

Associative-Speculative Series

**a collection of bare events
as non-study**

Dedicated to:

Philippe Bousquet (Pretoria – ZA)

&

Solam/Kiki Mkhabela (Johannesburg – ZA)

This book is written in Dutch and then translated into English by the author, with the necessary help of the reviewer and dictionaries of course. So, the chance that the reader will find funny, stupid and naughty rascal translation mistakes in this book is very, very high. 'Well, so what?', the author writes. He has tried to create the opportunity to make his English a little bit better, without an official language control.

Translation of:

Associatief-speculatieve reeksen. Een bijengesprokkelde verzameling ontblote gebeurtenissen om op door te denken.

Rotterdam: Brave New Books, april 2026.

Cover

The sculpting canvas on the cover of this book has been made by the rumba dancing Congolese artist Thonton Kabeya. Nowadays (2026) he lives and works in Johannesburg ZA.

Title: *Kasala, Inner City Blues* – 2020 – 306 cm/190 cm.

Thonton Kabeya:

“... I think the main idea behind this project is for people to start thinking about what happens after the conflicts for freedom end. Because after fighting for so long to get freedom, once you get it don't know what to do when you're free. Freedom becomes a new battlefield or war zone because now that you have freedom, what are you going to do with it? You can't do anything with it. It's just a way of expressing yourself, but what to express it for? Also, now there is a hunger to have what you don't have and to constantly to have more. When you were fighting for freedom, all these other things were not important, freedom transforms from a state of mind to a materialistic object.”⁽¹⁾

Fragment 1



¹ Thonton Kabeya (2023). Sanaa Collection. Zuid-Afrika: One ① Edition, pag. 42. Thonton Kabeya (2023²). La Rumba. Zuid-Afrika: One ① Edition.

Fragment 2



Fragment 3



• ***Let me live in the urgency of my own destiny!***

(Fiston Mwanza Mujila; ²)

Murder Most Foul.

(Bob Dylan; ³)

• ***We must try to find an ambiguity, to turn things upside down, to make a reversal possible, a somersault, to let a word change into a color, a shadow, a sculpture.***

(William Kentridge; ⁴)

² Fiston Mwanza Mujila (2015). *Tram 83* (translation: *Tram 83*, 2013, Ed. Métailié, Paris). Amsterdam/Antwerpen: De Bezige Bij, pag. 186.

³ Bob Dylan (March 27, 2020). *Rough and Rowdy Ways*, disc 2. Columbia Records. See: Extension 7.5. 'Murder Most Foul, as at the best it is' (Shakespeare), talks about the infamy of murder.

⁴ William Kentridge (2025). *Anatomie van het atelier*. (translation of 'A Natural History of the Studio, 2025, Oxford Slade Lectures). Amsterdam: Uitg. Cossee, pag. 62.

Contents

1. Disclaimer	page 11
2. Instead of a preface	page 13
3. Self-directed	page 23
4. Total freedom?	Page 49
5. Two letters	page 83
6. But	page 113
7. Nine extensions	page 123
8. Instead of an epilogue	page 153
Thanks to	page 165
Colophon	page 175

1. Disclaimer

A number of books cannot be classified because they do not want to be on the shelf to which they are condemned with the classification. Every bookstore should have a shelf for so-called Outsider books; books that do not want to be classified in one track. It can't be true that a book at one place is on the shelf of 'fiction – children's book – comic strip', at another place of 'poetry – Dutch poetry', elsewhere on the shelf of 'novel' and finally on the shelf of 'uncategorized non-fiction'. Yet that happened with the Dutch translation of the first comic strip (bande dessinée, they say in France) *Histoire de Monsieur Vieww-Bois*. The story originated in 1827, published in Geneva in 1839 with drawings by Rodolphe Töpffer, published in English in 1842 under the title *The Adventures of Mr. Obadiah Oldbuck*, translated in Dutch in 1975 and put in rhyme by Gerrit Komrij, digitized in Canada in 2013 and finally processed as a silent, drawn movie in 2014/2015. ⁽⁵⁾

The book starts with a nice foreword that I ⁽⁶⁾ would like to apply to this essayistic novella (= a kind of short narrative prose [non-]fiction) as a disclaimer.

<i>Voorwoord.</i> Hier vangt de waarachtige en kluchtige historie aan van de verliefde heer Jubal Jubelslee, en hoe hij, na talloze perikelen, uiteindelijk trouwt met het voorwerp van zijn min. Vlieg, boekske, uit in de wereld; het zit met dwaze dingen zo – wie er niet om lacht verveelt zich, wie er zich niet aan over geeft verzet zich, wie kritiek wil	<i>Foreword.</i> Here begins the true and farcical story of the lovesick lord Jubal Jubelslee, and how, after countless ups and downs, he finally marries the object of his love. Fly, book, out into the world; it's like this with foolish things – those who don't laugh at them get bored, those who don't surrender to them resist,
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⁵ Rodolphe Töpffer, Gerrit Komrij (1975). De wonderbaarlijke lotgevallen van Jubal Jubelslee. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Boelen. The trailer of the silent movie can be found on vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/170942829>.

