Literator - Journal of Literary Criticism, Comparative Linguistics and Literary Studies
ISSN: (Online) 2219-8237, (Print) 0258-2279

Multiple levels of literacy in Kopano Matlwa's literature. The case of *Evening Primrose* (2018)

Author:
Lesibana J. Rafapa[1]

Affiliation:
[1]Department of Languages, Faculty of Humanities, University of Limpopo, Mankweng, South Africa

Corresponding author:
Lesibana Rafapa,
jrlrafapa@gmail.com

Dates:
Received: 26 Jan. 2024
Accepted: 31 May 2024
Published: 31 July 2024

How to cite this article:
Rafapa, L.J., 2024, 'Multiple levels of literacy in Kopano Matlwa's literature. The case of *Evening Primrose* (2018)', *Literator* 45(1), a2054. https://doi.org/10.4102/lit.v45i1.2054

Copyright:
© 2024. The Author. Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

The paper explores distinctive ways in which Kopano Matlwa's novel *Evening Primrose* (2018) employs continuities and discontinuities between surface-level literary expression and underlying identity and cultural literacy. It is a desktop study centred on Kopano Matlwa's novel *Evening Primrose* (2018) as a primary text, as well as of secondary expository texts for theoretical and earlier literary commentary that constitute the article's conceptual matrix. I demonstrate how the author's thematic manoeuvring challenges notions of determinist culture and official mapping as fixed, as well as espouse conceptions of globalism that accommodate identity and cultural heterogeneity. As I discuss stylistic dimensions of the narrative from the vantage point of the theory of ecocriticism, I include the tenets of Es'kia Mphahlele's concept of African humanism as well as the concepts of 'borderland', 'code-switching' and 'integration literacy'. My findings have led to the conclusion that the novelist's discourses are encoded in the texture of the novel in ways that portray the South African post-apartheid milieu as informed by an intricate intersection of distinctive identity and cultural literacies that the various characters display. My scrutiny of the environment-adoptive cognitive processes in the mind of Matlwa's characters has led to a novel analogy between integration identity and cultural literacy and unitary grammar, reached psycholinguistically through code-switching.

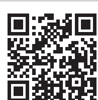
Contribution: This study provides new insights into how the novelist Kopano Matlwa employs literary discourse uniquely to explore South Africa's post-apartheid, evolving social psyche in ways that diagnostically assert alternative cultural identity intersections, readings and articulation. The paper plumbs beneath surface-level characterisation to externalise how key character categories of the novel under discussion do practicalise the potency of the post-apartheid context to forge a composite heterogeneity of cohabiting and mutually respecting cultures that have entered it. In novel ways, the theoretical matrix applied in the analysis of the novel galvanises a recognition of commonalities hitherto unidentified, mainly between tenets of originally Eurocentric ecocriticism and those of an Afrocentric African humanism. I compare the characters' successful creation of new cultural literacies, integrated with a new environment, to a successful integration of unitary grammar related to the linguistic process of code-switching. In this way, a new kind of relationship is projected between literary analysis and language learning.

Keywords: African humanism; borderland; code switching; cultural literacy; ecocriticism; Kopano Matlwa; post-apartheid South African literature; surface-level literacy.

Introduction

In this article, I probe discursive strategies that Kopano Matlwa employs in the style and characterisation of her novel *Evening Primrose* (2018) (hereafter abbreviated *Primrose*). My analysis will particularly pivot on what I argue to be her significantly variegated implementation of dialogue and how such language use by the characters signifies more profound, distinct identity and cultural literacies that set apart the manner in which their cultural background facilitates their unique reaction to the post-apartheid setting of the novel.

I assert a non-surface-level reading consonant with McLaughlin and DeVoogd's (2018:16) embracing of text comprehension as 'the result of an interaction between a reader, a text and a context'. I thus acquire a non-surface-level reading of Matlwa's *Primrose* (2018). Lafontaine, Dupont and Schillings (2018:2) define surface-level literacy in reading a text as 'focused on words and phrases'. The writers assert that a reader needs to go deeper and in progression to construction and integration literacies. According to McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2018:16), in construction literacy

Read online:

Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

or reading, 'textual information activates the reader's background knowledge', while in integration literacy, 'the activated knowledge and the information from the text are integrated in a coherent mental representation of the text'.

Such a process of integration literacy formation has parallels with the integration of a unitary grammar, assisting the learner of a new 'language' with the borderland to acclimatise successfully through code-switching. MacSwan (2017:190) and Burns (2022) concur that a unitary grammar can only be achieved with the mastery of original literacy, and an overlap between the original and the creatively attained new literacy.

I argue for manifestations of identity and cultural literacy in the conduct of Matlwa's characters for the latter to respond and adapt in a self-defining manner to the post-apartheid environment, or 'borderland', in the terms of writers such as Clark and Flores (2007). The liminality of borderland realities is what I see as central to attempt by Matlwa's characters in *Primrose* to negotiate their own contributions in building the post-apartheid environment. Such a defining condition is what Clark and Flores (2007:10) observe to be the 'fluidity and flux' of borderlands. I assert that the notion of 'borderlands' is amenable to the post-apartheid nation-building project, apportioned diversely to categories of Matlwa's characters.

The concept of 'borderlands' allows self-constructed and self-negotiated changes between social groups with dynamic cultural identities, such as those experiencing a transforming African humanist perspective and those bringing varied cultural literacies. In analysing the fabric of *Primrose*, I arrived at the conclusion that all the social groups of disparate *a priori* cultural literacies must go beyond surface-level cultural literacy to the deeper level of integration literacy. On the deeper plane of integration literacy, the cultural groups integrate more creatively and meaningfully with the new environment brought about by change, such as the demise of an apartheid order, to assume a new identity literacy, according to McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2018:16).

One of my hypotheses is that Matlwa's characters must be analysed for their attainment of cultural literacy in their post-apartheid self-construction. Segal's (2015:71) observation that cultural literacy is, 'a way of looking at social and cultural issues – especially issues of change and mobility' affirms my inclusion of such criterion in my literary analysis. I attempt to illustrate that Matlwa's characters of African cultural orientation '[*look*] at social and cultural issues' (Segal 2015) through their cultural consciousness, which writers such as Mphahlele (2002b) have described as African humanism. My point of departure is that African humanism is the *a priori* cultural identity feature that African communities bring along to the ever-evolving post-apartheid context delineated in the setting of Matlwa's novel.

