



IMBIZA

JOURNAL FOR AFRICAN WRITING

Nourishing the Mind

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Fred Khumalo
More Than A
Dozen Books
& Still Going
Strong

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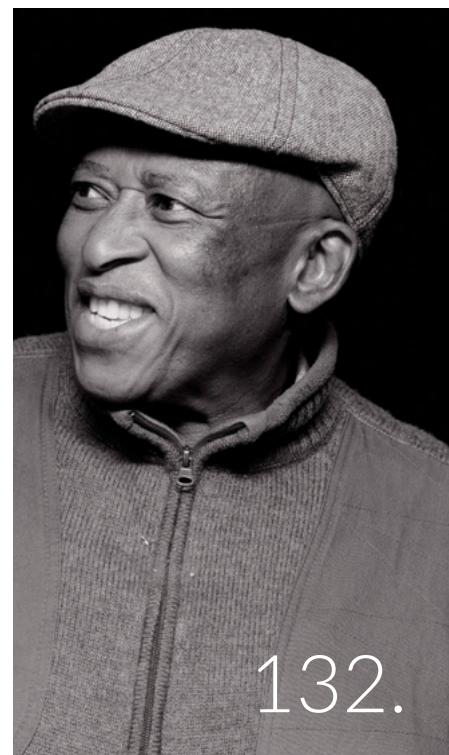
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LET'S FEAST

In the inaugural issue of *The Classic* in 1963, Nat Nakasa dedicated a significant amount of his editorial comment apologising to the readers. "The problems which beset most publications of this type are many and not easy to solve. Instead of listing them here, I wish to apologise to all those who have awaited *The Classic* faithfully. Everything will be done to avoid similar delays in the appearance of the coming issues."

Similarly, I feel compelled to apologise to the readers of this first edition of *Imbiza Journal for African Writing*. When we made the public call for submissions in December 2020, we announced that the first issue would be published in May/June 2021. We were oblivious of how hungry the community of readers and writers was for such a platform. Soon we were inundated with a flurry of submissions from all over the continent and had to parry enquiries from enthusiastic readers who were enquiring about the forthcoming journal. They could not wait to see *Imbiza* in print.

Although we made a public call only for short stories, the entries we received cut across different forms of writing, from poetry to essays, memoirs to drama, and anything in-between. Mindful of our limited capacity, and as a way of managing the inflow of submissions, we had commissioned many of the articles in advance. Submissions came from all corners of South Africa and other countries on the continent like Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as other parts of the world, including the United States, UK, Mexico and India.

The idea for the establishment of *Imbiza* was conceived out of the luxury of time for reflection afforded by the nationwide lockdown in South Africa. In the midst of the despair and despondence occasioned by the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, we still dreamed and persevered in pursuit of those

dreams. I approached a number of individuals whom I believed could help in the realisation of this dream. They all agreed to serve on the board and lend their intellectual capacity, inspired by the conviction that *Imbiza* is a journal whose time had come.

We envisioned *Imbiza* as an inclusive publishing platform for creative writing, criticism, academic writing and intellectual engagement for African thinkers, cultural workers and activists. Key amongst our priorities was the creation of a common publishing platform for aspiring writers and emerging scholars to publish alongside seasoned practitioners in their respective fields. *Imbiza* will actively promote reading, for without readers writing would become a forlorn exercise. This makes forming partnerships with educational institutions as well as entities that cherish similar ideals essential for our growth and existence.



In isiXhosa, the word "imbiza" means a pot used for cooking food. When we think of *Imbiza Journal for African Writing*, we imagine a three-legged pot that has been part of the lives of generations of Africans. In isiZulu, imbiza refers to natural herbs or any mixture of roots, bulbs and leaves used for medicinal purposes. It is both the sense of healing and nourishment that *Imbiza* aspires to bring to African readers and writers.

In our lead feature, Fred Khumalo rightfully observes that *Staffrider*, where his literary work was first published, launched the careers of many writers. The same can be said about its predecessors like Zonk and Drum magazines, as well as modern successors like *Chimurenga*, *Wordsetc*, *Baobab*, *Brittle Paper*, *Johannesburg Review of Books* and many others. Throughout history, journals and magazines have always offered a convenient publishing platform for writers to practise their craft, hone their skills and share their artistry with audiences. This is the kind of value *Imbiza* would like to add to the writing community.

We are inspired by individuals, organisations and associations that started journals and offered publishing platforms for writers before us. We also learn from their triumphs and tribulations, while at the same time adopting new methods offered by modern inventions. The journal's unique contribution to knowledge creation is its inclusivity, wherein it becomes a point of convergence for both the creative and the critical aspects of cultural production.

Khumalo is in many ways the embodiment of what *Imbiza* aspires to become. He is both a creator and a critic; straddles the literary and journalism realms; and writes in English and his native isiZulu language. These are some of the elements that are palpable in this edition, which, although published mainly in English, features work in indigenous African languages such as Kiswahili, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Xitsonga and Kikuyu. The writings featured in this edition illustrate that we are all connected through our stories, histories and cultures, while at the same time emphasising the uniqueness of our individual traits, voices and experiences.

The youngest writer in this edition is Stacey Fru, who at the tender age of thirteen, has already published no less than five books. Fru's story invites us to get into the mind of a child not only to understand a child's psychology, but to also reimagine and reflect on our own childhoods. Fru represents our futuristic approach and the dynamism that characterises *Imbiza*. Here she appears alongside seasoned writer, academic, multi-disciplinary artist and intellectual extraordinaire, Zakes Mda, who is about sixty

years her senior.

IN THE MIDST OF DESPAIR AND DESPONDENCE OCCASIONED BY THE ADVENT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC, WE STILL DREAMED AND PERSEVERED IN PURSUIT OF THOSE DREAMS.

To return to Nakasa, he continues to say: "It will be the job of The Classic to seek African writing of merit." The same can be said about *Imbiza* and this is reflected in the content of our first issue. The stories in this edition represent the preoccupations, sentiments and imagination of the authors. Their contributions are as diverse as different ingredients boiling in the same pot. Ours is to ensure the meal is fully cooked and palatable, so we can serve it to our readers. It is my greatest pleasure to present this maiden issue of *Imbiza Journal for African Writing*.

Enjoy this feast.



**Siphiwo Mahala, PhD
Editor**



KOLEKA PUTUMA: PERMISSION TO THRIVE AND

By Vangile Gantsho

I remember when the video for "Water" by Koleka Putuma came out. It was 2016, during my MA year, and I watched the video with a classmate. I found myself deeply affected by the conversations it conjured up.

We have come to be baptised here
We have come to stir the other world here.
We have come to cleanse ourselves here.
We have come to connect our living to the dead here.

And while contemplating the weight of this tumultuous relationship with water and Christianity and "the dead", my classmate asked: is it a poem though?

This question has gone on to follow Putuma from height to height: ten print runs in three years; the PEN South Africa Literary Prize for students (2016); The Glenna Luschei Prize for African Poetry (2018); Forbes 30 under 30 Honouree (2018); translated into four languages (plus two forthcoming)... Not to mention the many countries, festivals and spin-off productions, including the 2020 launch of her own publishing house, Manyano Media. *Collective Amnesia* (2017) has surpassed any South African poet's dream! And Putuma is not flying alone. She recently announced Hope Netshivhambe and Ayanda Nxumalo as recipients of a mentorship programme run through Manyano Media's Black Girl Live initiative.

breathe



Photo: Victor Dlamini

In "Lifeline", Putuma creates a spinal cord of sixty eight womxn, living and passed; friends, activists, scholars, poets, dancers...

every name
chants
Black girl –
Live!
Live!
Live!

This powerful invocation, from a woman who has been vocal about her struggles with depression, and whose work brings into our homes, a very real example of what dreaming out loud can look like, adverse to the equally real plight of black queerness – black womanhood – in a Christian South Africa, speaks directly to Gabeba Baderoon's question "What does poetry do?" In her introduction of *Our Words Our Worlds*, Baderoon writes:

"poetry has been the place in which black women have refused the narrow scripts prescribed by discourses of racism, respectability and cultural authenticity. In their poems, they have vastly expanded the range of possibilities for envisioning Black life. One of the most powerful tools for refusing reductive visions is to recall the hidden lineages of Black women's writing."



