Unquoting the Past:
Authorship and Appropriation in Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness*

Paige Sweet
Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow
Centre for Humanities Research
University of the Western Cape
paige.sweet@gmail.com

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Abstract:
In 2008 Andrew Offenburger published an article accusing Zakes Mda of copying significant portions of his 2000 novel, *The Heart of Redness*, from Jeff Peires's 1989 historical text, *The Dead Will Arise*. My essay argues that the terms of the debate, cast as one of plagiarism or intertextuality, pivots on a false binary that subsumes both terms to an ahistorical concept of the author and, consequently, arrives at a paradoxical conclusion. After reviewing the two key paradigms of authorship invoked here—the modern, western (Romantic) author and the (post-structuralist) scriptor that belong to plagiarism and intertextuality respectively—I then propose an alternative framework that considers the unique qualities of unmarked literary quotation. In shifting the terms of the debate I demonstrate how this reading of quotation is central to the novel's reflection on the relationship between the past and the present, as well as the foreign and the local. I show how a critical understanding of unmarked literary quotation is essential not only for appreciating the themes and structure of *The Heart of Redness*, but also for advancing an alternate model of authorship. The essay is part of a larger book manuscript project which argues that current anxieties about plagiarism and illicit copying point toward an unresolved set of questions about authorship and literary reproduction. Examining several works of contemporary fiction, I show how quotation practices, and creative uses of punctuation generally, are part of a critical rejoinder to Romantic tropes and practices of textual production.

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Despite the forty-odd years since the author's passing, he[i] is regularly resuscitated to star in yet another plagiarism scandal. There are numerous examples, in fact, that demonstrate how the figure of the author remains vital to the legitimizing fictions that sustain authorship as the province of originality and innovation. For if the inability to move along, as Roland Barthes proposed we do, from the author to the reader, shows us anything, it shows the persistent desire for a figure to whom to ascribe originality and, therefore, exclusive ownership. Despite the profound critiques to the modern, western concept of the author that have emerged in the wake of poststructuralists analyses like Barthes's, as well as by feminist, postcolonial, and legal scholars, the tendency to resuscitate the Romantic figure of the author endures, and it is especially pronounced in allegations of plagiarism. In view of the allegations of plagiarism levied against the South African writer Zakes Mda in the wake of his novel *The Heart of Redness*, this essay revisits two key paradigms of authorship—the modern, western (Romantic) author and the (post-structuralist) scriptor, corresponding to the notions of plagiarism and intertextuality respectively. I then draw together nascent theories of quotation to propose an alternate framework for evaluating unmarked literary quotation. I argue that this framework enables a renewed consideration of the novel's reflection on the relationship between the past and the present, as well as the foreign and the local. I conclude by showing how a theory of unmarked literary quotation makes a critical contribution to an alternative model of authorship.

The Heart of Redness features two parallel story lines: one plotline is set in the 1850s and is based on historical events known as the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement, where the amaXhosa people received a prophecy from Nongqawuse saying that they must kill their cattle and destroy their crops so that the white invaders (the British) would be driven into the sea. The second plotline takes place in contemporary South Africa, in the same region (the Eastern Cape) mostly among the descendants of the characters in the first plotline, split between Believers and Unbelievers according to their ancestors' position in relation to Nongqawuse's prophecy. The characters in the second chronotope are preeminently concerned about a proposed development project for a hotel and casino resort that would bring in rich tourists. The Unbelievers "stand for" development; the Believers, by contrast, are opposed to the development scheme, seeing it as a twentieth-century "civilization" project that would destroy indigenous plants and traditional ways of life. The main character, Camagu, has just returned to South Africa after a 30-year exile in the US, where he received his PhD in Communications and Development. He tries to forge an alternative to the warring sides, which is dramatized, in part, through his attraction to two very different women: Xoliswa Ximiya (daughter of the Unbelievers, Bhonco and NoPetticoat) and Qukezwa (daughter of Zim and NoEngland, Believers). Apartheid is elided in the novel, referred to obliquely as "The Middle Generations." This historical ellipsis serves to concentrate the novel's focus on the relationship of the past to the present, wherein apartheid figures as one concentrated period within a much longer pattern of foreign influence in South Africa.

Despite its elision of apartheid, the novel, Zakes Mda's third, published in 2000, was critically acclaimed as the first great novel of the "new" (post-apartheid) South Africa. In 2008,

however, Andrew Offenburger, a graduate student in History at Yale, vociferously disagreed because, he said, Mda had copied significant passages of *The Heart of Redness* from Jeff Peires's historical text, *The Dead Will Arise*. Peires's text, which was published in 1989, had been hailed as the most comprehensive historical account of the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement to date, building on colonial archives as well as Xhosa newspapers, oral history, and interviews with descendants of Nongqawuse. Considering only the parts of the novel set in the 1850s, Offenburger posed a deceptively simple question: is it plagiarism or intertextuality? Despite Mda's acknowledgement of his indebtedness to Peires in the dedication to the book, Offenburger judges the novel to be a work of plagiarism. And in his response (published in the same journal) Mda disappointingly abides by the terms set by Offenburger and attempts to prove his intertextuality.

