

## #BLESSED: AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF ALLUSION AS A DESCRIPTIVE LITERARY DEVICE FOR TRANSACTIONAL SEX RELATIONSHIPS IN FICTION

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### Abstract

*This article explores the creative use of allusion as a literary device in the description of transactional sex relationships in the following selected literary texts; *The Blessed Girl* by Angela Makholwa (2018), *Bare: #The Blesser Game* by Jackie Phamotse (2017) and *The Y in yOUR Man is Silent: Book 1* by Yvonne Maphosa (2019). The discovery of the dearth of literature on the portrayal of transactional sex relationships in fiction catalysed this article. Thus, this article sought to explore the diverse creative ways in which allusion is employed to describe the relatively new phenomenon of transactional sex relationships. In this article, a qualitative desktop literary analysis was the methodology of choice. The article employed the critical lens of Lipstick Feminism which advances the use of make-up and sexual appeal as an empowerment tool for women without regarding how it sustains the commodification of transactional sex relationships. The significant finding of the study was that the creative use of allusion was crucial as it exemplifies the blessee's lifestyle. The brand names are significant in shaping the blessee's archetype and image. It concludes that allusion was effectively used in the selected works of fiction to describe the new phenomenon of transactional sex relationships.*

**Keywords:** allusion, transactional sex relationships, fiction, blessee, side-chick, brands

### 1. Background and Introduction

The term "blessee" and "blesser" were first used in 2016 when the hashtag "#blessed" went viral on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and women alleged to be blessed recipients (Varjavandi, 2017; Mampane, 2018). According to Mampane (2018), it is a sort of "transactional sex" where older, wealthy men (referred to as "blessers") try to attract younger women (referred to as "blessees") with cash and lavish presents in exchange for sexual favours and, as Varjavandu (2017) adds, travel for shopping abroad. The new hashtag represented the latter rather than the frequently scriptural meaning of "blessed," which is to receive God's favour. The hashtag is, therefore, associated with the modern phenomena of transactional sex relationships. This article employs the definition of Wamoyi et al. (2019) of a transactional sex relationship, which defines it as a relationship that is neither marriage nor business-related but contains an underlying expectation of benefits and support in exchange for sexual intercourse. The phenomenon of transactional sex relationships, commonly known as blessers, blessees, sugar daddies, sugar babies, and side-chicks is a widespread occurrence in our societies.

Transactional sex relationships have not been studied in depth in African fiction. Ofosu (2013) assesses the concept of sugar daddies and sugar mummies in Amma Darko's *Not Without Flowers* using the critical lenses of the Womanist and African Feminist's literary perspectives. Ofosu (2013) is one of the scholars who condemn transactional sex relationships because she categorises them as prostitution. Stobie (2018) argues from the postcolonial feminist perspective when she explores the relationship of a blessee in Panashe Chigumadzi's *Sweet Medicine*. Stobie's analysis concludes that in urban settings, the existence of women is often coupled with poverty, women often do not have varied choices, and this results in negative effects.

Then, Fasselt (2018) conducted a postfeminist reading of Angela Makholwa's *The Blessed Girl*, a genre fiction of African chick-lit written in the form of a memoir. The novel employs deception and trickery

for the advancement of the heroine or the protagonist. Fasselt (2018) further states that Makholwa's novel centralises the class differences in the blesser/blessee relationship, describing it as an economic transaction more than a romantic one. In a podcast, Cochrane and Sawlani (2019) assert that African writers no longer exclusively produce serious and political novels but, like Makholwa writes, fun stories with serious undertones using *The Blessed Girl* as an example. They further elucidate that, although Makholwa's story is funny in its description of sugar daddies and life in Johannesburg as a blessee, there are narratives of mental health issues, family history and the impact of apartheid on post-independent South Africa.

