

“Epistemology of the Closet”: Narrative Seduction and the Power in the Belly in Kaizer Nyatumba’s “In Happiness and in Sorrow”

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Summary

In this article, the author explores how Kaizer Nyatumba’s short story, “In Happiness and in Sorrow”, deals with what Sedwick (2013) calls “the epistemology of the closet” by using interpellative strategies to dramatise narration as a seductive act (Chambers 1984). Starting from the premise that the power in the belly in Nyatumba’s story lies precisely in the fact that the narrative is told from the perspective of the abandoned wife, the author employs Ross Chambers’ “renewed narratology” of studying “narrative situations in stories” to determine how Nyatumba’s narrative makes its “point” by using seductive narrative manoeuvres to win the ideological assent of its readers. For this reason, the bulk of the argument in this article has, as its central thrust, a discussion of the modalities of narrative seduction in Nyatumba’s narrative that can hold any reader’s attention spellbound, regardless of how a reader responds to the issues it raises.

Opsomming

In hierdie artikel ondersoek die outeur hoe Kaizer Nyatumba se kortverhaal, “In Happiness and in Sorrow”, omgaan met dit wat Sedwick (2013) “die epistemologie van die binnekamer” noem, deur interpellatiewe strategieë aan te wend om verhaalkuns as ’n verleidelike kuns te dramatiseer. Die outeur gaan van die veronderstelling uit dat die mag in die buik, in Nyatumba se verhaal, juis opgesluit lê in die feit dat die verhaal vertel word vanuit die perspektief van die vrou wat verlaat is. Ross Chambers se “hernude narratologie” van die bestudering van “narratiewe situasies in stories” word aangewend om te bepaal hoe Nyatumba se verhaal sy “punt” maak, deur verleidelike narratiewe tegnieke te gebruik om die ideologiese aanvaarding van sy lesers te wen. Om hierdie rede is die kern van die argument in hierdie artikel grootliks ’n bespreking van die modaliteite van narratiewe verleiding in Nyatumba se vertelling wat enige leser se aandag kan vasvang, ongeag hoe ’n leser reageer op die kwessies wat dit aanroer.

In an essay entitled “Some Thoughts on Black Male Homosexualities in South African Writing”, Sikhumbuzo Mngadi tackles “the question of same-sex desire” in Zakes Mda’s *The Hill* and Kaizer Nyatumba’s short story “In Happiness and In Sorrow” (2005) by interrogating the shift that he finds in these works, in the framing of homosexuality from a largely political to a sexual discourse (2005: 155). In a persuasive argument, he demonstrates the paradox of how Nyatumba’s “story foregrounds the issue of homosexuality at the very moment that it obscures it” (2005: 162).

Since my interest lies specifically in Nyatumba’s story rather than in Mda’s play, I want to begin this article by summing up some of the salient points that Mngadi brings to the fore in his reading of “In Happiness and In Sorrow” (Nyatumba 1995)¹ and then go on to address what will be the central thrust of my reading, i.e. how Nyatumba’s story dramatises narration as a seductive act, to use a phrase from Ross Chambers, through its interpellative strategies, in its treatment of what Sedgwick has aptly called the “epistemology of the closet” (Lane 2013: 601).

Nyatumba’s story is a first person narrative told from the perspective (point of view) of Felicia, a teacher, who provides her readers with what some might say is “a blow by blow” account of how her marriage relationship to Fetsi, a bus driver, gradually deteriorates because of her husband’s bisexuality – a condition which she has, prior to this, glossed over, despite some suggestive hints based on his “friendship” with Jabulani (who later turns out to be Fetsi’s gay lover). As Mngadi points out, what is more stressful for Felicia is how she would explain to all and sundry that her husband has left her for another man, a man she has considered a family friend even before the marriage! Mngadi shows how Felicia invites the reader to share her pain and “denounce together with her, her husband’s ‘ungratefulness’ and the ‘unnaturalness’ of his sexual preference ...” (2005: 161). The bulk of his argument is devoted to how Felicia uncritically accepts as “natural” the masculine/feminine relations and considers anything to the contrary as abnormal.

