THE CAPE & THE COSMOPOLITAN: READING ZOE WICOMB

Hosted by the Department of English

Stellenbosch University

8-10 April 2010
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the following donors or sponsors: their donations or financial support have helped to make this conference possible:

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CONFERENCE THEME

THE CAPE & THE COSMOPOLITAN: READING ZOË WICOMB

This conference returns Wicomb to the Cape both literally and in terms of focusing scholarly attention on the site of her native space where so much of her fiction has converged. Along with this emphasis on the local, however, the conference aims to consider more cosmopolitan connections, to engage with the Cape and its history of global intersections. In doing so, it follows Wicomb in exploring ‘how setting functions much like intertextuality’ for the postcolonial writer, who, by introducing ‘dialogue between texts ... brings into being the interconnectedness of the human world in a divided society’ * Building on the colloquium Zoë Wicomb: Texts & Histories (co-hosted by SOAS, University of London, and the University of York in 2008)*, the conference The Cape and the Cosmopolitan: Reading Zoë Wicomb* aims to advance an extended interdisciplinary and interregional dialogue on and around Wicomb’s work.

The conference aims to create a forum not only for dialogues between disciplines but also between emergent and established researchers.


http://www.soas.ac.uk/events/event46091.html

Convenors:

Meg Samuelson (Stellenbosch) and Kai Easton (SOAS)

Conference Committee:

Jeanne Ellis, Lucy Graham, Grace Musila, Lynda Spencer and Tina Steiner

Graduate Assistants:

Grant Andrews and Grace Kim

Conference website can be accessed at:

THE CAPE & THE COSMOPOLITAN: READING ZOË WICOMB

08-10 April 2010

University of Stellenbosch
Co-hosted with SOAS

PROGRAMME:

Day 1 - 08 April:

08h30-09h00: Registration (Blue Molteno Room)

09h00-09h30: Welcome (Green Molteno Room)

Hennie Kotzé (Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Stellenbosch University); Shaun Viljoen (Head of Department of English, Stellenbosch University); Kai Easton (SOAS, conference convenor); Meg Samuelson (Stellenbosch University, conference convenor)

09h30-10h30: Keynote Lecture 1:

Presenter: Dorothy Driver (University of Adelaide) – “Cape and Cosmopolitan in Zoë Wicomb’s Writing”

Chair: Kai Easton (SOAS, University of London)

10h30-11h00: Tea (Room 571)

11h00-12h40: Panel 1 – Roots and Routes in/from the Cape (Green Molteno Room)

Presenters: Dan Yon (York University) – “Clement Daniels and the making of a rooted Cape Cosmopolitan”

Kai Easton (SOAS, University of London) – “Cultures of Travel: Cape Diasporas & Zoë Wicomb’s Playing in the Light”

Sue Marais (Rhodes University) – “You left. Remember?: ‘Roots’ versus ‘Routes’ in Zoë Wicomb’s The One that Got Away”

Sheena Goddard (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University) – “You can get lost anywhere: Cosmopolitanism and its discontents in the fiction of Zoë Wicomb”
Chair: Louise Green (Stellenbosch University)

12h40-14h10: Lunch (Beads Restaurant)

14h10-15h50: Panel 2 – Quotidian Spaces and Cosmopolitan Connections (Green Molteno Room)

Presenters:
- David Alvarez (Grand Valley State University) – “The Ambiguities of ‘Knowing One’s Place’: Zoë Wicomb’s Fiction and Criticism and Critiques of Everyday Life”
- Sopelekae Maithufi (University of Pretoria) – “Narrating the cosmopolitan through a decentred discourse: the case of David’s Story”
- Jane Poyner (University of Exeter) – “Cosmopolitanism and the Literatures of ‘Terror’: Zoë Wicomb’s David’s Story and Ishtiyaq Shukri’s The Silent Minaret”
- Irikidayi Manase (University of Venda) – “Reading city life in Cape Town during the early post-apartheid period in Zoë Wicomb’s Playing in the Light and making connections with the experiences in fictional Johannesburg”

Chair: Meg Samuelson (Stellenbosch University)

15h50-16h20: Tea (Room 571)

16h20-18h00: Panel 3 – Intertextual Locations (Green Molteno Room)

Presenters:
- Lynda Spencer (Stellenbosch University) – “Abagyenda bareeba. Those who travel, see: Rewriting home and exile in Zoë Wicomb’s You can’t get lost in Cape Town and Doreen Baingana’s Tropical Fish.”
- Denise deCaires Narain (University of Sussex) – “Negotiating ‘Cape Cosmopolitanism’ in Zoë Wicomb’s Texts”
- Margaret Daymond (University of KwaZulu-Natal) – “Shadow Stories and Shadow Selves in Zoë Wicomb’s Playing in the Light and Agnes Lottering’s Winnefred and Agnes.”
- Dirk Klopper (Rhodes University) – “Locations of the subject in Zoë Wicomb’s You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town (1987) and Rayda Jacobs’s The Middle Children (1984)”

Chair: Kai Easton (SOAS, University of London)

18h30: Public reading – Susan Kiguli & Zoë Wicomb (Erfurthuis)

Chair: Meg Samuelson (Stellenbosch University)

Cocktail Reception (Erfurthuis)
**DAY 2 – 9 APRIL**

09h00-10h00: Keynote Lecture 2: (Green Molteno Room)

Presenter: Abdurazak Gurnah (University of Kent) – “The Urge to Nowhere”

Chair: Tina Steiner (Stellenbosch University)

10h00-10h30: Tea (Room 571)

10h30-11h20: Panel 4 – Geographies of Race (Green Molteno Room)

Presenters: Stephane Robolin (Rutgers University) – “Properties of Whiteness: (Post)Apartheid Geographies in Wicomb’s Playing in the Light”

Minesh Dass (University of Johannesburg) – “‘a place in which to cry’: The Place for Race and the Home for Shame in Zoë Wicomb’s Playing in the Light (2006)”

Chair: Ralph Goodman (Stellenbosch University)

11h25-12h40: Panel 5 – (De)Constructing Colouredness (Green Molteno Room)

Betty Govinden (University of Kwazulu-Natal) – “‘Senses of colouredness’ – a critical exploration of coloured identities in South Africa, with particular reference to Zoë Wicomb’s writings.”

Kathryn Tobin (SOAS, University of London) – “Getting Lost in Cape Town: Zoë Wicomb and the (De)Construction of Colouredness in the New South Africa”

Lynne Rippenaar (Stellenbosch University) – “Passing confessions: secrecy, (dis)closure and border crossing in Zoë Wicomb’s Playing in the Light”

Chair: Nwabisa Bangeni (Stellenbosch University)

12h40-14h15: Lunch (d’Ouwe Werf Restaurant)

14h15-15h30: Panel 5 – Mappings and Metatexts (Green Molteno Room)

Presenters: Mark Sanders (New York University) – “Cape Impudence”

Virginia Richter (University of Berne) – “Local story, cosmopolitan text: Zoë Wicomb’s David’s Story and The One That Got Away”

Cóllin Parsons (University of Cape Town) – “Zoë Wicomb and the Cartographic Sublime”

Chair: Meg Samuelson (Stellenbosch University)

15h30-16h00: Tea (Room 571)
16h00-17h15: Panel 6 – Travels and Travails of the Book (Green Molteno Room)

Presenters:
- Andrew van der Vlies (Queen Mary, University of London) – “‘I’m only grateful that it’s not a Cape Town book’: You Can’t Get Lost between the Local and the Global”
- Julika Griem (Technical University of Darmstadt) – “Cosmopolitan seriality: the politics of genre in K. Ishiguro’s and Zoë Wicomb’s short story collections”
- Carli Coetzee (SOAS, University of London) – “A book must be returned to the library from which it was borrowed”: Zoë Wicomb’s ‘The One That Got Away’

Chair: Kai Easton (SOAS, University of London)

17h45: Public reading – Rustum Kozain, Nadia Davids, Ingrid de Kok & Imraan Coovadia (Erfurthuis)

Chair: Lucy Graham (Stellenbosch University)

Finger supper (Erfurthuis)

DAY 3 – 10 APRIL

09h00-10h40: Panel 7 – Cape and Cosmopolitan Histories (Green Molteno Room)

Presenters:
- Wayne Dooling (SOAS, University of London) – “Cape History and Domestic Respectability in the Novels of Zoë Wicomb”
- Pamela Scully (Emory University) – “Zoë Wicomb, Cosmopolitanism, and the Making and Unmaking of History in David’s Story and Playing in the Light”
- Hugh Macmillan (University of Oxford) – “The ‘Cape colour Question’ and the Cosmopolitan: Identity, History and Place in Zoë Wicomb’s novels”
- Mariangela Palladino and John Miller (University of Glasgow) – “Recasting imperialist sculpture into postcolonial text”

Chair: Susie Newton-King (University of the Western Cape)

10h40-11h10: Tea (Room 571)

11h10-12h25: Panel 8 – Traumatised and Diseased Bodies (Green Molteno Room)

