The Inward and Outward Trajectories of the Shaman's Journeys: Mediation in Ben Okri's *Dangerous Love* and Zakes Mda's *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe*

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Summary

This article teases out a dialogue between Zakes Mda's *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe* (2013) and Ben Okri's *Dangerous love* (1988), fictions that foreground art and delineate it as a shamanic ritual site. Having provided synopses of ritual in these two novels, the discussion then goes on to remark on the concern with this key subject in these novels' respective scholarships. Thereafter, the examination moves on to suggest that these overlapping highlight the tendency in African literatures to turn to spirituality and to the figure of the shaman during challenging political transitions. The proposal is that the shaman reconfigures memory into secular mediations of other subjects' trauma, making these intercessions operate in mutually inclusive private and public complexities. The rest of the article considers the depictions of two such intricacies: the artist's struggle to establish a narrative of mourning in *Dangerous love*, and the socially oriented dance and sculpture in *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe*.

Opsomming

Hierdie artikel ondersoek 'n samespraak tussen *The Sculptures of Mapungubwe* deur Zakes Mda (2013) en *Dangerous Love* deur Ben Okri, fiksies waarin kuns op die voorgrond gestel word en uitgebeeld word as die terrein van sjamaanse rituele. Ná 'n sinopsis van ritueel in die twee romans word die aandag gevestig op studies van die onderskeie romans se bemoeienis met dié sleutelonderwerp. Die artikel voer aan dat die oorvleueling lig werp op 'n neiging in Afrika-literature om toevlug te neem tot spiritualiteit en die sjamaanfiguur in tye van moeilike politieke oorgang. Die artikel voer aan dat die sjamaan herinneringe hersaamstel tot sekulêre bemiddelings van ander persone se trauma en sodoende bewerkstellig dat hierdie bemiddelings in onderling inklusiewe private en openbare kompleksiteite werk. Die res van die artikel ondersoek die uitbeelding van twee sulke verwikkeldhede: die kunstenaar se stryd om 'n treurnarratief in *Dangerous Love* te vestig; en die sosiaal georiënteerde dans en beeldhoukuns in *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe*.

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"No Good"
Priests tried to teach them
But they kept on believing
Dancing is praying.
(Hesse, M. 1997: 36)

In his latest novel, *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe* (2013), Zakes Mda centres a narrative that persuasively dramatizes his thesis on art: the main character, the illegitimate son Chatambudza, taps on his dream experiences (30, 128) in order to produce art. The novel's watershed point is articulated when Chata's sculpture, remarkably titled by the oral storyteller as the "Rain Dancer" (133), spontaneously stimulates comparable and impassioned trance-like experiences on other people (123). Also in this turning point is Chata's famous and trance-induced dance performance (109-111) which makes Marubini, one of the villagers with whom he leaves the village when the novel concludes, dance till "real drizzle from the sky" falls (111). Rainmaking is a feat that the storyline implicitly attributes to the fact that Marubini, the actor, "repeating some of Chata's enthused dance moves" (111, cf. 109-110), "danced for a long time", simulating various animal postures (111).

It is remarkable that the concept of art that *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe* delineates in terms of stimulating passion in the audiences appears to dialogue with Ben Okri's representation of art in his novel, *Dangerous love*, published more than two decades ago in 1988. Signposting a shift beyond the first generation of African writing (Ogude, James interviewing Okri, Pretoria University 2014), *Dangerous Love* indirectly considers how to engineer closure and recompense from a fleeting but profound moment of reflection on the trauma of trans-Atlantic slavery and on the 1960s brutal repression of the Igbo peoples. This challenge is foregrounded, ironically, in the failure of Omovo, the main character, to recall with considerable clarity the young girl (109) and an Igbo man (98) lying dead during the Nigerian civil (Biafran) war. As shown later on in this discussion, Omovo's general inability to capture his nightmare through art is revealing. This is because Okri implicitly attributes Omovo's presumed failure to enter into a trance experience to the same site that the article argues to be intrinsic to mediation. The discussion shows that the let-down draws attention to Omovo's spiritual interconnection with the victims of the Biafran war. The examination also proposes that, as suggested in Omovo's applauding of the hero of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Weep not, Child* for being the "young … visionary" liberated from the trappings of "social roles" (83), Okri sees heroism in terms of humility or modesty. Therefore, in contrast to Mda's *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe*, the consolidation of a suitable narrative of commemoration in Okri's *Dangerous Love* is made unique, ironically, by the very fact of fiasco and continual endeavours.

