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LOVE IN THE TIME OF SOUTH AFRICA? ON QUEER PRESENT CONTINUOUS BE(COM)ING IN BARBARA ADAIR'S *IN TANGIER WE KILLED THE BLUE PARROT* AND *END*.

Yuan-Chih Yen

A dissertation submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg,
in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts.
March 2018

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

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13 March 2018

ABSTRACT

The cultural imaginary in South Africa is, as Ashraf Jamal contends in *Predicaments of Culture in South Africa*, still imprisoned within boundaries of difference established by the past and still insists on rigid notions of the "national". For this reason, the South African cultural imaginary is unable to imaginatively engage with that which is unthinkable and unnameable in order to overcome the moral determinism that has burdened critical considerations of cultural production. To this end, Jamal proposes a rethinking of the human in South Africa in the name of love, one means of which is a reinvigoration of the notion of queer. In this dissertation, I will consider the ways in which Barbara Adair articulates a queer present continuous be(com)ing in her two novels *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* and *End*, which enables me not only to explore the potentialities of realising and sustaining an indeterminate in-between space in which the self and the other are able to renounce the need to know in order to begin to come toward one another, but also to open a space for reimagining frameworks for understanding literary production in South Africa.

Keywords: Barbara Adair, South Africa, love, queer, be(com)ing, indeterminacy

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“Remember, we are not nouns but verbs, and are therefore caught in a wondrous and ceaseless process of becoming. Love is such a verb, such a process of becoming.”

Ashraf Jamal (Interview n.p.)

“Loving not knowing. Loving: not knowing.”

Hélène Cixous (Cixous and Calle-Gruber 17)

INTRODUCTION, OR, HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, BARBARA ADAIR

Barbara Adair's first novel *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*, published in 2004, draws on the American writers Paul and Jane Bowles's time in Tangier, Morocco, and fictionalises their struggles to write as well as their efforts to love, not only each other but also their same-sex Moroccan lovers. Adair alternates a third-person narration focalised through Belquassim, Paul's lover[1], with italicised first-person monologic reflections from primarily Paul and Jane's perspectives. Adair's second novel *End*, published in 2007, is a similarly difficult book to summarise: as Beppi Chiuppani admits, "[i]t is a rather daunting task to describe *End* in an intelligible way" (160). Adair reworks various scenes from the 1942 film *Casablanca* in *End* as the narrator Freddie writes a novel in which an unnamed journalist – who is reporting from Maputo on the civil strife in Mozambique for a South African newspaper and who changes biological sex every alternate chapter – has an affair with X, a salesman from Johannesburg who is married to a drug addict, Y. These characters also frequently interact with Freddie to question her about their uncertain destinies.

"I don't do local," declares Adair in an interview with Fred de Vries. "Everyone does local. Let's get out of it, let's do something different" (n.p.). Adair's pronouncement here brings to the fore two of the central concerns of my dissertation which, broadly put, are the problems of "doing local" and "doing different". As my descriptions of *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* and *End* suggest, Adair's two novels are decidedly distinct works within the corpus of "South African" writing, especially to someone like me whose encounters with purportedly canonical works of "South African" literature have been overdetermined by ideas of race and the nation. Indeed, the discussions of "South African" literary works in the South African university classes I have attended have centred most often on rigid identity politics and involved reading representations of (post)apartheid racial relations as symptomatic commentaries on some supposedly coherent "South African" condition. As Sarah Nuttall points out, such practices of symptomatic interpretation, whose "genesis" is in "metaphor and allegory" (86) and whose aim often is to reveal the "true, deep undergirdings of apartheid" (85), has been the dominant mode of reading within South African literary

[1] For the sake of clarity, I will refer in this dissertation to the literary figures in full as "Paul Bowles" and "Jane Bowles", or by their surname "Bowles", whereas I will refer to Adair's representations of them as "Paul" and "Jane".

criticism.

What struck me upon reading Adair's two novels for the first time is their obvious and playful intertextuality and metafictionality, features which are remarkably different from the literary social realism to which I had for the most part been exposed. Moreover, I was intrigued by the ways in which Adair toys with the indeterminacies of the (gendered) body and sex(uality) in both novels. It seems to me that *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* and *End* articulate a conception of queer which, as I elaborate in the following chapters, goes beyond the conventional understanding of the term as a category of identification against the (hetero)normative, beyond what David Halperin maintains in his influential formulation "is by definition *whatever* is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. *There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers*. It is an identity without an essence" (62, emphases in original). This challenging strangeness of Adair's two novels is perhaps best signalled in the omission, whether intentional or not, of *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* from the annual bibliography in the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* which comprehensively documents publications of "South African" literature. *End*, on the other hand, is duly noted in the bibliography of 2007 publications, and Crystal Warren observes in her introduction to this bibliography that *End* is one of the "strong second novels" (183) produced that year and that Adair is one of the authors who "followed up the promise of their debuts" (183).

While such bibliographies compiled under the rubric of the nation – whose parameters the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* incidentally does not appear to define – may have their potential uses, I believe that they are symptomatic of the predicaments of cultural production and reception in South Africa that Ashraf Jamal has detailed in his work. For Jamal, whose views provide the impetus for this dissertation, the cultural imaginary in South Africa is still imprisoned within boundaries of difference established by the (colonial) past and still insists on rigid notions of the "national". That is to say, Jamal claims that the South African cultural imaginary demands known and knowable categories of identification which foreclose the indeterminate heterogeneity of the human, and is thus unable to imaginatively engage with that which is unthinkable and unnameable. As such, Jamal suggests that we are unable to overcome the moral determinism that has burdened critical considerations of local cultural production. I outline Jamal's position more fully in chapter one of this

dissertation, as this not only enables me to engage with the narrow critical reception of Adair's two novels which takes the national as the necessary point of departure, but also allows me to be attentive to areas of inquiry that Jamal believes have been precluded by the inability to entertain the unthinkable and the indeterminate.

One of the strategies that Jamal puts forward for thinking the unthinkable in South Africa, for adopting a position that avoids prescriptive and deterministic certainties, is a reinvigoration of the notion of queer, and this is a proposition that I take up most critically in my consideration of Adair's two novels. In my view, "queer" in South African literary criticism continues to be co-opted into the teleological explanation of the nation that is South Africa, and Tim Trengove-Jones's influential observation that "the status of gay South Africans has emerged as a litmus test for measuring how far South Africa has moved towards a culture of equality and non-discrimination" (117) is illustrative: what is clear here is that conceptions of queer remain grounded in sexual identity – that is, "gay" – and national progress. Indeed, Trengove-Jones further adds that "in a very specific permutation of the wider cultural process of bringing the hidden to light ([Albie] Sachs's claim that 'we are all coming out'), gayness has emerged from its occlusion by being aligned with our current governing narrative of human rights, pluralism, and constitutionalism" (117). I elaborate on this more fully in chapter one of my dissertation, and I also consider the problematic enunciations of queer in the critical reception of Adair's two novels.

In reading against such instrumentalisations of queer, I am able to think temporality, desire and relationality differently. The close reading of *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* and *End* that I offer in chapters two and three of this dissertation which (re)engage and reinvigorate queer thus enables me to advance what I am calling a queer present continuous be(com)ing. In this way, I am not only able to make sense of the overwhelming intertextuality of Adair's two novels, but am also able to suggest a hermeneutics of desire which facilitates my engagement with Jamal's urgent call to "rethink the human in South Africa and […], as a constitutive part of the process, restore the capacity for love" (*Predicaments* 20). As I argue, rethinking love as a "properly political concept", to borrow Lauren Berlant's formulation, means reconsidering the relationship between self and other in a more impersonal manner. What I ultimately contend is that thinking through my notion of the queer present continuous be(com)ing enables me to explore the potentialities, as enunciated in

Adair's two novels, of realising and sustaining an indeterminate in-between space in which the self and the other are able to renounce the need to know in order to begin to come toward one another.

Moreover, I am aware that such an indeterminate in-between space of be(com)ing is a necessarily textual one, and it is Hélène Cixous's conception of writing – especially her articulation of *écriture féminine* – that allows me to engage with such issues of (meta)textuality in *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* and *End*. For Cixous, such acts of writing situated within a feminine libidinal economy are not only attentive to the unsettling, emancipatory potentialities of *jouissance*, but also "give rise to the other while respecting them" ("Literature" 26). My close reading in chapters two and three of this dissertation thus draw on Cixous's notion of writing, which is in my view a textual expression of love as impersonal intimacy, to think through Adair's two novels which, as my argument will demonstrate, are acts of writing situated within what Jamal calls "other logics of engagement and cultural practice" ("Bullet" 19). In this way, I am able to propose that Adair's two novels may productively put the reader "*en procès*", to use Julia Kristeva's formulation.

What remains for me to point out in this introduction is that Lauren Berlant's proposition for thinking experimentally – that is, queerly – has guided me in the writing of this dissertation. According to Berlant,

> [t]his is what it means to live, and to theorize, experimentally: to make registers of attention and assessment that can change the world of their implication, but also to model the suspension of knowing in a way that dilates attention to a problem or scene. This involves the pain and pleasure of unlearning or "breaking down" what we thought our object was and who we are in relation to it; this involves moving with it without assurance of what we might become as we refuse to reproduce the lines of association, convergence, and force whose security defended us from the disturbance that, we say, we also want. (Berlant and Edelman 117)

The queer present continuous be(com)ing that I articulate in my "experimental" reading, which departs radically from conventional modes of making sense of "South African" literature, envisions exactly this "suspension of knowing". The question mark in the title of my dissertation, "Love in the Time of South Africa?", thus holds open such a space of uncertainty and indeterminacy at the risk of abjection: that is to say, this question mark underpins the "pain and pleasure of unlearning or 'breaking

down' what we thought" we have understood about the notions of "love", "time" and "South Africa". It is also for this reason that I attempt to forego as many subheadings as possible in this dissertation, as I believe that subheadings signal the possibility of neat, discrete categorisations which will instrumentalise my consideration of Adair's *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* and *End* in ways that I am precisely trying to avoid.

CHAPTER ONE: STILL DREAMING OF THE LOVE TO COME? ON FRAMING BARBARA ADAIR

1.1 ASHRAF JAMAL AND THE PREDICAMENT OF CULTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Ashraf Jamal's provocative analysis of cultural, and specifically literary, production in South Africa after apartheid in *Predicaments of Culture in South Africa* informs my evaluation of Adair's situation within what has been taken to be the field of "South African literature". For Jamal, cultural production and reception in South Africa is still trapped "within the 'ghetto' ([Albie] Sachs) or 'gulag' ([JM] Coetzee)" (19) and thus not yet free from the oppression of fatalist, positivist and relativist thinking that dogs the South African imaginary (xii). Central to Jamal's concern, then, is a critical reflection on "how to bypass, overwhelm, and ignore oppression, and, in doing so, create an other space for thought and creativity" (xii). Put differently, Jamal believes that the South African cultural imaginary is stuck in rigid and inadequate categories of "nomination" (9) or identification, and he emphasises that it is urgently necessary to engage with the unthinkable indeterminacies of what it means to be human in contemporary South Africa. Freedom, Jamal suggests, is the transgression of both the closures of apartheid and the reactive nature of imaginative expression which persists today: what he argues for is "a sphere of expression that accepts the unthinkable: that which has not heretofore been thought; that which in its nature resists thought; that which challenges the prohibition of the unnameable" (7). In an interview with Russel Brownlee which usefully summaries his argument in *Predicaments of Culture in South Africa*, Jamal further points out that he "very rarely encountered the ability or the courage to grasp the unthinkable; to shift the axis away from the tedium of polarisation, as though our minds and imaginations were transfixed by the Manichean dialectic and precious little else". For this reason, he proposes that what needs to be taken up by the South African cultural imaginary is a fluidity that "avoids prescription and determinist certainties" (n.p.).

Jamal begins *Predicaments of Culture in South Africa* by considering Albie Sachs's seminal essay "Preparing Ourselves for Freedom", and follows Sachs in arguing that freedom is achieved in the moment that it "cede[s] its pathological attachment to the oppressive regime that shaped and constrained its deliverance" (3), as such attachments render culture merely reactive and resistant. Sachs's most pertinent point

for Jamal is his suggestion that the South African cultural imaginary needs to innovatively engage with that which is unthinkable and unnameable in order to overcome the moral determinism that has burdened critical considerations of the country's cultural production: according to Jamal, "over and above the democratic or pluralistic levelling of cultural differences there remains a cultural agency that surpasses boundaries, as well as their nominal erasure, that can potentially evoke a third space which, in the South African cultural economy has not quite been expressed, let alone sustained" (11). He further urges South African cultural practice to break through the "increased ennui and sense of fatality" (4) to "rethink or re-imagine the negative closures that continue to dog cultural expression" (15). That is to say, Jamal finds that cultural imaginary in South Africa is still unable to productively account for the vital heterogeneity of its society and still seems trapped within the divisive logic of cultural difference established by the past, and for this reason he wants to think through ways that "render fluid the fixity of cultural difference" (31). Though Jamal understands Sachs to be invoking the possibility that South Africa could "imagine itself otherwise, that [it] could, through the creative act, restore the ability to dream, think and taste the deferred promise of freedom" (17), Jamal suggests that this otherness to itself which the South African cultural imaginary needs is "as much a source of terror as it is a promise of happiness" (17) as its achievement demands alternative and unconventional modes of thinking.

One of the problematic modes of thinking about South Africa is JM Coetzee's articulation in his Jerusalem Prize Acceptance Speech that the country is as "irresistible as it is unlovable" (qtd in Jamal, *Predicaments* 23): Jamal proposes a countervision that "South Africa is as *resistible as it is lovable*" (23, emphasis in original), suggesting that it is only in this way that we can begin to engage differently with the country's pathological obsession with overdetermined, binaristic articulations of difference which foreclose any positive engagement with the "heterogeneous complexity of life" (37) in South Africa. What Jamal implies is that this failure of the encounter between self and other is what seems to have come to define South Africa – he maintains that "the history of South Africa has been shaped by the very lack of love" (24) – and thus reconceiving South Africa as "resistible as it is loveable" will "effect a psychic and epistemic embrace that works against fear and denial and gestures towards love" (23). For Jamal, a realisation of the potential of love is

inextricably linked to the attainment of freedom, and he emphasises that "for the imagination to liberate itself, for freedom to become realisable, thought must resist closure *in the name of love*" (24, emphasis in original). In this way, the central challenges to the South African cultural imaginary for Jamal are "[h]ow to rethink the human in South Africa and how, as a constitutive part of the process, restore the capacity for love", "[h]ow to divert the psychic and epistemic constraints that repress the unthinkable and unspeakable and how to make this – emergent – otherness the harbinger of an ethically revisionary project", and how, despite the "disfigurement of the human" in a society that is "caught between national and global imaginaries", to "inculcate a spirit of play" and to nurture a "radical alterity" (20).

Jamal finds that Homi Bhabha's thought, especially his notion of the "hybrid moment" (*Predicaments* 24), points productively to a way beyond South Africa's "exchang[ing of] radical difference for sameness, blurred gradation for fixed and separable terms" (24), towards an acknowledgement of the "factors at work in the constitution of a given position other than the ideational and the received particularities of the social and historical" (30). For this reason, Jamal argues that one of the most pertinent alternative envisionings of South African culture, Njabulo Ndebele's humanist call for a rediscovery of the ordinary, is, despite appearing to emerge "as a third or supplementary term of critical engagement and perception" (84), in fact not as much of a liberating breakthrough as it appears to be because it remains an either/or logic which needs to be replaced by a both/and one (96): Jamal claims that "Ndebele's resistance to the spectacular blinds him to the extraordinariness of the everyday" (96), and that the "post-colonial subject is necessarily caught *between* the spectacular and the ordinary" (97, emphasis in original). To (re)locate this in-betweenness, this hybrid moment within contemporary South Africa, Jamal proposes that we need to "affirmatively refigure South Africa as an indefinite category and as an experiential paradox" (25) that is able to account for the "changing present – the time of the now – that transmutes the dogma of the past and the fiction of the future" (90). That is to say, Jamal thinks with Bhabha to think through and beyond the ways that the South African cultural imaginary holds on to the injustices of the past and the discourse of the "rainbow nation" which repressively subsumes difference, to "an *other* embrace – the embrace not only of otherness, but the embrace of others" which he posits is "the surest means, within the ever-shifting present, through which to

recover a past and promote a future freed from the spectre of colonialism" (40, emphasis in original).

Leon de Kock's notion of the "seam" is for Jamal one conceptual attempt to articulate the hybrid moment, to account for "the layering and the stresses and strains inherent in a bonded and repressive conception of" South Africa (*Predicaments* 24). In "South Africa in the Global Imaginary", De Kock proposes that the seam is "the site of a joining together that also bears the mark of the suture" (276), which means that any attempt at converging difference necessarily "bears the mark of its own crisis" (276). South African writing has, according to De Kock, been a kind of "seam" in that it is "the place where difference and sameness are hitched together – where they are brought to self-awareness, denied, or displaced into third terms" (277). The negotiation of identity within a literature conceived in this way as national for De Kock then signals the simultaneous recognition and sublimation of alterity, for the seam is "a place where neither oneness nor difference can be maintained without reference to the knowledge of its double, its constitutively cross-hitched character" (287). De Kock proposes an unpicking of this poetics of the seam in "Does South African Literature Still Exist?", for if "the seam of compulsive identity formation under conditions of referential fracture has been undone, then the lines of affiliation, logically, are free to go where they like" (77) and this undoing may facilitate a moving beyond the "absolute contests and the grim polarities of the past" (77). Jamal articulates two strategies inherent in the paradoxes of the seam that foster this "cognitive slippage that enables the sustenance and the interrogation of a fraught 'seam' that would, at every turn, undo the seeming integrity of South Africa" (*Predicaments* 25) and realise a "liminal position of belonging-yet-not-belonging" (57) which will allow South Africa to emerge as other to itself and attain cultural imaginaries free from oppression.

One of the strategies that Jamal articulates is a "radical syncretism" (*Predicaments* 69), rather than the "reactive syncretism" (62) which, "co-opted by nationalism and the market forces of late-modernity" (65), dominates the South African cultural imaginary and "merely constructs the illusion of a positive engagement or merger of difference" (66). Jamal argues that radical syncretism does not deny and erase the notoriety of the past but reveals and addresses its links to the present (70), and it is furthermore, like Bhabha's hybrid moment, a "means through which to issue forth

something new and unrecognisable, a new era of negotiation of meaning and representation" (75, emphasis in original). For Jamal, radical syncretism "acknowledges no *a priori* truth, neither does it post its own truth as the answer" and thereby is able to "expose abnormality at the root of the seemingly normal" (80): radical syncretism is an "aesthetic and epistemological strategy that, in challenging authorised beliefs and practices, serves to further destabilise public doxa and received authority" (81), and it is this "radically syncretic construction of identity" (77) which may facilitate an othering of the self and allow for the emergence of love.

Another strategy that Jamal enunciates which sustains the radical interstitial agency of the seam of the South African cultural imaginary is the notion of "queer". Jamal makes clear that "it is not strictly within the domain of sexually defined identity formation that the term is relevant" for him (*Predicaments* 90), but that it is in fact, following Annamarie Jagose, its "more mediated relation to categories of identification" (90) that he finds useful: "queer" for Jamal is a kind of third space "which, in foregrounding and enacting a 'mediated relation' to the dominant imperatives of identification, ultimately works towards the deterritorialisation of these imperatives" (103). That is to say, in rethinking the constitutive contradictions in conceptions of culture in South Africa – such as in levelling the ordinary and the spectacular or extraordinary – queer does not reconcile the binary to produce a synthesis, but instead "reveals the 'invisible visible'" (105), instituting "a radical plurality as the basis of any interstitial grasp of the changing present" (103). Most importantly for Jamal, queer

> comes to exemplify what Bhabha defines as the double life of the postcolonial subject, a life which constructively perverts existent polarities, which undoes closure and the discretion which founds the separation of terms of engagement, which deliberately over-dramatises the self as that which exists in extra-moral space, and, against a sage or pious wisdom, celebrates the constitutive perversity of the postcolonial condition as the source of revisionary agency and not the marginalised figuration of mere scandal. (103)

In other words, queer becomes a productive term for Jamal's consideration of the predicament of culture in South Africa as it offers, in its refusal to "be conscripted into a preconceived system of change" (105), a "way of living and thinking the psychic and epistemic impasse of the present moment" (105): queer facilitates a

thinking of the unthinkable and the unnameable, an acknowledgement of the inadequacies of signifying economies and of the closures instituted in categorical nominalisation, and also opens up creative spaces for reckoning with the unresolved violences of South Africa's past which continue to compromise considerations of the "radicality or heterogeneity that subsists at the core of South Africa's differential condition" (61). Queer, Jamal thus implies, precipitates South Africa's becoming other to itself and questions its obsession with identity politics that reifies a state of lovelessness, which for Jamal is "the negation of thought, and hence of life itself" (interview with Brownlee).

1.2 On "queer" in contemporary South African literary criticism

As I have pointed out, it seems that for Jamal, thinking and reinvigorating the notion of queer is one means of achieving a "cultivation of selfhood and nationhood – in and through representation – that is ceaselessly mobile and fluid" (*Predicaments* 154). Nonetheless, Jamal observes, drawing on the Mother City Queer Project's creator Andrew Putter, that "queer, as an intellectual model and way of life, has fallen victim to 'reification'" as a result of a "deficient critical reflexivity" (118). That is to say, queer seems to have become less a critical engagement with the incommensurable and mediated nature of all social relations than a fixation of reasonable categories of identification which have been co-opted into a new norm, a new code of received values. What I also understand Jamal to be foregrounding here is that queer has come to be co-opted into the teleological explanation of the nation that is South Africa, and this is in fact symptomatic of Jamal's diagnosis of the predicament of South African literary production: according to Jamal, "South African literature in English has elected to sanctify and memorialize its intent, producing a literature informed by a messianic, liberatory, or reactive drive, hence a struggle literature (which precedes liberation from apartheid) and a post-apartheid literature (which establishes a democratic state of play)" ("Bullet" 11) and for this reason it "fail[s] to give satisfactory weight to the marvellous richness that comes from non-prescriptiveness and healthily perverse reconfigurations of community" (19). It indeed seems to me that South African literature read under the sign of queer has struggled to think queer beyond sexual identity and national progress, and this predicament is evident in two prominent works of contemporary South African "queer" literary criticism: Cheryl Stobie's *Somewhere in the Double Rainbow: Representations of Bisexuality in Post-*

apartheid Novels and Brenna Munro's *South Africa and the Dream of Love to Come: Queer Sexuality and the Struggle for Freedom*.

In *Somewhere in the Double Rainbow*, Stobie explores the increasing number of South African novels published after 1994 which "employ bisexuality as a metaphor" and which map this onto a consideration of the "reshaping of the nation in different terms from the oppressive binary ideologies of the past" (xi). Even though she acknowledges that "[i]nstead of the fixities of identity politics, queer theory posits fluid spaces of possibility" (16), Stobie's use of bisexuality – which she intriguingly conflates with queer: she claims that she works through the "complex relationship between the concepts of queer and bisexuality in order to be able to oscillate between the two frameworks in [her] literary analysis" (16) – seems to prescriptively (re)position bisexuality within a spectrum of inhabitable sexual identities. For example, in her chapter titled "'Biopia' in Biography: A Cultural History of Bisexuality in South Africa", Stobie examines a "short-sighted refusal to perceive, or a misrepresentation of, bisexuality" (69), especially within (auto)biographies of "subjects associated with the arts, and who have South African connections, spanning the twentieth century" (75). It is exactly Stobie's need to recuperate and make visible a lived experience – however indeterminate or disputable – of bisexuality that ends up reifying it as a discrete category of identification, despite her insistence that her use of "bisexuality" should not be "understood as implying a concrete identity, but should be read provisionally and contingently" (20).

In a comprehensive explication of her conceptualisation of bisexuality, Stobie seems to put bisexuality forward as a third term which offers a synthesis of the dialectic that results from any attempt to reckon with binaries. She maintains that

> [b]isexuality represents a challenge to identities which are less certain and stable than many would like to believe, and it represents a challenge to narratives which repress alternatives. It thus offers a means of viewing the heterosexual/homosexual system of which it is a complex part. Viewed from a sympathetic – some might say utopian – perspective, it represents a potential for change, a loosening of boundaries, a possibility of multiplicity, all of which signify a fruitful cultural and national pathway beyond rigid binaries of the past. (*Somewhere* 70)

While I am not disputing the potential productivity inherent in bisexuality as a broader, strategically essentialist form of identity politics that Stobie seems to be

elaborating, what I am uncomfortable with is her conflation of such an articulation of the subject as relational with my – and I would also argue, Jamal's – understanding of queer as processual. Put differently, the fluidity and boundary disruptions that Stobie's thinking through bisexuality would like to enable is still nonetheless limited to an instrumentality, that of working through the rigidly divisive logic of cultural difference established by South Africa's violent past, whereas queer, in Jamal's articulation, "cannot be conscripted into a preconceived idea of change" (*Predicaments* 105). In Stobie's reading, the engagement with bisexuality in South African writing necessarily says something about the change in the national imaginary that is also an indication of the progression of the nation out of its past, maintaining that "a preoccupation with the trope of bisexuality in novels at this stage of South Africa's history is deeply significant within a national imaginary which is attempting to move beyond a strictly binarist viewpoint" (270). This symptomatic reading of bisexuality in its function as "queer" is in my view flawed, for even though it attempts to offer an engagement with what Jamal calls "the interstitial, ceaselessly compromised, and unresolvedly heterogeneous condition which continues to define South African culture" (*Predicaments* 148), bisexuality has nonetheless been insistently offered by Stobie as a kind of grand narrative of (sexual) identification that has, as Jamal would put it, "been rigged the better to explain the country's received history and not the radical a priori heterogeneity, or wide range of irreducible swings, non-linearity, and temporal trajectories that make up that history" ("Bullet" 16).

