

Mariam Popal
Touching Spaces in Textures

Mariam Popal is associate professor (PDⁱⁿ) in comparative literature/world literature at the Universität Bayreuth. She holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. from the Universität Hamburg and a habilitation (second thesis) in general & comparative literature from the Universität Bayreuth. She is a member of the Cluster of Excellence *Africa Multiple*, and an associate scholar in american studies at the Universität Potsdam. She has taught and conducted research at the Universität Freiburg, the Universität Basel, the University of Toronto, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and the University of Alberta.

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Affective Humor and Dialogicity in Contemporary Literature

[transcript]

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... for you...

*On earth is known to none
The smile that is not sister to a tear*
(George Eliot)

»This book first arose out of a passage in Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought – our thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography – breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other. This passage quotes a ›certain Chinese encyclopedia‹ in which it is written that ›animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) suckling pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies‹. In the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking that. But what is it impossible to think, and what kind of impossibility are we faced with here?«
(Michel Foucault [1966] 1994, xv)