One of the implications of Offenburger's method of analysis is that it does not consider the generically and historically-specific nature of authorship, which leads him to treat all forms of storytelling and history making as though they involve the same values about textual qualities. His collapsing of all textual distinctions is evident in the passage where he quotes from the introduction to an anthology on intertextuality, to which he appends his concise denunciation of Mda's work: "'To quote is not merely to write glosses on previous writers; it is to interrogate the chronicity of literature and philosophy, to challenge history as determining tradition and to question conventional notions of originality and difference,' *an effect Mda does not realize.*"[ii] Offenburger supplements his concise gloss with a graph and an index featuring a double-column comparison of passages from *The Heart of Redness* alongside passages from *The Dead Will Arise.* Although he marshals literary scholars to provide a distinction between intertextuality and plagiarism, his graphics betray a need to establish the primacy and originality of Peires's text alongside the plagiarizing unoriginality of Mda's. This speciously suggests that Peires's text—an academic monograph of a historical event—should be the standard by which to measure Mda's—a literary text with two intertwined narratives. Offenburger, of course, is not alone in his desire for this kind of author figure. Indeed, he might best be considered a representative of an enduring desire shared by many to maintain conventional notions of originality and difference.

The deceptive simplicity of Offenburger's question—plagiarism or intertextuality?—thus disregards the ways that the two concepts entail radically different presuppositions, conceptually and historically. Plagiarism, understood today, is a term that points the finger at an illicit, deceiving author and has the effect of shoring up the ideological conceits of a *true* author figure as an emblem of originality and propriety deserving of property rights in his work. Intertextuality, by contrast, names a *textual* formation in which the figure of the author *cannot* be posited as an originary creative source. Indeed, the figure commensurate with intertextuality is the text or, perhaps, the reader. The false binary, plagiarism-intertextuality, thus neglects to consider the historical formation of "the author," which not only tends to naturalize the moral and property rights that accrue to such a figure, but also conveniently sidesteps the radical challenges to the modern formation of authorship posed by intertextuality. But despite the radical critiques advanced by theories of intertexutality, the figure of the modern, western author continues to enliven discourses of copyright and patent claims, and the discourse of intellectual property rights breathes authorial life into literary analyses, which is evidenced by the recurrent desire for a stable, coherent, and familiar creative subject—a demand that is especially voluble in allegations of plagiarism.

It is therefore useful to pause for a moment to consider the function of a plagiarism charge. While not a legal category (because it is not always a violation of copyright), it draws much of its condemnatory force from the connotations it shares with acts that *are* criminal, such as stealing or (in its more dated associations) kidnapping. For this reason, the term plagiarism is more properly understood in a moral register. It is "bad" writing because it does not demonstrate proper respect for the sanctified attributes of modern authorship (originality, individuality, and property). But like the figure of the author, the concept of plagiarism must also be historicized. Indeed, plagiarism only began to acquire broad negative connotations in the nineteenth century as originality came to be valued over classical imitation and copyright laws became firmly attached to an individual author rather than publishers. Despite the many and varied critiques of authorship and copyright, plagiarism continues to generate significant popular condemnation, but little scholarly analysis. In the 1990s Gerhard Joseph observed, "plagiarism tends to be easily dismissed from our cultural consciousness and has occasioned relatively little theoretical discussion, considering the number of writers who have been guilty or at least accused of it."[iii] Although intertextuality pressures the logic and substance of plagiarism, the term has proved to be remarkably resilient; one consequence of this is that the concept of the author as creative genius lives on. The failure to move on from this notion of the author is surprising in view of the wide ranging contemporary accounts of alternative modes of authorial production, including fan fiction, mashups, and other forms of what legal scholar Lawrence Lessig has termed "remix culture." Within literary studies, Marjorie Perloff's recent book, *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century*, demonstrates how quotation generates new meanings and effectively opposes the cluster of concepts embedded in the modern notion of the author. With an eye toward the many technologies of quotation today embodied in translation, the internet, and artistic practices, Perloff boldly claims, "*citationality*, with its dialectic of removal and graft, disjunction and conjunction, its interpenetration of origin and destruction, is central to twenty-first-century poetics."[iv] Although Perloff is resolutely focused on poetry, her recognition of the intrinsic link between the form and process of creative composition that recycles language from another source can productively be extended to consider similar writing practices in other media. My contribution to these various efforts consists of advancing a model of authorship that is explicitly rooted in a theory of reading that reorients how we approach unmarked literary quotation.

