Abstract: Hailed as “the first great novel of the new South Africa” (“Mda Sets Tone” 12), Zakes Mda’s *The Heart of Redness* (2000) received widespread critical acclaim for intertwining numerous dualisms—modernity/tradition, belief/disbelief, city/country, youth/elders—to create a vibrant and complex postapartheid novel. *The Heart of Redness* acknowledges historian Jeff Peires’s *The Dead Will Arise* (1989) as “informing” the novel’s historical events, centered on the Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of the 1850s. Careful examination of the two books, however, reveals an abuse of textual borrowings and significantly undermines the novel’s literary value. This article questions the use of historical materials in *The Heart of Redness* by surveying past syntheses of history and literature in writings on the movement, and by exploring issues of intertextuality and plagiarism in African literature. Based on this analysis, *The Heart of Redness* should be understood as duplicitous in two ways: as a novel that explores binary themes, but also as a derivative work masquerading plagiarism as intertextuality.

In the Dedication of *The Heart of Redness*, Zakes Mda explicitly distinguishes fact from fiction. He alerts readers that a “real-life” person in Qolorha “must not be mistaken” for a “purely fictional character” in the novel. In the same paragraph, he also thanks historian Jeff Peires, “whose research [. . .] informed the historical events in my fiction.” These are two intriguing statements—made one after the other—for a novel that roams the frontiers of history and literature. In the case of the first, the desire to demarcate “real life” from pure fiction indicates Mda’s respect for the particular individual named and, more broadly, for historical accuracy. In the case of the second, Mda acknowledges the influence of historical research on the events portrayed in his novel, foretelling a narrowing, symbiotic relationship between fact and fiction.
By writing historical fiction, Mda plays to his strengths: scholars often note his application of magical realism à la Gabriel García Márquez, and he is among a handful of promising South African authors to emerge since the fall of apartheid. “The most critically acclaimed of the new black novelists” (Swarns E5), Mda utilizes magical realism in *The Heart of Redness*, his third novel, to literally and symbolically pass between myth and fact, belief and disbelief, and other binaries. The novel follows the journey of Camagu, who has returned to South Africa from exile in the United States after almost thirty years only to find himself overqualified and unemployed, “a stranger in his own country” (31). An attractive singing woman lures him to Qolorha-by-Sea, where he, an urbanite, becomes increasingly involved in rural life and politics. Camagu must negotiate the epistemologies of modern-day believers and unbelievers when he falls in love with Qukezwa, and by staking his ground in a political clash over economic development in the village. Woven in and out of this plot is a retelling of the Xhosa Cattle-Killing of 1856-57, a turning point in South African history that broke the back of Xhosa resistance and ushered in a new era of colonial domination. The two stories intertwine in the reader’s mind due to thematic and semantic parallels, and in the final few pages of the book, the storylines meld together to form a literary *umngqokolo*: two narratives uniting to replicate Xhosa overtone singing (Jacobs 228). Another dualism presented by the novel--not within its pages but by virtue of its publication--explores the correlation between history and literature.

Though *The Heart of Redness* is the first novel to focus at length on the Xhosa Cattle-Killing, it is in fact part of a tradition of narratives that blur the boundaries between history and story. Ever since the event transpired in the mid-nineteenth century, writers, painters, poets, and playwrights have borrowed from the work of historians--and vice versa--to try to understand and
represent how Nongqawuse’s prophecy could precipitate the implosion of the amaXhosa. Such experiments in narrative construction lend themselves especially well to postcolonial and postmodern authors, who apply intertextual voices and other authorial devices to “inform historical events,” as Mda phrases it. But where does intertextuality end and plagiarism begin? Following a discussion of the movement’s textual foundation and early literary renderings, this essay will analyze the ways in which The Heart of Redness was formed by Jeff Peires’s The Dead Will Arise (1989), contextualized by similar debates in African literature. This assessment focuses solely on Mda’s interpretation of the Xhosa Cattle-Killing—the half of the novel set in the 1850s—to understand how the historical event is rewritten, if at all. The resultant analysis calls to question the blurring lines between history and literature, intertextuality and plagiarism, in postcolonial African literature by demonstrating that Mda’s novel abuses the creative license afforded by postcolonial and postmodern literary practices.

What makes the movement so fascinating is, of course, its sweeping storyline. After decades of colonial encroachment, wars, and settler incursion into their lands, the amaXhosa followed the vision of a young prophetess in April 1856 to slaughter their cattle and not cultivate their fields, in hope of restoring a paradise-like “world of contentment and abundance. […] It was a sharp contrast to the impoverishment and despair experienced by those who had lost their land, their livelihoods and, most recently, even their cattle” (Peires, Dead 80). The millennial movement claimed tens of thousands of lives and forced an equal number of amaXhosa to immigrate to the Cape Colony for survival. Add to this the individuals involved: Nongqawuse, the teenage Xhosa prophet; Mhlakaza, her uncle and the movement’s promoter; George Grey, the archetypal colonial governor; the Xhosa chiefs (especially Maqoma and Sandile), led by Sarhili;
and a cast of other actors, Charles Brownlee, John Maclean, and Dr. John FitzGerald among them. With such inimitable “characters” performing this epic, the Cattle-Killing flourishes within a narrative framework. For this reason, artistic renditions often found their way to the stage.\(^2\) Playwright Brett Bailey, author of *The Prophet*, writes, “I love this story. I love the magic in it. It takes me back to the childhood narratives of underwater kingdoms I told to friends at the poolside. [. . .] I don’t want to think about repercussions. It’s so haunting, so poignant: it grips my heart. If it were but a fairytale” (152). Beyond the historical protagonists and plot, dramatic interpretations of the Eastern Cape frontier thrived on the orality of the event and its textual foundation.

The interplay of history and literature in constructing our knowledge of the Cattle-Killing is remarkable and also, in many ways, logical. An action did not incite the movement--a text did, a message from the spirits to Nongqawuse: “Tell that the whole community will rise from the dead; and that all cattle now living must be slaughtered [. . .]” (Peires, *Dead* 79). Subscription to this prophecy relied upon one’s interpretation of it. After the prophecies failed the first time, Mhlakaza “had an explanation ready [. . .]: the people should have slaughtered their cattle instead of selling them off” (Peires, *Dead* 104). According to Mhlakaza, the prophecies were not realized because the amaXhosa had misinterpreted them. Furthermore, the proliferation of the spirits’ message--and the chain of events thereafter--depended on communication, a re-telling of the message, and “the workings of rumour” (Peires, *Dead* 93). Nowhere is this more evident than in the colonial archive, where “trustworthy informants” reported what they heard from other messengers throughout British Kaffraria, providing officials with “Secret Information.”\(^3\)
Therefore, verbal constructions of events not only shape our understanding of the movement today; they catalyzed its transpiring in the 1850s.

This semantic importance and the utter “magic” of the story attest to why literary works flourished in the early twentieth century. While historians rested comfortably with colonial interpretations of the movement as a “national suicide” or “delusion,” authors sought to understand, or rationalize, or interpret—at times manipulating—the astounding events of the 1850s. H. I. E. Dhlomo’s *The Girl Who Killed to Save* (1935) constitutes a substantial literary representation of its time, a work that “[expresses] ambivalence about the prospect of assimilation and the necessity of a new kind of nationalism” (Wenzel 54). It is interesting to note, as Wenzel has, that despite the play’s lengthy “Historical Note,” the playwright deviates from the historical record and portrays Nongqawuse’s death years before she reportedly died. While this inconsistency does not undermine *The Girl Who Killed to Save*, other early creative works were diminished by stunted historiographical development or outright racism. Sanni Metelerkamp’s peculiar short story, “The Prophetess: A Tale of Cattle-Slaying, 1857” (1935), for example, suffers from colonial interpretation and bias. An opening “Note” misidentifies Sarhili as “paramount chief of the Zulus” (rather than the amaXhosa), and cites George McCall Theal’s slanted version of the events. In the body of her brief narrative, Metelerkamp describes Mhlakaza (“with his little lynx eyes”) and Sarhili (“his white teeth showing like the fangs of a wild dog and his eyes flashing ominously”) in an “evil-smelling” atmosphere “peculiar to a Kaffir hut” (67, 67, 65). But perhaps the most telling indication of the lack of historical work done on the Cattle-Killing in the early twentieth century can be found in John Henderson Soga’s *The South-Eastern Bantu* (1930). Soga, son of Tiyo Soga (who is present in Dhlomo’s play) and
respected Xhosa historian, draws the “pith of the messages of Nongqause and Mhlakaza” not from Xhosa oral history or newspaper articles but from a play by Mary Waters, *U-Nongqause: Isiganeko so ku Xelwa kwe Nkomo 1857* (1924): “[A]lthough the words have been placed in the mouth of Nongqause by [Waters], they may be taken as a realistic interpretation of what was intended by the original” (243). These examples show the unique codependency of history and story, the result of a contested event with few unbiased records. As one scholar notes, “[e]xplaining the Cattle-Killing is an historian’s nightmare and an hermeneutician’s dream” (Ashforth 581). From the event’s final days to the 1980s, South African writers (historians and playwrights alike) related to their audiences the “story” of the movement as much as any history.