Presenters:
- Kara Donnelly (New York University) – “David’s Story: Global Text, Local Harm”
- Karlien van der Schyff (University of Cape Town) – “TRURT, TRURT, TRURT, TRURT”: David’s Story and the Story of Women”
Lizzy Attree (University of Western Cape) – “Relative Silencing of HIV, Sexuality and Race by the Cape Cosmopolitan in ‘In Search of Tommie’ in Touch: Stories of Contact by South African Writers (2009)”

Chair: Lucy Graham (Stellenbosch University)

12h25-14h30: Lunch (own arrangements)

14h30-16h30: Writers’ Panel on the Cape and/or Cosmopolitan (Green Molteno Room)

Presenters: Nadia Davids (Queen Mary, University of London)
            Rustum Kozain (Independent)
            Imraan Coovadia (University of Cape Town)
            Susan Kiguli (Makerere University)

Chair: Harry Garuba (University of Cape Town)

16h30-17h00: Tea (Room 571)

17h00-18h00: Summation and conference proceedings (Green Molteno Room)

19h00: Conference Dinner (Cognito Restaurant)
VENUES

Registration: Blue Molteno Room, 5th Floor, Arts & Social Sciences Building, c/o Merriman and Ryneveld Streets

Panels: Green Molteno Room, 5th Floor, Arts & Social Sciences Building, c/o Merriman and Ryneveld Streets

Lunch Venues: 8 April – Beads Restaurant, c/o Ryneveld & Church Streets; 9 April – d’Ouwe Werf, 30 Church Street

Teas: Room 571 in English Department, 5th Floor (right next to the Blue Molteno Room)

Public Readings: Erfurthuis, 37 Ryneveld Street

Conference Dinner: Cognito Restaurant, 137 Dorp Street

To reach the Molteno rooms on the 5th floor of the Arts and Social Sciences Building:

The Arts and Social Sciences building can be found on the corner of Merriman and Ryneveld Street in Stellenbosch (see map).

When you enter the building at the main entrance on Ryneveld Street, you will walk up stairs and enter the second floor main corridor. Walk along the corridor on either side of the central division until you see large red swinging doors. Enter these, and take either the stairs or the lifts up to the 5th floor. On the fifth floor, there will be more red swinging doors – go through the one that says "English Studies". You'll now be in the English Studies department. Turn left and keep walking down the passageway until you reach doors painted in bright yellow, green and blue to your left. These are the Molteno rooms. The Green room is where the conference panels will be held, and the Blue room is for conference registration. Further up the passage is room 571, where the conference teas will be held.
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

ZOË WICOMB

Born in Beeswater in Namaqualand in 1948, Zoë Wicomb was educated in Cape Town and has both studied and taught at the University of the Western Cape. A significant critic of South African culture and postcolonial literature, she has been based mostly in the UK since 1970, and is currently Emeritus Professor at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow and Visiting Professor Extraordinaire in the Department of English at the University of Stellenbosch. She is the author of four highly acclaimed works of fiction, *You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town* (1987), *David’s Story* (2001 – winner of the M-Net Literary Award), *Playing in the Light* (2006 – shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writer’s Prize), and her most recent collection, *The One That Got Away*, which was launched in September 2008 at the first Wicomb Colloquium in London. Her latest short story, ‘In Search of Tommie’, was published in *Wasafiri* magazine and the anthology, *Touch*, in 2009.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Dorothy Driver

Dorothy Driver holds a Professorship in the English discipline at Adelaide University in Australia, where she teaches half-time; she returns regularly to South Africa for research, having taught fulltime between 1981-2001 at the University of Cape Town, where she is now Emeritus Professor and an Honorary Research Associate. She has published widely on constructions and representations of gender and race both under Apartheid and after Apartheid, and in the writings of women, including Olive Schreiner, Pauline Smith, Nadine Gordimer, Njabulo Ndebele, Yvonne Vera, Zoë Wicomb and many others. She was also one of the editors of the historical anthology *Women Writing Africa: the Southern Region*, and for twenty years compiled the Annual Bibliography and Survey of the Year’s Work in South African literature in English for the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. As a visiting professor she has taught courses in South African literature at the University of Chicago and at Stanford University. She was born in Grahamstown, South Africa.
Abdulrazak Gurnah

Abdulrazak Gurnah was born on the island of Zanzibar in 1948 and left East Africa for England in 1968. Following postgraduate studies at the universities of London and Kent, he spent two years lecturing at Bayero University in Nigeria, before returning to teach at Kent, where he is presently Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the English Department. He has published extensively on colonial and postcolonial writing, including articles on V. S. Naipaul and Wole Soyinka, and he is the editor of two volumes of Essays on African Writing and The Cambridge Companion to Salman Rushdie. Concurrently, he has made his name as a leading novelist on the contemporary international scene. In 2005 he was an invited participant in Durban’s 'Time of the Writer' festival, where he read from his seventh novel, Desertion (shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writer's Prize). His other novels include: Memory of Departure (1987), Pilgrim’s Way (1988), Dottie (1990), Paradise (1994 – shortlisted for both the Booker and the Whitbread Prize), Admiring Silence (1996), and By the Sea (2001 – longlisted for the Booker Prize and shortlisted for the Los Angeles Times Book Award, and winner of the Radio France International ‘Temoin du Monde’ Prize). His short story, ‘My Mother Lived on a Farm in Africa’, appeared in 2006.
PARTICIPATING WRITERS:

Imraan Coovadia

Imraan Coovadia, who was born in Durban and who graduated from Harvard and Yale, currently teaches in the English Department at the University of Cape Town. In 2001, he published his debut novel, The Wedding (Picador and Pan Macmillan), which was the runner-up in the Sunday Times Fiction Award, long-listed for the IMPAC Dublin International Literary Award, finalist for the first annual Connecticut Book Award, and short-listed for the Ama-Boeke Prize. This much heralded debut was followed by the daring Green-Eyed Thieves (Umuzi, 2006). In 2009, Coovadia published a monograph, Authority and Authorship in V.S. Naipaul (Palgrave Macmillan). His latest novel is High Low In-Between (Umuzi, 2009).

Nadia Davids

Nadia Davids was born in 1977 in Cape Town. She is an award-winning South African playwright, director and scholar whose work has been produced, published and studied in Africa, Europe and North America. She has written five plays, among them At Her Feet (2002) and Cissie (2008). At Her Feet won two 2003 Fleur de Cap Theatre Awards (Best Actress and Best New Director) and was nominated for the 2008 Noma Award for best book published in Africa. Cissie was nominated for three 2008 Fleur de Cap Awards (including Best New South African Play). Two of Nadia's short stories (‘The Visit’ and ‘Safe Home’) have been short-listed for the SA Pen Award. She is a part of the New York Women's Project Theatre's Playwright's Lab for 2008-2010. Nadia received her doctorate in Theatre from the University of Cape Town, and was a visiting scholar at U.C. Berkeley (2001) and New York University (2004-2006). She is currently a lecturer at Queen Mary, University of London. For further information, see: http://www.nadiadavids.com

Ingrid de Kok

Ingrid de Kok has published four books of poetry: Familiar Ground (Ravan Press, 1988); Transfer (Snailpress 1997); Terrestrial Things (2002); and, most recently, Seasonal Fires: Selected and New poems (Seven Stories and Umuzi, 2006). Her work has been published widely in international journals and anthologies, is translated into eight languages and is taught at institutions around the world. She has been awarded residency fellowships at the Rockefeller Centre at Bellagio and at the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, and has read at festivals such as the Berlin International Literature Festival, Poetry
International, Rotterdam and the Cuirt International Literary Festival, Galway. She grew up in Stilfontein, a gold mining town in what was then the Western Transvaal. When she was 12 years old, her parents moved to Johannesburg. In 1977 she emigrated to Canada where she lived until returning to South Africa in 1984. She is currently a Professor at the Centre for Extra-Mural Studies at UCT. For further information, see: http://www.ingriddekok.co.za

Susan Kiguli

Susan Nalugwa Kiguli is a Ugandan poet and academic, who holds a doctorate in English from the University of Leeds. She is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Literature, Makerere University, Uganda, and has served as the chairperson of FEMRITE, Uganda Women Writers’ Association. Her first volume of poetry, The African Saga (1998) won the National Book Trust of Uganda Poetry Award (1999) and made literary history in Uganda by selling out in less than a year. Her poetry has appeared widely in journals and anthologies both nationally and internationally. She has served on the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize (African Region, 1999) judging panel, and was one of the regional coordinators for the Women Writing Africa Project (Eastern region, 1999-2000). She has held residencies at the University of Natal (2001-2002) and Siftung Kunst: Raum Sylt Quelle, Germany (2008) and was a special participant in the Yorkshire Professional Development for Writers of African and Asian Descent-INSCRIBE Project (2005-2006).