In her chapter on Adair's *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*, which is one of the few critical considerations of the novel, Stobie is at pains to establish the sexuality of the characters in the novel, especially that of Paul and Jane Bowles, who Stobie notes have historically "(misleadingly) often not [been] flagged as bisexual" (*Somewhere* 241), and further asserts that bisexuality is "textually perceived as the norm, rather than an aberration, although the author herself [ie Adair] identifies as a lesbian. Thus, usefully for my purposes, Adair is biopic in her representation of a number of personae" (236). Not only does Stobie not make clear the significance of why this failure to ascertain the bisexuality of Paul and Jane Bowles is "misleading", she also seems to accuse Adair of some kind of privilege which arises from Adair's subject position – which she makes a point of pointing out – within the hegemonic binary of hetero/homosexuality that necessarily elides the Bowles' bisexuality in Adair's

fictionalisation of these American writers, despite her acknowledgement that bisexuality is *not* an "aberration" – that is, that it has not been short-sightedly misrepresented – in the novel. This impulse to know and to accurately situate people and characters within nominal categories of sexual identification is troubling, especially for someone like Stobie whose project claims to hold open a space for the consideration of fluid indeterminacies.

Moreover, Stobie maintains that *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* is an "anomalous text, difficult to classify, but comprehensible *primarily* within a South African context" (*Somewhere* 266, my emphasis) and that the novel, although set in Tangier, ultimately "allows for productive and progressive reflection on the contemporary South African social landscape, as well as on South Africa's position within the continent of Africa" (267). I would argue that this reading of the novel which adamantly resituates it within a "South African" framework is exactly the kind of interpretative move that the "dull and prescriptive enterprise" ("Bullet" 15), as Jamal describes it, of literary criticism in South Africa would make: according to Jamal, a literary work for South African literary critics "becomes important because it explains a given concern, its provenance measured according to the relevance of that concern. The utility rather than the *use*, therefore, lies in the book's telos and not – where it should count the more – in the aesthetic *affect* that limns and qualifies that telos" ("Bullet" 15, emphasis in original). In fact, Stobie's entire project – which "aim[s] to chart the representation of bisexuality, in the context of a body of fiction that deals with variant sexualities, *in order to* consider the ways in which this sexuality contributes to debates about how 'queer' reflects and shapes notions of emerging South African national identity" (13-14, my emphasis) – is symptomatic of Jamal's assessment of the current state of South African literary criticism: it is clear from Stobie's conclusion – that the engagement with bisexuality necessarily signals a changing society that is "moving out of the rigid and oppressive racial, gender and sexual binaries of the past" (273) – that she has not been able to resist the reactive and overdetermined narratives about national progress and cultural expression.

Munro acknowledges in a footnote in *South Africa and the Dream of Love to Come* that Stobie's *Somewhere in the Double Rainbow* "is an important starting point in the critical conversation about sexuality and South African literature – indeed it is the only book-length study of the topic thus far" (246), and her appraisal of Stobie's main

concern – that bisexuality's "appearance in a wide range of postapartheid literary texts indicated both a crisis of representation and a desire to move beyond black/white, either/or thinking in the wake of apartheid" (246) – foregrounds what I have argued is problematic about Stobie's project. Munro in fact takes up a similarly problematic ideological position in terms of sexual identity and the national imaginary, indicating that her project examines how "the deployment of the figure of the gay person as a symbol of South Africa's democratic modernity is, of course, a radical departure from the traditional familial iconography of nationhood – and it emerges from a history in which homosexuality has long been a deeply contested idea, bound up with the re-imagining of race, gender, and nation in the context of settler colonialism" (viii). What is neatly highlighted here is that, firstly, despite the gesture towards "queer sexuality" in the book's subtitle, Munro's focus is really on a particular reified category of identification, the homosexual, and more specifically the male homosexual; and secondly, Munro's reading of sexuality is instrumentalised in that she understands the changing attitude, however ambiguous or contradictory, in the engagement with sexuality in the South African literary texts she examines as necessarily charting the emergence of a more nuanced and democratic discourse about gay rights in South Africa. For Munro, male homosexuality came to stand, during the era of anti-apartheid struggles, for "the perversity of apartheid – but also sometimes fashioned as sign of resistance to the mores of an authoritarian regime that attempted to regulate everyone's sexuality in the name of racial purity" (viii), and she argues that "the gay, lesbian, or bisexual person then became a kind of stock minor character in the pageant of nationhood in the 1990s, embodying the arrival of a radically new social order and symbolically mediating conflicts over race and class" (ix). Indeed, Munro admits that her project "began as the search for a progress narrative from afar; I wanted to know how South Africans managed to forge a gay-friendly, radically plural democracy" (xxxiii), even though she does recognise the "varying modes of disillusionment and disappointment" (xxxiii) in the face of the nation's failing transformation. It is Munro's impulse to read sexuality symptomatically, to trace through the literary representation of minority sexual identities an overdetermined narrative about the precarious progress of a nation that is trying to democratically account for the multiplicity of "queer" lives, that, as I have pointed out, is limiting.

Nevertheless, one recent work of South African literary criticism, Andrew van der

Vlies's *Present Imperfect: Contemporary South African Writing*, does seem to present a more nuanced and productive engagement with notions of queer, especially within a South African context. Though "not expressly a study of queer politics or poetics" (9) but rather a "study of affect, temporality, and form in writing from postapartheid South Africa" (vii), Van der Vlies explains that "the reader will notice that queer characters are to be found in many of the texts discussed" (9) in *Present Imperfect*, and these gesture towards the usefulness of recent queer theories which are "interested in understanding bad feelings more generally" and which enable him to think "affect and temporality together – and for taking literary texts as archive and promise" (9). For Van der Vlies, "disappointment is a significant structure of feeling in contemporary South Africa" (viii) as many of the promises of post-1994 rainbowism remain unfulfilled, and he argues that recent South African literature reflects this sense of stasis and thus "might provide spaces in which imaginative openings out of the present uncertain aftermath of the end of apartheid are made visible" (ix). Chapter five of Van der Vlies's study, "South Africa, Time or Place?", is of particular interest to me, as it is in fact a reworked elaboration of a previously published article, "Zoë Wicomb's Queer Cosmopolitanisms". As the title of the original article makes clear, Van der Vlies is interested in the ways that "figures of queer disruption throughout Wicomb's oeuvre" subversively engage "with transnational identities and affiliations *and* with the chimera of racial purity and national unity in post-apartheid South Africa" (425, emphasis in original), and it thus seems that Van der Vlies is attentive in this article to articulations of queer beyond (sexual) identity to think queer as the productive space of the proliferation of indeterminacies. That is to say, Van der Vlies foregrounds the hybrid and syncretic nature of Wicomb's work which challenges the claims to affiliative authenticity – whether identificatory or textual – that is so prevalent in considerations of "a South African canon, and a national tradition" (439): he argues that not only does Wicomb unsettle racial and both hetero- and homosexual categories of identification, but her metafictional and intertextual novels also present a "broader project of cultural questioning and disruption" (440) which welcomes "multivalence and ambiguity" (440).

Van der Vlies indeed elaborates on these productive queer potentialities in his book chapter "South Africa, Time or Place?". He recognises that "Wicomb consistently seeks to hold open the possibility of exploring – and enabling – formal, political, and

affective uncertainty" (127) and further maintains that Wicomb's work is attentive to the "subtleties of a culturally, racially, and linguistically heterogeneous country" (128). Moreover, Van der Vlies contends that the metafictionality and especially the intertextuality of Wicomb's novels are a kind of "queer" strategy which

> constitutes a refusal to cede the revolutionary potential of the transition to monolithic constructions of nation or family (or national family), to a restrictive sense of what it is proper for a "South African" text to engage. Rather, Wicomb's restless allusiveness suggests a textual equivalent to her characters' displacements (and perhaps her own transnationalism): a refusal to cede ground to any resurgent nationalism. (128)

Van der Vlies thus appears to offer a critical mode of engaging queer which attends to the predicaments Jamal raises about South African literary culture, for his discerning analysis of Wicomb's work seems to bypass the received positions which valorise difference and which result in what Jamal calls the "reification of an unresolved and constitutive difference that defines South Africa's cultural imaginary" (*Predicaments* 147). Van der Vlies attempts instead to think the indeterminately heterogeneous and the radically syncretic that for Jamal is "constitutive of lived experience in South Africa" (*Predicaments* 63), and most significantly, his consideration of Wicomb's work suggests that, contrary to Jamal, there is in fact "radical play" and "experimentation at the heart of South African literature in English" ("Bullet" 16).

Nevertheless, Van der Vlies distinctly foregrounds the South African context of Wicomb's work, reading her creative experimentation as a reaction or a refusal to accept the prescriptive South African identity politics that has persisted into postapartheid society. In the chapter's concluding paragraph, Van der Vlies further proposes that

> Wicomb's embrace of the metafictional and of intertextuality comprises *a queer ethical response to the strange now-time of contemporary South African socialities and imaginaries*. It is a textual, but also an ethical, strategy, one that is particularly suited to an oeuvre imbued with a frustration at the inevitability of the disappointment of utopian expectations, wise to the habit nations have of cycling back to the hearth, the heteronormative family, ideas of ethnic purity, abhorrence of the in-between. Wicomb's narrative ethics *will have much to say to and about South Africa for some considerable time.* (149, my emphases)

Although this may be appropriate, for Van der Vlies is responding to Wicomb's own

strident engagement with a particular national context after all, I believe that queer has nonetheless been limited to a teleological explanation of the nation that is South Africa – even if it is to account for its "radical a priori heterogeneity" (Jamal, "Bullet" 16). In my reading of Adair's two novels that follows, I want to consider how the kinds of productive queer potentialities that Van der Vlies enunciates may open a space to entirely "rethink the perceptual dislocation in South Africa within an ever-shifting, restless and heterogeneous present" (Jamal, *Predicaments* 47) in literary works which do not explicitly call attention to such issues of nationhood and identification.

I should note at this point that the various engagements with notions of queer in South African literary criticism that I have been tracing span a little over a decade, from the publication of Jamal's *Predicaments of Culture in South Africa* in 2005 to Van der Vlies's *Present Imperfect* in 2017. Even though Jamal's critical concern is literary and cultural production of the period immediately following the official end of apartheid while Van der Vlies engages mainly with postapartheid – especially what has been termed "post-transitional" South African literature – what is noteworthy is that it has taken such a protracted period for the potentially transformative and liberating impulses of queer which Jamal enunciates to be taken up. Interestingly, it is also only recently that any commentator working in the field generally known as "South African literature" has addressed the significance of Jamal's appraisal of the predicaments of cultural production in South Africa: De Kock maintains in *Losing the Plot: Crime, Reality and Fiction in Postapartheid Writing*, which was published in 2016, that Jamal's "key intervention" is in his "plea for a change of spirit, a decisive turn in the affective disposition in which all acts of culture, for him, are enveloped" (94, emphasis in original), and he further observes that

> Jamal's emphatic statements – "to love is to think", and "it is lovelessness that is the negation of thought, and hence of life itself" – bring him much closer to a movement in critical theory that was gaining ground at the time he was in conversation with Brownlee [see Jamal, interview], though it is one that Jamal does not explicitly invoke: the Affective Turn. (98)

De Kock's recognition that Jamal's thinking is in line with the turn to a consideration of affect in critical theorisation is informative, for it highlights the enduring reluctance of readings of what has been called "South African literature" to move beyond symptomatic and teleologically national(ist) ones. Affect is, according to Vilashini

Cooppan, "in one sense deeply local, experienced at the level of the body and skin and abstracted from larger categories of shared social identification. In another sense affect is prototypically global, constituted by flows that run over and through individual subjects and singular sites of identification to comprise a larger network" (52). What this suggests is that thinking with and through affect facilitates a worlding – or, in Cooppan's formulation, a "worldedness" (71) – of "South African literature", a necessary reconsideration of the categories of identification through which we make sense of ourselves and of South Africa's literary production, and this is indeed what I have argued Van der Vlies's *Present Imperfect*, which has been marketed as the "first study of affect in South African literature", belatedly attempts to do.

1.3 On the category of "South African literature"

What has been implicit in my consideration of Jamal's reinvigoration of the notion of queer thus far is a critique of the category of a coherent national "South African" literature itself, the delineation of which had been a constant preoccupation in the academy. In his seminal paper "South Africa in the Global Imaginary" from 2001, De Kock surveys the literary historiographies which attempt to establish a consolidated canon of South African literature and points to the problems of their endeavours to account for the country's "cultural heterogeneity […which] remains to this day a scene of largely *unresolved* differences" (264, emphasis in original). He argues that "[p]erhaps to be a 'South African' writer in the full sense requires imaginative inhabitation of the seam as a deep symbolic structure" (284), referring to his poetics of the seam which I discussed earlier, and he further proposes that "'South Africa' itself remains a sign under erasure – the question who 'speaks' for South Africa is as vexed today as it ever was" (273). That is to say, De Kock groundbreakingly[2] recognises the simultaneous inadequacy yet necessity of employing the category "South African literature". He indeed maintains in "Judging New 'South African' Fiction in the Transnational Moment" that "South African literature" as a category may still remain useful and perhaps "even necessary for a sense of history and

[2] Van der Vlies points out that Lewis Nkosi had in fact already suggested at a conference at Oxford as early as 1991 that "'South African literature' did not exist" (*South African Textual Cultures* 174), although I would argue that it was not until De Kock's reflections on the issue that it was significantly taken up by academics.

determination in what one might call a 'national' imaginary" (32), though a consideration of this "national" requires an examination of how it interacts with transnational issues, how this "national" is constituted through interactions with that which is beyond its borders: according to De Kock, "the space of the 'national' has irrevocably entered into the fluid waters of the 'trans', the transitive cusp of crossing and recrossing, of absorbing the fictional self into (now easier, more fluid) spaces of related elsewheres, and of absorbing the otherness of such elsewheres into the fictional self" (32-3).

De Kock's displacing of essentialist and essentialising conceptualisations of "South African literature", his insistence on the fluid processes of travel and translation, has been widely taken up by academics working in the field, and this questioning of nomenclature and categorisation is perhaps most evident in the special issue of *English Studies in Africa* from 2010 dedicated to the consideration of the usefulness of the term "post-transitional" South African literature. Ronit Frenkel and Craig MacKenzie maintain in their introduction to the special edition, "Conceptualising 'Post-transitional' South African Literature in English", that the term "is, and is not, a temporal marker" because "[a]s a referent it cannot but highlight the passage of time that has passed since South Africa's transition into a democracy, yet it also points to the period before and after this formal transition as an unbounded period and discourse" and "does not claim that the issues involved in the transition have been resolved" (4). Frenkel and MacKenzie suggest that this "new wave of writing" (2) is "[c]haracterized by a proliferation of genres" and "encompasses diasporic South African writings (often examining issues of dislocation), proletarian disclosures, lyrical existential ruminations, memoir, satire, miracle narratives, and crime stories, and addresses issues of return, the dynamics of illness, and questions of space and its contestation" (4). Most significantly, Frenkel and MacKenzie contend that the "politically incorrect humour and incisive satire" of these works often show how problematic "traditional markers like nationality, race or ethnicity" (2) are, and they also note that this "post-transitional" literature is more cosmopolitan in style, as it "exhibits a reduced obligation to the logics of political commitment" and it "purposely contests the national as its overriding context" (4), thereby indicating "a broadening of thought and form that is context-bound but global in orientation as it attempts to frame South Africa in the present, as well as in terms of the transnational

relations that connect it to the globe" (4).

In this light, it is intriguing that neither Stobie nor Munro offers any reflection on the constitution of the field of South African literature they take as their object of analysis. As Van der Vlies maintains in his earlier work *South African Textual Cultures*, "[a]ny study using the designation 'South African literature' as shorthand necessarily engages […] with a field riven with definitional problems" (174). Despite acknowledging that bisexuality presents a "category crisis" (22), Stobie seems to be blind to the "crisis" in the other category that her work takes as a guiding rubric – "post-apartheid" South African novels. In fact, Stobie reads Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun* as "offer[ing] the most scope for the analysis of bisexuality as a prime embodiment of De Kock's 'seam' in the climate of social change in contemporary South Africa" (175): this not only indicates that she problematically takes South African literature as a cohesive field, but also demonstrates that she misses the radical categorical slippages that De Kock's poetics of the seam suggests. For Van der Vlies, who is attentive to these concerns, "[t]o ask, then, what South African literature might *be*, requires asking not only what makes a work 'South African' (what makes it tentatively the work of a national category), but also what criteria, institutions and protocols of reading have effected its reception and construction, both as South African – or problematically "South African" – and as *literature*" (174, emphasis in original). Setting aside the question of what makes a work "literature", the intrinsic worldiness of literature that Van der Vlies emphasises speaks to the productive impulses of queer which open up different, interstitial spaces for reckoning with South Africa's radical heterogeneity. What also needs to be taken into account in Van der Vlies's view is the pervasive influence of modernity, whose contradictions "continue to challenge the South African polity, and to provoke an ever-growing body of creative writing in the country – which continues to be published both there and abroad, and to invite and resist description in national terms" (175). Jamal similarly remarks that

> when I speak of "South Africa", it must be remembered that other than as an indefinitely pronominal descriptor with its own – limited – rhetorical efficacy, the country is not conceived as a historically and geographically bounded and determined site. Rather, "South Africa" serves as a drifting signifier […] through and in which I hope to assess the epistemological basis for the conceptualisation of traces of an emergent – though

> beleaguered and repressed – consciousness. In other words: how and why do we think of who and what "we" are? To what end does the claim to nationhood validate the contiguous and fraught nature of modernity as it is played out at the southernmost point of Africa? How do we think of cultural change both inside and outside the boundaries of the nation? (*Predicaments* 89)

1.4 ON THE CRITICAL RECEPTION OF *IN TANGIER WE KILLED THE BLUE PARROT* AND *END*

Adair's two novels have elicited relatively little critical consideration other than book reviews in local newspapers[3]. Stobie has worked extensively on *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*[4]: she has presented a conference paper titled "Somatics, Space, Surprise: Creative Dissonance in Barbara Adair's *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*", published a journal article "Writing in the Interzone: A Queer Postcolonial Reading of Barbara Adair's *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*" which was then elaborated into the chapter in her book *Somewhere in the Double Rainbow*, mentioned it along with *End* in another article "Postcolonial Pomosexuality: Queer/Alternative Fiction after *Disgrace*", and she also supervised Jean Rossmann's master's thesis on the novel. *End* has been examined academically only in a chapter in Beppi Chiuppani's PhD dissertation, "Beyond Political Engagement? Redefining the Literary in Post-dictatorship Brazil and Post-apartheid South Africa". In this section I want to think through the problematically symptomatic readings – which I have already argued Stobie's chapter on *In Tangier* exemplifies – that the newspaper reviews and, to some extent, academic considerations of Adair's two novels have presented.

The reviews of *In Tangier* focus mostly on Adair's engagement with the lives of Paul and Jane Bowles, paying more attention to elucidating the Bowles' biography than to the significance of Adair's rewriting of their lives in her novel. Martha Stone's brief review, for instance, does not engage with *In Tangier* on its own terms but rather reads its significance in terms of its relation to the life and works of Paul and Jane Bowles: Stone proposes that *In Tangier* "is worth hunting down by anyone interested

[3] I would like to acknowledge the help of the National English Literary Museum in Grahamstown in sourcing some of these newspaper reviews.
[4] Hereafter abbreviated as *In Tangier*.

in the lives of the Bowleses and their circle. Better still, it may encourage some readers to explore or re-explore the writings of its main characters" (45). Stobie also picks up on this problem in Adam Levin's review, which I will elaborate on in the next chapter, stating that Levin's "line of investigation strikes [her] as inappropriate, as it privileges biography, treating it as sacrosanct, although a biography itself is no more than a subjective interpretation of a life" ("Somatics" 42). Moreover, Stephen Randall faults Adair for not adequately accounting for the Bowles' lives, remarking in his review – pointedly titled "Interesting Foray into Literary Figures" – that he is "not convinced that, lengthwise, the novel is a sufficiently substantial vehicle for delineating two such powerful literary personalities" (4). In a similarly baffling and unsubstantiated manner, he claims that it "is good to see" (4) in 2004 a South African writer "using this period and these writer as their first foray into fictional writing" (4).

The impulse to make sense of *In Tangier* through its author's South African context that Randall hints at is most evident in Chris Dunton's review as well as the academic considerations of the novel by Stobie and Rossmann. As I pointed out earlier, Stobie emphasises the situatedness of *In Tangier* within a post-apartheid South African landscape, arguing that it is "comprehensible primarily within a South African context" (266). For Stobie, Adair's preface is important as it not only "situates the author as part of her own South African milieu" (235), but it also "provides a clear optic through which to read the ensuing fictionalised account" (236) of the Bowles' time in Tangier and "directs the reader to respond to the text as a meditation on the significance of the dissolution of some systemic boundaries" (237). Stobie thus implies, in my view, that *In Tangier* can be usefully read as an allegory of post-apartheid South Africa because it draws parallels between the contestations and reconfigurations of "intimate connections" and "ideologies and creative forms" (246), such as the issues concerning "sexuality in a changing society with a racially overdetermined history" (266), that take place in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa and the interzone of mid 20th-century Tangier. Dunton similarly concludes his review, which is perhaps the most thoughtful of all the newspaper reviews, by declaring that "in the end I'm not quite sure what it [*In Tangier*] intends to achieve. One possible way beyond that uncertainty is to read it in the context of South African fiction, post-*Disgrace*: to see it, in other words, as an exploration of notions of choice, distancing and home that reflects, very obliquely, on patterns of social consciousness

in the author's own environment" (18).

Rossmann examines the significance of Dunton's situation of *In Tangier* in relation to JM Coetzee's *Disgrace* (25), and she also at first emphasises that the novel compels a reading as a commentary on post-apartheid South Africa: Rossmann maintains that "the choices of different modes of personal attachments, sexualities and sexual pleasure, complicated by race and gender, are not only central concerns in Adair's text, but also major socio-political issues in current South African public (and private) debate" (26). By distancing readers from the socio-political landscape with which they are familiar, Rossmann believes that Adair is able to encourage readers to question more productively their own environment (27) and to "rethink the supposedly resolved issues of [South Africa's] transitional democracy and the promises of [its] new Constitution" (32). It is noteworthy that Rossmann does nevertheless reflect on her claim that "the significance of Adair's text lies in its status as a South African novel and in the questions arising out of its place in the landscape of South African literatures" (25). She contends that

> [i]n terms of a poststructuralist critique of the text, centrality should not be afforded to the author or her position as a South African, "displaced" in Tangier as a tourist/traveller comparable with the expatriate Bowleses. […] However, I would argue it is also interesting critically in terms of the broader underlying questions it asks about how texts function as vehicles for exploring the construction of identity and gendered subjectivities. How do texts act as useful sites for exploring the ways intimacy is staged during periods of social and political transition? How are "given" subjectivities internalised, subverted or re-invented in different geopolitical and historical contexts? (36)

This gesture towards a consideration of the novel beyond its South African condition is however co-opted back into the teleological explanation of the nation that is South Africa, for Rossmann concludes that *In Tangier* "creates a space for dialogue between the present South African social text and the past text of the Bowleses' lives and fictions" (141). She argues, for instance, that "[i]t would seem that Adair's text mirrors a South African social reality; that is, the gap between constitutional guarantees and the actual experiences of women in contemporary South Africa" (144). In Rossmann's view then, *In Tangier*, which "fails to offer equal textual, psychic or imaginative space to the position of women" (100), is symptomatic of the dominance of patriarchal relations in South African society.

In examining how *End* "stages some of the concepts on which [Njabulo] Ndebele constructed his aesthetics [ie a rediscovery of the ordinary], while at the same time bringing them to their limit and divesting them of any progressive political import" (153), Chiuppani similarly situates the novel within the South African context and argues that "some of its main characteristics are comprehensible only by taking into account a set of very particular issues which were raised in the course of the South African critical debate around political commitment during the final years of the apartheid regime" (153). Chiuppani points out that this is contrary to Adair's own intentions, which she made clear in her interview with Fred de Vries, of eschewing the "local" (154). For Chiuppani, *End* ultimately articulates a "post-engagement" in response to Ndebele's concerns with the limitations of engaged realism. Nevertheless, Chiuppani proposes that Adair's post-engagement leads to the rediscovery of a "new non-ideological politics" focused on the body and gender, and "the struggle for societal power appears to turn into the search of a novel relationship with the self" (192). Chiuppani thus maintains that Adair tries to reconceive what may constitute a sense of identity, thereby letting "detailed descriptions of the sexualized body […] completely overshadow race", a "bodily dimension" that was extremely prominent in engaged, anti-apartheid South African literature (195). For these reasons, Chiuppani concludes that "[d]espite its wider appeal, it [*End*] can only be understood as a specific reaction to" issues rooted in the South African socio-cultural context (197).

