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Queer reading,queer writing

de Waal, Shaun André

2006-02-10
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Preface

The structure of this MA research report is as follows:

First, the theoretical and critical essay, "'A bit out of line, somehow': William Burroughs and the queer reading the queer". This essay sets out the theoretical underpinnings and development of "queer theory", then goes on to examine the work of William Burroughs, and criticism of his work, in particular that by Jamie Russell, in the light of queer theory. Producing a "queer reading", I ask whether queer theory has anything unique to offer when approaching difficult and contentious texts such as those of Burroughs, and conclude that it does.

Second, there is the group of fictional texts that comprise the central section of this dissertation: "For rent"; "Loan"; "Private reserve"; "I wrote a letter to my love, but on the way I dropped it"; "Bite"; and "The toilet of crossed destinies". In varying ways, these stories — these "queer writings" — deal with issues pertinent to the articulation of queer, both thematically and formally.

Third, I conclude by outlining the ways in which my fiction is engaged in the business of "queering narrative"; how these stories, as presented here, link with my understanding of the different elements of queer theory as articulated in the first part, "'A bit out of line, somehow': William Burroughs and the queer reading the queer". I show the ways in which queer reading and queer writing, specifically in relation to my own praxis, overlap and interpenetrate.

Acknowledgements

My grateful thanks are due to my supervisors, Dr Michael Titlestad and Professor David Attwell, for their input and encouragement over the course of the writing of this dissertation, and especially the lively workshop discussions facilitated and/or led by Dr Titlestad, to which Lesley Cowling, Ashleigh Harris, Pam Nichols and others were valuable and interesting contributors.

My thanks, too, to Maureen Brady, for her help with proofreading, to the *Mail & Guardian* for study leave, and to Matthew Krouse for the loan of some especially choice books.

And to Lee Madeley, for being there.