Rustum Kozain

Rustum Kozain was born in 1966, in Paarl, South Africa. He studied for several years at the University of Cape Town and spent ten months (1994-1995) in the United States of America on a Fulbright Scholarship. From 1998 to 2004 he lectured in the Department of English at UCT, teaching in the fields of literature, film, and popular culture. His poetry has been published in local and international journals, some in translation in French, Spanish and Italian. His debut volume, This Carting Life, was published in 2005 (Kwela/Snailpress) and has been awarded both the Ingrid Jonker Poetry Prize and the Olive Schreiner Award. He works as a freelance copy-editor. Rustum’s blog can be found at:

http://groundwork.wordpress.com
ABSTRACTS

Alvarez, David (Grand Valley State University, USA)
Title: The Ambiguities of “Knowing One’s Place”: Zoë Wicomb’s Fiction and Criticism and Critiques of Everyday Life

This paper’s overarching claim is that Zoë Wicomb’s fictions and essays can be productively read in tandem with—and sometimes in the teeth of such theories of everyday life as those advanced by Michel de Certeau and Dorothy Smith, in whose work everyday life is triply foregrounded as object of study, subject of representation, and analytic category. In this paper I will argue that critiques of everyday life serve as useful means with which to approach Wicomb’s oeuvre, and that the latter itself constitutes one such critique, inasmuch as it represents and interrogates the complex nature of quotidian reality in the Cape and elsewhere during the apartheid and post-apartheid years. In sketching this argument, I will also situate Wicomb’s writing in relation to South African thinking on the everyday, some of which is explicit (e.g., Njabulo Ndebele’s notion of “the ordinary”) and some of which is implicit (e.g., much of Ingrid de Kok’s poetry).

In positioning Wicomb’s work in relation to critiques of everyday life I will parse the various nuances and ambiguities that attach to the phrase "to know one's place" across her fictions and essays, with special emphasis on her first collection of stories. I use the phrase to refer to the awareness that Wicomb’s characters evince of the social hierarchies in which they are embedded, and to their knowledge of the Cape’s polyvalent physical and psychological geographies. I will also suggest that Wicomb’s fiction partly subverts the phrase’s seeming finality by depicting quotidian forms of resistance to unjust power relations that are predicated on critical knowledge rooted in everyday experience. At the same time, however, I will draw attention to how the textual strategies at work in both the fictional and essayistic texts serve to caution against too celebratory a reading of the everyday.

Attree, Lizzy (University of Western Cape, South Africa / Independent, UK)
Title: Relative Silencing of HIV, Sexuality and Race by the Cape Cosmopolitan in “In Search of Tommie” in Touch: Stories of Contact by South African Writers (2009)

Although Cape Town is one of the epicentres of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, it was not until 1999 that Capetonian writers took on this devastating subject. Ten years later, in her only story featuring HIV infection, Zoë Wicomb weaves the taboo subject into a story of last days and the search for identity and meaning. In “In Search of Tommie” TS alludes to his illness while narrating the story of his ‘vark’ (pig) father, Tommie, who left his mother and had another child in England. TS shares his father’s name but refuses the identification until his story returns to him in the form of a semi-fictionalised autobiography written by a woman who could be his half-sister. Allusions to TS Elliot and other cosmopolitan references are thrown into the story by his latter day boyfriend or partner Joe who provides TS with part of his identity as a Moffie and leads him to contact his potential relative, Chris, in England. Using mimicry and the urgency of time, which as he is ill, is short, TS ‘ensnares’ Chris who also shares the narrative voice at times, providing a cynical counterbalance to TS’s conviction that they are related.
The silencing of HIV is notable in the context of the voicing of other taboo subjects, such as sexuality, which is spoken of more freely than the disease which lurks in TS’s “bad blood”. On seeking it out, the references are ever-present, and yet the disease is not named but implicit. It is the critic who amplifies the voice of the disease in this case. It is also not the focus of the narrative although it plays a pivotal role in Chris’s silent acceptance of her new found relative, indeed prompts her not to reject him, but to acknowledge him as kin out of sympathy – connecting them across a hitherto unbridgeable cultural and genetic divide. Not only the Cape but the presence of the disease itself provides a space of intersection, unusual in South African literature. How, for example, does Wicomb’s story compare with Rayda Jacobs’ *Confessions of a Gambler* or Derrick Fine’s *Clouds Move* also set in the Cape?

The story stands out in the collection, *Touch*, as one of the few dealing with the outcomes of sexual contact, not only in terms of progeny and scattered siblings and paternity but also in terms of HIV infection. The rest of the collection seems not to live up to its promise (from the ruffled bed sheets depicted on the cover) to speak of sexual and emotional intimacies and cross-pollination or contamination.

**Coetzee, Carli (SOAS, UK)**

**Title: "A book must be returned to the library from which it was borrowed": Zoë Wicomb's "The One That Got Away"**

In this paper I examine some of Zoë Wicomb’s short stories from the collection *The One that Got Away*, and some of her non-fiction writing, in the light of Kwame Anthony Appiah’s theorisation of cosmopolitanism. In his *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006) Appiah writes of the two strands that intertwine in the notion of cosmopolitanism – on the one hand the acknowledgement that we have obligations to others beyond a narrowly defined group with which we may identify (family, nation, race); the other that we respect the right of others to assert their difference from us.

I show how Wicomb is interested in this same tension between universality and particularity. As the main focus of this argument I take her short story “The one that got away”, in which a lost (and found) library book is returned to its original place after having been transformed or defaced. I show how, through the physical object that was and is this book, Wicomb comments on the tensions inherent in cosmopolitanism: the acknowledgement of the particular (the shelf mark, the library, the original) and the desire to transcend the particular, or to put it in other words to “get away”.

**Dass, Minesh (University of Johannesburg, South Africa)**

**Title: ‘a place in which to cry’: The Place for Race and the Home for Shame in Zoë Wicomb’s *Playing in the Light* (2006).**

In Zoë Wicomb’s *Playing in the Light* (2006) Marion, the main character’s troubled sense of identity (brought about by her parents’ shameful decision to ‘play white’) is viscerally symbolised by her discomfort in her own and others’ homes. In her Cape Town apartment she has nightmares about “the long house of [her] dream that is stuffed inside the house where [she] live[s]” (Wicomb 2006: 30). Her visits to her family home, where her elderly father lives alone, are similarly burdened by presences and
memories she finds unwelcoming. She will also visit her coloured ‘friend’ Brenda’s family home and feels ill at ease amidst the perceived squalor. And, her move to Scotland, once she has discovered her family’s secret, is a choice of “a place in which to cry” (Wicomb 2006: 191). In tracing this sense of being un-homed I interrogate Marion’s troubled racial identity. The paper will show that while the rhetoric of Apartheid racial classification makes being termed coloured an un-homed state (since one is neither black nor white), what coloured identity itself does is un-home the supposed stability of more determined racial categories (such as black and white). Conceptually, both race and home struggle with a displacement of the physical by imagined narratives about that physical embodiment. Marion’s un-homed state, then, reflects this displacement of the body by racial narratives. In the case of so-called coloured people this displacement is rendered even more problematic because shame re-places this displacement, rendering it all but invisible.

Daymond, MJ (University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

Title: Shadow Stories and Shadow Selves in Zoë Wicomb’s Playing in the Light and Agnes Lottering’s Winnefred and Agnes

Comparisons between the writing of Wicomb, Jacobs and Lottering will work around a recurrent pattern of physical and psychic movement in the writing of all three coloured women writers. This movement is both precipitated and defined by concepts which vary but have comparable functions: particularly ‘home’, ‘abroad’ and a ‘shadow self’. In each case the movement involves the recognition and rejection of a gendered and racialised selfhood, and a subsequent recovery or reinvention of self, but in altered form.

Certain differences within this pattern of movement will serve to illuminate the significance of the historical and regional contexts within which these writers’ autobiographical and fictional protagonists engage with selfhood.

Works to be discussed
Wicomb: You Can’t Get Lost; Playing in the Light; The One that Got Away
Jacobs: Middle Children; Postcards from SA; Masquerade
Lottering: Winnefred & Agnes.

Donnelly, Kara (New York University, USA)

Title: David’s Story: Global Text, Local Harm

As Zoë Wicomb’s novel David’s Story progresses, David and his amanuensis seem to squabble more and more over the genre—and the genre—that his story will embody. At the same time, questions about the mysterious Dulcie Olifant become increasingly urgent while their answers become increasingly obscure. Eventually David complains about the dominance of old women in the story, suggesting that she transform some of the oumas into oupas, adding, “There’s no harm in that” (200). David’s idea, which his collaborator rejects, does spark for her another idea: “Harm, I suppose,” she reflects, “is a category that I ought to take more seriously in relation to this story” (200). Certainly the story presents intense suffering endured by the principal characters during anti-apartheid struggle, including dreamlike
scenes of torture enacted on Dulcie. Has the frame narrator enacted this harm through her writing? And, as readers who inhabit a world that is like but distinct from the written world of David's Story, how ought we to assess the harm staged by the novel?