Mphahlele (2002b:144) explicates that nature or the environment is organised such that there is 'a vital force' dwelling in people and things, 'activating them, causing life to reproduce life, and making the stars, planets and other bodies to move to a definite pattern'. The premise that the centrality of the human figure in the universe cannot be analysed as the only 'absolute reality' (Mphahlele 2002b:144) intersects the African humanist worldview with ideas related to a more recent and originally Eurocentric theory of ecocriticism. Chakravarty places the present-day ecocritical human figure within what he describes as 'a collective geological force' with no ontological dimension (cf. Hoving 2017:2). Ogbazi and Udeh (2020:1) define the primary concern of ecocriticism as 'man's physical environment and ecology … a branch of literature that studies the earth, ecosystem and its need to be preserved'.

It is such a common outlook regarding the place of the human being in nature and the environment making me include both African humanism and ecocriticism in my application of theory to the scrutiny of *Primrose*. Moreover, the integration of African humanism with other worldviews is consonant with Mphahlele's own characterisation of African humanism as adaptable to change. According to Mphahlele (2002a), it is the reconstructive nature of African humanism that rationalises African cultural groups' distinctive appropriation of concepts that gained currency in a much later period than the Africans' inalienable African humanist lifestyles since origin (Mphahlele 2002c).

One more identification of African humanist thought with ecocriticism is the former's recognition of environmental local difference. This is seen in observations like Hoving's (2017), in remarking that:

> If colonization and globalisation result in the erasure of local differences (and local complexities) for the benefit of a homogenizing transnational economic system then ecology is the defence and reinstallment of local difference. (p. 3)

Ecology is a defining feature in ecocritical theory. In this kind of conceptual frame, 'moving beyond the postcolonial concern for gender, sexual and racial identities' (Hoving 2017:3) does not imply ignoring such identity differences in postcolonial settings like the post-apartheid borderland.

It is for this reason that my reference to a borderland recognises culture or identity as 'the norms, values, beliefs, and patterns' that would have shaped cultural 'groups' behaviour' (Brooks 1973) prior to arrival at the borderland. Borderlands are empowered by different identity literacies, harmoniously with Suarez-Orozco's (2004) adducing that cultural identity 'provides a mechanism for understanding socially shared and constructed experiences'. It is in deference to such a function of cultural identity that the writers Lafontaine and colleagues (2018), Schachter and Galili-Schachter (2012), as well as Segal (2015), respectively distinguish surface-level literacy from that at the deeper level, assert an identity literacy driven by agency and advocate a cultural literacy that is dialectically transformed by the new environment.

My notion of identity literacy that I assert to be a feature of Matlwa's literary characterisation regarding the reading of the post-apartheid text or social milieu is embedded in a definition by Schachter and Galili-Schachter (2012:3). According to Schachter and Galili-Schachter (2012:3), identity literacy is 'the practice of engaging the meaning systems embedded within texts, considering while doing so whether to adopt, adapt, or reject these as part of [*one's*] own personal meaning systems'. I have to clarify that the meaning that I adopt of the term 'text' is interchangeable with that of a borderland or new environment in which one has to adapt. The writers' conception of 'identity literacy' aligns with Valsiner's (2007) definition of 'a personal meaning system'. According to Valsiner (2007), a personal meaning system equipping people belonging to various cultural groups to interact efficiently in a new environment is 'a semiotic system with which individuals … make sense of themselves, the world they are in, and their relation to it' (in Schachter & Galili-Shchachter 2012:3).

I analyse Matlwa's novel relative to the post-apartheid context that is a borderland plagued by, among others, legitimised violent gender-based violence, rape, xenophobia, economic decline, poverty, corruption, a dysfunctional health system and premature deaths (Dlamini 2022; Mbembe 2015). I attempt to highlight that Matlwa's black characters are portrayed against the backdrop of time-entrenched racist anti-Blackness 'Engraved in the democratic Constitution through a clause that protects private property', resulting in black poverty '[*worsening*] since the 1994 democratic dispensation' (Milazzo 2022:26).

Conflicting emergent identity and cultural literacies within the medical profession in post-apartheid South Africa

The writer Azaldúa (1999, cited by Clark & Flores 2007) clarifies borderlands as:

> [*P*]hysically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy … [*serving*] as metaphor for dynamic psychological, social and cognitive transactions. (p. 10)

The writer implies that the requisite breakdown and negotiation of novel environments in the wake of change like the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994 should be understood as a meeting point of cultural and identity differences. A valuing of such co-existing cultural and identity literacies is an empowering attitude to difference, required for an equal new society where the adapted cultures of the previously marginalised groups carry equal weight.

In *Primrose*, character manipulation betrays the author's emphasis on an existing mix of cultural or identity literacies. The heroine Masechaba's rueful monologue in her delirious reflection on the failures of black post-apartheid rule is a clamour for long-awaited transformation: 'How do they expect me to distinguish individuals among a sea of dying arms and mangled bodies glued to mangled beds?' (pp. 23–24). A disappointment with present black leadership impels Masechaba to invoke icons of past competent black leadership. The reader realises a longing for hope inspired by black leadership before political freedom, in the words 'the Charlotte Maxeke, Hamilton Naki, William Anderson Soga kind of great' (p. 25). The anguish that Masechaba experiences is a patent culmination of menstrual abnormalities she has suffered since puberty; her brother's suicide spurred on by their father's loss of a government job as a result of corrupt cronyism (p. 14); her brutal rape by fellow black South Africans, who are her own colleagues at Botshelo Hospital where she is a medical intern; her neurotic disorder in the aftermath of the gruesome rape; and her struggle to reintegrate successfully with colleagues of different nationalities, who show scant commiseration for what she has personally gone through.

Masechaba morbidly merges individual patients, such as the character Mrs Mazibuko (pp. 26–27), lying in Bed A3 and deserving of personal medical attention, with a grotesquely ghastly scene recalled from past duty encounters of 'dying arms and mangled bodies glued to mangled beds' (pp. 23–24). This does expose Masechaba's hallucinative state of mind, haunted by the past deaths of patients in Botshelo Hospital and all over post-apartheid South African hospitals, of which Botshelo Hospital is a microcosm. One can rightly say that Masechaba is sensible to a post-apartheid need for leaders whom Clark and Flores (2007:12) describe as 'transformative agents'. Such a leader is capable of harnessing the cultural or identity literacy capital of the populace constructively in moulding a new environment in an affirming manner.