What becomes evident then in the critical reception of Adair's two novels is the persistence of the dilemma which Jamal identifies in literary and cultural production in South Africa and, I would also argue, in the reception thereof. Jamal indicates in the interview with Brownlee that he has "very rarely encountered the ability or the courage to grasp the unthinkable; to shift the axis away from the tedium of polarisation, as though our minds and imaginations were transfixed by the Manichean dialectic and precious little else" (n.p.). Ann Ussher's comment – that *In Tangier* is "an up-market work, often graphic, and would not appeal to the narrow-minded or the homophobic" (10) – is perhaps indicative of this in its anticipation of what Jamal calls "the latent conservatism of South Africa's cultural perceptual field" ("Hipper Redacted" 476), the (over)sensitive South African readers who are mostly still contained within clear categories of difference. I thus take up in the next two chapters Jamal's call to think more carefully through "indeterminacy as the condition for the

representation of culture in South Africa" (*Predicaments* 144) and to engage queerly with the "ceaseless enactment and reinvention of desire" (117), which is also a rethinking of the human in the name of love, that I believe Adair's *In Tangier* and *End* enunciate. Such a radical departure from the established and constraining ways in which South African literature has been read is in my view productive in that it not only allows me to take seriously Adair's departures from the national imaginary and resist a symptomatic, allegorical reading, but it also enables me to be attentive to areas of inquiry that have been overlooked, which, in the case of Adair, is the queer present continuous be(com)ing.

CHAPTER TWO: QUEER FUTURITY • QUEER PRESENT CONTINUOUS

2.1 QUEER THEORY AND FUTURITY

Since its inception, queer studies has been concerned with questions of futurity: Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner capture this sense of a still-to-come when they note in 1995 that "almost everything that can be called queer theory has been radically anticipatory, trying to bring a world into being" ("What Does Queer Theory" 344). Michael O'Rouke has recently noted that, despite various claims of the "death" of queer theory and the "anti-social" turn in recent queer studies which fiercely rejects any notion of a future, there is still a body of queer work "on the side of affirmation, utopianism and socio-political hope, very much on the side of life" (108) and he further maintains that current work in the field suggests that not only is there "a future for queer thinking, but that, Queer Theory is the future, a theory of the future, one which still has much to teach us about the urgent cultural and political questions of today" (107). The renewed sense of productive utopian optimism in reaction to the anti-social turn – which Jack-Judith Halberstam suggests is perhaps exemplified by Lee Edelman's *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* in its polemic "rejection of futurity as the meaning of queer critique and link[ing of] queer theory to the death drive in order to propose a relentless form of negativity" ("Anti-Social Turn" 141) – is, I would argue, most evident in José Esteban Muñoz's *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. Muñoz believes that even though queerness only exists as "an ideality that can be distilled from the past and used to imagine a future" (1), it is in this desire for a better "then and there", an alternative way of being which "resists mandates to accept that which is not enough" (96), that he finds transformative potentiality.

It thus seems to me that the recent anti-social turn has brought to the fore a more nuanced iteration of futurity in queer studies, in that negativity is taken up as a productive potential instead of as a nihilistic hopelessness. For Edelman, queer signifies the limit of the logic of "reproductive futurism" which perpetuates the "absolute privilege of heteronormativity" (*No Future* 2). That is to say, because queer is non-reproduction, it threatens the (hetero)normative social order that is figured by the child: queer is "the negativity opposed to every form of social viability" (Edelman, *No Future* 9) and "comes to figure the bar to every realization of futurity, the

resistance, internal to the social, to every social structure or form" (3). Critics such as Halberstam ("Anti-Social Turn" 141-142) have found this sense of apolitical, anti-utopian queer negativity to be problematically unavailing, even though Edelman himself observes in a footnote that some may misread his project as "an 'apolitical' formalism, an insufficiently 'historicized' intervention in the materiality of politics as we know it" (*No Future* 157). In fact, Edelman argues that "the embrace of queer negativity, then, can have no justification if justification requires it to reinforce some positive social value; its value, instead, resides in its challenge to value as defined by the social, and thus in its radical challenge to the very value of the social itself" (*No Future* 6). This formulation suggests that queer's invaluable potentiality is in its very resistance of and opposition to accepted heteronormative norms and values. Edelman also emphasises that "the efficacy of queerness, its real strategic value, lies in its resistance to a Symbolic reality that only ever invests us as subjects insofar as we invest ourselves in it, clinging to its governing fictions, its persistent sublimations, as reality itself" (*No Future* 18). He thus seems to imply that queer will only have a future if it is able to manage the perhaps impossible task of conceptualising an alternative psychoanalytical structure to the Symbolic.

Halberstam's articulation of queer negativity in their current work appears to be more politically compelling than Edelman's. They assert that "[n]egativity might well constitute an anti-politics but it should not register as apolitical" ("Anti-Social Turn" 148), thereby suggesting that in place of an apathetic ennui, queer negativity should prompt an earnest and impatient political engagement. The "negative potential of the queer" is also of particular interest to them because it allows for an exploration of the unpredictable implications of the loss of established meanings and patterns of desire ("Anti-Social Turn" 152) as well as a "rethinking [of] the meaning of the political through queerness precisely by embracing the incoherent, the lonely, the defeated, the traitorous and the disloyal and the formulations of selfhood that these negative modes set in motion" ("Queer Betrayals" 178). For this reason, Halberstam proposes that queer "names the other possibilities, the other potential outcomes, the non-linear and non-inevitable trajectories that fan out from any given event and lead to unpredictable futures" ("Anti-Social Turn" 153). Nonetheless, they are especially wary of the sanguine celebration of queer desires and urge a consideration of the ways in which homosexuality may also be "a site of complicity, complicity in everything that is

rotten about love, life, and politics as much as we want it to be complicity in the good, the true, and the righteous" ("Queer Betrayals" 185).

Heather Love's exploration of the potentiality of queer negativity resonates with Halberstam's work, and informs my understanding of Barbara Adair's complex enunciations of queer futurity in her two novels, *In Tangier* and *End*. In *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*, Love argues that queer critics have tended to either idealise accounts of the past and the progress of queer politics or focus too exclusively on redressing the negative "bad feelings" (160) and suffering which gays and lesbians throughout the years have experienced, and thus overlook "the wounds, the switchbacks, and the false starts" (32), the nuances of the difficulties and ambivalences that have marked queer experiences. For this reason, Love emphasises "backward feelings" such as "nostalgia, regret, shame, despair, *ressentiment*, passivity, escapism, self-hatred, withdrawal, bitterness, defeatism, and loneliness" (4) – seemingly apolitical feelings as a result of their "lack of vehemence and lack of dynamism" (162) but which she nonetheless believes are "tied to the experience of social exclusion and to the historical 'impossibility' of same-sex desire" (4) – in her consideration of the psychic and historical legacy of homophobia, that "historical injury" (1), that "history of loss" (29). Through this "feeling backward" to a "tradition of queer experience and representation" (4), Love attempts to "teas[e] out how this approach to the past might constitute an alternative form of politics in the present" (26). This alternative queer politics needs to, Love argues, "incorporat[e] the damage that we hope to repair" (151), thus implying that it is impossible to envisage any kind of queer transformative politics without an awareness of what needs to be transformed. Love is thus committed to a sense of queer well-being and futurity, for in asserting that "the question that faces us is how to make a future backward enough that even the most reluctant among us might want to live there" (163), she suggests that it is only through a constant engagement with the injurious past in the present that a promising future can be sustained.

2.2 *IN TANGIER WE KILLED THE BLUE PARROT* AND THE QUEER PRESENT CONTINUOUS

As I pointed out in my introduction, *In Tangier* is Adair's fictionalised account of the American writers Paul and Jane Bowles's time in Tangier, Morocco: in the novel,

Adair carefully draws out the Bowles' struggles to write as well as their struggles to love, not only each other but also their same-sex Moroccan lovers. It is well known that Paul and Jane Bowles had an unconventional, and what may perhaps be called queer, relationship: even though they were married, they had sexual relationships with people of their own sex (Meyers n.p.). Millicent Dillon also mentions in her biography of Jane Bowles, *A Little Original Sin*, that the Bowles often discussed their affairs and "their ideal of a marriage, and agreed that no marriage was any good unless the partners were free" (43). This is movingly elaborated in *In Tangier* when Paul explains that his and Jane's relationship "is a great relationship because it is based on our common understanding, or maybe misunderstanding, of the world. We have an implicit trust which, despite distance and sexual infidelity, will always be there. For Jane I am her harbour, for me, Jane is my harbour. Everyone else is just one of the small ports that we call into along the way" (46). Paul's male Moroccan lover Belquassim, through whom a significant portion of the novel is focalised, is based on the minor character of the same name in Paul Bowles's novel *The Sheltering Sky*, whereas Cherifa, Jane's female Moroccan lover, is drawn from Jane Bowles's lover of the same name, whom Jeffrey Meyers describes, perhaps too prejudiciously, as "[a]n illiterate savage who spoke only the local Moghrebi dialect and laughed uproariously at her own jokes, […and] was notorious for her black magic and insatiable greed, her love of alcohol and wild rages" (n.p.).

In Tangier, which coincidentally was published in the same year as Edelman's *No Future*, seems to suggest that there is in fact "no future" for queer. Throughout the novel, the impotence and destructiveness of queer desire is clear. Jane, for example, expresses in exasperation to Belquassim that

> I try all the time to live by standards that I have set myself, values that I have created for myself. But not many people can understand this. They think that if your values are not theirs, then you must be crazy, or lonely, or sad. And then when they tell me that I must be crazy, lonely or sad, for a minute I think that I am, and then I really do go to pieces. And it's a never-ending circle. (64-65)

As the narrative of *In Tangier* progresses, it becomes evident that it is not only Jane's gradual estrangement from Paul that causes her to break down, but also her sense of alienation resulting from her rejection of what Edelman terms the logic of reproductive futurism. She laments that "I know that I sleep in the arms of so many

women, but it's not the same. Or is it the same? These questions, such a cliché, the questions that everyone asks once in a while. Maybe I must just value what I have with Paul, but even that I have lost. I have done terrible and irreparable damage" (135). This "damage" is, I would argue, the psychological anguish and despair Jane has inflicted on herself as she continuously attempts – and fails – to find her place in either the arms of Cherifa or Paul.

Even though *In Tangier* highlights the problematic racial dynamics between Paul and Jane and their respective Moroccan lovers and suggests that part of Belquassim's defeatism is a result of his dependency on the white Europeans, I want to argue that the sense of forlorn hope that seems to pervade the novel is also indicative of the inevitable failure of anti-social queer in the face of hegemonic heteronormativity. The closing scene of *In Tangier* – in which Belquassim finishes his drink in a bar as he thinks of Paul's telegram from Spain informing him of Jane's death, while a young boy who turns out to be Belquassim's son arrives to summon him home for supper (163-164) – can be read in light of Edelman's thesis: the child leading the father home is a reminder that the queer figure has no choice but to comply with the logic of reproductive futurism. Indeed, Belquassim demonstrates that he too has come to this realisation, for in his contemplation that "when I sold myself, what did I receive in payment? Only a dream, and I have already spent my dream" (164) is the suggestion of the inaccessibility of queer utopia. Paul's earlier ruminations on hope – when he says "'Hope in what, humanity? It is such a false emotion, hope. Hope is more false than love, for hope allows a person to believe that he will ultimately attain something better. But he never will, and they never do'" (141) – also captures this despondency about the (un)sustainability of queer futures. In the opening chapter, Belquassim in fact reflects that Paul and Jane "had freed themselves from the slow decay of social bondage. Freed themselves from prejudice, tyranny and despair. And yet where are they now?" (6). Death seems to be the only other option for queer.

Nevertheless, I want to argue that an appropriate response to Belquassim's rhetorical question is that Paul and Jane are in Adair's *In Tangier*. The lives of Paul and Jane Bowles (and those of various other queer historical figures who have a significant presence in the novel, such as William Burroughs, Gertrude Stein, and the lesbian writer and salonist Natalie Barney) become intertexts to which Adair "feels backward", to borrow Love's formulation. That is to say, in drawing intertextually on

the lives of Paul and Jane Bowles as well as on their milieu and literary oeuvre, *In Tangier* urges our attending in the present moment of reading to the Bowles' emotional legacy and to Adair's elaboration of the latent potential of "backward feelings", or what Halberstam would call queer negativity. *In Tangier* can thus be understood as a textual articulation of affective feelings backward and, in this way, it opens up a potentially productive vision of queer futurity. Indeed, Linda Hutcheon argues that such "[p]ostmodern intertextuality is a *formal* manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context" (*Poetics* 118, my emphasis).

In *In Tangier*, Jane's volatile emotions seem to stem from her sense of (un)belonging, her reluctance to subscribe to the logic of reproductive futurism. She is exceedingly insecure about her own intellectual ability and is also highly aware of other people's opinions of her. For example, she grumbles to Belquassim about how, despite her novel being fairly well received by the New York literary circle, they still nonetheless "never really think of me as a real person. They may think that I am daring, but they never take my autonomy from their normal dull world seriously. I am never a part of them. And sometimes, when it gets to me, when I feel insecure, then I think that I have made the wrong choices" (65). Even though she feels that she has liberated herself from the "normal dull world" of conventionality, she is still deeply troubled by this marginalised position society has assigned her, and she also bemoans how hegemonic heteronormativity forecloses her "queer" identity when she reflects: "Why am I not a wife and mother like all those ladies that I grew up with? It would make things so much easier. I would at least be a person, someone whom the world can recognise" (65). Belquassim however observes that Jane in fact "tried to define herself in pleasure" in order to cope with this despair and self-doubt because it was "the way that she kept herself safe from those she loved most. How she kept safe from an outside world that she believed sought to judge her" (7). Nonetheless, this pleasure never seems to be sustainable. The gentle violence of the sensuality between Jane and Natalie[5], who arrives in Tangier with Gertrude (Stein) and Alice (B Toklas), captures this sense of the unsustinability of pleasure and the inevitable pain concomitant therewith: despite the intimacy of their sexual encounter, Jane gets "twisted" by

[5] It is worth noting that there is no mention of a meeting between Jane Bowles and Natalie Barney in Dillon's biography of Bowles, *A Little Original Sin*.

Natalie “in a hard brutal way” that she ends up “gasp[ing] as if she were a frangipani bud that had been torn from the bud” (114).

However, Paul suggests that it is exactly Jane’s need for emotional plenitude, her “desperate need to fill herself up with life’s emotional content” (22), that attracts him to her and keeps him going, for it is in this way that he can “experience life” and “[i]t’s the only way I really know what feelings are all about” (21). Jane’s negative, “backward” feelings thus become the impetus of sorts for Paul’s creative prolificacy. Throughout *In Tangier*, Paul displays a sense of apathetic, and almost nihilistic, detachment. In his most comprehensive elaboration thereof – he claims that “I do not care about anything; that is my value. I never speak about feelings; I do not experience that inner turmoil that most people seem to experience. I do not have feelings. I am able to stand outside the circle, never moving inside. In this way I can capture the feelings of others. I survive by words” (20) – he suggests that it is this self-imposed indifference, this almost dispassionate subjectivity, that is constructive because it paradoxically enables him to write productively about the “feelings” of others. Indeed, Jane comments that Paul “has already moved away from me into that world of nothingness where he is able to create. He needs to watch someone die, implacable and without feeling, and then he writes about it, and he writes about it beautifully” (135). It therefore becomes evident that queer negativity can sustain a sense of vitality and futurity, as Paul implies that his “survival” depends on this nihilistically impassive working-through of others’ feelings in his literary works, spurred on by Jane’s emotional fervour. Nonetheless, despite this seeming affectlessness, Paul continuously strives throughout *In Tangier* to understand the concept of love, just as Jane and Belquassim do in their different ways, and I will explore this more fully in the next chapter.

What is also noteworthy, however, is Paul’s remark that “[*s*]*entiment and memory* cannot affect me. I put *those feelings* somewhere else, otherwise I cannot work” (144, my emphasis), suggesting that for him to be productive, he has to let go of both the sentimental and the past, which for him also belongs to the affective. Love similarly locates the past in the affective, yet it is precisely through a “feeling backward”, a reaching for past structures of queer feeling, that one can forge a “backward future” (147) in which the past is reconsidered and revalorised to capacitate a queer “then and there”, to borrow Muñoz’s formulation, where this historical loss is embraced and

abjection risked (30). Jane can be understood as speaking to this when she says to Belquassim that "[n]o one can tell a story that is his own […]. We all have a common story, it's the same story, an old story, but I want you to tell me anyway. I want you to tell me because you have a new face and therefore you will tell the story differently" (14): she is interested in how Belquassim will enunciate his own "story" and implies that in repeatedly encountering the affective narratives of others, which for her are always already variations on a prior, established theme, she will be better able to make sense of her own "story" and a discursive space may be opened up to re-evaluate and perhaps even to transform the legacy of those deep-rooted affective themes of loss and abjection.

Indeed, *In Tangier* is framed as Belquassim's recollections of his past with Paul and Jane, as is indicated in the opening passage where Belquassim explains that "[m]emories are remembered so that the adventure can be told. The telling of a memory makes the story, the story that is more exotic than the experience. What happened itself is not the real, only the story is real." (1). What is suggested here is that, in recounting his involvement in the lives of Jane and Paul, Belquassim is trying to work through – and perhaps even rework – and re-evaluate his sense of displacement and despair resulting from his position as both a colonised and a queer subject. For Muñoz, "our remembrances and their ritualized telling – through film, video, performance, writing, and visual culture" have "world-making potentialities" (35). This transformative potential is evident when Belquassim realises that the "immediacy of my own suffering, maybe, helps me to see the world more clearly. If I know about pain then at least I can know the pain of others. Maybe it will allow me to forgive more easily as I will know that everyone else suffers in much the same way as I do" (11). In a similar manner to Jane, Belquassim believes that an acute awareness of his own suffering may foster a letting go of resentment and a sensitive reconsideration of the consequences of queer negativity.

As I have been suggesting, *In Tangier*'s enunciation of queer futurity only becomes distinctly apparent when it is considered inter- and metatextually. The way in which the novel is framed thus also becomes significant. In the preface, Adair notes that a young boy points out to her that "the old man with the white hair" who is writing in the café is presumably Paul Bowles and as she leaves, "he lifts up his head and looks out across the sea" (n.p.). In the last chapter of the novel, Belquassim looks out of the

bar to see Spain in the distance across the ocean (163) and his son also leads him home through the "front door that leads down to the ocean" (164). Jane Bowles muses in a notebook that "[t]here comes a moment when there is no possibility of escape, as if the spirit were a box hitting at the walls of the head. Looking at the ocean is the only relief" (qtd in M Dillon, *A Little Original Sin* 238). These two scenes of "looking at the ocean" which open and close the novel thus index the "possibility of escape" from the nullifying logic of reproductive futurism and the potential recourse to an affirming, solacing queer negativity.

The notable South African writer Marlene van Niekerk's appraisal of *In Tangier* is published, somewhat oddly, as the last page of the book and thus can be read as a sort of afterword. She concludes that *In Tangier* "leaves the reader with an overbearing sense of melancholy and sadness about the unavoidable traps of desire and exorcism that any western writer confronting any 'other' will encounter" (n.p.). The "other" here can not only be understood conventionally as the colonial other, but perhaps also as the queer other, and in this way, Van Niekerk points to the burden of the affective legacy of queer ostracism. However, she also observes that "it is a reading experience that *lingers in the mind*" and that there is "a *self-reflexive depth* to all the voices that Adair so skilfully evokes *for her purpose*" (n.p., my emphases). Van Niekerk's comments thus suggest that Adair's "feeling backward" to the legacy of Paul and Jane Bowles articulates and simultaneously attempts to disrupt the supposedly hopeless paralysis of queer negativity, for the unsettling persistence of the "backward feelings" in the novel – which she identifies as "[w]riterly narcissism, betrayal, moral confusion, love, lust and loss" (n.p.) – necessitates the attentive readers' introspection on their own relation thereto. In this way, *In Tangier* performs what I want to call a "queer present continuous". Whereas a "feeling backward" privileges the past, a queer present continuous – just as the present continuous tense describes something that is happening now but implies that it began sometime before the moment of enunciation and probably continued after it (Thomson and Martinet 154-155) – foregrounds the continuity of the past in the present and its implications for the future. *In Tangier* as an iteration of the queer present continuous thus opens a discursive space for the consideration of alternative modes of be(com)ing and encountering, of whether some sense of queer ideality and transformative politics can be distilled from an invalidating past to imagine a hopeful future.

In fact, I think that Van Niekerk's passing remarks about the "writer" become quite significant when considered more specifically in the Barthesian sense and elucidates the fundamental point I am trying to advance in this section, which is that *In Tangier* is a "writerly" text and it is in this way that a productive queer futurity can be enunciated. Throughout his work on textuality, Roland Barthes distinguishes between a "readerly" and "writerly" text. In *S/Z*, his earliest elaboration on these terms, Barthes maintains that the reader of the readerly text is "plunged into a kind of idleness" (4) and "instead of functioning himself, instead of gaining access to the magic of the signifier, to the pleasure of writing, he is left with no more than the poor freedom either to accept or reject the text" (4). Barthes adds that the readerly text is "controlled by the principle of non-contradiction, but by multiplying solidarities, by stressing at every opportunity the *compatible* nature of circumstances, by attaching narrated events together with a kind of logical 'paste,' the discourse carries this principle to the point of obsession" (156). That is to say, a readerly text is not only one in which the reader is a passive consumer of the literary work's meaning but is also one that is presented in a linear and traditional manner which forecloses the possibility for a plurality of meaning. In contrast, a writerly text is, according to Barthes, "*ourselves writing*, before the infinite play of the world (the world as function) is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system (Ideology, Genus, Criticism) which reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages" (*S/Z* 5, emphasis in original). This suggests that a writerly text is one which resists the reader's passive consumption of the literary work because it is interwoven with a multiplicity of narrative, cultural and social discourse and ideologies which challenge his or her expectations. In making sense of this plurality of meaning, the reader effectively becomes "a producer of the text" (4).

Barthes's essay "From Work to Text", which was originally published a year after *S/Z*, nuances this distinction between readerly and writerly texts. Here Barthes seems to equate the writerly text with his notion of "Text", for the Text not only "accomplishes the very plural of meaning" (159) and thus "asks of the reader a practical collaboration" (163) in the reading-writing thereof, but also disrupts the conventional, the status quo, because it is "subversive" (157) and is "always *paradoxical*" (158, emphasis in original). What is significant in this essay is Barthes's distinct elaboration of intertextuality. He argues that what makes up the plurality of the Text's meaning is

that it is

> woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages (what language is not?), antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony. The intertextual in which every text is held, it itself being the text-between of another text, is not to be confused with some origin of the text: to try to find the "sources", the "influences" of a work, is to fall in with the myth of filiation; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet already read: they are quotations without inverted commas. (160)

That is to say, every Text is heteroglossic by nature because it is never self-enclosed but always already contains within it various social and cultural discourses as well as vestiges of other texts, whether literary or not, which threaten any stable, unitary conception of meaning. Barthes also seems to suggest here that the point is not to trace and identify a literary work's intertexts, but rather to understand the relational nature of all texts and to make meaning of the networks of affiliation.

Barthes carefully articulates this understanding of intertextuality in a later treatise on textuality, *The Pleasure of the Text*. For Barthes,

> *Text* means *Tissue*; but whereas hitherto we have always taken this tissue as a product, a ready-made veil, behind which lies, more or less hidden, meaning (truth), we are now emphasizing, in the tissue, the generative idea that the text is made, is worked out in a perpetual interweaving; lost in this tissue–this texture–the subject unmakes himself, like a spider dissolving in the constructive secretions of its web. (64, emphases in original)

This again emphasises that all texts are intertextual and what in turn makes a text "readerly" or "writerly" is the way in which the text itself foregrounds this intertextual nature. The reader of a writerly text gets entangled and "unmakes" him- or herself in this web of (inter)texts and experiences a *jouissance* or bliss as a result of this loss of the stability of selfhood in language. The writerly text of bliss, Barthes argues, "discomforts (perhaps to the point of a certain boredom), unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language" (*Pleasure* 14). It is thus in these texts' subversion of what Barthes calls *doxa* – the conventional, the accepted – that the reader, disintegrating into the realm of textuality and unravelling his or her settled sense of identity, experiences a moment of orgasmic bliss. On the other hand, though the distinction is not as differentially unambiguous, texts of pleasure – that is,

readerly texts – are texts which are pleasurable because they conform to the ideologies of the dominant class and plug the reader into its social values: according to Barthes, the text of pleasure is one that "contents, fills, grants euphoria; the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, is linked to a *comfortable* practice of reading" (14, emphasis in original).