This harm is decidedly local, affecting women within the African National Congress, specifically Dulcie. Yet violence spirals outward, with the body of Saartjie Baartman as one totemic link between the Cape and cosmopolitan Europe, and with the references of the frame narrator, a “European culture vulture,” as the other (187). In my paper, I will seek to understand the specific and physical harm to South African female bodies in relation to David Story’s global intertextuality. On one hand, I turn to Cervante’s Don Quixote, analyzing the frame narrator’s effort to fit Dulcie into a genre as an echo of Quixote’s manipulation of Dulcinea. On the other, I consider Kant’s categorical imperative, which helps us isolate the terms in David’s Story’s matrix of obligation—to tell, to tell the truth, to do no harm—and of desire—the desires for truth, for genre, for a story, as well as the sexual desires of the characters. Through my investigation, I hope to understand the specific—and local—nature of the harm that Zoë Wicomb’s text enacts.

Dooling, Wayne (SOAS, UK)

Title: Cape History and Domestic Respectability in the Novels of Zoë Wicomb

Respectability was central to late nineteenth-century bourgeois identity. For white settlers of colonial South Africa, respectability meant the sanctity of the nuclear family and a leisurely life that came with the employment of black servants in the suburban household. For the coloured petit bourgeoisie, respectability meant distance from the slave past, education and temperance. To all, respectability was inseparable from Englishness. Viewed in this way, respectability was both class-based and highly gendered, and as such was given concrete form in the Cape’s historic non-racial and male franchise.

But these conceptions of respectability, which we owe to the work of historians, are problematic. Apart from obscuring much of its actual content, respectability remains the prerogative of white middle classes. The quest for respectability on the part of the coloured petit bourgeoisie is seen as a reaction to the hegemony of Victorian ideals and the internalisation of white middle class values.

This paper examines whether Zoë Wicomb overcomes these constraints. For in their intimate domestic spheres, Wicomb’s main characters are almost all respectable. They are obsessed with cleanliness, they love the smell of Cobra polish, and they buy AMC Classic pots. They speak and read English, and they are concerned with the shame of the slave past. They seek to distance themselves from dagga-smoking skollies. Most importantly, this paper asks whether Wicomb is able to present respectability as a contested and historical category.

Doubt, Jenny (Open University/ Ferguson Center, UK)

Title: In Search of Memory in the time of AIDS: Zoë Wicomb’s “In Search of Tommie”

Given that government-level responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa can be said to have perpetuated stigma and denialism, purportedly accelerating the crisis, local-level initiatives have
emerged to address both medical and social aspects of the disease. The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), for example, has impacted issues such as the affordability and dissemination of antiretroviral medication by using a national platform to propel and fund community-level clinics and support groups.

Based outside Cape Town, the Khayelitsha Memory Book Foundation is an example of a local organisation whose work focuses on the restoration of memory as one of the social aspects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Supporting the development of personal narratives as central to the process of debunking stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS and raising awareness about people whose lives are affected by HIV/AIDS, the work emerging from this community-level project maps the emerging narratives of HIV/AIDS and contributes to its accompanying cultural archive in South Africa.

Zoë Wicomb's short story *In Search of Tommie* (2009) focuses on the story of one person living with AIDS in Langa, outside Cape Town, and can be read against the local context that has emerged as a source of cultural discourse surrounding the epidemic. Wicomb also draws on the process of creating narratives through memory work, a national-level cultural phenomenon that finds its most recent roots in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In pledging their sales royalties to TAC, the authors who have contributed to *Touch*, the literary anthology in which *Tommie* appears, forge a public relationship between storytelling and the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa. This paper addresses the link between the germination of local HIV/AIDS narratives and the public staging and publishing of those narratives in promoting national and international HIV/AIDS activism and awareness, raising questions about the relationship between these personal narratives and public HIV/AIDS archives in South Africa. It also seeks to address the relationship between the source of these narratives – both the Khayelitsha Memory Book Foundation and *In Search of Tommie* (Langa) are situated outside of Cape Town in the Cape flats – and the cosmopolitan staging ground that Cape Town provides.

**Easton, Kai (SOAS, UK)**

**Title: Cultures of Travel: Cape Diasporas & Zoë Wicomb's Playing in the Light**

What are the theoretical implications of my title? How easily can we translate cultures of 'travel' together with 'diaspora'? What - exactly - does 'diaspora' mean and how does it relate to - or negate - ideas of 'travel'? Of origins, home and belonging, journeys and returnings?

While our interest in travel and diasporic cultures is increasing in the arts and humanities, we still seem to separate the two terms, even while our definitions are - appropriately enough - fluid.

James Clifford refers to them as 'translation terms', to work and 'overwork', strategically, adaptively, contingently. For in academia and the media our distinctions are often generic, nationalised, racialised - boxed into categories. There are of course a multitude of what Marjorie Garber has called 'category crossings', for travel writing is certainly not limited to the 'imperial gaze' that we read about in Mary Louise Pratt's seminal book, *Imperial Eyes*.

This is the framework for a discussion of a fictional response to some of these questions: Zoë Wicomb's

This paper will address the relevance of the discourses of diaspora to Wicomb’s plot about racial identification in twentieth-century Cape Town, and will show how Playing in the Light - a ‘new’ South African novel - has much to say about the history of ‘travel’ - in its most expansive sense - at the Cape of Good Hope.

Goddard, Sheena (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa)
Title: You can get lost anywhere: Cosmopolitanism and its discontents in the fiction of Zoë Wicomb

This paper will explore the ambiguities of cosmopolitanism as it is presented in the fiction of Zoë Wicomb. Both You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town and Playing in the Light present the exilic and post-exilic subject as ill-at-ease with itself. The texts deconstruct the cosmopolitanism which is an offshoot of the exilic experience, showing that while on the one hand such a cosmopolitanism can facilitate entry into an increasingly ‘normative’ world of hybridity in Europe, on the other hand it acts as an alienating force, preventing the subject from fully coming to terms with the identity crises caused by the experience of living in Apartheid South Africa.

The resulting experience is what one might refer to as a form of ‘self-exile’, which, while linked to geography and brought on by external political forces, is nevertheless something internal, psychological and personal. Wicomb’s novels (and here I read You can’t get lost in Cape Town as a fragmented novel rather than short stories) invite the question: ‘Who is more the exile, those who choose to leave the country to escape oppression, or those who remain behind and deal with the divided selves they must become under Apartheid?’ They therefore uncover some of the strategies of identity survival by those who experience both these opposing worlds and choices. In the case of the geographical exile, cosmopolitanism is explored as a replacement for the lost space of ‘home’ and the (often fictive) identity which is assumed to go with it. In the case of those who stay behind, the ‘internal cosmopolitanism’ forced on them by the system is shown to be an equally unsatisfactory solution to the problem of identity.

Frieda Shenton can be read as representing the first of these experiences of unsatisfactory cosmopolitanism. She is comfortable neither in her exile space nor in her ‘home’ space when she returns. Geography is shown to be overwhelmed by psychic instability, which is itself reflected in the fragmented narratological style of the text. The narrative becomes an escape from fragmented geographies and a fragmented self. Marion Campbell’s parents represent the second form of unsatisfactory cosmopolitanism. By declaring themselves ‘white’ under the apartheid regime, they have accepted what might be referred to as an ‘imposed exile’ from their own inner beings, in order to be more accepted by the oppressive society in which they live. This compromising of their own subjecthood leads to the self-exile of their daughter, whose fragmented identity is in turn best reflected in the fragmentary narratives emerging from the TRC hearings on which the novel reports, and on which Marion must base her new, post-apartheid, identity.

In both texts language and narrative show the fragmentation of identities, and the cosmopolitanism sought by the protagonists as hardly more than a cover for this inner fragmentation. Like Nomonde
Calata’s long, fragmented wail in memory of her husband at the TRC hearings into his death, the texts offer fragmentation as the truest reflection of exilic experience, both in South Africa and beyond its shores.

Govinden, Betty (University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

Title: “Senses of colouredness” - a critical exploration of coloured identities in South Africa, with particular reference to Zoë Wicomb’s writings

An important feature of contemporary cultural politics in South Africa is that the historical script of identities is been vigorously revised and re-written. Zoë Wicomb, eminent among several cultural workers, has astutely and imaginatively explored performances [and mythologizings] of colouredness against the broad background of colonial, apartheid and post-apartheid formations and influences. This paper - located in a critique of the general reconfiguration of identities in present-day South Africa - will consider the way in which Wicomb, in both her fictional and discursive writings, explores the fault lines, contradictions, silences and ambiguities of colouredness in South Africa. Working centrifugally, the paper with develop a particular critique of colouredness as constructed in the Cape, and how it is engaged in local and global spheres.

Griem, Julika (Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany)

Title: Cosmopolitan seriality: the politics of genre in K. Ishiguro’s and Zoë Wicomb’s short story collections

Despite the very different contexts of their writing, Kazuo Ishiguro and Zoë Wicomb have been analyzed and marketed along surprisingly similar lines: both authors frequently use first-person narrators struggling with the delusional quality of traumatic memories; both have created characters who seem to be haunted by complex experiences of displacement; both of them have, finally, been credited with a cosmopolitan agenda inviting us to reconsider some of the political routines of postcolonial theorizing. In the light of these parallels it is, at a first glance, hardly surprising that in their most recent works Ishiguro and Wicomb even rely on similar generic strategies – whereas Ishiguro, in Nocturnes (2009), links East and West through five intricately related short stories, Wicomb’s collection The One That Got Away (2008) presents a series of twelve stories weaving a complex network of relations between Cape Town and Glasgow.