Perloff's paradigm is especially significant for literary study today because of the urgent need for a robust rethinking of plagiarism. Rather than allow the specter of the author to give second life to Romantic notions of originality and innovation, literary analysis would benefit from a renewed attention on one of the insights of intertextuality that seems to have been lost in the fray of subsequent critiques and models of analysis, namely quotation. Toward this end, it is useful to draw together theories of quotation that both belong to and exceed the paradigm of intertextuality. Both Julia Kristava and Roland Barthes have elaborated conceptual regimes to explain how every text is comprised of quotations. "Every text," Kristeva says, "is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another."[v] Developed as part of her study of the Russian Formalists, Kristeva underscores how every word operates within and among a variety of linguistic structures (genre, narrative, sentences, etc.), which means that every word intersects with multiple writings or texts. Contrary to many deployments of intertextuality that focus on explicit references or citations, the significance that Kristeva

accords to the word itself as a point where multiple texts refract one another requires the acknowledgement of the force of a linguistic unconscious, that is, of the proliferation of unintended meanings, allusions, and after-effects that result from the inscription of any word. Similarly, in his essay "Death of an Author," Barthes says, "The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture."[vi] Barthes emphasizes that the removal of the author figure as the organizing principle of the text is not a mere historical fact; rather, this recognition radically transforms the text such that it is impossible to conceive of the author as prior to the text he produces. Where the author once stood as a guarantor of meaning, now stands the scriptor, a figure whose primacy cannot be posited above that of the reader or the text. In a text that celebrates and practices this quotational practice, Jonathan Lethem likewise paraphrases Kristeva and Barthes when he declares, "Any text is woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages…."[vii] The far-reaching insight that texts are far more derivative and influenced than original and autonomous has aided literary studies in developing robust theories of reading that appreciate the reciprocal influence that texts have on one another. But in the absence of an equally robust theory of authorship commensurate with these insights, the ghostly figure of the modern author is frequently conjured to adjudicate questions about the appropriate or proprietary borders of legitimate authorship.

To provide a theory of authorship adequate to the qualities of contemporary literature, I propose supplementing the insights offered by poststructuralist theories with an unlikely source in order to provide another perspective on what is at stake in literary quotation. Walter Benjamin's little-discussed views on quotation are particularly apt for assessing the relationship between the past and the present through a reappraisal of what I refer to as the already-said and the saying-now. "Quotations in my works," Benjamin says, "are like robbers by the roadside who make an armed attack and relieve an idler of his convictions."[viii] Benjamin explains that the importance of these thieving quotations is their destructive rather than preservative intentions. In the Introduction to *Illuminations*, Hannah Arendt says that Benjamin understood his quotations as "thought fragments" whose primary purpose was to redirect thought.[ix] She says, quoting Benjamin intermittently, that quotations "have the double task of interrupting the flow of the presentation with 'transcendent force' and at the same time of concentrating within themselves that which is presented."[x] Interrupting and concentrating, this is the function of quotation that becomes so vital to the use of the past. Arendt links Benjamin's thieving conception of quotation to his understanding of a changed relationship to authority and tradition in the modern period. Following Benjamin's style of quotation, Arendt continues:

> The discovery of the modern function of quotation, according to Benjamin…was born out of despair—not the despair of a past that refuses "to throw its light on the future" and lets the human mind "wander in darkness" as in Tocqueville, but out of the despair of the present and the desire to destroy it; hence their power is "not the strength to preserve but to cleanse, to tear out of context, to destroy." Still, the discoverers and lovers of this destructive power originally were inspired by an entirely different intention, the intention to preserve; and only because they did not let themselves be fooled by the professional "preservers" all around them did they finally discover that the destructive power of quotations was "the only one which still contains the hope that something from this period will survive—for no other reason than that it was torn out of it." (ibid.)[xi]

Benjamin's insights permit a different angle of vision because they emphasize how re-inscription can extend tradition into new domains, offering new meanings to the already-said. For Benjamin, quotation forms part of the textual seam where past and present are stitched together. In this way he suggests that the critical use of the past can be mobilized against the stagnation of tradition through a radical mode of appropriation that ensures that the past remains vital for life. Benjamin's fixation on how the past is transmitted and put to work for the present through an operation of quotation might productively be thought in relation to his writings on the author and art in the age of technological reproducibility. For my purposes here it suffices to draw out the ways that Benjamin's seminal theory of quotation foregrounds the textual operation of appropriation, refusing any claims to individual ownership, originality, or authenticity in relation to the quoted material. Indeed, Benjamin's affirming stance toward the pilfering value of quotation validates the creation of new meanings, which, paradoxically, ensures our fidelity to tradition by reinscribing it in the present.

These nascent theories of quotation are usefully assembled into a framework for assessing unmarked literary quotation for two reasons. First, it is useful as a supplement to intertextuality, which has offered only scant acknowledgement to the role and value of unmarked literary quotation. As a result, too often the term plagiarism steps in to mark quotation as illicit, quietly ushering the Romantic author back onto the literary scene. Second, although intertextuality dethroned the author in order to make way for the reader and to valorize new practices of reading, when allegations of plagiarism arises we too often revert to modes of textual interpretation that fall back on Romantic concepts of originality, primacy, and individuality. It is worth noting that literary scholars have not demonstrated broad acceptance of the term scriptor, which Barthes proposed in place of "author," which also points to the absence of a theory of authorship that would be adequate to the insights of intertextuality. This is not merely a problem for thinking about plagiarism; rather, it is a problem for conceptualizing authorship. In view of this, understanding authorship as quotation or, quotational authorship, contributes significantly to a theory of authorship that describes literary production as indebted not to specific authors or texts but, instead, to a corpus that sustains its relevance to contemporary issues through a re-presentation of the already-said amid the saying-now.

