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INTRODUCTION

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Affective Encounters: Storying in South African Environmental Communication

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ABSTRACT

This is an introduction to the special issue, *Affective Encounters: Storying in South African Environmental Communication*. The authors introduce the theme of the collection and make the case for the global relevance of the local specificities of environmental communication in South Africa. The intrusion of the past into the present, in the realm of culture, politics, economics and the environment are discussed, and then a decolonial approach to environmental communication is offered. The papers included in the collection are discussed, and the essay concludes by offering "affective encounters" as a useful concept for eco-storying from the global south.

Introduction

As ecological concerns rise globally in relation to climate change, the sixth extinction and environmental degradation, experiences differ across local contexts. This special issue draws attention to how "situated knowledges" (Haraway, 1988) can advance theorizing the relation of environment and communication. A local focus on ecological communication offers insight into the cultural politics of emotions (Ahmed, 2013) occurring during the geological events that exacerbate climate, ecological and social catastrophe. Two recent environmental stories from and about South Africa have recently caught our attention, on account of being examples of emotionally and politically powerful forms of situated knowledge.

The first is the South African Pavilion at the 2024 Venice Biennale, titled *Quiet Ground* (Malatjie, 2024). Curated by Portia Malatjie, Quiet Ground features a commissioned sound installation, *Dinokana* (2024) by the collective MADEYOULOOK (a Johannesburg based interdisciplinary collaborative duo, Molemo Moiloa and Nare Mokgotho). The installation offers multilayered seating evocative of contour lines in a darkened space, into which visitors are invited. As the curator explains:

> The multichannel sound piece weaves in songs about the rain, harvest, and water divination with snippets of interviews from growers and land workers from different generations and communities across the country who are finding new vocabularies for resurrecting their relationship to land. The immersive sanctuary invites visitors to sit on and in the work, making it a space of refuge and of rest (Malatjie, 2024).

As the curator explains, *Quiet Ground* "emphasises the many forms of reparative practices employed to reignite healthy, multisensorial, and mutually beneficial relationships to land and to water" in the context of the many violent dispossessions of land facilitated by slavery, colonialism, and apartheid (Malatjie, 2024). "This is the language of repair" writes uMbuso Nkosi (2024,

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p. 17), "repair not of the past long gone but of the living present as part of the past, that makes the future."

The second is the film, *Wild Coast Warriors* (Chevallier & Wood, 2024), which premiered at the Encounters Documentary Film Festival in 2024. The film documents the community-led, multi-stakeholder battle in the courts against Shell's efforts to prospect with seismic blasting for oil and gas along an hitherto less-touched, community-steered stretch of coast in Pondoland (Healy, 2022; Mahlatsi et al., 2023). The story centers the voices and activism of Pondo leaders and communities in the Wild Coast areas of the Eastern Cape. The response of Pondo community member, Mummsy Danca, after seeing the film at a community screening, is quoted on the film's website: "The film today was very good and I felt proud of my people, especially when I see the lawyers standing for our people. This means that our voices will be heard around the world" (https://www.wildcoastwarriorsfilm.com/reviews). The case of the Pondo community fighting back against Shell's attempts to survey and mine their magnificent coastline can be held up as an example of how indigenous stewardship of land and environments can be an effective point of resistance against global fossil fuel companies supported by the corruptible national government.

These two pieces of storytelling coming from South Africa illuminate how environmental issues are (and indeed always were) at the heart of the social and the political structures that have shaped life in the "beloved country" (Tomei, 2022). In this special issue, we follow the provocations of land, water and ocean towards a discursive and artistic discourse that we call *affective encounters*. In sites of trauma, such as the entire South African polity, it can be difficult to find strategies and vocabularies of repair. It is true that "words must arise from their worlds" (Menon, 2022, p. 5); words can also create new worlds. Stories are never *just* stories – they function in multifaceted ways, preserving memory, articulating being, and are always linked to questions of justice, including environmental justice (Wiebe, 2019). In South Africa just as everywhere else, every struggle for political, social or environmental recognition and voice is mediated, and takes place on the screens, airwaves and WhatsApp groups as much as it does on in creative practice, cultural practice, community work, activism and in the courts.

This special issue takes a specific focus on the power of environmental storying to connect, drive care and understanding, and offer opportunities to heal from the past and better the future: to produce new visions and versions of the world.