In my paper I will focus on the question of genre as a nexus of aesthetic and political aspects. Drawing on the structural premises and possibilities of classic cycles and series of short stories such as Joyce’s The Dubliners, Anderson’s Winesburg Ohio, Rushdie’s East, West, and Wicomb’s earlier Cape Town collection, my comparative analysis will demonstrate that the collection of short stories can be employed as a poetological vehicle to negotiate crucial relations of parts and wholes that have both aesthetic and political implications: it is not only in different notions of place, space and mobility, but also in different forms of iteration (in both Derrida’s and Benhabib’s sense) and variation, of open and closed seriality that the very different quality of the two authors’ cosmopolitan projects can be grasped.
Klopper, Dirk (Rhodes University, South Africa)
Title: Locations of the subject in Zoë Wicomb’s You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town (1987) and Rayda Jacobs’s The Middle Children (1994)

Drawing on Guattari’s notion of the interlocking ecologies of subjectivity, community and environment, this paper will examine the entanglement of self, family and milieu in Zoë Wicomb’s You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town (1987) and Rayda Jacobs’s Postcards from South Africa (2004). Both short story collections have elements of the bildungsroman, combining autobiography and fiction in narrating the emergence into adulthood of a young protagonist, here a coloured girl struggling to free herself from the constraints of home and country. In both collections family, place and history are formative, and both collections engage with questions of home (habitus) and unhomed (unsettled). The paper will argue that protagonist’s heterogeneous relationships with community and place are mirrored in the literary form adopted by these collections, comprising an entanglement of discrete but related stories.

Macmillan, Hugh (University of Oxford, UK)
Title: The “Cape Colour Question” and the Cosmopolitan: Identity, History and Place in Zoë Wicomb’s novels

I approach the work of Zoë Wicomb as a historian with an inherited interest in the ‘Cape Colour Question’ and an acquired interest in the history of the evolution of ideas about race, ethnicity and identity. I am also working on the history of the African National Congress in exile in Zambia and have an interest in the broader, and global, anti-apartheid movement. I have chosen to discuss identity, history and place in two of Zoë Wicomb’s novels David’s Story and Playing in the Light. In David’s Story a quest for roots and ‘Coloured’ identity in the history of the Le Fleur family and the Griqua trekkers (which began life as a rewriting of Sarah Gertrude Millin’s controversially ‘liberal’ novel on the theme of ‘Coloured identity’, God’s Stepchildren), is uneasily welded together with a story about Dulcie, a ‘Coloured’ heroine of the liberation struggle, who may or may not have existed, and who may or may not have been the victim of torture and rape at the hands of the apartheid state or her comrades in the liberation movement in exile in Botswana or Angola. At one moment in the novel we are with Dulcie in one of the ANC camps in exile, at another moment we are racing along with this character as she speeds along Chapman’s Peak. While Dulcie’s story is set in the Cape in the transition from apartheid, it has flashbacks to the past, and to the wider, transnational network of the liberation movement in exile. I intend to discuss the significance of this shuttling back and forth in time and space in the weaving together of Dulcie’s story. I would also like to show how the novel has led me to reconsider gender and ‘Coloured’ identity as important lines of inquiry in my own work on the ANC in exile. Playing in the Light deals in an apparently more straightforward way with the consequences of apartheid legislation, which sought to impose for the first time a ‘scientific’ system of race classification in the 1940s. It is also a novel about ‘Coloured’ identity in the Cape and the consequences for later generations of choices about race, ethnicity and identity that were made under duress in response to that legislation – specifically the choice to ‘pass’ as white. Wicomb is an author who was born in the northern Cape, but who has spent much of her life abroad and now lives in Glasgow. Like David’s Story, although set in Cape Town, Playing in the Light tantalisingly touches a wider cosmopolitan realm – the main character not only lives on the Atlantic seaboard, an area of relative privilege, despite a view of Robben Island, but she also owns a travel agency although she hates to travel. As a practising historian, I am interested in the relationship between the author’s biography and her work and between history and fiction. Taking as a point of reference J.M. Coetzee’s proposal of the novel as a rival to history (rather than a supplement to
history), I intend to discuss how Wicomb’s two novels offer counter-genealogies as they deal with the fraught racialised history of the Cape and its relation to the wider cosmopolitan realm.

Maithufi, Sopelekae (University of Pretoria, South Africa)

Title: Narrating the cosmopolitan through a decentred discourse: the case of David’s Story”

This paper attempts to read David’s Story as a deferral of its protagonist-narrator’s reclamation of his roots across the Cape. No attempt is made to consider his adventure as a mere defence of the ancestral home from which he had been racially marginalised. Nor will it be argued that his location of his maternal lineage to the centre of his story inscribes the racially maligned black female body with difference.

Instead, I present his expedition as a mechanism that unwittingly uncovers ‘knowledges’ of which the nationalitarian ideology to which he subscribes is ignorant or represses. Indeed, this ‘carnivalesque’ is also well articulated in the dialogic contest that Wicomb sets up between him and the amanuensis, because it foregrounds his complicity in the trauma perpetrated against, for instance, some women in the ANC military camps in Quattro, Tanzania. In other words, the echo of the iniquities that he perpetrated in exile (Quattro) enunciates his guilt. In turn, shame draws him closer to his wife and to imagine his family tree — but only as a marginal component of his attempt to debunk the colonial discourse of steatopygia and possibly to assuage his sense of self-reproach. Ironically, however, this ‘translation of sexual to racial difference’ (Counihan, 2007: 162) shows the Cape as a cosmopolitan ethnoscapes with profuse border crossings.

This paper therefore argues that the quotidian that David’s narrative makes apparent reveals enterprises that ‘manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them’ (Michel de Certeau, 1984: xiv). Using Appadurai’s concept of ‘locality’ (1996), this paper discusses several such activities as articulations of ‘a present relative to a time and place’ (De Certeau, op. cit., xiii) or as performances that build up bridges between human beings interpellated by apartheid to relate with one another via antiminor lines. These ventures include the ‘coloured’ women’s usage of old stocking as headscarf/gear, condescending comments about the Griqua/Nama identities by people who are classified ‘coloured’ and the contradictory tones that different ideological positions appear to dictate when referring to the ethnic nationalist legacy of Adam Kok. These feats depict individuals who, ‘once lost beneath the clash and glamour of anti-apartheid struggle’, for instance, ‘refract the complex of identities’ (Loren Kruger, 2003: 70) that do not conform to any grand discourse.

These ‘non-official’ voices and performances are closely analysed as evidence of this novel’s presentation of the Cape as a post-apartheid cosmopolitan context that probes how to articulate difference in an epistemology the ‘gnosis of which is already situated elsewhere’ (Ato Quayson, 2001: 153).

It is hoped that this paper will conclude by opening a dialogue between the portrayal of the cosmopolitan in David’s Story and the protagonist-narrator’s constructions of complex relations with the self, time and space with which alienation is felt because of apartheid in You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town and other stories.
Manase, Irikidzayi (University of Venda, South Africa)
Title: Reading city life in Cape Town during the early post-apartheid period in Zoë Wicomb's Playing in the Light and making connections with the experiences in fictional Johannesburg

The paper examines the nature of the city life experienced in Wicomb’s Cape Town as the city transformed from apartheid to a post-apartheid city in the 1990s. It seeks to explore how inhabitants such as Marion, deal with ‘newness’ in the face of major historical changes occurring in the rendered Cape Town’s social and political spaces. The strategies used by Marion, Brenda, John and other residents to cope with the past city and their relevance in the transforming one; some of the residents’ psychic journeys, physical journeys in and out and around Cape Town, and the described intersections between personal and national histories, are examined in an effort to determine the new patterns of city life, identity reconstitutions and connections that are being established in this new city. The paper will thus draw on cultural geographic philosophies, spatial analysis and historical studies to examine how the represented residents live, imagine, travel and reconstitute their identities in the new Cape Town. The paper also seeks to evaluate the ways in which the residents’ dealing with the impact of apartheid and its social and spatial divisions, whose effects are present in this and other transforming cities of South Africa, such as Johannesburg, in the 1990s, can be viewed as distinctly Cape Town. To this effect, a brief comparison of Wicomb’s Playing in the Light and Dangor’s Bitter Fruit and Vladislavic’s The Restless Supermarket will be made to examine the ‘interconnectedness’ and distinctions reflected in the urban experiences witnessed during the transition in Cape Town and Johannesburg, respectively, and thus attempt at an ‘interregional’ study of Wicomb’s fiction.

