

## IXELLES

Johannes Anyuru, translated from Swedish by Nichola Smalley

1. In the introduction to *Ixelles*, Omar El Akkad highlights the novel's interest in "belonging as a matter of narrative ownership" (pg. iii). According to *Ixelles*, what prevents narrative ownership? What choices do the novel's characters to find belonging?
2. What is Ruth's relationship to 2070 in the novel's present, and how does her position differ from those who live inside or outside the neighborhood? How does Ruth's relationship with 2070 impact her decisions with the agency and with Em?
3. Describe the novel's structure. What effects are created by its many different voices and perspectives, as well as sections like the Monster Manual, Control, and Gold?
4. What significance do the novel's many sonic registers, such as taped recordings, self-produced music, piano compositions, and Ruth's atonal soundtracks, have? How do they relate to one another and to the novel's plot?
5. There are many violent histories in the background of *Ixelles*, including Belgian colonialism and extractive mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. What impact do these histories have on the novel and its characters? How does *Ixelles* relate to extracted minerals and materials such as gold, diamonds, and heavy metals?
6. In the novel's world, what is the role of institutions such as churches, mosques, libraries, and civic halls in terms of their authority and their physical space? What special significance do libraries have for Ruth and Mio?
7. Ruth says that the golden disc is like "an artifact from another world" (pg. 64). What parallel realities does the novel suggest or imagine, and how do they differ from our world?
8. What role do analog and digital technologies play in the novel?
9. Regarding 2070's demolition and gentrification, Ruth observes that "control [over the outcome] will be exercised on a grammatical level" (pg. 198). What is *Ixelles's* perspective on language's power and the power of those who wield it? How does the novel challenge deterministic uses of language?



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For more information, contact Kelsey McFaul:

[kelsey@twolinespress.com](mailto:kelsey@twolinespress.com)

Two Lines Press | San Francisco, CA  
[twolinespress.com](http://twolinespress.com)