Photo: Victor Dlanini

Putuma, born in 1993, Port Elizabeth to a pastor father, holds a BA in theatre and performance from the University of Cape Town and comes to poetry as an award-winning theatre practitioner. She is the recipient of the Mbokodo Rising Light Award (2017), CASA (Canadian-South African) Playwriting Award (2017), Imbewu Trust Scribe Playwriting Award (2018), and the Distell Playwriting Award (2019).

She follows in a lineage of black (queer) dreamers who have broken ceilings in spaces many thought they had no right going into. Critically acclaimed Mamela Nyamza, who bleeds classical dance into traditional and contemporary styles, and has performed on and choreographed for some of the world's most prestigious stages. Nyamza has been a part of iconic productions such as the *Lion King* and *African Footprints*, as well as her own (deeply impactful) works, such as *I Stand Corrected* and *Amafong-kong*, while mentoring countless dancers through community programmes around the country.

Thandiswa Mazwai, who has received a Kora Award, four South African Music Awards, a nomination for the BBC Radio 3 Planet Awards, and has been part of the soundtrack of numerous historical moments (including the FIFA 2010 World Cup and the passing of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela), was the first contemporary womxn artist to deliberately commission an all-womxn band. Clutching lessons from the likes of

Busi Mhlongo and Miriam Makeba, she popularised the then taboo and profound spiritual act of burning impepho on stage as a summoning of her ancestors. Because *akahambi yedwa*.

And while we navigate and negotiate living with a health and femicide pandemic, we have to find and produce lifelines for ourselves and each other that will ensure that we not only survive both, but thrive and breathe while doing so, and not become [hyper visible], loved and supported when we are at the centre of a tragedy or dead. Statement: Black Girl Live (donate through koleka-putuma.com)

**POETRY HAS BEEN THE PLACE
IN WHICH BLACK WOMEN
HAVE REFUSED THE NARROW
SCRIPTS PRESCRIBED BY
DISCOURSES OF RACISM,
RESPECTABILITY AND
CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY.**



In 2016, I had the cherished honour of performing alongside her at the University of the (supposed) "Free" State Woordefees. I remember sitting outside one of the venues with her and Khanyisile (Mbongwa) when a White European womxn casually decided to invite herself to our table and make rubbish talk. This woman tried to convince us that it was OK for her to make a group of black children from elokishini sing the Nationalist Party anthem, "Die Stem" in post-apartheid South Africa. At first we entertained the conversation – Koleka has a way of finding humour in the absurd – and listened to her deliberate distancing from South African Afrikaners while completely disregarding how intrusive her whiteness was in this situation. Things went pear-shaped, however, when she equated her regard for Black people to how she cared about trees, and birds... and glass. Koleka was the first to stand up and exit. No word. No explanation. She picked up her glass and left.

Similarly, at the Tewop Slam against Zewande Bhungu (2018), Putuma turned a green doek into the green blanket of the man on the mound in Marikana¹ on stage. And on Twitter, during the 2020 Covid-19 artist devastation, Putuma told Nathi Mthethwa, then Marikana Minister of Police and current Minister of Arts, Sports and Culture that his department had failed to adequately provide swift and sufficient support for artists during the first few months of nationwide lockdown. Amidst a flurry of artist calls to have him removed as a representative presiding over the arts, Putuma told him that he did not care about artists and, in fact, had no idea what the function of the Department of Arts, Sports and Culture was.

Collective Amnesia was released during the aftermath of #FeesMustFall, #RhodesMustFall and #RUReferenceList movements. At this time, black womxn were/ are no longer swallowing their disappointment in (and rage towards) liberation men's duplicitous dedication to fighting racism and upholding patriarchy. Womxn were/are dying everywhere. And black womxn were/ are no longer buying into the Strong Black Woman trope. Putuma's voice echoes the anger, frustration and at times, disbelief. Much like Nyamza and Mazwai, Putuma's art cannot be separated from her politics. She is not asking for permission or going gently into the night.

I don't want to die with my hands up or legs open².

With the calls for decolonising curriculums, Putuma's work has split the ivory tower into two. On the one hand, here is a powerful important feminist voice that cannot be ignored. *Collective Amnesia* has been prescribed at the University of Stellenbosch (in South Africa) and the Gothenburg University in Sweden, while parts of it are taught in South Africa, Europe

and throughout the United States. On the other hand, there is this obsession around whether or not it can (should) be considered poetry. An obsession that has largely been driven by the self-preservation of an enraged racist patriarchal (faceless) tower.

Recently, Putuma reflected:

... Imagine if I had taken to heart the rhetoric and criticisms of some of these SA poets on what makes your poetry good or bad – I would never have been brave with my work. 4 years later ... It was important for me to write it – to validate my own voice as being good enough to be archived and read... Some / most writers get better with time, reading, practice...

... there's room to have healthy and rigorous debates without attacking the person, and it is also possible to critique the opportunity / platforms they have been afforded without invalidating the moment. –

22 January 2021 – Facebook post

POETS ARTICULATE THE PULSE OF A PEOPLE.

Of course critical engagement is necessary for any art form to grow, but we need to make room for that engagement to be opened up. To include the context from which the work emerges, as well as what the work does. Throughout history, poets – artists – have been able to speak to the hearts of people, particularly in troubled times. Poets articulate the pulse of a people. Her second collection, due to be released in April 2021, is set to be an exploration of racial and gendered aesthetics of "memory, documentation, performance, hypervisibility and erasure" in Europe and South Africa. Putuma continues to centre her work on black woman and archiving, constantly making sure that young (black queer) people are asking questions and refusing to be the daughters set on fire to keep men warm . Putuma continues to force us all into the smoke – a running theme in all her work, be it poetry or theatre. Watching her grow, and dream and create does more than contribute to the archiving of invisible black woman's work, it gives permission to those who follow to

Live!

Live!

Live!



¹ Marikana Massacre of 12 August 2012, resulted in 34 miners being fatally killed by the South African police.
² MEMOIRS OF A SLAVE & QUEER PERSON – *Collective Amnesia*



MASOJA MSIZA FUSES POETRY WITH ACTING

By Sandile Ngidi

An overwhelming sense of gratitude centres Masoja Msiza. He is grateful to God, his ancestors, family and the goodwill of his legion of fans who are besotted with his charismatic television gangster-character Nkunzi Mhlongo in the popular SABC1 television drama series, *Uzalo*.

When the isiZulu soapie, whose church and crime storyline, is based in Durban's KwaMashu township started four years ago, more than five million viewers got hooked. Such was the power of the story and the quality of acting. Thanks to its growing popularity, *Uzalo* now attracts more than nine million people every weekday. During South Africa's first lockdown in March last year, *Uzalo* reportedly shot to more than 10 million viewers on Mondays.

So, headlining this TV show is no mean feat. No wonder Msiza, the show's main protagonist, is eternally grateful for how life has turned out, and firmly believes he was born for this role. "Someone who can't say thank you is quickly discarded and soon becomes valueless among other people. You don't always need money to show gratitude. Every small gesture from your heart is what counts. Giving thanks is a sign of wisdom. What matters is not what you give me, but what you put in me. Even in kids, it is not so much what you leave for them, but what you leave in them," Msiza says.

Msiza still gets goose bumps when he reminisces about how he got his biggest break on South African television. "I was invited, and did not really audition, for the role," he says. "At the time I was in two television productions, *Isibaya* and *Ring of Lies*.



I had just finished *Umlilo*. The producers of *Uzalo* had seen me in *Umlilo*. In that show I played a killing machine of a murderer and impressed them so much. What I later learned that they could feel my TV presence and my crowd-pulling power."

A phenomenal talent was unleashed on the television screen. "When I came to Durban to the shooting studios, even cleaners came out to see this Nkunzi chap. I am grateful to the *Uzalo* production for what they have done for me. The value of what I have been given by *Uzalo* is intangible. It can't even be transferred to anyone," Msiza says. "I don't take this special gift for granted. I have to respect it, treat it with integrity and work hard. That is why I am still forging ahead, raising the bar and enhancing my game."