Mngadi views “In Happiness and In Sorrow” as a “welcome” contribution to “the subject of male same sex desire”, however, he bemoans as “belated” Nyatumba’s supposed “broaching” of the issue of black homosexuality in South African fiction. Pointing out that as long as educated people like Felicia ‘live with the contradiction of demanding equality at the workplace and accept unquestioningly the role of “old-fashioned African woman” at their house[s], and if the level of discussion on the subject of sexuality is held hostage by this contradiction, then it has not begun, at least not in earnest” (2005: 166). In conclusion, Mngadi speculatively proffers:

1. The short story, “In Happiness and in Sorrow”, first appeared in *Staffrider* 10(4), 1992. However, for the purposes of this article, the page references will be from Nyatumba’s 2005 short story anthology, *In Love with a Stranger and other Stories*.

It would be interesting, for instance, to track the aftermath of [Felicia's] husband's departure, not from the point of view of Felicia's devastation but, more importantly, from that of the “gay scene” that Fetsi and Jabulani enter. It is in this scene/space that I think a more useful discussion can take place; otherwise, the subject will remain mired in generous gestures that conceal, rather than make available, the complex modalities of meaning that the story's founding event avail. In the story, it is clear that the homosexual relationship between Fetsi and Jabulani predates Fetsi's marriage to Felicia, and it seems to me that the exclusive emphasis that is placed on Felicia's devastation results in the impoverishment of discussion on homosexuality as a myth among others. In the end it is afforded the aura of the last word.

(2005: 166)

It should be clear by now that Mngadi's interrogation of the story is meant to be a reading against the grain, a reading that seeks to “liberate the text” from its foregrounding of how it is supposed to be read, so to say. Nonetheless, I have quoted Mngadi's conclusion at length here because, while I agree that it would be interesting to look at the unfolding of the events and the aftermath of the husband's departure from the point of view of the “gay scene” Fetsi and Jabulani enter, I am of the opinion that the power in the belly in Nyatsumba's story lies precisely in the fact that the narrative tells us of the unfolding of the events from the perspective of the abandoned wife.

The basic premise of the story is: how does a wife who suddenly finds out, after her husband has left her, that he was bisexual (or homosexual?) all along, react to this shock. For this reason, it was perhaps somewhat imperative for Nyatsumba that the narrative be filtered through Felicia's consciousness. It is the modalities of how Felicia attempts to win the ideological assent of her readers that is of particular interest to me, though, and, for this reason, Ross Chamber's study of narrative situation in stories, basically on how stories make their “point”, is crucial to my reading of this short story.

In a nutshell, Ross Chamber's argument in his study, *Story and Situation* (1984), seeks to provide a “renewed narratology” concerned with how stories make their “point”, that is, to what he calls “the performative function of storytelling” (4) rather than “discourse of structure and discourse of narration” that formed the central thrust of his narratology predecessors' arguments such as, Todorov, Greimas, Booth and Seymour Chatman. Central to Chambers is how texts identify situations in which they wish to be read. In his analysis of nineteenth century short stories he finds that the modality of their operation in creating these situations is “the metaphor of seduction” (1984: 10). It is this “metaphor of seduction” that I wish to explore with regard to Nyatsumba's short story, precisely because it is the most obvious situation in which this text invites to be read.

I want to begin by arguing that Nyatsumba's short story is a seductive text through and through. In Chambers' terms, it is the type of a narrative that attempts “an oblique way of raising awkward, not to say, unanswerable

questions” and for this reason it becomes “necessary for it to trade in the manipulation of desire” (11). The question, however, is what the modalities of its seduction are. First and foremost, the story offers a dramatic introduction that is bound to arouse interest:

It all seemed like a nasty dream at first, and I kept thinking I would wake up to find it was not real. How could I believe that it had all come to that, and that one swift and apparently ill-thought move would send my world crashing down like an egg on the floor? How could I believe that the world to which I had woken up was radically different from the one I had left behind when I went to bed the night before?

