

Visions of China: Political Friendship and Animosities in Southern African Science Fiction

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Abstract

Using contemporary science fiction as a barometer, we can see the African imaginary to be seemingly preoccupied with the idea of China and with forecasting various dystopian scenarios regarding the future of China–Africa relations. Yet, through an examination of three short stories from Southern Africa – Tendai Huchu’s ‘The Sale’ (2013), Abigail Godsell’s ‘Taal’ (2009) and Mandisi Nkomo’s ‘Heresy’ (2013) – I explore a complex relationship whose participants are intimately aligned: China and Africa have an historical connection that asks us to take seriously the practice and potential of political friendship. Through a close reading of these short stories, it becomes possible to consider how the relationship need not result in Chinese neocolonialism and exploitation. Working with the conceptual framework of political friendship, I illustrate how these short stories cumulatively serve to unravel easy distinctions between the friend and the enemy, thereby intimating that, in the future, southern Africa can benefit from approaching China as both friend and enemy.

Keywords:

China–Africa political friendship, China in Africa, African science fiction, AfroSF, PROBE, Tendai Huchu, Abigail Godsell, Mandisi Nkomo, yellow peril

‘To deepen China–Africa traditional friendship, boost practical co-operation and forge in an all-round way a new China–Africa strategic partnership, is the shared desire of our two peoples.’ Hu Jintao, President of the People’s Republic of China, Pretoria, 2007¹

In 2007, Hu Jintao, then the President of China, delivered a speech to South Africans acknowledging the benefits of a strategic partnership and went further in stressing that the connection is not merely pragmatic and must serve to honour and deepen their long-abiding friendship in the future. Yet contemporary science fiction from the continent belies the notion of Sino-African political friendship. Tendai Huchu’s ‘The Sale’ (2013), Abigail Godsell’s ‘Taal’ (2009) and Mandisi Nkomo’s ‘Heresy’ (2013), are southern African short stories set in a future in which China’s current economic prowess results in technoscientific empires² that seek to encroach upon Africa in varying degrees.³

Not bound by realpolitik, science fiction is ‘equipped to dramatize political philosophy, by thought experiments which take ideologies to uncompromisingly logical conclusions’.⁴ Hence these short stories are able to provide a sense of shared and hidden beliefs whose material and political reverberations lie further in the future of Sino-African engagements. Far from promises of China’s ‘win–win’ paradigm, according to which no Chinese partner can turn out a loser, Huchu’s ‘The Sale’ and Godsell’s ‘Taal’ reveal how China’s economic ascendancy, while operating under the guise of African development, uses technology as

means to invade and control Africa. Yet, while these narratives express neo-colonial fears that a 'new scramble for Africa' seems imminent,⁵ they also provide a speculative arena in which to interrogate how we ultimately perceive the value, use and future of Sino-African political friendship. Science fiction can thus serve as an imaginative production of political theory by interceding in ways that International Relations cannot, because of the confines of diplomacy.⁶ Ultimately, I argue, this is more the case with Nkomo's 'Heresy', where China also establishes itself as a global leader, but not at the expense of South Africa, which remains caught in a rivalry with China. This narrative assumes the challenge of imagining the current tension of Sino-African relations otherwise, by destabilising the dichotomy of enemy and friend, thereby bringing to light different options for the future of their political friendship.

The Ties that Bind: Sino-African Normative Friendship

As P.E. Digeser notes, 'since the time of Thucydides, terms such as *friend* and *friendship* have been part of the language of interstate politics. Diplomats frequently draw on these words to characterise international agreements. Politicians regularly toast, worry about, and aspire to maintain these kinds of relationships in their public rhetoric'.⁷ Consequently, there has been some debate among International Relations scholars about whether friendship should be taken seriously in contemporary political analysis.⁸ This concern is certainly applicable to the example of ex-president Hu Jintao, whose speech to South Africans deploys the word 'friends' or 'friendship' 21 times, making the emphasis seem heavy-handed, if not anxious. Yet Digeser advises us not to be dismissive of these 'rhetorical gestures', insisting that 'after having been exiled from political theory for centuries, friendship is making a comeback'.⁹ Similarly, Andrea Oelsner and Simon Koschut stress that if we conceptualise 'international friendship as a political reality and not as a utopian ideal', then 'friendship actually transforms small pockets of the international system by revealing alternative forms of order as well as alternative patterns of interaction among particular actors, which also affect their immediate environment'.¹⁰ Analogous to this position, I claim that Jintao's proposal of 'traditional friendship' to South Africans is a significant one in understanding the nature of Sino-African engagement.

Typically, 'international friendship can take two forms: strategic and normative'.¹¹ Yet Jintao's reference to 'traditional friendship' seeks to exceed the parameters of strategic political friendship; for embedded in the phrase 'traditional friendship' is a nostalgic allusion to the peaceful and diplomatic maritime explorations when, during 'the early days of the Ming dynasty, a mighty armada of 62 ships crossed the China sea' and, under the charge of Zheng He, 'made eight great expeditions, making calls at more than 30 countries and territories, including what is today Somalia, Kenya, and Madagascar'.¹² In addition, it is often understated that

other countries across the continent, mostly confined to the Southern Africa region, have experienced earlier encounters with Chinese, South Africa nonetheless offers the most diverse and extensive portrait. The overall scope stretches from the tens of thousands of indentured laborers (eventually repatriated to China) joined by smaller ranks of 'free' migrants lured by the gold rush toward the end of the nineteenth century.¹³

Unlike other frequenters of African shores, as Garth le Pere and Garth Shelton suggest, early Chinese explorers in Africa were not motivated by a settler or colonial project.¹⁴ Harking back to how China has only affirmed and respected the value of Africa, Jintao thus taps into the 'accumulation of memories, founding myths, experiences, and symbolic patterns' that builds the necessary 'affect and emotions [which] activate and mobilise reciprocal behaviour'.¹⁵ By alluding to a shared history of common cultural understanding that has already surpassed the mundanity of strategic friendship, contemporary Africa, by extension, must not only recognise but propagate the ideals of this unique hospitality.