The synopses of ritual in Mda's and Okri's novels outlined in the previous paragraphs highlight the theme of spirituality, and take us into those corresponding debates that consider whether or not Mda and Okri, respectively, experiment with "magic realism". These deliberations reveal the cautiousness with which critics have approached this keyword, have attempted to disaggregate it and have delineated it in terms of the concept of the quotidian. For instance, David Bell and J.U. Jacobs (2009: 1) comment that "Mda's works are … distinguished by their striking originality, by an experimental quality that is as varied as it is extraordinary". Barker (2008: 12) defines the "extraordinary" in terms of how disparate historical and ontological contexts are made to "converse" with one another. This is a delineation that is often made of "magic realism". However, as a term, "magic realism" has acquired around itself a sense of "tyranny" (Barker 2008: 3). By contrast, Rita Barnard (2004: 283), who focuses on Mda's *Ways of Dying*, sees the concept of "magic realism" as a "transgeneric worldview" in which "textuality appears as lived reality", reminiscent of "productive ambiguity". Barnard (2004: 282) uses three lenses in order to designate this mode of writing "a *prosaics"* ("as a counterpart to *poetics*"). The first, which Barnard (2004: 282) associates with Njabulo Ndebele's notion of the "ordinary", is ostensibly a nuanced engagement with everyday life. Barnard (2004: 291) speaks about the second as "ideology" in its "shared and lived grossness", and the third as "carnival" (Barnard 2004: 288). For Dirk Klopper' (2011: 92), however, everyday life in Mda's *The Heart of Redness* is about the "challenge" "posed … to binary thinking and [how] the novel's preoccupation with an ecological awareness converge[s] in the notion of the prophetic as involving the relationship between nature and culture".

By contrast, the quotidian in Okri's *The Landscapes Within* has been read in terms of myth making. According to Rosemary Gray (2013: 22; cf. Gray 200), the "creative process" in this novel is geared "towards the moment" when, in an epiphanic moment or *axis mundi*, "the landscapes without synchronise with the landscapes within". Evidently aware of Okri's rejection of "magic realism", Gray (2013: 22) seems to read this text in terms of shamanism, as this novel's principal character's quest to recall and to deal with "a night[marish] encounter with the mutilated body of a young girl" introduces a sense of ritual. For, Gray continues, the quest to synchronise the landscape within with the exterior one offers "an imaginary resolution to socio-political and personal conflicts". Gray (2013: 23) continues that, as also highlighted by Omovo, this coordination is "about becoming a life artist". It is hence that Gray comments that the novel recalls Milan Kundera's proposition that the artist "is fascinated not by his voice but by the form he is seeking" and by "inscribi[ng] himself on the spiritual map of his time, of his country, on the map of the history of ideas" (2013: 25).

Dance and sculpture in Mda's and Okri's fictions signal synchronisation. For, on attempting harmony, Chata and Omovo correspondingly resemble the shaman who undertakes trips to "spatially differentiated alternative worlds" or "multileveled cosmos" (DuBois's 2009: 47), "pursuing, confronting, cajoling, and confounding spirit entities on behalf of his … community" (DuBois 2009: 3). As Mircea Eliade (in DuBois 2009: 109) asserts, the crux of this trip is, first, "ecstasy" or "trance"; second, "a set of techniques used to induce" a "trance"; and, finally, "a culturally … shaped set of understandings of the cosmic events occurring during" a "trance". This article sees the "trance" experience in terms of "vision", particularly as read within "the traditions" "*mundus imaginalis*" – the communally shaped understandings of the supernatural world and its communicative predilections' (DuBois 2009: 121). It is no wonder that these insights hence form the gist of the training of a neophyte into a shaman. For, the purpose is to make "the community" ratify its sense of religious self in the shaman's vision and "to remember" the sacral world by reenacting it in specific [and comparative] rituals" (DuBois 2009: 121). It is in this task that the shaman helps the people to nuance that which they already believe in (122), to have the specifics highlighted "for further elaboration" (123), and for deployments in the redressing of various afflicted people's predicaments (123).