Marais, Sue (Rhodes University, South Africa)
Title: 'You left. Remember?': 'Roots' versus 'Routes' in Zoë Wicomb's The One that Got Away

Appearing two decades after You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town (1987), Zoë Wicomb's second short fiction collection, The One that Got Away (2008), consists of interwoven stories which span two cultural contexts and cities: Cape Town and Glasgow. As the narratives demonstrate, the histories of Scotland and South Africa are intertwined by virtue of the imprint of colonialism, but latter-day migratory movements within a globalized economy see those from opposite hemispheres relocating, permanently or temporally, their paths intersecting and converging. As D.W. De Villiers comments: "In shuttling between these two countries Wicomb’s text explores the ineffably meshed character of identity, traversed by countless lines of influence. The stories are set in the 'global village' of the present, yet also register the global entanglements of the past". If the 'entanglements of the past' gave rise to various forms of conflict, the contemporary mobility reflected in the stories does not erase cultural difference and friction. Thus, though certain characters find common ground despite their divergent backgrounds, others experience uncomfortable confrontation.

The notion of 'escape' intimated by the title is multi-faceted, and the motif of 'disgrace' acts as a thread throughout the collection. Once again Wicomb scrutinises the ambivalences of coloured identity in South Africa, whilst the reflexive dimension of the stories constitutes a sustained debate on issues of representation and identity-formation. Similarly inflected, as was You Can't Get Lost, by Wicomb’s own circumstances, The One that Got Away circles around the accusation levelled at the protagonist-
focaliser, Frieda Shenton, by her mother in the final story of the earlier collection: "You left. Remember?" Whilst it asserts the reality of 'routes' – of hybrid, dynamic and cosmopolitan identities – The One that Got Away returns to the quandaries inherent in occupying a liminal zone between affiliation and disaffiliation, recognition and disavowal, of 'roots'. It also uncompromisingly confronts the reality that, as Sean Muller asserts, the "global village is an apartheid village", and that current migration patterns are "selective".

Narain, Denise deCaires (University of Sussex, UK)
Title: Negotiating ‘Cape Cosmopolitanism’ in Zoë Wicomb’s Texts

This paper focuses on intertextual relationships in Wicomb’s Playing in the Light (and in selected stories from You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town and The One That Got Away) to explore the ways that these texts suggest possibilities for what might perhaps best be described as 'contrapuntal cosmopolitanism'. Bruce Robbins, in ‘Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism’, argues that “Something has happened to cosmopolitanism” so that it now includes a less elite “cast of characters” and can be defined not as a “luxuriously free-floating view from above” but as a phenomenon that is rooted in the interconnected and inter-national particularities of specific cultures. In Playing in the Light, an explicitly literary intertextuality is referenced when Marion reads canonical South African texts (by Gordiner and Coetzee) in an attempt to read her way back into and re-negotiate a (her?) place in South Africa. That she does this reading while in Scotland neatly confirms the point that 'belonging' is always a dynamic and shifting business. As well as this playfully self-conscious intertextuality, in which the reader reads Marion reading, Wicomb’s novel also includes a dense weave of other crucial intertexts: a newspaper article concerning the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with the accompanying photograph that uncannily haunts Marion and eventually nudges the family secret into the open; Outa Blinkoog’s cart with its fragments of embroidered texts; what appears to be a title for a story, ‘The Betrayal of Annie Boshoff’ which Marion types; and the story that Brenda asserts “should be written” about Marion’s father (the one the novel has only partially delivered on) rather than ‘her own’ township tale. I argue that the complicated relationships between these intertexts and the distinct contexts they inscribe, provide suggestive possibilities for negotiating an idea of ‘Cape cosmopolitanism’, one that is attentive to the particularities of the Cape context while alert to the inevitably and unevenly global process of literary mediation.


Palladino, Mariangela and John Miller (University of Glasgow, Scotland)
Title: Recasting imperialist sculpture into postcolonial text.

In 1888 at the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow’s Kelvingrove Park, the Doulton Fountain was unveiled as part of the commemoration of Queen Victoria’s colonial achievements. Among the representations of Britain’s overseas territories on the fountain, is a depiction of South Africa, featuring a white farmer, a girl of mixed race and an ostrich. This metonymic evocation of Imperial South Africa is addressed in its new location in Glasgow Green in Zoë Wicomb’s short story ‘There’s the Bird that Never Flew’ in the
2008 collection *The One That Got Away*. Wicomb’s interest in this monument focuses on ‘the posture and facial expression’ of the girl and her ‘matter-of-fact intimacy’ with the man standing next to her. By naming the girl Kaatje and [re]-‘casting [the fountain] into words’, Wicomb renegotiates the presence and perception of this image of South Africa in Glasgow and interrogates the relationship between representation and the real.

Wicomb’s challenge to the reification of colonial roles in this imperialist sculpture raises complicated issues regarding space, text and postcolonial politics. Utilizing Heidegger’s theory of being and time in relation to space, this paper examines the fluidity of narrative in response to the static, spatial signification initiated by the sculpture. Visual art manifests itself in space, literature expresses itself in time; hence the fountain’s narration shifts the spatial into the temporal. According to Heidegger, to be is to be temporal; thus in narrativising the sculpture, Wicomb bestows a new ontological dimension to the representation of South Africa in Glasgow. Recasting South Africa into the temporality of literature allows it to exceed the spatial constraints of Doulton’s work.

**Parsons, Cóllín (University of Cape Town, South Africa)**

**Title: Zoë Wicomb and the Cartographic Sublime**

Frieda Shenton has a shocking sense of direction. She doesn’t seem to know that you can’t get lost in Cape Town, and keeps doing just that. My paper will concentrate on Wicomb’s *You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town* as an instance of postcolonial mapping. When Said, in *Culture and Imperialism*, called for a new type of mapping that resists and subverts colonial meanings, he offered no concrete model. Similarly, Fredric Jameson offered no model of “cognitive mapping”.

I don’t wish to claim that Wicomb is the answer to both these theoretical challenges, but I will argue that *You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town* offers an interesting challenge to conventional ideas of cartography. Frieda Shenton’s Cape Town is structured around itineraries, not maps (to use Michel de Certeau’s distinction), and the result is a fragmented, counter-hegemonic vision of the ordered space of apartheid. Her spatial understanding is at odds with that of the state.

A very particular aspect of all mapping is a cosmopolitan vision. After all, the aim of a map is to make far away places close and strange places familiar. Wicomb’s South Africa in *You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town* is shot through with images of the world; the landscape is not an image of itself, but of the world in one place. Although we can say that maps are cosmopolitan in the way that they allow us to imagine the world, they lack the global sentiment, the experience of “feeling global”, as Bruce Robbins puts it, that indicates a sense of a global humanity. Drawing on postcolonial and phenomenological readings of space I will argue that Wicomb’s counter-hegemonic cartography is an attempt to construct a global geography of affect, a cosmopolitan literature of space in the face of the violence against space that characterised apartheid.

**Poyner, Jane (University of Exeter, UK)**

**Title: Cosmopolitanism and the Literatures of “Terror”: Zoë Wicomb’s *David’s Story* and Ishtiyaq Shukri’s *The Silent Minaret***
This paper will argue that both Zoë Wicomb in David’s Story (2001) and Ishtiyaq Shukri in The Silent Minaret (2006) ascribe to Anthony Appiah’s notion of “rooted cosmopolitanism” which combines global homogeneity and local heterogeneity. These novels trace the historical continuities between “terror” and local South African colonial and apartheid histories. In the Shukri’s case, this thereby seems to confirm Neil Lazarus’s thesis that the 9/11 attacks do not, as the prevailing view contends, constitute a historical rupture between a postcolonial and neo-imperialist phase. Only by remembering or bearing witness to these continuities can the postcolonial project remain credible and a rooted cosmopolitanism, with its concern for the local as well as the global, allows these authors to achieve this.

If cosmopolitanism is a worldly openness to difference, it is nonetheless tested by the boundaries created by nationalism and ethnocentrism in Wicomb, and additionally by the Anglo-American “war on terror” in Shukri. In Wicomb, the unnamed amanuensis employed by David to write his story brings to bear the discourses of cosmopolitanism on MK guerrilla David’s politically dubious quest for an authentic (that is “pure”) “coloured” identity and his ancestor Andrew de Fleur’s ethnocentrism that ironically foreshadows the National Party’s policy of apartheid. In Shukri’s novel, the cosmopolitan Muslim protagonist Issa Shamsuddin attempts to sever his links with South Africa, his home (even though he is undertaking doctoral research in London into the exploits of the Dutch East India Company in the Western Cape). The US policies ostensibly set in place to counter global terror, of which Issa is a probable victim when he mysteriously disappears, radically stall the cosmopolitan ideal. The novel traces the continuities between the subject of Issa’s research and contemporary US policies. For Wicomb and Shukri, then, cosmopolitanism is a political project, one that can call to our attention both the pitfalls of national consciousness and interrogate the discourses of global “terror”.