The task of such transformative leaders demands a profound and circumspect examination of 'the confluences of ethnicity, gender, and language' (Clark & Flores 2007:12). The writers contrast the transformatively agentive leader with 'a perpetuator of the status quo' who 'ignores or dismisses' the cultural or identity literacies, one of whose indices is language (Clark & Flores 2007:12).

There is a characterisation contrast between the portrayal of the younger-generation character Masechaba and that of the older-generation character Sister Agnes (p. 27). Sister Agnes's indignation is symptomatic of her cultural literacy, which differs from the cultural literacies of the younger-generation doctors. This is in spite of both the Sister and the younger-generation health workers, Masechaba included, commonly belonging to the professional practice governed by a common jargon (p. 27). The differing medical-cultural literacies between Sister Agnes on the one hand and the latter-day healthcare workers on the other hand is revealed by an incident in which the younger doctors have made a decisive medical intervention. The medically acceptable treatment of '[*plunging*] a central line into Mrs. Mazibuko's

neck' has led to the terminally ill character Mrs Mazibuko's instant death (p. 26).

The older-generation healthcare worker Sister Agnes proves to possess a relatively more intact African humanist cultural literacy by exclaiming that she 'did not think that the procedure was necessary' (p. 27). It can be said that the different evolvement stage of Sister Agnes's African humanist cultural literacy is responsible for her having:

> '[*S*]aid a *number of times* that Mrs Mazibuko should be discharged and allowed to go home and spend her last days with her family … and go watch her grandchildren play at her feet.' (p. 27; [*author's own emphasis*]).

There are fundamental outlook discontinuities between Sister Agnes and the younger colleagues. Such cultural literacy divergences within the post-apartheid borderland impinge on what is supposed to be a common medical professional literacy binding the two generations of medical practitioners.

The author emphasises that Sister Agnes indicated her stance 'a number of times' that she 'did not think' the decision by the team of younger-generation medical experts to administer the fatal procedure was right (p. 26). This is a bold etching on the reader's mind of the cultural literacy maze that post-apartheid South Africa is faced with. There is an evident phoenix-like survival of a persistent African humanist cultural literacy in characters such as Sister Agnes, who is faced like the rest of her fellow African medical staff with the responsibility to interact sensibly with the post-apartheid context of the hospital. For a character such as the protagonist, Masechaba, the birth pangs of a required new identity literacy are manifest in her vacillating medical profession literacy. At one time, Masechaba regrets her role in Mrs Mazibuko's demise, as in the utterance, 'I'm the one who convinced her to sign the consent form' (p. 26). At another time, the same character exonerates herself thus under the veil of professional etiquette: 'who said we had to enjoy caring for the ill?' (p. 27).

It is, however, important to accede that both Sister Agnes and Masechaba are at the post-apartheid borderland with their reactions grounded in an African humanist consciousness. One example of such a common *a priori* cultural literacy, even between Sister Agnes and Masechaba, is a warm regard for death anchored in the belief that one enters the happy realm of one's ancestors. This is one of the many tenets of African humanism, like reverence for old age and regard for human life as sacred (Mphahlele 2002d:242). Masechaba's intermittent remorse (p. 27) reveals a feebly surviving African humanism that she continues to share with Sister Agnes, albeit to some stunted degree. Her later somersault to self-justification (p. 27) is borne of a hybrid cultural literacy, to some extent blunting her African humanist regard for human life as sacred.

Prior to her African humanist sensibility maturing to the current levels of Sister Agnes's, the failures of post-apartheid government loom too large in the mind of Masechaba. An externalisation of such a rashness in Masechaba's temperament is manifest when she spearheads an emotional petition against xenophobia in sympathy with Nyasha and the other post-apartheid inhabitants from African states (pp. 74–75). She experiences heartless gender-based violence in the form of a gang rape (pp. 9, 123).

It is not as if Masechaba and Sister Agnes are immune to the turbulence of the post-apartheid milieu. They too are immersed in a flux of new medical and social cultural literacies in the post-apartheid context of rampant corruption, xenophobia and threatening imperialism and acculturation concomitant to the unprecedented influx of professionals from other African states. The author successfully conjures the pernicious atmosphere through the characterisation of characters such as the 'medical officer in the Obstetrics & Gynecology Department', Nyasha from Zimbabwe (pp. 32–33). All that such a significant characterisation achieves is to exhibit that evolving cultural literacies benefit from 'knowledge derived from the daily interactions that occur along and within borderlands', to borrow the words of Clark and Flores (2007:10).

From the perspective of ecocritical post-discursivity, a character like Masechaba responds to the apartheid borderland in a more untrammelled manner. She does not conform in behaviour to a static cultural official mapping of nature. For the youthful Masechaba, historically held discourses, as in African humanist values, are relatively more dissipated. It is in this sense that Roorda (2001:259) describes the action of deep mapping as recognition of the 'clash between official "map knowledge" and experiential "empirical knowledge" in representations of space'. The benefit of deep mapping by individuals and cultural groups finding themselves in a borderland is captured lucidly in Roorda's (2001:259) observation that 'where maps and ordinary experience of place were once equally personalized and scarcely separable, a rift between subjective familiarity and objectified cartography has widened in modern times', to the extent that even nonfiction writers on nature 'have sought to dramatize this antinomy'.

Ecocritical deep mapping, where agency reigns supreme, is more evident in Masechaba than in Sister Agnes. From the point of view of medical profession literacy, Masechaba is more ecocritically schizoid in her living, by embracing new advances of medical technology without much impediment from some aspects of an African humanist world view. Hoving (2017) distinguishes a hidebound alignment with *a priori* identity and cultural literacy from what he describes as ecocritical evocations of 'the earth's uncompromised materiality'. According to Hoving (2017), in order for liberating change to occur, space is created 'beyond the many confining and destructive colonial discourses that have defined it', thereby ridding the ecocritical force of 'constructivist theories that approached the world primarily as discursive construction'. Such an impulse may be

necessary not just in freeing oneself from colonial bondage, but it also may be handy in reminding oneself not to adhere slavishly to one's *a priori* identity and cultural literacy in a manner hostile to environmental integration.