According to Digeser, one can call these normative friendships 'special relationships' because of the closeness of the bond and the rarity of their occurrence. 'The relationship is special in that the friends believe that they understand their institutional arrangements in a way that few states may'.¹⁶ Unlike most political friendships that more readily understand themselves as alliances or partnerships based on self-interest, friendships of character do not exclude affective dimensions otherwise exclusive to interpersonal friendships. It follows that 'the interests of a friend in a special relationship are accorded a higher priority. The expectations for consultation are greater. The willingness to defend one another's interests are stronger'.¹⁷ And, while this mandate might be read as idealistic and impractical, it is worth considering China's formidable record in supporting various African states in this capacity.

After the formation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, China believed that they could serve as an example and true friend to various African nations seeking political independence, which culminated in the values espoused at the 1955 Bandung Conference, where an official declaration of equality and mutual benefit for all parties was made. Yet China's fervent backing of Africa went beyond political diplomacy and 'included moral and material support for different generations of national liberation and independence movements',¹⁸ which aligns with Digeser's observation that 'in a special relationship, states may go so far as to seek to protect one's friend from internal threats. The autonomy of one's friends is not an insurmountable barrier to providing such protection'.¹⁹ Not afraid to look partial, the PRC smuggled arms into Africa²⁰ and trained African soldiers for various anti-colonial struggles as they erupted across the continent. And, in more recent years, China has wielded its newly found economic power in Africa's favour by not only providing foreign aid but also 'cancelling the debt of 31 African countries',²¹ valued at US\$1.3 billion,²² thus exercising a level of virtue that can 'set an example for the developed world'.²³

In more recent times, however, China has 'sought a new, commercially based, rather than ideologically motivated, partnership with Africa'. Noting the interest in 'Africa's economic, rather than revolutionary, potential',²⁴ along with the failure to acknowledge this drastic shift in power, many theorists have made retrospective speculations that China is not, and has never been, as benevolent a friend as it has claimed to be. For example, le Pere and Shelton argue that China has simply been shrewd in understanding 'its own limitations. China was not in a position to match the aid resources of the West or the Soviet Union',²⁵ making special friendship – established through the rhetoric of an anti-colonial struggle – necessary for securing allies in the global south. Kenneth King finds it anachronistic that recent Chinese policy documents deploy 'the words "poor" and "poverty" [to] refer to China itself'.²⁶ He argues that 'they maintain some of the same discourse as had been used by

China in the 1950s and 1960s',²⁷ because it perpetuates the friendly ideology of the poor helping the poor, despite the fact that China has now made a clear display of its power to act as a unilateral benefactor to Africa. Far from appreciations of friendship, the manner in which China now engages with Africa is regarded by some as 'little different to a disguised neo-colonial market penetration strategy'.²⁸ Unsurprisingly, then, Huchu's 'The Sale'²⁹ captures feelings of betrayal and anger at the consequences of Sino-Zimbabwean engagement and bears the caveat that Zimbabwe must more urgently classify China as an enemy instead.

Expectations and Betrayal in Huchu's 'The Sale'

In 'The Sale', China has taken control of Zimbabwe through the production of a corporatised state – called CorpGov. Like many other science fiction dystopias where 'the government of people has been replaced by the administration of things',³⁰ CorpGov is hierarchical, elusive and fundamentally uninterested in civil society – a surveillance state that leaves no room for political dissension. 'The Sale' takes its title from the fact that a future Zimbabwe has been purchased by China in a piecemeal fashion and is now set to lose its last free portion of land in a final sale. The protagonist, Mr Jimmy Munyuki, is trying to meet with various state officials to prevent the sale of this remaining plot of Zimbabwean land. He has honoured protocol in arranging a meeting, but when he arrives, petty bureaucrats, secretaries and surveillance systems block him and he thus fails to speak out against the final sale of land.

In 'The Sale', Jimmy attempts to stay in the city in order to make another attempt at meeting with CorpGov, but he cannot remain because the Department of Native Affairs, to which he must report, is in his homeland. Despite the fact that the story is set in future Zimbabwe, Huchu references the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act (1963) from South Africa's apartheid era, when African citizens were assigned to ethnically derivative homelands.³¹ In effect, this law served to dispossess Africans of their land and controlled and monitored black activity in urban or 'white' spaces. Moreover, the narrator states that his particular homeland is now called Mas-ving O, because 'some of the old names had been kept by CorpGov, with minor phonetic changes to reflect the language of the new administrators'.³² Jimmy then confides that these new names are there because 'they couldn't be bothered to learn the old names'.³³ Much as during the colonial era, the native population has lost the right to name the spaces they inhabit.

Now aware of his illegitimate presence in the city, Jimmy is uncomfortable as he walks the street. He is soon hounded by a drone that commands him 'with loud wailing reminiscent of old order police sirens'.³⁴ Again, Huchu's descriptive choices stress a past that is being regurgitated by Chinese state control. The narrator informs us that this is all part of a public health project where the drones monitor and inoculate people on the spot. Hence the Chinese techno-scientific empire reveals 'not just a technological state (with its space programs and high-tech militarization), but a "social state," a technological condition of being, in which all aspects of life are mediated by intermeshing systems of technological rationalisation'.³⁵ Because everyone has to comply with the drones, life expectancy goes up 100 per cent. Hence Jimmy is probed and injected by the drone without consent and he questions, 'were they even human at all with their daily diet of NeustrogenAlpha™, and the mood stabilisers and anti-depressants pumped into the water supply?'.³⁶ In the techno-

scientific empire, public health is a matter of enforced well-being; no one is given a choice about their desired state of health and mortality, and this incident recovers the routine humiliation that African males were often subjected to when confronted by apartheid police.³⁷ Jimmy also informs the reader that the drone checks testosterone levels in males; unless males are bouncers or in the army, they are monitored to ensure that their testosterone levels remain low. The narrative demonstrates how the black male body is ideologically and biologically engineered as either a monstrous weapon of state power or a predetermined threat that must be eliminated. Moreover, Huchu forces us to confront the consequences of turning African males into 'docile robots'³⁸ and 'vegetables, walking zombies'³⁹ in science fiction narratives.