More than ten years ago or so, Msiza was a promising and very committed poet who used to make appearances at various literary events in Gauteng. What struck me about him back then was his charisma, confidence and deep love for South Africa's indigenous languages and poetry.

"I fuse poetry into storytelling. I want people to look up to me and see there is something they can learn from me. I bring out something refreshing. The kind of content people are looking for," he says. "I develop a strong connection with people I work with. Poetry is at the heart of my craft. It helps me respect the power of words and the depth of our languages."

In pushing to make his acting as credible and authentic as possible, Msiza totally embodies his character, often blurring the line between reality and fiction for his mesmerised fans. "Some people thought Dawn Thandeka King, who portrays MaNgcobo (*Uzalo*'s no-nonsense matriarch) and I were an item in real life. It was the same when I acted alongside with her rival in the love stakes, MaMlambo, portrayed by Gugu Dlamini. Again it happened when I acted alongside Gabisile (Baby Cele-Maloka). People had to admit all of this is sheer talent and nothing else," he says.

Although extravagantly gifted as an actor, Msiza believes in constantly working hard to hone his craft. "Talent alone is not enough. One needs to work hard and enhance one's game. That is why my work is smooth, and I pray and work to keep it that way. Good actors must read and keep learning from life in every manner possible. Life has a million lessons every day and at every turn," Msiza says.

Sowetan entertainment journalist Patience Bambalele is among those besotted with Msiza's talents. "His role is crucial in the storyline since almost all characters interlink with it. He kills the role with a

rare combination of qualities – charisma, hard work and a great understanding of the human mind. He knows what's required at a given moment," Bambalele says. "There is no doubt that Nkunzi is one of the characters who have contributed to the increasing viewership of the soapie."

Quite fittingly for a wordsmith, Msiza is a bookworm. His favourite writers include Peter Abrahams, Wole Soyinka, Kahlil Gibran, Chinua Achebe, Mazisi Kunene, Sibusiso Nyembezi, B.W. Vilakazi, Don Mattera and Mzwakhe Mbuli.

He's humble to acknowledge being inspired by those who came before him. "I look up to seasoned South African actors such as Mbongeni Ngema and Menzi Ngubane in a long list of formidable local and international actors I adore," Msiza says.

Born to Sesi Mahlangu and Babane Ngubane from Devon in Mpumalanga and Nkandla in KwaZulu-Natal respectively over 50 years ago, Msiza comes after twins, a boy and a girl. He reveals that he got tested in the rough waters of life early in his life, an experience that doubtlessly prepared him for the man he is today.



With the benefit of hindsight, everything Msiza went through growing up makes sense and has shaped his destiny. For that he's grateful. "I belong to every community. That's how God designed my path in life. My father was a migrant worker from the rural backwaters of KwaZulu-Natal. He met my mother at Devon in Mpumalanga where her family of eight children lived on a farm under very harsh socio-economic conditions," he says wistfully. "I was, in fact, born at Phola Park in Ekurhuleni, and grew up in the warm and nurturing Msiza home in KwaThema. I'm eternally grateful to John Msiza, mamkhulu and the entire Msiza family for the unconditional love and guidance they gave me."

KwaThema shaped his persona and taught him a great deal about life. "In every street there was a soccer club. I learned to compete early on. There were tennis clubs, soccer clubs and so on. You had to compete," he says.

In this competitive environment Msiza stretched himself in various hobbies in search of his métier. For a time it seemed soccer was his destiny. "The late Moroka Swallows legendary striker Andries "Six Mabone" Maseko used to train us in the township. I loved challenging training regime. But I was never that good at soccer. People soon realised I was actually an entertainer. I had to find my niche, and be the best at it."

When Msiza tells me that his father's nickname is Nkunzikayihleli (a bull that never retreats), he pauses for a moment and his eyes light up. He suddenly connects the dots. "You can see, this character [in *Uzalo*] was created by my ancestors. They paved the way and now the name Nkuzi is being elevated," he says.

Msiza is a man of many talents. He also sings. He has a new self-produced 13-track music CD, *Time To Rhyme*, which symbolises his gratitude for all the good things that have happened in his life. I buy the album from him. Immediately, one song stops me in my tracks. Titled Hallelujah, this song is an unforgettable anthem and prayer in times of hardship. In a bold and unmistakable call to the Almighty, Msiza's baritone voice is accompanied by sweet melodic voices of the other singers. The song is a winner and will surely pull the heartstrings of all listeners. With the album, Msiza seeks to pay tribute to his family and others for helping him to be where he is today.

As it turns out, this is not the first time Msiza has tried his hand at music. Music has been a constant companion all his life. While in high school he belonged to an *isicathamiya* group, the Spring Bomber Boys. In 1982, they even recorded an album under

Dephon Records and distributed by Teal Trutone Music. The stable included the iconic 80s mbaqanga singer Pat Shange and disco sensation Yvonne Chaka Chaka.

Today, Msiza radiates self-assurance that comes from an actor who has paid his dues. He's comfortable in his own skin and is happy to have made Durban his second home. "Durban has always been my favourite place. Four years in Durban feel like I am using my vocation on my vacation. People are warm here. It's the grace of God. Durban people feel like *Uzalo* is theirs. They are proud of it," he says.

I WANT PEOPLE TO LOOK UP TO ME AND SEE THERE IS SOMETHING THEY CAN LEARN FROM ME.

When not in front of the camera, Msiza can be found on the motivational speaker circuit where he preaches the value of self-empowerment and self-love through music, books and a purpose-driven life. For him success is impossible without discipline, humility and hard work.

Msiza strongly believes in personal drive and his advice to others who yearn to make it in life is this: "Don't allow *umasaka* who is dancing on top of your head to derail you from your dream and purpose. Stay focussed and keep it together no matter the ups and downs. Stand firm on your principles and goals."



Artwork: Limo Artwork



The Writer's VOICE

IN A POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ARTISTICALLY-CONSCIOUS WORLD



By Zukiswa Wanner

In this 24th year of Time of the Writer Festival, as we face a global pandemic for the second year running, it seemed important that as I looked at the larger festival theme *The Writer: Witness, Canary in the Mine or Testifier*. I focus, too, on the writer's voice in a political, social and artistically-conscious world. I focus on this because it's a world we live in. For what is writing, without politics or society, and how meaningful is it if not executed artistically?

Many readers in South Africa and some on the rest of the continent are familiar with one of the festival guests' Niq Mhlongo's *Dog Eat Dog* and Thando Mgqolozana's *Unimportance*. In the two novels, the protagonists, Dingz in *Dog Eat Dog* and Zizi in *Unimportance*, find themselves fighting an education system set up to make it near impossible for poor students to attain higher education.

Many would say Mhlongo and Mgqolozana were canaries in the mine, foreseeing the doom, or revolution (depending on which side of power you sit on) that was to come to our universities.

The #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall protests.
We are writers.
We are witnesses.
And we testify.

The year 2020 was bad for everyone globally. Unable to attend festivals, concerts and launches, artists could not earn and they became poorer than normal.

In South Africa, artists were slightly luckier than those in many other countries. We had the Presidential Employment Stimulus Package to the tune of R300 million. Or so we thought.

On Friday 5 March, I was one of 400 artists who joined a National Arts Council's Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PESP) webinar. Three hundred million rand was allocated to the arts. Among the applicants were council members. No-one saw any conflict of interest there. Council member Advocate Makhosini Nkosi told artists if they had a problem, they should take it up with the Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture.



Photo: Troy Onyango

Equally interesting was that some of the artists and organisations that received the grant are now being offered up to sixty percent less and have had to shut down and seek other ways of earning an income.

All this while the custodian of the PESP funds for the arts, the National Arts Council, claims to have run out of money and is asking for more monies from Department of Sports, Arts and Culture (DSAC) to meet its obligations. Why do they need a bailout?

We are writers.

We are witnesses.

And we can testify.

But here is the thing about being witnesses and testifying.

If a tree falls in the forest and white media doesn't know about it, did it fall at all?

If a writer writes, whether as a witness, canary in the mine or testifier, and no-one reads it, does it matter?

I would posit that at the moment, it doesn't.