Furthermore, Frieslaar (2021) conducted a theological study to investigate the contributing factors to young women engaging in transactional sex relationships amongst others in the context of the church. The main claim of the study was that the "blesser-blessee" phenomenon contributes significantly to a patriarchal, shame-centred culture that objectifies women and that this culture is the fundamental cause of violence against women. The study aimed to empower women to become free from the adverse effects of the blesser-blessee phenomenon and how the church should respond in assisting them. The research employed the narrative approach to "engage with the living human 'documents' (the young women who were interviewed)" (p.7) which included Jackie Phamotse, the author of the semi-biography *#Bare: The Blesser's Game* (2017). The study concluded that transactional sex relationships contribute to violence against women. In a subsequent study, Frieslaar and Masango (2021) conducted a study to examine how transactional sex relationships contribute to Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The central argument of their study was that the church should be acting decisively to combat the scourge of GBV and IPV. Phamotse, in an interview with Frieslaar, referred to the rape incidents she narrated in her novel (Frieslaar & Masango, 2021). According to Frieslaar and Masango (2021), the key outcome of the study was to provide the church with a framework for pastoral care and healing techniques to aid in the recovery of young women and their transition from shame to self-worth.

Ndlovu (2016) employed Butler's notion of precarity and general feminist approaches to examine *Sweet Medicine* by Panashe Chigumadzi (2016) in an essay review. Ndlovu explained that Chigumadzi interrogates the complications of traditional and Christian patriarchal ideals in such crises by framing her work via the politically engineered collapse of the Zimbabwean economy. Ndlovu (2016) concluded that the kind of syncretism that Chigumadzi's narrative appears to support is the uncritical embrace of religious variety that seems to benefit various people as needed.

Transactional sex relationships in fiction have, thus, been labelled as prostitution or economic transactions. It is evident from the dearth of literature on transactional sex relationships in African fiction that it is a topic that has been researched in isolation and not in-depth. The social studies and fictional studies scholars reviewed concur that poverty and economic circumstances lead to transactional sex relationships in sub-Saharan Africa. However, a significant knowledge gap exists in how the blesser/blessee culture is described in the available literature.

The following quotation, which is peculiar to South Africa, suggests that young women can distinguish themselves from their underprivileged peers and continue to enjoy a lavish lifestyle they would ordinarily not afford by engaging in transactional sex: 'In poverty-stricken township contexts, fashion is hotly pursued by many young people identifying with the allure of the middle class' (Bhana & Pattman, 2011, p. 965). Consequently, because there is insufficient literature on the aspects that describe transactional sex relationships, thus, the goal of this article is to fill the knowledge gap.

### **Theoretical framework**

This article provides an analysis of allusion as a literary device in the description of transactional sex relationships in selected works of fiction using the feminist criticism of Lipstick Feminism, which is a "third-wave feminist movement that embraces the concept of accepting and celebrating femininity to help women's emancipation" (Marchetti, 2020, para. 1). According to Lipstick Feminism, women are provided with the correct tools by the power of their femininity to join the dominant culture. Therefore, Marchetti (2020) adds that taking advantage of their sexual appeal and wearing makeup gives women a sense of empowerment. Similarly, the emphasis in transactional relationships is on sex appeal and outward attractiveness.

### **Methodology**

This qualitative desktop article focused on the content analysis of selected contemporary African literature texts in English. Since it provides textual descriptions and provides non-numerical data of transactional sex relationships classified as blessers, blessees, sugar daddies, sugar babies, and side-chicks, qualitative literary research was appropriate for this article. Four novels by southern African authors were chosen and analysed using a purposeful sampling technique. The books were: *The Blessed Girl* by Angela Makholwa (2018), *Bare: #The Blesser Game* by Jackie Phamotse (2017) and *The y in yOUR Man is Silent: Book 1* by Yvonne Maphosa (2019).

### **Findings and discussion**

#### **Single reference allusions in *The Blessed Girl***

Makholwa (2018) extensively employs allusion to engage the reader to reinforce her message. Makholwa uses allusion as a casual reference that is not integral to the plot or as a single reference for which the reader needs to make a connection between the work and the allusion. Makholwa's use of this technique requires the reader to know the characters, clothing brands, and TV shows alluded to, amongst others. This section discusses the singular reference allusions to famous historical and contemporary figures, doctors, authors, books, social media, clothing/car/alcohol brands, cafés and reality television shows, respectively, in *The Blessed Girl*.

Makholwa (2018) makes a single reference allusion to a historical figure, "Marilyn Monroe was the original blessee" (p.3). In her memoir, Bontle Tau, the main character in the novel, alludes to Marilyn Monroe, a popular American actress and sex symbol who was famous for contributing to the sexual revolution of her time. Bontle calls Monroe the original blessee and, thus justifies why she is a blessee. This allusion is used to reinforce to the reader that blessees are not a new phenomenon. Another example that alludes to Marilyn Monroe is "[i]f I were given the option to spend a lifetime as Albert Einstein or as Marilyn Monroe, I'd choose Marilyn Monroe every time...drugs and all" (p.3). However, Monroe is juxtaposed with Einstein, a well-renowned genius, to create a beauty vs brain effect to emphasise that she would still choose beauty.