In a fascinating monograph on race in American science fiction, Isiah Lavender III opines that science fiction writers often use figures like robots to engage with slavery in ways that are unconscious and racist or, alternatively, to reflect on a painful racial history that continues to haunt the national psyche. He probes the seemingly deracialised attitude of science fiction as a genre by arguing that it 'uses technology or science to distance and defamiliarize the institution and practice of slavery, resulting in constructions of slavery as neo-slave narratives or *meta-slavery narratives*'.⁴⁰ As Lavender argues, the desire for robotic subjects to behave as they are instructed often resembles the colonial reading of African males 'as natural machines essential for the cultivation of the physical landscape and capable of producing wealth'.⁴¹ Somewhat uncannily, Jimmy watches over a group of workmen, stating that 'they were native workmen. Strong men. The sort of men with strong bodies and low IQs that were valued above all else by CorpGov'.⁴² It becomes apparent that CorpGov, using biological weapons as opposed to guns, has greater success than the previous colonialists in producing machines out of the African male. The dystopian absolutism of Huchu's vision makes us pause to consider how Sino-African relations could disintegrate to the extent where Zimbabwe has lost all political autonomy, leaving its citizens with no recourse for justice.

Somewhat ironically, Digeser implies that these effects could stem not from the termination of special friendship – as one might assume – but from its very execution. He opines that 'the adverbial conditions associated with special relationships include interacting confidently, trustingly, closely but also, perhaps, presumptuously, boldly, and immodestly'.⁴³ Hence, normative friendship involves overstepping the ideological and socio-political borders between nations in order to provide support and thus implies a large amount of trust, as nations are vulnerable to external influences within their own borders. This, however, can also lead to compromised autonomy because the friend 'can potentially threaten the independence of one party or the other',⁴⁴ resulting in the kind of state parasitism presented in 'The Sale'.

As a case in point, when China provided armed assistance for Robert Mugabe's ZANU(PF) revolution, it was widely accepted as the successful practice of special friendship because it encouraged the political emancipation of Zimbabwe. And, having effected change in Zimbabwe, China has since been allowed to operate within its borders with relative ease. Even when Mugabe's rule became increasingly dictatorial, China continued to provide aid in order to secure its economic hold over Zimbabwe. Hence, according to Desire Assogbavi, Zimbabwe is a clear example of how 'Chinese relationships with some African governments

reinforce dictatorship and provide new opportunities for authoritarian regimes that oppress their citizens'.⁴⁵ Somewhat diabolically, China turned a blind eye to the crippling local economy and human rights violations occurring in Zimbabwe, arguing that 'intervening in a friend's internal affairs increases the chance of conflict, misunderstanding, and the dissolution of the friendship'.⁴⁶ Exercising a policy of political non-interference, the rhetoric of 'traditional friendship' that enabled the penetration of the Zimbabwean state in the first instance was repurposed as a benevolent gesture of providing aid to a newly impoverished nation. Nevertheless, the notion of special friendship is still at play, even when it amounts to cronyism; as long as both parties settle on what constitutes an 'agreeable character', irrespective of its calibre, they can continue to provide support to each other.⁴⁷ Hence, rather than disproving the existence of normative Sino-African friendship, Huchu's narrative explores the risk that inheres in the nature of special friendship by speculating upon how its very practice could lead to Zimbabwe's demise.

At the very end, Jimmy succumbs to despair, 'yet, deep inside him, a more primeval feeling of rage stirred up' and, in a final act of defiance, he 'placed his body between the old stone walls and the bulldozers'.⁴⁸ Jimmy's suicide evokes a sense of profound helplessness, but it also suggests that the right to dissent is a fundamental one. His death is an act of biopolitical defiance that sees value in discontent and the excesses of the human body, which, despite their ability to lead to various forms of destruction, pain and suffering, can allow for personal creativity and political freedom. By setting Jimmy's defiant torso against the might of the Chinese bulldozer, the narrative speculates that China will need to be vehemently counteracted in the near future in order to protect Zimbabwe's already breached borders – sentiments analogous to Carl Schmitt's famous treatise on the political.

Schmitt proposes that 'it cannot be denied that nations continue to group themselves according to the friend and enemy antithesis'.⁴⁹ Yet 'the determination of some group as the enemy is a political decision that presumably rests on the sovereign's assessment that they represent a threat to one's community'.⁵⁰ Schmitt opines that the public declaration of friends and enemies is fundamental to the production and fortification of national identity and enables the dynamics of global politics. Yet, for Schmitt, these distinctions are neither ethical nor emotive but politically strategic in order to protect the sovereignty of the nation state. In highlighting the duplicitous results of Sino-African relations, Huchu's narrative seeks a complete revision of China's role from friend to enemy. It is a fairly conservative logic, which seeks to delimit the inevitably murky terrain of political friendship, but it follows that, in declaring China a political enemy, Zimbabwe may stand a chance of securing greater political autonomy in the future.

For le Pere and Shelton, however, casting China as the enemy is a stereotype that obfuscates the complex socio-political terrain of Sino-African friendship. They argue that representations of this kind often 'border on the hysterical', meaning that 'demonisation and lazy caricature become ready substitutes for rigour in research and analysis'.⁵¹ Yet, while Huchu's narrative *is* Manichean in its ideology, it provides a sharp sense of clarity that makes the story incredibly effective. For, as Oelsner and Koshut highlight, emotional reactions are often indicative of how special friendships 'take on dramatic dimensions due to a sense of betrayal or loss that a state-friend perceives when it sees that the other has violated a key relational norm'.⁵² These friendships are rare; they operate at a different level

of affective and political intensity, and, because ethical reciprocity is a cornerstone for special interstate friendships, it is not uncommon for one party to hold the other accountable by articulating their thwarted expectations and feelings of betrayal. Through the production of pathos, 'The Sale' does indeed hold a mirror up to China and communicates an earnest appeal for more humane engagement. Yet the heaviness of its dystopian narrative also breeds a spirit of nihilism or Afro-pessimism that overrides any sense of African accountability in the degenerative state of future Sino-Zimbabwean relations. Drawing on features of a critical dystopia, however, Godsell's 'Taal' demonstrates how "*They* [the Chinese] didn't let you hold onto anything. Especially not innocence",⁵³ and is significantly more self-conscious in this regard.

Recasting the Enemy in Godsell's 'Taal'

Set in the year 2050, 'Taal'⁵⁴ begins after a nuclear war between China and America has left the entire world in a state of disrepair and uncertainty. As a result, China has 'chosen South Africa as a home away from home' and, the narrator informs us, 'now that the Chinese government had arrived and taken over, everything was different'.⁵⁵ The South African government willingly signed over ownership of the country in exchange for protection and, comparable to 'The Sale', Godsell imagines a Chinese regime that has captured the South African army as well as propaganda blimps that serve as a surveillance system to control the local population.