⁶ See Extension 7.6.

oefenen heeft ongelijk, en wie er ernstig bij wil blijven, hij ziet maar.	those who want to criticize are wrong, and those who want to stay serious about it, screw it.
<p><i>Avant-propos.</i></p> <p>C'est là que commence l'histoire vraie et grotesque du seigneur Jubal Jubelslee en mal d'amour, et comment, après d'innombrables hauts et bas, il finit par épouser l'objet de son amour. Voler, petit livre, sortir dans le monde; c'est comme ça avec les choses stupides – ceux qui n'en rient pas s'ennuient, ceux qui ne s'y rendent pas résistent, ceux qui veulent critiquer ont tort, et ceux qui veulent rester sérieux à ce sujet, laisse béton. (7)</p>	

If you dedicate a novella to a South African Frenchman, a South African Swazi slash South-African German (and also a Swazi Pseudo-American and a Mozambican-Swazi), you must incorporate a little French and English into your writing. Why? Just because! In everyday life, no reason needs to be given for such a just-because! You just do it.

You can strike a pose in everything: you can write hypocritical books, cynically align yourself with a diametrically opposed ideology, call yourself progressive while actually being right-wing, pretend to be a good or bad mother, act modern while detesting everything modern, etc. What is impossible is lying in language; the words we choose do not lie, in them the whole truth comes to light. (8)

⁷ Solely Google is responsible for this translation into French.

⁸ Ariana Harwicz (2024). Het geluid van een tijdperk (Translating of: El ruido de una época). Bleiswijk: Vleugels, pag. 14.

2. Instead of a preface

Perhaps humanity is learning far too slowly and steadily to omit. Not just omit, but refrain combined with wonder, doubt, and postponement in favor of incoherence. So, something can emerge that opens up new + renewed + innovative connections in favor of the all-too foolish.

This thought occurred roughly in this order.

Passing on art.

We've started clearing out our condo. We'll be traveling to South Africa again soon, and we know we'll be bringing artwork back with us. This gives us the opportunity to see what we already own and which artworks we could pass on to family, friends, and acquaintances. Over time, artworks can take on a different character when they were first purchased and kept in our home. There's nothing wrong with that; it's simply a fact that not only people, pets, trees, flowers, phenomena do change, become a bit obsolete, wither, but things do too. We offer selected artworks to selected people to enjoy the works for a while. And if a piece starts to wither again in its new location, someone surely will be nearby who would happily give it another place for a third while.

Turntable.

Pass-on art is reminiscent of LPs.

After many years of collecting music, the time came to pass it on. Over time, tapes could be recycled, and LPs and CDs could move to another workspace, a studio. This worked out perfectly because any residual effects of the music I'd passed on could be heard elsewhere, while its previous location began to purge itself. The meanings of those LPs and CDs, in the broadest sense of the word — namely, their meaning components — were lost and became increasingly less (or even ir-) relevant. The former location purged itself rapidly thanks to the absence of the things that held those meanings. Only 200 CDs and one batch of LPs survived the urge to pass them on. The meanings of the latter stack resist any purging to this day. NB In German, such resistance is called something like

Schöngesteerei, but without the negative connotations of disdainful complacency and excessive veneration of the aesthetic. The surviving CDs and LPs were never willing or able to keep up with the host's urge to clean up.

After 14 years of patient waiting, the LPs were tired of waiting and cried out for clarity. Like The aphorism of Franz Kafka: Once upon a time a cage was looking for a bird. ⁽⁹⁾ It was a matter of choosing or sharing, or in other words, playing, selling, or donating. Once, the LPs had captured the hearts of their hosts, now they wanted their hearts back; laced with at least a nice touch of soul from the same hosts. And when that is no longer possible, it behooves the LPs to embark on the quest for someone else's heart or soul.

In addition to the usual fresh rolls and eggs, the hosts bought another turntable to give the LPs a chance to be revived or finally de-heart-ed. And then Bob Dylan's fourth official LP landed on the turntable; titled: Another Side of Bob Dylan. ⁽¹⁰⁾ The line "All I really want to do, is, baby, be friends with you" ⁽¹¹⁾ immediately popped out of the speakers. A series of verbs tells us what the first-person narrator isn't after; nine of them pass by only in the first verse. The 'I' don't want to compete, to beat, to cheat, to mistreat, to simplify, to classify, to deny, to defy, to crucify you. Another 38 verbs follow in the next five verses. It seems Dylan is referring to the end of his relationship with his girlfriend Suze Rotolo. Others say Dylan didn't want to write protest songs anymore, and in the I/you song " All I really want to do," he lets us know that mission accomplished. ⁽¹²⁾

Mustache.

These interpretations, together with their simultaneity and their difference, pointed the way to Desmond Morris, the writer best known

⁹ Franz Kafka (2025). Een kooi ging eens een vogel zoeken (Die Zürauer Aphorismen). Amsterdam: Koppertnik, pag. 18.

¹⁰ Bob Dylan (1964). Another side of Bob Dylan. Columbia Records.