(Nyatumba 1995: 34)

In this way the narrative claims its “narratorial authority” (Chambers 1984: 11) by arousing the interest of the reader, thereby, whetting his/her appetite to find out more about the unreality of the situation that is underscored above. The phrases “nasty dream”, “not real”, “utterly incredible”, “pinched myself to make sure I wasn’t dreaming” all prepare us for a shocking revelation which is, subsequently, encapsulated in Fetsi’s “gay disclosure” note which has “brought” the narrator “misery”: “I have finally come to the painful conclusion that I must leave you and the children so that Jabulani and I can see each other openly. Just as I once loved you, so do I love him (34).” At this stage, the identity of the narrator is not yet revealed and one would be forgiven for speculating that it is a husband who has been abandoned by a wife who wants to pursue another relationship. It only turns out later that it is the wife, Felicia, who is being abandoned by Fetsi, who has “come out of the closet” to pursue a gay relationship with Jabulani; herein lies the twist of Nyatumba’s tale. It is precisely this that hurts Felicia and prompts her to invoke the readers’ sympathies and invite them to commiserate with her: the fact that she has been abandoned for another man. As Mngadi points out: “The effect is that the loss of her husband and father of her children *to a man* ought not to make sense to the reader in much the same way that it does not make sense to her ... (2005: 158).” Perhaps it is more accurate to say that, rather than invoking the sympathy of the readers, the narrator is, at the very least, hoping for their empathy.

It is at this stage that the narrator begins to adopt what should clearly be seen as an active seductive manoeuvre to win the ideological assent of the readers. Firstly, the narrator seeks to impress upon her readers the status of her credibility by hammering home the veracity of the narrative that is about to unfold: “If you hear a story from me, then you should know it’s true and that it has been told to you in the most accurate manner possible (Nyatumba 1995: 34).” This is followed by a narrative interspersed with a mode of seduction that is underpinned by what Iffland (1987: 20), albeit in a different context, calls “a conscious interpellative strategy of the narrative” in Althusseran terms, as embodied in words and phrases such as “you” and “dear reader”

which are clearly indicative of its “direct hailing” of the reader. Goran Therborn, (as quoted in Iffland 1987: 20), describes this notion of “an elaborately written text speaking directly to a solitary reader” as “the rarest form of interpellation”. But addressing readers in this way is not necessarily the best or the only way of recruiting them to your cause and Nyatumba’s narrator is well aware of this. So what Felicia does, and does effectively, is to use her narrative authority to sensationalise the unfolding of the drama in which she portrays herself as not just “one of the participants” (34), but most significantly, as the victim of circumstances.

What then are the modalities of narrator’s interpellation of her readers in Nyatumba’s story? Firstly, Nyatumba’s story is an example of a text that “interpellates the reader, [and] addresses itself to him or her directly, offering the reader a position from which the text is most obviously intelligible ...” (Belsey 1980: 57). Felicia constructs a narrative of herself as a sexually frustrated wife whose husband has not fulfilled his conjugal responsibilities for months prior to the tragic news of their separation: “... Fetsi had not made love to me for many months. I had even forgotten how it felt to be touched and loved. He had given himself to liquor and spent every minute of his time with his friend, Jabulani” (Nyatumba 1995: 35). Later, we are told: “I must confess to you dear reader, that nothing in our marriage hurt me more than Fetsi’s refusal to make love to me. It blasted my pride as a woman to smithereens (35).” It should come as no surprise therefore (or at least, that is what is expected from us as readers) that, in her sexual frustration, she fantasizes about other men, including the principal of the school where she teaches, whose persistent sexual advances she almost succumbs to at one point. No, Fetsi was really a hard nut to crack (!), if you will, is the response the narrative hopes to elicit from the reader: “I tried all the tricks I knew of. I would send children to bed early, dress provocatively, spruce myself up and even try to seduce him – all to no avail. He showed absolutely no interest in me as a woman.” This way, Mngadi surmises, Felicia invites us “literally and metaphorically to be her (ideological) bedfellows” (2005: 158). When this shunning of Felicia’s desperate sexual advances to Fetsi is discerned in juxtaposition with the image of “a good wife ... [whose] world revolved around Fetsi and [her] children”, one who, despite her education and her higher salary is content to share her life with a mere Putco bus driver, a wife who unquestioningly embraces her consigned role as “an old-fashioned African woman” (Nyatumba 1995: 41) and who, furthermore, “accepts unreservedly that a man must be the head of the family” (in spite of her belief in women’s liberation at the workplace), it becomes difficult, or so Felicia assumes, that her devotion to her husband is, at this stage, not being reciprocated. There is no point in labouring this contradiction between Felicia’s stance in her workplace and her home, Mngadi has done this well. It suffices to point out that Felicia’s narrative here banks on heterosexual male readers’ ideological assent framed thus: “Wow! What more could a man want,

given the generosity of this model wife!” It is through this feeling of envy that we are meant to “recognize” our “otherness” as “seducees” of Felicia’s narrative. To put it bluntly, Felicia’s detailed description of her desperate and unreciprocated attempt to seduce Fetsi makes us as readers “witnesses” in the act of Fetsi’s seduction as well as its “objects” (Chambers 1984: 25). For, “Seduction as a narrative tactic takes the form of recruiting the desires of the other in the interest of maintaining narrative authority,” as Chambers succinctly proffers (1984: 215).