Emphasis shifts slightly when we read *Dangerous Love* through this curriculum outline of how to train to be a shaman. This is because the profound visions of Omovo and the chief who meditate on Biafra and trans-Atlantic slavery in *Dangerous Love* do not seem to be distributed – let alone noticed – possibly by virtue of the trances not being made public. It is as if Omovo and the Chief are non-enrolled neophytes whose respective mourning enterprises have not yet been heard and synchronised with the vast corpus of people's mythologies. The assumption would seem to be that the open valorisation of social values – especially in trance-induced performances that are loaded with socially recognised values – heals social rifts. However, as demonstrated below, mediating these dilemmas alone and in private – as Omovo and the Chief respectively do – signals magnanimity and ritual; it is one which makes the shamanic figure suffer in silence the difficulties of establishing a narrative of mourning his people without them being aware of this or expecting their acknowledgment.

Here, the reader is reminded of the Horseman, the tragic hero of Wole Soyinka's play, *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975), whose failure to "will himself to death" upon the passing away of his master, the king, foregrounds the Horseman's human frailty and, thus, wins our sympathies. Hence, seemingly expanding on Soyinka's notion of tragic heroism, Okri constructs Omovo into an artist who is gifted with a dogged determination to conceptualise and trace inequity across millennia and to propose open-ended forms of contrition. These forms of repentance, which are too radical to be registered within DuBois's (2009: 121) "*mundus imaginalis*", are shamanic,

by virtue of being products of intellectuals who think profoundly. As we argue below, alternatively, when heard within this socio-philosophical register as in the infectious trance experiences of Chata and Marubini in *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe*, parochial and essentialist values, such as patriarchy, are revolutionised.

This article considers how these novels deploy the ideas of art and dance in order to visualise the postcolonial. In dealing with these visions, the discussion highlights these key concepts as pointers to the shamanic experience or ritual and how it is taken up in comparable ways by different individuals. In short, the purpose is to ascertain how the "responsibility" "to remember" rests with the individual "I" (Nora 1989: 15) "to recapture … through individual means" (16). The obligation is revealed in those episodes where, in *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe*, Chata and Marubini respectively dance themselves and fellow individuals into other spiritual realms, bridging/reconciling them (see *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe*, p. 133, for instance). The task is also read in the lament that *Dangerous Love* centres: this is that, while it is not possible for Omovo and for the Chief to concretise social narratives of complicity in the perpetuation of terror such as in the Nigerian (Biafran) war and trans-Atlantic slavery, the failure on its own suggests, ironically, a spiritual journey that is consistent with ritual. From henceforth, the article closely focuses on the textual details of these imagined trips, first, in *Dangerous Love* and, finally, in *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe*.

Ben Okri's *Dangerous Love*: The Neophyte who Neither Enrols nor Graduates

In *Dangerous Love*, Okri appears to be concerned about his (1989: 126) category of "higher stories that help our souls fly up towards the greater light". This is because *Dangerous Love* enunciates a lament for how Africa became a postcolony following the demise of European colonialism; Omovo, the key male character, suffers post-traumatic stress disorder consequent upon witnessing the mutilated corpse of a girl during the Nigerian civil war, Biafra (46). Later on in the storyline, Omovo becomes the Romeo figure who is brutally assaulted for his illicit romance with a married woman, Ifeyiwa. Ifeyiwa is the young woman forcefully given away in marriage to the elderly drunk, Takpo (14), who subdues her through rape (84). Following the attack, Omovo goes into exile where he suffers depression on realising that Africa has not yet made reparations for failing to prevent trans-Atlantic slavery.

