

Thursday 2 August

1pm Milgate Room, AD Hope Bldg, SLLL



BBC News, 'Black Panther's sister, Shuri, gets own Marvel comic series', 18 July 2018.

Deirdre Byrne

Give the Black Girl the Remote: Decolonising and Depatriarchalising Technology in *Black Panther*

In Ryan Coogler's 2018 film, *Black Panther*, the small African kingdom of Wakanda is situated on a huge vein of vibranium, the strongest and most versatile (fictional) material in the universe. Vibranium is the source of the Wakandans' technological enhancements, including a force-field around their high-tech capital city that makes it appear from the outside that the kingdom is impoverished and technologically primitive. Marvel's and Coogler's acts of giving vibranium to the Wakandans represents a powerful act of decolonising technology, which – in colonial logic – is the sole preserve of white male scientists. The most advanced technology is now in the hands of Wakanda, where the technological genius is not the hypermasculine T'challa, but his sister Shuri, disparaged by traditionalists in Wakanda as "a child". Despite her irreverent and iconoclastic approach to tradition, sixteen-year-old Shuri is, according to the film's producer Nate Moore, "the smartest person in the world, smarter than Tony Stark [Iron Man]". The film's portrayal of Shuri – a black girl nerd who is manifestly her brother's equal in the arts of war and technology – points to how far popular media has come in decolonising and depatriarchalising control of resources in the twenty-first century.

Deirdre Byrne is Professor of English Studies and Head of the Institute for Gender Studies at the University of South Africa. She is editor in chief of scrutiny2: issues in english studies in southern africa and Gender Questions. She is one of the co-editors of Fluid Love, Fluid Gender (forthcoming from Brill) as well as a co-author of Foundations in English Literary Studies (Oxford University Press). in 2019.



Literary
Studies
Seminar
Series
2018

enquiries: russell.smith@anu.edu.au