

Special issue: 'Generic Boundaries in South African Literature: a Revaluation.'

In an article provocatively entitled "'In a Country where You couldn't Make this Shit up'?: Literary Non-Fiction in South Africa', Hedley Twidle examines the relationship between fiction and non-fiction in South Africa and reaches the conclusion that 'one is left with the paradox that the centuries-old opposition of "the novel" and "history" can hardly be abandoned. Provoking the complex play of responsibility and irresponsibility that lies at the heart of reading the literary (non-fictional or otherwise), this binary remains – such is the complexity of apprehending texts, and the sheer volume of narratives that must be processed in a digital world – both inhibiting and energizing; inadequate and indispensable.' (Twidle 2012: 25) Such works as J. M. Coetzee's 'autobiographies' or Antjie Krog's *A Change of Tongue*, for instance, paradoxically challenge this binary while simultaneously reasserting its existence, thus calling into question not only the relationship between 'reality' and 'fiction,' but also the very validity of the concept of literary genres. Of course, one should not fall into the trap of thinking 'that history equals "nonfiction," which would also produce the reverse equation that non-fiction equals history' because 'such an equals sign would be (and has been) extraordinarily limiting, constraining the kind of writing that can be done, whether fiction, non-fiction, or history,' as Stephen Clingman rightly points out in his answer to Twidle's article (Clingman 2012: 54). Yet, it seems that the South African literary landscape has always been, and can still be, defined through this prism.

In relation to this, a remarkable evolution has been the rise of crime narratives, either fictional, like the novels written by Deon Meyer, Margie Orford, or Jassy MacKenzie, to mention just a few examples, or non-fictional, as shown by the rise of 'true crime' – a trend which, Leon de Kock contends, testifies to the fact that 'postapartheid literature is inescapably bound to the time of before' (De Kock 2016: 58) and to what could be described as an archeological impulse.

This call for papers invites proposals for an issue entitled 'Generic Boundaries in South African Literature: a Revaluation' which will aim to examine what is at stake in the distinction between fiction and non-fiction, but also, more generally, in the fluidity of boundaries between genres in South African literature. We invite contributions on South African literary works which show an awareness of the shifting boundaries between fiction and nonfiction (true crime, new journalism...), but also, possibly, between prose and poetry or between realism and fantasy.

Proposals should be sent by 31 July 2022 to the editors of the issue: Mélanie Joseph-Vilain (melanie.joseph-vilain@u-bourgogne.fr) and Gilles Teulié (gilles.teulie@univ-amu.fr). Articles will be due by 31 October 2022.

References:

Clingman, Stephen (2012). "Writing Spaces: Fiction and Non-Fiction in South Africa" *Safundi* 13.1-2, 51-58.

De Kock, Leon (2016). *Losing the Plot. Crime, Reality and Fiction in Postapartheid Writing*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Twidle, Hedley (2012). "'In a Country where You couldn't Make this Shit up'?: Literary Non-Fiction in South Africa" *Safundi* 13.1-2, 5-28.

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