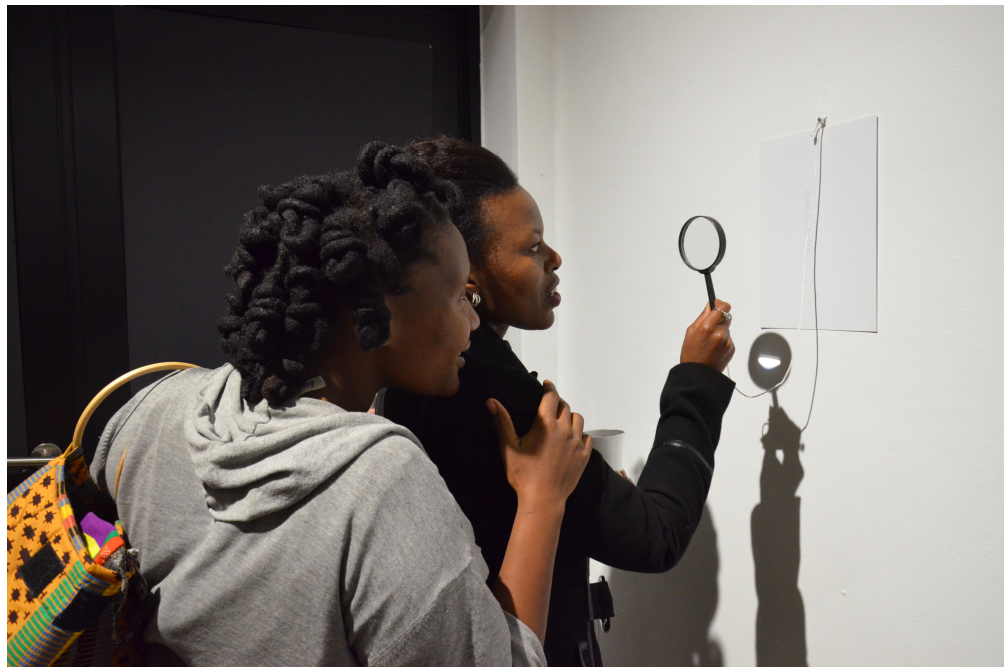
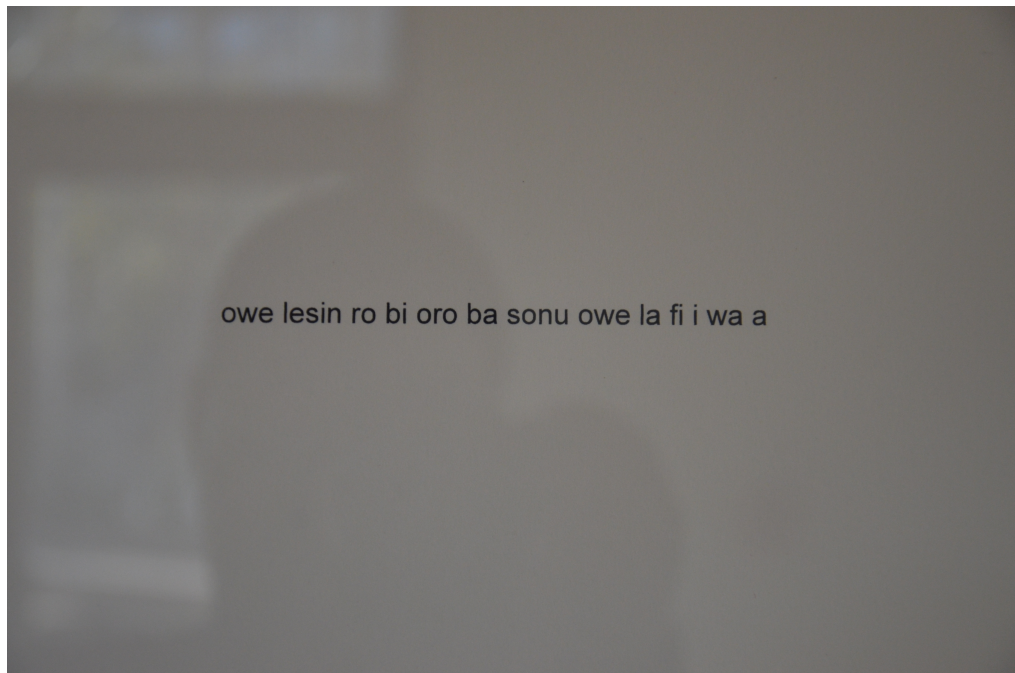