The central protagonist, an especially resentful young woman named Callie, recalls that the situation was not always this hostile between the South Africans and the Chinese, but a failed revolutionary march by the South Africans led to 'the lines drawn clean and absolute. Us and Them, Justice and Tyranny'.⁵⁶ After the march, the Chinese dropped the façade of friendship and used the military to maintain control of the population. Now Callie has joined a militant rebel group in a covert attempt to overthrow the Chinese. Standing over a soldier she has just injured, her combative spirit emerges: 'she balled up her fists. She hadn't invited the fucking Chinese'.⁵⁷ As with Huchu's narrative, China is an enemy that must be challenged in order to regain control of the state, but Godsell's story merely uses this as a point of departure, the divisive ideology of Callie's world being suddenly compromised by her encounter with this soldier-victim.

After injuring the soldier, she pulls off his helmet and is surprised that he converses in Afrikaans because, to all other appearances, he is Chinese. The fact that he speaks Afrikaans implies that he is a South African and she is stupefied by the exchange as it highlights her simplistic understanding of what the enemy should look like. She is confused about why a South African would join the Chinese army but realises that 'maybe she couldn't make it that simple anymore'.⁵⁸ This moment is pivotal in illuminating ambivalence in the South African imaginary about whether a Chinese presence is friend or foe. Callie now asks, '[w]hat does a South African face look like anyway?', implying that the superficial or public identification of the political enemy will no longer suffice in the future of Sino-African engagement. Previously invested in a logic of 'Us' and 'Them', the narrator states that 'now she wary of capital letters', because she has been caught off-guard by 'fighting our own'.⁵⁹ Undoubtedly, this uncanny revelation of the other draws attention to the spectral presence of Chinese South Africans who have not received due recognition as bona fide citizens and,

consequently, the story goes on to make a compelling response to the 'yellow peril' theme that has served as a common mode of representation in science fiction narratives.

Looking at both historical and contemporary circumstances in South Africa, Romain Dittgen and Ross Anthony suggest that South Africans lack an understanding of and curiosity about the Chinese presence in the country. The 'general failure to grasp the contemporary presence of China in South Africa and more globally',⁶⁰ they argue, has led to the 'persistence of Yellow Peril tropes'⁶¹ in local popular culture and media. Stemming from the late 19th century, yellow peril tropes serve to depict China 'as threatening in a twofold manner: on one hand, it is associated with moral hazard and the fear of "the horde"; on the other hand, it is a source of anxiety in terms of its perceived ingenuity and connectedness to powerful sectors of society, including industry and government'.⁶² While yellow peril tropes are indeed indicative of ignorance,⁶³ their deployment is also discursively strategic and thus inheres to conservative science fiction narratives as a form of othering. For example, Lavender depicts how American science fiction tackled the 'rampant paranoia concerning vast Asian hordes invading America'⁶⁴ through representations of the alien other. The informing logic is that, in defeating this alien other in a speculative narrative, the psychological and ideological boundaries of America are fortified and its subjects purged of the anxieties of cultural and economic invasion. The yellow peril theme thus forms part of conservative nationalistic discourse that reifies the distinction between friend and enemy. In 'Taal', however, the alleged enemy speaks her domestic/native language, implying that he locates himself *within* the ideological boundaries of South Africa, and this moment is key in highlighting how nationalistic discourse collapses when the distinction between the friend and enemy is disrupted.

In *The Politics of Friendship*, Jacques Derrida's riposte to Schmitt's politicisation of the enemy suggests that, when distinguishing 'between friend and enemy, such a dissociation cannot be reduced to a mere difference'.⁶⁵ He continues by illustrating the 'possibility of semantic slippage and inversion [where] the friend (*amicus*) can be an enemy (*hostis*)'⁶⁶ in Schmitt's treatise, highlighting how Schmitt's notion of the political enemy is ultimately performative; 'it is important that the concept be purified of all other dimensions – especially of everything opposed to the political or the public, beginning with the private: anything that stems from the individual or even the psychological, from the subjective in general'.⁶⁷ Derrida argues that one could end up going to war with one's friends by simply defining them as public enemies, and vice versa. Hence, rather than seeking to delimit ideological and political instability, the suggestion is that we can produce new definitions of the political and, by extension, political friendship through its embrace.

Intriguingly, these ideas are conversant with the 2011 White Paper by the South African Department of International Relations and Co-operation (DIRCO). Moving closer to indigenous philosophy, the department highlighted its 'Diplomacy of Ubuntu', which 'translates into an approach to international relations that respects all nations, peoples, and cultures. Similarly, national security would therefore depend on the centrality of human security as a universal goal, based on the principle of Batho Pele (putting people first)'.⁶⁸ Informed by an ideal of universal humanism, *ubuntu* is a collectivist principle that views the dignity of every human as intrinsic to personal well-being, and DIRCO thus entwined national interest with that of international welfare and peace. Consequently, as Karen Smith

astutely observes, ubuntu diplomacy ‘challenge[s] the boundaries established by the discipline of IR: the domestic–international divide is problematized, the concept of statehood is questioned’,⁶⁹ and ‘in particular, *ubuntu* suggests the possibility of a different kind of relationship from the friend/enemy dichotomy so prevalent in IR’.⁷⁰ Somewhat counter-intuitively, using *ubuntu* as a foreign policy destabilises the very notion of the foreigner and/or enemy, since everyone must be approached as a friend, whose humanity is equal to our own.

‘Taal’ hinges on such a paradox; feeling ashamed that she has murdered the soldier, Callie now seeks to acknowledge him as a fellow South African by commemorating his death with a message ‘sprayed small and neat beside the body’.⁷¹ It reads, ‘Mag die Here jou seën, en nog baie jare spaar, Kuan Lee Gouws’, which is translated in a footnote as ‘May God bless you and spare you many more years, Kuan Lee Gouws’.⁷² The soldier has a Chinese first name with an Afrikaner surname and, somewhat sheepishly, Callie mentions that ‘she wished it [her commemorative sentence] could have been better, but she’d never spoken Afrikaans before the revolution’.⁷³ She is unfamiliar with Afrikaans, but it is his language – his *Taal* – and she must use it to honour his life and death. She thus linguistically ‘unhomes’ herself in favour of the other and makes a profound display of *ubuntu* through this extension of radical hospitality.⁷⁴ By illustrating how the face of the Chinese as other is merely a visage that initially interrupts her true interpretation of his identity, the story comments on the superficial nature of yellow peril tropes and stereotypes and the conservative reassertion of nationalistic discourse.