Not until 1989 was the first academic monograph about the Cattle-Killing published. In *The Dead Will Arise*, Jeff Peires sought to concretize much of the extant literature by grounding it in primary sources. Peires aimed to write an academic history of the Cattle-Killing by wading through colonial records, newspaper articles, and private letters to construct a more accurate narrative. Proficient in isiXhosa, Peires conducted interviews with the descendants of Nongqawuse and others in the Eastern Cape, and he worked from original Xhosa texts. Although *The Dead Will Arise* now shows signs of historical aging, as new interpretations challenge its assumptions and conclusions, it remains a well-balanced and in-depth analysis. Peires clarifies the movement’s relation to lungsickness, Sarhili’s role, the opportunism of Governor George Grey, and the mixture of theologies that made it possible. Another cornerstone of Peires’s research--to be discussed below--identifies Mhlakaza as the former Wilhelm Goliath, personal servant of Nathaniel Merriman, Archdeacon of Grahamstown, from 1849-53.
While *The Dead Will Arise* constitutes an historical investigation, Peires includes tacit references and an authorial tip-of-the-hat to the event’s literary (and oral) interpretations. His study engrosses the reader with its storyline form, uncommon to most works steeped in primary sources. In many ways, it reads like a novel or play.5 “If an Elizabethan dramatist had written the life of Grey as a variation on the theme of Faust,” Peires notes, “the Governor’s administration of the Cape would have appeared as Act Four, the magnificent victory just prior to the tragic denouement of Act Five” (52-53). Additionally, other scholars have commented on the list of “Dramatis Personae” at the beginning of the book, which addresses the challenge that “[h]istory, unlike fiction, cannot control the number of its characters” (Peires, *Dead* xiii). At the book’s end, the reader is treated to a denouement similar to that found in the “great three-decker novels of the Victorian era.” Peires writes, “This history is not, unfortunately, a fiction but, having lived so long with these characters, I cannot bear to leave them without saying a few words as to their ultimate fate” (324). These dramatic and literary references draw attention to the story of the movement and strengthen its historicity.

The inverse of this can be found in *The Heart of Redness*, a novel about postapartheid South Africa as much as the Cattle-Killing, where Mda uses historical accounts to buttress his plot’s development and literary goals. Mda states his intentions up-front, in the aforementioned Dedication. He ostensibly prepares the reader for a novel replete with intertextual and historical references, a practice common to postcolonial and postmodern literature. And because of the historiographical headway made by Peires, Mda had the opportunity to create a refreshing, substantial account of the movement unavailable to his literary predecessors. But as the novel progresses, his historical borrowings accumulate an inordinate debt to *The Dead Will Arise*. 
Taking stock of the one-sided transactions between novelist and historian reveals a troublesome presence of preexisting text and suggests that, contrary to postmodern theoretical leniency in reading plagiarism as intertextuality, *The Heart of Redness* must be seen as a plagiarizing, unoriginal work, a derivative of Peires’s historical research.

A thorough inventory of historical fragments in *The Heart of Redness* reveals four principal ways that Mda employed *The Dead Will Arise* to construct his version of the Xhosa Cattle-Killing: by paraphrasing, borrowing sections sequentially, copying, and replicating semantic strategies.

First, paraphrased lines account for the majority of transgressions. The following are but two examples of almost ninety dispersed throughout the novel (see Appendix):

1. **The Dead Will Arise**
   Mlanjeni, the Riverman, was about eighteen years old in 1850 [. . .]. The power of evil so pervaded the world, he thought, that it inhabited even the homestead of his father Kala and poisoned even his mother’s cooking. In order to keep himself pure and undefiled, Mlanjeni withdrew from the society of men and spent much of his time alone. Most especially, he liked to go down to a deep pool on the Keiskamma River where he would sit up to his neck in water for hours--some said days--subsisting only on ants’ eggs, water-grass and other foods of nature. (1)

   **The Heart of Redness**
   Mlanjeni the Man of the River. He was only eighteen. [. . .] Instead he brooded over the evil that pervaded the world, that lurked even in the house of his own father, Kala. As a result he refused to eat his mother’s cooking, for he said it was poisoned. [. . .]

   In order to stay clean he eschewed the company of other human beings, and spent his time immersed to the neck in a pool on the Keiskamma River. There he lived on the eggs of ants and on water-grass. (13-14)

2. **The Dead Will Arise**
   Outside his father’s dwelling, Mlanjeni erected two witchcraft poles, standing as a gateway. People who wished to remove the suspicion of witchcraft walked between these poles. The innocent emerged unscathed but those

   **The Heart of Redness**
   Mlanjeni set up two anti-witchcraft poles outside his father’s house. Those suspected of witchcraft were required to walk between them. The innocent walked through. Terrible things happened to those who had ubuthi
who felt themselves guilty were overcome with weakness and fear as they approached. While the witch writhed on the spot quite unable to move, the people would shout, ‘Get out! Get out! Bolowane!’ to drive the witchcraft out of its victim. Eventually the witch, thus purged of his or her witchcraft, staggered through the poles to Mlanjeni who gave him a small twig of the plumbago bush to protect him and keep him pure of evil. (2-3)

even as they approached the sacred poles.

One by one they began to walk between the poles. The clean were unscathed. The unclean were struck by weakness and fear as they approached the poles. Then they writhed on the spot, unable to move. The people shouted, ‘Out! Get out witchcraft!’ until the victims staggered through the poles to Mlanjeni, who gave them some twigs that would protect them from further evil and keep them pure. (16-17)

In these examples, Mda extracts narration from the historian, adds but a faint semantic twist, and places it in the hands of his omniscient narrator. At times the transition proves even more cumbersome, when lines of academic interpretation become the characters’ quotations themselves, in a sort of historiographical self-fulfilling prophecy. In other words, Peires’s analysis becomes--via The Heart of Redness--its own historical content. For instance, Peires writes that Nxele “seemed to have returned to [the amaXhosa] in the form of [Mlanjeni].” and that “many Xhosa were still awaiting his reappearance” (Dead 2). Mda puts this directly into Twin’s mouth: “‘Can it be that Mlanjeni is the reincarnation of Nxele?’ Twin wondered. ‘After all, the amaXhosa nation is still awaiting the return of Nxele’” (Heart 15). Furthermore, Mda’s overdependence on The Dead Will Arise lays bare the stylistic repercussions of excessively borrowed material: the stilted quotation reads more like plot development than the existential thoughts of a nineteenth-century Xhosa man.

Second, these paraphrased passages would be unproblematic were it not for their plenitude in addition to the sequential order in which they are borrowed from Peires’s text. This
“sequencing” lays bare the extent to which one text forms the other. Hence, in examined passages on Mda’s pages 13, 16, 16, 17, and 19, material originates from Peires’s pages 1, 2, 3, 3, and 12. Another section from *The Heart of Redness*, pages 86-90, most definitely comes from *The Dead Will Arise*, pages 84-88. In these various historical sections, Mda uses material both sequentially and chronologically, making the task of identifying borrowed passages an easy one.

Two other types of sequenced material come from the historian’s pages: one relates to the novel’s overall structure, the other to evidence. In selecting material to construct his novel, Mda does not restrict himself to the Cattle-Killing proper (i.e., from Nongqawuse’s prophecy in April 1856 to the mass exodus and death of thousands in 1857); he sets his limits as defined in *The Dead Will Arise*: starting with the rise of Mlanjeni, the prophet who led the amaXhosa to war against the colonists from 1850-53, and ending with the “Kaffir Relief Committee” in 1857. That is, the novelist relies upon the temporal framing established by the historian. More specifically, beginning the novel with Mlanjeni—exactly where Peires opens his narrative in order to give historical context—exemplifies the over-reliance on this one work.

Historical evidence is, of course, open to examination and interpretation by the general public. Letters, dispatches, notices, and records of all types from the Eastern Cape of the 1850s remain freely available at the National Archives in Cape Town and elsewhere; anyone can access these materials, quote them, and adapt them to creative works. They are public record. At first glance, Mda draws upon these to construct a historically accurate portrait of the time. But under closer scrutiny, a pattern of undocumented borrowings emerges. For example, in December 1856, Ngqika Commissioner Charles Brownlee wrote to Chief Commissioner John Maclean about the
role of women in the Cattle-Killing. This material made it into The Heart of Redness (similarities in solid underlining):

**National Archives, Cape Town**
The women are now the strongest supporters of the delusion, most of the men who have cultivated, have had to break up their ground themselves, and when the husbands have insisted that their wives should take a part, they have left and gone to their parents who have encouraged and supported them. (GH 8/30, Charles Brownlee to John Maclean, 12/7/1856)

**The Heart of Redness**
The women of the amaXhosa were the main cultivators of the land. Many of them refused to go to the fields even when their husbands were the staunchest of Unbelievers. Women became the strongest supporters of the prophets. Many of them left their husbands and went to live with their parents. (126)

This reads like an inventive massaging of the colonial record into fiction, but Mda does not use the letter from the colonial archive. He extracts it from The Dead Will Arise together with Peires’s own thoughts. Peires introduces the letter by writing that “rumours were especially widespread among Xhosa women, who performed most of the agricultural labour, and many women refused to cultivate despite pressure from their husbands” (Dead 117; similarities in dotted underlining). That Mda used the letter as published in The Dead Will Arise is likely, and other preceding passages confirm this suspicion (see Appendix, nos. 45-48).