From South Africa to the World

It is unusual for this journal to present special issues with country-specific themes. Previous special issues in *Environmental Communication* have been organized around a specific concept such as care in Vol 18 (1–2) or spectacle in Vol 10 (6) and have included contributions from colleagues around the world. This collection instead brings together a range of work on South Africa, by South African researchers, and offers them as a basis for advancing global conversations about the role of affect and storytelling in environmental communication.

It bears pausing to consider how South Africa as a case study may be useful to think with, for scholars of environmental communication based elsewhere in the world. There is a huge need for more scholarship from the global south to appear in the trusted and prestigious journals of the global north, not simply to send the message that "our" research is equally relevant, but more critically to recognize that southern theories, methods and epistemologies reconfigure global scholarly conversations. Beyond this prosaic observation, South Africa, as both a political formation and an ecological location offers many useful contributions and comparison points for the field of environmental communication. There is growing scholarship on environmental humanities in South Africa (Green, 2020; Ogude & Mushonga, 2023), with significant work aligning with long histories of environmental relations. Examples of such lie within the oceanic humanities (Brenner et al., 2022; Hofmeyr et al., 2022; Hofmeyr & Lavery, 2022). In the field of media and

communications in the country, the environment is starting to move into focus. Specifically, work is emerging on climate communications in South Africa (Bosch, 2012; Cramer, 2008; Death, 2014; Evans, 2019; Levi, 2021), as well as on water pollution (Okorie, 2023; Webster & Iqani, 2024) in the country. More work is needed to explore the links between media and communication with food security, land reparations, wildlife relations, and other environmental issues in South Africa.

It could be said that the field of South African environmental communication is undergoing necessary realignment with deeper human-ecological relations that have long existed and been troubled, and in this is currently emerging. This is due to two key features of our country: South Africa is both highly unequal and biodiverse. We offer this special issue as a contribution to the ongoing formation of that sub-field. As the global environmental crisis deepens, it is more important than ever that local and national bodies of scholarship are crafted to respond, research and theorize modalities of adaptation and survival across a plurality of existence. While the growing field of environmental communication in South Africa has a lot to glean from global scholarship, we argue that it also offers insights from the intersections of the decolonizing of knowledge, the integration of indigenous perspectives, and a redress of complex interrelations between social and environmental issues (Kempf et al., 2022). Intersectional scholarship emerging here not only enriches the field of environmental humanities but also contributes to the global discourse on sustainable development and social justice, and we hope that the work we have gathered in this special issue so far moves toward these goals and can be useful for colleagues elsewhere.

The inequality that characterizes the South African polity is of course the legacy of Apartheid, a famously brutal system of racial segregation that although politically ended in 1994 has persisted in a range of economic, cultural, and geographic formations (Mpofu-Walsh, 2021). As one of the most inequal countries in the world (Francis et al., 2020; Francis & Webster, 2019), South Africa features both extreme wealth and constant, grinding and exhausting poverty, a two-tier system of social services (world class private health care and schooling alongside horrifically neglected public hospitals and education), and shocking levels of unemployment. The fabled biodiversity of South Africa (Klopper, 2010; Mamathaba et al., 2022; Tucker, 2010) is increasingly under threat from a range of anthropogenic factors (Hoveka et al., 2020). South Africa is perhaps best known to many international visitors as a safari tourism destination, featuring world-renowned national parks, most famously the Kruger National Park teeming with a huge diversity of species, yet from which Black people were forcibly removed (Dlamini, 2020). This Cartesian forced removal of humans from nature is also repeated within the setting up of Marine Protected Areas (Childs & Hicks, 2019). The Cape Floral Kingdom is one of the most biodiverse in the world (Mamathaba et al., 2022), and the oceans that border 2,850 kilometres of coastline are teeming with aquatic species. These are under threat from ongoing cultures of extraction, industrialization, urban expansion, and climate change (Scholes et al., 2015; Ziervogel et al., 2014). With the social effects of extreme inequality constantly present in ways that can easily flare up into many forms of social unrest, including prevalent crime, gender-based violence, crises of homelessness and infrastructure collapse, it is possible that some South Africans may consider environmental questions to be quite low down on the list of priorities for collective concern (Marais-Potgieter & Thatcher, 2022; Meyer, 2018).