A comparison can therefore be made between the category of characters such as Masechaba's mother Ma and Sister Agnes and the obverse category, epitomised by the way Masechaba's cultural literacy interacts with the apartheid borderland. The orientations of ecocritical thinking detailed above by Hoving (2017) qualify more the latter category of Matlwa's characters. All the same, a close gleaning of textual evidence points to the novelist portraying the character of Masechaba in a more nuanced manner than simplistically concluding, as one does here, that the younger-generation characters identify more readily with what could be interpreted as a globalisation or an ecocriticism discounting local identity and cultural differences. The differential perfection of a better integrated and evolved identity and cultural literacy within the borderland that is the setting of *Primrose* is not permanent, especially in view of the novel's denouement, to which my discussion turns later.

Masechaba's identity and cultural literacy project on a broader canvas

Significantly, the heroine Masechaba's struggles to balance the overlaps of an African humanist and other cultural literacies present in the post-apartheid borderland unfurl beyond what I demonstrate above as indices of her vacillating medical profession literacy. One way in which Matlwa hints at such a scope of Masechaba's meaning-making is through a skilful manipulation of the incidents of the novel to problematise the axle of generational affinity between Masechaba and the other medical practitioners of her age. Such a technique impels the reader to identify varying medical profession literacies among age-mates. This is a profound discourse on the heterogeneous quality of cultural literacies that defies oversimplified conformity, even in the same community. In Masechaba's interaction with fellow medical doctors, the appearance of a homogeneous uniformity supposedly forged by the common nomenclature and professional orientation is merely at the surface level and deceptive. The relationship between Masechaba and the Zimbabwean national Nyasha is a case in point.

When Nyasha accuses her colleague Masechaba of poorly treating a victim of large-scale xenophobic attacks with 'third degree burns to 80 percent of his body', nicknamed Maputo (p. 69), 'because he was foreign' (pp. 69–73), the disgusted Masechaba retorts that 'Nyasha can go to hell' (p. 73). The reader tends to sympathise with Nyasha and disagree with Nyasha's reckless accusation, considering that Masechaba is at least as disliked by fellow South African 'nursing staff and other doctors', hence her vindictive mob rape. Such a painful rejection of Masechaba may be broadened to South Africans such as her own mother, who are not part of medical staff. In the case of Masechaba's mother, she is indignant with her daughter's humaneness towards the disliked foreigners, exemplified in the daughter's 'being friends with' and 'living with [*Nyasha*]' (p. 73). This is why a more discerning reading of this specific incident involving the foreigner character Maputo and other parallel scenarios disproves both the character Nyasha's misjudgement of the post-apartheid borderland and opaque claims by critics such as Dlamini (2022:13), in her remark that 'Masechaba neglects Maputo'.

Masechaba explains in patient detail that as she entered the ward on her 'emergency department call', Maputo had arrived 'already intubated' (p. 69). In a professionally caring manner, Masechaba duly prescribes 'fluids, antibiotics, and analgesia' before handing the patient properly 'over to the surgical team' (p. 69). In objective medical literacy terms, Nyasha should be expected to concur with and even laud Masechaba's professionalism in this regard. However, Nyasha unreasonably totalises South Africans within the medical profession as unprofessional and xenophobic. Nyasha displays some beyond-profession foreigner bias that obstructs her from the reality that it is not justifiable to paint caring South African medical professionals with the same brush as the unscrupulous individuals happening to have landed in the medical field. It stands to reason that in any profession, there are both benevolent and malevolent individuals and that this has nothing to do with one's nationality. In this setting, Nyasha misuses her foreign Zimbabwean national status in an abusive fashion to intimate that foreign nationals in post-apartheid South African hospitals should be given a different kind of attention that would unfairly discriminate against other patients.

Equally curious are views, somewhat lacking in nuance, of the metaphor of blood, elicited for example in the thematic sustenance of the fact of Masechaba grappling with unrelenting menstrual blood. My interpretation of such a sustained image of blood is that of a positive signification of the inseparability of Masechaba's identity and cultural literacy from the overriding cultural literacy of the inhabitants of her place of birth, that is, South Africa. As far as the metaphor of blood symbolises the parturient blood relationship between the character Ma and her daughter Masechaba, it is positive. Acceding to the positive alternatives of the sustained metaphor of blood in *Primrose* should help mitigate obfuscating generalisations like the ones found in critiques of the novel by some writers. One example is Dlamini's (2022) otherwise incisive critique of *Primrose.* The critic lumps together the positive monumentalisation of Masechaba's menstrual blood with the negative blood of foreigners who fall victim to criminal attacks. Dlamini articulates what I see as an incorrect collapsing of two distinct undertones of the metaphor of blood. She remarks that the novel is 'written in two types of blood', where 'both bloods are seen and depicted as abject, unusable, and causing discomfort' (Dlamini 2022:2).

As I demonstrate below, the birth blood of Masechaba is instrumental in helping shape her post-apartheid identity and cultural literacy in an empowering manner. Masechaba's

negotiation of a moulting cultural literacy in the face of post-apartheid identity dynamism is a reassurance of the need to embrace the *a priori* differences of culture brought along to the borderland. The kind of insight in Masechaba's affectionate bond with the family and land of her birth is in tandem with nondeterminist notions of culture amenable to the postmodern, even transmodern, times we live in.

Matlwa psychically pegs all the incidents of the novel on a haunting, bloody backdrop of stalking menstrual blood (pp. 6, 7, 10). This is etched on our conscience through Masechaba's imprisonment to its memory. This stylistic technique should be understood as an intimation of the way one is tied to one's birthplace, for without periods there cannot be birth. For this reason, the metaphor or motif of blood in *Primrose* does point to a positive aspect of needed post-apartheid cultural literacies that the author imbues in Masechaba. The main character's naturally bloodied umbilical cord ties her to the inescapable fact of her being a South African autochthon, which she is within her rights to be aware and proud of. Rather than the metaphor of blood in the novel being negatively understood to signal a blanket indictment of xenophobia against South African nationals in the post-apartheid borderland, as in the example of Dlamini, Matlwa's characterisation could be understood as a recognition of the inevitable native cultural literacy of the South African characters.