Third, there are instances of outright copying, too:

1. Dying wives watched helplessly while the family dogs ate the corpses of their husbands. *(Dead 243)*
   Dying wives watched as the family dogs ate the corpses of their husbands. *(Heart 293)*
2. [. . .] a mysterious black race across the sea, newly resurrected from the dead. *(Dead 73)*
   ‘A black race across the sea, newly resurrected from the dead [. . .]’ *(Heart 95)*
3. [. . .] the iqungu attacked his slayer, bloating and swelling up his body until he too died. *(Dead 23)*
   [. . .] his iqungu attack the slayer, bloating and swelling up his body until he died. *(Heart 20)*

Verbatim similarities between the two books are generally the exception. Placed within the context of almost ninety closely paraphrased clauses, however, the transgression intensifies.
Even when *The Heart of Redness* does not paraphrase or copy, the two books share peculiar words in common that point to an engagement of excessive intertextuality. One example will suffice. Peires writes of the War of Mlanjeni on page 12, “It would be tedious and, indeed, unnecessary to give a full account of a war [. . .].” Mda notes on page 19, “It was an ugly and tedious war that lasted for three years [. . .].” The only significant word these two lines share, “tedious,” is quite common and, in any other setting, would not signify the slightest bit of connection. It is peculiar, though, for Mda to characterize a war as tedious, is it not? (Peires actually described the *writing* of the war’s history as tedious, not the war itself.) This could be past readings unconsciously surfacing into the writer’s creative faculties, but—again—the coinciding sequence of pages and subject matter that ties these two books together suggests a systematic application of one text into another.

Fourth, Mda’s replication of semantic strategies, i.e., his use of Xhosa words in the novel, earned him applause in newspaper and journal articles. As one reviewer wrote, “The names of trees, birds, and clothing are written in Xhosa, not English, and customs [. . .] are part of the story rather than explained in a footnote” (Rossouw 5). Jacobs proposes that the linguistic coexistence “remind[s] the reader [. . .] that the speech world of this English-language text is a southern Nguni one” (229). Mda is to be commended for the infusion of Xhosa vocabulary, but credit for almost all of these translations should be given to Peires:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>The Dead Will Arise</em></th>
<th><em>The Heart of Redness</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. They slaughtered cattle for the <em>amafaca</em> (‘emaciated ones’), feeding them [. . .]. (261)</td>
<td>Now they were slaughtering cattle and feeding the <em>amafaca</em>, the emaciated ones. (295)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. He issued formal commands (<em>imiyolelo</em>) to the Xhosa nation, ordering them to obey the instructions of Mhlakaza [. . .]. (87)</td>
<td>At the same time he sent <em>imiyolelo</em> – his formal commands – throughout <em>kwaXhosa</em> that all ama<em>Xhosa</em> should obey Mhlakaza’s instructions. (89)</td>
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3. [...] the people should have slaughtered their cattle instead of selling them off. [...] They should carefully preserve the umpefumlo (‘breath’ hence ‘soul’) of the beasts, so that they could rise again. (104)

4. ‘[Nonkosi] used to lead the people to a pond there at the Mpongo, and there used to see abakweta [newly-circumcised youths] dancing on the surface of the water [...]’ (202)

The fault lay with the people who had sold their cattle off instead of slaughtering them. And those who slaughtered them without going through the ritual of preserving their impumfumlo, their souls. (151)

She led them, together with hundreds of other followers, to a pond near the river, and there they saw newly circumcised abakwetha initiates dancing on the surface of the water. (183)

And in a final example, Mda quotes Nongqawuse saying, “They said they were messengers of Naphakade, He-Who-Is-Forever, the descendent of Sifuba-Sibanzi, the Broad-Chested-One,” (Heart 59-60). Aside from his continued reliance on Peires for the information in this line (Dead 79, 114-15), this is an egregious example because Mda affixes the English translations to Nongqawuse’s dialogue with her uncle, Mhlakaza, and Twin; there would be no need for translation between native speakers of isiXhosa.

One of the theoretically interesting connections between these two works involves the character of Mhlakaza. Peires first made the observation that, prior to the movement, Mhlakaza went by the name of Wilhelm Goliath and was the “first Xhosa to be confirmed as an Anglican” (35). Based on letters and a newspaper article, Peires puts forth an insightful parallel: that the character of Goliath/Mhlakaza personified the religious fusion between Christian and African cosmologies taking place during the 1850s. This link had been challenged by a handful of historians before the publication of The Heart of Redness, but Mda adopted Peires’s version of history nonetheless. And it could come back to haunt him: a recent article leverages new archival evidence to argue that Mhlakaza was definitely not Wilhelm Goliath (cf. Davies). The very
existence of this evidence calls for a revision to Peires’s thesis in *The Dead Will Arise*, and it poses a critical question to authors of historical fiction: should Mda correct his novel for historical accuracy? If yes, *The Heart of Redness* would fail as an autonomous work of literature. If no, the novel would forever serve as an historiographical time capsule, when the shifting perspective of a central participant left its footprints in wet literary concrete.

With so much of the historical half of Mda’s novel originating beyond its own binding, one might ask, what does the author bring to his own pages? The most significant contribution adds Khoikhoi elements to the story, with Qukezwa, Tsiqwa, and Heitsi Eibib, although these do not figure nearly as much as the Cattle-Killing narrative taken from *The Dead Will Arise*. Nothing demonstrates this better than the very “heart” of *The Heart of Redness*, when Nongqawuse relays her message to Mhlakaza and others. Her prophecy forms the novel’s—and the historical—center; all other developments revolve around its subsequent interpretations. In Nongqawuse’s prophetic moment, only one clause and three of twenty-three sentences are original Mda contributions. His version is lackluster and creatively dull, pulling material once again from Peires (Appendix, nos. 26-28). This exemplifies the most crippling effect of the author’s borrowed writing; it stifles his creativity and leaves “little room for interpretative work on the historical narrative” (Samuelson 53).

The final consideration of how *The Dead Will Arise* sustains *The Heart of Redness* concerns the overall ledger of Mda’s historical debt. Perhaps more astounding than the overabundance of paraphrased passages is that these sections have been transplanted more or less systematically. If one sets the excerpts alongside one another and compares page numbers, one
can see a parallel trajectory between the two books. That is, as *The Heart of Redness* progresses deeper into its development, Mda uses text further into Peires’s work.

**Overall Trend in the Pattern of Borrowed Text**

For each point along the X-Axis, then, there are two Y-values, one demarcated with a circle (to represent the page number in *The Heart of Redness*), one with an “x” (to represent the page number in *The Dead Will Arise*). In order to standardize the lengths of the books, each page number was turned into a percentage of its book’s completion. For example, where the black line travels between 40% and 50% (i.e., almost half-way through Mda’s novel), the problematic text comes between pages 145 and 157. These passages take text in Peires’s book mostly around page 100, or about 33% through his book (the gray line). The overall trend, then, reveals that as Mda progressed in his novel, his paraphrasing came from later passages in *The Dead Will Arise*, too.
To a certain extent this is logical, as chronological texts would develop in tandem, but Peires’s text is not exclusively chronological. Yet the general pattern remains.

Note that less deviation exists in the page numbers of citations (the space between an “x” and an “o”) in the first third of the two books than in the final two-thirds. Two explanations account for this discrepancy. First, as Mda began his novel, he relied on Peires’s text more heavily, in order to establish events, characters, and interactions. The sources of paraphrased passages literally come one right after another in Peires’s text. Second, as the novel progressed, Mda plucked text more liberally from all parts of *The Dead Will Arise*, using selected descriptions of characters or events anachronistically (such as flashbacks of a character’s personal history). In other words, the increasing difference shows Mda applying creative license to the historical record. Be that as it may, the corresponding trend reveals a systematic abuse of borrowed material that cannot be compensated by the brief acknowledgement in the novel’s dedication.

Reviewers sailed calmly past the tip of this iceberg, to use an apt cliché, upon the novel’s release. Maureen Isaacson of the *Los Angeles Times* said of Mda, “A prolific and prominent new voice of South African literature, Mda transforms historical events and invents new ones [. . .]” (R10). Henk Rossouw of the *Mail & Guardian* labeled it “a South African original” (5). The novel is a “brilliant critique of [a] cult of newness” wrote Tony Eprile in the *New York Times* (9). The critical praise brought Zakes Mda further into the literary spotlight. Short-listed for the Commonwealth Writers Prize, *The Heart of Redness* was a *New York Times* Notable Book, and it received the *Sunday Times* Fiction Prize in 2001. (Ironically, the *Sunday Times* also awarded *The Dead Will Arise* its Alan Paton Nonfiction Award in 1990.) The only hint of concern came in a
2003 op-ed by André Brink in the *Washington Post*. Brink writes, “In *The Heart of Redness*, Zakes Mda revisits (but unfortunately does not fully reimagine) from a black perspective the great cattle-killing of the 19th century [. . .]” (B3). What is not being said here? Does Brink sidestep the textual abuse because it was an acknowledged theft? Can a brief acknowledgement compensate for extensively plagiarized material? And, if so, is postcolonial African literature a textual free-for-all? The remainder of this article places *The Heart of Redness* alongside two other episodes of accused plagiarism in African literature to underscore why the novel—despite its acknowledgement—does not utilize intertextuality; it must be judged a plagiarized work.

As a working definition, Michael Worton and Judith Still delineate the theory of intertextuality, which “insists that a text [. . .] cannot exist as a hermetic or self-sufficient whole, and so does not function as a closed system.” This is in part because “the writer is a reader of texts (in the broadest sense) before s/he is a creator of texts, and therefore the work of art is inevitably shot through with references, quotations and influences of every kind [. . .]” (1-2). Based on this definition, in the case of *The Heart of Redness*, one could therefore expect “influences of every kind” to permeate the text, and Mda confirms this in his writing more generally: “Having drunk so deeply of the literatures of the Basotho and Xhosa people (and also Zulu and Setswana [. . .]) and then later having explored [. . .] the other ethnic groups in South Africa in all the eleven official languages of the country, I can see how the varied influences have melted into my work” (“Babel’s Happiness” par. 13). A problem arises, though, when Mda’s “varied influences” cannot compete with his overt and singular reliance on Peires’s Cattle-Killing history. As Worton and Still write, “To quote is not merely to write glosses on previous writers; it is to interrogate the chronicity of literature and philosophy, to challenge history as determining
tradition and to question conventional notions of originality and difference” (12), an effect Mda does not realize. One novel that does achieve this, according to several scholars, is Yambo Ouologuem’s *Le Devoir de Violence* (1968).