The Heart of Redness is exemplary for the framework I propose because it is one of the few recent instances where accusations of plagiarism were made in a scholarly journal. This is significant because it registers the tenacity with which scholars loop another suture between the idea of the author and the notion of a singular creative source. In addition, Mda's novel is unique among literary plagiarisms because the passages it copies were not from another novel but rather from a historical text. This fact raises provocative (if not new) questions about the relationship between literature and history, the colonial archive and its counter-narratives, as well as the ownership and appropriation of stories about the past. Given this set of issues it is perhaps all the more striking that the corrective Oppenburger suggests is that Mda credit Peires as co-author. To my mind this remedy raises a whole host of other questions: What is the crucial difference between an author and a co-author? What form should acknowledgement take, especially considering that footnotes and citations are still considered experimental and unconventional devices for novels? What should be done with "plagiarized" texts? What are the literary or textual effects of unmarked quotation on other texts? I explore these questions indirectly through

my reading of *The Heart of Redness*, focusing primarily on how the novel's use of unmarked quotations can be understood as part of its preoccupation with themes of appropriation, with the relationship of the past to the present, and with the dynamics between the foreign and the local.

It is useful to begin by asking what the unmarked quotation accomplishes. Does it challenge the master narrative status of Perires's text, or does it, as Rebecca Wenzel asserts, consolidate its authority precisely by not changing any part of it? If we focus our analytic gaze solely on the way that Peires's text appears in Mda's, then we are bound to conclude that Mda is either a lazy writer or an unimaginative one since he could not be bothered to depart too far from Perires's words. But this is only half the story. And to arrive at this conclusion must be understood to be as much a problem of reading as it is a problem of writing. That is, if the reader's expectations are such that she does not expect to find scholarly quotations or footnotes in the novel (regardless of whether they might appear in other novels), then she might consider whether the effect or *point* of the unmarked quotation lies elsewhere. In other words, since this is not a historical novel or an academic monograph, then it is necessary to ask a different set of questions. Instead of asking how Peires's historical rendering appears in Mda's novel, the reader might ask how historical narratives condition what appears as possible responses to present-day problems as represented. For example, one might consider how the descriptions of Sir George Grey's civilizing ambitions include references to the naming of rivers and mountain ranges. Mda writes:

> He [Sir George Grey] had been a governor in Australia and New Zealand, they said, where his civilising mission did many wonderful things for the natives of those countries. Of course he had to take their land in return for civilisation. Civilisation is not cheap. He had written extensively about the native people of those countries, and about their plants. He had even given names to ten of their rivers, and to their mountain ranges. It did not matter that the forebears of these natives had named those rivers and mountains from time immemorial. When Ned told them about the naming of the rivers, a derisive elder had called Grey The Man Who Named Ten Rivers. And that became his name. (95-96)

In Offenburger's view, this passage is notable only for the semantic similarity it shares with Peires's text (the passage Offenburger notes is underlined above). The corresponding passage from Peires's text, provided by Offenburger, is: "He had named ten rivers and discovered two new mountain ranges…."[xii] But the passage is also rich in terms of its meditation on naming and its ironic tone. Indeed, pairing the two passages as evidence for a plagiarism charge conceals some of the important differences between the two passages. The passage from Peires's text appears in the context of enumerating some of Grey's failures, as well as how he managed to influence colonial policy and knowledge production despite his immense disdain for indigenous culture. By contrast, in Mda's text, the tone is highly ironic. Mda uses this literary device effectively, showing how the very same thing that Grey uses to boost his own self-image (his naming of rivers and mountain ranges) earns him derision among the amaXhosa, who provide him with a mocking praise name. Mda extends the ironic tone in this passage to offer a subtle critique of the violence that Grey's re-naming accomplishes as indicated in the seeming ease with which names from "time immemorial" can be displaced. Moreover, the way that this description of Grey is narrated through third person indirect discourse (from Ned and "people

like him" who had converted to Christianity and supported Grey—referred to with the "they said" in the passage above) enables the narrative voice to assume ironic distance from that which it describes. In this way, the tone and the grammar mark a wordless critique that guides the interpretation of how the words appear on the page. We must read in this a word of caution for how evidence (e.g., of Grey's goodwill) is marshaled to support a given action (his civilizing project), as well as a counter-narrative about how words might be redirected toward other purposes (e.g., christening Grey The Man Who Named Ten Rivers).