In Tangier's complex writerly intertextuality has clearly baffled some reviewers. According to Martha Stone, whose review appears to be the only one from outside South Africa, *In Tangier* is "a hybrid consisting of excerpts from six works of fiction and poetry by Paul Bowles and two works of fiction by his wife, Jane Auer Bowles, all held together by Barbara Adair's novel. At no point does Adair give the reader any indication of which work is being quoted" (45). For Stone, then, *In Tangier* is part fiction and part a collection of unattributed excerpts. Adam Levin, whose review "Paul, Jane and Barbara" appears in a local newspaper, similarly finds Adair's apparent "borrowing" (to use his term) of passages from Paul and Jane Bowles's work problematic. He points out that "[i]n the course of 164 pages, a total of 33 pages of either Paul or Jane's work is simply lifted in page-long chunks" (n.p.). It is unclear, however, which pages Levin is referring to here, for the italicised first-person stream-of-conscious meditations which intersperse the novel total 37 pages and, though presented as if they are excerpts from the journals of the Bowleses[6], are in fact fictional because they frequently mention Belquassim, whom the Bowleses would never have been able to interact with because he is a character drawn from Paul Bowles's *The Sheltering Sky*. Perhaps naively, Levin asserts that "[w]hile some might pass this off as a post-modern literary technique, for me it verges on plagiarism" (n.p.) and he further insists that "the story, if not the details, [must remain] true to the spirit and motivation of the subject" (n.p.). The issues raised by these reviewers relating to originality, the extent to which writers may use other writers' published work and the fictionalising of biographical "fact" are in fact addressed by Adair herself, not only indirectly through the metafictionality of *In Tangier*, but also directly in her acknowledgements as well as in her later article "Speaking through the Mask of Culture", which responds to the highly publicised dispute between Antjie Krog and

[6] Shirley Kossick also incorrectly identifies these sections in her description of *In Tangier*: "Using the recollections of Belquassim as well as *journal entries of both Paul and Jane*, Adair pieces together a compelling portrayal of their lives in Tangier" (n.p., my emphasis).

Stephen Watson regarding their poetical reworkings of the Bleek-Lloyd archives of indigenous Khoisan narratives and Watson's accusation that Krog plagiarised his adaptations thereof[7]. I thus think that it is necessary to consider carefully what Levin rejects as the "post-modern literary technique[s]" (n.p.) of *In Tangier* and the implications thereof.

In "Speaking through the Mask of Culture", Adair self-knowingly weaves, without citation, the words of not only Barthes but also Julia Kristeva into her own: she claims that in postmodernity, "we have texts as a mosaic of quotations[8]. Intertextuality, an unconscious imitation; the citations that go to make up the text are anonymous, untraceable and yet already read, they are quotations without inverted commas, a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture[9]" (n.p.). In this way, Adair positions herself resolutely within the tradition of postmodernist notions of textuality and authorship. Jean Rossmann explores this through the metatextuality of the novel and comments on how Adair uses Paul (Bowles) – who was known as a translator and promoter of Moroccan artist-writers such as his "protégé" (M Dillon, *You Are Not I* xiv) Mohammed Mrabet and Ahmed Yacoubi, with whom he had a "creative relationship" (*ibid.* 224) – to reflect on the nature of her own creative-writing process (34-36). For example, Rossmann discusses how Adair articulates her own playful practices of appropriation and reworking when she lets Paul reflect that "[i]t is a new thing for me to record the story of another. Yes, I do make some changes, but the story and the language are not my own. Now I am playing with the words of another. They are not my words. I do not own them. Yet I feel that they are mine because I write them down" (*In Tangier* 124; qtd in Rossmann 35).

Nonetheless, Adair's postmodern "playing" with others' words seems to be curiously problematised in her suggestion in "Speaking through the Mask of Culture" that because "there are only a limited number of so-called unique combinations" of originality, what is left for the individual is the "imitation of the styles and words of

[7] See chapter one part one of Kathryn Barbara Highman's PhD dissertation, "Forging a New South Africa: Plagiarism and the National Imaginary", for a detailed analysis of the case.
[8] In her essay "Word, Dialogue and Novel" which presents the ideas of the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, Kristeva writes that for Bakhtin, "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (37).
[9] In his well-known essay "The Death of the Author", Barthes suggests that "[t]he text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (146).

others" and thus "[w]riters necessarily speak through a mask, the mask of culture" (n.p.). These claims point to Arthur Schopenhauer's essay "On Authorship and Style", in which he actually censures such lazy imitation. For Schopenhauer, "[t]o imitate another's style is equivalent to wearing a mask. However fine this may be, it soon becomes insipid and insufferable because it is lifeless, so that even the ugliest living face is better. […] We should discover faults of style in the writings of others in order to avoid them in our own" (515-516). Adair, however, astutely qualifies this mask as being that of "culture", because for her, as for Barthes, all literary works are necessarily situated within a network of socio-cultural discourses. In thus resituating the lives and works of Paul and Jane Bowles in *In Tangier* as what Hutcheon would call "historiographic metafiction", Adair calls attention to such "faults" or oversights as not recognising that "[t]he interaction of the historiographic and the metafictional foregrounds the rejection of the claims of both 'authentic' representation and 'inauthentic' copy alike, and the very meaning of artistic originality is as forcefully challenged as is the transparency of historical referentiality" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 110). That is to say, the past needs to be reconceptualised as being no longer reliably teleological because it is also only accessible through textualisations, and thus *In Tangier*'s re-examining of the discursive contexts of the Bowleses opens this past up to potential revisions with transformative implications for the present and the future. Barthes's enunciation of the intertext as "simply a *circular memory*" (*Pleasure* 36, emphasis in original) is thus also instructive in its analogy of complicating of linear temporality and textuality.

Indeed, what I think is significant for my consideration of queer futurity is not whether Adair unquestioningly accepts the postmodern notion of (inter)textuality, but rather how her taking up thereof opens up a space for a queer present continuous of alternatives. In the acknowledgements which appear just after the title page of *In Tangier*, Adair claims that readers "will know these words or sentences or paragraphs or poetry. They will know who wrote them. They will know where the words come from. *They will also know why they are placed where they are in my text*" (n.p., my emphasis). Adair thus self-consciously hints at her practice of feeling backward to the (literary) archive of queer negative affect and further recognises the attentive reader's writerly awareness of its legacies. Stone's review picks up on this, albeit reductively, when she maintains that *In Tangier* "is worth hunting down by anyone interested in

the lives of the Bowleses and their circle. Better still, it may encourage some readers to explore or re-explore the writings of its main characters" (45). In the novel, Adair has Paul reflect more discriminately on the impact of his work when he contemplates that "when I die my books will remain, and if they are still read people will remember me. Or maybe they will not. Maybe they will just remember the people who are made by the words. They will not be my words. They will just be words. People's words. […] Nothing lasts, but does it pass on?" (125). Though Paul's words literally "pass on" through Adair's novel, what is more significant is how Adair enunciates a queer present continuous: she suggests that Paul's words become part of the (textualised) history of queer negativity which, when remembered, may end up changing people's consciousness, which in turn may potentially bring about a change in social circumstances where queerness can re-*member* itself into a more progressive society.

One of the queer figures that Adair feels backward to in *In Tangier* is Kit, the female protagonist of Paul Bowles's *The Sheltering Sky*. Belquassim offers a reading of the last section of *The Sheltering Sky*, in which Kit gets picked up by a caravan of Bedouin traders after Port's death and becomes attached to one of the camel drivers, Belquassim (P Bowles 285ff.). Adair's Belquassim believes that

> Kit, after the death of her husband, then left more than just his body, she left her senses behind. She left her America and became part of a caravan that was moving its silver across the desert. She left behind her civilisation, her body-wrapped right-mindedness, to appropriate another civilisation, one that inflicted a suffering that she could never previously have known, but one that allowed her to revel with an almost sensuous pleasure in her own suffering and to understand that it is only death that can claim ownership. (28)

It is evident here that Belquassim's point of view focuses tenderly on Kit's giving up of what Barthes would call *doxa* to embrace an alternative "civilisation", an alternative mode of being in which pain becomes an impetus to be in touch with – and perhaps even transcend – the bodily self. This contrasts the way Dillon frames her analysis in *A Little Original Sin* of the same section. For Dillon, Kit in this final section of *The Sheltering Sky* "goes deeper and deeper into a savage landscape where she is subjected to a series of rapes and brutalities. She even comes to love her degradation in a world that is sex and death and violence and nothing else. She finally falls into madness" (175), and thus what is foregrounded is a sense not only of

victimhood but also of a demise and ruination of the self.

Furthermore, Adair feels backward to the two puzzling female protagonists of Jane Bowles's *Two Serious Ladies*, Miss Goering and Mrs Copperfield, who according to Dillon "seem in a perpetual traction of the emotions" (*Little Original Sin* 101). In the extract from the closing pages of Jane Bowles's novel that Jane reads to Belquassim, Mrs Copperfield, who has just returned from a trip to Panama where she met the prostitute Pacifica, meets up with Miss Goering in a restaurant and reflects that

> "I can't live without her [Pacifica], not for a minute. I'd go completely to pieces." To which one of her serious friends [ie Miss Goering] replies: "But you have gone to pieces, or do I misjudge you dreadfully?" "True enough," says Mrs Copperfield, "I have gone to pieces, which is a thing I have wanted to do for years … but I have my happiness, which I guard like a wolf, and I have authority now and a certain amount of daring, which, if you remember correctly, I never had before." (*In Tangier* 64)

This suggests that Mrs Copperfield has finally triumphed in her refusal to live according to the dictates of the logic of reproductive futurism, and in fact feels that she gains a sense of respect and a certain liberation in her "going to pieces", in her audacious breaking (up) of *doxa*. What is further noteworthy is Adair's omission of the clause "I know I am as guilty as I can be", which appears in Jane Bowles's original (197) where Adair has ellipses, and this suggests a sanguine elision of negative culpability in order to foreground the affirmative and productive sense of queer futurity. Though Jane asserts to Belquassim that she wants to feel exactly as Mrs Copperfield – whose "sole object in life was to be happy" (J Bowles 40) – does, she also realises that she does not yet "have that certain amount of daring" (*In Tangier* 64) to challenge the (hetero)normalising structures she is confronted with. Adair is thus not naively unaware of the emotional struggles concomitant with the desire to belong in unbelonging: just as Jane Bowles in writing *Two Serious Ladies* "was not simply creating character as she wrote; she was also creating herself and her life to come" (M Dillon, *Little Original Sin* 107), so Adair in *In Tangier* questions and works through the world-making potentiality, as Muñoz would have it, of a queer present continuous.

It is in this way that I understand Adair's *In Tangier* to open up a discursive third space for a consideration of the productivity of alternative, queer be(com)ings. In an interview with Jonathan Rutherford, Homi Bhabha explains that this notion of the

third space "displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom" (211). Though it does not dismiss and lose sight of archives of antisocial queer negativity that it feels backward to, *In Tangier* in its iteration of a queer present continuous unsettles the way in which these relationalities have been conventionally received. For example, in feeling backward to Jane Bowles and her work – which in Dillon's reading is about "what is common to us all: of that place within ourselves where we are at one and the same time masculine and feminine, childlike and powerful, aged and just beginning, of that place where we go to death and we hold on to life" (*Little Original Sin* 423) – Adair continues to negotiate the either/or-ness of the logic of reproductive futurism to advance an and-ness of queer antisocial sociality and present continuous.

Furthermore, this kind of hybrid third space, according to Bhabha, "gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (211). As problematic as Levin's reading of *In Tangier* may be, his review signals that the novel does indeed open up this discursive third space. When Levin elaborates that he is "suspicious" as to whether *In Tangier* "stays true to the spirit of the Bowleses" and claims that "[o]nce the writer has lost the reader's trust in this way, it is difficult to re-establish it. Was Cherifa so evil? I wonder. Was Jane so angry?" (n.p.), he highlights how the novel unsettles readers' cultural and textual assumptions and conventional approach to meaning-making. Indeed, Dillon maintains that both Paul and Jane Bowles "[i]n their originality […] shared an antagonism to imposed systems of thought, to academia, to intellectual and literary snobs" (*Little Original Sin* 43). Paul and Jane Bowles thus serve to elaborate an affective heteroglossia in *In Tangier*, in which the attentive reader is compelled to pragmatically reconsider and revise notions of queer negativity to ground future possibilities. That is to say, Adair does not categorically attempt to make reparations, but rather signals (inter)textually the possibility for a rethinking of the productive potentiality of queer antisocial affectivity. For Barthes, intertextuality suggests "the impossibility of living outside the infinite text – […] the book creates the meaning, the meaning creates life" (*Pleasure* 36). Paul's comment to Belquassim that "[s]ometimes I think we should all live as if we were in a novel, then it would not hurt so much" (82) addresses, however dispassionately, the "world-making potentialities"

(Muñoz 35) of such intertextual remembering and retelling.

2.3 *END* AND THE QUEER PRESENT CONTINUOUS

Adair's second novel *End*, as I suggested in the introduction, draws on and reworks the 1942 film *Casablanca* in complex ways. As Fred de Vries further points out, "[t]here's also the cruel writer Freddie, a kind of superimposed character, who talks to her protagonists, called X and Y, and treats them like puppets on a string. Oh, and one of them changes gender, whenever it suits the manipulative Freddie" (n.p.). In this section, I will consider how *End* enunciates, similarly to *In Tangier*, a potentially productive vision of queer antisocial sociality. Although the novel's title suggests a sense of finality, of no beyond, no future, what *End* rather seems to delineate is the limits of the logic of reproductive futurism. Furthermore, *End* seems committed to a queer present continuous where the futurity and world-making potentialities of (queer) textuality lie in the *sujet en procès* who, according to Kristeva, "remodel[s] the historically accepted and defined *chora* of *signifiance*, through the proposition of the representation of a different relation to natural objects, to social apparatuses, and to the body itself" ("Subject in Process" 142). This fluid motility of the unnamed journalist's be(com)ing is dramatised through *End*'s metafictional nature, and the unnamed journalist comes to occupy the position of what Edelman terms the "*sinthom*osexual", or rather, what I will call a *sinthom*osexual *en procès*.

Beppi Chiuppani, whose PhD chapter is the only academic consideration of *End*, argues that the plots of *End* and the film *Casablanca* are both "constructed around the political and the sentimental" and thus the novel's setting up of the film as an intertext "elicits in the reader the expectation of an interaction between these two dimensions" (163). Chiuppani further maintains that "[r]ight from the prologue, we realize that if *Casablanca* was commenting on the dilemma of engagement in the struggle for European freedom, *End* will be thinking about a similar problematic in relation to recent African history" (162). What I think *End* does more pertinently is to situate and question the dilemma of interaction between the political and the affective in relation to the logic of reproductive futurism. Indeed, De Vries points out in his interview with Adair that the "story of *Casablanca* is essentially the choice between love and virtue, between staying with the woman you love and doing the right thing" (n.p.), and Adair indicates in that interview that *Casablanca* "is all about true love ladida" and that she

had hoped to turn the conventional love story "on its head" and "[m]ake the clichés the opposite" (n.p.).

The film *Casablanca* focuses on a love triangle in which Rick Blaine, an American café owner who holds two letters of transit, has to choose between his enduring love for Ilsa Lund, a woman who was his former lover, and helping her husband Victor Laszlo, who is involved in the resistance movement, escape Vichy-controlled Casablanca to continue his fight against the Nazis. Rick eventually lets Ilsa and her husband have the letters of transit to leave Casablanca, thereby allowing the legally married couple to remain together. Rick remarks to Ilsa in his newfound sense of political commitment that they both know she belongs with Victor as she is "part of his work. The thing that keeps him going". In this way, Rick suggests that conventional, heteronormative forms of kinship are necessary for political activism, for a future free of oppression. In *End*, Adair focuses on queer's forward-looking constraintlessness when Freddie takes the queer unnamed journalist with her on the plane out of South Africa, leaving the married couple X and Y behind to face the law – Y is arrested "on a charge of being an accessory to the murder of a civilian in Berea and dealing in cocaine, mandrax and cannabis" (152). The unnamed journalist further points out to X that "You are part of her [Y]. You are the thing that keeps her going" (153). The implication here is that X and Y are ontologically constitutive – the man *is* the woman – and hence that the heteronormative demarcations of sex and patterns of intimacy are inevitably arrested in unproductive impotency, in a no-future.

Furthermore, in *Casablanca*, a Bulgarian woman approaches Rick to find out whether Captain Renault is "trustworthy", as she is prepared to offer herself to him for sex in exchange for exit visas. Not wanting her to ruin her new marriage, Rick arranges for her husband to win at the roulette table so that they will have enough money to buy the visas themselves. This suggests that heroic patriarchy is always in support of maintaining heteronormative forms of kinship. Adair, however, reworks this scene from the film to comment on the inhibiting nature of the logic of reproductive futurism and the (symbolic) law. In *End*, a woman of "about twenty" years old walks up to a policeman to enquire "what kind of man" the police captain is, as he has promised her husband a job in the police force if she sleeps with him. The woman and her husband are from the Eastern Cape and are trying to survive in Johannesburg. The policeman urges them to leave the city and arranges for her husband to win at the

roulette table so that they will have enough money to return to the Eastern Cape (127-129). What is thus emphasised is that it is indeed the patriarchal, symbolic law – as figured in the policeman, the enforcer of the law – that holds such stultifying, heteronormative organisations of communal relations in place.

Adair's hesitancy to accept the logic of reproductive futurism becomes clearly evident when Y muses that

> [e]veryone seems to have children, and if they don't then they have a cat. I suppose it is a biological imperative that all women need to bear children so that the race will continue. Biology disguised as good sex. Or maybe disguised as selfless sharing. No one else will need you to share your life with them. Or is it just plain fear that makes people reproduce, the fear of death, the need for immorality, immorality through your own genes? The need not to be alone. Maybe it is just ego, the need to be so desperately needed. I wonder. (108)

That is to say, the claim that reproduction is a necessary "biological imperative" is merely an excuse to disguise a fundamental fear and empty narcissism. The peculiar last chapter of *End*, which Chiuppani glosses as "a surreal epilogue to the story" (165), thus fits into Adair's problematising of the logic of reproductive futurism. Princess Diana is imagined to visit a refugee camp in the north of Mozambique. After having engaged with the people, Diana is assassinated on her way back to the plane. More than just a critique of the colonisers' superficial, self-serving attempts to make reparations, the scene also highlights, in my view, the absurdity and futility of patrilineage – or of what Halberstam calls reproductive time, the heteronormative "temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety, and inheritance" (*In a Queer Time and Place* 6) – as embodied in the notion of monarchy and exemplified in Diana, who is described as "the future Queen of England" (157). Diana is a "vacant princess" who is "as vacant as their [the refugees'] world" (158) because she is trapped in an inescapable, hopeless existence, just like the refugees, and thus her assassination highlights this vulnerability and ineffectuality of reproductive futurism. When the unnamed journalist states in face of this that "I am tired of all of this now. It all seems so desperate. I want something else" (159), he[10]

[10] Gender pronouns used to refer to the unnamed journalist will follow the sexual designation in the *End* chapter under discussion.

seems to be yearning for nonnormative logics of engaging with and be(com)ing in the world.

End seems to suggest that drug use is one way to embody an alternative, queer temporality. Y is a drug addict and dealer, and her habits are often a point of contention between her and her husband, X. X complains to Y that "I hate that white powder that you put up your nose or put into a pipe to smoke. […] Don't you sometimes wonder if it is worth all of this? I mean, what are you doing it for?" (63) and accuses her of trying to break free from herself and her responsibilities when he reflects that "I wonder if you know you are trying to escape from yourself" (64). For Halberstam, queer temporality is about "the potentiality of a life unscripted by the conventions of family, inheritance, and child rearing" (*In a Queer Time and Place* 2), and Y embraces this counterhegemonic productivity of drugs. Y recognises the stagnancy of rigid conventionality and affirms drugs' ability to open up a queer present continuous when she asks X whether she should "remain here hiding out with you then? […] Or shall I carry on the best I can in these circumstances? If I stop the powder it will be as if I have stopped breathing. I shall die. If we were all like you the world would die" (63). Indeed, X does acknowledge that Y's drug addiction is more than just a shirking from responsibilities when he remarks that she "needs to be free and she is fighting for freedom. Freedom is the only thing that she knows about" (141-142). That is to say, drugs become a different kind of letter of transit, one which allows a breaking free from the confining logic of reproductive futurism. This is emphasised in *End* when the drug dealer Y meets is constantly identified as the "weasel" (84-85, 133-134), a reference to *Casablanca*'s Ugarte, who is suggested at the beginning of the film to have murdered German couriers to obtain the letters of transit, which he planned to sell to Victor Laszlo. There are further parallels between the drugs in *End* and the letters of transit in *Casablanca*: for example, the weasel-like drug dealer slips the drugs he is trying to hide in the piano in a Johannesburg hotel bar (94) , just as the letters of transit were hidden under the hinged lid of the piano in Rick's Café in the film.

The potential for liberation in drugs thus seems to be situated in the provisionally sustaining unbelonging and disconnection from the logic of reproductive futurism. Y argues that "[c]hildren fasten people into the pointlessness of existence. Drugs offer a way out of living because then you can live in a world that is false and untrue. You

create it, you die in it, and you can pretend" (108). Freddie, however, is apprehensive of the egocentric self-absorption of this apparent unshackling, even though she had earlier pointed to the agency of those who choose "[t]he drug world – at least one changes consciousness by choice" (61). She maintains that

> [i]f you think that drugs point to a way out, even though the rest of the world frowns on the way out because they only feel secure in the world if they believe everyone is really there in it with them, everyone is as grey and sober as themselves. You think they give you a way out as they change the world for you. They alter the way that you see things. They expand your mind. Would they do the same for X? I sort of think that they wouldn't. (109)

Freddie ultimately suggests that drugs do not bring the subject to embody a tenably radical queer temporality, for the temporality that drugs allow one to embody tries to disrupt the hegemonic "repro-time" (Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place* 5) and thus is circumscribed and will never be sanctioned by it. Indeed, Y has not been able to let go of her heteronormative marriage and the couple is left to face the (symbolic) law.

Furthermore, the unnamed journalist – "the I, the he, the she, the changeable-at-a-whim character" (9) – indicates to X that "[w]here I am going you can't follow. What I have to do you cannot be any part of" (153). This is indicative of Adair's critique of the logic of reproductive futurism: reproductive heteronormativity is unable to figure the undoing of the symbolic, which an embodiment of radical queer temporality seems to demand, and is thus left behind. In the prologue to *End*, it is said that "many eyes in imprisoned Africa turned hopefully, or desperately, towards the freedom of America, the freedom to live and the freedom not to die" (n.p.). Freddie's flying out of Johannesburg with the unnamed journalist, the queer "sometimes-different-gender protagonist" (87), thus suggests an attempt to enunciate an emancipating queer present continuous in which queerness has "the freedom to live and the freedom not to die". This seems to point to the Deleuzoguattarian lines of flight that David Ruffolo articulates in his *Post-Queer Politics*. For Ruffolo, the politics of "queer" is stagnant because

> bodies can only be conceptualized through the representations and significations of identity norms that inscribe bodies. The emphasis on *being* here maintains an unproductive commitment to meaning. Post-

> queer's interest in the creative and rhizomatic functioning of becoming is not in opposition to being, meaning, representations, and significations but asks different questions around what bodies can do as they are dialogically negotiated through creative relations that do not refer back to the inscriptive limitations of subjectivity. (15, emphasis in original)

In other words then, drugs merely reposition the subject in the endless, unproductive cycle of significations and representations. Through the unnamed journalist, Adair seems to enunciate a "post-queer" body politics of becoming that is not limited to the "discursive reproductions of identity norms" (Ruffolo 24): in the constant changing of biological sex, the unnamed journalist straddles the queer/heteronormative binary and thus seems to transcend the "inscriptive limitations of subjectivity" to produce creative flows of desire.

Nevertheless, I think that *End* suggests that this ontology of becoming necessarily happens within symbolic textuality, hence my use of "be(com)ing". Freddie recognises the symbolic nature of writing, for she points out to the unnamed journalist that "a future means you have to keep on living. And you have no future beyond these pages" (112), and thus proposes to her that "maybe I can write another story with you as the main character in it" (154). What is implicit here is the acknowledgement that even such radical queerness as the unnamed journalist seems to embody is dependent on significations and representations. Freddie in fact suggests that all engagement with the world is necessarily mediated through the symbolic when she muses that she herself "would only be here for the length of this novel. Once it ended, she and this created world would no longer exist. Only the readers would continue to exist in their own worlds, worlds that they created in which to pass their own time" (8). That is to say, people make sense of their world through significations and representations, just as the writer constructs a novel through language. The world-making potentiality of texts is also indirectly signalled here. Freddie clarifies that "[w]ords don't die. They just have to be read. It's only the readers who die" (3). What *End* precipitates is the "death" of the reader in heteronormative repro-time, and in this manner potentially opens access to a "mode of being" – or rather, a mode of queer be(com)ing – "in the world that is also inventing the world" (Muñoz 121). *End*'s feeling backward to *Casablanca* further emphasises this world-making potentiality of the queer present continuous. For Muñoz, this kind of "[q]ueer restaging of the past helps us imagine new temporalities that interrupt straight time" (171). Indeed, the unnamed journalist's

comment to Freddie – that "[t]hanks Freddie, for reminding me of the movie […]. It has made things so much more complicated; now I will have to think about love and romance… love and loss" (2) – suggests that Adair's intertextual reworking of *Casablanca* necessitates a more "complicated" and more fluid conceptualisation of desire: what is lost in this process is our commitment to the logic of reproductive futurism. It is the unnamed journalist in *End* who embodies such a radical queer temporality and who advances a rhetorical space for a queer antisocial sociality and be(com)ing. The unnamed journalist thus comes to occupy what I am calling, drawing on both Edelman and Kristeva, the figure of the *sinthom*osexual *en procès* who is disruptive of the symbolic logic of reproductive futurism.