Once trumpeted as a “great African novel,” *Le Devoir de Violence*, upon close examination, “reveal[s] a tissue of quotations, translations, and incorporations, which, depending on your point of view, would be either an ‘original’ and creative exercise in intertextuality or ‘copied,’ plagiarized, tainted with crime” (Miller 218, 219). The novel’s borrowed passages become less ethically threatening when one recognizes that they were translations and not exclusive to one source. Despite the close textual similarities between *Le Devoir de Violence* and Graham Greene’s *It’s a Battlefield* (1934), among other books, Miller concludes that the novel does not fall into the binary of originality and plagiarism. It actually escapes the paradigm and constitutes “an assault on European assumptions about writing and originality” (219). With this in mind, one could claim that *Le Devoir de Violence* bridges black protest literature with postcolonial works by disengaging the colonial model and tradition. To borrow the words of Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Le Devoir de Violence*, like the “post” in postcoloniality and postmodernism, “challenges earlier legitimating narratives” (155).

This intellectual leniency was not prevalent before the 1960s, prior to the advancement of intertextuality and postmodernism. And it is sparingly granted today. In her enlightening article, “Appropriate(d) Discourse: Plagiarism and Decolonization,” Marilyn Randall proposes that “tolerance for imitation and accusations of plagiarism depend on contemporary definitions of originality, authenticity, property and their social and economic consequences” (528). Extending this to the colonial arena, she would support Miller’s and Appiah’s conclusions regarding *Le
Devoir de Violence: “The theoretical construction of the colonized subject may be seen to justify ‘plagiarism’ as an appropriate revolutionary move in the process of the creation of a new identity [. . .]” (Randall 532).

By contrast, in The Heart of Redness, Mda draws on text not from multiple sources and not in translation. His novel does not challenge or revolutionize. It glosses on Peires. Jacobs calls this “overt intertextuality” and suggests the novel “may best be approached [. . .] as the fictional equivalent of Xhosa overtone singing [. . .]. Various voices may be heard together contributing to the narrative in Mda’s novel in a cultivated polyphony that draws the reader’s attention to textual functioning as well as simply to hermeneutics” (225, 228). Considering the excerpts presented in the Appendix, calling The Heart of Redness a “cultivated polyphony” appears exceedingly generous. Jacobs then observes that Mda’s “fictional narrative follows the main contours of the historical one very closely,” and, in one example, cites his comparison “(Mda 98; see also Peires 175-177)” (232). This is true: The Heart of Redness replicates the “main contours” of The Dead Will Arise, as the graph above indicates, but even the hardiest of postmodern critics must recognize that the duplicated curve is comprised of copious semantic similarities.

And yet, many scholars hesitate to give weight to side-by-side analyses of textual abuses, and, more generally, to claims of plagiarism. In her discussion of the “Beyala affair,” Nicki Hitchcott unpacks the controversy surrounding Calixthe Beyala, who was convicted of plagiarism and awarded the Grand Prix du Roman de L’Académie Française in the same year (1996). Responding to accusations of plagiarism, Beyala first denied any wrongdoing, only later to write, “I admit to plagiarizing from the moment that I write. Because I belong, by necessity, to an other” (qtd. in Harrow 116). Lenient academics, including Hitchcott, “question the value of
presenting evidence” side-by-side, “like witnesses called to the stand” (102; Mireille Rosello qtd. in Hitchcott 102). Such theoretical musings, however impractical, perhaps apply to cases like Beyala’s where textual borrowings originate in multiple sources. Ken Harrow categorizes Beyala’s *Le Petit Prince de Belleville* as “a work of considerable theft,” but “it is in the end a novel that stands by itself, that coheres, if imperfectly at times, that is effective, in fact. It is Beyala’s work” (110). But unlike Beyala’s novel and *Le Devoir de Violence*, *The Heart of Redness* pulls singularly and frequently from *The Dead Will Arise*.

By juxtaposing Mda’s novel with Ouologuem’s and Beyala’s debates, an easy case for plagiarism can be made--were it not for the acknowledgement. In fact, the Dedication in Mda’s novel is the only point in its favor: neither Ouologuem nor Beyala recognized their pre-existing texts, at least until scholars and the media raised the issue. Nevertheless, Mda’s thanks to *The Dead Will Arise* falls far short of paying back his historical loans. Readers unfamiliar with Peires’s research undoubtedly come away from *The Heart of Redness* in awe of Mda’s grasp of the historical details. It is as if an unacknowledged textual ancestor (cf. Wenzel) haunts the novel: Peires, the ghost writer. The pervasiveness of Peires’s words throughout half of *The Heart of Redness* makes the Dedication grossly inadequate, and an amendment to co-authorship justifiable.

These three different cases converge in response to a fundamental question raised by the “Beyala affair.” At one point during the public spectacle, Beyala claimed her borrowed passages organically grew from “the intertextual nature of the African literary tradition,” that “[s]he and her writing are different [. . .] because she is an *African* woman” (Hitchcott 104). In response to this, Ben Okri, whose *Famished Road* unwittingly provided Beyala with content, retorts, “The
idea she spread and according to which African literature naturally plagiarizes is not only false but dangerous, harmful, because it allows people to believe that all African writers continually borrow. It’s insulting to them and to literature” (qtd. in Harrow 111). With more accusations of plagiarism made each day, these two statements raise a timely and vital question: should postcolonial African literature be held to different standards of authenticity/duplicity because of non-Western literary/oral traditions and because of the continent’s colonial past? Until now, the answer seems to have been “yes.” Ouologuem’s Le Devoir de Violence and (to a lesser extent) Beyala’s writing have been afforded ample “creative” space to exploit intertextuality and to critique Western paradigms of authenticity, duplicity, and plagiarism. On the other hand, with The Heart of Redness—and despite its acknowledgement—postmodern interpretations of plagiarism-as-intertextuality have reached the limits of plausibility.

Due to the textual nature of the Xhosa Cattle-Killing and its subsequent literary representations, authors depicting the movement have a deep artistic tradition (however historiographically shallow) from which to employ textual voicing and cross-references. The writing to date would have lent itself perfectly to postmodern, creative, fictional renderings. Mda’s novel, however, systematically paraphrases and profoundly relies upon a single historical work. Therefore, it cannot be categorized alongside other African literature that utilizes intertextuality to disengage colonial dualisms, akin to Ouologuem’s Le Devoir de Violence and Beyala’s Le Petit Prince de Belleville. These novels borrow translated text, doing it less often and from multiple sources. The resulting differences place The Heart of Redness outside of this subversive literary tradition and beyond the limits of postcolonial and postmodern creative license. If the novel does not constitute plagiarism, how does this bode for African literature?
Will future authors continue to scavenge the historical bookshelves to find their next template for literary success?
Works Cited


Appendix

The following page numbers correspond to Ravan Press’s 1989 edition of *The Dead Will Arise* and to Oxford University Press’s 2000 edition of *The Heart of Redness*. Since their original publication dates, both of these books have been reprinted as newer editions. Passages retain original quotation marks, signifying historical source citation in *The Dead Will Arise* but indicating dialogue in *The Heart of Redness*.

**The Dead Will Arise**

1. Mlanjeni, the Riverman, was about eighteen years old in 1850 [. . .]. The power of evil so pervaded the world, he thought, that it inhabited even the homestead of his father Kala and poisoned even his mother’s cooking. In order to keep himself pure and undefiled, Mlanjeni withdrew from the society of men and spent much of his time alone. Most especially, he liked to go down to a deep pool on the Keiskamma River where he would sit up to his neck in water for hours—some said days—subsisting only on ants’ eggs, watergrass and other foods of nature. (1)

2. [. . .] [Nxele’s] revelations concerning Mdalidephu the God of the black man, Thixo the God of the whites, and Thixo’s son Tayi, whom the whites had murdered. (2)

3. Before the day arrived Nxele himself was dead, drowned escaping from Robben Island where the British had imprisoned him. But he had promised before he surrendered that he would come back one day, and many Xhosa were still awaiting his reappearance. They saw him repeatedly in dreams and visions and now he seemed to have returned to them in the form of this sickly youth [Mlanjeni]. (2)

4. ‘The land is full of “ubuthi”!’ cried Mlanjeni. ‘This is the cause of so much disease and death among both men and cattle; let all cast it away, and come to me to be cleansed.’ (2)

**The Heart of Redness**

Mlanjeni the Man of the River. He was only eighteen. [. . .] Instead he brooded over the evil that pervaded the world, that lurked even in the house of his own father, Kala. As a result he refused to eat his mother’s cooking, for he said it was poisoned. [. . .]

In order to stay clean he eschewed the company of other human beings, and spent his time immersed to the neck in a pool on the Keiskamma River. There he lived on the eggs of ants and on water-grass. (13-14)

Whereas Nxele had preached about Mdalidephu the god of the black man, Thixo the god of the white man, and Thixo’s son, Tayi, who was killed by the white people [. . .]. (14)

But his career was stopped short by the British, who locked him up on Robben Island. Before he surrendered he promised that he would come back again. Alas, he drowned trying to escape from the island.