In another example, Makholwa (2018) makes a single reference allusion to a contemporary figure and another to a psychologist. One example is "Donald Trump doesn't believe in global warming so I don't buy it either" (p.21). Bontle alludes to Donald Trump, the 45th American president famous for his controversial tweets and governing style. The allusion is used to communicate the blessee's belief system, and how she does not find fault with the 'blessed girl' lifestyle she leads, thus, using Trump as her archetype. Makholwa uses this allusion for character development by associating Tau with Trump.

The blessee in Makholwa's (2018) novel also makes a single reference allusion to a well-known South African Clinical Psychologist: "Talking to my psychologist, Dr Nthabiseng Mabena, helped me a little

bit" (p.95). The allusion is used to create an awareness in the reader about Bontle's 'need' to talk to a psychologist. The allusion is integral to the plot as the reader must infer a connection between the allusion and the plot that partly centres around Bontle's struggle with mental health problems deriving from her transactional sex relationships.

Then, Bontle makes another single reference allusion to three writers: Malcolm Gladwell - a Canadian journalist and writer, Donald Trump – the 45th American president, and Richard Branson, an English magnate and writer. The following allusions are made: "Malcolm Gladwell said that if you spend 10 000 hours honing a skill if you practise incessantly at it, you are more likely to be a champion in that field" (p.3). "The only books in my house are motivational treasures by the likes of my hero Donald Trump, Richard Branson and books about how to manipulate men... he he he" (p.4). Makholwa (2018) employs the allusions above for the character development of the protagonist and provides exposition to the readers. Gladwell's book appeals to Bontle because she wants various transactional sex relationships as they provide a platform for her to get skilled and receive optimally from her blessers. This thought relates to Wamoyi et al. (2010) who posits that transaction varies during the relationship, with quantities given being more at the beginning. Bontle considers being a blessee and manipulating men a skill she needs to hone.

Similarly, a single reference allusion is made to four books; *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* (1992), *Why Men Love Bitches* (2002), *The Art of the Deal* (1987) and *The Secret* (2006). These references are integral to the plot and the development of the blessee. Makholwa (2018) requires the reader to infer a connection between the titles of the books mentioned above and Bontle's lifestyle. Bontle considers herself to be from Venus, a bitch, who manages dealings with different men and lives by a motto in *The Secret*; "What you think, you create. What you feel, you attract. What you imagine, you become" (p.147). The books that the blessee reads confirm her dedication to being a blessee through reading the relevant books, her acknowledgement of being a bitch and her life's motto.

The fifth single reference allusions Makholwa (2018) employs are allusions to social media which is an integral part of the plot of *The Blessed Girl*. Bontle uses social media to update her followers on different platforms, and it is also covertly the reason she lives the blessed life, to show it off to others. Examples of allusions to social media are: "I've got a decent clientele thanks to the following I've amassed on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook" (p.6). The blessee, who also imports and sells hair weaves, uses her transactional sex relationship posts on different social media platforms to amass a good following, thus increasing her hair business customers. Apart from sharing her blessed lifestyle, she also posts pictures, "...share this look with my Instagram fans" (p.7) which serves as an advertisement for her hair business. In addition, she uses Photoshop to her advantage because she Photoshops not only her appearance but fake holidays as well, and although it is an illusion, this often creates an impression of authenticity to her social media fans. The last example in the social media category is "FaceTime means I have to do my hair and put on make-up, so I text him instead" (p.125). Although the general public might use FaceTime to call family and friends, the blessee, as advocated by Lipstick Feminism, employs FaceTime to sexually entice her blessers when they call. In other words, she must always wear make-up and be ready for the camera. Makholwa (2018) employs all the allusions mentioned above as integral to the plot because they create the setting in the mind of the reader of what the blesser lifestyle entails regarding social media.