So, how do we make literature as significant and relevant as an art form as we do dance, music or film so that when we witness or testify our voices count? After all, literature, when well executed, not only entertains but educates.

Perhaps it's time that literature has what Thando Mgqolozana has fantasized about. A literature foundation. It could be a blueprint for the continent.

It would ensure that literature is accessed in villages as much as it is by the middle and upper classes. It would monitor that there is no "Africana" section in bookstores because Africana would comprise majority of the stock. After all, is this not Africa? Is there an Americana or Europeana section in bookstores in America and Europe?

Writers would not need to witness, prophesy or testify for the people who don't know they have done so. People would do it for themselves because across economic brackets they would know the works of writers from this continent, living or dead, and realise there are so many stories that resonate.

We would not hear such statements like "African writers don't write sex/humour/crime/fantasy/sci-fi/romance/politics/YA/children's books". We have written those books, we are writing them and we shall continue to write them. A literature foundation would help to publicise this.

Our continent would be immensely enriched if each country had a literature foundation where writers

would not need to debate whether to take Ngugi's side or Achebe's side on the language question. Because you see, writers would work in a language of their preference certain that if their work is engaging enough, it could be translated into any another of our languages. Our universities would not allow anyone to earn a Master's degree in any language if they have not translated a book from this continent from one language to another.

TO BE TRULY POWERFUL IS TO HAVE YOUR OWN VOICE AND TELL YOUR OWN STORY.

A literature foundation would also act as an arbitrator between publishers and writers, providing auditing services where writers have queries about royalties.

The African Continental Free Trade Area, which many of our countries have signed and ratified, would ensure easier movement of books and cancel VAT on books. How can we tax knowledge and art? Why would we tax art knowing what we have learnt during this pandemic about its ability to heal us?

Educated but unemployed citizens would work in libraries, teaching literacy through our stories. We would have literary awards where people would fight for an invitation as much as they do for music or film or theatre awards. Because our leaders would understand that a reading continent is a leading continent, more so as it already has all the other resources that the rest of the world wants. As a country, as a continent, we would be unstoppable. Because to be truly powerful is to have your own voice and tell your own story. And stories are literature. And literature goes hand-in-hand with literacy.

Advocacy. Policy. Grants for publishing and translation. An annual award ceremony. That would be part of what a literature foundation would do.

As writers, we can be witnesses, appear to foretell doom or testify. Unfortunately, as long as no-one reads us and engages with our work, it will not matter.

I am Zukiswa Wanner.

I love and believe in this rich but poor continent.

I am sometimes mistakenly thought of as a canary in the mine but I am always a witness, a testifier and a writer.





Acclaimed novelists Nozizwe Cynthia Jele, Angela Makholwa and Zukiswa Wanner have established a consultancy to help aspirant writers get the best rewards from their work.

Writers' Inc - Powering The Might of The Pen

*Is it the angel of death known as ‘writers’ block?’
Solitary work that blinks back at the screen or the writing pad, screaming
for validation? Or maybe it’s finding a good editor who can push and
encourage you to take that manuscript from average to great?*

When internationally acclaimed writers Nozizwe Cynthia Jele, Angela Makholwa and Zukiswa Wanner met over a virtual cup of coffee during the height of Covid-19 in 2020, these are just some of the challenges that they discussed. The discussion birthed Writers' Inc, a platform that provides services to elevate the writer's life by offering much needed services for those in the business of writing.

"We are here to ease the burden of writers who are passionate about their craft but lack the tools to make their work publishable and profitable," says Angela Makholwa, author of critically acclaimed novels such as *Black Widow Society*, *The Blessed Girl* and, more recently, *Critical But, Stable*.

Constantly approached for assistance and advice, these three accomplished writers decided that this warranted the creation of the Writer's Inc platform.

"After 15 years in the publishing industry, one gripe most authors complain about is how to get the work out there once it's published. There's always tension between overmarketing yourself and annoying everyone on social media or underselling yourself and failing to get sufficient publicity for one's work. We want to teach authors how to strike the right balance", says Goethe Medaillist and author of much-loved titles like *The Madams*, *Maid in SA: 30 Ways to Leave Your Madam* and the award-winning *London Cape Town Joburg*.

For award-winning writer Jele, it's about creating multiple revenue streams from a published work. Jele's debut novel *Happiness Is A-Four-Letter Word* had a screen adaptation and was one of the highest-grossing box office hits of 2016.

"Writers need to have the tools to monetise their work and understand the contracts that they sign as their work takes on new forms. As a writer, you may be underpaid but don't know how best to ask for what you deserve."

Jele, who also authored the much-loved novel *The Ones' with a Purpose* continued, "most authors do not have the resources to negotiate fair value for the work that they spend many hours cultivating for the world to enjoy. We have resourced Writers' Inc to be able to deliver contractual services in order to empower writers to protect their works."

Writers' Inc is an umbrella body that offers writing and publishing workshops for short and long fiction and creative nonfiction, editing services, scriptwriting courses, manuscript reviewing and proofreading. The three writers have adopted a "best of breeds" approach by working with other experts in the literary and screen writing fields.



WRITERS NEED TO HAVE THE TOOLS TO MONETISE THEIR WORK AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTRACTS THAT THEY SIGN AS THEIR WORK TAKES ON NEW FORMS.

"Our business model includes retaining legal and marketing brains that will enable writers to get the best rates when negotiating contracts and advice on such pertinent issues such as distribution rights and royalty fees. If self-publishing, we will hold your hand from first draft right through to marketing the end product. The company also provides administration and management of writing, speaking and workshop facilitation opportunities for writers across the African continent," says Makholwa.



Writers who seek representation or who need assistance with any of Writers' Inc's services can get in touch by dropping us an email addressed to writersinc@gmail.com



Photo: Thandukwazi Babusibezwe Gcabashe

Fred Khumalo is a versatile novelist, short story writer and journalist.

Fred Khumalo

MORE THAN A DOZEN BOOKS & STILL GOING STRONG

By Thobile Hans

Fred Khumalo is certainly one of the most versatile and prolific contemporary writers in South Africa. In a career that spans over three decades, the Reluctant Zulu, as he often calls himself, has churned out a dozen books and penned hundreds of columns, and it seems there are many more up his sleeve.

As he was growing up in Mpumalanga township, outside Durban, Khumalo knew he was destined to be a writer. At school he started writing poetry under the tutelage of the revered Black Consciousness poet and founder of Mpumalanga Arts Ensemble, Mafika Pascal Gwala.

"In high school I wrote something I mistook as poetry and short stories that I showed to my English teacher

Mr Mungwe. He hooked me up with Mafika Gwala. I had known Mafika Gwala as this troublesome person who brought Steve Biko to our township. We spoke about him in hushed tones. In apartheid days there were those guys we looked at and said *uyapolotika loya*. Mafika Gwala was like that. I didn't know much about his writing. It turned out he was an internationally recognised writer. I would see the guy getting drunk. He was my father's age and I didn't know about his work. He looked at my writing and we had a good chat," said Khumalo.

As a writer plying his trade in isiZulu and English, Gwala did not give the young Khumalo false hopes that becoming a writer would make him rich. From the get-go, the mentor asked his student what he wanted to become.

"I said I wanted to be a writer. He laughed and said, 'Well, you will starve and there is no guarantee you will be published. You might do a degree in literature but there's no guarantee you will be published. So, I'd advise you to study journalism because it will guarantee you a job and you might start practising serious writing while you are employed,'" said Khumalo.

Khumalo joined Azanian Students' Movement (AZASM) at school. He got involved in politics because he was "dismayed and angry at the ignorance and apathy of the people of my age. AZAPO (Azanian People's Organisation) attracted people who were thinkers."

While in Standard 9 (Grade eleven) at Phezulu High School, Khumalo came up with the idea of compiling a news bulletin he would present to his schoolmates and teachers.

"Every morning at assembly we did prayer and the teachers would read announcements and they would say 'Mfana wezindaba – Frederick Khumalo', and I would get up and read my news bulletin. These stories were a digest of stuff I would have picked up from local newspapers. The digest also included stories I would have picked up in the township. These were all written and presented in my own style. My voice was still very squeaky. Initially, my schoolmates would make fun of it. That story is there in *Touch My Blood* (my first book)," bragged Khumalo.