‘Can it be that Mlanjeni is the reincarnation of Nxele?’ Twin wondered. ‘After all, the amaXhosa nation is still awaiting the return of Nxele.’ (15)

‘Leave ubuthi alone,’ he preached. [. . .] ‘People and animals will die. Cast away ubuthi! You do not need ubuthi to invite good fortune or to protect yourselves! Cast it away, and all come to me to be cleansed!’

‘This sickly boy is Nxele himself [. . .].’ (15)
5. Outside his father’s dwelling, Mlanjeni erected two witchcraft poles, standing as a gateway. People who wished to remove the suspicion of witchcraft walked between these poles. The innocent emerged unscathed but those who felt themselves guilty were overcome with weakness and fear as they approached. [..] While the witch writhed on the spot quite unable to move, the people would shout, ‘Get out! Get out! Bolowane!’ to drive the witchcraft out of its victim. Eventually the witch, thus purged of his or her witchcraft, staggered through the poles to Mlanjeni who gave him a small twig of the plumbago bush to protect him and keep him pure of evil. (2-3)

6. Rumours of the Riverman’s power grew in the telling. ‘He lights his pipe on the sun,’ it was said; ‘he heals the sick, makes the blind see, the lame walk, and the dumb speak.’ (3)

7. The sun itself [...] descended from heaven to touch Mlanjeni’s head and passed through his body to his feet from which it arose again to appear with new brilliance in the east. And everywhere the believers saluted its rising by shouting, ‘He appears! He appears! Mlanjeni! Our chief!’ Children exclaimed that Mlanjeni was the ‘True Lord’ [...] (4)

8. [...] since witchcraft was not a personal quality but an evil affliction which he had the god-given power to cure. (3)

9. It would be tedious and, indeed, unnecessary to give a full account of a war [...] (12)

10. ‘Extermination is now the only word and principle to guide us,’ [...] (12)

11. [...] Smith, infuriated by the unexpected defiance of his Xhosa ‘children,’ frantically called on the settlers to ‘exterminate’ the savage beasts. (18)
12. They believed that war medicines generated supernatural forces (*iqungu*) within the stomach of a soldier. If he was killed, the *iqungu* attacked his slayer, bloating and swelling up his body until he too died. (23)

13. [. . .] Khoi women prostituted themselves and risked their lives to smuggle [. . .] a cannister of powder to the Kat River rebels. (18)

14. Messengers from distant African nations—the Sotho, the Thembu, the Mpondo, the Mpondomise—all sent to him for war charms or for the secret of catching witches. (29)

15. He despised the way the Methodist congregations ‘told their hearts’ in public, and he yearned for the private confessions, the beautiful robes [. . .] (34)

16. Over a period of some eighteen months, the two men walked all the way from Grahamstown to Graaff-Reinet, up to Colesberg and the Orange River [. . .] (34)

17. [. . .] in April 1850 Wilhelm became the first Xhosa to be confirmed as an Anglican. He could recite the creed, the Lord’s prayer, the ten commandments and most of the translated Anglican liturgy in Xhosa [. . .]. (35)

18. [. . .] in which Mdalidephu, the God of the blacks, was raised up in opposition to Thixo, the God of the whites. (33)

19. This dreaded cattle disease, which already had killed off hundreds of thousands of cattle in Europe, was brought to South Africa in September 1853 by a Dutch ship carrying Friesland bulls to Mossel Bay [. . .]. (70)

20. They drove their precious cattle to mountainous and secluded places. (71)

The Dead Will Arise

The Heart of Redness

Iqungu was the vengeful force generated by war medicines. A soldier who died in war could have his iqungu attack the slayer, bloating and swelling up his body until he died. (20)

Khoikhoi women sold their bodies to the British soldiers in order to smuggle canisters of gunpowder to their fighting men. (22)

Messengers from the distant nations of the Basotho, the abaThembu, the amaMpondo and the amaMpondomise visited him, asking for war charms and for the great secret of catching witches. (25-26)

The Methodists, he said, told their hearts in public. He preferred the private confessions of the Anglicans. Also, the Anglicans wore more beautiful robes. (52)

For eighteen months they walked all the way from Grahamstown to Graaff-Reinet, and then to Colesberg on the banks of the Orange River. (53)

Wilhelm Goliath boasted that he was the first umXhosa ever to receive the Anglican Communion. He could recite the Creed, all Ten Commandments in their proper order, and the Lord’s Prayer. (53)

Then we had Nxele who told us about our own god, Mdalidephu, who was in opposition to Thixo, the god of the white man. (54)

There were reports that it had killed many cattle across the seas in the land of the whites. It was brought to the land of the amaXhosa nation by Friesland bulls that came in a Dutch ship two years earlier, in 1853. (55)

Cattle owners were trying to escape it by driving their herds to mountainous and secluded places. (55)
The Dead Will Arise

21. Starting off as little more than a dry, husky cough, lungsickness slowly tightened its grip on the hapless beasts it destroyed, bringing to them a lingering and uniquely horrible death. The cough gradually increased in severity, forcing the animals to stretch forward with their front legs wide apart, their heads extended and their tongues protruding, gasping for air. Yellowish fluid crept over their lungs which stuck to their ribs, and as the disease spread, the cattle putrefied from the inside out, becoming first constipated and then diarrhoeatic. (70)

22. To make matters even worse, the maize was blighted by a species of grub which penetrated the roots and destroyed the stalks before the corn was edible. (71)

23. Nothing like this had ever happened before. [. . .] Their thoughts turned naturally towards the possibility that the disease might have been caused by malevolent witchcraft. (71)

The Heart of Redness

Twin-Twin wept as he watched his favourite bull die a horrible and protracted death. First it was constipated. Then it became diarrhoeic. It gasped for air, its tongue hanging out. (55)

As if lungsickness was not enough, the maize in the fields was attacked by a disease that left it whimpering and blighted. It crept through the roots and killed the plant before the corn could ripen. (56)

Such a calamity had never been seen in kwaXhosa before. It was the work of malevolent spirits and of ubuthi, of witchcraft. (56)
24. But all idylls come to an end. Merriman could not tramp the countryside forever, and his duties confined him increasingly to the white Anglican community of Grahamstown.

Merriman [. . .] found him a position teaching at the Xhosa school in Southwell [. . .]. Wilhelm re-entered Merriman’s personal service. [. . .] Wilhelm had clearly become a nuisance and ceased to occupy the same important and affectionate place he had formerly enjoyed in the archdeacon’s journals. [. . .]

[. . .] Mrs Merriman herself indicated, ‘He [Wilhelm] was a dreamy man [. . .]’.

[. . .] Wilhelm quitted the Merrimans some time in 1853 and went to live near his sister’s place on the Gxarha river [. . .]. There he resumed his own name of Mhlakaza, and within a few years he began to preach a new Gospel of his own devising [. . .]. (35-36)

25. On a certain day in April 1856, two young girls left Mhlakaza’s homestead on the Gxarha to frighten the birds away from the cultivated fields. The elder was Nongqawuse, an orphan girl of about fifteen living with her uncle Mhlakaza. The younger was Nombanda, Mhlakaza’s sister-in-law, then aged about eight or ten. (78-79)

He explained to Twin and Qukezwa that when Merriman stopped walking and was confined to the church in Grahamstown, Mhlakaza’s days as a gospel man came to an end. At first the holy man engaged him to teach isiXhosa at a school, and built him a hut in his garden. But he was not a happy man at the holy man’s household. Merriman and his wife treated him like a servant, whereas on the road he had been a gospel man in his own right. He felt that Merriman’s wife didn’t like him. She called him a dreamy sort of fellow. And this convinced him that his enthusiasm for the gospel was not taken seriously by Merriman’s family. So he left and came to live next to his sister’s homestead near the Gxarha River. He gave up on the god of the white man, and reverted to the true god of his fathers. (58)

‘Three days ago my niece, Nongqawuse, and my sister-in-law, Nombanda, went to the fields to chase away the birds that like to feed on the sorghum.’ (58)
The Dead Will Arise

26. ‘Tell that the whole community will rise from the dead; and that all cattle now living must be slaughtered, for they have been reared by contaminated hands because there are people about who deal in witchcraft.

There should be no cultivation, but great new grain pits must be dug, new houses must be built, and great strong cattle enclosures must be erected. Cut out new milksacks and weave many doors from buka roots. [..] The people must leave their witchcraft, for soon they will be examined by diviners.’ (79)

The Heart of Redness

26. ‘The Strangers said I must tell the nation that all cattle now living must be slaughtered. They have been reared by contaminated hands because there are people who deal in witchcraft. The fields must not be cultivated, but great new grain pits must be dug, new houses must be built, and great strong cattle kraals must be erected. Cut out new milksacks and weave many doors from buka roots. The Strangers say that the whole community of the dead will arise. When the time is ripe they will arise from the dead, and new cattle will fill the kraals. The people must leave their witchcraft, for soon they will be examined by diviners.’ (60)

27. ‘They only treated it like a joke,’ replied the girls. ‘Nobody listened. They said we were telling fairy­tales.’ The strangers were not to be put off. They ordered Nongqawuse to go to her uncle Mhlakaza. (79)

Mhlakaza said that at first he had treated the message of the Strangers as a joke. But they had appeared to Nongqawuse again, and ordered her to give the message to her uncle. (60)

28. The rapid spread of lungsickness seemed to prove the strangers’ words that existing cattle were rotten, ‘bewitched’ and ‘unclean’, and encouraged the people to destroy these in the hope of getting ‘a fresh supply of clean and wholesome’ beasts. ‘They have all been wicked,’ implied Mhlakaza, ‘and everything belonging to them is therefore bad.’ The old cattle were tainted and polluted and the new cattle would be contaminated by them. [..]