A significant part of the story centres around popular brands, and, thus Makholwa (2018) employs more single-reference allusions to clothing brands, expensive cars, alcohol and television shows, and cafés/shops, which requires the reader to have knowledge of them. The use of single-use allusions creates a setting, provides exposition to the reader and adds to character development. In addition to social media allusions, single reference allusions are made to expensive clothing brands. Makholwa (2018) alludes to a Louis Vuitton scarf and shoes (a luxury French fashion house); Bobbi Brown brand

make-up (founder of Bobbi Brown Cosmetics); Gucci sneakers, top and cap; a Prada bag and Versace body lotion and perfume (luxury Italian fashion houses); and “a Khosi Nkosi form-fitting African print dress” (p. 32) from a South African female clothing brand. Then, she alludes to stilettos by Christian Louboutin (a French fashion designer who created red-soled stilettos popularly referred to as ‘red-bottoms’); Rolex, a Swiss luxury watch; “a classy form-fitting black Victoria Beckham dress (an English fashion designer); Chanel No 5 which is a signature scent and iconic product by French businesswoman - Coco Chanel. She also alludes to Diesel jeans (an Italian clothing company); Roberto Cavalli jeans from an Italian fashion designer who is popular for his sand-blasted look for jeans; Miu Miu stilettos from an Italian high fashion brand that specialises in women’s clothing and accessories; “a body-hugging Karen Millen dress” (p.102) by a British women’s clothing line that specialises in evening attire, amongst others, and lastly, a Hugo Boss pin-striped suit by a German luxury fashion house.

The above allusions are critical because they are the epitome of the blessee lifestyle. The brand names alluded to by Makholwa (2018) are integral in creating the image of the blessee and her archetype. These allusions vividly describe and, thus, create an image of the fashion sense of the blessee in the reader's mind. The reader not only imagines the character’s made-up face but also how the clothes are described to fit her body and the scent. Significantly, as advocated by Lipstick Feminism, the focus of the blessee is on her makeup and sex appeal because everywhere a dress is referred to, the allusion describes it as form-fitting or body-hugging. The above examples of single reference allusions concur with several studies that conclude that women use their agency to exploit transactional sex relationships to fulfil their modern needs fuelled by the media and globalisation (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003; Swartz, 2017).

Then, Makholwa (2018) employs single reference allusions to expensive cars, which are also an integral part of the blessee lifestyle which also creates an image of the materialism of the blessee. The following allusion: “When I go to ekasi in my shining Mercedes convertible” (p.43) refers to a German luxury car described as shiny and a convertible. The allusion is integral to the plot and supports the argument that the blessee lives an expensive lifestyle. Bontle, in *The Blessed Girl*, also alludes to a Lamborghini, an Italian luxury car, when she states, “[e]verything I post is real, boo, right down to the Lamborghini my man drives” (p.51). The allusion conveys that Bontle’s boyfriend drives an expensive car, which contributes to the character development of one of the numerous boyfriends that are integral to the development of the plot. Makholwa (2018) also alludes to a Maserati, an Italian luxury car. The allusion provides exposition to the reader by explaining the blessee’s interest in men who drive a specific type of luxury car. The above example of the blessee boasting about her blesser’s expensive cars is an example of how Lipstick Feminism inadvertently promotes patriarchy because the blessee boasts about a car that is not hers, and, thus, the financial and material power remains with the blesser (Marchetti, 2020).

Penultimately, Makholwa (2018) makes single reference allusions to alcohol, cafés, shops, hotels and reality television shows. Pertaining to alcohol, Dom Perignon, Moët & Chandon, Moët Brut Imperial, popularly referred to as Moët, are champagnes that are products of a French winery. The allusion is used to make the reader aware of Bontle’s expensive taste in champagne. It also allows readers to infer a connection between the blessee lifestyle and the allusion. In addition, Makholwa (2018) alludes to Rupert & Rothschild Classique wine made from a prestigious partnership between a South African family and a French Baron. Thus, the blessee only consumes expensive champagnes and wines to keep up with her lifestyle.

Similarly, Makholwa (2018) makes singular reference allusions to the Melrose Hotel, Saxon Hotel, Mount Nelson Hotel, News Café, and Woolworths. The aforementioned are not merely descriptive but are alluded to, to create a setting of the typical venues the blessee wines and dines in and the ones she buys from when in a financial crisis. For example, Bontle states, “I have a cheap bottle of

wine from Woolworths to see me through the weekend” (p. 66). The reader infers that Woolworths is ordinarily an expensive supermarket, but the allusion reveals the expensive taste and lifestyle of the blessee. Thus, Woolworths is her last resort to buy when she is in a financial crisis. However, it is public knowledge that Woolworths is one of the most expensive supermarkets for ordinary citizens.