According to Edelman, the "defining mark of futurism" is that it "inscribes the faith that temporal duration will result in the realization of meaning by way of a 'final signifier' that will make meaning whole at last" (*No Future* 37). This suggests that the logic of reproductive futurism accedes to a meaningful, symbolic telos despite its constant deferral. To contrast this, Edelman, informed by the Lacanian *sinthome*[11], develops the notion of "*sinthom*osexuality" which "scorns such belief in a final signifier, reducing *every* signifier to the status of the letter and insisting on access to jouissance in place of access to sense, on identification with one's sinthome instead of belief in its meaning" (37, emphasis in original). That is to say, the *sinthom*osexual is not preoccupied so much with intelligibility but rather with the drives of *jouissance* which disrupt all attempts at meaning-making. Indeed, Edelman clarifies that "[d]esignating a locus of enjoyment beyond the logic of interpretation, and thus beyond the correlative logic of the symptom and its cure, the sinthome refers to the mode of jouissance constitutive of the subject, which defines it no longer as subject of desire, but rather as subject of the drive" (113). Even though this drive for Edelman is the death drive – he claims that "jouissance evokes the death drive that always insists as the void in and of the subject, beyond its fantasy of self-realization, beyond the

[11] Edelman explains that "[t]he sinthome – a term, as Lacan explains in Seminar 23, that he takes from an 'old way of writing what was written later as "symptom"' – speaks to the singularity of the subject's existence, to the particular way each subject manages to knot together the orders of the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real. […] Though it functions as the necessary condition for the subject's engagement of Symbolic reality, the sinthome refuses the Symbolic logic that determines the exchange of signifiers; it admits no translation of its singularity and therefore carries nothing of meaning, recalling in this the letter as the site at which meaning comes undone" (35).

pleasure principle " (25) – and thus queer means a figural embodiment of the death drive, Edelman nonetheless attributes a contingent political agency to queer. He maintains that even though no one can exist "outside the Symbolic", we can still "make the choice to accede to our cultural production as figures – *within* the dominant logic of narrative, *within* Symbolic reality – for the dismantling of such a logic and thus for the death drive it harbors within" (22, emphases in original).

This "subject of the drive" who works within the symbolic to unsettle it points to Kristeva's notion of the *sujet en procès*, who is attuned to the "process of *signifiance*, that is, [to the] pre-verbal drives and semiotic operations logically if not chronologically anterior to the phenomenon of language. In this process, the unitary subject discovered by psychoanalysis is only one moment, a time of arrest, a stasis, exceeded and threatened by this movement" ("Subject in Process" 134). For Kristeva then, the *sujet en procès* is constantly motile and this access to the semiotic[12], affective drives threatens to undo symbolic stabilities and structures. In her groundbreaking work *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva emphasises how the semiotic and the symbolic modalities together constitute the signifying process (24), which she calls *signifiance*, and she highlights the subversive nature of the semiotic, as it is the "return of instinctual functioning within the symbolic, as a negativity introduced into the symbolic order, and as the transgression of that order" (69). Kristeva argues that it is in "poetic language" that the semiotic manifests most distinctly, and Kelly Oliver makes Kristeva's position clear that "within poetic language, the semiotic element disrupts the unity of the Symbolic and thereby disrupts the unity of the subject of/in language": in other words, poetic language "calls the subject into crisis, puts the subject on trial" (13) and the subject is thus always one of fluid be(com)ing.

Whereas Edelman's recuperative politics is less obvious, Kristeva's project is clearly a political one. Edelman recognises that the *sinthom*osexual in fact "conjures a politicality unrecognizable as such by virtue of its resistance to futurism's

[12] Noëlle McAfee clarifies that for Kristeva, the semiotic "is the extra-verbal way in which bodily energy and affects make their way into language. The semiotic includes both the subject's drives and articulations. While the semiotic may be expressed verbally, it is not subject to regular rules of syntax" (17), whereas the symbolic is "a way of signifying that depends on language as a sign system complete with its grammar and syntax" (17).

constraining definition of the political field" ("Ever After" 472), while Oliver notes that "[f]or Kristeva, to recognize the subject-in-process is to recognize the death drive and eros. It is to recognize drive force that transgresses the Law. […] To recognize the subject-in-process expands our conception of the social. The social becomes both Law and transgression, both Meaning and nonmeaning. It becomes a social-in-process/on trial" (184). What I am thus foregrounding in reading Edelman through Kristeva is the agency and present continuity inherent in Edelman's figure of the *sinthom*osexual. *Sinthom*osexuality, Edelman argues,

> affirms a constant, eruptive jouissance that responds to the inarticulable Real, to the impossibility of sexual rapport or of ever being able to signify the relation between the sexes. […] *Sinthom*osexuality, then, like the death drive, engages, by refusing, the normative stasis, the immobility, of sexuation to which we are delivered by Symbolic law and the promise of sexual relation. (*No Future* 74)

Both Edelman and Kristeva are thus attentive to the uncontainably transgressive and transformative *jouissance* of the drives and the nuanced ways which it may unsettle symbolic structures of meaning. In this manner, my figure of the *sinthom*osexual *en procès* recuperates Edelman's queer antisociality for a queer antisocial sociality grounded not in the negotiation of empathetic intersubjective recognition but in the connective potentialities of *jouissance*. That is to say, rather than completely disavowing relationality and identity-based notions of community, the *sinthom*osexual *en procès* insists on the emancipatory potentialities of *jouissance* and the creative, unossified forms of selfhood and belonging which attend to these pre-symbolic drives in the symbolic. Queer is thus not just a mere "structural position" (Edelman, *No Future* 24) negating futurism, but becomes a present continuous be(com)ing.
The unnamed journalist reflects at the beginning of *End* that "[r]oles must be played in life" (17), and Freddie later adds that "[r]oles can always be changed, like the clothes that you wear" (120). In an interview about *Gender Trouble*, the work in which she first formulated the notion of the performativity of gender, Judith Butler maintains that

> [t]he bad reading goes something like this: I can get up in the morning, look in my closet, and decide which gender I want to be today. I can take out a piece of clothing and change my gender, stylize it, and then that evening I can change it again and be something radically other, so that what you get is something like the commodification of gender, and the

> understanding of taking on a gender as a kind of consumerism. […] [M]y whole point was that the very formation of subjects, the very formation of persons, *presupposes* gender in a certain way – that gender is not to be chosen and that "performativity" is not radical choice and it's not voluntarism. […] Performativity has to do with repetition, very often the repetition of oppressive and painful gender norms to force them to resignify. (83-84, emphasis in original)

In pointing to what Butler claims is a "bad reading" of her notion of performativity, *End* in fact parodies the seemingly volitional resituation in and re-identification with gendered subject positions and the reductivity of identity-based politics. This is most evident in the various scenes where X has sexual intercourse with the unnamed journalist whose biological sex alternates seemingly whimsically between male and female in different chapters of the novel, thereby necessitating readers to interpret the acts as variously homosexual and heterosexual. It is exactly this kind of "circulation of identity norms" (20) that Ruffolo finds problematic: he argues that "resignification as a form of discursive power actually limits bodies to the possibilities within the strict realm of subjectivity" (22) and he believes that Butler's notion of performativity has been central in this "solidification of queer, subjectivity, and discourse" (25). As I have been suggesting, *End* articulates an alternative: the *sinthom*osexual *en procès* who embodies a queer present continuous be(com)ing that does not inhibit the free play of *jouissance*.

In Xai Xai, the unnamed journalist meets up with X, whom he first comes into contact with at a pub in Maputo, and they have an erotic encounter:

> He couldn't see X, but he knew that he was in the room. He could smell him – that faint smell of urine that all men seemed to have hovering around them. Then he saw the shadow reflected in the brown-spotted mirror of the open cupboard door. The reflection beckoned him inwards. Like a corpse, the body moved slightly as the breeze from outside blew the cupboard door. It swung inwards, the blank holes that were closed eyes gaped upwards. X's mouth was slightly open, his bare, smooth chest rose and fell with his breathing. His nipples were wine stained, darker than the rest of his skin, bullet scars, and his hands were flung behind his head as if he had just fallen backwards. He walked into the room and moved up to the body. Slowly he leant over it and took one of the nipples between his lips. X moaned, as if in a dream. Then the cupboard door swung shut and he could no longer see the image, nor feel the nipple in his mouth. "Hello," he said and walked over to the bed. He leaned over to kiss X. Lips

lightly on a cheek. (50)

In this first sex scene, the physical body is sexuated only through the male pronouns and it is thus symbolic signification that inscribes the body in gender. For Edelman, *sinthom*osexuality "finds something other in the words of the law, enforcing an awareness of something else, something that remains unaccounted for in the accounts we give of ourselves, by figuring an encounter with a force that loosens our hold on the meanings we cling to" (86). What the unnamed journalist as *sinthom*osexual *en procès* foregrounds is the sexual, corporeal drives which attempt to unbind the hold on regularising meaning to embrace the inarticulacy of be(com)ing. Furthermore, in comparing the eroticised body to a "corpse", Adair indirectly connects the (figure of the) death drive and *jouissance*, thereby signalling the subject of the drive beyond the logic of meaning, the logic of reproductive futurism. This is also evident in the unnamed journalist's thoughts in a taxi that is stopped by soldiers while she is travelling from Mozambique to South Africa – a soldier smashes the glass of the window and she muses, as a shard of glass cuts her, that "[t]he blood felt like X's semen, a stain on her face. It dripped downwards. Semen, the texture of blood. Semen that made her bleed" (75). The unnamed journalist here unsettles normative associations of the body to intimate the painful death drive underlying *jouissance*, and the response presented by the text is intriguing: "He [the soldier] slowly licked the blood from a finger that was surrounded by a silver wedding band and smiled. *Bright red, red, like the sky at night, red like the ruby the Indian nurse wore in her nose, red, red... Red for the unborn child soldier*" (76, emphasis in original). The italicised section functions as a sort of refrain throughout the novel when blood is involved.

This refrain first appears when the unnamed journalist is experiencing her menstrual cycle in Maputo. She comments that "[a] bright red splash ran down her leg, nourishment for an unborn child. […] It had looked so good that blood, she was afraid to hide it. Maybe it would go away when she wasn't looking. *Red, like the sky at night, red like the ruby the Indian nurse wore in her nose, red, red...*" (13). The same basic refrain also concludes the bloody scenes where the unnamed journalist cuts his cheek while he is shaving and thinking of a random girl (26), and where the police raid Rick's Café and shoot the drug-dealing "weasel". In this latter scene, the text notes that "tonight a white man was shot, not a black man. The blood stained the carpet red. It was the same colour as the blood that ran the streets in Alexandra township. *Red,*

like the sky at night, red like the ruby the Indian nurse wore in her nose, red, red..." (136). Furthermore, when the unnamed journalist encounters one of the child refugees whose legs had been amputated and whose loose bandages were "trailing like a bridal veil on the ground", she observes that "[t]he blood was now running fresh; one drop and then another fell into the sand. *Bright red, red, like the sky at night, red like the ruby the Indian nurse wore in her nose, red, red... Red for the unborn child, the child in uterus, but he had already been born*" (15). When the unnamed journalist kisses X in a hotel room, "[h]er red lipstick left a bloodstain where their lips met" (103) and the refrain – "*Bright red, red, like the sky at night, red like the ruby the Indian nurse wore in her nose, red, red... Red for the dead child, the child in death, but he had already been born*" (104) – appears. In the last instance, Princes Diana is imagined to be assassinated during her visit to a refugee camp in the north of Mozambique. The bleeding bullet hole is described as a "bloody star that shone brightly" (160), and the text responds with the refrain "*Bright red, red, like the sky at night, red like the ruby the Indian nurse wore in her nose, red, red... Red for the dead child, the child princess, red, red…*" (161). The refrain thus plays up the contradictions inherent in blood as a symbol for both life and death, pointing to the animating death drive within the antisocial sociality of the queer present continuous.

Another refrain that *End* incorporates is the song "As Time Goes By", which is performed in *Casablanca* by Rick's Café's in-house pianist Sam. The lyrics of the song suggest that "no matter what the future brings", what is most important – that is, the "fundamental thing of life" – is to persist in "the fight for love and glory" (Adair, *End* 16), which in the context of the film is the struggle for patriotic and heteroreproductive forms of identification and kinship. This investment in the logic of reproductive futurism is questioned when the unnamed journalist reflects that "[t]he words of the song rang in her head, but they seemed to be all wrong. That was not how Sam had sung it, or had he? Sam did not sing the song the way Amil [the child refugee whose legs had been amputated] and the scratchy dog had sung it" (16): in other words, reproductive time can be unproductive and illogical for some. Freddie further remarks that "[w]asn't the movie [*Casablanca*] made to inspire the Americans to fight for nothing at all?" (16), signalling the disenchantment with the logic of reproductive futurism, as Freddie suggests that the fight for "love and glory" is ultimately for "nothing at all". Edelman maintains that "the politics of reproductive

futurism, the only politics we're permitted to know, organizes and administers an apparently self-regulating economy of sentimentality in which futurity comes to signify access to the realization of meaning both promised and prohibited by the fact of our formation as subjects of the signifier" (*No Future* 134). As I have been arguing, *End* exposes the fallacy of this logic and challenges this accession to symbolic meaning in the articulation of a radical queer temporality and be(com)ing through the semiotic drives. Indeed, Freddie urges the unnamed journalist to "[s]top thinking about time", to "[s]top being influenced by what is only an arbitrary division in a day. It is a pernicious and *bourgeois* instrument; don't keep imposing it upon yourself" (46, emphasis in original). That is to say, reproductive time is merely an apparatus supplementing the hegemonic logic of futurism and Freddie encourages instead a queer life that is unscripted by such stultifying and "pernicious" conventions.

In drawing intertextually on the sexually transgressive cult musical-film *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* in another refrain, *End* furthers its enunciation of a queer be(com)ing. After Freddie reflects metafictionally at the beginning of the novel that only she could love the unnamed journalist and after a later scene in which Freddie watches X and Y in Rick's Café, the text declares: "Tick, tock, tick, tock… *Time is fleeting, madness takes its toll.* How does the rest of the song go? And soon this story will end… Tick, tock, tick, tock… Time goes by… After time comes time…" (6, 134; my emphasis). The italicised portion of the refrain comes from the song "Time Warp" , which Dr Frank N Furter's servant Riff Raff sings in *Rocky Horror*. For Amittai Aviram, this song implies that "we [the audience], with Mr. and soon-to-be Mrs. Normal [Brad and Janet, the newly engaged couple], have just stepped into a weird realm […] where time does not progress, where both space and time are 'warped' from their ordinary linearity" (185). *End* thus indicates right from the beginning through this refrain that it will disrupt hegemonic, linear understandings of being and temporality. Furthermore, in feeling backward to this important contribution to the queer archive, *End* also emphasises the inconsistencies within the logic of reproductive futurism. Indeed, Aviram argues that in *Rocky Horror*,

> [t]he institution of heterosexual reproduction has been effectively subverted, and, according to the neckless narrator [the frame narrator who tells Brad and Janet's story], the characters […] remain "lost in time, lost in space,—and meaning". To be "lost…in meaning" is to find oneself in the play of meanings and allusions, in a position that is both frightening

and exhilaratingly free. (190)

That is to say, *Rocky Horror* and *End* both demonstrate the unsettling and liberating potentialities of the antisocial semiotic drives, and it is these interruptions of the symbolic order that embrace the articulation of queer be(com)ing.

Nonetheless, both *Rocky Horror* and *End* seem to be keenly aware that there cannot be a total dismantling of the symbolic. Dr Frank N Furter, who embodies the transgressive semiotic drives in *Rocky Horror*, is eventually killed by Riff Raff and his sister Magenta, who Aviram argues "somewhat (but not entirely) represen[t] a heterosexual couple" (189), and this suggests that the symbolic order always manages to subsume differences and reassert itself. Indeed, Oliver notes that "[f]or Kristeva, to abolish the Symbolic is to abolish society. Without the Symbolic order, we live with delirium or psychosis. More than this, how could we have any *discourse*, emancipatory or otherwise, without the Symbolic?" (9, emphasis in original). *End* recognises the dynamic productivity of persistently pushing against the symbolic even though there can be no complete receding from its logic. Edelman contends that "[t]he formal insistence of the drive, in fact, has the effect of deforming meaning insofar as it shows how the absolute privilege accorded the 'semantic function' serves as the privileged mechanism for maintaining the collective 'illusion of a life'" (*No Future* 135-136). In this way, *End*'s "formal insistence of the drive" confronts the impasses and "illusions" of sociality foisted by the logic of reproductive futurism to open up a space for a queer antisocial sociality. This is dramatised in the novel's metafictionality, and the *sinthom*osexual *en procès* puts the reading subject in process and on trial, bringing about "a modification of the relation of the subject to the outside" (Kristeva, "Subject in Process" 142).

The front cover of *End* quotes the first two lines of the novel – "Can Freddie tell you a story, a fiction; words that mean nothing or everything depending upon how you want to perceive them? And will it have a wow finish?" – and in doing so headlines its metafictionality. Throughout the novel, questions about the nature of fictional writing and textuality are raised and the text's implication in (queer) world-making is also explored. Freddie, the writer who is working on a novel in *End*, reflects right at the beginning that "[r]eaders like a man with personal integrity, morality, intelligence. They want to be able to identify with the hero, they want an identity, they want to be

saved from the obscurity of having a choice" (5). This makes clear the relation between readers and texts, as what is suggested is that readers enjoy being able to identify with and perhaps even model their identities on conventional characters. The world-making potentialities of texts is thus also implied, for texts seem to have a tangible impact on reality. Indeed, Patricia Waugh in her seminal work on metafiction argues that "for metafictional writers the most fundamental assumption is that composing a novel is basically no different from composing or constructing one's 'reality'" (24) and she further indicates that metafiction "sense[s] that reality or history are provisional: no longer a world of eternal verities but a series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures" (7). Through its metafictionality and its figure of the *sinthom*osexual *en procès*, *End* exposes the ideological constructedness of existing power and meaning-making structures – especially the hegemonic logic of reproductive futurism – and compels the unsettling thereof.

It is clear that this metafictionality complements the figure of the *sinthom*osexual *en procès* to establish a third space through which the queer antisocial sociality and be(com)ing is enunciated. The unnamed journalist's comment on the *Médecins Sans Frontières* doctors in Maputo – that "[t]hey were real people. They had a real purpose. They had all crossed borders, the border of the 'I' that Freddie had created for her. They knew that they were 'I'. They had manufactured a meaning for themselves" (11) – is indicative of this. It is exactly this unwavering insistence on stable and meaningful identities which these doctors epitomise that *End* problematises, for it forecloses the revolutionary productivity of modes of becoming with are attuned to the free-flowing semiotic drives. In other words, even though the "border of the 'I'" of the unnamed journalist seems to be within the textual, this figure of the *sinthom*osexual *en procès* has further material implications, for it opens the space for a discourse of radical queerness which necessarily challenges the kind of purpose-driven and self-assured subjectivity in which these doctors have invested. Edelman maintains that "the efficacy of queerness, its real strategic value, lies in its resistance to a symbolic reality that only ever invests us as subjects insofar as we invest ourselves in it, clinging to its governing fictions, its persistent sublimations, as reality itself" (18). Indeed, Freddie intimates that the unnamed journalist, the hero-protagonist of the novel, attempts to find a way out of the "governing fictions" of the reproductive futurism when she explains that "[a]ll a hero wants is to find a way out

of the world. That is why they die so well and so dramatically" (63). This is further signalled in the dramatic "wow finish" of *End*, in which the imagined Princess Diana is assassinated. William Spurlin argues that Diana can be read as a queer icon particularly after her death in that she "resisted inhabiting subject positions that inhibited the expression of her desires" (169-170), and in doing so she

> enabled not only the redeployment of gender norms insofar as she unapologetically enjoyed sexuality outside the confines of marriage and procreation, both of which are legibly inscribed in her position as princess, but also showed the world the ways in which it is possible to realign one's affectional and familial bonds in meaningful ways beyond those dictated by convention, by biology, or by marriage. (168)

In this way, Spurlin and Adair both seem to recognise that this kind of "death" in the symbolic logic of reproductive futurism facilitates the potentiality of the queer present continuous be(com)ing.

It seems to me, however, that at certain points in *End*, doubts are raised about the efficacy of this figure of the *sinthom*osexual *en procès*. In a scene informed intertextually by Victor Laszlo's comment to Rick in *Casablanca* – "Welcome back to the fight. This time I know our side will win" – which indexes Laszlo's assurance of political liberation as well as the triumph of those on the side of the logic of reproductive futurism, Freddie delivers this exact statement to X but adds in a murmur that she is "not sure which side is which, but what does it matter? When did it ever matter?" (154). Freddie suggests here that it is often difficult to distinguish between those who subscribe to the logic of reproductive futurism and those who challenge it, thus seeming to express an apolitical nonchalance and to lose faith in the potential achievements of the figure of the *sinthom*osexual *en procès*. Indeed, the unnamed journalist also seems to believe that she is a purely textual figure with no reach beyond the novel when she remarks to Freddie that she is "trapped in the world that is your world" (12), and Freddie seems to corroborate this when she tells him that "a future means you have to keep on living. And you have no future beyond these pages" (112). Nonetheless, Freddie reaffirms the necessity for this figure when she indicates to the unnamed journalist that "maybe I can write another story with you as the main character in it" (154) and when she reassures him that "we all know where it will end, so I must make you take the side that will win. You are, after all, the protagonist of this story" (92). Most significantly, it is the unnamed journalist that Freddie takes

with her on the plane out of Johannesburg in the end, leaving the heterosexual couple X and Y behind. This is symbolic, as I discussed earlier, of *End*'s enunciation of an emancipating queer present continuous.

It is thus evident that *End* situates the consideration of queer futurity in its articulation of the queer present continuous, in which the figure of the *sinthom*osexual *en procès* metafictionally advances a queer antisocial sociality and be(com)ing that contests the hegemony of the logic of reproductive futurism. It is through this figure and the metafictionality of the novel that the reader is similarly put in process and on trial, and consequently, the "unsettled reader is forced to scrutinize his concepts of art as well as his life values. Often he must revise his understanding of what he reads so frequently that he comes to question the very possibility of understanding. In doing so he might be freed from enslavement not only to the empirical, but also to his own set patterns of thought and imagination" (Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative* 139). What *End* necessitates is a more fluid conceptualisation of semiotic desires which continuously push against and threaten to undo symbolic structures of meaning-making. For Kristeva, the kind of project in revolutionary poetic language in which *End* partakes is necessarily political, for "[t]he text is a practice that could be compared to political revolution: the one brings about in the subject what the other introduces into society" (*Revolution* 17). In other words, what I am arguing is that in this revolution in representation, Adair opens a productive third space in which stultifyingly rigid discourses, such as the logic of reproductive futurism, can be transformed. It is therefore appropriate that when X asks the unnamed journalist "[w]ho are you, and what did you do before, what do you do now, and what do you really think? Why are you here?" (52), the latter responds with "[w]e said no questions" (52). Such questions are unanswerable as we are always be(com)ing, and to attempt to respond to them would be a settling into fixed and symbolic subject positions. Finally, it is significantly indicative that the journalist who functions as the figure of the *sinthom*osexual *en procès* in *End* remains unnamed, for names are merely the "illusion of words" (33) that can never fully articulate the complexity of queer be(com)ing.

CHAPTER THREE: LOVE • IMPERSONAL INTIMACY

3.1 AN EQUALLY POLITICAL CONCEPT OF LOVE

According to Leo Bersani, love is "an exemplary concept in all philosophical speculation about the possibility of connectedness between the subject and the world" (Bersani and Phillips 75). To think through what love signifies is thus to carefully examine the relationship between the self and the other, the encounter with difference. Lauren Berlant also affirms the centrality of love in considerations of relationality and intimacy when she maintains that "love has been established as the core feeling of being and life, a primary feeling of sociality" ("Love, a Queer Feeling" 436). Berlant points out that what is conventionally thought of as love has been "central to the normalisation of heterosexuality and femininity in consumer culture" (440) – in other words, it scripts heteronormative desires for marriage and procreation (438) – but she nonetheless believes that thinking queerly about love opens it productively to become "a scene of optimism for change, for a transformational environment" (448). Berlant thus recognises love's ultimate potential for actualising "forms of nonviolent intimacy that will structure reliably what a life is, what fulfilment feels like, and what a text about people's lives will say" (439-440), though this can only be achieved if we accept love's incoherence and acknowledge that love problematises all settled conventions and institutions which presume it to establish principles for living (443). For this reason, love needs to be thought of as an explicitly political concept and Berlant elaborates in "A Properly Political Concept of Love" that whatever else love may be, its politicality lies in its "desire to induce change without trauma, to become revolutionized and open and yet more oneself" (685). This implies that love has world-making potentialities which do not aggressively appropriate or subsume difference but rather empower our attempts to negotiate difference, which in turn allows us to understand ourselves differently. Indeed, Berlant proposes that

> [a] properly transformational political concept [of love] would provide the courage to take the leap into a project of better relationality that would give us patience with the "without guarantees" part of love's various temporalities; a properly transformational political concept would open spaces for really dealing with the discomfort of the radical contingency that a genuine democracy – like any attachment – would demand; a properly transformational political concept would release courage and creativity about how to make resources for living available to all objects in

> their thatness. (690)

What is thus suggested is that love accomplishes a sort of affective support in that we become able to work empathetically and productively with the unintelligibility of otherness and the new forms of relationality these endeavours at intersubjectivity may induce.

