Defining collective and individual memory in Lainy Malkani’s Sugar, Sugar and Jennifer Makumbi’s Kintu.

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Abstract

This article explores the idea that memory exists in two distinct spheres: collective, individual. But what is it that distinguishes the two, and how are they defined and differentiated in Kintu (2014) and Sugar, Sugar (2017)? Building on research that asserts the fallibility of individual memory and the power of collective memory to build convincing narratives, this article studies how characters in the two texts interact with these concepts, and how these interactions allow us to forge new ones. Ultimately, I expand upon Mark Strand’s concept of the ‘gift’, the meaning which collective memory provides to the present, using the texts to understand how this ‘gift’ might apply to individual memory, too.

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Section
Articles
Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi, a Ugandan novelist and short story writer, has a PhD from Lancaster University. Her first novel, Kintu, won the Kwani Manuscript Project in 2013 and was longlisted for the Etisalat Prize in 2014. Kintu was published in: 2014 by Kwani, 2017 by Transit (USA) and in 2018 by Oneworld (UK/Commonwealth). She was awarded the 2014 Commonwealth Short Story Prize for her story "Let's Tell This Story Properly" and her first full story collection, Manchester Happened, will be published by Oneworld in May 2019. The collection will be known as Let’s Tell this Story Properly in the UK. Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi is a Ugandan novelist and short story writer. Her doctoral novel, The Kintu Saga, was shortlisted and won the Kwani Manuscript Project in 2013. It was published by Kwani Trust in 2014 under the title Kintu. She was shortlisted for the 2014 Commonwealth Short Story Prize for her story "Let's Tell This Story Properly", and emerged Regional Winner, Africa region. She was the Overall Winner of the 2014 Commonwealth Short Story Prize. She was longlisted for the 2014 Etisalat Prize.