Regarding reality television shows, Makholwa (2018) makes single reference allusions to the Kardashians, an American reality television series about a high-profile celebrity family and Somizi, a South African actor, choreographer and media personality who has a television show called *Living the Dream with Somizi*. These allusions to television shows are made to make the reader aware of the type of lifestyle that Bontle desires to live. The Kardashians and Somizi both depict a glamorous lifestyle which covertly advocates for plastic surgery, expensive clothing and car brands. The blessee aspires to be like the celebrities in these shows.

Finally, Makholwa (2018) makes the following general single reference allusion “...I think I need to also invest in Kegel balls...” (p.98). Kegel balls are balls that are used to strengthen the pelvic floor and vaginal muscles. Makholwa (2018) uses the allusion because of its importance to the blessee’s development, which prioritises sexual grooming, amongst others, to keep her in shape and satisfy her lovers. In addition, the quote, “Any girl who lives my lifestyle will tell you the worst season of the year for as mistresses are the so-called Festive Season” (p.101) alludes to the festive season. The reader is to infer a connection between the undesirability of the Christmas holidays and the reality of Bontle being a side-chick that becomes insignificant during the holidays. These last two allusions are significant because they also reveal the blessee’s dedication to being a blessee by working on her vaginal muscles to satisfy her blessers. In contrast, it also reveals the loneliness the blessee experiences over the Christmas holiday because her blessers spend time with their families. She cannot go to her family because she has created the illusion that she is constantly busy with work.

#### **Allusions to clothes, cars and alcohol in *Bare: #The Blesser Game***

Phamotse (2017) also employs allusion to create an atmosphere of opulence. The most prominent theme in the allusions made by Phamotse is consumerism. This section discusses allusions to clothing brands, alcohol and expensive cars in *Bare: #The Blesser Game*, which corroborates the findings in the literature review. The following items are exchanged for transactional sex; money, education, clothes, food, alcohol, basic needs and cell phones (Kuate-Defo, 2004; Zembe et al., 2013). Also significant to note is that consumerism directly motivated young people to engage in transactional sex (Kamndaya et al., 2016).

Similar to Makholwa (2018), Phamotse (2017) employs allusion as a single reference for which the reader needs to make a connection between the work and the allusion, which requires the reader to have knowledge of the clothing brands, alcohol and cars alluded to, amongst others. Firstly, as previously alluded to, image and presentation are significant in the transactional sex relationship culture. Thus, the first single reference allusion is made to several designer brands in the following quote, “...Gucci, Miu Miu...Stuart Weitzman, Alexander McQueen, Walter Steiger....And every woman has to have at least one pair each of Christian Louboutins, Jimmy Choos, Manolo Blahniks, Tom Fords and of course the master Louis Vuitton” (p.152). The allusion refers to shoes by the designers mentioned above. It conveys a sense of luxury and the need to wear or own the aforementioned designer shoes to be part of the transactional sex relationship culture. Another example of a single reference allusion is “...clothes I must mention Valentino, Versace, Dior, Armani, Prada, and Chanel” (p.152), an allusion that refers to the designer clothes that one needs to wear as a blessed girl. Similarly, the following single reference allusion example alludes to exercise gear by mentioning them by designer name, “[h]er bare minimum outfit - Nike Aeroloft vest, Lululemon running shorts and Vivo barefoot shoes...” (p.284). The exercise gear is explicitly described to create an awareness in the

reader that it is what the blesser/blessee culture requires.

Secondly, single reference allusions are made to alcohol in the following quotes; "...blend of Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay, from Franschoeck" (p.150), "Romanee-Conti, La Grande Rue, Richebourg, Chablis, Chambertin, Montrachet..." (p.153) and "...some other exclusive champagnes are Bollinger, Krug, Moet, Cristal, Veuve Clicquot ..." (p.154). This allusion to wines and champagnes creates an awareness of the expensive taste of alcohol in the blesser/blessee culture. When taught about choosing wines and champagnes, Treasure, the main character, is informed to always look for the words 'grand' or 'premier' when ordering wine.