It seems that, as a tormented person who is nevertheless keen on redressing other people's miseries, Omovo resembles an initiate en route to being a shaman. This is why his dilemma manifests itself apparently in several

threads that appear to uncannily intrude into each other from across diverse levels of his awareness. First, the identity of the "girl" whom he thinks he saw faded away into mere "light at the end of the forest", the site which he fails to reach (preamble to Book One and to Book Two, 52). Second, he seems to trace the image of the girl to the catastrophic history of the Nigerian "civil war" (55) where, when he was a boy, "he saw a crowd of wild people" carrying "sticks and cudgels" and "chant[ing]" "songs" that "called for the killing of Igbo people" (55). At times, his efforts to recall the primary origin of his harrowing encounter with the body of the girl end in fiascos. Also, according to Omovo, his endeavour to use art to critique neo-colonial Nigeria tends to merely emphasise its banal and squalid conditions (6, 27) and is inclined to be mediocre (35). Third, it would seem that, later when Omovo is a young adult, the girl's image is taken over in Omovo's mind by the figure of Ifeyiwa. The resemblance is striking, because, in contradistinction to "the girl", Ifeyiwa seems to be killed towards the end of the novel in what again appears to be the Nigerian civil war while escaping back to her people. Fourth, and last, when Omovo is finally seen engaged in a memorialising enterprise, it is after he had shaved his head in honour of his deceased mother (5).

The novel's construction of Omovo into a figure that is reminiscent of a neophyte is indisputable; his father and brothers – close and surviving family members – are depicted not shorn of hair. If anything, Omovo's father – the person who is culturally expected to be the chief mourner – expresses surprise at seeing Omovo bald, and is also shown as being obsessed with consummating his second marriage and impregnating his newly-acquired young wife. By contrast, Omovo's father's other sons are mentioned only as being upset about his cold attitude. Therefore, to rephrase and adapt Mamphele Ramphele (1996: 102) slightly, *Dangerous Love* constructs Omovo into the chief mourner that he can never be, simply because he was, and could never have been his mother's husband. As the only grieving person, Omovo unwittingly occupies the subject position of the widower that his father is culturally expected to inhabit. In other words, Omovo's mourning surpasses the roles of being "both subject and object of mourning", the obligations that Ramphele (1996: 99) says are assigned to the widower. As the (grieving) son, Omovo does not embody the memories of the deceased's intimate life as a surviving husband would normally be considered to be having. Therefore, Omovo resembles a member of the public who has come to commiserate with the surviving spouse, "transform[ing]" "ritual danger" – as in grieving alone and marked as the chief mourner – into "ritual power" (Ramphele 1996: 101) – as in sharing with and mediating the widow's grief and solitude. The irony is that Omovo's father, whom the novel constructs as an embodiment of the neo-colony, will not appreciate – let alone acknowledge Omovo's effort.

This is why, despite appearing to be carrying out the social expectation of a widower, Omovo fails to establish a coherent narrative or artistic style of commiseration in honour of other deceased people, especially the victims of trans-Atlantic slavery and of Biafra. Perhaps the explanation for this seeming deviation from the "normal" course is to be found where the storyteller depicts Omovo seemingly frustrated for failing to reach a trance experience while he tries to conceptualise and to comprehend the "energies ready to burst in him" (*Dangerous Love* 288-289). At times, this sense of apprehension and heightened anxiety manifests itself in nightmares, such as the one wherein Omovo's father kills Tuwo, Omovo's friend, when he is held in *penis captivus* inside Blackie, Omovo's stepmother (260). The bad dream, happening as it does during Omovo's convalescence period after being assaulted by Ifeyiwa's husband's henchmen for cuckolding him, is enlightening. Equally instructive is a series of dreams that plunge Omovo into melancholy and into a desperate sense that he has lost the ability to comprehend. This textured predicament is shown especially when he contemplates the dysfunctional state of his nuclear family during the period leading up to and after his mother's death (274-277), and when he ostensibly prophesies the "hawkers of boiled eggs" or "crowds of the apocalypse" tearing "down the houses on the exclusive lawns", the "whistling pine trees, the hedges" and "all images of power … petrol stations, government vehicles" (276). Therefore, his angst constructs him into a shaman, in the manner in which, as already stated earlier in this article's section on theory, he embarks on a journey to "spatially differentiated alternative worlds" or "multileveled cosmos" (DuBois's 2009: 47), "pursuing, confronting, cajoling, and confounding spirit entities on behalf of his … community" (DuBois 2009: 3). The quintessence of this new person is also transitory and momentary, making him or her discover new possibilities beyond the frontiers established by his or her people's complacency in their own sense of self/culture.