‘Taal’ ends on an enigmatic note, with Callie simply committing herself to ‘small acts of grace’⁷⁵ towards everyone she meets. We are never sure what these actions will amount to, but, by incorporating and accommodating the identity of the other within the self, the narrative ultimately dissolves the representative scheme of the yellow peril by classifying every global citizen as a friend. The story thus fulfils the mandate of a critical dystopian narrative, because it ‘self-reflexively takes on the present system and offers not only astute critiques of the order of things but also explorations of the oppositional spaces and possibilities from which the next round of political activism can derive imaginative sustenance and inspiration’.⁷⁶ Hence, unlike ‘The Sale’, ‘Taal’ tempers its dystopian narrative by embedding utopian impulses within the work.⁷⁷ Yet ‘the troubling question, however, is who among the strangers is unwelcome? When does society, in an ubuntu world, close its gates to would-be guests? In other words, might not ubuntu push us to the extreme of sympathizing with everyone and thus no one?’⁷⁸ Mvuselelo Nckoya’s probing questions of South Africa’s *ubuntu* diplomacy are useful in highlighting the need to delimit political friendship to achieve a state of healthy citizenry.

Callie, who is initially critical of Chinese propaganda, begins to read her positionality as a South African freedom fighter on equally problematic terms. Now that her defensiveness has dropped, she confesses that ‘this country hadn’t been ready for a war. Not even close’.⁷⁹ South Africa was caught off-guard amid a global crisis, as they did not have a sufficient national security plan. Hence, ‘she could almost understand it, the treaty and everything. They’d all been so scared when war broke out. [...] The President had been scared enough to sign away his power for the promise of security. Now the only people not scared were the rebels and the Army’.⁸⁰ Callie acknowledges that the Chinese extension of immunity is by no

means benevolent, but the Chinese are at least able to offer conditional protection, significantly more than the South African government was capable of at the time. She thus intimates that, as civilians in a country with poor governance, they should be more grateful for the Chinese presence in South Africa. From 'Taal' we surmise that casting China in the role of the enemy is ultimately a smokescreen that circumvents feelings of betrayal and anger harboured by civil society in relation to their own national government. Callie's encounter with the soldier forces her to consider how her part in the rebel army 'wasn't enough though, not in the long run. The rebellion wouldn't survive on poor strategies and luck'.⁸¹ Godsell thus uses her introspective narrative to shift the object of focus away from Chinese agitation and towards South African apathy by conveying that the country may not lack a fighting spirit but, unlike China, lacks the necessary foresight and organisation to bolster the nation.

Many detractors have duly criticised DIRCO's *ubuntu* diplomacy on precisely these grounds. South Africa, they argue, posits *ubuntu* as an international ideal, while proving incapable of ensuring human dignity for its own citizens.⁸² Pointing at the 2008 xenophobic attacks, critics argue that citizens are often unable to embrace international guests with fraternal concern because government fails to prioritise the humanity of its citizens – a pattern that can easily play itself out in Sino-African relations if the already restive African working class⁸³ and other 'irate citizens who have been put out of business or economically displaced by their Chinese counterparts'⁸⁴ take to confronting the Chinese in lieu of state intervention. Arguably, then, African resentment towards the Chinese has 'less to do with anti-Chinese sentiment than with the frustrations directed at African political and economic elites because of the skewed nature of wealth accumulation within the African state'.⁸⁵ Consequently, the narrative enforces an examination of how the perpetuation of yellow peril discourse is a part of nativist thinking that uses the Chinese as scapegoats for national grievances that remain unaddressed and delineates how South Africa is, in fact, its own worst enemy.

Digeser states that 'the friend as a mirror is an important trope in our understandings of friendship [...] less in the sense of advocating a vision that should be endorsed by everyone and more in the sense of expressing and building upon attributes of the practices of friendship that lead in a direction opposite to that of merely mirroring what one already happens to be'.⁸⁶ Using the concept of political friendship as a mirror through which to view oneself is not an exercise of narcissistic self-reproduction. Rather it is a means by which to explore what is both different and uncomfortable within oneself. Hence representations of China in the African imaginary, when treated as a negative capability, gesture at the idea that 'Africans will be better off emulating the Chinese in their uncompromising stand over China's unity, their fierce nationalism and their entrepreneurial spirit'.⁸⁷

According to Sanou Mbaye, in comparison to Chinese proactivity there are simply too many instances of African apathy: 'when 48 African heads of state met with the Chinese leadership in 2006 Beijing, they arrived without a concerted common development programme. As usual, they came to listen and rubber-stamp whatever proposal China had in store for their respective countries'.⁸⁸ Because 'unilateral gratitude is not enough' to sustain political friendship,⁸⁹ it is astounding that African leaders had no vision or strategy to negotiate in favour of their respective countries, and Mbaye intimates that Africa will be the

cause of its subsequent downfall. A message that echoes the curt – but nevertheless astute – sentiments of Zhong Jianhua, then the PRC ambassador to South Africa. As relayed by King,

during one of the discussions a postgraduate from a country to the north challenged the diplomat: ‘Mr. Ambassador, you need to tell us what China plans for us.’ Mr. Zhong’s response was: ‘You are asking the wrong question. You should not worry about what China wants to do to you, but what you want to do for yourself.’ The message was that Africans should stop thinking about themselves as passive victims – always on the receiving end, and never thinking of themselves as active agents – at least sometimes creating their own future.⁹⁰

As Kwesi Kwaa Prah argues, ‘we tend to act as if we expect the whole world to treat us as their suffering brother who needs moral and kindly attention. We do this even though we see and know that for hundreds of years other societies have used us as objects of exploitation’. Afro-pessimism is not just a tedious narrative, it is also a dangerous and defeatist one. There are many ways to conceive of the Chinese presence in Africa; using it as part of an unwarranted sense of victimisation can result in a wasted opportunity. As stated, ‘the challenge is not for us to moan about Chinese racism and lack of altruism in their dealings with Africans’ since ‘all nations particularly the “big ones” act in their own enlightened self-interest’.⁹¹ Prah thus goads us into considering how China merely wishes to remain competitive in an imperfect global economy, and urges Africa to level the playing field. Maintaining a competitive edge, however, requires the strategic deployment of the concept of the political friend *and* enemy – a move that is cleverly executed in Mandisi Nkomo’s, ‘Heresy’.