Allusions to bloody encounters are a constant, through a recurrent metaphor suffusing the fabric of *Primrose*, with the different gory encounters of Masechaba serving as mere variables. The magnitude of the metaphor invoked by its pervasive immanence in the fabric of the novel points to how imperative it is to detect the multivalent positive symbolism of blood. It is from such a perspective that Ghafeer and Abdullah (2022:697 [*author's own emphasis*]) observe the recurring spectre of Masechaba's 'dreadful traumatic experience' of a gang rape, resulting 'in a reacting pain for her *till the end*' of the novel. Whether the bloody experience manifests at the personal level at Masechaba's birth, when Ma binds her baby to her South African origin by burying the umbilical cord in South African soil, or from the national or public level when Masechaba and her fellow South Africans are raped and brutalised by apartheid, or when Masechaba is brutalised in the most blood-shedding rape, or when a new, post-apartheid South Africa issuing from all this blood is born – the constant metaphor of blood is a positive, birth-giving and regenerative one.

Clearly, the symbolism of blood sutures together the apartheid and post-apartheid experiences. The dialogue capturing what the perpetrators of Masechaba's post-apartheid gang rape say during the act makes allusions to apartheid-era blood. Masechaba laments: 'They said I was lucky they didn't necklace me, like they did to the likes of me during apartheid' (p. 105). The symbolism of the birth of Masechaba's baby Mpho represents the motif of continued fluxes of cultural literacies, straddling old and new South African public spaces in more intriguing ways.

The literary critic Dlamini (2022:2) argues that Masechaba's newborn child represents 'a fresh start' after the loss of a struggle towards a redeeming self-definition in the mother's life. Another layer of the birth symbolism, however, is that of the birth of baby Mpho as a refreshed continuity of epic victory in Masechaba's constantly conquering meaning-making – notwithstanding the challenges that Dlamini (2022:2) rightly catalogues. The existential challenges include 'a dysfunctional health system in a country torn apart by corruption, racism, legitimised gender-based violence (rape), premature deaths' Dlamini (2022:2). Masechaba's baby Mpho is born against the odds of surgical procedural and menstrual complication threats posed to the mother's reproductive organs during her teen years (pp. 9–11) and organ-destroying rape (pp. 97, 123). One of the birth symbol's polysemic levels is a representation of the birth or attainment of a new post-apartheid South Africa, in defiance of the bloody history that the country has gone through. Both the baby and the new South Africa have defied a bloody history. Like the new South Africa, born of a borderland in which identity and cultural literacies have had to be managed prudently and in difficulty, Masechaba's baby Mpho is 'something so perfect, so magnificent [*that*] could come from so much darkness' (p. 148).

It has taken extraordinary circumspection and emotional maturity on the part of Masechaba to reach where she is with 'births'. Once more, some incidents reveal the alter ego character Nyasha as a sounding board for Masechaba's qualities that she herself lacks. Masechaba consistently opposes the one crime of attacks on foreign nationals (pp. 74–75), even paying for it by being brutalised (pp. 97, 123). After the rape, Nyasha, rather than support Masechaba more soundly, advises the latter that she 'shouldn't tell people what had happened' and should 'rise above it' (p. 118). According to Nyasha, making her friend Masechaba's ordeal known among colleagues at Botshelo Hospital would lead to 'white people' in the country justifying their stereotype that '[*her*] people are animals' as well as make the white doctors 'suck [*Masechaba*] into their self-pity' (p. 118). Nyasha's thinking in this incident is flawed because of its Manichean nature, stifling potential refinements of cultural literacies needed in the borderland of post-apartheid South Africa. This is in contrast with Masechaba's rising above the possibilities of facetious or surface-level cultural literacies that fellow citizens of different *a priori* sensibilities may still be trapped in. Further evidence of Masechaba's strength of character is found in what she muses sympathetically about during one of her many monologues in the plot of the novel:

> 'On call, last night, the paramedics brought in this white lady at about 1:30 a.m. She was at home with her boyfriend when four men broke into their flat, raped her, shot her in the head, and ransacked the house … her boyfriend had died at the scene, but she had not been told yet.' (pp. 37–38)

In contrast, Nyasha reacts in a diametrically opposite manner in a conversation with Masechaba about the fear of such violent crime making some white medical interns plan to leave South Africa (p. 38). Typically, Nyasha remonstrates:

'Let them go … Our people are just rag dolls for them to perfect their clinical skills for the white people they'll be serving in the private sector. Let them go' (p. 38).

At Nyasha's distress with the outlandish white man's asking whether 'there was a [*black*] girl who could help him carry his bags to the ward', Masechaba retorts with a sounder identity literacy, both within the medical profession and in the greater post-apartheid setting. Masechaba reprimands Nyasha, stressing that the latter needs 'to be the bigger person' for the reason that she is 'the doctor' while the white man is 'a patient in pain' who does not know what he means (p. 35). In ecocritical terms, Masechaba can be understood to call on Nyasha to rise above a perpetual trammelling by postmodernist and postcolonial prefabricated discourses that classify some elements of the natural environment as more important than others. There are more incidents in the novel denuding Nyasha's parodying of the serious task of cultural literacy formation, casting her in the mould of an antihero, of the novel (pp. 38, 39, 44, 68, 119). In the words of Masechaba, Nyasha 'couldn't … let go of her anger' at colonisation and had her hands 'always so full of good arguments, unsettled debts, and old grudges that there was no room for anything else' (p. 119). In a fresh breath of air, Masechaba is seeing things in their right proportion.

Matlwa's depiction of Masechaba provides a sobering antidote against Nyasha's foibles that appear not to help build a sound post-apartheid South Africa. The author infuses her discourse in Masechaba's voice and action. In expressing her motive for spearheading a petition opposing the attack on foreign nationals, Masechaba magnanimously declares that:

> '[*T*]he world will see that this isn't who we are, and that those thugs out there going around killing foreigners don't represent the majority of us. Maybe this petition will bring this madness to an end.' (p. 74)

The overwhelming support of the petition by South Africans of all races and the South African mainstream and social media actually bears out Masechaba's caution against overgeneralising and accusing all South Africans of xenophobia, as the likes of Nyasha do: many people sign the petition; it is embraced through 3000 shares right from the start; it has 10 000 likes; SAFM and the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper display active support by giving the petition exposure (pp. 74–75).