Seeing the popularity Khumalo was getting with girls, other boys asked to join him. This resulted in him becoming the editor of the group of five for a year before others "ran out of steam". In matric year, Khumalo was the only newsreader standing.

In 1985, Khumalo went to Natal Technikon to study journalism as per the advice of his mentor Gwala. It was while he was at this institution that he encountered, and then immersed himself in the writings of Tom Wolfe and Norman Mailer. These writers would have a lasting impact on his approach to journalistic writing. They were the founders of what was then called New Journalism. These days it is interchangeably referred to as narrative journalism, or creative journalism.

"It is not straightforward news reporting. You research your subject or do interviews with other people, and when writing, you employ techniques generally used by fiction writers: setting, character, elaborate description, dialogue. I am more in love with this approach to journalism as it allows the writer to give context and atmosphere. When I started working for newspapers I excelled in that kind of writing. And

I was lucky to have editors who saw that in me. I wasn't good at chasing stories and breaking stories," said Khumalo

Khumalo cut his teeth as an all-rounder journalist at *UmAfrika* (a Zulu newspaper) back in 1987 in a KwaZulu-Natal that was politically volatile at the time.

"I was once attacked by Inkatha members. They beat me up and left me for dead. My writing in *UmAfrika* – a newspaper owned by the Catholic Church – was very left-wing because we exposed collaboration between Inkatha and the apartheid government. We exposed a lot of things and we were not popular with government and its Inkatha surrogates," said Khumalo.

I AM MORE IN LOVE WITH THIS APPROACH TO JOURNALISM AS IT ALLOWS THE WRITER TO GIVE CONTEXT AND ATMOSPHERE.

His editor at *UmAfrika*, Cyril Madlala, was worried about the personal safety of his understudy, so he had to find a plan to have him leaving the country. In 1991, through an NGO based in the United Kingdom, Khumalo, alongside a number of other young professionals, found himself in cold Canada where he worked as an intern journalist at *Toronto Star*.

He returned to South Africa a year later to work for *City Press* and that was the beginning of his more than 30 years of working for major newspapers in the country.

As he was reaching the peak of his career in the The pinnacle of his print journalism career is probably when he served as editor of *Insight and Opinion* at the *Sunday Times* for nearly 10 years. In 2008, while still at the *Sunday Times*, Khumalo also hosted, on a freelance basis, *Encounters*, a public debate television programme on SABC.



Photo: Thandukwazi Babu Ibeze Gcabashe

Khumalo believes history offers the luxury of distance to both the writer and the reader.



"I was first published as a writer (of fiction) in *Staffrider* magazine. It launched a lot of writers' careers like Njabulo Ndebele and Chris van Wyk, who later became its editor. It introduced new writers and I was published in 1991. After that I published short stories in *Tribute* magazine. What I am trying to say is that there wasn't a radical departure from journalism. I was working for a Zulu language newspaper, while at the same time freelancing for *Tribute*, *Bona*, *Pace* and *Drum* magazines. I was hungry to be recognised," said Khumalo.

His major breakthrough in literature came in 2006, when he won the inaugural European Union Literary Prize with his debut novel, *Bitches' Brew*. In the same year, he published his autobiography, *Touch My Blood*. To date, Khumalo has authored 13 books in both English and isiZulu, including *Bitches' Brew* (2006), *Touch My Blood* (2006), *Seven Steps to Heaven* (2007), *Zulu Boy Gone Crazy* (2010), *The Lighter Side of Robben Island* (2012), *Zupta Must Fall* (2016), *Dancing the Death Drill* (2017), *Ngenxa yeMendi* (2019), *Talk of the Town* (2019), *UManzekhofi Nezakhe* (2019), *The Longest March* (2019) and *The Heart of a Strong Woman* (2020).

In 2019, following the publication of his historical novel, *The Longest March*, which is a fictional recreation of an incident that occurred in 1899, where about 8 000 Zulu men along with women and children, walked from the gold mines in Johannesburg to KwaZulu-Natal, covering a distance of about 500 kilometers over ten days. The fictional reimagining of this historic event was not enough for Khumalo, instead, in October 2019 he decided to embark on a physical journey to retrace the footsteps of his ancestors, and walk from Johannesburg all the way to Ladysmith, where the historic march culminated some 120 years earlier.

"My wife and kids thought I'd gone crazy when I told them I would be walking from Johannesburg to Natal. I began to have my own doubts." Despite the initial misgivings, Khumalo started training for the long march in earnest, and, on 7 October, he took the first step in a journey that was guaranteed to shed him a few kilograms, but inscribe him in the annals of longest walkers of 21st century South Africa. Readers followed him online, travellers cheered, whistled and hooted as they whizzed past him in their cars. His friend Sandile Ngidi, the poet, drove ahead of him, to secure accommodation on a daily basis.

Drenched in sweat, energy waning and lips dry, Khumalo was buoyed by the hero's welcome with which he was received by the community members in Ladysmith, who formed a guard of honour as he walked into the town on the final day of the march.

The mayor, Mabhoyi Madlala, presented him with a trophy already emblazoned with his name. His long walk was no longer just about his book, but also helped to shine a spotlight on the backwater town whose intangible heritage is little known. The Ladysmith Town Council has undertaken to make the long march of 1899 part of the heritage trail of Ladysmith, a town that earns a significant portion of its revenue through tourism.

MY WIFE AND KIDS THOUGHT I'D GONE CRAZY WHEN I TOLD THEM I WOULD BE WALKING FROM JOHANNESBURG TO KWAZULU-NATAL.

Explaining his fascination with historical novels, Khumalo says history offers the luxury of distance to both the writer and the reader. "Distance in both emotional and intellectual terms. At a historical remove we are more able to put matters in context, to better analyse them, and interpret cause and effect. Even contemporary stories are likely to have a richer resonance if they can trace their provenance to an earlier era. Or if what's happening in the story now has a historical context."

Khumalo's hard work over the years is paying off. He is now a multi-award-winning and internationally acclaimed author. His novel *Dancing the Death Drill* won the Best Fiction Single prize at the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) awards in 2019. The same novel has been adapted as a stage play and graced prestigious stages across the world. The novel has now been translated into German. His latest short story collection, *Talk of the Town*, won the Nadine Gordimer Short Story Prize at the South African Literary Awards in 2020.

Khumalo's works are now subject of pedagogic instruction, critiqued by distinguished scholars and prescribed at a number of universities in South Africa and abroad. Professor M.K. Masemola, Executive Dean of Human and Social Sciences at UNISA, has this to say: "In Khumalo's work, the instinct to critically interrogate history is inscribed by a vacillation between memoir and metafiction, swinging on a pendant of an intertextually weighted pendulum of allochthonous memory."

"This is very deliberate on the part of Fred Khumalo, whose two texts [Touch My Blood and Seven Steps to Heaven] under discussion engage the past with a sophisticated line of continuity based on cyclical overlaps of past and present, as well as the auto-biographical and fictional figures on a national and transnational scale." (2021: pp. 106 – 107).¹

Khumalo's resounding success on the literary front follows an equally glittering career in journalism. In 2011 and 2012, he was awarded the coveted Nieman fellowship to spend one academic year at Harvard University in United States of America, thus following in the footsteps of a long list of iconic South African journalists, including Lewis Nkosi, Nat Nakasa, Aggrey Klaaste, Zwelakhe Sisulu, Allister Sparks, Joe Thloloe, Pippa Green and Lizeka Mda.

"The Nieman is a prestigious thing. It gave me so much confidence. I said, 'look at me I am at Harvard talking here and people are eating off the palm of my hand and they actually assign me to write for them,'" reminisced Khumalo.

Khumalo, who now writes full-time, published four books in 2019 alone. He recently participated as the main featured writer at the Time of the Writer Festival. He took part in a number of panel discussions, including one called "Gender, Power and Violence".

"I have written a lot of stories that are women-driven. Of course, we live in a country that for a long time has had a problem with the abuse of women. It is only now, as women, children and men, that we are speaking about these things openly. As a writer with a social conscience, I feel it is my responsibility to articulate and create a platform on which these issues are ventilated."