Disruptive and Dynamic Sino-African Friendship in Nkomo’s ‘Heresy’

‘Heresy’ is set in the year 2040 and, while China has risen in global economic rankings, South Africa has not fallen under its sway. To some extent, Nkomo’s narrative realises an idealistic scenario where south–south interactions challenge the global order. All the hegemonic superpowers have fallen off the radar, creating a platform for fierce competition in the global south that realises an ‘alternate order of global affairs’.⁹² In the story, South Africa has a very competitive space programme and is caught in an anxious space race, while ‘China is a number of months behind’.⁹³ The competitive spirit is fierce, and members of the South African space programme, along with the president of the country, are paranoid about Chinese spies who might carry news of their progress and intelligence back to China.

The treatment of conspiracy, however, is comedic and light, already a marked difference from the grave, dystopian tones of the previous two stories discussed. Playing on the joke that Chinese products are of poor quality, a delegate allays the president’s fears by stating, ‘I wouldn’t worry much about the Chinese Sir. According to SSA, their rockets are rubbish’.⁹⁴ Nkomo often uses humour to deride the competition, but what is significant about his method is that it does not infantilise the Chinese but rather pokes fun at the South African administration, which is paranoid about Chinese infiltration, since the Chinese do not seem as invested in the demise of South Africa as they suspect. Yellow peril tropes are engaged with ironic distance, and humour deflates their potential to render as ‘other’. Nkomo thus

belies the conspiracy theories about China secretly wanting to colonise Africa. Instead, he exposes South African exceptionalism by demonstrating how the entire administration has an inflated sense of self-importance, which leads them to assume the role of arch rivals even when this has no material basis in the milieu of the story. Nevertheless, 'Heresy' conveys a sense that Africans can – somewhat usefully – construct an invisible enemy out of China to build momentum for progress. The South African president is determined that they 'will not be outdone by those would-be-revolutionaries'⁹⁵ and Mr Masemola, the Minister of Space Travel, insists that 'we are running on schedule here comrades. The bloody Chinese are lapping at our heels'.⁹⁶ China is positioned as an enemy, and the inadvertent effect is that of exponentially accelerating South African development. Hence we see that having political enemies can allow for friendly encouragement and advancement. Ultimately, Nkomo confirms the reading that a China–Africa rivalry is, in fact, underpinned by a form of friendship further on in the narrative, when the South African mission hits an obstacle.

When the South African team launches the Dlamini I, it crashes and pierces a hole into an invisible barrier. Scientists are sent in to investigate what this barrier is made of, but the search fails to yield results. The Minister of Space Travel, Mr Masemola, suspects Chinese saboteurs, but his assistant reassures him that 'we checked out the scientists. The Chinese have not infiltrated them. They are honestly clueless'.⁹⁷ Unable to blame the Chinese, South Africa concedes that it needs outside help and, somewhat surprisingly, this involves letting 'the Chinese breach our security barrier on the hole', who conclude their investigation by 'suggesting it may be something ethereal'.⁹⁸ South Africa turns to China in a moment of crisis and it is the Chinese who first alert the South African government to the fact that they have killed god, which is where the story, 'Heresy', gets its title.

As explained in the course of the narrative, the ethereal realm is where the spiritual essence or entities of the universe reside and, after piercing that hole and sending in a further probing investigative blast, the South African government has obliterated the entire realm, thereby killing god. Not wanting the story to break publicly, the South African government again uses the Chinese as a scapegoat: 'President Dlamini had this to say on the matter, "This is merely a step forward in the space race. All this trifle about God is just propaganda spread by the Chinese"'.⁹⁹ Caught in a corner and currently without resolution, the yellow peril rhetoric of China as enemy is deployed, both strategically and farcically, in order to rescue South Africa from the global public relations disaster of having killed god.

It is only later that Masemola comes up with a solution and asks the president to reassign him as Minister of Foreign Affairs so that he may execute his plan. He reasons that

'according to our figures, we have the resources to solve at least forty percent of the world's problems on our own – with maybe a bit of assistance from the Russians, or the UK. The Chinese however, only have the capacity to solve twenty percent. Especially since nobody likes them. This means that if we start a new race, who can, ehh, solve more world issues in less time. We will definitely win. So we, ehh, can become the world's saviour, which will probably increase our reach, and give us a better image' [To which the president responds:] 'Masemola – you're a genius! It's such an easy way for us to outwit those annoying Chinese. [...] I am going to officially

apologise to the world for being so short sighted. I will admit we killed God, then feed them some nonsense about humanity being alone with only one saviour. Us!¹⁰⁰

Nkomo cheekily reverses contemporary politics, representing China's current success as South Africa's potential victory in the future. At present, China has lifted 400 million people out of poverty¹⁰¹ and has the economic capacity to extend its aid beyond its borders. Here we can see more clearly that the significant place that China occupies in the southern African imaginary is due to a certain amount of envy.

More idealistic than Diseger, Derrida returns in *The Politics of Friendship* to Cicero to explore the trope of the friend as mirror: 'if friendship projects its hope beyond life – an absolute hope, an incommensurable hope – this is because the friend is, as the translation has it, "our own ideal image". We envisage the friend as such. And this is how he envisages us: with a friendly look'.¹⁰² Our friends embody the projection of our ideal identities; their characteristics are the ones we currently lack and wish to cultivate. This future-oriented will solidifies the friendship by giving it purpose and dynamism. In 'Heresy', neither the image of a dream world nor a catastrophe fully emerges,¹⁰³ which creates an atmosphere of vigilance and creative improvisation regarding China–Africa relations. The narrative thus illustrates how it works best to desentimentalise the connection by not 'simply think[ing] about two actors and their behaviour towards each other, but about their relationship'.¹⁰⁴ A relationship-centred focus to political friendships, while still mutually investing in meaningful world-building projects, provides enough objective distance to cultivate difference and autonomy; in Nkomo's story this is expressed through the ironic treatment and creative fluidity of the friend and enemy who morph at each circumstance to improve South African morale. Hence we do not conceive of solidarity as a singular or isolated act that demands repeating, but allow for the necessary reinvention and reinterpretation of the friendship itself.