For Felicia, what compounds the problem of Fetsi’s lack of response to her sexual advances even more is the fact that he has, hitherto, demonstrated homosexual inclinations, albeit subtly. At the heart of the revelation of Fetsi’s, until then, clandestine activities of his sexual orientation is the march organized by “the Gay’s and Lesbians’ Organisation of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg” (Nyatumba 1995: 42), which, “it soon becomes obvious to [Felicia] that they [Fetsi and Jabulani] had been part of”, that leads to an ensuing argument on the question of homosexuality. For, it is precisely at this stage that the battle lines are drawn between Felicia, on the one hand and Fetsi and Jabulani, on the other hand, with Fetsi (presumably, with Jabulani’s tacit approval) initially prevaricating before defensively confessing that he and Jabulani participated on the sidelines by adopting a solidarity stance with the gay and lesbian marchers by way of “shouting one or two slogans with them”; emphasising that it was a matter of acknowledging the democratic rights of people to express their opinion about the issue irrespective of their sexual orientation or preference rather anything else that informed their participation. Of course, there is nothing untoward about Felicia’s initial reaction to this revelation, that is, her pondering or ruminating via an interior monologue about, to borrow a phrase from Sedgwick, her husband’s possible affinity towards “the love that is famous for daring not to speak its name” (Lane 2013: 603):

I was flabbergasted. *My* husband had participated in a march by homosexuals! What the hell was happening? Was he, perhaps, also homosexual? The thought sounded so crazy. But when I thought of the day I found him caressing Jabulani in the car the thought sounded less and less crazy. Although Fetsi later told me he was merely comforting Jabulani who had had a fight with his girlfriend, the incident never completely faded from my mind. Often I found myself thinking about it and asking myself many questions, especially since Fetsi stopped making love to me. Could it be ...? I couldn’t bear to think of it.

(Nyatumba 1995: 42)

Felicia continues to ponder:

I must confess to you, dear reader, that nothing in our marriage hurt me more than Fetsi’s refusal to make love to me. It blasted my pride as a woman to

smithereens. Could it be that he no longer found me desirable? I asked myself. Was he, perhaps, seeing somebody else?

(42)

Nor is there, necessarily, anything wrong with Felicia’s introspection subsequent to her surprise encounter of Jabulani and Fetsi in an uncompromising position in a car. The significance of this revelation is rather that, in retrospect, it conjures up an image in Felicia’s mind that the signs of Fetsi’s sexual preference were already there, but she just failed to read them or perhaps that, even then, for Felicia, Fetsi’s homosexuality was already “an open secret” that she just subconsciously chose to suppress because the knowledge would render a possibility that was, for her, too ghastly to contemplate. In any case, this is the time, if you like, when the seeds of Felicia’s sense of anxiety about Fetsi’s “variance” are planted, but the suspicions are only reinforced later, as can be inferred from the quote above.

However, there is nothing more significant here than Felicia’s response to Fetsi’s defence of gay rights. Arguing that “these people [homosexuals] are an aberration to society”, she accuses them of “confusing our children, changing things from the way God wanted them to be” (Nyatumba 1995: 44). She further goes on to argue that gay people “want men to sleep with men and women to sleep with women”, a practice that she finds not only abnormal and “unchristian” but also “indefensible” (44). Felicia’s stance here is quite crucial, especially when seen against James Iffland’s definition of the complexity of the process of interpellation:

... the real success that a work of art achieves in “hailing” or “addressing” the reader, in having the reader “recognize” him/herself in it (with all the ramifications), depends largely on the power, if you will, of its ideologemes. ... [The] real “hook” by which the reader will be drawn in is an ideologeme (or a series of them) which responds to the reader’s inner (though socially overdetermined) world of fantasies, fears, aspirations, prejudices, preconceptions, beliefs, desires, etc. Obviously the level of interpellation will be augmented substantially if the reader is able to identify with one or more of the characters in intimate fashion (“That’s me”), but surely this identification effect is predicated on the character’s being wrapped up within the problematic of a forceful ideologeme.