It is noteworthy that Omovo's people do not appear to see that he is answering to the call reminiscent of that which exhorts a person to be a shaman, let alone recognise this vocation in him. This is because, implicitly addressing the readers of African literatures, Okri makes Omovo a reinvention of Okonkwo, the valiant but tragic anti-colonial fighter in the first-generation African classic, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. In this novel, Ikemefuna is the young boy offered for ritual sacrifice to Okonkwo's people after one of their daughters had been accidentally killed. Subsequent to the performance of the rite, Okonkwo, the leader and father figure who was tasked with raising Ikemefuna, is befallen with misfortunes. Ostensibly, upon losing faith in his people's ability to stand up to European invasion of Africa, Okonkwo hangs himself and dies. As if reversing the story in Achebe's novel, the girl/woman figure in Okri's text haunts Omovo, perhaps in a way that makes him the sacrificial lamb on behalf of the first generation

of black freedom fighters who have had a generally gendered opposition to the European coloniser.

This is why *Dangerous Love* excludes Omovo from the conflict between his brothers, on the one hand, and his father, on the other hand. Instead, the novel makes Omovo a lover and a mourner – one who illicitly (and unofficially) takes care of Ifeyiwa. When we read Omovo against the oracle's pronouncement of Ikemefuna's fate in *Things Fall Apart*, the implication is far-reaching. It is as if Omovo tries to rescue Ifeyiwa, the metaphor of Biafra, from the Oracle that solemnises the postcolony in the form of Federal Nigeria. Therefore, Okri extends the dream beyond Achebe's seeming mulling over the kind of Africa that is rid of "filicide" – a theme that is common in "other postcolonial texts that have achieved canonical status" such as Morrison's *Beloved* (see Neil Ten Kortenaar 2004: 776). In other words, the reader is re-turned to the past that has been re-conceptualised in non-reductive lines, especially those that conjure up masculinity tropes in order to lessen the emasculating consequences of Europe's colonisation of Africa. Therefore, Omovo's grieving for "the girl" and for Ifeyiwa remains socially unacknowledged – but profound for being private, novel and experimental.

A comparable acceptance of guilt and willingness to recompense is taken up in the final part of *Dangerous Love* which signals and concludes its wider black African compass. This defining moment is shown when the Chief of Omovo's refuge that he calls "B" (277) appears disconsolate "standing in front of the house of shame like an unwilling pilgrim" (298). This "house" is an ancient site of slave trade. It is particularly remarkable that, upon beholding this "house", the Chief "stood, head bowed by an invisible, indescribable weight" considering whether "his ancestors had helped sell slaves" (298-299). In contrast to Omovo whose temporary disorientation leads to his "moment" or "illumination" into Africa's deterioration into the postcolony (293), the Chief is attacked by the recognition that he is "a walking inheritor of death and the chains of bad history" (299).

To conclude this section, it is worth repeating several points that this article has been using in order to arrive at its definition of the shaman figure in *Dangerous Love*. A seeming sense of failure characterises Omovo's attempt to make amends for the death of "the girl" and of Ifeyiwa. In this venture, Omovo embarks on a spiritual journey. As also shown in the Chief's anxious contemplation of his ancestors' possible complicity in the history of trans-Atlantic slavery, the essence of this trip is contrition on behalf of other people and mourning. In other words, the Chief and Omovo are engaged in "mourning" the "phenomenon of death … behind which there is nothing" (Derrida, Brault and Naas 2009: 177). In what follows, the article ponders the kind of ritual where the shamanic figure enchants the wider public to engage in commensurate shamanic journeys and interventions.