Yet, as this special issue seeks to demonstrate, the environmental is closely linked to the social and political, and it always has been, for better or worse. In South Africa, the use of racial categories such as "Black" and "White" in policy as well as scholarship is deeply rooted in the country's historical context, particularly the legacy of apartheid and the ongoing socio-political dynamics it produced. The persistence of these terms reflects both the historical realities of racial classification and the contemporary struggles for identity, representation, and social justice. There remain environmental legacies to this institutionalized racism. The Apartheid government, as part of its theft of land from Black communities, also cordoned off certain nature reserves, including the famous Kruger National Park (still named after the Boer general), by forcibly removing communities who lived there, and then de facto reserving the newly formed reserves for the leisure pursuits (holidaying and

hunting) of the white minority – Black people were in fact permitted to visit during Apartheid, but were not made welcome (Dlamini, 2020). Although the parks are now de-segregated and run by democratic government departments, available to all South Africans as part of their national heritage, a lingering sense that "environmentalism" is for and by white people remains part of popular feeling in the country. Further, "green apartheid" also lingers, where Black citizens are less likely to have access to green spaces in their neighborhoods, and the economic means to travel to them for holidays (Venter et al., 2020). The legacy of what slain Ogoni activist and poet Ken Saro-wiwa called "slow genocide" (Pezzullo, 2024, p. 9), sees the extractivist and industrial devastation wrought by the fossil fuel industry and apartheid-capitalism impacting mostly on poor, Black communities. Although there are highly active Black scientists, environmentalists and conservationists, and a long history of exploitation of indigenous knowledge by white scientists, there remains a stereotype of "white ownership" over issues to do with the land, conservation and environment (Burnett, 2022). This typecast is deeply damaging and has been partly shored up by problematic research linking race to "interest" in studying biological and environmental sciences (Rosenberg & Le Grange, 2020). Partly to help break this stereotype, this special issue explores what other forms of "storying" about ecology are taking place in South Africa.

These many specifically South African concerns require local thinking, and this must by necessity be located within a decolonial framework.

A decolonial approach to environmental communication

What does it mean to re-frame environmental communication as relevant to post-apartheid South Africa? Critical race and decolonial theory have contributed much to environmental scholarship (Sklair & McQueen, 2021; Yusoff, 2018). Many of the debates that frame the field globally are relevant to the South African context, for example, new global perspectives on communicating the climate crisis (Evans et al., 2018; Filho et al., 2018), and theories of interspecies relating (Haraway, 2008, 2016). Further, African environmental epistemologies are key to framing ecological storytelling in the southernmost country on the continent. African relationality allows a "shift from a detached, observer-centric stance in environmental communication to one that actively engages within the interconnected ecological network we collectively inhabit" (Okoliko, 2024, p. 8).

Because so many of the problems currently facing South Africa – both social and environmental – were originally caused by the politics of separation, new theoretical approaches are required for considering how to unmake the living legacies of segregationist politics. The decolonial turn in critical theory (Maldonado-Torres, 2011) invites the work of decolonising the mind and forging new ideas for handling colonial legacies. Applying decolonial thinking to environmental communication is a project already underway across the global south, specifically in relation to Indigenous knowledge in the Americas (Castro-Sotomayor, 2020; Rodríguez & Inturias, 2018; Wiebe, 2020). In South Africa, how the environment is communicated is partly being redefined by a new generation of environmental activists, who are fighting to bring indigenous knowledge systems into environmental and land-based struggles.

A decolonial approach to environmental communication in South Africa requires what violet milton and Winston Mano call an Afrokological framework for African media studies (milton & Mano, 2022), which in turn demands "epistemological conviviality" (Mano & milton, 2021). Writing in the context of forging African theoretical frameworks for media and communication as a broader field, and building on the work of Francis Nyamnjoh (Nyamnjoh, 2020), milton and Mano argue that decolonial communication research is not so much about adding seats to the table, but making the table bigger such that multiple voices, ethics, traditions, languages and value systems can be integrated into the communicative world. From this perspective, a decolonial communication theory works actively and directly against the politics of separation and binary thinking to instead create a politics of connection and multivocality. This multivocality is not

just about having many voices talking at once as a box-checking exercise, but a genuine and hospitable welcoming of all those voices into the landscape of ideas. Further, a new turn in decolonial theory posits that multiple species should be included in the narratives we tell (Adams, 2021; Haris, 2022; Stengers, 2010), and as author Amitav Ghosh (2019) points out, these stories are already being told in myth and associated literature.