The frailties imbuing the Zimbabwean national Nyasha are such that they hardly ascribe to her the virtues associated with the nonracial, nonhomophobic and modest Pan Africanist project respecting geographical and cultural borders among Africans inhabiting different parts of the continent and in the diaspora. Rather than identify with Nyasha, the reader is likely to approve what the writer Dlamini (2022:12), for a different reason, detects as Masechaba's attitude to 'poke fun at Nyasha's radicalism and Pan Africanism'. Masechaba's repulsion of the way Nyasha and her category of characters are a travesty of the noble premises of an accommodative trans-modern Pan Africanism is a yardstick for an undistorted decoding of Matlwa's novelistic discourse. It is exactly Matlwa's effective lampooning of characters such as Nyasha that is a strength in her artistic practice.

The superficiality of Nyasha's vaunted liberation consciousness is also exposed by her choice of a new professional home. Masechaba finds Nyasha's departure to Canada 'unbelievable', considering the latter's paraded radical Africanism (144). Masechaba's resentment resonates with the reader's disillusionment at what could be conceived of as Nyasha's hypocrisy, when the latter migrates to 'an us-less place' where she will 'live an anonymous life' – and 'not just to Nigeria or Kenya or even back home to Zim' (144).

Through skilful characterisation, Matlwa manages to convey her encoded discourse on the need for a well-adjusted cultural and identity literacy for black characters' and post-apartheid's survival in the new environment created by the advent of democracy in South Africa. Different characters' handling of such an adjustment plays themselves out initially in a medical professional environment. With greater discursive impact, the characters' experiences and their reactions to the changes in their socio-political environment go beyond just the setting of the hospital. In this way, the moral of the narrative encompasses the status quo across the entire nation and in the African diaspora.

The characters' medley of underlying Englishes as an index of staggered cultural literacy refinement

The English dialogue of younger characters such as Masechaba and Nyasha signifies a way of thinking more distant from indigenous thinking.

Masechaba upsets the family elders when she expresses her thoughts through the medium of a diary whose content acquires the form of a direct dialogue with God. In a manner consistent with the elders' reverence for the ancestors and the Supreme Being, the elders also forbid her to write emails to her brother Tshiamo after his suicide (p. 14). In such email messages, the main character contextualises the impact of the corruption of the South African post-apartheid government on her family economics within a global terrain, in a statement like 'the world is evil and our government corrupt and the West forever plotting our demise' (p. 16). It would not be unfounded to interpret such conduct as Masechaba being drawn to the more mesmerising lure of a 'sophisticated' globalism than is the case with the older characters resisting such rantings.

Significantly, the elderly characters Malome Softly, his girlfriend and Aunty Petunia communicate by means of traditional practice, rather than with some sophisticated,

philosophical articulation. At Tshiamo's burial, the elders in turn step 'into his grave and [*pour*] soil over his head', 'grabbing [*Masechaba's*] arm and [*forcing her*] to go and look at his face in the casket' (pp. 16–17). On the same day, the family elders confront both Masechaba and her mother about the emails purporting to speak to the deceased, dismissing the act as 'practicing witchcraft' (pp. 16–17).

Mphahlele (2002a:28) describes an African humanist outlook as 'essentially spiritual' and as recognising the centrality and integrating agency of 'the vital Force or Supreme Being' in a universe of human, animal, plant and inanimate building blocks. The scholar emphasises that such African spirituality is a 'simple faith free of the tyranny of theology and intellectual argument' (Mphahlele 2002a:28). From such an identity and cultural literacy vantage point, Masechaba's attempt at unpacking of Tshiamo's death and questioning the place of God in all this 'theologically' is bound to grate against the cultural literacy of her elders. The disposition of Malome Softly to enter Tshiamo's grave and perform a ritual of valediction is an index of a spirituality more radically African than that of the younger Masechaba. The uncle interrupts Masechaba's un-African humanist reverie in his action to make his niece stare in the face of Tshiamo's cadaver. The uncle's action is consistent with the African humanist eschatological abandon, stemming from regard for death as one 'join[*ing*] the *happy* realm of our immediate ancestors' (Mphahlele 2002d:138 [*author's own emphasis*]).

A call from Ma interrupts Masechaba's dream during her sleep of a Western-type romance whereby she and her white boyfriend Francois are 'on a quad bike' cruising dreamily 'through hills of mud' (p. 48). The long call from Ma interrupts Masechaba's delight in the starry-eyed effigy of a modern multiracial wedding. Punning on the word 'complaint', the author explains that the call is a complaint about Masechaba's Aunt Petunia not inviting Ma to her daughter Seipati's traditional '*magadi*' (p. 48). The lexical use of '*magadi*' and not terms like bride price should correctly be construed as a clue that Ma actually communicates to her daughter Masechaba using a kind of language imbued with African humanist thought, of which African languages are a depository. The pun is that Ma's complaint about Aunt Petunia denying her the delight of a traditional wedding is unwittingly also a complaint about Masechaba's attraction to a culturally extraneous notion of wedding that she dreams about.

The effect of Matlwa purposively harnessing dialogue and metonymic diction in this fashion is a hint at the black characters belonging to different levels of deviance from *a priori* identity and cultural literacy, although they commonly grapple with the same site for borderland existential negotiation. Both Ma and Masechaba are conversant in the English language, yet their use of the language is un-identical. As a hint by the author about Ma's undoubted proficiency in the English language that is the working language in government departments, in one of her monologues Masechaba informs the reader that 'Ma found an admin job in the … Health Department … so she could get me a bursary, which made it easy' (pp. 14–15). The educational qualification enabling Ma to be in an 'educated' job attests to her ability to speak normative English without mixing it with indigenous language. Ma's inflected use of the English language should be interpreted as a function of a much more nuanced cultural literacy than that of the likes of younger Masechaba. It does not suggest Ma's innocent inability to communicate in normative English.

Another elderly character, Sister Agnes, eavesdrops and intercepts untiringly in Northern Sotho each time Masechaba mobilises fellow workers to desist from xenophobic attacks (p. 104). The educated senior nurse exhorts Masechaba in an indigenous language thus: '*Mara, Doctor, wena le dilo tše tša gago, tlogela man! O tlo ipakela mathata*' [But, Doctor, if you do not desist from this waywardness you are inviting trouble upon yourself]. Such a use of African-language communication is notwithstanding the fact that Sister Agnes is as proficient in English as she is up to date with South Africa's zeitgeist of the time. It is evidence of Sister Agnes's education that she tempers Masechaba's disappointment with Nyasha's abrupt departure with the words, 'You know *mos* how things are, Doctor' (p. 144). Sister Agnes pleads to Masechaba to accept that Nyasha may have tired of 'South Africans accusing [*foreigners*] of stealing their jobs' (p. 144).