Bersani's notion of "impersonal intimacy", which he also terms "impersonal narcissism", is in my view one formulation of love as a properly political concept – despite Berlant's critique thereof as "wishful and willful" ("Neither Monstrous" 269). In his collaboration with Adam Phillips in *Intimacies*, Bersani argues that what is necessary is "a profound shift in registers of intimacy: from our heterosexual culture's reserving the highest relational value for the couple to a communal model of impersonal intimacy" (42). Informed by Freudian/Lacanian psychoanalytic discourses, Bersani maintains that love is fundamentally a narcissistic love for the self and that a "reinvent[ion of] the relational possibilities of narcissism itself" (76) is needed for the conventional belief that "in love the human subject is exceptionally open to otherness" (75) to be true. Bersani draws on the *Phaedrus* to develop this new relational model: love in the Platonic text is firstly about a "contemplation of pure Forms" (80), and in the pederastic relationships common to ancient Greek life, the older lover recognises in the younger beloved something of these ideal Forms which are linked to the gods, and thus he also perceives something of his own soul (81-82). What Bersani proposes is that we emulate this model of relationality in which "each partner demands of the other […] that he reflect the lover's type of being, his universal singularity (and not his psychological particularities, his personal difference), by recognizing and cultivating that singularity as his own most pervasive, most pressing potentiality" (86). Intimacy is thus not concerned with individual egos and the differences that underlie our personalities, but becomes about the reciprocal love of the selfsame in the other, the mutual recognition of the "singularities" and virtual potentialities that people share and can cultivate together. Bersani seems to realise that this universalising attempt to erase boundaries may be problematic, but he emphasises nonetheless that

> [i]f we were able to relate to others according to this model of impersonal narcissism, what is different about others (their psychological individuality) could be thought of as merely the envelope of the more profound (if less

> fully realized, or completed) part of themselves which is our sameness. Naturally, each subject's type of being is not reflected in everyone else. But the experience of belonging to a family of singularity without national, ethnic, racial, or gendered borders might make us sensitive to the ontological status of difference itself as what I called the nonthreatening supplement of sameness. (86)

That is to say, what is ultimately politically transformational and productive about impersonal intimacy is that it is a kind of relationality not based on mastery or absolute knowledge of the other, but on a non-domineering reckoning with difference. However idealistic impersonal intimacy may seem, its significance lies in its optimistic reformulation of the relationship between the self and the other which does not interpret difference as hostile and threatening: it offers instead a paradigm for working with our inherent unsettling nonsovereignty, and the possibility of interacting empathetically with the other and being, as Phillips puts it, "attuned […] to what each is becoming in the presence of the other" (113).

Hélène Cixous's notion of *écriture féminine* seems to be a textual expression of impersonal intimacy as her articulation of acts of writing that are situated within a feminine libidinal economy offers a space for the self to investigate its relationship with the other in a non-commandeering manner. As Ian Blyth and Susan Sellers explain, what is central to *écriture féminine* is "the desire to set up a non-acquisitional space – a space where the self can explore and experience the non-self (the 'other') in mutual respect, harmony and love. A 'feminine' approach to the other is generous and giving, it avoids the ('masculine') impulse to appropriate or annihilate the other's difference, allowing the other to remain as 'other'" (15). For Cixous, this fundamental difference throughout history has been sexual difference. In her seminal piece "Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays", Cixous argues that Western thought is constructed upon binaristic, hierarchical oppositions (63) and this has entrenched the "[s]ubordination of the feminine to the masculine order" (65). The feminine[13], with its

[13] It must be noted that Cixous does not lapse into sexual essentialisms, for she emphasises that she "make[s] a point of using the *qualifiers* of sexual difference here to avoid the confusion man/masculine, woman/feminine: for there are some men who do not repress their femininity, some women who, more or less strongly, inscribe their masculinity" ("Sorties" 81, emphasis in original). That is to say, Cixous does not believe that *écriture féminine* is the sole domain of women, though she does admit that "it is undeniable that there are psychic consequences of the difference between the sexes" (82) as specifically female experiences such as pregnancy may contribute to the practice of writing in the feminine.

drives and desires, has thus been repressed in order to ensure the functioning of the phallogocentric system (67) and it is this problematic relationship with the masculine and the symbolic that Cixous wishes to unsettle: she believes that it is time for a new model of relationality, for "[h]istory has never produced or recorded anything else which does not mean that this form is destinal or natural. Phallocentrism is the enemy. Of everyone. […] And it is time to change. To invent the other history" (83).

In the alternative relationship that Cixous anticipates, "there would have to be a recognition of each other" and "each would take the risk of *other*, of difference, without feeling threatened by the existence of an otherness, rather, delighting to increase through the unknown that is there to discover, to respect, to favor, to cherish" ("Sorties" 78, emphasis in original). Cixous believes that this "other history", this "acceptance of the presence of the other" (Blyth and Sellers 32), is achievable through a new feminine practice of writing. In this *écriture féminine*, women would not repress their "instinctual drives", or "what-comes-before-language" (88), but let them come through in writing. Furthermore, women would be in touch with their bodies because the woman really "makes what she thinks materialize carnally, she conveys meaning with her body" (92). In this way, women will "blow up the [phallogocentric] Law" (95) and "'realise' the un-censored relationship of woman to her sexuality, to her woman-being giving her back access to her own forces; that will return her goods, her pleasures, her organs, her vast bodily territories kept under seal; that will tear her out of the superegoed, over-Mosesed structure where the same position of guilt is always reserved for her" (97).

Écriture féminine thus centres corporeality and the semiotic, and most importantly for Cixous, "there is a link between the economy of femininity – the open, extravagant subjectivity, that relationship to the other in which the gift doesn't calculate its influence – and the possibility of love; and a link between this 'libido of the other' and writing" (91-92). In other words, *écriture féminine* opens a space "in which a type of exchange would be produced that would be different, a kind of desire that wouldn't be in collusion with the old story of death. This desire would invent Love" (78): it is through this revolutionised and revolutionary mode of writing in the feminine that one can begin to understand and arrive at love as impersonal intimacy, that is, as a "renunciation of the demands of a self that wants to exert power over the other, a renunciation that would accept, without giving in, so good-heartedly, to deliver itself,

to open up, to give rise to the other while respecting them" (Cixous, "Literature" 26). Cixous's articulation of *écriture féminine*, which draws attention to the properly political value of textuality and writing as "the passageway, the entrance, the exit, the dwelling place of the other in me" ("Sorties" 85-86), thus offers a useful framework for exploring the articulations of queer present-continuous be(com)ing in Adair's two novels.

3.2 "FREEDOM THROUGH THIS STRANGE KIND OF LOVE": *IN TANGIER WE KILLED A BLUE PARROT* AND IMPERSONAL INTIMACY

In her master's dissertation on *In Tangier*, Jean Rossmann closely examines representations of intimacy and relationality in the novel. She argues that "the relationship between self and Other as represented by Adair reveals a quest for the impossible annihilation of difference or alterity" (49) and further maintains that *In Tangier* offers, especially through Paul, "a utopian vision, challenging the limits and boundaries of love/intimacy and suggesting new possibilities beyond the limits of the known" (49). Even though Paul's relationship with Belquassim appears to be one between the Western coloniser and the native colonised, Rossmann claims that "the encounter with the Other, as represented in Adair's text, is so riddled with the complexities and existential possibilities of alternative intimate relationships that it exceeds a purely racist and imperialistic critique" (73). She focuses instead on what she terms "counterpleasures" (57), that is, the transgressive sadomasochistic eroticism that iterates new corporealities which give rise to different imaginings of relationality. Nonetheless, Rossmann argues that Adair reinscribes the dominance of patriarchal relations in her representation of women and that she "pathologises the women in her novel as wild, wicked and wanton" (114). In fact, Rossmann seems to find it puzzling that Adair, being a female writer, does not engage in some kind of *écriture feminine* (139-140, 145-146): not only does Rossmann maintain that "Adair fails to offer equal textual, psychic or imaginative space to the position of women" (100) and that female experience "remains irrevocably 'outside knowledge'" (120), she also "wonders how Adair as a woman writer fails to balance the intensely personal nature of the male sex scenes with an equal attention to the intimacy of 'lesbian' lovemaking" (129).

Even though Rossmann does attempt to elaborate on the writerly nature of *In Tangier*, arguing that "Adair's text is a palimpsest that allows, through its postmodern

technique, a space for the expression of new modes of intimacies" (4), Rossmann ultimately believes that "[w]hilst raising contemporary issues surrounding sexual freedom, the ethics and aesthetics of sadomasochistic counterpleasures, and creating space for alternative patterns of intimacy, Adair's vision […] is limited" (147). My sense is that Rossmann's account of intimacy and relationality in *In Tangier* does not sufficiently account for Adair's careful, reserved vision which recognises the dangers of the desire to "annihilate" difference but is also sceptical of the possibility of bringing the self and the other into a relation of equality. What Adair seems to be attentive to in her novels is the nuanced spaces that sex and physical touch as well as radical acts of writing in the feminine libidinal economy may open for a consideration of difference, especially sexual and racial difference, and the potential for an impersonal intimacy.

Throughout *In Tangier*, the nature of love is a constant preoccupation for the three central characters, Paul, Jane and Belquassim, and they try in their own ways to make sense of the burden of negotiating some sense of self which does not violently subsume the difference of the other. Jane's reflection on her relationship with Paul is pivotal in this regard. She says that

> I love Paul. I will love him forever. But he says he has never loved anyone. How can I love someone who does not love me back? He always says "You are not I. So you love and I will not." He has colonised me, or have I allowed this colonisation, as some say of the Moroccans? They allowed it to happen, as they knew that they would gain much from the French. They wanted it. They were lesser than their masters were. Am I lesser than Paul? Is he my master? (25)

Confronted with Paul's seemingly aloof resistance to intersubjectivity, Jane wonders whether any interaction between people, whether it be between people of different genders or of different races, necessarily sets up a conditional and hierarchical relationship of oppression. What Jane thus calls into question is whether love is always a force of subjugation, whether the self always ends up trying to obliterate difference in its interactions with the other. Nonetheless, Jane also expresses some unease at the realisation that people in fact seem to be complicit in their desire to maintain categories of difference, and her yoking of gender and colonial injustices is indicative of an implicit acknowledgement of as well as an attempt to mitigate her own involvement in the categorical "colonisation" of others.

This paradoxical entanglement with difference is reiterated in Paul's response to Jane, "You are not I. So you love and I will not". Here, Adair has Paul reference the title of Paul Bowles's puzzling short story "You Are Not I", collected in *The Delicate Prey and Other Stories*, in which a young woman who escapes a mental institution ends up at her sister's house only for her to be forcefully taken back to the institution. As the young woman is manhandled back into her room at the institution, she observes that "no one realized that she was not I" (218), that she has somehow swapped places (mentally?) with her sister and it is the latter who is now confined in the institution. Millicent Dillon maintains in *You Are Not I*, her biography of Paul Bowles, that "You Are Not I" is "crucial, central" (239) to Bowles's oeuvre and argues that "the essence of the story" is the "idea of the interpenetration of beings to the point of exchange of identity, the idea of the dissolution of borders between beings" (241). I think, rather, that Bowles's short story demonstrates that the encounter with difference is always a conflictual one, for even though the young woman "ke[pt] insisting inside [her]self" and "willed" (214) a disintegration of the boundaries between herself and her sister, the curious use of subject pronouns in the title asserts that such intersubjective relations are impossible. Indeed, "You Are Not I" suggests that interactions between people are always a violent negotiation of scripted categories of identification – such as between those inside and those outside (the mental institution), between those who abide by social expectations and those who live by their personal convictions – and that a total identification with the other, which is a complete erasure of difference, threatens the subject itself with annihilation. What Jane's reflection on love thus indicates is her commitment to intimate, intersubjective encounters with other people despite the burden of sustaining an identity which admits otherness without eradicating difference.

Paul's refusal of this burden, on the other hand, is reasserted when he declares that "I never want a place or a person to appropriate me. I will never take sides again, I do not have this right" (99). For him, interacting with others entails choosing identitarian modes of being and he does not wish to do this as it means forcibly appropriating and being appropriated by difference, which inevitably involves a loss of selfhood. He thus cautions that "once you reveal everything to another you fall under his power. If I ever told you one important thing this is it – don't reveal yourself completely to another" (147). Paul seems to propose feelingless loneliness as the ethical alternative.

He remarks that "[b]lack solitariness is in my head. And to love…do I even know what it means?" (22) and further argues that

> I am not sure that I want to agree with what he [Jean-Paul Sartre] said later in his writings. He tried to say that our salvation is with each other as this is the only way we are free to experience and so to be. I am not sure that we cannot save ourselves alone, that is if we think that we need to be saved. I am not sure that the solidarity of others is a perspective I concur with. […] I think that human beings are confined to a life of solitariness, which is why I like it in this city [Tangier]. Here I have no illusions about my solitariness, I am outside the social milieu, I am outside of that which is familiar. So my solitariness is reinforced. (59)

Paul suggests here that loneliness entails a moving away from everything that one is accustomed to, and significantly, what is also intimated is that in doing so, one shifts from a static being toward a mobile becoming.

Indeed, Paul endorses the social isolation that Tangier affords him as he finds it productive. He claims that

> I love the silence out here. It teaches me something about solitude, about reintegration. […] Sometimes it is difficult not to try to keep hold of the man that I know, the American in me, but I think I have let it take its course. I do not remain who I am. It is not loneliness that I feel […]. I hear nothing but my own breathing, and I feel nothing but the blood moving through my veins and up into my brain allowing me to think. After this feeling I can only feel me. Just me, the inside of me. The inside of silence. The inside of nothing. (41)

It is paradoxically this distancing from others that allows Paul to feel a "reintegration", a sense of subjective and social coherence, which opens up the productive potential inherent in his seemingly nihilistic negativity. He asserts that "I do not have feelings. I am able to stand outside the circle, never moving inside. In this way I can capture the feelings of others. I survive by words" (20). That is to say, this reintegrating loneliness is what allows Paul to open up a space for writing, a space in which he can try to both empathetically engage with and "survive" – that is, not be destroyed by – difference. In this regard, he maintains that "[his] writing is based on nothing – that nothingness that creates existence" (20), as it is in and through writing that he feels he is able to arrive nonviolently and constructively at the other. Indeed, Belquassim remarks that Paul loves the stories that he told him and from these stories Paul "would fashion his own tales, tales of intrigue and passion. *One world enjoined with another*"

(7, my emphasis).

Nonetheless, Paul also points to the limits of writing as a space for an unconditional interaction with the other, as he observes that

> [i]n writing, unlike music, I have to think of the people in the story, I have to think of where my characters are and how they will respond to what they are doing. I control them. I don't judge them. What have I got to do with my characters? Nothing, they decide what to do although I write about it. But I leave myself out of their lives, I do not impose myself on their lives. I therefore cannot judge them. But I do control them. (53)

This authority over the other Paul feels he has in writing suggests that for him, writing does not quite exemplify a space for impersonal intimacy as he is unable to completely suspend the need to fully know or control the other. Paul thus brings to the fore what Berlant finds "wishful and willful" ("Neither Monstrous" 269) about the notion of impersonal intimacy. Berlant maintains that "we have all been affected by ideas and by people, but attachments multiply affects without forcing detachment from prior positionings, especially if we see attachments mainly as aggressive and tightly binding" ("Neither Monstrous" 269), and this implies that it is not as easy as Bersani suggests for the ego to let go of the narcissistic need to subsume the threatening difference of the other in order to recognise the other's singularity and similar potentiality for becoming. I would argue that Adair recognises this difficulty and tries in *In Tangier* to think through the implications of not being able to relate to the other along the model of impersonal intimacy.

For Adair, this failure precipitates colonisation, and Bersani indeed remarks that "the imperialist project of invading and appropriating foreign territories" is "an ego-project, a defensive move (or a pre-emptively offensive move) against the world's threatening difference from the self" (66). Regarding "the division of the country [Morocco] between the French and the Spanish, and the creation of the International Zone [in Tangier]" (83), Paul observes that "because we think that we are god we have divided the land too" (83), pointing to the ego-narcissism that is the European imperial project. Furthermore, on witnessing firsthand a Moroccan rebel rioting against and being shot by a French guard, Paul says to Belquassim:

> No, I want to hear these sounds. This is the sound of people who want to be free, free from the French who won't let them walk on their stinking

> bourgeois boulevards without being sneered at. And they think that if they are free of the French, if the Boulevard Pasteur is called the Avenue Mohammed V, they will be free from hunger and from nihilism. They won't you know, but it doesn't matter, what matters is their movement, their need to destroy those that they perceive are the cause of this wanton poverty and squalor. We are all its cause. We all want to destroy. (96)

As I suggested earlier and as Paul reiterates here, colonisation seems to fundamentally be about an overcommitment to sustaining particular categories of identity that it becomes impossible to admit otherness without violently eradicating difference. What Paul proposes though, is that *everyone* is implicated in this antagonistic politics of subjective identification, and he thus also implies that what is necessary is a rethinking of relationality without aggression. The incident in which Belquassim is attacked with a knife by a Moroccan man for being a "sell-out whore" (80) – that is, for his perceived obsequiousness to Paul – also speaks to this hostility towards the other that results from ego identities. The native assailant reflects that

> [t]hey take our country. They take our culture. They take our women. And now they take our boys. They take what it is to be a man from this country and they leave only sickly women behind. The cutting. I did it because violence makes me a man. I cannot drive them out but I can be a man. A man who can make blood flow. A man who is not a woman. They cannot take me. They cannot make me a woman. I must stay a man, stay a man because then I can do violence. (89)

This unwavering zeal for known and knowable categories of identification compels the destruction of the other, foreclosing any openness to difference. Cherifa's comment on the disappearance of Paul's "beautiful blue parrot" (57), which Paul and Belquassim believe she had killed with magic, is significant in this regard. In her saying that "I do not know what happened to the bird, […] but that bird was not a Moroccan bird. You brought it from somewhere else. It did not belong here in this Moroccan house" (58), she enforces scripted categories of (non)belonging.

For Jane, this colonisation of the other, this brutal imposition of identificatory categories in one's attempts to know and to relate to the other, is inadvertent. She remarks that "[n]o one who thinks, I believe, can ever rationalise colonialism in any form. It is only the faceless patriot who believes in the right of conquest and subjugation. […] Perhaps we all do it without recognising what it is. Am I colonising Cherifa, or is she colonising me?" (24). As indicated here in her uncertainty, what

Jane is preoccupied with throughout *In Tangier* is the "nonsovereignty" of the self – which Berlant and Lee Edelman clarify in *Sex, or the Unbearable* is "the psychoanalytic notion of the subject's constitutive division that keeps us, as subjects, from fully knowing or being in control of ourselves and that prompts our misrecognition of our own motives and desires" (viii) – and the implications of this nonsovereignty for one's endeavours to relate to others. For Berlant and Edelman, sex is a site which "holds out the prospect of discovering new ways of being and of being in the world[, b]ut it also raises the possibility of confronting our limit in ourselves or in another, of being inundated psychically or emotionally" (vii). It seems to me that Adair explores in *In Tangier* the kinds of spaces that physical touch and sexual intercourse offer for thinking anew about relationality and intimacy, for the self to suspend its fixation with frameworks of knowing to begin moving towards the other.

Jane observes in her reflection on her relationship with Paul that, even though she cannot logically explain her desire to relate to Paul, she feels a strong affective connection when they touch each other. "I gave it [her soul] to him, and even if he remains an enigma, love is not rational. […] When we touch each other, it is passion mixed with my emotions and his lack of emotion that I love most of all. It is the way he touches me, touches my skin. Skin on skin. And we don't have sex any more" (25), remarks Jane, intimating the intense association that is a radical encounter with the other beyond categories of difference. In this way, Jane's comment on the ineffectuality of words and her desire to "feel" – that "what are words anyway? To me they mean nothing as long as I have my feelings, both the good and the bad ones. I do not need to describe them. I just want to feel" (26) – can perhaps be interpreted literally: to "feel", that is, to touch, realises forms of continuous exchange which is also an openness to the other.

Nonetheless, Jane's relationship with Cherifa foregrounds the destabilising emotional "inundations", the overwhelming anxieties and frustrations, that also accompany sex and physical touch's unsettling resistance to the fixity of identificatory categories. Jane observes that "lust is harsh. It knows no boundaries or rationality. Cherifa impales me. […] When she touches me it is as if she is putting a knife through my body, I can't move. […] Those long fingers over my nipples, squeezing them, fondling them. Watching my pleasure. Obsession, obsessive. It's a feeling that so attracts me, but at the same time it repulses me" (50). This *jouissance*, this painful

pleasure that results from erotic touch, undoes the subject by making clear the limits of knowability – by "break[ing] down the fantasy of sovereignty" (Berlant and Edelman 71), as Edelman puts it – in the self's struggles to relate empathetically to the other. Indeed, Jane further comments that

> [w]hen she [Cherifa] touches me, and whispers to me, my body seems to have a life of its own. It just moves and responds and it refuses to be influenced by what I say in my head. […] There are no rules in this game of passion. And Paul, when Paul touches me, and when I touch him, my head and my hands move together. But when I touch Cherifa my hands move on their own, they have no guide. It's a kind of love I feel for her. But what is love really? I can't compare what I feel for her to what I feel for Paul, but can't they both be called love? Or, is love something that is reserved only for others? Something that I can never know? (51)

This persistent apprehension that Jane expresses about the nature of the encounters with difference signals the committed yet also perturbing openness to thinking transformatively about relationality that sex and physical touch offers. As Berlant and Edelman argue, "[r]eimagining forms of relation entails imagining new genres of experience" (ix), and Jane's uncertainty about "love" demonstrates her attempts to experiment with new, impersonal modes of intimacy, despite what Berlant and Edelman would call the unbearable negativity of sex.

Paul, on the other hand, seems to imply that sex in fact cannot, as Berlant puts it, "induce a loosening of the subject that puts fear, pleasure, awkwardness, and above all experimentality in a scene that forces its participants to disturb what it has meant to be a person and to 'have' a world" (Berlant and Edelman 117). Paul claims that "I don't much care for sex, which is why I do not often get involved with it" (23), and when he does engage in sexual intercourse, sex seems to be an act of appropriation. For instance, after one particular sexual encounter with Belquassim, "Paul leaned across him [Belquassim] and with his forefinger traced his own name with Belquassim's semen across the flat brown stomach. Belquassim could feel the letters 'P-A-U-L'" (29): this is clearly a symbolic act of claiming sovereignty, demonstrating Paul's unwillingness to be unsettled and move beyond himself. Indeed, Dillon notes that "[i]n Paul [Bowles]'s own fiction, whenever the sexual act appears, it is almost invariably played out as a drama of one person overcoming another, of one person dominating and the other submitting" (*You are Not I* 218).

Nonetheless, Paul asserts that he "want[s] to make a case for love" (133). "I believe that if you are in love there is never any guarantee that you will ever be loved back," he declares, "Love is only valuable if it is instinctive, rather than rational […] I don't need to be loved back by anyone. I love her more than I have loved anyone. But my love is selfless, because, in a sense, if I am in love with my own reflection, it's a reflection that I see in her. And in this I stand alone. It's possible then that I am the cruel one" (133). This is perhaps the clearest articulation in *In Tangier* of Bersani's notion of impersonal intimacy, the mode of relationality in which "the self the subject sees reflected in the other is not the unique personality central to modern notions of individualism" (85). For Bersani then, it is imperative that the self collapses the differentiating, and thus violent, categories of identification which not only structure the ego's desire for assurance of its own existence but also one's interactions with others, and he clarifies that the "fundamental premise of impersonal narcissism is that to love the other's potential self is a form of self-love, a recognition that the partners in this intimacy already share a certain type of being (a sharing acknowledged by love)" (124). Paul's recognition that encounters with the other are only constructive if they are "instinctual", and more significantly, "selfless" thus speaks to this. This impersonal intimacy that Paul and Jane share is also not only acknowledged by Belquassim – he fathoms while watching Jane and Paul together in the hospital when Jane fell ill that "[h]e leaned against the wall and watched them in their intimacy. He had never been so close to something like this before and he felt awed. Whatever it was, he felt its intensity rush over him, clouding his thoughts as he battled to comprehend it. Why her, he thought, why her?" (158) – but is also reiterated by Jane, who claims that "[t]hat *incomprehensible closeness* that we have, it is not a logical closeness, but it is one that I do not question. That is how I love him [Paul]" (89, my emphasis).