If Apartheid and colonialism created false, oppressive and extractive boundaries of many kinds – between races, primarily, but also between genders, spaces, nature and culture, rural and urban – then part of the decolonial work of reparation is to reconnect across the false boundaries in multiple ways, including to recognize the myriad ways that humans are, and will forever remain, connected to every other living species on the planet. The violent legacies of colonialism and apartheid created dispossession and suffering and excluded indigenous systems of knowledge and narrative. Part of the decolonial project, therefore, must be the centering of these back into the work of environmental communication. Reparative storytelling "involves an investment into relationships, reciprocity, and respect" (Wiebe, 2019, p. 20), this is what turns stories from just stories, to stories that are *just* (Wiebe, 2019).

This collection: South African environmental communication

This special issue includes papers that explore various aspects of what we call "affective encounters". We offer a theoretical definition and discussion in the following section, but first we introduce the papers collected here. Each paper works, by exploding binaries, and forging new forms of connection between empirical and theoretical terrain in environmental communication.

Taking a spatial metaphor as an organizing concept, we have ordered the papers by starting with a "zoomed out" focus, and then traversing different orientations as we "zoom in" to the geographical focus of this collection, South Africa. The first paper is roughly situated in outer space, and looks back on Earth, specifically Africa, as origin. The following three papers are located, at different scales, in salt water, moving from the open sea to shoreline swimming, to beaches. The final three papers are located, at different scales too, in human-animal relations, from vernacular naming practices of frogs to peri-urban caracal mediations, to urban solitary bee relations. Although this journey "starts" in space and zooms in to the South African coastline, interior, and then its cities, we offer this order of papers not to eliminate other possibilities, but to evoke different points in space and the scales that are at play when exploring the multiple epistemologies that we are inviting into convivial relations through their juxtaposition.

Amanda Du Preez considers filmic narratives about African astronauts, asking, "who and what is being displaced by images of post-Earth adventures?" Integrating both the gaze down on earth from above, and the gaze from the earth to the night sky, the paper centers human subjectivity in the affective encounter, with the emotions of loss and solastalgia foregrounded as theoretical framing. The contribution outlines how human identity and practice are partly forged through emotional forms of encounter with earth systems, which are neatly summarized in the cultural politics of African astronaut identities. This paper explores affective engagement with the planet as both home and as a space of alienation, thus complicating binary ideas of relationality.

Within the colonial backdrop of the ocean all too often being considered an alien other, **Dylan McGarry and Cleo Droomer** reframe the watery body as a critical site of memory and heritage, rather than as something separate from the land. Through a dialogical "call and response," the authors find a language for oceanic relations *vis a vie* Droomer's creation of "floatation devices" or "Life(Jackets)" that engage with the ocean's haunting histories, oriented through bodily knowing and rooted in both personal and intergenerational trauma. By employing McGarry's "pedagogy of echo-location," the ocean is positioned not as an "othered" space but as integral to the collective narrative, especially in relation to Droomer's ancestral ties to slavery and apartheid-era displacements. The chapter emphasizes the ocean's significance as a site of remembrance, arguing for its recognition alongside land-based sites of historical suffering. This "tactile theory" underscores

the need to develop new ocean literacies that acknowledge the ocean's role in shaping identities and histories.

Vivienne Bozalek, Tamara Shefer, and Nike Romano bring attention closer to the shoreline and propose this as a physical and metaphysical site for encounter and engagement. Through the practice of swimming-writing, the authors reimagine higher education and knowledge production by immersing themselves in the ocean's multiplicities, where human and more-than-human entities are intimately entangled. This embodied methodology of encounter pays close attention to affective engagements that challenge the erasure of bodies in traditional scholarship. The shoreline, as a site of these encounters, allows the authors to confront the hauntings that the ocean carries, including slavery, colonization, apartheid, and the ongoing environmental degradation of the seas. The ocean, both alluring and dangerous, offers a reparative space for rethinking justice and responsibility in an era of ecological crisis. Through this practice, the authors contribute to a "justice-to-come" scholarship, acknowledging the ongoing and unfinished nature of their reparative engagement with the ocean and the planet.