Figure 21



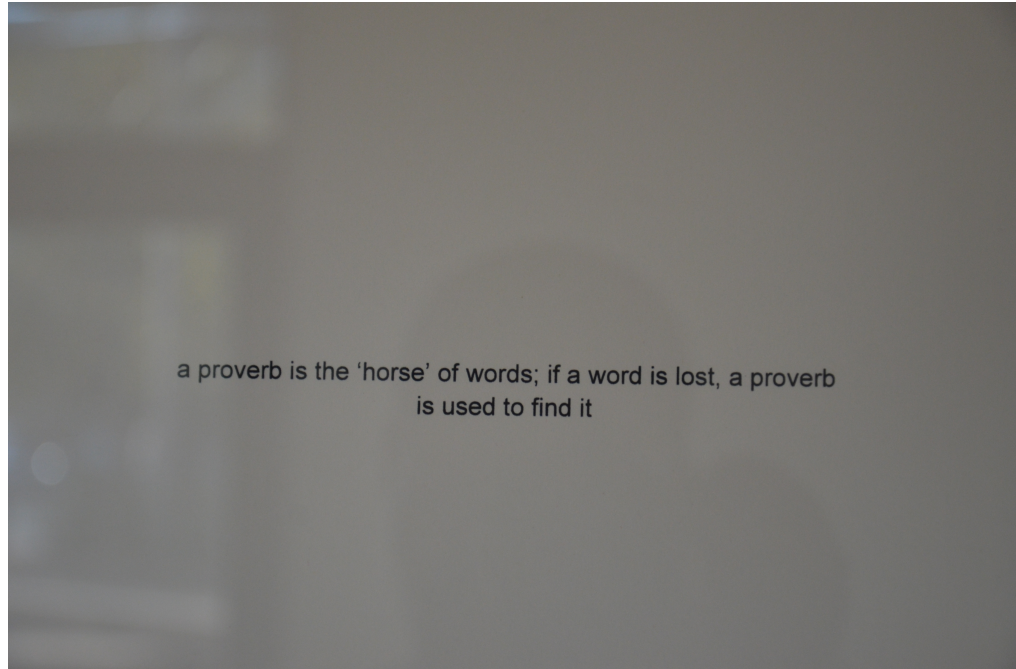


Figure 22



Figure 23

Zonke Shamwari gatina lapa Southern Rhodesia, Mena bala lo brief lapa gawena indaba zonke tina maboy lapa Whitehead and Jack tina finawena izwa lo indaba, gatina. Tina fina wena na lo unfasi gawena na lo mombie gawena yena bona lo mugodi ga lo manzi ga lo mushi stereke.

Goodbye, Mena boy gaweba, Boss,
[signed] R.K. Whitehead for, Jim Frish, Kero Whitehead & Jack.

To all of our friends here in Southern Rhodesia, I write this letter to you because all of us boys here at the Whitehead and Jack we want you to hear our business proposition. We want you and your wife and your cattle to see the hole for the water that is really good.

Goodbye, I am your boy, Boss,
[signed] R.K. Whitehead for, Jim Frish, Kero Whitehead & Jack.

