



■ Suburban Menace are a local hip hop group from the northern suburbs whose rap influence on the language used by youngsters is being studied by a doctoral student from the University of the Western Cape. Marvin Levendal, left, Clayton Petersen, Marlin Keating and Winston Schereka.

Hip-hoppers become subjects of UWC linguistic thesis

Suburban Menace, a hip hop group from the northern suburbs, have become the subject of a doctoral thesis by a student at the Linguistics Department of the University of the Western Cape. Every Wednesday evening, Quentin Williams attends the Suburban Menace hip hop events at Stones, Kuils River to observe how young people who come to hip hop shows develop new locally-styled identities and ways of communicating as a result of the hip hop event. By studying places and spaces of hip-hop, like the Suburban Menace hip-hop events, Quentin aims to expose the language practices of youth who attend these events. “Every aspect of hip hop performances has an influence on how young people speak to each other either before or after a rapper goes

on stage,” said Quentin. The language used by today’s hip hop-loving youth on the street is based on the American and South African hip hop culture. According to Quentin this is not merely a fad or an indication of incompetence of language use, but rather a unique language style developed from the influence of hip hop culture. This hip hop jargon is evident from the on stage rap language of Suburban Menace who, like most Cape Town hip hop groups, use a unique blend of English and Afrikaans. Joi Keeling, 21, a student from New Orleans, America, who attended one of the Suburban Menace events at Stones does not understand the Afrikaans language used in the performances but relates to the rap language influenced by

artists in her home country. “Suburban Menace has the same expression and culture of our hip hop artists in America and this shows that hip hop’s language is universal and understood by everyone who loves hip hop,” said Joi. According to Quentin, people come from America and England to attend Suburban Menace’s hip hop events and form part of the global population who actually influence our local language. “This allows a lens into how youth who come to the hip-hop shows develop new locally-styled identities and different ways of multilingual communication. The idea is to find out whether these are versions of everyday language practices among bilingual and multilingual speakers in Cape Town and Bellville,” said Quentin.



■ The Strathmore University Kilele Choir of Nairobi, acknowledged as one of the leading choirs in Kenya, will give one concert of mixed sacred music at St George’s Cathedral in Cape Town on Tuesday April 21, at 7pm. Entry is free. While the programme will comprise several arrangements and original songs by Kenyan composers, they choristers will also sing three popular songs by South Africa’s own Mzilikazi Khumalo including Sangena and Akhala Amaqhude Amabili. The accomplished choir will sing in a dozen languages from Swahili and Latin to Kikuyu, Dholuo, Giriama, Tiriki, Chonyi, Luhya, Taita, Maragoli. Xhosa and Zulu. The choir’s new CD “e polo” will be on sale for R60. For more details you can call 083 744 0662.

Call for submissions for exhibitions

The Association for Visual Arts (AVA), at 35 Church Street, Cape Town, and Spier, are calling for submissions for an exhibition to be held for three weeks, from Monday May 25 to Friday June 12. It will be curated by Bianca Baldi and Kirsty Cockerill and will be part of the Conversations series. The curators will be visiting as many artists’ studios as time constraints allow on Thursday April 16, Friday April 17 and Monday April 20. Artists who want to take part should send their name and contact details to avaart@iafrica.com or fax to 021 423 2637 and be prepared to drop off a selected work at the AVA on May 22 for the exhibition. Conversation is an ongoing project by Bianca Baldi, which will be launched at this exhibition. Conversation is a collaboration which prompts an open-ended dialogue between two artists. This process aims to gain insight into the person and their artistic practice and process. A studio visit does not automatically confirm a place on the exhibition; the curators will notify artists if a work has been selected. All artworks must be for sale. For more information, call 021 424 7436 or visit www.ava.co.za