According to Koschut and Oelsner, it is 'necessary to think of international friendship not as something that is merely being performed at the intergovernmental level but as something that is being enacted in the day-to-day activities and imaginations at all levels of society'.¹⁰⁵ In this article, I have tried to illustrate how this includes science fiction narratives that present us with a 'succession of literary experiments, each one examining a small part of a much larger image and each equally necessary to the greater vision'.¹⁰⁶ Huchu's 'The Sale', Godsell's 'Taal' and Nkomo's 'Heresy' all provide useful elucidations of the future of Sino-African political friendships and ask us to consider which socio-political and cultural decisions will lead to an optimal outcome for Africa.

In the moment in which China 'seeks a "win-win" relationship with Africa', it is important to acknowledge that 'the management of relationships to achieve this is not undemanding'.¹⁰⁷ Hence, while the presence of China in Africa presents many challenges, southern Africa has every reason to remain optimistic about the future of Chinese friendship,¹⁰⁸ as well as the much anticipated south–south ascendancy in global politics. Maintaining both friend and enemy status, however, will prove crucial in meeting this goal.

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Notes

1 G. le Pere and G. Shelton, *China, Africa and South Africa: South–South Co-operation in a Global Era* (Pretoria, Institute for Global Dialogue, 2007), p. 217.

2 The term comes from Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., who describes it as science fiction representations of ‘the consolidation of existence into one world’, which reveal the possibilities of expansive economic and socio-political projects that shape and encompass the global reality of mankind: I. Csicsery-Ronay Jr., ‘Empire’, in M. Bould, A.M. Butler, A. Roberts and S. Vint (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* (London and New York, Routledge, 2009), p. 362.

3 T. Huchu, ‘The Sale’, in I.W. Hartmann (ed.), *AfroSF: Science Fiction by African Writers* (Johannesburg, StoryTime, 2012); A. Godsell, ‘Taal’, *PROBE*, 148 (2011); M. Nkomo, ‘Heresy’ in Hartmann (ed.), *AfroSF*.

4 K. Macleod, ‘Politics and Science Fiction’, in E. James and F. Mendlesohn (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 231.

5 A. Otieno Ong’ayo, ‘Sino-African Relations: Reflections on Civil Society Engagement’, in A. Harneit-Sievers, S. Marks and S. Naidu (eds), *Chinese and African Perspectives on China in Africa* (Kampala, Pambazuka Press, 2010), p. 224.

6 For example, in its most recent White Paper, the South African Department of International Relations and Co-operation states at the outset its commitment to south–south co-operation, but then proceeds to caution that ‘the cohesion of the countries of the South may be eroded as certain key developing countries progress towards becoming developed countries’. DIRCO, ‘Building a Better World: The Diplomacy of Ubuntu’ (Pretoria, DIRCO, 2011), p. 19, available at <https://www.gov.za/documents/white-paper-south-african-foreign-policy-building-better-world-diplomacy-ubuntu>, retrieved 4 October 2018. Clearly, China’s drastic socio-economic rise has created some dissonance regarding what an adequate response from Africa now entails, but this anxiety cannot be addressed explicitly in an official document such as the White Paper.

7 P.E Digeser, *Friendship Reconsidered: What It Means and How It Matters to Politics* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2016), p. xviii.

8 F. Berenskoetter, 'Friendship, Security, and Power', in S. Koschut and A. Oelsner (eds), *Friendship and International Relations* (London and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 51.

9 Digeser, *Friendship Reconsidered*, p. xi.

10 A. Oelsner and S. Koschut, 'Introduction', in Koschut and Oelsner (eds), *Friendship and International Relations*, p. 3.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

12 Le Pere and Shelton, *China, Africa and South Africa*, p. 18.

13 R. Dittgen and R. Anthony, 'Yellow, Red and Black: Fantasies about China and "the Chinese" in Contemporary South Africa', in F. Billé and S. Urbansky (eds), *Yellow Perils: China Narratives in the Contemporary World* (Hawaii, Hawaii University Press, 2018), p. 110.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

15 L. Eznack and S. Koschut, 'The Sources of Affect in Interstate Friendship', in, Koschut and Oelsner, *Friendship and International Relations*, p. 77.

16 Digeser, *Friendship Reconsidered*, p. 254.

17 *Ibid.*

18 Le Pere and Shelton, *China, Africa and South Africa*, p. 18.

19 Digeser, *Friendship Reconsidered*, p. 254.

20 Le Pere and Shelton, *China, Africa and South Africa*, p. 52.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 157.

22 D. Assogbavi, 'The Role of China in Peace and Security in Africa', in Harneit-Sievers *et al.* (eds), *Chinese and African Perspectives*, p. 194.

23 Le Pere and Shelton, *China, Africa and South Africa*, p. 157.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 129.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 55.

26 K. King, *China's Aid and Soft Power in Africa: The Case of Education and Training* (Woodbridge, James Currey, 2013), p. 3.

27 *Ibid.*

28 S. Mbave, 'Matching China's Activities with Africa's Needs', in Harneit-Sievers *et al.* (eds), *Chinese and African Perspectives*, p. 47.

29 I have written about this story previously in a different capacity, in N. Moonsamy, 'Life is a Biological Risk: An Examination of Contagion, Contamination and Utopia in African Science Fiction', *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*, special issue on African Science Fiction, 3, 3 (2016), pp. 329–43.

30 Macleod, 'Politics and Science Fiction', p. 230.

31 Bantustans were in either South Africa or Namibia, but never Zimbabwe.

32 Huchu, 'The Sale', p. 34.

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

35 Csicsery-Ronay, 'Empire', p. 368.

36 Huchu, 'The Sale', p. 36.

37 There are numerous other references to the emasculation he suffers under state power. As he is being probed, 'the checkout woman chewed gum nonchalantly, watching everything, savouring his humiliation'; she spoke to him 'like one would talking to a toddler', Huchu, 'The Sale', pp. 36, 37.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

40 I. Lavender III, *Race in American Science Fiction* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2011), p. 55 (emphasis in original).

41 *Ibid.*, p. 54.