Figure 24

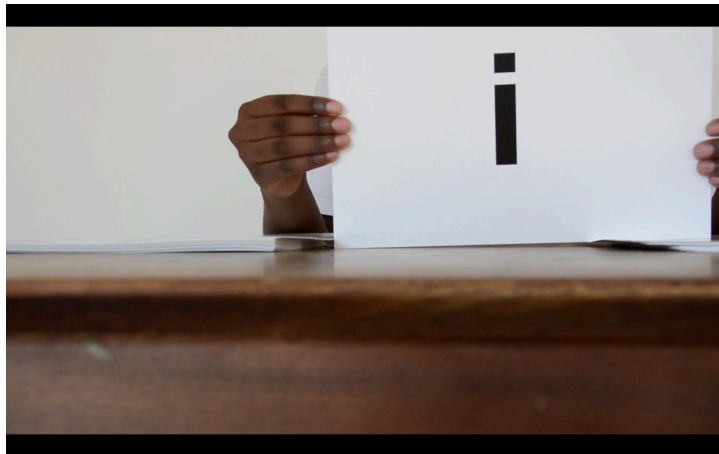
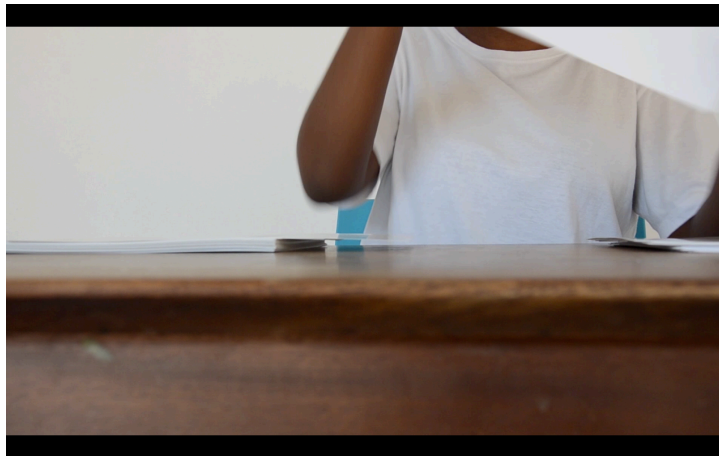


