The Bloody Horse

Katie Tanigawa, University of Victoria

Abstract:

*The Bloody Horse: Writing and the Arts* was a Johannesburg-based magazine that published six issues between 1980 and 1981. The idea for the periodical developed from a conversation among Patrick Cullinan, Lionel Abrahams, and Chris Hope during the 1974 Poetry Conference in Cape Town. Though the initial conversation led to the creation of Bateleur Press, the trio, alongside Lawrence Herber, began work on *The Bloody Horse* in 1979 (Cullinan 86). The founders created the magazine to support the increase in ‘writers willing to stick their necks out and say what has to be said’ (Cullinan 86) amidst the growing climate of censorship in South Africa. Many of the contributions were politically charged, reflecting Cullinan’s vision that the magazine would reflect ‘”the ways in which the writers of this country are reacting to their society […]”’ (Essa 271). The title, *The Bloody Horse*, is an allusion to South African poet Roy Campbell’s poem, ‘On Some South African Novelists,’ and highlights the founders’ belief that literature could play a role in South African political discourse. The first issue of *The Bloody Horse* was published in 1980, and Ampie Coetzee served as the magazine’s editor for the duration of the magazine’s run.

Main Article:

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In a review of the first issue, Ahmed Essa noted that the journal seemed a response to the proliferation of ‘almost exclusively one-race oriented’ periodicals published in South Africa (Essa 271). To distinguish this periodical from other ‘one-race oriented’ periodicals, Cullinan makes it clear in his opening ‘Comment’ of the inaugural issue that *The Bloody Horse* accepts ‘contributions in all languages of South Africa.’ Cotzee, the editor, writes in Afrikaans, ‘ons glo nie aan aparte tydskrifte vir aparte skrywers van aparte tale en kleure nie’ [we do not believe in separate periodicals for separate writers of separate languages and colors]’ (Essa 271). Elsewhere Cullinan expresses the hope that *The Bloody Horse,* alongside other inclusive South-African periodicals, ensures that ‘No poet of any merit need go unpublished’ (Cullinan 87).

Further Reading:

(Campbell)

(Cullinan)

(Daymond)

(Essa)

(Nicol)

(Watson)