Zakes Mda's *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe*: The Non-inaugurated Shaman

If, in *Dangerous Love*, the shaman's role is displayed by the unofficial neophyte in those moments where his attempts to compensate for the tragedies that have befallen Africa since it was colonised by Europe are not diffused across the populace, the contrary is the case in Mda's *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe*. In Mda's novel, out of all the artists of Mapungubwe who practise sculpting, Chatambudza the main character is the only one who thinks profoundly, and as a result of whose trade people localise competing secular narratives.

In consonance with the shamanic pioneering of alterities, Chata's "fantastical animals", are creatures of his "dreams" (*The Sculptors of Mapungubwe* 30, cf. 128), and elsewhere attributed to his "trance" experiences (85, cf. 133). Because Chata does not appear to intend "to reproduce life as [his people] knew it" (28), his half-brother, Rendani, says in mockery that, when he and Chata were "growing up", they "all laughed at" him "because [he] could only carve or mould grotesque creatures that existed only in [his] head" (132). What Rendani is unaware of is that, while in a trance, Chata defines sculpting in Mapungubwe beyond the "advancement" of the "the year of the mirror" (3), the period of mercantilism with "traders from Arabia who came from Sofala" in the year 1223 CE (3). Rendani also does not know that this innovation spread to their father, Zwanga, especially his "nightdreams and in his nightmares and in his daydreams and in his daymares" (84).

It seems that, later on in Chata's life and in the text, his charisma inspires people's quest for civil liberties; first, it is when he defies the King's "decree" "that for one full year all gold mined in the kingdom should be for export only" (67, cf. 68, 69, 75) and that no one other than he "and Young father [Baba-Munene, Rendani's father-in-law were] allowed to wear silk in the kingdom" (68). The story's development sees Chata's art earning him Rendani's jealousy (68), and the wrath of the King, for presumably committing "crimes against the people of Mapungubwe" (107) and for not demonstrating allegiance to the king (123). It is a stage in the storyline when Chata's "immortalis[ing] of a Khoikhoi woman" (123), whom people initially think is Marubini (124-126, cf. 134-135) elicits enthused responses from the people, turning them into a "community of gapers" (133). Chata's charm seems to be consistent with his "worldly" mien and cosmopolitanism: he has years of experience as a sailor and an entrepreneur with the KiSwahili of "Mogadishu, Sidoma or … Persia" (16). Unhappy with this carnival, the king issued an injunction, ostensibly to protect the "Royal Sculptor" (16), an institution of aesthetics that Rendani manipulates by appointing Chata to be a "Carver of Carvers". In this new brief, Chata is instructed to produce holy art works for the King and Baba-Munene. This is a tool that the king also

attempts to use in order to conjure up the rain (16). In this new version, the "Royal Sculptor" recalls post-Apartheid, by virtue of being part of the industry of open shaft mines the harvests of which Chata, in particular (85), is instructed (69) to donate to the King and to use to memorialise him.

In a way reminiscent of Omovo's bounteous commiseration with the victims, Chata also enunciates the eco-critical; it is evident in those parts of the storyline where Chata accidentally discovers that the trade in the rhino horn (70, 147) continues unabated and where the land is being over-mined. Chata's discovery interestingly leads him into connecting this desecration of the ecosystem with the enslavement of women. This violation is evident when, for instance, he notices that his half-brother, Rendani, is offered a slave woman from the North, and where bureaucracy attempts to bully artists into a non-critical celebration of national unity, such as in the enterprise of the "Royal Palisade".

These iniquities are addressed in a trance that happens at the apex of a rite in which Chata – the unofficial shaman – enchants Marubini unwittingly into a neophyte. The climax appears to be an extended one, as shown in those episodes where Chata's preoccupation with sculpting the Khoikhoi woman enchants the other community members and extends their subjectivities as séances to "the community of gapers" (134). However, while *Dangerous Love* mobilises a prolonged meditation on the violated woman's body – often through Omovo's defective focalising perspective, *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe* openly exhibits the female body as if in celebration. Seen collectively, the responses to Chata's stimulus suggest carnival; it is where, in vintage Mda tendency, the woman's body is shown through the techniques which suggest plenitude. For instance, in the charged reactions to Chata's sculpture of a woman, there is never finality on whether this figure depicts Marubini (128, cf.134) or the Khoikhoi woman (145).