Figure 25

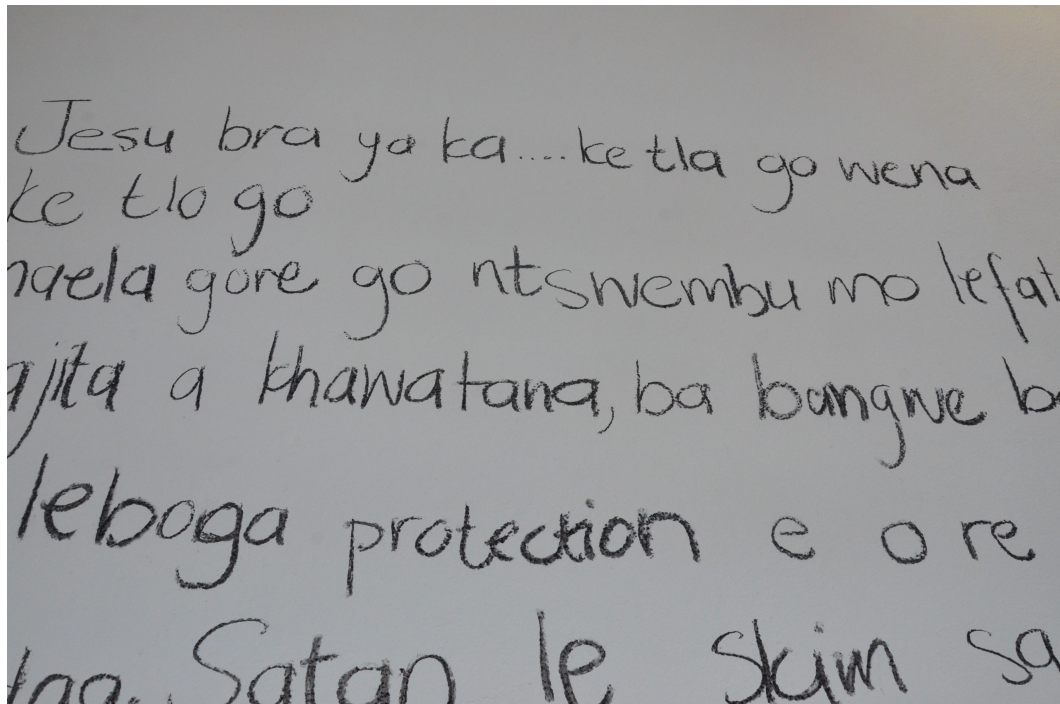
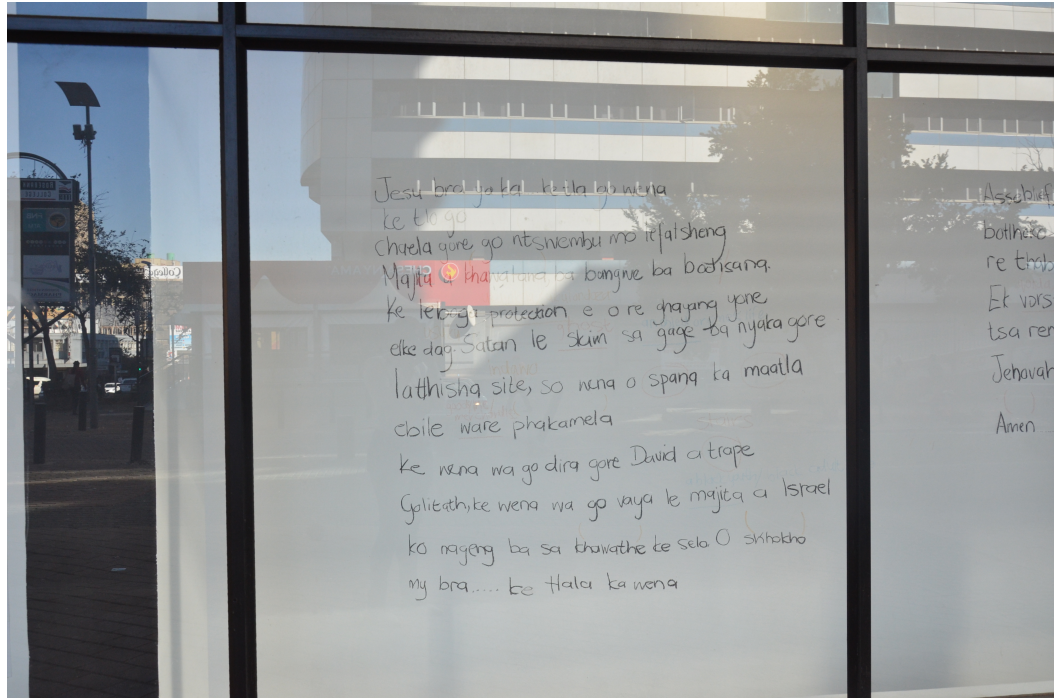