Khumalo, who reads to children live on Facebook daily and is also a columnist for *Sowetan*, has written a novel for young adults that's due late this year. But before that, in April he will be launching a collection

of short stories titled, *A Coat of Many Colours*, whose title is obviously inspired by Dolly Parton's song of the same name.

AS A WRITER WITH A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE, I FEEL IT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY TO ARTICULATE AND CREATE A PLATFORM ON WHICH THESE ISSUES ARE VENTILATED.

The Reluctant Zulu – to the loss of the taxi industry – has taken up a lectureship post as the Adjunct Professor of African Literature at the University of South Africa. We can only hope that he will be able to impart knowledge and inspire a new generation of literary enthusiasts who will be as passionate about reading and writing.



1 From "African Cultural Memory in Fred Khumalo's Touch My Blood and its Metafictional Para-texts", Journal of Black Studies (2021), Vol. 52 Issue 2, pages 103 - 122

LAUNCHING IN APRIL

A collection of short stories titled, *A Coat of Many Colours*, whose title is obviously inspired by Dolly Parton's song of the same name.

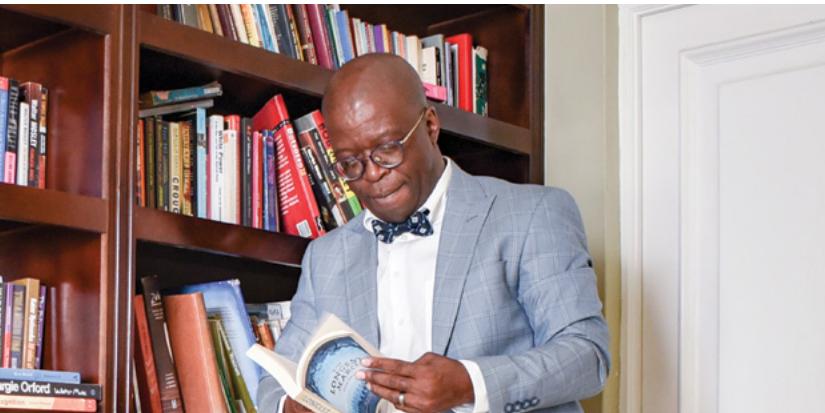
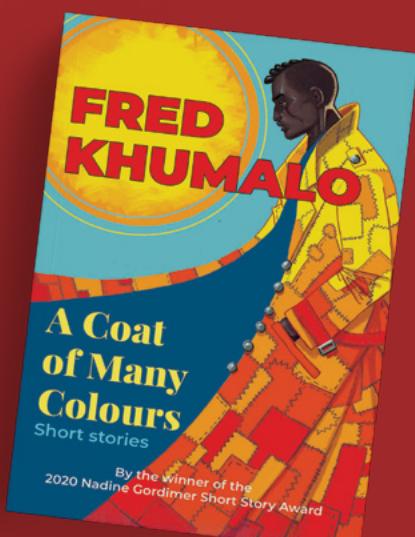


Photo: Thandukwazi Babusibezwe Gcabashe

Poet Mafika Gwala encouraged Khumalo to first study journalism before dabbling in other forms of writing.



Libraries Matter

South African Library Week was celebrated from 15 – 21 March 2021. Organised by the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA), the programme was conducted through virtual platforms as it is becoming a common practice under the “new normal”. The campaign was aptly themed, “Libraries Matter”. In this special feature of *Imbiza*, we attempt to answer the question: “Why do libraries matter?”

AN ENCOUNTER WITH A LIBRARY

By Siphiwo Mahala

My encounter with a library was by sheer accident. Growing up in Makhanda, Eastern Cape, my friends and I often watched bioskop at Noluthando Hall. It so happened one day that while we were waiting for the hall to open, we were called to come and watch a bioskop for free in the smaller house next to the hall. Although the movie was not as exciting as the karate bioskop we had intended to watch, there was another attraction around us – books!

As soon as the movie ended, I started browsing through the books on the shelves. The person in charge asked me if I was interested in taking any of them home. The answer was a resounding “Yes”! Books had been my reliable companions from a young age, but I had never been surrounded by so many at the same time. My father used to bring home books from the “white school” where he was a labourer. I chose a number of books that caught my eye, presented them to the official behind the counter and went home with a pile.

From that day onwards, I became a regular visitor at Duna library – the small house that until that point held no significance to me. The library became the place where I did my homework, browsed books and took some home for leisure reading. It was apartheid South Africa, and I did not realise how privileged I was until I lived in KwaMavuso village in Alice, where there was no community library. Sadly, more than thirty years later, there is still no library in KwaMavuso and many other rural areas in the country.

Despite numerous interventions by government, the library sector and civil society organisations,

libraries remain sparsely located and concentrated in the cities, thus continuing to serve the privileged minorities to the detriment of township and rural communities. The building of library infrastructure in underprivileged areas ought to be coupled with sustainable campaigns that foreground libraries as paramount in the inculcation of a culture of reading. The availability of local content, particularly works by African authors, is essential in the transformation of the library sector as well as in engendering a community of new readers.

The combination of a well-resourced library infrastructure and a reading campaign is what would propel us forward. Libraries can take the youth off the streets, give them access to books and introduce them to a reading culture that will open new vistas beyond their immediate environment. They are fundamental in growing a reading culture and building a knowledgeable society. Books have the ability to change lives. That is why libraries matter.



The combination of a well-resourced library infrastructure and a reading campaign is what would propel us forward.



Photo by Zahid Izzuddin on Unsplash

ON READING, BOOKS & LIBRARIES

By Nohra Moerat

I was a library user before I could read. My father, a high school teacher, was a member of Wynberg Library and believed in reading to your children from the time they are born.

Unlike my younger sister and my much-younger brother, I never attended pre-school, but I could read and write by the time I started school. Instead, I was raised on a fourteen-volume set of *Childcraft*, the teacher's aide my mother used as a primary school teacher. An encyclopaedia for young children, with simple texts and illustrations, they covered topics from nursery rhymes to short stories, fairy tales and folklore to myths and legends.

The primary school I attended highly valued reading and prize-giving concerts at the end of the year, including book prizes for achievers. Every year we were given a reading list; we had to be able to recite poetry and tell the class about a book we had read from the list. This was in addition to having readers, prescribed textbooks from which we learned to read. In senior primary we were expected to write book reports about the books on our reading list.

I was an insatiable reader and could go through the school's list in no time. The *Childcraft* series had been read from cover to cover (except for the volumes on parenting) and so my father took us to the library every week.

Besides the regular visits to the Wynberg Library, my father bought a complete set of the Companion Library children's classics, supposedly for my brother, but since he was still a baby at the time, I claimed them for myself. In addition, we were treated to monthly trips to CAFDA's second-hand bookshop where fifty cents could buy you five children's books.

These early reading experiences helped me develop very eclectic tastes in literature. Strangely enough, I can remember many books, or at least their titles, quite vividly, but I have no personal recollection of



our trips to Wynberg Library. Could this be because in 1967 this notice was put up at the library?

"The City Council has been obliged to provide separate library facilities for Whites and non-Whites, in order to comply with the requirements of Cape Provincial Library Ordinance No. 4 of 1955. In Wynberg a new library for non-White members has been built on the corner of Sussex and Bexhill Roads. It will be known as the Castletown branch. As this library is now open, we greatly regret that we must request our non-White members to transfer their membership to it." Laishley, K. & Zinn, S. (2015).

**THESE EARLY READING
EXPERIENCES HELPED ME
DEVELOP VERY ECLECTIC
TASTES IN LITERATURE.**

In September 1967, Castletown Library opened to serve the "non-White" members of Wynberg Library and the Coloured population of Wynberg. My father, a staunch supporter of South African Council on Sports (SACOS) and its campaign "no normal sport in an abnormal society", never used the library again. He would drop us off and we would walk home.





CHILDREN'S LITERATURE A FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

By Elinor Sisulu



Ngugi wa Thiong'o, one of my foremost literary heroes, whose writing changed my world view when I was a young university student, has for many decades explored and exposed the ravages of colonialism through his literature and political and social commentary. He has long argued for a renaissance of African languages as a necessary step to the restoration of African wholeness.