Above all, what is instructive about this instance of Mda's recycling of Peires's text is that it provides the colonial precedent for the recurrent discussion about how the appropriation of plants and land is linked to the rhetoric of civilization. This comes through not only in the few notable sentences in the passage cited above, but also in the paragraphs that follow in which a debate ensues about whether Sir George Grey is a thief and whether his interest in Xhosa folk stories, animals and plants is as beneficent as it appears. The scene ends with Twin-Twin's meditation on his discomfort with the "strange alliance" he finds himself in: as an unbeliever, he rejects Nongqawuse's prophecy while still adhering to amaXhosa beliefs and ways of life more generally, which is starkly opposed to the amaGqobhoka, the Christian converts, who also reject Nongqawuse's prophecy, but do not out share his deeper fidelity to amaXhosa traditions. Reading the passage in its entirety does more than simply restore context to the sentence that Offenburger plucks out. It reads it with an eye toward its use of literary devices; it reads it in relation to the motif of appropriation; it reads it for how it critiques or redirects a straightforward interpretation of the colonial account.

There are numerous examples of appropriation in the text. The British severed the head of Xikixa (father of Twin and Twin Twin) so they could keep it as a souvenir, for later scientific inquiry, or (as Twin and Twin Twin suspect) use it in the witchcraft of the white man. Camagu shocks everyone when he confirms the likelihood of the British keeping Xikixa's head because he saw in the British Museum of Natural history not only the shrunken heads of the so-called Bushmen, but also the private parts of a Khoikhoi woman who was called Saartjie Baartman. And, as though to point to the difficulty of squaring the balance sheet of appropriation, there is also the issue of the dance that the Unbelievers borrow from the abaThwa that helps them celebrate unbelief and participate in a ritual devoted to memory and suffering—a dance that the abaThwa demand that they return. Such forms of appropriation raises questions about the extent to which the repatriation of misappropriated body parts tend to colonial wounds or curtail their continuation. Likewise, the abaThwa seem unsatisfied with the Unbelievers' acknowledgement and appreciation of the power of their dance, but one might also ask what they gain by its return. These examples seem to pressure the relevance of thinking about quotation and authorship, but in fact they show its broader significance in terms of thinking about appropriation and the past. This is also evident in the motif of botanical appropriation, which I return to below.

Before turning to a scene from the text in the narrative thread set in contemporary South Africa, there is another perspective of how unmarked quotation functions in the novel that deserves attention. Whereas Offenburger set out to prove that Mda had plagiarized passages from Peires and therefore was unworthy of the critical acclaim he was receiving, other scholars advised caution in the face of the rhetoric of plagiarism. However, even these scholars, in spite of their distance from the tone of plagiarism, nonetheless concede that Peires's text sets the

historical terms for Mda's novel. Rebecca Wenzel, for example, says, "the novel's reliance on *The Dead Will Arise* consolidates the authority of written scholarly history," and she then concludes that the "characters are not so much in dialogue with scholarly history as they are determined by it."[xiii] This assertion is surprising in the context of Wenzel's lucid literary and historical analysis because it leads to some of the same conceptual mistakes as Offenburger's study, not only disregarding the second narrative thread, but also abiding by a narrow notion of authorship. The crux of the issue here, for Wenzel, is the way that Mda's use of Peires's text is compromised by the way Mda incorporates Peires's theory that the historical figures Goliat and Mhlakaza were in fact the same person—a theory that has long been subjected to significant critique.[xiv]

While Wenzel's analysis certainly has merit, I would still maintain that reducing the comparative field to Mda and Peires's text would amount to a failure in reading. Wenzel's expansive analysis demonstrates one way to guard against such a limited reading. What deserves to be enhanced is the theory of authorship that undergirds the logic that would reduce Mda's text to its indebtedness to Peires's.[xv] To compare only Mda's text and Peires's would be to read only half the story. Considered in a broader frame, such a limited comparison clearly misses the significant common ground between literature and history, an element that is especially significant in these texts. Sheila Davies makes this point when she sets out to refute absolutely the Goliat-Mhlakaza link. Davies expresses surprise that Peires would reiterate a rumor that had such racist overtones, but concludes that he did so in the service of a "desire to write a Good Story."[xvi] She continues, noting, "*The Dead Will Arise* is, in fact, infused with a desire to imitate fictional forms and style—to write literature. It contains long scene-setting descriptions and significantly consigns all details that might 'disturb the narrative flow' to endnotes."[xvii] Within this context, the Goliat-Mhlakaza link is an important narrative device; indeed, Davies goes so far as to say that this feature is one of several that "intensify the fictional effect."[xviii] While it may, on the surface, be surprising to find a reference to the "fictional effect" of a historical text, from another perspective it points to the common repertoire of storytelling techniques that Mda and Peires share. More broadly, it is indicative of the literary pre-histories of historical texts, which include oral stories, rumors, and other ways that the past is transmitted through unofficial or unauthorized routes. This perspective allows us to see the ways in which Peires's own text is infused with the question—if not the crisis—of authorship. Indeed, to the degree that the Xhosa Cattle Killing was instigated by a prophecy—wherein one speaks the words of another—the uncertainty and polyvocality of authorship conditions all aspects of knowledge and storytelling that emerges from the events. For Peires it is a matter of how to locate authorship in relation the events of the Cattle Killing Movement, especially in the sense of trying to determine the origins and authority of the prophecy. (Indeed, some scholars have argued that the way Peires wrote *The Dead Will Arise* effectively writes out Nongqawuse as the author of the prophecy.[xix]) It is possible that the way the question of authorship troubles Peires's text is symptomatic of the difficulty of citing prophecy. Indeed, it might be argued that the true origin for a prophet's words is their divine source. In this reading, prophecy shares with plagiarism the quality of reciting the words of another. Put differently, these modalities of authorship share a displaced relation to their sources, which injects a degree of foreignness and doubt in precisely the same place we would conventionally expect to find the certainty and autonomy of the solitary author.