Nurses within 'the Obstetrics & Gynecology' department of Botshelo often speak to foreign patients 'in Sesotho, isiXhosa, isiZulu' although they know that the non-nationals cannot understand the local African languages (p. 44). Masechaba strives to alleviate the potentially negative impact of such nurses on their foreign patients, while Ma declares that she does not see any wrong in the nurses' attitude (p. 43). The sardonic tone with which Matlwa paints such a linguistically cacophonous collision of languages between the foreigner patients and South African nurses betrays a much deeper stance regarding the interplay of cultural literacies. The insistence on communicating in South African indigenous languages should be understood as a plea for the foreigner patients to try and accommodate a distinctively South African black cultural literacy in order for a harmonious co-existence between the foreigners and nationals to be facilitated.

The Achilles heel of the foreigner patients is their stubborn adherence to the *a priori* cultural literacies they have brought along to the borderland. They do not work hard to evolve such literacies in a versatile and creative manner into richer *a posteriori* ones seminally resulting from dialectical dialogue with the local cultural literacies that are a decisive part of the post-apartheid environment. Masechaba does not discern the failure of foreigners even beyond the bounds of the hospital to introspect and align their *a priori* cultural literacies dynamically with those of the black nationals, where xenophobic violence often breaks out. Such an adjustment is necessary, true to what Bourdieu (1991:2020–2021) means by a need on a deeper level as peoples of heterogeneous cultural

literacies interact for a quest for the 'objective' criteria of 'regional' or 'ethnic' identity. The writer cautions against an improper attitude in remarking that one should not forget that in social practice criteria like language, dialect and accent 'are the object of mental representations' (Bourdieu 1991). One needs to accommodate local cultural peculiarities for the smooth building of a new society, for the reasons that such local identities are 'acts of perception and appreciation, of cognition and recognition in which agents invest their interests and their presuppositions [*or*] representations in things … or acts'.

It can be seen that the use of differing varieties of English and of South African indigenous languages by Matlwa's characters communicates effectively a moral. Such a use of dialogue correlates with what the author concedes in her novelistic discourse as the imperative to mould identity and cultural literacies that are not of a surface level.

Conclusion

I have demonstrated manifestations of multiple levels of identity and cultural literacy in Matlwa's *Evening Primrose* (2018). I have discussed how what may appear as insignificant, surface-level language use by key characters such as Masechaba, Ma and Sister Agnes signifies such characters' more profound and distinct identity and cultural literacies. I have argued for a reader's need to delve deeply, beyond the superficial topography of the author's characterisation. I have also demonstrated that such a reading is crucial in identifying ways in which different categories of Matlwa's characters bring along their varying *a priori* identity and cultural literacies and how differently the characters transform them into sensible *a posteriori* cultural literacies that take account of the new environment, or what I describe as the borderland of post-apartheid South Africa. Such a borderland, namely post-apartheid South Africa, the setting of *Primrose*, entails quotidian strife that the citizens face.

Mbembe (2015) comments that the post-apartheid politicians 'represent the postcolonial state as a "site of eating" and libidinal excesses that render mobilisations over crucial matters such as access to health care, sanitation, housing, clean water or electricity useless or impossible as a result of corruption'. Abdullah (2020:80) highlights that some blemishes that Matlwa's characters face in the post-apartheid environment are 'far reaching racial and social discrimination' despite the fact that 'apartheid was annulled in 1994'. Makgoba (2023:87) ascribes the gloom faced by members of the public in post-apartheid leadership to political direction vacillations. These have resulted from developments whereby 'subsequent to the Mandela administration, Mbeki's administration was bedevilled by HIV/AIDS denialism that decimated especially the poor black citizens in hordes; the Zuma government scorched social, economic and political life with its state capture and other corrupt mafia-state scandals; while "avoidant" President Ramaphosa's approach to governance is crippled by indecision occasioned by inane consultation and infinite postponement.'

I leaned on theorists such as Lafontaine and colleagues (2018) as well as McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2018) in my literary appreciation of the novel to test different levels to which the characters manage cultural literacy formation. This has led to my findings that characters faced with a new cultural environment have to go beyond a surface-level display of cultural literacy formation. Indeed, only an identity and cultural literacy formation beyond the surface level is needed in Matlwa's characters in order for them to be successful in using their *a priori* cultural literacy to negotiate a transformed post-apartheid South Africa, in which an efficacious *a posteriori* cultural literacy is only one at the optimal integration level. It is an integration-level *a posteriori* cultural literacy that can be as effective as the learning of a new 'language' through the code-switching attainments described by Burns (2022). The new environment of a post-apartheid South Africa is a forum of *a posteriori* identity cultural literacies; it is a new language that the interactors have to learn, with their *a priori* identity and cultural literacies playing a part similar to that of the first language in code-switching; it is the matrix of action in *Primrose*. Such an accomplished acquisition of a new language through code-switching or *a posteriori* cultural literacy enables one to '[*develop*] integrated yet discrete mental grammars that are deployed in strategic and rule-based ways' (Burns 2022). The rigour with which participants in a borderland should reinvent their *a posteriori* identity and cultural literacies can be matched with what MacSwan (2017:190) attributes to a code-switching demand of bilinguals to be 'exquisitely sensitive to an incredibly rich and intricate underlying system of rules for both languages in their repertoires'. This is the case because, according to Burns (2022), 'scholars from the code-switching camp maintain that bilinguals do in fact develop discrete yet overlapping mental grammars'.

Apart from my conceptual framework for analysing the novel, including ideas like 'borderland' and code-switching or translanguaging, I apply a combination of theories to the central thrust of my study. I apply the theories of African humanism and ecocriticism combined, for the reason that I find outlook intersections between the two. The writers Ogbazi and Udeh (2020:1) explain ecocriticism as having 'its primary concern on man's physical environment and ecology', studying 'the earth, ecosystem and its need to be preserved'. Such information should assist one to detect the worldview affinities between ecocriticism and African humanism. Mphahlele (2002b:144) explicates that nature or the environment is organised such that there is 'a vital force' dwelling in people and things, 'activating them, causing life to reproduce life, and making the stars, planets and other bodies to move to a definite pattern'. The premise that the 'vital force' dwells in human beings and in the other natural items that are no less important in the environment (Mphahlele 2002b) levels up nature in such a way that human beings are not in the centre. Chakrabarty locates the present-day ecocritical human figure within what he describes as 'a collective geological force' (in Hoving 2017:2). In a definition of ecocriticism like this one, the human being exists in the environment in a stature equal to that of the rest of nature, similar to the place of a human being in the African humanist notion of the environment.