**Richter, Virginia (University of Berne, Switzerland)**

**Title: Local story, cosmopolitan text: Zoë Wicomb’s *David’s Story* and The One That Got Away**

Cosmopolitanism has become a popular catch phrase in recent critical discourse. While it sometimes expresses a justified desire to move beyond a narrowly national perspective and to offer a counterweight to purely economical processes of globalisation, very often the term is deployed as vaguely synonymous to ‘critical consciousness’ or ‘ethical stance.’ In my paper, I would like to consider Zoë Wicomb as a cosmopolitan author in a very precise sense: as an author who embeds locally specific stories in a complex intertextual, historical and transnational web of cross-references. The story of the guerilla fighter David in her first novel is connected through a multilayered narrative to the story of the Griqua people as well as the story of Saartje Baartman. David’s individual experience is thus linked to other historical narratives of displacement and cross-cultural interaction. The local setting is as indispensable as the wider frame of reference exploring the connections between South African and European history.

The cosmopolitan text however is not only constituted through references to different locales, but through formal strategies of narrative dislocation and questioning that subvert any facile assumption of identity and point to the interconnectedness of individual stories and histories. It is a central aim of my paper to explore Wicomb’s narrative techniques and to link these to her positioning as a South African and cosmopolitan author. Since narrative is partly determined by genre, I find it illuminating to compare her novel *David’s Story* to her recent collection of short stories, *The One That Got Away*. While the
different life stories in the former are incorporated in a complex diegetic network, the format of a series of independent but connected stories in the latter allows Wicomb to explore techniques of juxtaposition, variation and parallelisation, thus correlating the two spaces to which she has the strongest biographical link: South Africa and Scotland.

**Rippenaar, Lynne (Stellenbosch University, South Africa)**

**Title: Passing confessions: secrecy, (dis)closure and border crossings in Zoë Wicomb's *Playing in the Light***

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa acted as a catalyst for public confession while reconstructing the nation under the sign of reconciliation and providing the vehicle ferrying the nation across the temporal border between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ South Africa. While not the first truth commission internationally, and drawing on the experiences of previous commissions, the TRC was unique in aiming to foster reconciliation as one of its main objections. It has in turn received much international attention, thereby fuelling global debates about public confession as a means for healing. While having produced its own particular variant of a confessional society, post-TRC South Africa also participates in a wider global culture of confession evident in psychotherapy to a large extent and in the popularity of reality TV, talk shows, social networking sites, etc. Confession is increasingly becoming a central thread in the texture of everyday life.

This paper engages with the intersection of global and local confessional practices through a close reading of *Playing in the Light*. *Playing in the Light* focuses on the shame, secrecy and silence entailed in voluntary “passing” (being reclassified) under apartheid and this legacy in post-apartheid South Africa. “Passing”, as Yvette Christianse has argued, was one of the losses that could not be mourned within the TRC, rendering it an unspeakable silence that passes into the ‘new’ South Africa rather than a confessional topic leading to absolution, healing, reconciliation and closure. Focusing on its presentation of “passing” and the ways in which the shifting concepts of shame and identity cross the temporal border, the paper aims to explore the ways in which confession, or the refusal and/or inability to confess, is staged within the novel. It will then consider the extent to which racial passing is used to articulate, engage or trouble South Africa’s passing from an apartheid nation into a post-apartheid one through practices of public confession. Finally, discussing Marion’s travels from the Cape to Scotland, it will explore the ways in which “passing” comes to suggest a range of border crossings, including those across the national borders reconstituted by the TRC.

**Robolin, Stéphane (Rutgers University, USA)**

**Title: Properties of Whiteness: (Post)Apartheid Geographies in Wicomb’s *Playing in the Light***

One of the fundamental traits of Zoë Wicomb’s fiction is its locatedness. Each narrative, from her first stories in Namaqualand to her most recent in Glasgow, is so carefully place-bound that geography becomes a key feature of her texts. This paper proposes to explore the significance of location and geography in Wicomb’s *Playing in the Light*, a novel whose protagonist Marion Campbell owns a travel agency but paradoxically despises travel. What Wicomb’s novel reveals is the complicated ways that
race and physical space interact and mutually constitute each other in Cape Town’s apartheid and postapartheid landscapes.

Marion’s discovery of her family’s racial passing as apartheid-era play-whites unravels a narrative of the intimate, devastating consequences of passing in racially segregated South Africa. The terms of this drama are powerfully geographical. “Crossing-over” not only requires the definitive metaphorical shift from coloured to white space, but it also obliterates the distinction between public and private spaces in the all-consuming pursuit of the triumphant performance of (white) racial identity. More to the point, given apartheid’s regimentation and spatialization of race, whiteness was effectively performed in part through a careful accessing of (transgression into) white neighborhoods—a fact that reveals the key places that play-whites historically used to make their entry into whiteness, Observatory chief among them.

In this light, Marion’s own postapartheid geography can also be read for its racial dimensions. I argue that her rigid desire for order and her exclusive, high-security apartment in the shoreline suburbs where “property is inviolable” speaks to the successes of her parents’ project of whitening. For, Marion’s actions and responses to places suggest that the most prized property of whites, following American critical legal theorist Cheryl Harris, is whiteness itself.

Sanders, Mark (New York University, USA)

Title: Cape Impudence

In Sarah Gertrude Millin’s God’ Step-Children, the catalyst for the first race-mixing is the Hottentot girl Silla, who “smiled at [the Reverend Andrew Flood] with the impudent little manner which was naturally hers.” An absence of shame (im-pudencen) becomes the source of shame. When any reasonable explanation of origins is lacking—surely in part because what demands explanation (“degeneration” and its successors) does not deserve it—concupiscence serves. Let us call it a metonymy of the “Cape,” if not of the “Kaaps.” It has, from Schreiner to Coetzee, come to hand as a reliable and predictable element of what Wicomb has discussed as “setting” (“Setting, Intertextuality”). In Millin’s novel, the gaze of the master/ mistress, faced with a not knowing, is doubled and mirrored by the girl. Young coloured women bear the burden of concupiscence, as Wicomb has observed (“Shame and Identity”; “Translations in the Yard of Africa”). How, then, does one write back against a history of sexual violence? This is the challenge taken up in David’s Story. Faced with David Dirkse’s reticence about a comrade named Dulcie, the author-narrator imagines quasi-pornographic scenes in which Dulcie is tortured at night by a shadowy group of men. The novel suggests, in various ways, that the author-narrator is one-sidedly attracted to David, and that her delineation of these scenes may thus be influenced by phantasy: he comes to me at night and touches me, he hurts me and goes. If Zoë Wicomb’s irony is elsewhere self-professedly “postcolonial,” here it is self-critically feminist: the woman may desire—without shame—but the other woman may become her unintended victim because her desire, however benign it seems, is implicated in a rivalry that can sow violence. Has the “Cape” thus returned with a vengeance in the form of an inescapable narrative in which the sexual is said to shape history and histories, both personal and racial? If this itself is impudence, is it avoidable? And if it is, should it be avoided? Such are questions that will guide me in a close attention the metafictional structure of David’s Story.
**Scully, Pamela (Emory University, USA)**

**Title: Zoë Wicomb, Cosmopolitanism, and the Making and Unmaking of History in David’s Story and Playing in the Light.**

This paper will examine the workings of History in two works by Zoe Wicomb: *David’s Story and Playing in the Light*. I consider Wicomb’s engagement with history in two senses: both as chronological time passing and as disciplinary method. I argue that Wicomb uses history to insist on the cosmopolitan nature of the South African past and present. By so doing, she disrupts politics as usual and turns our attention to the messiness and poetics of people’s engagements with one another.

In *David’s Story*, Wicomb seems to have two central concerns related to history. On the one hand, by paying so much attention to history, she attends to the way that by creating a fixed landscape of the past on which to ground calls for action and restorative justice, historical narrative informs our interpretations of truth and ethics. On the other hand, her use of history and of multiple narratives that compete in the telling of the history of colonialism and struggles against it in *David’s Story*, from various perspectives informed by women’s experiences, for example, also demonstrates the way that history is always contested and always more of a whirlpool than a steady ground from which to launch a future. Wicomb, I suggest, likes this messiness of history, and the cosmopolitanism of the South African past, precisely because it ultimately frustrates grand ideological claims, and forces attention to the poetics of the everyday. In *Playing in the Light*, Wicomb again chooses that pivotal historical moment—the coming of racial democracy to South Africa—now to meditate on the way that the silences of history shape the lives of individuals and of communities perhaps even more powerfully than the writings and spoken truths of a new era.

The paper is concerned to see how Wicomb’s work with history draws on shifting approaches within the discipline of history (i.e. the work of Joan Scott and Hayden White, which has problematized the status of fact in History, and has attended to the work of narrative in creating truths). Wicomb also has something to say most specifically to the importance of history and the history of the Cape, with its myriad identities, social locations and competing historical narratives, to post-apartheid South Africa. I argue that Wicomb proposes a far more complicated and unresolved perspective on cosmopolitanism than that outlined by Anthony Appiah. Appiah argues for the possibility of civil communication across difference. Wicomb, I think, is more skeptical of the possibilities of such civility and of it necessarily resulting in good communication. Her work, I would suggest, argues for the relevance of attending to heterogeneity, even if such exploration reveals lives and histories that frustrate those engaged in political nation building.