(Iffland 1987: 22) (Emphasis added)

Arguably, in the context of Nyatumba’s story, the reader’s intimate identification with the character would not necessarily be in the form of “That’s me” but it is more likely to be “I would feel the same way if I were in her position.” This is to say, in Felicia’s case, it is ideologemes conveyed in “abstract conceptual beliefs or values” (Jameson 1981; 87) of the supposed prejudices of Christianity against “same sex desire” that underpin the narrative’s “hailing” or interpellation of the readers. Simply stated, any reader who considers himself Christian is expected to embrace Felicia’s

condemnation of homosexuality as not only unorthodox but also taboo. This will, of course be more effective if, as Felicia hopes, the “power of words”, as embodied in the seductive charm of her narrative, succeeds in making the reader put himself or herself in her shoes in order to adopt a presumably more holistic analysis of Felicia’s sound predicament.

Incidentally, while talking about “the power of words”, it is as if, as both Nyatumba’s interlocutor and focaliser, Felicia, has in mind the author’s poem, “Words”,² which reads in parts:

on their own
they look like
lost sheep
on a precipice:
meaningless
unimportant and vulnerable

but shepherd them
cull them carefully
adorn and string them
together
and they will sing
... for words well chosen
are more precious
than diamonds

Notwithstanding the power of Felicia’s words, the reader, of course, has a choice to read the text against the grain or liberate the text, that is, to refuse to read it in the way it invites itself to be read, as Mngadi’s essay amply demonstrates.

Yet, it would be a mistake to overemphasise the direct hailing of the readers as the only strategy used by Felicia to win the ideological assent of her narratees, for the way Nyatumba accords Felicia not only with the power of the control of the narrative but also bestows on her the consummate skill of the power of persuasion cannot be underestimated. Nothing provides evidence of this as the resonance of Felicia’s utterance in describing her frustration with the lack of intimacy in the relationship. Relating the fact that her husband had not made love to her “for many months” she avers:

I had even forgotten how it felt to be touched and loved Oh, how it hurt!
How it rent my heart into pieces and ached worse than a scorpion’s sting. I
would lock myself in the bedroom and masturbate. I would lie awake in bed

2. Interestingly, both the poem, “Words”, and the story, “In Happiness and in Sorrow”, were firstly published simultaneously in the same issue of *Staffrider*; whether this was coincidental or by design, of course, remains a moot point.

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next to my husband and imagine other men possessing me. And on those nights when I was bold enough to tell Fetsi what I wanted, he would simply brush me off and go to sleep.

(Nyatumba 1995: 35)

In terms of the logic of the narrative, it should not come as a surprise, therefore, that at one point Felicia almost relents to her principal's sexual advance, who has, in return, promised to recommend her for appointment as Head of Department (Nyatumba 1995: 43). So, when Fetsi informs her that he has decided to pursue a relationship with Jabulani openly, her world is completely shattered. To make this understandable to the reader, Felicia provides, in almost catalogue form, a number of compromises that she has had to make, to make the relationship work, thereby, reinforcing in the reader's mind what she perceives as Fetsi's ingratitude. These include, *inter alia*, the fact that although she is more educated than her husband and, by extension, her salary is higher than his, that has never been an issue for her and that in marrying him she had to defy her family; and the fact that, at least at home, she is a traditional African wife who does not question her consignment to household chores at home are all cited as reasons for the unjustness of his betrayal of her.

The point that should be made, therefore, is that while Felicia's radical anti-homosexual stance is contestable, Fetsi's deception of Felicia about his sexual preference/orientation cannot, and should not, be downplayed. As a matter of fact, this deception brings to mind and gives more credence to one of Proust's famous quotes in his narrative, *The Captive*:

The lie, the perfect lie, about people we know, about the relations we have had with them, about our motive for some action, formulated in totally different terms, the lie as to what we are, whom we love, what we feel with regard to people who love us ... – that lie is one of the few things in the world that can open windows for us on to what is new and unknown, that can awaken in us sleeping senses for the contemplation of universes that otherwise we should never have known.

(Cited by Sedgwick in Lane 2013: 603)

My suggestion therefore is that, as much as Nyatumba's story is about the “gay uncovering” of Fetsi by Felicia, it also has a great deal to do with “the perfect lie” that Fetsi has concealed from Felicia for the duration of their relationship. This is, in my view, what seems to be an oversight in Mngadi's reading of the story, whose interest, of course, lies elsewhere, as has been pointed out.