These subversions are elaborated upon in the fact that Mda develops this sense of carnival from a Khoisan perspective which, on its own, recalls a shamanic mediation of binary oppositions, such as is evident in the mortal and immortal, human and animal, and in the male and female figures. This angle is hinted at in the storyteller's transcript of Marubini's dance; it is said that she "crawled like a hunter stalking quarry" and at another time "turned and became the stalked beast" (110). The idea of therianthropic metamorphosis surfaces in the hybridity and vacillation that Marubini's dance reveals. Chata undergoes this change when he is under the spell of "Hwamanda", music from a "horn [that] bellowed like a wounded bull" (108). While entranced, Chata would "dance" "the dance that he had learnt from the gazelles of the wild", "add[ing] the suppleness of the snake, the power of the snorting buffalo and the playfulness of the vervet monkey", all this while being accompanied by a chorus of his male colleagues (108). Equally, when "problems of the world began to occupy [Chata's] mind he danced himself into a trance, thus dancing them out of his head and

replacing them with creatures from the dimension of the dead and the unborn" (133). According to Jolly and Lewis-Williams (in David Lewis-Williams and Thomas A Dawson 1990: 12), trance among the Khoisan people happened "in rock shelters", triggered specifically by the performer's witnessing of those lines that make hybrid images of human beings and animals (Lewis-Williams and Dawson 1990: 14). Lewis-Williams and Dawson (1990: 14) argue that the "San people" see this form of art as a depiction of an assembly between God and all animals.

As a subject whose performance suggests a sense of vacillation from being "a hunter" and to being "the stalked beast", Marubini is also reminiscent of the San shaman who, in terms of Dawson's (2010: 123) view, utilises the image of the eland to "activate" "supernatural potency to enter trance". The eland is known to feature in the San people's everyday life as a unifier of the masculine and feminine properties, and as a reconciler between the natural and supernatural worlds (Dawson 2010: 123; cf. Vinnicombe 1976: 177-181). In the San puberty rituals, Lewis-Williams (in Dawson 2010: 123) maintains, "[t]he girl is spoken of as if she were a hunter who had just shot an eland, while the boy is secluded and cared for as if he were menstruating – both are neither male nor female during the liminal period of the rites". Lewis-Hamilton (in Dawson 2010: 123) continues that, later on in life, the marriage rituals are staged in ways that seem to reverse/redress the constructions of gender that had taken place during the initiation rituals. This is where "the bride is anointed with eland fat, while the bridegroom initiates a new phase of hunting by killing an eland" – itself an animal that the San view as reconciling the binary oppositions that are central to life (Lewis-Hamilton in Dawson 2010: 123). This is why, earlier, when asked by the council to explain to what he attributed his ostensibly insolent behaviour, Chata's response also affirms a contrasting construction of gender: he says that "he had been taught to be a man by his mother" (107). Indeed, this is what the text associates with Chata's maternal background. His late mother was purportedly "a !Kung woman, one of those cave dwellers who called themselves Zhun/twasi, which meant 'real people'" (9-10) but "generally" held "in awe" in the setting, Mapungubwe, as "People of the trance" (10). The citizens of Mapungubwe tacitly acknowledge or understand Marubini to be a transcendent figure delegated to bring rain from the ancestral world, and this is why they call her the "rain dancer" and why the authorities oppose Rendani's subsequent attempt to marry her.

In conclusion, the shamanic figures of *Dangerous Love* in the form of Omovo and the Chief are not heard or seen in public consciously engaged in memory making. This does not minimise their roles as shamans. As this article has tried to argue through Ramphele (1996), Omovo and the Chief do undertake spiritual journeys on behalf of people, suffering their sins of omission and commission. As noted above, this is where the metaphors of dance and sculpture in Mda's *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe* can be used to

elaborate on and nuance the act of memorialising; it explicitly addresses the iniquities of the gendered discourses when performed in public and in synch with the known social narratives. Memory also revises these discourses in pursuit of civil liberties.

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