42 Huchu, 'The Sale', p. 40.

43 Digeser, *Friendship Reconsidered*, p. 254.

44 *Ibid.*

45 D. Assogbavi, 'The Role of China in Peace and Security', p. 196.

46 Digeser, *Friendship Reconsidered*, p. 254.

47 More recently, there have been speculations that China assisted with the recent removal of Robert Mugabe as the ZANU(PF) and national president, not on the grounds of poor

leadership but because Mugabe's rule was hampering the optimisation of Chinese business in Zimbabwe. See for example, Agence France-Presse, 'China Hails Zimbabwe's New Leader, but Denies Role in Power Transition', *Mail & Guardian*, Johannesburg, 2017, available at <https://mg.co.za/article/2017-11-27-china-hails-new-zimbabwe-leader-denies-role-in-transition>, retrieved 11 February 2019.

48 Huchu, 'The Sale', p. 41.

49 Digeser, *Friendship Reconsidered*, p. 226.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 227.

51 Le Pere and Shelton, *China, Africa and South Africa*, p. 14.

52 Oelsner and Koschut, 'Introduction', p. 19.

53 Godsell, 'Taal', p. 18.

54 'Taal' is the Afrikaans word for language; the relevance of this title will be addressed further on.

55 Godsell, 'Taal', p. 16.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

58 *Ibid.*

59 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

60 Dittgen and Anthony, 'Yellow, Red and Black', p. 130.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 109.

62 *Ibid.*

63 Arguably, cultural ignorance persists at both ends. Karen Thornber highlights how there is very little Chinese curiosity about African literature and the little representation of Africans in Chinese literature is 'remarkably lacking in sustained, nuanced engagement with Africa and Africans, and African writings likewise have often promoted unfortunate stereotypes about China and Chinese; xenophobia, Afrophobia, and Sinophobia have been as rampant in the arts as elsewhere in society': K. Thornber, 'Breaking Discipline, Integrating Literature: Africa-China Relationships Reconsidered', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 53, 4 (2016), p. 700.

64 Lavender, *Race in American Science Fiction*, p. 13.

- 65 J. Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. G. Collins (London and New York, Verso, 1997), p. 85.
- 66 *Ibid.*, p. 88.
- 67 *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- 68 DIRCO, 'Building a Better World', p. 4.
- 69 K. Smith, 'Contrived Boundaries, Kinship and *Ubuntu*: A (South) African View of "The International"', in A.B. Tickner and D.L. Blaney (eds), *Thinking International Relations Differently* (New York, Routledge, 2012), p. 315.
- 70 *Ibid.*, p. 312. Similarly, Siphamandla Zondi notes the decolonial potential of *ubuntu* diplomacy, which forces the international system to rethink its priorities in favour of a new progressive world order as opposed to national security. He argues that, by collectivising human dignity, developing nations that continue to be adversely affected by the legacies of colonialism may finally benefit from first world intervention. S. Zondi, 'The Rhetoric of *Ubuntu* Diplomacy and Implications for Making the World Safe for Diversity', *African Journal of Rhetoric*, 6, 1 (2014), pp. 103–42.
- 71 Godsell, 'Taal', p. 21.
- 72 *Ibid.*
- 73 *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- 74 In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida outlines a possibility for hospitality of this kind. Unlike conditional hospitality, the law of absolute hospitality allows for the foreigner to be made to feel at home *because* of his or her ability to account for his/her foreignness. J. Derrida and A. Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, trans. R. Bowlby (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000).
- 75 Godsell, 'Taal', p. 20.
- 76 *Ibid.*, p. xv.
- 77 T. Moylan, *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*, (Boulder, Westview Press, 2000), p. 189.
- 78 M. Ngcoya, 'Ubuntu: Toward an Emancipatory Cosmopolitanism?', *International Political Sociology*, 9, (2015), p. 255.
- 79 Godsell, 'Taal', p. 17.
- 80 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- 81 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

82 See M. Qobo and N. Nyathi, 'Ubuntu, Public Policy Ethics and Tensions in South Africa's Foreign Policy', *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 23, 4, (2016), pp. 421–36. For an even more scathing critique, see G. e Pere, 'Ubuntu as Foreign Policy: The Ambiguities of South Africa's Brand Image and Identity', *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 39, 1 (2017), pp. 93–115.

83 A. Bodomo, *Africans in China: A Sociocultural Study and Its Implications on Africa–China Relations* (Amherst, Cambria Press, 2012), p. xxiv.

84 P.J. Botha, 'China Inc: An Assessment of the Implications for Africa: New Diplomatic Initiatives', in G. Mills and N. Skidmore (eds), *Towards China Inc? Assessing the Implications for Africa* (Johannesburg, SALLA, 2004), p. 63.

85 S. Naidu, 'China in Africa: A Maturing of the Engagement?', in Harneit-Sievers *et al.* (eds), *Chinese and African Perspectives*, p. 33.

86 Digeser, *Friendship Reconsidered*, p. xx.

87 S. Mbaye, 'Matching China's Activities with Africa's Needs', in Harneit-Sievers *et al.* (eds), *Chinese and African Perspectives*, p. 52.

88 *Ibid.*, p. 48.

89 Eznack and Koschut, 'The Sources of Affect in Interstate Friendship', p. 81.

90 King, *China's Aid and Soft Power in Africa*, p. 174.

91 K.K. Prah, 'Foreword', in Bodomo, *Africans in China*, p. xxv.

92 Le Pere and Shelton, *China, Africa and South Africa*, p. 104.

93 M. Nkomo, 'Heresy', p. 222.

94 *Ibid.*, p. 223.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 224.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 227.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 228.

98 *Ibid.*

99 *Ibid.*, p. 236.

100 *Ibid.*, p. 238.

101 Le Pere and Shelton, *China, Africa and South Africa*, p. 33.

102 Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, p. 4.

103 Dittgen and Anthony argue that ‘neither the image of a “dreamworld”, in which China – through the advent of “industrial modernity – could and would provide happiness for the masses”, nor of a “catastrophe” or “nightmare”, where the influx of Chinese capital and people, “indifferent to the well-being of the masses and unfettered by political constraints” (Buck-Morss 2000, xiv) crushes the local economy, fully apply in the South African case’, and this is very accurately reflected in ‘Heresy’. See Dittgen and Anthony, ‘Yellow, Red and Black’, p. 130.

104 Berenskoetter, ‘Friendship, Security and Power’, p. 54.

105 Koschut and Oelsner, *Friendship and International Relations*, p. 204.

106 P. Kerslake, *Science Fiction and Empire* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2010), p. 2.

107 *Ibid.*, p. 138.

108 Le Pere and Shelton, *China, Africa and South Africa*, p. 125.