As I have indicated, Adair seems to propose throughout *In Tangier* that physical touch and sexual intercourse as well as the act of writing may open up spaces which realise the "incomprehensible closeness" that is an expression of impersonal intimacy, though she is evidently also hesitant about the potential of the self to hold off the colonisation of the other; that is, she is sceptical of whether the self can suspend the need to know the other in order to begin moving towards the in-between where otherness is admitted without the erasure of difference. Paul reiterates this view when

he observes: “How can we redeem ourselves? Through a community with other men as some have already put forward? Maybe we can even be lucid about this indifference. There is no prophylaxis, no solution. All I can do is write what I see and let other people be the judge of it” (98). Paul cynically implies that people have never quite been able to relate to one another without violence as we have not been able to treat difference indifferently and impersonally, and even though he acknowledges that he does not have a “solution” to this, he suggests that writing is the only way he can make sense of social encounters. Indeed, Belquassim mentions that “Paul needed his words. His stories were like pictures created by hashish, they painted him into an unknown world of raw emotion that he had never recognised or known existed. Only his characters knew of this emotion, but even they were unable to recognise it” (10). It is significant that it is Belquassim, a character from Paul Bowles’s novel *The Sheltering Sky*, who asserts that there is a “[f]reedom through this strange kind of love” (68): writing liberates people from conventional modes of being and knowing and offers a space for what Berlant calls an “experimentality in worlding” (Berlant and Edelman 100), a dynamic space where intimacy and relationality can be thought differently.

Ultimately then, Adair seems to suggest through *In Tangier* that the location of love is in the space of the in-between, that space where two people *begin to* move beyond the self towards – but not arrive at, as that would entail an erasure of difference – the other and it is in this space that I also locate the queer present continuous be(com)ing: what I draw attention to in my formulation is the relationship fostered by the textual between a coming towards the other and a sexual coming. Sarah Dillon astutely observes that what holds the “disparate examples” Bersani uses in *Intimacies* together to develop his notion of impersonal intimacy is the literary (60). Following Dillon, I would argue that Adair regards writing and literature as also “not just necessary to impersonal intimacy: literature is *the* medium of impersonal intimacy” (S Dillon 60, emphasis in original). That is to say, in challenging rigidly conventional understandings of corporeality, identity and relationality, and in, as Berlant would put it, “displacing sex from its normative function as the mechanism of emotional cohesion that sustains aggressive heteronormativity” (Berlant and Edelman 13), Adair situates *In Tangier* in what Cixous would call *écriture féminine*, a writing in the feminine libidinal economy which recuperates the unsettling, emancipatory

potentialities of *jouissance* and which "give[s] passage to this further-than-myself in myself" (Cixous and Calle-Gruber 56). Even though Adair suggests through *In Tangier* that the self and the other cannot quite relate equally and non-oppressively, it is exactly this movement beyond the self towards equality – that is, the movement towards what Phillips understands in *Intimacies* as "the longed for and feared experience of exchange, of intimacy, of desire indifferent to personal identity" (113) – that opens up the space for the equally political concept of impersonal intimacy. Reading Adair's writerly text *In Tangier*, then, becomes, in a reformulation of Edelman's observation (Berlant and Edelman 108), a kind of unbearable encounter that breaks down the structuring fantasy of reading subjects as they are compelled by the text to reconsider their relation to others and their concept of who they are. Indeed, Dillon maintains that "[l]iterature enables an impersonal intimacy between reader and characters, between reader and author and, perhaps most importantly, between co-readers" (S Dillon 60), and it is in this way that we can make sense of the title of the novel, *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*: the first-person plural "we" recognises that even though everyone is implicated in this project of colonisation, this desire to work through the incoherences that trouble the fixity of identity and to comprehensively know the other, we can all become more aware of each other's potential becoming after reading the novel and effect an impersonal mode of relationality which, to use Cixous's eloquent exposition again, is "a renunciation of the demands of a self that wants to exert power over the other, a renunciation that would accept, without giving in, so good-heartedly, to deliver itself, to open up, to give rise to the other while respecting them" ("Literature" 26).

3.3 "LOVE, THAT HUMAN CONSTRUCT": *END* AND IMPERSONAL INTIMACY

As I pointed out in the previous chapter, Adair claims in her interview with De Vries that *End* aims to unsettle the heteronormative "true love ladida" story of the film *Casablanca* and to "[m]ake the clichés the opposite". Berlant and Warner similarly take issue with the hegemony of heteronormativity and urge an exploration of "the changed possibilities of identity, intelligibility, publics, culture, and sex that appear when the heterosexual couple is no longer the referent or the privileged example of sexual culture" ("Sex" 548). For them, "[m]aking a queer world has required the development of kinds of intimacy that bear no necessary relation to domestic space, to kinship, to the couple form, to property, or to the nation" (558). *End*'s decentring of

the heteronormative logic of reproductive futurism and the world-making potential of its queer present continuous be(com)ing thus necessitate a reconsideration of the notions of love – understood as the encounter between the self and the other – and intimacy. As in *In Tangier*, *End* situates love in the space of the in-between and explores more meticulously the ways that the textual may mediate the relationship between a sexual coming and a coming towards the other.

Beppi Chiuppani centres his analysis of *End* on questions of political commitment. He argues that "[i]n the process of rethinking the nature and limits of engagement", *End* manages to "focus on some of the spaces that were silenced by the repressive environment of apartheid, which in this specific case include a number of gender dynamics that can be considered queer" (153). In this regard, Chiuppani observes that Adair's distinct "commitment to gender politics" (153) lies in her shifting the focus in *End* away from "social politics" to a reconceptualisation of the body, thereby "fashion[ing] a peculiar kind of gender/bodily engagement" (170). What *End* ultimately presents, according to Chiuppani, is "an unsettled and unsettling politics of the body, a dimension in which the power of the individual seems concentrated on rethinking the sexualized features of one's bodily existence. These politics, precisely because of their inherent indefinition, become possible only through the written word of fiction" (196). Chiuppani thus suggests that the subversive politics of *End* lies in Adair's "reinterpret[ion of] gender as a textual category" (168). The implications of this textualisation of the body informs my consideration of the novel's articulation of intimacy and relationality: what I will argue is that the "unsettled and unsettling politics" of the body, mediated through the (s)(t)exual, precipitates an "unsettled and unsettling politics" of identity, and it is this destabilisation of the coherence of the self that necessitates a reconsideration of the nature of the encounter between the self and the other.

Throughout *End*, Adair makes clear that sex has, as Edelman puts it, "something to do with experiencing corporeally, and in the orbit of the libidinal, the shock of discontinuity and the encounter with nonknowledge" (Berlant and Edelman 4). That is to say, the representations of the sexual in *End* bring the corporeal to its limits, and it is this that the figure of the *sinthom*osexual *en procès*, which I have been reading through the unnamed journalist, facilitates. This is signalled in part by the sense of restive perturbedness conveyed in the seemingly insignificant remarks which

emphasise the uncertainty of the unnamed journalist's gender. For instance, while having sex with the unnamed journalist in chapter seven, who is referred to by feminine pronouns, X says that "[h]e pulled at the zip of his pretty khaki trousers and thought about her small hard breasts as they pressed against his thighs. *They could have been a boy's breasts* they were so small. He thought about her face; looking down, all he could see was the dark cropped hair and a moving head that stirred his cock" (65, my emphasis). In the next chapter, in which the unnamed journalist is referred to by masculine pronouns, X notes upon waking up from a sexually stimulating dream that he "wiped his face and touched his cock. It was hard. *Strange, the boy had the face of a girl, and then the face of a boy again*. The face that hovered above his stomach, the hands that touched him in places that had not been touched before were a boy's hands" (68, my emphasis). X's arousal from this experience of the "nonknowledge" of corporeal indeterminacy calls attention to the body, especially the gendered body, as a construct that coheres identity, and it further reframes our thinking about identity along modes of desire and the libidinal – that is, along what Tim Dean, drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, calls a "hermeneutics of desire" ("Sameness" 26) – rather than identificatory categories.

Adair nonetheless also seems to suggest that this unsettling defamiliarisation of the body within the hermeneutics of desire takes place not only during the sexual act, but happens when one stops resisting the persistence of one's libidinal and semiotic drives. This is evident, for instance, when X passes a "very old" woman arguing with a cashier in a supermarket in Johannesburg about being overcharged for tampons (57). Freddie wonders whether the woman is "too old to menstruate […] but these days, who knows? Maybe hormones in a pill have genetically engineered her to keep on menstruating. Maybe she just wants to stay young, and what better way than to be reminded of your youth once a month?" (57). This insistence on the menstrual not only necessitates a reconceptualisation of the corporeal, but also troubles the experience of abjection that Julia Kristeva formulates and the way it has been conceived to mediate the self's desire to be autonomous, to be distinct from the other. As Kelly Oliver explains, the abject is in Kristeva's account "something repulsive that both attracts and repels. It holds you there despite your disgust. It fascinates" (55), and thus it signals a response to "what is on the border, what doesn't respect borders", a reaction to a kind of in-betweenness that disturbs the distinction between self and

other, that threatens identity (56). Furthermore, Oliver maintains that for Kristeva, the abject "threaten[s] the social, the Symbolic order. The Symbolic can maintain itself only by maintaining its borders; the abject points to the fragility of those borders" (56). The way the unnamed journalist in *End* describes her menstruation thus calls for consideration: she remarks while sitting on the toilet that

> [a] bright red splash ran down her leg, nourishment for an unborn child. Oh great, she thought, and with a wet washrag that she took from beside the basin she wiped it away. Bright red blood, it was a beautiful sunset colour. Sighing, she placed the white Kotex pad on her panties, pulled up her jeans and got up. It had looked so good, that blood, she was afraid to hide it. (13)

The menstrual blood is tellingly not met with frightful repugnance, but rather is confronted with an appreciative pleasure, as if the unnamed journalist is not disconcerted by the potential collapse of meaning that abjection induces. That is to say, this alternative experience of the abject indicates Adair's willingness to entertain the possibility of a mode of relationality in which – contrary to Kristeva's assertion that "I abject *myself* within the same motion through which 'I' claim to establish *myself*" (*Powers* 3, emphasis in original) – the self remains incoherent, in which there remains an indistinct, unbound(ari)edness between the self and the other.

This indifference to difference, this nondiscrimination between self and other which unsettles meaning, gestures towards the impersonal – which Bersani construes in one formulation as "a connectedness based on unlimited bodily intimacies" (Bersani and Phillips 37). What I am thus arguing is that in *End*, Adair attempts to stage the implications of such a connectedness in which the self – whose identity is established on a sense of the corporeal, however indeterminate and unsettled, rather than on identificatory categories – relates impersonally to the other. This is articulated in the novel when X, who relates categorically to Y as husband and wife, asserts: "all X thought was that maybe one day, one day Y would know what was best for her. She would want him. He was best for her. But *now he wanted the boy's body*. He wanted to push his finger deep into that bracken sweet-smelling salubrious arse. He wanted to see his semen run down thighs and catch itself in the faded hairs that trapped it" (70, my emphasis). X intriguingly points here to a deferred potential relationality based on identification, but also expresses his immediate need for sex and a body specifically rather than a person(ality). Sex, as I noted in the previous section, blurs the

boundaries between self and other, and Dean elaborates that this is because "sex confuses the separateness and hence the distinguishability of bodies, thereby shattering (or threatening to shatter) our sense of corporeal integrity" (*Unlimited* 22). That is to say, sex calls attention to our inherent nonsovereignty by unsettling our sense of the corporeal and hence it demands that the self suspend its fixation with identificatory categories to begin moving nonviolently towards the other.

Following Dean's observation that "erotic encounters represent not just an instance of but also, perhaps more significantly, a metaphor for contact with otherness" (*Unlimited* 181), I understand X's need for another's body in a sexual encounter as signalling Adair's appeal for thinking anew about intimacy and relationality, about realising forms of contact with otherness that do not subsume the other. "Do you need to know someone to have sex with them? Probably not" (65) – the question that X asks and his tentative response to it when he thinks back to his first sexual encounter with the unnamed journalist in Mozambique – is thus a poignant one as it addresses Adair's concern for impersonal intimacy. What it points to is that sex, rather than the ability to situate oneself and the other into known and knowable categories of identification, facilitates an intimate encounter with the other where the focus is not on difference. A later sex scene in which the unnamed journalist and X have oral sex complicates Adair's consideration of relational possibilities:

> He [the unnamed journalist] knelt down on the floor as X sat there. Giving head is often described as something where the recipient of the pleasure is dominant, he thought as he took X's cock in his mouth. Someone is always in a subservient position. I suppose that is what it looks like. Kneeling in front of a man. He sucked on the cock and it grew larger. But I am a man. And when I kneel I am kneeling because I have the power to give or not to give. […] He lifted his head from where it was deep in X's groin.
> "I will do the thinking here," he said to X. "I will think and you will just respond. And then when I am done we can consider this love thing that you speak about." He bent his head again, and then he stopped and smiled. He leaned over and Freddie passed him a book that was lying on the table next to the bed. We can do things that we would never have thought of. We can do things that are only described in a book. (142-143)

The unnamed journalist asserts that they will be able to "consider this love thing" once they have finished having sex, corroborating the idea that sex holds out the prospect for new understandings of intimacy and relationality. Nonetheless, the unnamed journalist also seems to indicate that despite the world-making potentialities of sex, one cannot relate outside of categories of identification but can only try to

resignify such categories. In this instance, it appears that sex enables the reclamation of the apparently "subservient position" of the giver of oral sex, even if it is to a more ambiguously domineering position. Furthermore, Adair mentions that books allow one to do certain things, pointing to the role of textualisation and textuality in bringing the corporeal to its limits and opening up the space for a renegotiation of intimacy.

It indeed appears that for Adair, impersonal intimacy can only be realised through text(uality) and this is reiterated when she points out that even though the unnamed journalist "believed that he learned a lot about X" after their first rendezvous in Mozambique, "Freddie knew that he had learnt nothing. The only truth that he learnt was the feel of X's body, and even that was no more real than celluloid. What he learnt was a lie, a fabrication, a physical presence" (54). What Freddie intimates here is the limits of the corporeal, suggesting that the body is in fact no more real than "celluloid", a filmic text: the body, despite its materiality or "physical presence", is a mere "fabrication", a construct that professes to cohere the self and attempts to make possible an empathetic relationality based on a nonviolent reckoning with difference. Indeed, Freddie asserts that "the lie was always in the kiss, a betrayal" (6). In addressing the song "As Time Goes By" used in the film *Casablanca* – whose lyrics claim that "a kiss is just a kiss", one of those "fundamental things of life" (Adair, *End* 16) – Adair expresses reservations about whether mere bodily intimacy is able to facilitate impersonal intimacy, suggesting that a coming towards the other which does not subsume difference is not as simple as two bodies coming together.

In her essay "When Our Two Lips Speak Together", Luce Irigaray emphasises the world-making potential of the kiss when she proclaims that "[t]wo lips kiss two lips, and openness is ours again. Our 'world'" (73). Even though Irigaray's comments in this essay relate to sexual difference and the feminine, the figure of the lips she articulates is conceptually useful for my purposes as it expresses a singular plurality, a two-that-is-one, that troubles the distinction between self and other: in these kissing lips that is an erotic commingling, the boundaries between the touching and the touched, subject and object, disappear, thereby opening up the potential for a kind of relational encounter in which sameness or difference do not matter. Irigaray nonetheless further elaborates, somewhat enigmatically, that language intervenes in and disconcerts this intimacy: she states that "open or closed, for one never excludes

the other, our lips say that both love each other. Together. To articulate one precise word, our lips would have to separate and be distant from each other. Between them, *one word*" (72, emphasis in original). Freddie's remark, read through Irigaray, then not only confronts the "lie" of corporeal determinacy which coheres identity, but also "betrays" the easy idealism as formulated in *Casablanca*'s "kiss is just a kiss": the kiss is a kiss mediated through the language of the novel, language which intervenes in the two-that-is-onenness that exemplifies impersonal intimacy.

End further teases out the nuances in the part that language and text(uality) take in the negotiation of an intimate, impersonal mode of relationality, and this occurs through the novel's postulation of identity – or rather, identification – as the inhabiting of a series of constructed – that is, textual – "clichés". In a Johannesburg hotel bar that is reminiscent of Rick's Café in *Casablanca*, for example, Freddie observes that

> [a]t a table nearby sat seven people. Freddie looked at them and wondered what the best words would be to describe them. I can't say fascist, for what does a fascist look like? Hitler was swarthy and he had a thin black moustache just above his top lip, a cockroach sitting on his mouth. […] The Spanish fascists did not look as modern and spotless as Ronald Regan did […]. And none of them looked like Margaret Thatcher or held a handbag. Well, I suppose, once again, it is a particularly South African stereotype; fascist clothing, khaki pants and khaki shirts, apartheid clothing in a bar. You know what I mean. It is the way they comb their hair. It is slicked down with oil. And I suppose it is their size. They are fat. Why is it that the description of a fascist is always of an overweight fascist? I mean, Thatcher was thin, so was PW Botha. Oh fuck, I can't seem to write anything that is not a cliché, Freddie mused. (85-86)

Freddie indicates here that she feels the need to situate people within pre-established, predictable categories to make sense of them, even though she seems to be aware that these stereotypical categories of identification can never be reliably definitive. In this way, Adair suggests that even though identity resists interpretation, we can always only think through and work with(in) these "clichés".

Nonetheless, Adair also proposes that there is an inherent productivity in such "clichéd" identificatory categories. As Freddie continues to work on her novel in *End*, she becomes increasingly aware that her writing engages in hackneyed formulations: she wonders whether she can "put in so many clichés" and comes to the conclusion that "[o]h well, two clichés in a story can make you laugh, a hundred clichés, she

laughed, they will move you. Sometimes, Freddie thought, extreme banality allows you to catch a glimpse of the sublime, the glorious incoherence of the sublime, the glorious incoherence of the prosaic" (12). This draws on, as Adair herself points out in the acknowledgements of *End*, Umberto Eco's observation that *Casablanca* is an assemblage of clichés or archetypes. For Eco, this excessive use of clichés in the film is in fact productive and gestures towards the sublime: he argues that "[w]hen all the archetypes burst in shamelessly, we reach Homeric depths. Two clichés make us laugh. A hundred clichés move us. […] Just as the height of pain may encounter sensual pleasure, and the height of perversion border on mystical energy, so too the height of banality allows us to catch a glimpse of the sublime" (38). What Adair endeavours to achieve in setting up and problematising "clichéd" identificatory categories, then, is to bring about an unsettling *jouissance* which may disrupt the ways that identity, and thus relationality, has been conceived.

Jean-François Lyotard indeed reminds us of the relation between the sublime and *jouissance*: informed by Immanuel Kant's consideration of the sublime, Lyotard maintains that the sublime is "a strong and equivocal emotion: it carries with it both pleasure and pain. Better still, in it pleasure derives from pain" (77). Lyotard further proposes that the "postmodern" sublime is that which "puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself" (81). In her engagement with notions of the sublime then, I understand Adair as attempting to textually perform the unrepresentability and indeterminacies of identity. In other words, through the "incoherence of the prosaic", by which I understand Adair to mean literally the inability of "prose" – that is, language – to sufficiently articulate identity, Adair undermines the categories that have conventionally been used to understand the self. Moreover, Lyotard's comment – that the work that the postmodern writer produces "are not in principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what *will have been done*" (81, emphasis in original) – informs my consideration of *End*'s metafictionality: Adair's experimental "postmodern" novel undermines readers' desire to make sense of the work in the terms available to them, and rather "searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger

sense of the unrepresentable" (Lyotard 81). That is to say, *End* narratively enacts the ambiguous potential of identificatory categories as delineated in language, however ineffectually, to convey the indeterminacies of the corporeal and of identity. In this manner, Freddie's contention that "[r]eaders like a man with personal integrity, morality, intelligence. They want to be able to identify with the hero, they want an identity, they want to be saved from the obscurity of having a choice" (5) calls attention to how *End* allows for no easy identification but rather problematises this eagerness to identify and demands of the reader to see through this constructedness of identity.

Just as *End* presents the corporeal and identification as constructs, especially as ones formulated by and through textuality – that is, signification – and in doing so effects an unsettled and unsettling understanding of the self, so it follows that "love", the encounter between self and other, is recognised as a construct. Freddie articulates the novel's central assertion about the nature of love in the following reflection:

> "Love," Freddie mused, "that human construct. Love for a person, love for a country, love for a cause. Unrequited love, requited love that is dull enough to make a person search for another love, hope for love, the journey to find love and glory. After all, who said it? 'What is the point of war without love?' The love themes can go on and on. I wonder if there's a novel in which this theme is not present?" She turned to him [the unnamed journalist]. "You can love X. I'll let you love him, just for the moment, just for now." (6)

For Freddie then, love is a formulation which involves acts of interpretation, and in this way, the distinction between self and other is one that is imagined and can be reimagined. Not only does Freddie bring into question here the relationship of the self to other people, but she also draws attention to how a reimagined encounter between self and other necessitates a rethinking of the self's relation to the imagined community that is the nation. Freddie in fact suggests that it is this inclination and aspiration to relate that drives us, and it is the failure to relate in a way that "requites" or responds to the other's difference that results in "war". Moreover, Freddie points out that all novels embody a sense of love, thereby acknowledging acts of reading as an encounter between reader and text, and thus also calling for a consideration of the ways that text(uality) may facilitate impersonal intimacy.

The *sinthom*osexual *en procès* figured through the unnamed journalist calls for, as I

have been demonstrating, a hermeneutics of desire which foregrounds the body as a site of creative potentiality rather than a stable reification of knowable identificatory categories, even as it recognises that it is always already constrained within language. In this manner, the unsettled and unsettling politics of the self disrupts the "prosaic" clichés of love, the banal ways in which the self and the other have been construed to relate, such as within the logic of reproductive futurism. Adair in fact stages these tensions of relationality in *End*. When the unnamed journalist bemoans that there is "[n]o sex, no love, nothing" for him in Mozambique, Freddie observes that "love is an illusion – two old people holding hands together in front of a television screen. […] Love is always an illusion. We all think we love one another, but the lie is in the kiss that we exchange" (24-25). Freddie indicates here that the belief in the potential for relationality is a mistaken one as the affective intimacy experienced in touching another may be deceptive: touch may not facilitate that "incomprehensible closeness" (89) between two people that *In Tangier* seems to articulate, as Adair recognises in *End* that language mediates all encounters between self and other, and inscribes us within representational economies and identity politics in which interactions are negotiated through categories of identification. Language thus disrupts the radical openness to difference, the two-that-is-oneness embodied, as Irigaray intimates, in the kiss. The unnamed journalist nonetheless insists that "[l]ove is not an illusion; I'm not buying into this narrative. And anyway we can't debate this now. Isn't it already part of the story?", to which Freddie responds that "love wasn't in the story; he just liked to imagine that it was" (25). The unnamed journalist seems to resist the idea that relationality, especially one that attends nonviolently to difference, is unattainable and observes that love is rather "already part of the story", implying that certain kinds of text(uality) inherently foster an intimacy in which the encounter with the other is not a subsumption of difference. Freddie, however, seems convinced that the unnamed journalist understands love conventionally as mere romance and "passion" (25), and thus dismisses his unexpectedly astute remark that literature enables an impersonal intimacy, proposing that he simply "wanted to believe in this game, he wanted to love, to believe in a truth" (31). Such sentimental, romantic love which normalises the comfortable certainty of reproductive futurism is exactly what Adair tries to challenge through Freddie, and hence her repudiation that "love" is not dealt with in the novel.

Nonetheless, the unnamed journalist troubles Freddie's assessment, conceding that

romantic love may perhaps also be a means, however problematic, of comforting ourselves with a consistent narrative or "truth" about the incoherences of being in an unbearable world. When Freddie decides to give the unnamed journalist the plane ticket so that they can leave South Africa together at the end of *End*, leaving the married couple X and Y behind, the unnamed journalist remarks that "[w]hat you did for X, […] that was a fairy tale to make him feel that it was okay to stay with Y and to keep watch over her no matter what happened. I think he knew you were lying" (154). As I proposed in the previous chapter, Freddie's choice in leaving the heterosexual couple behind is symbolic of Adair's refusal of the logic of reproductive futurism and her enunciation of a queer present continuous. Nonetheless, the *sinthom*osexual *en procès* figured through the unnamed journalist recognises that there cannot be an outright rejection of such "clichés" as we can always only work with and through these normative and normalising paradigms, and hence she acknowledges Freddie's construction of a "fairy tale" narrative in which X selflessly tries to save Y from drug abuse: X indicates to the unnamed journalist that "I thought that Y, my wife, was descending into a different world to mine. I thought she was in some ways dead to me, dead to the world that I want and the world that I know. I was frantic. […] And then when I came back here I saw her again. I saw her hair and I saw her face, and I knew that I needed to stay with her so that I could help her" (145).

It is this kind of "illusion of romance" (159), this appearance of relating to another, which the unnamed journalist eventually admits to preferring, and it is in this way that I make sense of her anxieties about the possibility of relationality expressed earlier in the novel. After her first encounter with X in Maputo, the unnamed journalist asks Freddie "[w]hy did you put him [X] in here? Things were just moving along at their own pace. I don't need this emotional entanglement. In fact, I would prefer to be alone. Alone with thoughts of [the daughter of the blind guesthouse owner] Marina's soft, girlish skin" (38). Here, the unnamed journalist conceives of relationality as "emotional entanglement", suggesting that she does not want to or cannot bear the demands of this ensnaring intimacy, this intense commingling in which sameness and difference become indistinguishable. What she favours instead is loneliness, a solitary space in which she can *think about* touching and relating to another. Contrary to *In Tangier*, Adair appears to problematise the productive potential of loneliness in *End*. For instance, Freddie points out to the unnamed journalist that "[i]f you communicate

somehow with people, you can pretend that you're not alone. And it is always nice to pretend. It makes you feel okay" (22), and this insinuates that not being able to form connections with others can be distressing as people tend to want to associate in some way with others. As Berlant claims, loneliness is "a kind of relation to the world whose only predictable is in the persistence of inaccessible love" (Berlant and Edelman 37): rather than brood over the failure to attain relation, *End* suggests that what is necessary is the gesture towards what Bersani terms a "love freed from demand" (28). Freddie indeed observes the urgency of such non-domineering encounters between self and other when she ponders "[b]ut what is loneliness [?] Is it when you hate your own company? Is it when you have a memory of not being lonely, of having someone to hold you? To hold you down" (113). Unlike Paul in *In Tangier* who is satisfied with being by himself and for whom loneliness appears to be the position from which impersonal intimacy is possible, Freddie expresses reservations about the world-making potentialities of loneliness, as people are inclined to forming attachments with others even though those interactions may often be unbearably oppressive.