[..] They brought with them a whole new world of contentment and abundance.

‘Nongqawuse said that nobody would ever lead a troubled life.’ [..] ‘There would rise cattle, horses, sheep, goats, dogs, fowls and every other animal that was wanted [..].’ (80)

‘The rapid spread of lungsickness is proving the Strangers right,’ he said. ‘The existing cattle are rotten and unclean. They have been bewitched. They must all be destroyed. You have all been wicked, and therefore everything that belongs to you is bad. Destroy everything. The new people who will arise from the dead will come with new cattle, horses, goats, sheep, dogs, fowl and any other animals that the people may want. But the new animals of the new people cannot mix with your polluted ones. So destroy them. Destroy everything. Destroy the corn in your fields and in your granaries. Nongqawuse has told us that when the new people come there will be a new world of contentment and no one will ever lead a troubled life again.’ (60)
The Dead Will Arise

29. Nor could Sarhili ever forget that terrible day more than twenty years previously (April 1835) when he had accompanied his father Hintsa as he rode proudly into the camp of Governor Sir Benjamin D’Urban. Hintsa was given assurances of his personal safety, but he was never to leave the camp alive. D’Urban disarmed Hintsa’s retinue, placed the King under heavy guard and threatened to hang him from the nearest tree. Hintsa was held hostage for a ransom of 25,000 cattle and 500 horses, ‘war damages’ owed to the Colony. He tried to escape but was shot down, and after he was dead his ears were cut off as military souvenirs.

This was Sarhili’s first introduction to his colonial neighbours. He never forgot and he never forgave. ‘Where is my father?’ he asked his councillors when the War of the Axe broke out. ‘He is dead. He died by the hands of these people. He was killed in his own country. He died without fighting. . . . Today we all flight.’ (84-85)

30. Nongqawuse was still seeing the strangers often. Sometimes they came to her in the homestead after dark. Eventually she became too ‘ill’ (presumably too confused and disorientated) to talk, and her place was taken by her young relative Nombanda, who was preferred by many visitors, including the chiefs. (87)

31. Our most reliable oral source informs us that ‘the same voices that spoke to Nongqawuse spoke to him as well’, [. . .] a favourite horse lately dead, and best of all his dead son, now alive and well. (87)

32. [. . .] a fresh ear of corn, a fresh pot of beer [. . .] (87)

The Heart of Redness

Even though almost twenty years had passed since King Hintsa had been brutally murdered in 1835 by Governor Sir Benjamin D’Urban, the amaXhosa people still remembered him with great love.

[. . .]

He had not forgotten how he had accompanied his father into D’Urban’s camp and had fortunately escaped when his father was held hostage for a ransom of twenty-five thousand cattle and five hundred horses. Since he had heard that his father had been gunned down when he tried to escape, his anger against the British had never diminished. His pained words were recalled every day in many an umXhosa household, ‘Where is my father? He is dead. He died by the hands of these people. He was killed in his own country. He died without fighting.’ (86-87)

[. . .] Nongqawuse, who was still seeing the Strangers almost every day. Sometimes she would be overwhelmed by the spirit so much that she got sick. Then Mhlakaza would take over and make his pronouncements. But the favourite of the people, and even of the chiefs, was young Nombanda [. . .]. (88)

The same voice that had spoken to Nongqawuse spoke to King Sarhili as well. [. . .] At a distance on the waves of the sea he saw his own son who had recently died. He was alive and well [. . .]. He saw his favourite horse that had also recently died. (88)

He was served a fresh pot of beer by Nongqawuse herself, and was shown a fresh ear of corn. (89)
33. He asked whether the promises could not be fulfilled without the destruction of the existing cattle [...] (87)

34. [...] he bowed to the prophecies, asking only for three months space to give him time to kill his immense herds.

He issued formal commands (imiyolelo) to the Xhosa nation, ordering them to obey the instructions of Mhlakaza, and as a public sign of faith he commenced the slaughter by killing his favourite ox, a beast renowned throughout Xhosaland. (87)

35. Other visitors witnessed the sight of Nongqawuse or Nombanda talking to the spirits, though they saw and heard nothing themselves. (88)

36. ‘Then they heard the crashing of great stones breaking off the cliffs overlooking the headwaters of the River Kamanga [i.e. Gxarha] [...] While they stood wondering, the girl was heard saying, “Cast your eyes in the direction of the sea.”’ (88)

37. [...] Mjuza, the son of the prophet Nxele [...] (72)

38. [...] the spirits of Xhosa warriors who had died fighting in the various wars against the Colony. (72)

39. For months after the news of Cathcart’s death, the Xhosa posted lookouts on the higher hills to watch for the arrival of the Russian ships. (72)

40. [...] Mjuza, the son of the prophet Nxele, announced that his father had not drowned escaping from Robben Island but was leading the conquering black army across the sea. (72)

41. [...] a mysterious black race across the sea, newly resurrected from the dead. (73)

42. ‘But can these wonderful promises of the Strangers not be fulfilled without destroying all the existing cattle?’ (89)

43. ‘But my herds are too many. I shall only ask that I be given three months to destroy them all.’

In the following weeks the king began to kill his cattle. The first victim was his best bull, which was famous for its beauty in all the land. [...] At the same time he sent imiyolelo—his formal commands—throughout kwaXhosa that all amaXhosa should obey Mhlakaza’s instructions. (89)

44. All important visitors were introduced to the young prophetesses—Nongqawuse and Nombanda. They were treated to the sight of the girls talking to the spirits. The visitors themselves never heard the spirits [...]. (90)

45. There was an explosion and great rocks fell from the cliffs overlooking the river. [...] ‘Cast your eyes in the direction of the sea,’ Nongqawuse commanded. (90)

46. [...] Mjuza, the son of our great Prophet Nxele. (92)

47. [...] the spirits of amaXhosa soldiers who had died in the various wars against the British colonists. (93)

48. ‘For many months we posted men on the hills to look out for the arrival of the Russian ships.’ (93)

49. ‘I remember this very Mjuza, son of Nxele, telling everyone that the great prophet had not drowned escaping from Robben Island, but was leading a black army across the seas that would come and crush the British!’ (94)

50. ‘A black race across the sea, newly resurrected from the dead [...]’ (95)
42. He had named ten rivers and discovered two new mountain ranges. (48)

43. The hatred of believers for unbelievers ripped whole families apart. Fathers turned on their sons and wives deserted their husbands. In Sandle’s chiefdom, a believer named Qongo tried to murder his son who was an unbeliever, and several other fathers were likewise guilty of violently persecuting their unbelieving children. [...] sons expelling their aged fathers from the homestead. (160)

44. [...] termed by the Xhosa, the amathamba (‘soft ones’ or believers) and the amagogotya (‘hard ones’ or unbelievers) [...] (165)

45. Hundreds of cattle were killed every day. The believers were ordered not to eat the meat of any cattle killed the previous day, so that every day fresh cattle were slaughtered and yesterday’s remaining meat thrown away. Rotten flesh lay putrefying around the homesteads. (95)

46. They dug out their corn from the insulated safety of the grain pits [...] Some of it was sold off at half its normal price [...] [...]

47. Spirits often manifested themselves in the form of imilozi (voices), which spoke a strange whistling kind of language that only the privileged could understand. (91)

48. [...] Nongqwawuse also took visitors to a cave and to aardvark holes where lowing sounds might be heard. Another favourite location remained the bush adjoining the cultivated field where she first met the strangers. (90)

49. The hatred of believers for unbelievers ripped whole families apart. It was like that in many families. Believing brothers fought against unbelieving brothers. Unbelieving spouses turned against believing brothers. Unbelieving fathers kicked believing sons out of their homesteads. Unbelieving sons plotted the demise of believing fathers. Unbelieving fathers attempted to kill believing sons. (97-98)

50. The amaXhosa people called the Believers amaThamba--those whose hearts were soft and compassionate. [...] The Unbelievers were called amaGogotya--the hard ones. (98)

51. Throughout kwaXhosa Believers were killing hundreds of cattle every day. People were not allowed to eat meat of cattle that had been killed the day before. Every day new cattle were slaughtered and the previous day’s meat was thrown away. Soon the stench of rotting meat filled the villages. (98-99)

52. Twin and his wife went on to dig out the corn from their underground granaries and threw it into the river.

53. Some Believers sold their corn and cattle to the unbelieving amaMfengu and to the markets of King Williamstown and East London at a fraction of the market price. (99)

54. [...] for they manifested themselves in the form of imilozi, the whistles that are the language of the spirits. Nongqwawuse and Nombanda spoke with the new people in whistles. (122)

55. While Nongqwawuse was leading Qukezwa and a group of visitors to the valley to listen to the lowing sounds of the new cattle in the aardvark holes and in the bush where the Strangers had first appeared. (123)
49. Such rumors were especially widespread among Xhosa women, who performed most of the agricultural labour, and many women refused to cultivate despite pressure from their husbands. Commissioner Brownlee wrote: ‘The women are now the strongest supporters of the delusion, most of the men who have cultivated have had to break up their ground themselves, and when the husbands have insisted that their wives should take a part, they have left and gone to their parents.’ (117)