Moving onshore, **Aaniyah Martin** engages clean-up practice as a reparative and caring encounter that connects ocean with land in re-storying South African coastal histories. Located both on the shoreline and within communities inland, this practice extends beyond traditional beach clean-ups by engaging participants in the tactile mending of collected plastic into rugs. These "hydro-rugs" serve as care cartographies, mapping coastlines with the materials and memories that wash ashore and addressing the ecological crisis in conjunction with historical injustices. Through collaborative public storytelling and material engagement, hydro-rugging invites participants to dwell with the ocean's haunted histories, fostering a deeper understanding of the hydrocommons and the interconnectedness of human and more-than-human communities. This iterative and slowly mounding practice reveals the hidden layers of these relationships, offering a space for healing and reparation both by the sea and within communities far from the shoreline.

Staying with the aquatic, but moving inland to rivers and wetlands, **Fortunate Phaka** considers the political and cultural importance of ecological research and environmental information being produced and disseminated in the indigenous languages of South Africa. Colonial and apartheid systems actively marginalized indigenous languages, education and knowledge systems, and this has translated into an English-dominant environmental policy and conservation sector. As Phaka argues, teaching about wildlife in indigenous languages should be a central consideration, but it is not, partly due to a lack of codified indigenous language information. He reports on extensive fieldwork that produced field guides on amphibians in isiZulu and argues for the conservational and political importance of ongoing vernacular work such as this. Like the lovely frogs named and described in the isiZulu field guide, environmental communication must remain "linguistically" amphibious, to allow people from all backgrounds to participate in and forge new forms of connection. In the context of the epistemic violence conducted in South African history, massive redress is required to support and build environmental resources outside of English-language dominance.

Moving to the peripheries of cities, **Gabriella Leighton** reports on the role of social media in a study of the interaction of caracals on the urban edges of Cape Town. The Urban Caracal Project invited citizen participation, which snowballed into a mini form of internet celebrity for the beautiful, charismatic wild cats being photographed by Capetonians. Leighton reports on the role that social media fame played in the project's scientific work, as well as in the creation of a certain kind of affection for the cats in the public. The affective encounter taking place here seems, on the face of it, to be the same kind that characterized human affection for other charismatic species, yet there are other affective boundaries being negotiated also. Specifically, the boundary between nature (the wild) and culture (the city) is exposed as false, as the caracals increasingly interact with the edges of the cities the same ways that humans interact with the edges of the wild. Also, this paper shows how the boundary between online and offline is entirely porous, and how a great deal of "feeling" can be produced through mediated encounters.

Moving into the gardens and balconies of cities, **Mehita Iqani, Chevonne Reynolds** and **Natasha Shilubane** explore the role of emotion in a citizen science project about biodiversity in Johannesburg, which involved the hosting of solitary bees in bee hotels in participants' outside spaces at home. Again, binary definitions of "wild" and "urban" are broken down, and new inter-species forms of conviviality and hospitality are shown as possible. By exploring the role of emotion in this specific research project, Iqani et al show how affect can "work" for science and science communication, but also reveal how "feelings" play a key role in ordinary people's regard for other creatures specifically, and the idea of "nature" in general. Arguably, this new forms of kin-making between insect and human is a fertile opportunity for the inter-species aspects of the decolonial project.

As is true for many post-colonial, decolonizing and global south countries, communication is always saturated with relations of power: race, gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, citizenship, ability and more. The legacy of apartheid produced lopsided and extractive narratives about the environment, nature, other species and ecology, and implied that these areas of existence were to be stewarded by whiteness. There is much work to be done to dismantle this toxic legacy, and to re-center indigenous, vernacular and indeed non-human narratives and politics to the work of environmental communication in South Africa. This special issue offers some starting points to that work, though of course it cannot claim to have resolved it entirely.

Affective encounters

The South African cases assembled in this special issue explore various aspects of the affective and storying possibilities attendant to environmental communication. The collection here shows not only some of the key forms of narrative (that is, environmental communication) that are being produced and disseminated in the South African context, but also provides an opportunity for considering the political and theoretical importance of such storying.

An "affective encounter" can be defined as a political, embodied, feelings-driven narrative or communicative interruption of (false) boundaries between the ecological and the social, oriented towards connection and reparation.

