



Gender Talks Series

Female friendship as refuge: A contemporary re-reading of Isak Dinesen's short story Babette's Feast and its film version as refugee/migrants.



Dr Belinda Du Plooy has worked in higher education for 25 years in various capacities, both academic and managerial. She holds qualifications in Public Relations Management and Communication Studies and in English Studies. Her Master's dissertation was on the topic of pain and healing in the work of Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison. Her doctoral thesis was on the topic of compassion as metanarrative in contemporary discourses. She lives in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and works at Nelson Mandela University. She regularly acts as mentor to emerging researchers and as postgraduate supervisor across a variety of Social Science and Humanities disciplines. Her areas of academic specialisation, publication and supervision include Literature, Philosophy, Popular Culture, Film Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, Communication, Media Studies, Academic Engagement and Higher Education practice.

In this seminar Belinda will reflect on Babette's Feast, a short story written by Danish author Isak Dinesen (a pseudonym used by Karen Blixen) in the 1950s. It was revived again in the 1980 as a film (directed by Gabriel Axel) and won both huge popular and critical acclaim. It was also awarded with the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film (Danish) in 1987.

The narrative revolves around Babette – a French exile and refugee in Scandinavia. There has been reports of a possible new adaptation of the film, set in contemporary America. Belinda will consider this story (both the written text and film, and the relationship between the two) against the contemporary global refugee crisis. At the centre of the story is the friendship between three women: Babette, the French refugee, and the two Scandinavian sisters who give her shelter in their home and community. Babette's story has been a favourite of many generations of readers, and also of film aficionados, but it may well be unfamiliar and new to a younger audience and readership born after the mid-1980s.

Join us as we consider this extraordinary story and what it has to communicate to us today about our own contemporary crises of engagement with the other. You are encouraged to read the short story or view the film – or do both – before the seminar, but that is not essential. You will definitely want to read and view it after the seminar.

Speaker: Dr Belinda Du Plooy

Date: 24 June 2022

Time: 12:30 – 14:00

Moderator: Dr N Lake

RSVP: khosholome@ufs.ac.za

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