Adair indeed demonstrates in *End* that the failure to relate along a model of impersonal intimacy leads to colonisation and war, what she calls a "community of violence" (16). Similar to my reading of *In Tangier*, *End* suggests that it is this aggressive imposition of categories of identification in order to know and be able to relate to the other that Adair finds troubling. Freddie's reflection on "modernity" upon seeing soldiers with machine guns in Maputo is instructive in this regard: modernity, Freddie wonders, "if this is what I must call it. What is a better word for what the new Western half of the world – although not all of it is in the West – has imposed upon people who are different" (43) and she further contends that

> people have given up a part of themselves for this slice of modernity. We have brought it to them and handed them a small piece of it. And if they have not wanted it we have forced it onto them. And now they want this Western world, now they want to push their world and culture behind them as if it is backward and retrogressive. There has been more than just the eradication of culture, family, religion and community. There has been the eradication of the spirit, a defeat of the soul. They want to be like us. And yet…and yet it is all so ill fitting, this modernisation, so ill fitting that it almost seems as if people are saying, maybe quietly, fuck it, fuck you. (44)

Freddie points first to the complexities of modernity, a concept which David Attwell acknowledges in *Rewriting Modernity: Studies in Black South African Literary History* is "a notoriously baggy concept that resists narrow definition" (3). According to Attwell, "[i]f a simple philosophical definition were available, it might be that modernity is the currently governing concept of what it means to be a subject of history" (3), and he corroborates Freddie's claim that modernity is an overcommitment to a particular way of knowing foisted on others which does not account for difference when he notes that it "refers not only to technology and the emergence of an administered and industrialised society, but also to that fluid but powerful system of ideas that we inherit from the bourgeois revolutions of Europe in the late eighteenth century – ideas such as autonomy, personhood, rights, and citizenship" (3-4). Nevertheless, Freddie also recognises that everybody is implicated in this antagonistic politics of identification, this desire to situate and be situated within known and knowable categories of subjecthood. She thus remarks that despite the non-Western other's attempts to assimilate into such Western paradigms of self-knowledge, those categories are "ill fitting" – that is, they do not quite articulate the non-Western other's sense of embodied specificity – whence their resistance. In this way, colonisation as the need to know, to locate oneself and others in "clichés" which foreclose difference, seems to inherently undermine itself, as the indeterminacies of the corporeal and the self mean that identity always already resists interpretation.

One of the ways that modernity has presented for making sense of "what it means to be a subject in history" is "nationalism". Indeed, Benedict Anderson proposes in his seminal work on the origin and nature of nationalism that "nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word's multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. [… T]he creation of these artefacts towards the end of the eighteenth century was the spontaneous distillation of a complex 'crossing' of discrete historical forces" (4). It is nationalism as a construct – which I understand as one of the regulated and knowable categories of belonging in which people situate themselves in order to interact with others – that *End* wants to unsettle. "And after all, what is nationalism?" Freddie ponders, "[j]ust another inane and stupid emotion, but at least it is an emotion. So you have love and you have a bit of national spirit. Absurd, but you have it anyway" (91). For Freddie then, nationalism and love are analogous in that nationalism is a useless feeling just as

love construed as a feeling of romance is unproductive, and because "you have it anyway" – that is, because both feelings persist despite their apparent inanity – Adair implies that it is necessary to rethink the productive potential of such emotions as nationalism for an impersonal model of relationality. Freddie's further denunciation of the efficacy of emotions – that "[e]motions never seem to take one anywhere. I wonder why people have them. All they do is sustain an illusion. More emotion, more illusion, more illusion, more emotion, more illusion, and so it goes on. Useless" (98) – is thus illuminating, for it addresses Anderson's concerns that the supposed community that is the nation is an illusion, and that "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (7): what Freddie suggests is that these feelings of apparent connectedness seem to be used to perpetuate and to justify the violence that results from an inability to account for difference.

Sara Ahmed's *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* offers a productive paradigm for thinking about emotions and affect in a more transformative manner. According to Ahmed, emotions "should not be regarded as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices" (9) because feelings are engendered in the contact with others. In this way, Ahmed proposes that emotions should be thought about as "impressions", arguing that "*[w]e need to remember the 'press' in an impression*. It allows us to associate the experience of having an emotion with the very affect of one surface upon another, an affect that leaves its mark or trace. So not only do I have an impression of others, but they also leave me with an impression; they impress me, and impress upon me" (6, emphasis in original). Moreover, in conceptualising emotion as impression, Ahmed does not distinguish between "bodily sensation, emotion and thought as if they could be 'experienced' as distinct realms of human 'experience'" (6), thereby pointing to the integrality of affect to my articulation of an unsettled and unsettling politics of identity, as thinking about emotions with Ahmed necessitates a reconsideration of the nature of the encounter between self and other. Ahmed maintains that "emotions create the very effect of surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside in the first place. So emotions are not simply something 'I' or 'we' have. Rather, it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made: the 'I' and the 'we' are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others" (10). It thus seems to me

that emotions advance a kind of relationality that is about moving towards the in-between where distinctions between self and other are renegotiated. For Ahmed, "emotions work by working through signs and on bodies to materialise the surfaces and boundaries that are lived as worlds" (191). If emotions work through signification to generate meanings through the histories and contexts that they may invoke, it then follows that it may be possible to resignify the material textuality – that is, the "clichés" – of emotions.

It is in my view this potential for opening up a space for resignification that Adair explores in *End*. Nationalism, or rather the insistence on a nationality, as a "clichéd" category of identification is examined in a scene – intertextually referencing the scene in *Casablanca* in which German officers singing a patriotic anthem in German is drowned out by a fervent rendition of *La Marseillaise* by Victor Laszlo and the other patrons in Rick's Café – in which a "khaki shirt" and his comrades belt out the South African national anthem of the apartheid regime *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika* which is drowned out by the rest of the bar singing the pan-African liberation anthem *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* (91-92). National anthems are for Anderson one of the mechanisms which facilitate the imagined communities that are nations, indicating that "[n]o matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes, there is in this singing an experience of simultaneity. At precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. The image: unisonance" (145). Adair reveals here the problematic ideality of such unisonance, which the hybrid combination of *Die Stem* and *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* in the South African national anthem after 1994 attempts to realise, as people hold onto their identificatory categories and the emotions which work through the textuality of the national anthem seems to entrench the other as other. Adair nonetheless ambiguously suggests that such emotions as embodied in the impassioned contestation of anthems can move people into an in-between space, and this is symbolically represented in the "gilded whore" who "did not know the words to the song, but a small tear fell from her painted eye and made the mascara run down her face. It united with her white face powder and became beige, almost brown, as it moved downwards. She stood up and cried" (93).

I think that, finally, Adair is aware that resignification can only happen within text(uality) and it is thus the novel *End* as a whole that attempts to bring about a

reconceptualisation of love as a space of the in-between in which the self and the other can relate nonviolently. Indeed, Edelman believes that the notion of "relation itself" is ultimately "a relation *to* the signifier" (Berlant and Edelman 114, emphasis in original) and proposes that a "radical encounter with the other, which is *other than signification*" (114, emphasis in original) is not impossible but "exists in the form of continuous exchange, in the openness of (and to) our questioning the forms of its possibility" (114). In deliberating over the ways that a hermeneutics of desire may enable a detachment from textual, "clichéd" categories of identification, Adair's *End* continuously brings into question the impulse to know and to situate – that is, to colonise – the self and the other and the potential for the realisation of an impersonal mode of intimacy. Following Edelman's articulation of queer as "less an identity than an ongoing effort of divestiture, a practice of undoing" (Berlant and Edelman 19), I understand *End*'s queering of love as an ongoing effort of undoing the known and knowable identificatory categories that we insist on in order that we may move beyond ourselves towards an encounter with the other which does not subsume difference. Chiuppani indeed claims that

> [i]t is precisely because Adair intends to see through the sense of "identity," historically triggered by the spectacular nature of South African society, she is drawn to reconceive what may be regarded as the ultimate source of a perception of sameness—our appraisal of the body. This freedom from sameness, however, does not seem to point toward any sort of ideological horizon. No socio-political framework, clearly, could provide for it, as it can only exist in the fictional world realized by the new kind of literature Adair practices—as well creates—with her novel. (195)

A significant observation that Chiuppani makes is the way that the context of South Africa informs *End*'s articulation of an unsettled and unsettling politics of identity, but what is necessary to note is that in specifically highlighting nationalism as a category of identification that needs to be renegotiated, Adair urges a broadening of our treatment of "nation" as an emotional collective, one in which we remain open to the possibility for, as Ahmed puts it, "learning to live with the impossibility of reconciliation, or learning that we live with and beside each other, and yet we are not as one" (39).

CONCLUSION, OR, THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A "WOW FINISH"

In his article "Learning to Squander: Making Meaningful Connections in the Infinite Text of World Culture", Ashraf Jamal maintains that

> [f]reed from an identitarian hysteria, perhaps there could begin to be a reconfiguration of a more harlequinesque or syncretic subjectivity, founded not on a utopian embrace of otherness, or a mutinous relation to a preconceived or preordained selfhood, but, rather, upon a keenly wakeful grasp of the absurdity of both positions. In short: there is no *a priori* selfhood from which one diverges and no aspirational alterity which can be wholly absorbed. The trick, then, is to recognise the ruse of self and other, a dialectic which, while highly efficacious, is nonetheless a chimera or nonsensical illusion. (32, emphasis in original)

In daring to think a space beyond the obsession with known and knowable categories of identification, Jamal's reflection helpfully sums up my central argument in this dissertation, which is that Barbara Adair's *In Tangier* and *End* enable us to engage with the notion of love in an impersonal and properly political manner to enunciate a queer present continuous be(com)ing, an in-between – albeit textual – space where the self and the other may be freed of stultifyingly (hetero)normative and teleological logics and begin to come toward one another in a non-"mutinous" manner. Furthermore, I have shown how the two novels enable us to respond to the kind of freedom that Jamal believes we may achieve once we are able to think beyond the narrow identity politics which circumscribe cultural production and reception in South Africa. For Jamal, a "harlequinesque or syncretic subjectivity" is one that refuses a simple, reified merging or glossing (over) of difference but is receptive to the indeterminate heterogeneity – the messy, borderless assemblage – of being, facilitating a negotiation of meaning which unsettles coherent categories of representation. Indeed, what I have demonstrated in my close reading of Adair's *In Tangier* and *End* is the ways in which the two novels enable us to think through the possibilities of realising and sustaining that in-between space in which the self and the other are able to renounce certainties in order to attempt to approach each other: I have argued that even though Adair is keenly aware of the vexing contradictions and the eventual chimerical absurdity inherent in any attempt to make sense of the encounter between the self and the other, it is the (queer) potentialities opened by the effort to begin to come toward one another – despite the risk of abjection in not

knowing what will happen – that matters.

In this way, it is clear that *In Tangier* and *End* enable us to think more broadly through the predicament of identity politics, especially as a mode of identification and categorisation. For Jasbir Puar, identity politics and the "intersectional model of identity, which presumes that components – race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, age, religion – are separable analytics and can thus be disassembled" (212) is problematic as it "simply wishes the messiness of identity into a formulaic grid" (212), disavowing the nebulous entanglement that is identity: Puar maintains that such identity politics "demands the knowing, naming, and thus stabilizing of identity across space and time, relying on the logic of equivalence and analogy between various axes of identity and generating narratives of progress that deny the fictive and performative aspects of identification: you become an identity, yes, but also timelessness works to consolidate the fiction of a seamless stable identity in every space" (212). As such, Puar contends that intersectionality becomes a "hermeneutic of *positionality* that seeks to account for locality, specificity, placement, junctions" (212, emphasis in original).

In my close reading of Adair's two novels, I have proposed a hermeneutics of desire in the place of a hermeneutics of positionality, and demonstrated that Adair's novels articulate a queer be(com)ing, a textual space that fosters a sexual *com*ing which facilitates the undertaking of a *com*ing toward (an)other. In my formulation of be*(com)*ing as an expression of a hermeneutics of desire, what I foreground is the function of *jouissance* – that is, limitless and bewildering orgasmic pleasure – as it is this free play of libidinal, corporeal drives which continuously push against and threaten to undo symbolic structures of meaning-making, and which thus precipitate an unsettled and unsettling "border of the 'I'" (Adair, *End* 11). My parenthesising of "come" further signals my concern with the textual and textuality, as it is only on reading the word "be(com)ing" that this emphasis is evident: I have argued that it is in engaging with Adair's writing – especially with her novels' inter- and metatextuality as well as the figure of the *sinthom*osexual *en procès* in *End* – that the reader is also put in process and on trial. According to Hélène Cixous,

> [w]riting is working; being worked; questioning (in) the between (letting oneself be questioned) of same *and of* other without which nothing lives; undoing death's work by willing the togetherness of one-another, infinitely charged with a ceaseless exchange of one with another – not knowing one

> another and beginning again only from what is most distant, from self, from other, from the other within. ("Sorties" 86, emphasis in original)

Following Cixous, I have demonstrated through my close reading of *In Tangier* and *End* that Adair's writing holds out such an in-between space in which the reader is working and being worked, in which a ceaseless and non-domineering exchange between the reader-self and the other – or, in Cixous's formulation, the "further-than-myself in myself" (Cixous and Calle-Gruber 56) – may take place, opening up transformative, world-making potentialities.

Put differently, thinking Adair's two texts through such conceptions of writing as Cixous's has enabled me to engage with queer as an assemblage "attune[d] to movements, intensities, emotions, energies, affectivities, and textures as they inhabit events, spatiality, and corporealities" (Puar 215), especially in and against the South African context that, as I have shown, tends to dominate the reception of Adair's work, and has, in particular, produced reductive ways of understanding the representation of sex(uality) in her work. It is in my view these essentialising versions of queer – or, more precisely, these conceptions of *gay* as a category of identification – instrumentalised for South Africa's rainbow nationalism that Adair's novels in their enunciation of a queer present continuous be(com)ing resist.

In the preface of *In Tangier* dated 1993 that supposedly sets up the novel's South African context, Adair claims that "[n]ow for the first time, with the announcement of the release of political prisoners and the unbanning of the African National Congress, we can travel. Is it for this reason that I welcome political change in my country or can I muster other reasons for my hopefulness?" (n.p.). As my close reading of *In Tangier* and *End* has indicated, I believe that the "other reason" for Adair's hopefulness for political change lies in what I have understood as her gesture not only towards the impossibility of a teleological explanation of the nation that is South Africa, but also towards the indeterminate heterogeneity at the heart of South Africa and the impossible explanation thereof, which then precipitates, in Jamal's terms, a "traduce[ment of] the hegemonic values of the time […] in a non-reactionary and non-antagonistic manner, the better to elide the constraints of the time and invoke an other and untimely moment which not only rethinks the human, but does so *in the name of love*" ("Billy Monk" 58, emphasis in original). This rethinking of the human in the name of love that I read through Adair's two novels is expressed in the

possibilities for "travel", which I understand in a more figurative sense, that she hints at in her preface to *In Tangier*: our making the effort to wend our way with a ceaselessly mobile and fluid be(com)ing opens a space for this hopefulness for impersonal intimacy as a properly political concept of love in South Africa.

Moreover, my concern with the affective economies that *In Tangier* and *End* open is also signalled in Adair's recognition of the opportunities for "travel", albeit more figuratively. Affect, as Vilashini Cooppan points out, "[w]ith its flows through and across different subjects, objects, histories, and places, […] invites us to reach for new units of comparison and so to construct new histories of feeling that both recognize the force of violence and imagine a future beyond it" (71). The hermeneutics of desire that I have advanced in place of the conventional, stifling hermeneutics of positionality in my close reading of Adair's two novels enables me to attend to the travelling or "flow" of affect, which, in its disruption of "clichéd" conceptions of the "border of the 'I'" (Adair, *End* 11), (re)negotiates the insistence on nationalism and the "clichéd" borders of the nation. In this way, I am able to engage with the issues that Jamal raises about South African cultural production and reception.

For Jamal, the lack of "experimentation" in South African literature is indicative of the predicament he observes, and he offers the following deliberation:

> Why has this experimentation not fully taken hold in South African fiction? Is this perhaps because we do not have the courage to write without witnesses? Because we believed it imperative that we must be witnessed, that we must be subject to a greater Western optic? Or because we believed that we could not truly know ourselves inside the beleaguered and bastardized orbit of our existences? ("Bullet" 16)

It should be clear from my argument that *In Tangier* and *End* attest to the existence of such artistic experimentation which is willing to take the risk of abjection in their not-knowing, and Adair's two novels in fact compellingly articulate what Jamal calls "other logics of engagement and cultural practice", which he believes is absent from South African cultural production and reception. "[I]n diffusing-and-bypassing the numbing imperatives of canonical literature," such "other logics" would, in Jamal's view, "issue forth different affective impulses" ("Bullet" 19).

Even though I have endorsed Jamal's diagnosis of South African cultural production and reception thus far and heeded some of his astutely innovative propositions, I think

that Adair's two novels also offer an opportunity to critically reevaluate Jamal's position, in particular its failure to account for the "different affective impulses" that literary productions such as Adair's enunciate. This has to do, I believe, not only with the ways in which literary criticism necessarily and belatedly instrumentalises literary works in order to make meaning, but also with the way that Jamal's literary criticism is situated firmly within a specific South African context. For this reason then, it seems inevitable that Jamal would be invested in a recuperative ethics in which love is reappropriated for a "wow finish" and offered as a way out of the restrictive sense of identity politics which informs cultural production and reception in South Africa. Despite his insistence on thinking through "an extra-moral and a-categorical realm, a realm that bursts and renders fluid all categories and […] challenge[s] a hegemonic drive to categorise, divide, and rule" (*Predicaments* 145), Jamal believes that a "recovery" from the predicaments he identifies in South African cultural production and reception only "arises from a psychic and epistemic rupture, from a place within rupture called love: a place that is immune" (*Predicaments* 162). In this way, Jamal appears to instrumentalise love for a location of the unthinkable and for an explication of the radical incommensurable heterogeneity that is South Africa.

Such a reading that has as its impulse a desire for reparations for the violences of the past – which partly result from, as Jamal points out, the "sickly obsession with identitarian politics" which forecloses "the immense currency of a secular worldliness – the value of transience, cosmopolitanism, hybridity and improvisation" ("Billy Monk" 62-3) – problematically overlooks the ways that reading with affect and a hermeneutics of desire resignifies the national: as Cooppan demonstrates, "[i]nsofar as affect does not exactly erase temporality but instead layers and punctures it, simultaneously sedimenting the past and blasting it away, affect reorganizes the reading of national narratives around a set of questions for which historicism alone cannot provide the plot or the answer" (61). That is to say, reading with affect troubles teleological and redemptive narratives of the national, and what thus becomes consequential is, as Cooppan indicates, "not a question of simply moving on or living after but of *living with*" (61, emphasis in original). Living with implies, in my view, the impossibility of reconciliation as well as the continuous moving towards and taking up of the unknowable in-between. For Cooppan, "[a]ffect's circulatory network suggests that a text's meaning does not lie *in* the text, *in* the new national, postracial

subject it represents, *in* the reader, or even *in* the history that the text is understood to sediment, contain, or imaginarily resolve, but instead in the contact and passage among those entities and others" (69, emphases in original). This assertion is instructive in that it addresses my argument that *In Tangier* and *End* in their enunciation of a queer present continuous be(com)ing open the location of impersonal intimacy as the space of the in-between in which, following Sarah Dillon's formulation again, not only the "reader and author" but also "co-readers" (60) may begin to move beyond the self toward – but not arrive at, as that would entail a knowing and thus an erasure of difference – the other.

I am well aware that I have taken issue with precisely this kind of reading of "South African" texts which are (over)determined by and (re)instrumentalised for its South African contexts. Nonetheless, as Edward Said reminds us in *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, both literary texts and criticism are inextricable from the materiality of their contexts of production and consumption: for Said, "texts have ways of existing that even in the most rarefied form are always enmeshed in circumstance, time, place, and society – in short, they are in the world, and hence worldly" (35) and the "same implications are undoubtedly true of critics in their capacities as readers and writers in the world" (35). Furthermore, Said maintains that "texts are worldly, to some degree they are events, and, even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted" (4), and in this way "texts impose constraints upon their interpretation or, to put it metaphorically, the way the closeness of the world's body to the text's body forces readers to take both into consideration" (39). What Said implies here is the inevitability of the kinds of symptomatic reading that Jamal contends is part of the predicament of cultural production and reception in South Africa.

While it would be naïve of me to disregard the worldliness of Adair's texts, what I find problematic is the ways in which critics have read *In Tangier* and *End* as *necessarily* addressing the nation and its (dis)contents. Moreover, what my close reading has foregrounded is the ways in which the two novels resist the existing modes of reading through a hermeneutics of positionality which compel the reconciliation of texts with their contexts. In other words, I think that Adair is befittingly attentive to the necessary open-ended hesitancies of queer which refuse to entertain the kinds of voguish intersectional identity politics that, according to Puar,

"privileges naming, visuality, epistemology, representation, and meaning" (215), and I further believe that *In Tangier* and *End* in their enunciation of a queer present continuous be(com)ing attest to Jamal's essential point, which is his call for "the commitment to the enabling power of questions aligned to an openness to the unconscious and unthinkable" (*Predicaments* 155). Heeding Jamal's appeal for thinking queerly and for reinvigorating the notion of queer – as well as taking on board Lee Edelman's suggestion that "[q]ueer theory might better remind us that we are inhabited always by states of desire that exceed our capacity to name them. Every name only gives those desires – conflictual, contradictory, inconsistent, undefined – a fictive border, a definition, that falsifies precisely insofar as the name takes us always back to the family as our culture's exemplary site of naming and of allegiance to the name" ("Queer" 345) – has enabled me to engage with and embrace such indeterminate and nonsovereign hesitancies.

It is indicative then that the name of Adair's second novel *End* does not appear prominently on the book cover, but is rather embedded and highlighted in the word "dep*end*ing". This signals one of the central preoccupations of my dissertation, which is the ways that Adair's two novels facilitate my articulation of the always already indeterminate and contingent in-between space of love as impersonal intimacy. In other words, this non-naming points to my concern with what Julia Kristeva calls "the hell of naming, that is to say of signifiable identity" (*Powers* 207) and with my taking up of Jamal's call for thinking, or at least attempting to think, the unthinkable and the unsignifiable which, as I have indicated, is taking seriously the properly political concept of impersonal intimacy that, as Adam Phillips maintains, "asks of us what is the most inconceivable thing: to believe in the future without needing to personalize it. Without, as it were, seeing it in our own terms" (Bersani and Phillips 117). Ultimately then, what I am proposing, in drawing attention to the ways that *In Tangier* and *End* gesture towards a renouncing of the affirmation or personalisation of a signifiable identity, is an articulation of love as a poetics of not-knowing.

In this I have been guided by Cixous, for whom, as I have already demonstrated, love is a nondomineering way of relating. Cixous further asserts that

> [t]here are things that we do not understand because we could never reproduce them: behaviours, decisions that seem foreign to us. This also is love. It is to find one has arrived at the point where the immense foreign

> territory of the other will begin. We sense the immensity, the reach, the richness of it, this attracts us. This does not mean that we ever discover it. I can imagine that this infinite foreignness could be menacing; disturbing. It also can be quite the opposite: exalting, wonderful, and in the end, of the same species as God: we do not know what it is. It is the biggest; it is far off. At the end of the path of attention, of reception, which is not interrupted but which continues into what little by little becomes the opposite of comprehension. Loving not knowing. Loving: not knowing. (Cixous and Calle-Gruber 17)

Cixous is keenly aware here of the paradox of love, that unbearable rapture in the tension between wanting to know and letting go of the desire to know. For Cixous, then, to love is finally to relinquish the desire to master and to colonise through the bombast of known and knowable categories of identification. As Cixous puts it in her most poetic pronouncement on love,

> [t]he supreme statement of love would be: I do not understand you. 1 do not want to understand you. I love from not understanding you. And love is the explosive, painful tension between not understanding and wanting to understand, between trembling at the very idea of understanding while passionately wanting to be understood and fearing above all any type of comprehension. ("*Apple*" 65-66)

Adair's *In Tangier* and *End* embody, in my view, this supreme statement of love, and for this reason, we need to accept the inconclusiveness of criticism, to suspend the need for a "wow finish" (Adair, *End* 1). Or, to embrace another of Cixous's formulations, "[a] text has to be treated like a person, with its mystery. We must have in our relation to the text a position both active and passive, one of patience. One has to accept what one accepts from a person: not to understand" ("Egg" 99).

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