Figure 26

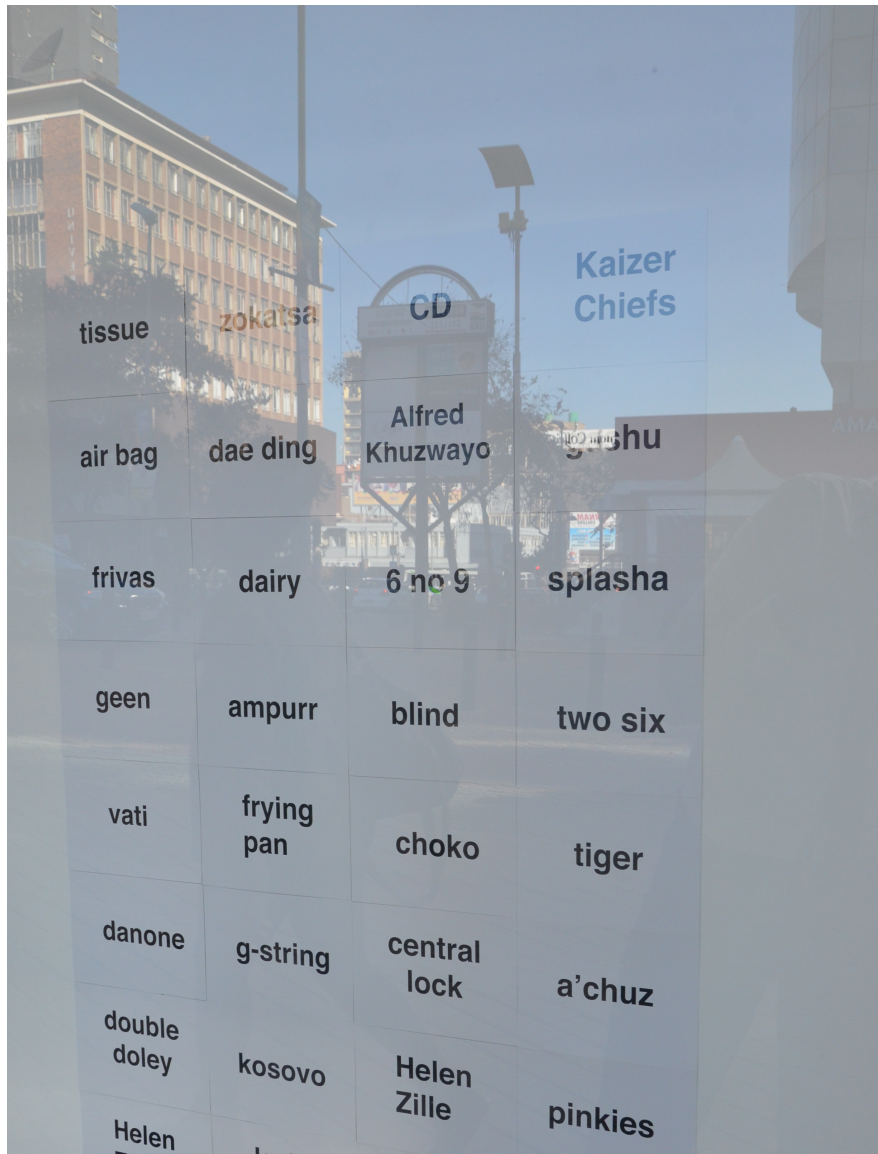


Figure 27

Cut ups

1. "...it would be wrong to equate the author to the 'real writer'..." from **Michel Foucault**, *What is an author?*
2. "...mixing the abstract with the concrete..." from **Flora Viet-Wild**, *Writing madness: borderlines of the body in African literature*
3. "...its like being an organism living off another..." from **Dobrota Pucherova**, *A portrait of the artist in black and white*
4. "...a speaking agent who does not mention itself in the process..." from **Miek Bal**, *Travelling concepts in the humanities: a rough guide*
5. "...the voice of the source is not heard..." from **Jacques Derrida**, *Of grammatology*
6. "...it speaks to the complex layering or reference and quotation that characterizes contemporary art..." from **Martha Burskirk**, *The contingent object of contemporary art.*
7. "... the act of narration is then an attempt to control in an effort to redetermine her identity..." from **Melissa Levin and Laurice Taitz**, *Fictional Autobiographies or Autobiographical Fictions?*
8. "...the author supposedly occupies an imaginary space in the simple sense that she does not "exist", either on the plane of reality of the story or of the book..." from **John Brenkman**, *On Voice*

9. "...as creator, the writer can put his or her own subjectivity in play by projecting it into the interiority of the character enmeshed in the social world represented in the novel..." from **John Brenkman**, *On Voice*
10. "...Marechera's life and his work are closely intertwined..." from **Katja Kellerer**, "House of Fools": Madness and the narrative of the nation in "The House of Hunger" and *Mapenzi*
11. "...as wall drawings can exist for a limited period of time..." from **Martha Burskirk**, *The contingent object of contemporary art*.
12. "...as wall drawings can be duplicated in another site..." from **Martha Burskirk**, *The contingent object of contemporary art*.
13. "...demonstrating its aggressive distrust of language and form..." from **Robin Lydenberg**, *Cut-up: Negative poetics in William Burroughs and Roland Barthes*
14. "...arbitrary signs and that they come to us empty..." from **Robin Lydenberg**, *Cut-up: Negative poetics in William Burroughs and Roland Barthes*
15. "...applying montage techniques already practiced in visual art to text..." from **Edward. S. Robinson**, *Shift linguals: cut-up narratives from William S. Burroughs to the present*.
16. "...whose placement can determine the reader's experiential understanding of the narrative..." from **Martha Burskirk**, *The contingent object of contemporary art*.
17. "...arbitrary signs they come to us empty..." from **Robin Lydenberg**, *Cut-up: Negative poetics in William Burroughs and Roland Barthes*

18. "...Burroughs uses these cut-ups to critique originality..." from **Edward. S. Robinson**, *Shift linguals: cut-up narratives from William S. Burroughs to the present*.
19. "...making the strategies that might be used by the author visible to the reader/audience..." from **Edward. S. Robinson**, *Shift linguals: cut-up narratives from William S. Burroughs to the present*.
20. "...break down the conventions of language..." from **Edward. S. Robinson**, *Shift linguals: cut-up narratives from William S. Burroughs to the present*.
21. "...the writers mother-tongues the language of the oppressor..." from **Pamela Mlama**, *Creating in the mother tongue*
22. "...these methods resemble the cut-ups whose objective to 'free words' meant undermining the authority of the word..." from **Robin Lydenberg**, *Cut-up: Negative poetics in William Burroughs and Roland Barthes*