But following these displacements is far more productive than continuing the search for an elusive author figure. If we consider the novel's imbrication in various fields of meaning that are cross-cut by unmarked quotations, then its commentary on how various modes of appropriation are vital to the way the past writes its signature into the present becomes visible. The scene where Qukezwa (the contemporary equivalent of Nongquwuse) is charged with the crime of vandalizing or chopping down trees is emblematic here. According to Xhosa law, only the umga (or mimosa tree) can be chopped down without the chief's permission. Qukezwa has typically shown herself to be a protector of trees, arguing against the hotel-casino development, in part, on the grounds that it would destroy the natural beauty of the region, so her illegal destruction of the lantana and wattle trees shocks even those who have come to expect scandalous behavior from her. Qukezwa's defense is that the lantana and wattle are "foreign" trees: they are "not the trees of our forefathers," she argues; rather, they are "enemies" because they are "dangerous" to indigenous plants and should be "destroyed."[xx] As is typical for the structure of the book, a debate between the Believers and Unbelievers ensues, emphasizing the stark opposition between the two sides of the issue. One the one hand are those who are swayed by Qukezwa's argument that, like the poisonous inkberry trees that she has cut with impunity, the "old law" should be changed because it does not serve the "new" South Africa. In explaining why the law must be changed, Qukezwa says, "Just like the umga, the seed of the wattle tree is helped by fire. The seed can lie there for ten years, but when fire comes it grows. And it uses all the water. Nothing can grow under the wattle tree. It is an enemy since we do not have enough water in this country."[xxi] On the other hand is Bhonco, a steadfast Believer and longtime foe of Qukezwa's father, Zim, who asks whether all foreign trees should be cut down: "Are you going to go out to the forest of Nogquloza and destroy all the trees there just because they were imported from the land of the white man in the days of our fathers?"[xxii] Qukezwa, who has already shocked the elders by speaking to the court in person (rather than abiding by customary law and being represented by her father), wins significant respect when she explains: "The trees in Nogqoloza don't harm anybody, as long as they stay there…. The trees that I destroyed are as harmful as the inkberry. […] They come from other countries…to suffocate our trees. They are dangerous trees that need to be destroyed."[xxiii]

With this passage in mind, I would like to recall Benjamin's theory of quotation in order to consider how it might be expanded to consider themes of appropriation and transplantation more generally. This is relevant here because the trees under discussion are distinct material traces of colonialism. Originating in Central America and Australia, they undoubtedly took root in South Africa as part of the expansive exchange of botanical products circulated by the British throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But the trees are also *metonyms* for colonialism, not only figuring the enduring presence of the transplanted foreign(er), but also marking the displacements of biodiversity. In this sense the self-regeneration of the plants is like a seasonal reminder of what has come and gone in the cycles of colonial exploits. Put differently, they are organic indices of how the past resurfaces in the present and, in this way, are not unlike the scars of history that resurface on the first born of every descendent in Twin-twin's line.[xxiv] The ongoing global (some would say neocolonial) imbalance of these biomaterial exchanges is indicated obliquely in this scene when Bhonco argues that the law must not be selectively applied or changed for one "impetuous girl." To support his position he tries to analogize Qukezwa's actions to those of other thefts. He tells the court: "Remember that only a month ago two white tourists who were staying at the Blue Flamingo [hotel] were arrested by the

police…for smuggling cycads….[xxv] Ostensibly a defender of the sanctity of the law, Bhonco provocatively elides the difference between weeding out destructive foreign trees (Qukezwa's crime) and the expropriation of indigenous trees by foreign forces (the tourists' crime). Bhonco seems to suggest that the law is needed to ensure the protection of natural resources. But his staunch opposition to the Unbelievers leads him to insist on the letter of the law without considering whether its spirit continues to serve the interests of the village; he also apparently forgets that he had previously mocked the idea that someone should be arrested for taking "wild things that belong to no one in particular." By contrast, Qukezwa, referred to by the narrator as the "tree-cutting siren," embodies a distinctive form of authorship, arguing persuasively for a critical reinterpretation of "the old law…[which] weighted heavily on our shoulders during the sufferings of the Middle Generations."[xxvi] But she does not simply flout customary law; rather, she weeds out aspects that are counterproductive to the urgent issues of the day, advancing a persuasive rationale for her authority (a kind of oral authorship that shows remarkable continuity with the kind demonstrated by Nongqawuse) based on a deep commitment to Xhosa traditions and new interpretations of customary law, scoring respect for her knowledge of plants and even the agreement of some of the elders for her reasoning.