Interestingly, Felicia's stance brings to mind what Goran Therborn has referred to as “three fundamental modes of ideological interpellation”:

each of which is involved in the process of “subjecting and qualifying individuals by “telling them, relating to, and making them recognize”: 1) what

exists (and its counterpart, what does not exist); 2) what is good (and hence, what is bad); and, 3) what is possible and impossible.

(Cited in Iffland 1987: 28)

It is within the second mode of ideological interpellation that Felicia's narrative is premised, especially because her main objective in the narrative is to underscore her moral high ground and (in her view) the unjustifiability of Fetsi's action of walking out on her. In this regard, I have already pointed out some of the things that Felicia lists as her attributes of being "a good wife" and how these are pitted against Fetsi's allegedly "bad" decision which we are supposed to condemn. The point, however, is that while we, as readers, can see through the pitfalls of Felicia's ideologically determined anti-homosexual stance, we should, in the same vein, also condemn Fetsi's rather belatedly revealed double standards with the contempt they deserve – it would be grossly unfair to exonerate Fetsi of his culpability in this family tragedy, especially because there are children involved, who will now be without a father because of his recent embrace of his sexual preference. In a word, the problem I have with Mngadi's otherwise impeccable analysis is that in its emphasis on the irony of Felicia's bias it, albeit unwittingly, seems to absolve Fetsi from sharing some of the blame. We may not agree with the simplistic approach that Felicia adopts, nevertheless, we cannot deny our empathy for her and her children for their betrayal by their father.

I hope to have shown that, despite the assumption that the narrator makes about her implied readers, the story invites a number of other possible readings which might not necessarily be to the narrator's advantage. However, what the narrative does effectively is to demonstrate the power of direct interpellation as a way of manipulating its readers. In fact, Nyatumba's story can be taught to good effect comparatively with any of Njabulo Ndebele's stories which, arguably, rely on a subtler form of interpellation in order to consciously challenge the imagination of its readers. Putting that aside, this story, somewhat obliquely, raises the eternally unresolvable issue of whether homosexuality is inherent and, as such, inevitable or a matter of personal preference. For example, the contrast made in the narrative between Fetsi's "big arms", obviously emphasising his masculinity and Felicia's impression of Jabulani as an "effeminate and somewhat odd man" who "sometimes wore ear-rings like women do" and "... often bent his hands at the wrists as if he was handicapped" and also remarkable for his "girlish, seductive laugh" (Nyatumba 1995: 38) would seem to be a deliberate ploy on Felicia's part to indicate that while the writing was on the wall about Jabulani's sexuality (based on his mannerisms, demeanour and gestures) she had no inkling that her husband may have been involved with Jabulani as early as when their relationship started. The result would be that, while Felicia would be shocked by this revelation on her husband's sexuality in spite of his ostensible masculine prowess, in Jabulani's case, it would merely be a formal reaffirmation of his suspiciously effeminate behaviour.

In conclusion, one of the most striking features of Nyatumba’s story, “In Happiness and In Sorrow”, is that, in spite of its employment of a direct mode of interpellation to win the readers’ ideological assent, it still retains its thought-provoking attribute through its effective retention of narrative authority which holds the reader(s) spellbound, regardless of how one responds to the issues it raises. That Nyatumba should have written such a story at this point should, in hindsight, not come as a surprise, especially when one considers that this short story was first published at the same time as Nyatumba’s essay, “Writing Prose During Transition” (1992) in which he proffered, following Ndebele’s critical essays on South African writing and Albie Sachs’s seminal, albeit controversial, discussion paper “Preparing ourselves for freedom” (Sachs 1990: 19):

I think that instead of doing what we have done for years, we now need to reach a certain level of creative maturity as writers, and remember that despite our oppression, we can still love and laugh. *I think we should begin to explore all those emotions we have in the past been too ashamed of writing about lest we were dismissed as sentimental romantics who sang about roses and daffodils while others waged a revolution.* (emphasis added)

I think we need to take a closer look at ourselves as a people, and write the many potential interesting stories that are there, waiting to be written.

As can be inferred from my comments above, it would appear that the writing of “In Happiness and in Sorrow” was informed by such sentiments.

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