

***BAD WRITING THE FAILED State & THREE JERUSALEMS:***

***PROVOCATION IN NARRATIVES OF RESEARCH MAKING & WALKING***

Author: DR. MYER TAUB, THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE, WSOA, UNIVERSITY OF WITWATERSRAND

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Figure: From Afar: An image of William Boshoff's *The Wailing Wall* at Nirox, Cradle of Mankind

Here, for the first time Jews were driven into the midst of a race society and almost automatically singled out by the Boers from all other "white" people for special hatred, not only as representatives of the whole enterprise, but as a different race "race", the embodiment of a devilish principle introduced into the normal world of "blacks" and "whites" (Hannah Arendt, "Race and Bureaucracy" in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* 1951:202).

"I had asked my creative writing students to do a simple exercise in class. They were required to produce bad writing." Amitavah Kumar in *Bad Writing is Easy* 2019:213)

"-that to my fancy it appeared like going up to Jerusalem at the feast of Passover" (James Boswell from *The Life of Samuel Johnson* 1791)

I work at a failing institution. This is not an apology; or an utterance of remorse rather than to suggest there is potential in reconsidering Mimesis through language and action in narratives forms like Substitution, and Reproduction; how they invert concurrency of signaling (See Auerbach on *Mimesis*, Gaylard on *Substitution* and Benjamin on *Reproduction...*) Similar to the forms that Gros suggests with taxonomies of the failed state: anarchic, phantom, anemic, captured and aborted. (See Gros 1996) Institute mirrors the state or, no-not the other way around. The institution takes on dystopia rendered strange, dislocated and futurist visualised by Angela Carter in her novella *Heroes and Villains*: asking for "Are academic qualifications useful after an apocalypse? |" (Yeandle 2013). Failure is used to frame parts, even genres within the larger subject of an emergent narrative: attempts to provide inter subjective coherence in the retelling of making of creative praxis in times of crisis. Bad writing as a performative strategy mythologized appearing as partly unknown is Kumar's requirement in activating a writing process that in turn portrays something about the history of its own making but also to see for ourselves what is lost when things are overstated. (2019: 213) Inherent within the stratum of process towards failed outcome is then more overt traces of making. Making by examination of failure occurs through the presentation of badly making as part of that narrative.... I walk to a failed institution. These walks form part of my own daily creative practice that is in the exploration of ecologies, of the body, presence, and time, of whiteness, the city then also transversal

acts of making. It is on these walks, both transversal and random that narratives emerge especially around the shape of narrative transmissions, and the catalyst of memory, along with the reshaping of identity styled by the city. On these walks that narratives also unconsciously emerge, reappearing as bad writing as being partly unknown. In my walking-research, the city functions both as a *theatre* and as a heterogeneous repository of remembered experience and initiated experience. Nutall & Mbembe's *Johannesburg: An Elusive Metropolis* (2008) provokes walking as redemption of the post-apartheid city with localised terminologies. Of particular interest in this anthology of essays is the "Stylizing the Self" (91–118) by Nutall presenting an interplay between the self and the city, demonstrating how the self is styled by the city it inhabits. This interplay of walking as a form of inhabitation of walking the failure that a narrative forms around transmission, nomadism, temple city and the Jewish body informing yet another emergent strategy around inverting metaphors as strategies of resilience. This epiphany forms part of this evocation of the "temple city" that in this triad includes Johannesburg, (after London and Jerusalem) performing as the Third Jerusalem. Johannesburg following the traffic of Jewish capital performs as an evocation of worship, desire, materiality, race and phenomena. Kentridge's utterance how Johannesburg is the second greatest city after Paris (1989) is likely to be a misnomer when in fact Johannesburg performs an inverted illusory dialectic clashing chaotic temple city performing satanic-messianic-being dangerously failing impressment in this time of crisis...

Referencing: Samuel Johnson, Hannah Arendt, Erich Auerbach, Gerald Gaylard, Walter Benjamin, Amit Varma, Angela Carter, Achilles Mbembe, Sarah Nutall, William Boshoff and William Kentridge.

Bio

**Dr. Myer Taub** teaches in the Department of Theatre and Performance. His current focus is on a book series called *Wild Zones*, (Taylor Francis Routledge) as series editor and contributor. *Wild Zones* are kinetic overflows that might generate creative economies. Recent work and ideas have been published in *South African Theatre Journal* (2022) and *Leonardo* (2020).