The women of the amaXhosa were the main cultivators of the land. Many of them refused to go to the fields even when their husbands were the staunchest of Unbelievers. Women became the strongest supporters of the prophets. Many of them left their husbands and went to live with their parents. Women were the leaders of the cattle-killing movement. (126)

50. Grey’s health programme was perhaps the one unqualified success of his policy [. . .] (59)

He had established health programmes for them, which were an unqualified success. (145)

51. Fitzgerald was soon treating fifty patients a day [. . .]. He had been trained in ophthalmic surgery, and his cataract operations gave him the reputation among the Xhosa of a man who could restore the sight of the blind. (60)

He was an ophthalmic surgeon, and he performed cataract operations that gave him fame throughout kwaXhosa as a man of miracles who could make blind people see. Fitzgerald was treating more than fifty people a day. (145)

52. Grey also wanted to create an elite school for chiefs’ children in Cape Town, where they might learn to appreciate the extent of Britain’s wealth and power, grow up in a fully ‘civilized’ environment, and become entirely divorced from their own culture and its attendant habits. (59)

‘You see, I plan to open a school in Cape Town for the sons of chiefs, where they will grow up in the bosom of British civilisation. They will learn to appreciate the might of the British Empire and will acquire new modes of behaviour. They will give up their barbaric culture and heathen habits [. . .].’ (145)

53. We know remarkably little about the month or so that Grey spent on the frontier before he suffered a nervous collapse and returned prostrate to Cape Town. (112)

Before his rounds on the wild frontier were over, he suffered a nervous breakdown and had to be sent back to Cape Town hallucinating and blubbing. (146)

54. The First Disappointment (94)

This was the First Disappointment. (note: Mda uses Peires’ terminology for several developmental stages of the Cattle Killing) (148)
The Dead Will Arise

55. On the great day, two suns would rise red in the sky over the mountain of Ntaba kaNdoda where they would collide and darkness would cover the earth. There would be a great storm, which only the newly built and thatched houses would be able to withstand. Then the righteous dead—those who had been killed by God for their wickedness through snakebite or drowning—and the new cattle would rise out of the earth at the mouths of the Kei, Kwenxurha, Tyhume and Keiskamma rivers. They would be wearing white blankets and new brass rings. The English and their collaborators (‘all who wear trousers’ in one account) would retreat into the sea, which would rise up in two walls to engulf them and open a road for them to return to the Uhlanga (place of Creation) whence they came. (98)

56. No believer slept that night. The young people danced and revelled [. . .]. (99)

57. But nothing happened. If anything, the promised day of darkness was particularly bright. (99)

58. He sent messengers to Mhlakaza, and it was widely reported throughout Xhosaland that Mhlakaza had denied ever uttering prophecies, that he had laid the whole blame on Nongqawuse [. . .]. (99)

59. Sarhili dispatched orders to all the Xhosa chiefs, prohibiting the further slaughter of cattle. (99)

60. [. . .] the people should have slaughtered their cattle instead of selling them off. [. . .] They should carefully preserve the umpefumlo (‘breath’ hence ‘soul’) of the beasts, so that they could rise again. (104)

The Heart of Redness

‘On that great day two suns will rise in the sky. They will be red like the colour of blood. In the middle of the sky, over Ntaba kaNdoda, our sacred mountain, they will collide, and the whole world will be in darkness. A great storm will arise, and only those huts that are newly thatched in preparation for the arrival of our ancestors will survive it. Out of the earth, at the mouths of all our great rivers, the dead will arise with their new cattle. Our forefathers will finally come wearing white blankets and shiny brass rings. And be warned, all you Unbelievers: the English and their collaborators, all those traitors who wear trousers, will be swallowed by the sea, which will take them back to the place of creation whence they came ... to be re-created into better people.’ (149)

Twin and Qukezwa did not sleep that night. They joined the revellers at the banks of the Gxarha River [. . .]. (149)

No darkness. Instead the day was brighter than usual. (150)

King Sarhili summoned Mhlakaza, who denied that he was the source of the prophecies. He put all the blame on Nongqawuse. (151)

He decided to issue a decree that chiefs should ban all further cattle-killing activities in their chiefdoms. (151)

The fault lay with the people who had sold their cattle off instead of slaughtering them. And those who slaughtered them without going through the ritual of preserving their imiphefumlo, their souls. (151)
61. [. . .] a great host of new people had appeared in boats at the mouth of the Kei and told Sarhili that they had come to establish the independence of the blacks and that he must send messages to all the black nations. In the meantime, the Xhosa must continue to kill their cattle. (106)

62. ‘I have seen [my father] Hintza face to face.’ (106)

63. [. . .] Mhlakaza suggested that the white settlers should also kill their cattle, destroy their crops and put away their witchcraft. For, he said, ‘the people that have come have not come to make war but to bring about a better state of things for all’. He invited the whites to come to the Gxarha to hear and see for themselves. [. . .] Reverend Henry Kayser of Peelton was warned that it was not enough for him to be reading from the Book—he must throw away his bewitching matter as well. (107)

64. [. . .] by replacing the Xhosa chiefs’ rights to judicial fees and fines with a fixed monthly income in colonial money which would, again in Grey’s words, make the chiefs financially ‘dependent on the Government of the country’. The councillors, who assisted their chiefs in return for a share in the judicial fines, would likewise receive salaries and would thus likewise become dependent on the government rather than on their chiefs. (63)

The Dead Will Arise

The Heart of Redness

He was among a host of new people who appeared in boats at the mouth of the river. They told the king that they had come to liberate the black nations, and that this message must be passed throughout the world. In the meantime the cattle-killing movement must be strengthened. (151-52)

‘I have seen my father! I have seen Hintsa face to face!’ (152)

[. . .] Mhlakaza was extending a hand of reconciliation to the white settlers. He was asking them to kill their cattle and destroy their crops as well, for the sake of their own redemption. He invited them to come to the Gxarha River to see for themselves and hear the good news of the resurrection.

‘It is not enough for you to read the big black book,’ he warned them. ‘You must throw away your witchcraft. The people that have come have not come to make war but to bring about a better state of things for all.’ (152)

The chiefs would henceforth receive a monthly salary in colonial money. They were no longer allowed to impose fines on those who were found guilty at the chiefs’ courts. Councillors like Twin-Twin who assisted the chiefs in exchange for a share of those fines would now also be paid by the government. This would make them loyal to the government instead of to the chiefs. (153)
Grey now proposed, in his own words, to ‘gradually undermine and destroy’ Xhosa laws and customs [. . .]

‘European laws will, by imperceptible degrees, take the place of their own barbarous customs, and any [Xhosa] chief of importance will be daily brought into contact with a talented and honourable European gentleman, who will hourly interest himself in the advance and improvement of the entire tribe, and must in process of time gain an influence over the native races [. . .].’ (62–63)

Mhlakaza was ‘merely a secondary instrument in the hands of the Great Chiefs [Sarhili and Moshoeshoe] working on the superstition and ignorance of the common people’. (109)

‘This whole cattle-killing movement is not just superstitious delusion. It is a plot by the two chiefs ... a cold-blooded political scheme to involve the government in war, and to bring a host of desperate enemies upon us.’

‘Kreli and Moshesh want to drive the pacified Xhosas into a war they do not want against the English.’ (155–56)

‘That it was his intention to make war with the English, and that he killed his cattle so as to have none to guard, and more men available to fight, that he did not see the use of cultivating as the crops would only be cut down by the troops, and that the cattle of the white people and [Thembu] would furnish them with food when fighting.’ (219)
The Dead Will Arise

69. [...] with the imposition of English law in the place of the ‘bloodthirsty’ aboriginal law. [...] Aborigines should not, however, be allowed to congregate together and keep up their old bad habits, but should be scattered and distributed all over settler country. (49)

70. [...] whom Grey accused—again falsely—of conspiring to kill settlers and rape white women. Te Rauparaha was released only after his subjects agreed to surrender three million acres for white settlement. Other Maoris were not so lucky. One Christian convert was tried and shot by court martial without benefit of defence counsel, and his companions were illegally transported to Australia. (51)

The Heart of Redness

[...] where he had succeeded in imposing English law in the place of the bloodthirsty aboriginal law. He had made it a point that aboriginal people were not allowed to congregate together and practise their old uncivilised habits. Instead they were scattered all over the settler-country, where they could be equipped with education and skills that were necessary for their survival in the modern world. (156)

[...] so Grey had accused him of plotting to kill white settlers and rape their women. The chief was arrested, and was released only after his people agreed to hand over three million acres of prime land for white settlement. This added more land to the millions of acres that Sir George had gained by various means from the Maori, including court-martialling and executing their uncooperative leaders and transporting some of them to Australia. (157)

71. [...] it sent out a boat which promptly overturned, nearly drowning the five men in it. (122)

72. The news of the ‘destruction’ of the Geyser caused a great sensation among the Xhosa [...] The victory over [...] ship started a new frenzy of cattle-killing. (179)

73. In most respects, the message of the new people through Nonkosi was the same as that of Nongqawuse [...]. Nonkosi was quite definite that ornaments should be disposed of rather than worn, and that fires should be made of sneezewood rather than mimosa. [...] Old Kulwana supported the prophecies of his daughter, saying that he himself could hear the cattle bellowing underground. (202)

Although Nonkosi’s message was similar to Nongqawuse’s, she gained a new following. [...] Whereas Nongqawuse urged her followers to wear ornaments and make-up, Nonkosi’s teachings were that ornaments should be disposed of. She further gave instructions that fires for cooking or for any other purpose should be made only of sneezewood, instead of the more popular mimosa.