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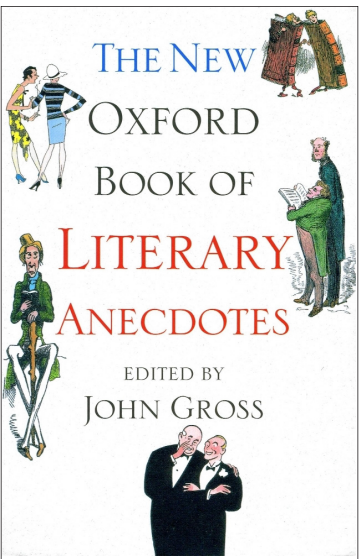
■ Read of the week

The New Oxford Book of Literary Anecdotes, Edited by John Gross, Oxford University Press
Review: Brian Joss

An anecdote, according to the dictionary, is an amusing or entertaining incident and this collection is full of them. Some of them are touching, others are amusing and others are weird, but whatever they are, they will entertain you. An anecdote is dynamic and describes the unfolding of a short, self-contained action. Above all they reveal quite a lot about the author, intentionally or unintentionally.

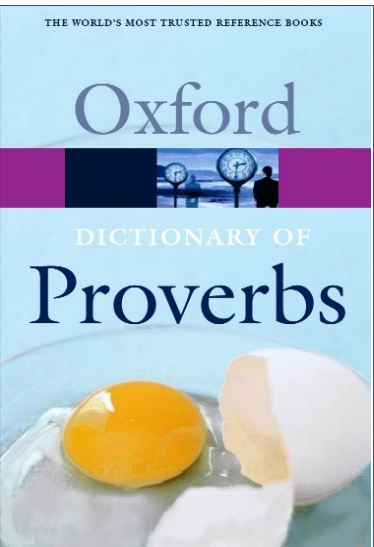
This collection is a feast of stories that reveal the wit, generosity and eccentricity of writers from Geoffrey Chaucer to Emile Zola. The book includes anecdotes about people as diverse as Sir Walter Raleigh South African author JM Coetzee, Ian Fleming, the creator of James Bond and JK Rowling, author of the Harry Potter phenomenon.

Her anecdote is about the theft of Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince, before it was published. It is the sixth book in the best selling series, and, as editor John Gross points out it is hard to imagine a comparable incident taking place in the past, before the appearance of a new novel by Lewis Carroll, Kenneth Grahame or Beatrix Potter. Agatha Christie was a little irritated with her literary detective Hercule Poirot. In fact she found him insufferable, but she wasn’t about to retire him, not when he was her main source of income, she told Cork, her agent, according to one anecdote. Another interesting anecdote is the one about Ian Fleming and how he told his would be publisher in a roundabout way that he had written his first Bond book, Casino Royale. I enjoyed this eclectic collection and if you have any interest in the literary world then this is a must for your library. It will keep you entertained for hours.



Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs, Oxford University Press, Edited by Jennifer Speake
Review: Brian Joss

Everyone knows the proverb “every dog has his day,” but do you know the proverbs “every dog has one bite” or “a dog that will fetch a bone will carry a bone”, or what they mean? The answers are in this collection of more than 1 100 of the most widely used English proverbs. It is the authoritative A-Z of proverbs and this fifth edition includes all the old favourites as well as some new ones. It is easy to navigate with a thematic index and each proverb has a fascinating history. Every dog has his day first appeared in 1545, then in 1600 in Shakespeare’s Hamlet, “the cat will mew and dog will have his day”. It means take the opportunity and you will have success.



There are proverbs for every occasion and though they sound like clichés today, they, like clichés have the ring of truth. Here are some familiar ones and some not so familiar: Absence makes the heart grow fonder; He who is absent is always in the wrong; An ape’s an ape, a varlet’s a varlet, though they be clad in silk or scarlet; and one for the global economic crisis; Bad money drives out good, coined by Sir Thomas Gresham, founder of the Royal Exchange (1519-79). The evidence that he used this expression is anecdotal, although the phrase was contained in a letter he wrote to the Queen. Save us from our friends is not as new as you think. It was first said in Latin by Ovid in 751. Even though it is an A-Z of proverbs, there is no listing for Z. The last entry is: If youth knew, if age could, which first saw the light of day in French in 1594. It is highly recommended.