I had the privilege of being in the audience when he gave a powerful keynote address at the 2019 Africa Rising International Publishers' Association seminar in Nairobi in which he said:

"The eclipse of African languages as valid vehicles of intellectual and literary production, with the African elite and the government's accepting the abnormality as the desirable normality, is not purely the product of the dominance of the Europe-based or even Africa-based publishing enterprise. It was the result of the colonial project: years and years of a conscious programme of denigration of African languages".¹

I've long admired Ngugi's efforts to promote writing in African languages by writing in his own mother tongue Kikuyu. I fervently believe that his cherished goal of decolonising the African literary landscape through the use of African languages cannot be achieved without a focus on children's literature. I have often argued that if literature were a house, children's literature would be the foundation. A house with a shaky foundation is unlikely to be around to serve future generations. A language without a vibrant

children's literature will face the same challenge.

In an article entitled "The Earth Turns on a Foreign Axis", the late Zimbabwean writer Chenjerai Hove, another of my literary heroes and a beloved brother, argued that education in Africa has been an alienating experience because from the time an African child enters a classroom, he finds that his world is not worth learning about:

Nothing about my own parent's farming routines, the birds of my own sky, the smell of my own land, the cries of the children, as mothers sang African lullabies to them, and the folk tales which sent ghosts reeling in our imagination. Nothing about the stories of witches and medicine-men and women as they fought to control both the gods and the human beings. All became 'superstition' as we succumbed to the new religion, never to return or maybe to remain in some grey area of confusion.

**I HAVE OFTEN ARGUED THAT
IF LITERATURE WERE A HOUSE,
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
WOULD BE THE FOUNDATION.**

Developing an Afro-centric children's literature is a deeply political project. It is at the heart of ensuring that our children's education will no longer be an alienating experience and that the Earth will not continue to turn on a foreign axis.

¹ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Africa Rising: IPA Seminar, Nairobi, June 2019

In his book *Palaver Finish*, published by Zimbabwean publisher Weaver Press in 2002, Hove hankered after a national cultural and book policy:

For me a book policy ensures that there is no book hunger among children in school and those who have left school. Libraries in the townships and other places must be provided with books bought for the readers by the state. But whenever will we have anything like that? Suppose the state made it a rule to remove book hunger: the Ministry of Education would buy ten thousand copies of every new book published locally by a local writer, to give to schools. Every school library would be full of books by local writers, giving children an initial taste of the world through the literature of the land. For it is in those works that the children will discover what their geographical, psychological and emotional landscape is about in order later to appreciate the landscapes of others, in other lands.” (*Palaver Finish* p.86)

In 2015, South African author Thando Mgqolozana followed up his declaration of withdrawal from South Africa's white literary establishment with 20 tweets outlining steps that were needed to decolonise literature. These included more libraries and bookshops in black communities, vibrant literary festivals in townships around the country, writing competitions, literary magazines, book shows on radio and television – all this primarily in mother tongue. He argues that it is not possible to establish a culture of reading unless we cultivate a new literary infrastructure – “our own thing”. And to do this, he argued, we need a functional support system.

The Puku Children's Literature Foundation is one of those initiatives that tries to do “our own thing”. We have worked hard to develop the puku.co.za website to communicate, advocate, network and participate in the promotion of books so creators and consumers of Afro-centric children's literature will have a more structured and organised system for selecting, reviewing and sharing accurate data on children's books. We have tried to generate quality multilingual content to populate our platforms, mainly book reviews in all our languages. Our strategy is to cultivate strong editorial and reviewing skills among indigenous language content creators to contribute to a comprehensive review process that ensures quality children's book reviews in all South African languages.

Like many other individuals and organisations in the children's literature ecosystem, we are struggling. Our government is strong on rhetoric when it comes to promotion of reading and support for African languages but government levels of investment are

just not large or consistent enough to cultivate a new literary infrastructure envisioned by Mgqolozana. Tragically, the Covid-19 pandemic has eroded the little support and investment the literary world was getting.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted more than ever, the need for our children and young people to become independent readers and have access to reading resources in languages they most need. As the pandemic has forced an increased uptake of remote learning across multiple platforms, our task of producing enduring and memorable content in all our languages has become increasingly urgent. Whatever the difficulties, the work must go on. *Aluta continua.*

IT'S NOT POSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH A CULTURE OF READING UNLESS WE CULTIVATE A NEW LITERARY INFRASTRUCTURE.



The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for our children and young people to become independent readers and have access to reading resources in languages they most need.



The Siyafunda Donate-A-Book initiative has helped 45 rural schools establish libraries in more than 30 communities and seven provinces across the country.

Changing Lives, ONE BOOK AT A TIME

By Lucas Ledwaba

T is not surprising that the University of KwaZulu-Natal, through its 24th edition of Time of the Writer Festival, has bestowed the honour of Time of the Writer Literature Champion Award on Ntokozo Ndlovu.

Ndlovu, who works with The Web Foundation and Siyafunda Donate-A-Book projects, is on a mission to spread the love of books and has to date "helped 45 rural schools establish libraries in over 30 communities and seven provinces across the country. In five years, we have managed to donate more than 375 000 books to rural schools and communities. In the process, we have reached more than 18 000 pupils in both primary and secondary schools."

Ndlovu takes it all in his stride as he continues on his calling to keep the spirit of the book alive in the remotest parts of the country.

"We (are) deeply grateful for the recognition of our work, because I am very sure that every other nominee for this award was as capable, if not more, of winning this award," he says.

In addition to establishing libraries in 2018, they started a process to transform the rural schools to be in line with the digital age.



"We have since established Computer Centres in three rural schools, each equipped with 10 personal computers. We believe that pupils in rural communities deserve the same exposure, opportunities and knowledge about the world around them that are easily accessed and afforded by pupils in urban areas. By providing the necessary tools to advance literacy and education in the rural areas, we can help millions of people fight poverty and inequality complexes," Ndlovu says.

Ndlovu, who is a member of the South African National Defence Force, believes in the power and influence of books and how they can influence and shape society.

"They [books] give us insight into how other people live, they broaden our worldview, they influence our thoughts on politics and social issues, they show us how to be better people, and they help us to not feel alone," he says.

Ndlovu explains that the Siyafunda Donate-A-Book focuses on collecting and distributing books by means of establishing libraries in rural schools. It is envisioned that the libraries will be focusing on developing the community as a whole.

"For those of us who read a lot, we always come across books that change our thoughts, actions or behaviour in some way. Over time, reading literally becomes a life-changing experience."

Ndlovu says the long-term vision is that "these rural school libraries will equip learners with life-long learning skills and develop the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens".

"The learners in the communities that we work in come from poverty-stricken families and are often secluded from basic amenities. They lack adequate digital and technological opportunities and often not exposed to world outside their villages. "Taking it one school at a time, we aim to balance the equation and equalise literacy opportunities," he says.

But he and his colleagues' mission is not about dwelling on problems. At the same time, there's no denying that taking on such an enormous responsibility while being a self-funded organisation is a difficult task. "Right now, we are renting a store in Pretoria and in Durban, which are very expensive, but we do not have any other option or choices. We also have a transport problem. We currently have one vehicle we use to move around collecting and distributing books in these remote areas. So, we need a more convenient and appropriate fleet of vehicles

that will enable the organisation to continue in our mission to transform rural schools into self-reliant lifelong learning institutions," reflected Ndlovu on the uphill battle to keep going to empower Africa and its children," Ndlovu says.

"We are working against all odds. We do not have luxury time to relax and play the blame game or have excuses of why we cannot add value to our rural children. We have pledged that we will do whatever it takes to reach and support as many poor rural primary schools as possible with children's books; create and maintain a culture of reading through education and training; establish Reading Advocacy Groups in schools and reduce the high number of school drop-out occurrences caused by insufficient text books."

OVER TIME, READING LITERALLY BECOMES A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE.