Kulwana became his daughter’s staunchest supporter. He told her followers that he too had heard the cattle lowing and bellowing from the pool. (182)
74. ‘[Nonkosi] used to lead the people to a pond there at the Mpongo, and there used to see abakweta [newly-circumcised youths] dancing on the surface of the water, and they thought that they heard the thudding of the oxhide, accompanied by a song, to which the abakweta danced. Truly the people were so deluded that they went so far as to claim that they had seen the horns of cattle, heard the lowing of milk-cows [. . .].’ (202)

75. Believers should shave off their eyebrows to distinguish them clearly from unbelievers. (202)

76. News of Nxito’s arrival home circulated rapidly among the believers and it was widely but wrongly reported that he had been converted from his unbelief. (148)

77. Eventually Mhlakaza had yielded and agreed to arrange a meeting between Nxito and the new people, but the old chief, wary of deception, had sent one of his men [. . .] to spy out the designated place and guard against trickery. Unfortunately for Nxito, Makombe’s presence was discovered and Mhlakaza announced that Nxito had insulted the new people by placing an unbeliever in their road. (149)

78. [. . .] somewhere along the long lonely road back to his Great Place—the road he had travelled down so full of expectation—he tried to kill himself. His councillors were obliged to remove all knives, spears and sharp objects from his reach and to watch him carefully. On 6 January 1857, he arrived back at Hohita. (150)

79. On 16 February 1857, the long-awaited eighth day, the sun rose as usual about six o’clock, neither late nor blood-red. ‘The sun rose just like any other sun.’ (157)
The Dead Will Arise

80. Napakade had been ready to rise, he said, with six hundred cattle, but the ancestors of the unbelievers had begged for a delay [. . .]. (159)

81. This was none other than Mjuza, the son of the prophet Nxele, who had predicted the resurrection of the dead in 1818. [. . .] Like his father Nxele, Mjuza was a great anti-colonial militant. He fought vigorously in three Frontier Wars, burning down Butterworth mission in 1851, and nearly perishing from a bullet in the stomach. When the first prophecies of cattle-killing were heard in the land, Mjuza, who had carefully preserved his father’s weapons, announced that his father was returning at the head of the army of black Russians to liberate the country. (205)

82. They boiled up old bones that had been bleaching in the sun for years, and ate the broth as soup. They broke into the stables around East London and ate the meal meant for the horses. (242)

83. They stole and ate the well-fed dogs of the white settlers in King William’s Town. (242)

84. Most, however, simply sat, waiting for death [. . .]. (243)

85. Dying wives watched helplessly while the family dogs ate the corpses of their husbands. There are reports of children falling down from hunger and unable to rise again [. . .]. (243)

86. The Mfengu allies of the Cape Colony had ignored the prophecies of Nongqawuse and grown rich on cattle bought cheap from Xhosa believers. [. . .] They slaughtered cattle for the amafaca (‘emaciated ones’), feeding them [. . .]. (261)

The Heart of Redness

‘The new people were ready to rise. The great Naphakade, He-Who-Is-Forever, was ready to lead them to our shores, driving more than six thousand cattle. But the ancestors of the Unbelievers [. . .].’ (243)

He who was the son of Nxele the prophet who prophesied the resurrection of the dead in 1818! He who was known far and wide as a great anti-colonial militant! He who was a war hero who burnt down a mission station in Butterworth in 1851 and was shot in the stomach by a colonial bullet! He who had announced at the beginning of the cattle-killing movement that his father was coming back at the head of the Russian army to liberate the amaXhosa people! (268)

[. . .] Qukezwa boiled up old bones that she picked up on the veld and in the dongas. Although the bones had been bleaching in the sun for years, she hoped to get some broth from them. She and Heitsi drank it as soup.

Twin’s raiding parties went as far as East London. They broke into the colonists’ stables and stole their horses. (292)

They stole the well-fed dogs of the colonists and cooked them for supper. (292)

Many Believers just sat in their homes and waited for death. (293)

Helpless mothers watched as children fell, never to rise again. Dying wives watched as the family dogs ate the corpses of their husbands. (293)

They had ignored the prophecies of Nongqawuse and had become rich by buying cattle cheaply from the Believers. Now they were slaughtering cattle and feeding the amafaca, the emaciated ones. (295)
87. He still wanted the Xhosa to become ‘useful servants, consumers of our goods, contributors to our revenue’. (247)

88. Then followed the well-worn argument about indiscriminate charity attracting destitute masses to King William’s Town [. . .]. (256)

‘The Xhosa are becoming useful servants, consumers of our goods, contributors to our revenue.’ (296)

Indiscriminate charity would attract hordes of natives to Kingwilliamstown, he said. (297)
1 Portions of the research and writing of this article were conducted while a visiting fellow at the University of Cape Town, generously funded by the Fox International Fellowship at Yale University. Thanks to Ann Biersteker and Henry Trotter for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper, and to Christopher L. Miller for a preliminary discussion on plagiarism.

2 The Cattle Killing continues to appeal to all kinds of dramatists today, with creative works like Sisonke Arts and Speeltheater Holland’s puppet show *Umhlaba Obomvu (Red Earth)* in 2006, and Mats Larsson Gothe and Michael Williams’s opera *Poet & Prophetess*, which debuted in March 2008. Brett Bailey recently mentioned to me that he is considering revisiting the subject for a future production.

3 See for example “Secret Information,” April 15, 1860, BK89, National Archives, Cape Town.

4 It is possible the historical note was not Metelerkamp’s doing, as her short story was previously published as “Namjikwa: A Tale of the Cattle-Slaying of 1858,” *African Monthly* 3, no. 17 (April 1908), which did not carry the historical introduction. The body of her short story between 1908 and 1935 remained nearly identical, however.

5 Thanks to Jennifer Wenzel for her thoughts related to this topic. Davies also comments on the literary qualities of *The Dead Will Arise*, claiming it is “infused with a desire to imitate fictional forms and style--to write literature” (37), an overreaching assessment. Peires used literary devices to convey the movement’s history, which was grossly misunderstood (and misrepresented) prior to the publication of *The Dead Will Arise*.

6 Some scholars have analyzed *The Heart of Redness* in relation to Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. See for example Harry Sewlall, “Deconstructing Empire in Joseph Conrad and Zakes Mda,” *Journal of Literary Studies* (December 2003), 331-44. Sewlall mentions Mda’s portrayal of Sir Harry Smith saying, “Extermination is now the only word and principle that guides us,” and he likens this to, “Exterminate all the brutes!” in Mr. Kurtz’s journal (Sewlall 342); in fact the line appearing in Mda’s novel replicates verbatim a quote by Sir Harry Smith appearing in *The Dead Will Arise* (see Appendix, no. 10). Although the two novels share a titular likeness, Mda claims the novel had nothing to do with *Heart of Darkness*; rather, “[i]t had everything to do with the Xhosa expression [. . .] ububomvu, which means redness, or the heart of redness” (“Zakes Mda”).

7 To date Peires has not opined at length on *The Heart of Redness*, nor on other literary treatments of the Cattle Killing. His comments have been limited to, “These works of creative fiction inhabit a different order of reality to mine, and I do not think it at all appropriate to comment on their contents. I am sincerely honoured by the notice which Zakes Mda has taken of *The Dead Will Arise*, but for me to engage with *The Heart of Redness* [. . .] would be fair neither to Zakes or myself” (“Second Thoughts”). The paper in which these comments appeared later became the Afterword to the 2003 edition published by Jonathan Ball.

8 Mda and Peires were both associated with an SABC television series, “Saints, Sinners, and Settlers,” which placed historical figures on trial in contemporary South Africa to determine responsibility for key developments in the nation’s history. SABC commissioned Mda to write the script for the Nongqawuse episode (Williams 73), and credited Peires as an “historical consultant,” although his participation in the production was negligible. Mda’s script inventively examines the role that Nongqawuse played in the Xhosa Cattle Killing, based on standards of culpability in postapartheid South Africa. Mda touches upon this in an interview, and then responds to a question about how he came to write *The Heart of Redness*. He neither mentions Jeff Peires nor *The Dead Will Arise* but says he “researched the history because this now was going to be a history novel--although a different kind of history novel--I look at the history, but I also look at the present, the postapartheid South Africa, to see the effects of that history on the present people. [. . .] It was very important to me to be accurate when it came to the historical aspects of the narrative. It was also important to me to interview the present generation to discover what the attitude is about that past and also to get the folklore that surrounds those characters. In other words, to get written history as it exists in books and in the archives, but also history as it exists in the imagination of the
people, the oral history, which has a lot of magic because though it has some elements of the written history, a lot of it is legend. Then you put the two of them together, and you have a wonderful novel” (Williams 74).

For certain, current issues of intertextuality and plagiarism have arrested the publishing industry around the world. In the United States, the Harvard Crimson uncovered Kaavya Viswanathan’s novel, *How Opel Mehta Got Kissed, Got Wild, and Got a Life*, as a conglomeration of paraphrased snippets from other novels. In England, Dan Brown defeated claims that his *The Da Vinci Code* infringed another book’s copyright. And in South Africa, academics/poets Stephen Watson and Antjie Krog engaged in a bitter debate about Krog’s latest translation of /Xam narratives in her book, *the stars say “tsau”*. With ever-developing technologies and tools, such as Google’s Book Search project, the number of accusations of unfair voicing and outright plagiarism will only increase.