The lesson from the novel is that the new South Africa, in which all the citizens of different identity and cultural literacies collectively strive to forge a new unitary cultural literacy, demands of all the individuals and groups to undergo some identity and cultural literacy code-switching.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

The author declares that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Author's contribution

L.J.R. is the sole author of this research article.

Ethical considerations

An application for full ethical approval was made to the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC), University of Limpopo, Department of Research, Administration and Development and ethics consent was received on 4 December 2023. The ethics approval number is TREC/1732/2023:IR.

Funding information

This article received no specific grant from any funding agency in public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability

The author confirms that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and are the product of professional research. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency or that of the publisher. The author is responsible for this article's results, findings and content.

References

Abdullah, O.M., 2020, 'From Trauma to Recovery: Mending Wounds in Kopano Matlwa's Evening Primrose', *Journal of Iraqi University* 46(3), 490–495.

Azaldúa, G., 1999, *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza*, Aunt Lute, San Francisco, CA.

Bourdieu, P., 1991, *Language and symbolic power*, Polity Press in Association with Basil Blackwell, Cambridge.

Brooks, N., 1973, *Parameters of culture*, State Department of Education, Foreign Language News Exchange, Hartford.

Burns, D., 2022, 'Translanguaging vs. code-switching', *Language Magazine – Improving Literacy and Communication*, viewed 04 December 2023, from https://www.languagemagazine.com.

Clark, E.R. & Flores, B.B., 2007, 'Cultural literacy: Negotiating language, culture, and thought', *Voices from the Middle* 15(2), 8–14. https://doi.org/10.58680/vm20076583

Dlamini, N., 2022, 'The (ab)use of empathy in Kopano Matlwa's period pain', *Imbizo* 13(2), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.25159/2663-6565/11056

Ghafeer, D.W. & Abdullah, O.M., 2022, 'Attachment trauma and the role of a secure base in Kopano Matlwa's Evening Primrose', *Journal of Anbar University for Languages & Literature/Magallat* 14(4), 675–696. https://doi.org/10.37654/aujll.2022.179857

Hoving, I., 2017, 'Writing the earth in a globalizing world', in I. Hoving (ed.), *Writing the earth, darkly: Globalization, ecocriticism, and desire*, pp. 1–29, Lexington Books, London.

Lafontaine, D., Dupont, V. & Schillings, P., 2018, 'Does reading literacy instruction vary according to language or culture? Similarities and differences in English-, German- and French-speaking education systems in PIRLS 2016', *IEA Compass: Briefs in Education* 4, 1–10.

MacSwan, J., 2017, 'A multilingual perspective on translanguaging', *American Educational Research Journal* 54(1), 167–201. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216683935

Makgoba, M., 2023, *Leadership for transformation since the Dawn of South Africa's Democracy – An insider's view*, Skotaville Academic Publishing, Johannesburg.

Matlwa, K., 2018, *Evening Primrose*, Quercus, New York, NY.

Mbembe, A., 2015, *The state of South African political life. Africa is a country*, viewed 05 October 2022, from https://africasacountry.com/2015/09/achille-mbembe-on-the-state-of-south-african-politics.

McLaughlin, L. & DeVoogd, G., 2018, 'Reading comprehension, critical understanding: Research-based practice', in D. Lapp & D. Fisher (eds.), *Handbook of research in teaching the English language arts*, pp. 85–110, Taylor and Francis, New York, NY.

Milazzo, M., 2022, *Colourblind tools: Global technologies of racial power*, Northwestern University Press, Evaston, IL.

Mphahlele, E., 2002a, 'Notes towards an Introduction to African humanism: A personal inquiry – 1992', in J. Ogude, S. Raditlhalo, N. Ramakuela, M. Ramogale & P.N. Thuynsma (eds.), *Es'kia*, pp. 134–141, Kwela Books in Association with The Es'kia Institute, Cape Town.

Mphahlele, E., 2002b, 'The fabric of African culture and religious beliefs – 1971', in J. Ogude, S. Raditlhalo, N. Ramakuela, M. Ramogale & P.N. Thuynsma (eds.), *Es'kia*, pp. 142–156, Kwela Books in Association with The Es'kia Institute, Cape Town.

Mphahlele, E., 2002c, 'Africa in Exile – 2000', in J. Ogude, S. Raditlhalo, N. Ramakuela, M. Ramogale & P.N. Thuynsma (eds.), *Es'kia*, pp. 113–125, Kwela Books in Association with The Es'kia Institute, Cape Town.

Mphahlele, E., 2002d, 'Social work and the politics of dispossession – 1987', in J. Ogude, S. Raditlhalo, N. Ramakuela, M. Ramogale & P.N. Thuynsma (eds.), *Es'kia*, pp. 237–246, Kwela Books in Association with The Es'kia Institute, Cape Town.

Ogbazi, I.J. & Udeh, B.J., 2020, 'Eco-poetry and the Nigerian poet: A study of some selected poems in Tanure Ojaide's Delta Blues and Christian Otobotekere's beyond sound and voice', *Journal of the Literari Philosophia (JOLP)* 6(2), 1–10.

Roorda, R., 2001, 'Deep maps in eco-literature', *Michigan Quarterly Review* 40(1), 257–273.

Schachter, E. & Galili-Schachter, I., 2012, 'Identity literacy: Reading and teaching texts as resources for identity formation', *Teachers College Record* 114(050302), 1–37. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811211400506

Segal, N., 2015, 'From literature to cultural literacy', *Humanities* 4(1), 68–79. https://doi.org/10.3390/h4010068

Suarez-Orozco, C., 2004, 'Formulating identity in a globalised world', in M.M. Suarez-Orozco & D.B. Qin-Hillard (eds.), *Globalization: Culture and education in the new millennium*, pp. 173–202, University of California Press, Berkley, CA.

Valsiner, J., 2007, *Culture in minds and societie*s, Sage Publishers, New Delhi.