**Spencer, Lynda Gichanda (Stellenbosch University, South Africa)**

**Title: Abagyanda bareebo. Those who travel, see: Rewriting home and exile in Zoë Wicomb’s You can’t get lost in Cape Town and Doreen Baingana’s Tropical Fish**

In this paper I will be setting up a dialogue between Zoë Wicomb’s *You can’t Get Lost in Cape Town* and Doreen Baingana’s *Tropical Fish*. The two collections are structured as a series of interconnected stories which sometimes read as a fragmented novel. They both deal with the coming of age of the respective focal characters; their engagement with the interface between their local experiences of home (in the Cape and Entebbe) and their cosmopolitan encounters of Europe and the United States.
As a precursor of contemporary African women writers, Zoë Wicomb has anticipated many preoccupations of this generation such as questions of home and exile, travel and dis/location and repressive maternal bonds. My paper will explore Wicomb and Baingana’s interconnectedness and treatment of these conflicts in relation to the respective geographical and historical contexts of the Cape and Entebbe.

**Tobin, Kathryn (SOAS, UK)**

**Title:** “Getting Lost in Cape Town: Zoë Wicomb and the (De)Construction of Colouredness in the New South Africa”

My paper entitled “Getting Lost in Cape Town: Zoë Wicomb and the (De)Construction of Colouredness in the New South Africa” addresses the epistemological resonance of apartheid classifications in a ‘new’ South African nation engaged in processes of re-conceptualisation and re-narrativisation. Wicomb’s 2006 novel *Playing in the Light*, echoing her critical work, portrays concerns of identity, history, language, and nation as essential to the construction of a South African selfhood. Her protagonist, Marion, embodying a liminal space between white and ‘coloured’ (itself purporting to occupy the ‘in-between’ of white and black), exemplifies the struggle of the new South Africa to collectively re-imagine and reconfigure the entrenched political and social categories of ‘race’.

The paper examines three pivotal moments in the novel that together outline Wicomb’s exploration of the implausible yet historically dominant conventions of ‘coloured’ identity. First, it analyses Marion’s explanation of her distress in terms of ‘crossings’ between identities; second, it interrogates the glimpse into legitimized irrationality of apartheid discourse yielded by her trip to the National Library; finally, it comments on Brenda and Marion’s discussion of ‘colouredness’ in intertextual and ‘postcolonial’ terms.

Through these three major examples, I analyse Wicomb’s construction of ‘colouredness’ (and, more broadly, ‘the New South Africa’) as a space of hybrid consciousness, straddling and obliterating categories of ‘race’. Framing Wicomb in conversation with other recent fiction from South Africa, most notably Yvette Christiansén’s *Unconfessed* (2006), my paper examines the central question posed through these novels: What is it to be ‘coloured’ when the distinction itself, emerging from apartheid’s racialised injustice, lacks relevance as well as sense? Exploring conceptions of ‘colouredness’, in the context of their Cape location, Wicomb and Christiansén simultaneously express and challenge the inextricability of reality from (fabricated) discourse. Through this exploration of ‘colouredness’ throughout its complicated history, the paper examines an essential aspect of the ‘new’ South Africa and its articulations of identity.

**Van der Vlies, Andrew (Queen Mary, University of London, UK)**

**Title:** ‘I’m only grateful that it’s not a Cape Town book’: *You Can’t Get Lost* between the Local and the Global

In the final story in *You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town*, “A trip to the Gifberge”, the reader learns that Frieda Shenton, the book’s narrator-protagonist, is about to publish her stories – perhaps the narratives
the reader has encountered in the preceding stories (or chapters) – and that her mother is appalled at the idea:


In a very important sense, of course, You Can’t Get Lost was indeed not a Cape Town book; it was published first, in 1987, by the feminist press Virago in Britain, and then in the United States by Pantheon (at the time an imprint of Random House). Only in May 2008 did it appear from a South African publisher, Umuzi, the literary imprint of Random House South Africa, finally becoming a Cape Town book after two decades.

How do changing circum-texts interpolate (or interpolate for) reader and author, differently? What traces have the cosmopolitan – and now also, finally, “Cape” – contexts of publication and performance left on the text? A nuanced engagement with Wicomb’s subtle explorations in fiction of the vicissitudes of writing itself – of the narration of self, community, or nation, and of the complexity (and complicity) involved in bearing witness – surely requires that attention be given to the material conditions of these works, a form of enquiry that mirrors the work’s own key sense of the predicament of writing.

This paper will offer an assessment of the stakes involved in, and the effects of, the changing material instantiations of Wicomb’s first published book – from its first editions, through its inclusion in the “Women Writing Africa Series” run by the City University of New York’s Feminist Press (which published the text with assistance from the Ford Foundation, and bracketed it with scholarly paratexts) in 2000, to the Umuzi edition, which likewise offers paratextual endorsement (a scholarly introduction) but also includes a number of silent authorial revisions to the text.

Van der Schyff, Karlien (University of Cape Town, South Africa)

Title: “TRURT, TRURT, TRURT, TRURT”: David’s Story and the Story of Women

In Zoë Wicomb’s David’s Story, the protagonist, David Dirkse, attempts to represent the truth by (re)writing Griqua history through foregrounding the stories of women. His representations of women are intimately connected to the history of the Cape, since he notably begins his story “at the Cape with Eva/Krotoa” and is “adamant about including a piece on Saartjie Baartman” (1). Even David’s inability to voice the truth about Dulcie’s torture is closely linked to the local, as the very word “truth” breaks down into “a palindrome of Cape Flats speech – TRURT, TRURT, TRURT, TRURT…”, a word that “breaks down into letters” and “fall(s) plop” into a “useless heap” (136) on the page, reminiscent of Dulcie’s broken, disfigured body.

This paper explores representations of the female body in David’s Story, focusing on the ways in which the female body is often cast in both local and global narratives of “truth”, as well as the complex ways in which Wicomb resists such an imposition of “the trut in black and white” (136) onto the female body. Comparing the representation of Baartman in David’s Story with the recent harassment of Caster Semenya, this paper investigates the problematic ways in which female bodies are both represented in and appropriated by local and global narratives of “truth”.

Works cited:
Yon, Dan (York University, Canada)

**Title: Clement Daniels and the making of a rooted Cape Cosmopolitan**

On the eve of her maiden departure overseas, Frieda, in "You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town", returned from the city to her natal home and family in the Karoo. There, as she tried to balance the buckets of water while walking along the well-worn path back to her family home, her difficulty is compounded by a 'maddening traffic of words', that, try as she did, she is unable to escape. 'I am persecuted by a body of words that perform regardless of my wishes, making its own choices,' she writes. 'Words will saunter in and vanish in a flash, refusing to be summoned or expelled. Just as I cannot summon my heart to beat faster or slower, so the words in conversation could tumble out regardless or refuse to be uttered, betraying or making a fool of me. Thus the water song will not surface while the bucket chant will not be banished.' It is in these moments of a 'maddening traffic of words' that we grasp Frieda's deeply felt cosmopolitan sensibility marked by an acute sense of rootedness and familiarity meeting an equally deep sense of estrangement. This duality of belonging and estrangement, that characterizes Frieda's 'rooted' cosmopolitanism, is one that I draw upon in this paper as a lens for reading other cosmopolitans and other kinds of cosmopolitanisms that take root in the highly racialized landscape of the Cape.

I explore the dynamic of belonging and estrangement through the character of Clement Daniels (1919-1999) and his 'travels' - figurative and actual - through the Cape and beyond - Durban, Namaqualand, St Helena Island, Somerset West. I examine how the memories of other worlds, in particular of 'the island', made through the fact that his mother, a Cape immigrant from St Helena Island, were continually invoked as another imaginary through which the Coloured-designated self could be (re)imagined within the racial economy of Apartheid South Africa. In this sense, the paper is about alterities within Colouredness and possibilities for reading a range of Cape cosmopolitanisms in which oceanic imaginaries, of routes and roots, and of the cosmopolitan port city of Cape Town, loom large. Upon retiring as a High School teacher in Somerset West, in 1981 Clement, accompanied by two other friends, made what will have been a momentous journey to the Island of St Helena - the home of his mother. In my paper I draw upon the journal that he kept of this journey as I engage with the 'words that perform' what he sees and feels and, by extension, how he performs what is his own sense of cosmopolitanism.

Driving From Cape Town

1. Take the N2 out of Cape Town
2. Turn left into Baden Powell Drive
3. Turn right at Adam Tas Str. & follow to Stellenbosch Central
Stellenbosch Central Conference Venues

- Registration and Panels in Molteno Rooms, 5th Floor, Arts and Social Sciences Building, c/o Ryneveld & Merriman
- Teas, Room 571, Arts and Social Sciences Building
- Evening events, 8 & 9 April, Erfurthuis, 37 Ryneveld
- Lunches, 8 April - Beads
- Restaurant, 9 April - D'Ouwe Werf Restaurant
- Conference Dinner, Cognito Restaurant

From N2, Cape Town

Cognito Restaurant
137 Dorp St

Erfurthuis, 37 Ryneveld

Beads Restaurant
C/o Ryneveld & Church St

D'Ouwe Werf Restaurant
30 Church St