¹¹ See also: Wouter van Oorschot (2024). Dylan en wij zonder Amerika (Dylan and us without America). Amsterdam: Prometheus, p. 87.

¹² Philippe Matgotin, Jean-Michel Guesdon (2016). Bob Dylan complete. Zwolle: WBOOKS, pg. 116.

See also: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

in the Netherlands for his book "The Naked Ape." ⁽¹³⁾ Morris wrote and painted too. He is considered a Surrealist. At the Arnhem Museum, we recently saw two of Morris's paintings in the exhibition "Forbidden Landscapes."



Desmond Morris, *Serpent's Choice*, 1958. Oil on Canvas. ⁽¹⁴⁾

The catalog presents the painting above as an example of a fantasy landscape. It is hardly mentioned something about; only: "In *Serpent's Choice* (1958), for example, a snake with knowing eyes glances at the viewer while contemplating a selection of invented animals – presumably deciding which to devour – one of which has a distinct mustache." ⁽¹⁵⁾ It takes considerable imagination to figure out on the basis of which signs in the painting the image is categorized as surrealist. The association between the painted mustache and Dalí might work as a wafer-thin, invisible line for some – who

¹³ <https://www.boekwinkeltjes.nl/b/231507193/De-naakte-aap/>

What kind of animal is man? That's the question Desmond Morris poses in this book. Through the eyes of this brilliant observer, we see who we truly are: an ape who has indeed broken free of his origins, but who is still driven by his old instincts. Whether it concerns raising our children, our eating habits, or our sex lives, we are less different from our own kind than we might like. Desmond Morris's *The Naked Ape* is a classic that will continue to find new audiences. It is one of the most remarkable and widely read reflections on humanity and its behavior. With this magnificent hard-cover edition, we celebrate 50 years of *The Naked Ape* being a bestseller.

¹⁴ https://www.desmond-morris.com/dm_art/serpents.htm

¹⁵ Eleanor Clayton ed. (2024). *Forbidden Territories. 100 Years of Surreal Landscapes*. London: Thames & Hudson, page 24 & 42.

knows. Also, regarding Morris's second painting in the same exhibition, a surrealistic reference doesn't easily move from the flat surface to implant itself in the perception. On his own website, Morris divides his production period into four periods: Early period, Zoo period, Naked Monkey period and the Late period. The two paintings shown in Arnhem belong to the Zoo period. Zap through all the pictures on Desmond Morris's website, the adjective "cartoonish" comes to mind, without any reference to unconscious dream images and absurdities.

Collage.

"Cartoonish" as a brilliant move from the images in my thinking through, strips the narration of its Neo-Freudian, psychoanalytic categorization referent. In effect, cartoonish liberates the image from the unconscious occupation, without touching upon the absurd. Cartoonish is both relieving and secularizing. The cartoonish disjoins. The constructed coherence of unconscious and absurd, using unconscious dream images, falls apart. A new interspace (inter, in-between) separates the unconscious from the absurd in the image-making process. The verb "to disjoin" causes the surrealist to collapse (= lose its form) and creates the opportunity for (re)new[ed], innovative collages.

South African artist William Kentridge can teach us a great deal about collages. A collage consists of fragments. A more or less haphazard rearrangement of fragments suddenly conjures up an image, a form, in our perception. The way that image, that form, comes to us is simply irresistible, Kentridge teaches. While we know it's just scraps of paper. ⁽¹⁶⁾ Kentridge distinguishes three types of rearrangements of fragments.

- Randomly rearrange and look for a new insight;
- By adding one or more other fragments to a fragment;
- By placing several larger fragments next to each other, where a sharp contrast is central and where it is impossible to miss that the image is a construction.

¹⁶ William Kentridge (2025). *Anatomie van het atelier (A Natural History of the Studio. Oxford Slade Lectures)*. Amsterdam: Uitg. Cossee, pag. 90.

I examined again closely one of the collages hanging on our wall at home with the trio of rearrangement types in mind – to be clear: I was looking merely as an observer, not as a maker, like Kentridge. I was looking at:



Avhashoni Mainganye. I've seen it all. 2004. (private)

And:



Sello Malebye, South-African artist, Ga-Rankuwa. Waiting for likes. Year: 2025/26.

Looking at rearrangements of fragments frees the creator from the pressure toward meaning, writes Kentridge. The rearrangement and the viewing thereof are situated on the borderline of meaning. The temporary rearrangement image can be somewhat sustained by its entry into the collection of memory images. This collection of memory images appears to last longer than the rearrangement image itself. The collection pushes the duration of the rearrangement image toward the memory image. When the creator, William Kentridge, and his associates present their rearrangement images, they leave space between them. Space that makes the sequence of rearrangement images jolt. As soon as the shock space takes hold of the viewer, they feel a sudden force of resistance, they falter, they become distraught, the accumulated collection of memory images becomes dismayed. The rearrangement spaces suddenly grab the viewer emotionally by the throat. For the viewer, the rearranged spaces repeatedly open surprising possibilities for association based on the viewer's collection of memory images.