

Abstracts

liberal colonialism. This paper will consider the ways in which the advent and development of the social sciences, in the form of the Wits Bantu Studies Department and the SAIRR, in early 20th century Johannesburg depended on the silencing of the processes and structure of conquest in South African history, and the production of a scientific racial liberal discourse on the 'Native Question'. In doing this, I will explore a particular 'intimacy' of empire (Lowe 2015) through which imperialism was made 'legible' across the Atlantic through social scientific production. The paper will also offer some reflections on the *longue duree* interconnections between the advent of settler colonial social science and research, and contemporary social science pedagogy and praxis in South Africa.

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Title Deeds: Reading Maps in Space, Place, and Mind

My intention in this visual provocation is to collate examples of archived documents, including maps, and marks in the landscape, that have surfaced in the course of my intellectual journey through the past decade-and-a-half, and to draw these diverse records of place-making into conversation with contemporary modes of digital map-making. My aim is to complicate notions of map-making as a technique of knowledge-making inevitably tied up with colonial expansion and control. I look at the geometric markings and abstract engravings at the Driekopseiland rock art site in the Northern Cape, at the expansive stone-walled homesteads, terracing, and intensive farming networks of the Bokoni in eastern Mpumalanga province, at archived maps on paper made by young refugees from southern Angola in the 1880s, and at Dorothea Bleek's 20th-century project to map southern African languages onto the landscape, as examples of landscape marking and identity-making in diverse contexts. Against this historical trajectory, I discuss the surge of mapping projects available online, many designed with recuperative intent, and discuss their relevance for an embryonic digital mapping project being planned for Johannesburg, South Africa. Called JoziQuest, the project aims to make visible the intricacies of space and memory in a city that remains structured by legacies of apartheid and exclusionary urban planning, which continue to haunt the present.

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How to Learn from An Inconclusive Translation of An African Woman's Writing?

In his essay "Contested Grammars: Comparative Literature, Translation, and the Challenge of Locality", Simon Gikandi brings forward a critique on the systematic preclusion of consideration of literatures from Africa and South Asia in the modern disciplines of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies which extends its influence to other non-Western spaces such as East Asia. By saying that East Asian literatures can be more easily embraced because "they promised cultural entities that could be disciplined into a unified structure" which enables an East/West comparison that satisfies the "desire for totalization inherent in the comparative method", Gikandi reveals the shared violence (despite with different manifestations) behind the Westocentric treatments of literatures from the non-West in the two disciplines that are often self-justified for their desire to break the linguistic and cultural boundaries in studies of literatures, and points to a productive direction for conversations between writers and readers from East Asia and Africa which may take the inconclusiveness of the disciplinarity and the lack of methodological rigorosity of the Westocentric scholarly approaches to literatures as an advantage and inspiration, instead of an essential weakness (Gikandi, 258). In this paper, taking into account my own subjective position as an immature East Asian female student who is still struggling to break the cultural boundaries between East Asia and Africa, I compare my own translation of Paulina Chiziane's *Niketche* with the translation of the same work by David Brookshaw, a renowned British scholar and professor who publishes and translates widely on literatures written in

Portuguese in the different continents. While there are important things for me to learn from Brookshaw's writings and translations, my reading of many books that he translated, including Niketche, often differs from that of his at several different levels. By studying the insights that can be generated through a comparison of these two translations, one mature version by a renowned, well-established scholar in the West, and another inconclusive version by a student whose connections to both the West and the different non-Western spaces, both linguistically and geopolitically, are still not absolute, I explore the extent to which my reading and my translation of Niketche may generate productive insights into the reading of Chiziane's book from different linguistic and thematic standpoints, on one hand, and may contribute to the overall discussion towards a non-violent transcontinental paradigm of modern comparative literature and translation studies, on the other. My tentative argument is that many literary or academic works from contemporary African writers encourage me to value my own experiences as an "inconclusive" modern subject at different levels, and it is through the valorization of these complex, different experiences that non-exclusive conversations between writers and readers from (seemingly) radically different non-Western spaces become a possibility.

The Changing Roles of Media, Civil Society, and Activism (Chair: Tim Longman, Boston University)

Tenford Chitanana, University of Technology, Sydney

Subaltern Voices and the New Hegemony. Performance, Digital Media and Activism in Zimbabwe

This interdisciplinary study investigates the intersection of storytelling, performance, and digital media as well as how activists find voice in a hegemonic environment. It follows a repertoire of 'digital media performers' who use social media platforms to comment on Zimbabwean issues. Shrinking political space and economic collapse, characterizing Zimbabwe over the past 20 years, affected a range of economic and social sectors. A contracting paying audience and daunting government censorship negatively impacted the country's nascent commercial theatre and film industry. Yet, the growth in new media technologies has transformed how performances are produced and delivered. A new phenomena of social media skits— short performances, scripted or unscripted, straight-to-view or edited, and digitally distributed— has emerged in Zimbabwe's online space. These performances and their platforms have become a form of 'public sphere' where ordinary citizens converge to discuss pertinent issues. Exploring three leading performances (platforms) i.e. BustopTV, Zambezi News, and Madam Boss, and considering the history of performance in Zimbabwe, e.g. in political activism and agitation propaganda, the study probes this emergent form, unpacking its function. The study applies a constructionist ontological stance, placing emphasis on reality and meaning as a construct of those who live it rather than a set standard to abide by. Thus, performance is regarded an evolutionary being constantly shifting to address the reality of those who partake in it. Qualitative interviewing, observation, and qualitative content analysis are used to explore the motivations behind these performances and the practical considerations related to their form and function. Using an eclectic theoretical framework; theater and performance—with a focus on Boal's tradition; hegemony and subaltern (in Gramscian and post-colonialism sense); and digital activism, the paper explores how the restrictive political environment influenced the shift in medium. The study argues that reflexivity of performance aids to sense-making and advances counterhegemonic discourse for those on the margins of society and power.