It is telling that this scene—with its rowdy discussions about transplanted and misappropriated materials—occurs in a court, an inkundla, suggesting that the issue of which foreign trees are benign and which are destructive is a proxy for much larger questions about the legacy of bio-matter in South Africa. The reference Bhonco makes to the cycad is but one of the many instances where discussions about foreign and indigenous plants stand in for the debate about "civilization" and development—that is, the pressures of foreign influence (namely capital) in contemporary South Africa.[xxvii] The issue is put into its starkest terms when Bhonco says, "It is foolish to talk of conserving indigenous trees. After all, we can always plant civilized trees."[xxviii] The equation of trees with civilization surfaces in a similar way during the meeting with the developers who, as they get increasingly excited by their own run-away plans, muse about cutting down all the trees to make way for rollercoasters and "trees imported from England. We'll uproot a lot of these native shrubs and wild bushes and plant a beautiful English garden."[xxix] This inkundla scene thus condenses many of the issues around appropriation and transplantation that recur throughout the novel. Read as part of an extended consideration of the effects of appropriated and transplanted goods, it becomes possible to see the effect of Mda's stitching together of the already-said with the saying-now as one that brings fresh perspective to how the living material of the past animates concerns of the present. Put in more explicitly literary terms, we might see the creative agent here as a kin to Benjamin's active, strategic fellow who doggedly transplants linguistic material, wresting historical material in the service of imaginatively placing it in dialogue with contemporary issues. In this way we remain attentive to how the novel imaginatively exceeds Peires's historical text through its use of quotation, appropriation, and transplantation.

A few objections may be raised to this analysis. For one, Mda's novel is not "experimental" and he does not use quotation (or history as quotation) in an experimental way; that is, his quotations do not rip anything out of context (which marks their difference from Benjamin's quotations). In some ways this echoes one of Wenzel's critiques, namely, that Mda's novel has the form of an English novel with the content of Peires's history.[xxx] In this view, it is merely a conventional narrative with plagiarized bits. However, this conclusion is only possible

if one does not read the second narrative thread or believes it to be too compromised by the "plagiarisms" of the first narrative thread to warrant any close reading. But we must acknowledge a larger context here, which is the many themes about appropriation (colonial and aesthetic), as well as the themes about the relationship of the past to the present. And, in view of these preoccupations, even as it might be necessary to account for the failures of the text—to express disappointment, for example, that more imaginative or magical elements appear in the second narrative thread—we must count it a failure of reading and of our analytic vocabulary if we only chronicle a text's failures. By contrast, if we shift the focus of interpretation, then we are more likely to appreciate what the text does rather than what the text fails to do.

A second objection is embedded in this first one, which is that Mda's novel is limited, "determined," by Peires's historical text. Offenburger voices this critique in stronger terms when he says *The Heart of Redness* "accumulate[s] an inordinate debt to *The Dead Will Arise*."[xxxi] The response to this view is, parardoxically, to be found in the words with which Offenburger continues: "Taking stock of the one-sided transactions between novelist and historian reveals a troublesome presence of preexisting text and suggests that, contrary to postmodern theoretical leniency in reading plagiarism as intertextuality, *The Heart of Redness* must be seen as a plagiarizing, unoriginal work, a derivative of Peires's historical research."[xxxii] For Offenburger, Peires has accomplished the truly original research, which involves consulting primary texts. Peires even demonstrates "literary desires" in the writing of his engaging narrative, which Offenburger commends him for. The literary aspirations of history, in this view, seem to be a better mode of engaging the past than the novel form. But this view is anchored by its erasure of the vast range of literary antecedents that suggest just the opposite: that historiography utilizes technologies of appropriation in much the same way as the novel form. The second and more significant response to this objection builds on the analytic distinction between the category of plagiarism and the concept of intertextuality to explore the urgent need to subtract literary analyses from paradigms of inheritance, debt, and derivation. Not only do these monetary metaphors reinforce Oedipal dynamics of literary influence that have been subject to deep critique by feminist and postcolonial literary scholars for the ways they uphold paternal and imperial notions of literary production and distribution, they also limit textual interpretation to a paradigm that overlaps with capitalist categories of ownership—reducing the map of literary space to that of intellectual property space.[xxxiii]

In some ways the theory of quotational authorship I propose is rather modest, amplifying what other literary scholars have said about the ways that every text emerges out of and contributes to the already-said, the already-written. But in another way, quotational authorship significantly changes the position of the author in relation to the bodies of knowledge (literary, historiographical, philosophical, etc.) of which she or he is a part. Instead of the author—or the author's name (*pace* Foucault)—anchoring the meaning or the structure of a text, the text is understood as an interweaving of the already-said and the saying-now that contributes to a larger field of meaning unowned by any one. It is important to remark on how these quotations work prospectively as well as retrospectively. For instance, Mda's text, not only instigated renewed scholarly, literary, and popular interest in the Xhosa Cattle Killing, it also stimulated interest in Peires's text.[xxxiv] Indeed, one of the consequences of Mda's method of quotation, appropriation, and transplantation is registered in the statement Jeff Peires made expressing his satisfaction with Mda's acknowledgement because of "the renewed attention given to his own work through the

publication…of Mda's fictional narrative."[xxxv] I offer Peires's words here because his brief statement deserves amplification for the way it demonstrates that authorship in a quotational mode can expand and enhance both the already-said and the saying now. This strategy resonates in the novel not simply in the quotational practices that transplant Peires's textual material (that is, not only in the novel's content), but also the way that this material is intertwined with a narrative thread set in present day South Africa (that is, the way it affects the novel's form). As such, content and form, theme and method, serve as a comment on how the past and the present are braided together. Lest literary analysis be reduced to policing the mobility of its linguistic content, we must remain attentive to formal, stylistic, and aesthetic qualities—an imperative that attains greater significance for literary texts that operate at the boundaries of mercurial social norms of propriety.

