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What difference does it make who is speaking?

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2016

http://hdl.handle.net/10539/21888

Khoza, Mbali (2016) What difference does it make who is speaking?, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, < http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/21888>

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Abstract

This thesis examines the concept of authorship in literary and artistic practice by travelling the concept of authorship from literature to artistic practice. To achieve this the thesis will be guided by the questions, 'what is an author?', 'when is authorship?' and more importantly the title question, what difference does it make who is speaking? To unpack these questions and those that will follow, my research will begin by thinking through the idea of authorship and authorial voice in literature and to identify the ways in which this is performed in artistic practice. Additionally the thesis will explore the authorship and authority, particularly how the author uses the power of language to impose authority over the reader and the West language still holds power the postcolonial subject or authors. In retaliation of this authority, the thesis also looks at how postcolonial writers/artists have developed a language of power.

This analysis will be directed by a selection of theorists, writers and artists. Theorists such as Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault whose questions on authorship are the bases of my research and Miek Bal *Traveling Concepts in the Humanities*, Jacques Derrida *Of Grammatology*, Ngugi Wa Thiongo *Writers in Politics*, Walter Benjamin *The Task of the Translator and* Jean Fisher's *Embodied Subversion* as well as other supporting reading.

In addition to that, investigating methods of writing in Dambudzo Marechera's novella *House of Hunger* and Willimam S. Burroughs *The Naked Lunch* and how these ideas are reflected by artistic practice .To help envisage the idea of the 'artist as author' I look very closely at specific works of three postcolonial artist and their relationship with language. I have selected works by artists Kemang Wa Lehulere's *Some Deleted*

Scenes Too, Tracey Rose's *Span I*, and Danh Vo's *Last letter of Saint Théophane Vénard to his father before he was decapitated copied by Phung Vo* as well as drawing from my own practice.