Environmental storying is arguably always an affective encounter because it works to re-stitch opportunities for connection across legacies of violent disconnection. A great deal of environmental communication produces negative affect, often grief (Lockwood, 2016). These "green feelings" (Lockwood, 2016) should be placed in historical context, because they are the long tail of epistemic violence within the complexes of modernity, which are ultimately sensory (Musila, 2017). The politics of affect play out in the immediacy of a communicative encounter because whatever is real makes itself felt within the event of the reception of the information (Massumi, 2015, p. 147). In being made to be felt, an opportunity emerges for reorienting relations. A theory of communicative affect engages the senses (body) as well as the imagination (mind). Through the radical openness of affect (Stengers, 2010), communicative and social relations can thus expand beyond binaries. Affect locates a zone for communication operating at the boundaries of time (past/present/future) as well as categories of being (human/more than human). In postcolonial contexts, like South Africa, where relational amnesia has resulted from the violence of forced removals, technologies for connection lie within the activities of rituals, cultural practices, creativity, and spirituality. Affective encounters therefore not only recognize but also center forms of communication that exist outside of archives of text and documentation.

Arguably all forms of environmental communication work as affective encounters, in that different modalities of care and compassion (Pezzullo, 2023) must be mobilized in order to invite, and sometimes incite, non-extractive practices and relations between humans and other species, and between humans and the organic and elemental media that make up the planet. However, "care" should not default to imperialist notions for guardianship of "unpeopled" nature. Rather, indigeneity should be re-centred as core to "biodiversity conservation research and practice as a norm of

'care'" (Sène, 2024). The extent to which indigeneity aligns with the environmental and affective politics of environmental communication in South Africa is a question inviting future research. South Africa's pre and postcolonial history, which includes the slave trade, indentured labor, settler colonialism and brutal socio-economic segregation based on race, as well as longer histories of migration from Bantu groups south, Indian Ocean trade and current day migration trends complicates notions of indigeneity, because so many cultures and knowledges migrated to South Africa from many elsewheres over history. Yet still, indigenous and situated knowledge formations demand attention and reintegration into environmental communication in South Africa, as a key part of the decolonial project of epistemological conviviality.

As theorized from our location in the south and engaging global theories, affective environmental communication can expand beyond a presentation of evidence and impact towards listening and tuning in: a shift from effect to affect in anthropocentric storying. This collection has focussed on how, in South Africa, social and ecological justices are entangled, and multi-species storying (Haraway, 2016) produces complex publics. These publics are produced through processes of encounter, which happen along boundaries, which we argue to be inherently porous and negotiable. Boundaries address affect as a radical opening toward the ecological (Massumi, 2015), and these openings are produced in *storying* that both tackles inequality and decenters human narrative. Affective storying expands potentials for environmental communication by attending to intersections of social and ecological justices that are not merely driven by grief and horror (Clark, 2020) or spectacle (Grebowicz, 2014; Lester, 2016), but that offer opportunities for the relational (Barad, 2007). Alongside affect, the special issue has shown how storying can become a form of encounter (Tsing, 2015): an emotionally charged opening for new, locally emergent, and politicized ecological and communicative ontologies.

As Amitav Ghosh (2016, p. 9) points out, "let us make no mistake: the climate crisis is also a crisis of the imagination." The inability, or refusal, to grasp the scale and magnitude of the crisis facing us can be partly addressed through work of imagination, expressed in communicative forms. The South African cases assembled in this special issue make the case for how every affective encounter between ecology and narrative is – indeed *must* be – politicized. This means that history intrudes to the present, while so too does the future, in terms of the time that we all witness to be running out to resolve our collective crises. Extractive and oppressive systems of power, exemplified by Apartheid, seek to determine and fix boundaries, to separate between categories such as race (Black/White), space (Wild/Urban, Land/Sea), language (Colonial/Indigenous), species (Human/Insect), genders and more. Yet, communicative encounters that produce affect (feeling, connection, care, embodied commitment) reveal those boundaries to be not only flawed but false. And it is narrative, be it creative, vernacular, embodied through movement or art, created through community, reaching back through painful histories and into the better worlds that humanity is fully capable of producing, that illuminate and navigate the liminal spaces through which productive work can be done to navigate and deconstruct boundaries: to repair. From the perspective of affective encounters, illuminated as they are by some of the specificities of the South African condition shared in this special issue, we may be able to see how the power of narrative can and indeed should play a central role in ongoing work to decolonize environmental communication.

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