A rigorous analysis of unmarked literary quotation thus contributes significantly to a revised conceptualization of authorship that is not bound to conventional (modern, Western) norms of intellectual property, originality, or individuality. From the perspective of quotational authorship, Offenburger's exposé may also be said to contribute to an expansion of authorship in the sense that his study forms part of the web of quotations that subordinates a singular authorial figure to the expanded fields of meaning from which it draws and contributes. The important thing is to see that these authors—Mda's, Peires's, Offenburger's, Wenzel's, and any others who might participate in these quotational endeavors—are not in competition with a limited amount of critical or financial return, but rather share out an unlimited set of meanings in the production of knowledge in its imaginative and empirical registers.

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[i] I use the masculine pronoun deliberately to mark the gendered dimensions that have historically contoured the concept of authorship.

[ii] Quoted in Andrew Offenburger. "Duplicity and Plagiarism in Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness*." *Research in African Literatures*. 39.3 (2008), 174, emphasis added.

[iii] Gerhard Joseph, "Dickens and International Copyright." *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*. Eds. Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi. Durham: Duke UP, 1994, 267.

[iv] Marjorie Perloff. *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010, 17, emphasis in original.

[v] Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel." *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Ed. Léon Roudiez, Trans. Thomas Gora and Alice Jardine. New York: Columbia UP, 1980, 66.

[vi] Roland Barthes, "Death of the Author." *Image-Music-Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978, 146.

[vii] Jonathan Lethem, "The Ecstasy of Influence: A Plagiarism," *Harper's*, February 2007, 65.

[viii] Hannah Arendt. "Introduction." *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. By Walter Benjamin. Ed. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1968, 38-9.

[ix] Ibid 39.

[x] Ibid.

[xi] Ibid.

[xii] Offenburger 189.

[xiii] Wenzel 194.

[xiv] In *The Dead Will Arise* Peires supported the contention (which had long circulated as a rumor among Xhosa people) that Mhlakaza was the same person as Wilhelm Goliath, a "gospel man" who had been a servant of Nathaniel Merriman, archdeacon of Grahamstown (Peires, *The Dead Will Arise* 33-36). For the most extensive critique of this theory see Sheila Davis, "Raising the Dead: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing and the Mhlakaza-Goliat Delusion." *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 33.1 (2007): 19-41.
[xv] To be clear, I do not wish to affirm the rhetoric of debt that saturates Offenburger's text. On the contrary, the language of debt belongs to the same paradigm of authorship, where paternal and economic metaphors constrain the way we conceptualize literary production and the relations among texts more generally.
[xvi] Davies 35.
[xvii] Ibid 37.
[xviii] Ibid.
[xix] For a discussion of how Peires's account of the Cattle Killing is symptomatic of androcentric bias in South African historiography, see Helen Bradford, "Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and Its Frontier Zones, 1806-70" *Journal of African History* 37 (1996): 351-70. Meg Samuelson makes a similar argument about Mda's treatment of female agency and authorship in *The Heart of Redness* in "Historical Time, Gender, and the 'New' South Africa in Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness*." Sephis e-magazine 2, no. 2 (2006): 15-18. www.sephis.org/pdfezine5.pdf.
[xx] Mda 248.
[xxi] Ibid.
[xxii] Ibid.
[xxiii] Ibid.
[xxiv] As Rebecca Wenzel notes, "These 'scars of history' literalize and somatize the presence of the past" (183).
[xxv] Mda 249.
[xxvi] Mda 246.
[xxvii] The "red" in the book's title refers to the ochre derived from indigenous plants (signifying traditional ways of life), and the rejection of "redness" is equated with progress, modernity, and "civilization."
[xxviii] Mda 168.
[xxix] Mda 234.
[xxx] Wenzel 181.
[xxxi] Offenburger 168.
[xxxii] Ibid.
[xxxiii] For a more expansive analysis of the overlap between literary space with that of intellectual property space see Joseph Slaughter, "Form and Informality: An Unliterary Look at World Literature."
[xxxiv] For a detailed account of the many iterations of the Xhosa Cattle Killing, see Rebecca Wenzel's excellent book, *Bulletproof: Afterlives of Anticolonial Prophecy in South Africa and Beyond.*
[xxxv] See Peires's statement here: http://bookslive.co.za/blog/2008/07/22/plagiarism-controversy-jb-peires-satisfied-with-zakes-mdas-acknowledgment/