Finally, Phamotse (2017) employs a single reference allusion to allude to expensive cars to create an atmosphere of luxury in presenting the transactional sex relationship culture. In a differently-themed novel, the writer would have referred to cars without the detail it receives in *Bare: #The Blesser Game*, primarily to create an image of luxury in the reader's mind. The allusion is made to the following luxury cars; BMW 760Li, Maserati Quattroporte, Porsche Cayenne and a Bentley Continental GTC. The vivid descriptions add to the image of the blesser/blessee culture.

Both Makholwa (2018) and Phamotse (2017) employ single-reference allusion primarily for character development, the creation of the setting and the mood of the plot. They both allude to clothing brands, expensive cars and alcohol. In contrast, Makholwa (2018) alludes to historical and contemporary figures, writers, books, social media and television shows to develop the character of the blessee and the plot. Phamotse (2017) also alludes to social media but not in as much detail as Makholwa (2018).

#### **Allusion to clothing brands, cars and sexual relations in *The y in yOUR Man is Silent: Book 1***

Makholwa (2018), Phamotse (2017) and Maphosa (2019) all employ allusion in their novels as a literary device to describe transactional sex relationships. However, only the examples of allusions that infer a connection to transactional sex relationships, such as clothing brands, cars and sexual relations, are discussed to remain within the scope of this article.

The first examples of allusion presented in Maphosa's (2019) novel pertain to clothing brands. In the example, "Elik bought these red bottoms overseas!" (p.41), Fierce alludes to red-soled stilettos created by popular French designer Christian Louboutin. This allusion contributes to the character development of the blessee (referred to as the side-chick in this novel) because it supports the argument that side-chicks love expensive popular brands. In another example, "I have a weakness for H&M, I always feel the need to buy something there" (p.55) and "... I get a nice dress at YDE..." (p.55), Fierce alludes to H&M (Hennes & Mauritz); a Swedish clothing company and YDE (Young Designers Emporium) that aims at supporting local South African designers. The aforementioned allusion contextualises the story because it raises the awareness in the reader of the importance of luxury brand items for the side-chick.

Additional examples of brands alluded to in the story include, "...I have lots of Victoria's Secret lingerie, red bottom heels, genuine Louis Vuitton bags..." (p.70) and "I can't believe I'm waking up in another woman's Egyptian cotton" (p.71). Victoria's Secret is an American lingerie and clothing brand, whilst Louis Vuitton is a luxury French fashion house emphasising the Egyptian because it is the best in the cotton industry. The examples mentioned above contextualise the theme of materialism and add to the character development of the side-chick.

Then Maphosa (2019) alludes to cars: one that would perhaps be considered ordinary and another that would be considered lavish. First, the blesser buys her a white Toyota Fortuner as an apology gift when she discovers that he married someone else behind her back and, thus, becomes her blesser

and subsequently buys her a Jeep. "Just like that, I'm the owner of a brilliant black Jeep Grand Cherokee Limited" (p.237).

The next set of examples of allusion pertain to sexual relations in *The y in yOUR Man is Silent: Book 1*. Fierce alludes to a song with a strong sexual theme in the following example; "...Marvin Gaye and get it on..." (p. 45). Marvin Gaye is an American singer who released a song titled *Get It On* in the 1970s. The allusion contributes to the sexual theme examined in the article and, thus, demonstrates the side-chick's excitement to have sexual intercourse with one of her lovers. Fierce also alludes to a popular American television programme called *Cheaters*, in which the producers act as private investigators hired by civilians to follow lovers suspected of cheating. The allusion "If that show *Cheaters*, were here tonight, they would air an episode to remember" (p.49), conveys the side-chick's awareness that she is cheating with a married blesser, which contributes to the theme of transactional sex relationships between side-chicks and blessers.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, single-reference allusion has been used for character development, setting and mood creation of the story in *The Blessed Girl* by Angela Makholwa (2018), *Bare: #The Blesser Game* by Jackie Phamotse (2017) and *The y in yOUR Man is Silent: Book 1* by Yvonne Maphosa (2019). The three writers use allusion to refer to alcoholic beverages, luxury cars, and designer brands. However, Makholwa (2018), also makes references to writers, novels, social media, television shows, historical and modern characters, and other sources to create the plot and character of the blessee. Social media is also mentioned in Phamotse (2017), although not as extensively as in Makholwa's (2018) novel. In addition to alluding to cars and designer clothes, Maphosa (2019) alludes to sexual relations in the form of a song and a television programme. Since transactional sex relationships are a new phenomenon, the writers have effectively employed allusion to provide identifiers that describe the transactional sex relationship culture.

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