Another challenge is that books have not escaped the impact of the digital revolution which is forcing humanity to learn to do things differently from how they have always been conducted. "The rise of the Internet is only one aspect of the digital revolution, a technological transformation which has had, and continues to have, a profound impact on the book industry. We have realised the potential of digital technologies to enhance the learning experience such that pupils and teachers alike become engaged thinkers, active learners, knowledge constructors and global citizens that participate fully in the society and economy," Ndlovu says.

To counter this challenge, the mission of Siyafunda Donate-A-Book is to bridge the digital divide that exists between urban and rural communities, establish school libraries that promote and inspire curious minds, strengthen the existing Donate-A-Book programme, teach rural children information technology skills and provide internet access to rural communities through schools. Ndlovu emphasises solution-orientated mentality that drives his mission. "At Siyafunda Donate-A-Book we are of the view that when it is dark, do not curse the darkness, light a candle."





BEST FRIENDS

By Stacey Fru

Meet Zafar. Zafar is thirteen-years-old. Just like every other thirteen-year-old, Zafar attended school. But, unlike many, he struggled to make friends and talk to people. Zafar had no difficulties presenting a class oral. However, when it came to a one-on-one conversations, he would be left speechless or he would act in an abnormal ways. Because of this, Zafar had no friends.

This didn't bother him much because he loved sitting alone anyway. When alone, Zafar would be deep in thoughts. In his thoughts he kept saying to himself, "plus there is no one here whom I can relate too". Meaning that he finds no one in his school that he likes, or who likes him.

Zafar liked playing Yu-Gi-Oh card games and watching anime. All the other children in his grade liked Fortnite and sports.

Apart from his lonely school life, Zafar was also having troubles at home. Ever since his little sister was born, Zafar felt ignored by his parents.

His dad usually worked very late nights and the only day they spent time together was Saturday nights when they would usually talk about things sports-related. Zafar failed to see why so many men loved sports.

His mother was too busy, either on the phone or looking after his little sister. The only time Zafar had with his mother alone was when she needed his help to cook. Even then, she played loud gospel music to which she sang along and did not care much about what Zafar had to say.

Zafar's favourite moments in the house was when he could retreat into his room, listen to Billie Eilish and fantasise about many things and aspects of a life he might never live.

Zafar couldn't care less about what drama went on at school, but this Monday on his way through the school quad, he couldn't help but notice that his peers were talking about a new student.

"Great," he said to himself. "I wonder what this person will be like."

Another one of Zafar's favourite pastimes was to study humans. He was always watching people's actions and trying to make sense of what people say.

Zafar took his seat in class after greeting the teacher and began to manage his desk.

"Lightest to darkest."

"Shortest to tallest." He said quietly to himself.

In the middle of his sorting out, he heard his teacher announce: "Class, today I would like to introduce you to a new student by the name of Oliver. Oliver, take a seat."

The teacher pointed at the empty seat next to Zafar.

"Just great. Another human to talk too," Zafar muttered sarcastically.

"Oliver will need a buddy to show her around the school and give her tips and guidelines about everything. Who would like to volunteer?" The teacher asked.

At that moment, about nine hands shot up. The teacher took one glance at them and said: "Right Zafar, I think you would be perfect for that job."

Zafar's head shot up at the sound of his name and he looked at his teacher trying to send a signal that he couldn't deal with the prospect of talking to a human.

After all his attempts of sending eye signals had failed, Zafar thought it would be the best time to convince his teacher after lessons that he couldn't do it.

During the whole class, Zafar kept on thinking how to carefully construct his sentences so he would not make a mistake while talking to his teacher. The sound of the bell made him jump and instantly snap out of his thoughts.

He carefully packed all his belongings and made his way to his teacher's desk. Before he could utter a word, his teacher said, while marking papers: "I'm sorry Zafar but my mind is made up. Now don't forget to tell her about how strict I am with homework."

Zafar was shocked ... "How did he know what I wanted to say?" Then he remembered that he had also forgotten to hand in his homework! He quickly searched his bag and, when he found it, he realised his hands were shaking and were very sweaty as he handed his homework to his teacher.

His teacher looked at him and said with a smile: "This is a great opportunity for you to find your place in society, just be yourself."

Zafar said a quick "thank you" and rushed out of the class. As he turned around to go to his locker, he caught sight of Oliver. She was standing there staring at him. He quickly dropped his glance and made his way to his locker. When he put his books down, he thought of how to introduce himself. "Hey, I'm Zafar and I'll be your buddy for ..."

Zafar was cut off mid-sentence when he heard her voice. "Hi, I'm Oliver. Nice to meet you." She said putting out her hand.

Zafar shook her hand and said: "Hello, I'm Zafar and your uh...buddy for the term. Nice to meet you as well."

He then asked her to walk beside her as he carried on to show her all the classes they would have. He showed her the coffee and tuck shops, the quads, sports fields and different venues. Before long, they ended up where they had started.

Saying his last words, Zafar took a moment to look at Oliver and, as he did, he noticed something unique.

Oliver had a hearing aid. Oliver saw him staring and

she quickly said: "I was born with severe hearing loss. Therefore, I can't understand or hear anything without my hearing aid."

"Cool, it is my first time seeing it up close," Zafar responded.

The silence that came after that started to disturb Zafar. So, he grabbed his lunch from his locker, looked at Oliver and said: "Well, it's breaktime now and I'm really hungry. Catch you later." With that he turned around and started to walk away.

He then heard Oliver's voice. "Wait!"

Zafar turned around as Oliver continued, "as you know it is my first time here and I have no friends. So far, you have been the only person who has been nice to me after seeing my ear piece. So, can I please sit with you?" Zafar had never been asked that before. So, with heavy hesitation he agreed and waited for her to get her lunch.

They walked for a while before they stopped in a very narrow pathway. They then proceeded to a quiet area with the site of their small town below. They sat down on a rusty bench which looked like it had been there for many, many years before.

Oliver was amazed by the view and how isolated this place was. Turning to Zafar, she asked: "Where are all the other kids?"

Zafar looked at her and felt that he could trust her. He knew she was a good person, something he had sensed after secretly studying her during their tour. He then went on to tell her about his lonely school life and his classmates' attitudes towards him. When he was finished, Oliver kept quiet, unsure of what she was supposed to say.

Zafar started having his doubts about opening up to her. "No-one wants to hang out with someone like me ..." he added.

Oliver then looked at Zafar and said: "That was me at my old school, except that it was me distancing myself from everybody after everybody had distanced themselves from me because I was a 'deaf freak. My parents moved me here for a new start to find new friends." She then smiled at Zafar.



And that's how one great friendship started. Although Zafar didn't know it at first, Oliver would soon become his best and only friend in the whole wide world.

They found so many similarities and differences between each other. They talked about their family backgrounds and found that they came from completely different home environments but were treated the same. Both parents paid little or no attention to them and they were often alone with their thoughts.

Oliver was in the middle of one of her childhood stories when the bell calling for the end of break rung. They both jumped up, packed their things and walked back to their lockers.

Without showing it, they were both really happy for becoming friends that day. They once again met during second break and went to "The Spot", which was a name for their hang-out. While there, they continued their ever-fresh discussions.

That day Zafar went home feeling good about himself and his place in the world. He got in and started a conversation with his mother and was happy to look after his little sister. During his homework time, he couldn't stop thinking about his new friend.

"Oliver is my friend." He kept on repeating to himself and, every time he did, he would feel a tiny smile rising on his lips.

Zafar smiled the whole way through dinner. He observed that both his parents exchanged grins as they noticed how happy he was.

"How was school today Zafar?" His mother asked and eagerly waited for his response.

Zafar excitedly told his family about his new friend and every little detail about his morning. When he was finished, his parents were both confused and happy that their young son was finally opening up.

Zafar woke up the next day feeling happy to go to school. He quickly prepared himself, ate his breakfast with pride and rushed out and began his walk to school. He reached his locker and was surprised to see Oliver already there, quietly reading. He sat next

to her and saw she was reading Harry Potter. He tapped her on the shoulder and greeted her.

The whole morning before class, they were talking about the Harry Potter series – both the books and movies.

After class register, Zafar's teacher called him back. "Zafar, I've seen you've made a new friend," he said.

Zafar couldn't help but smile and nod. He moved forward and hugged his teacher and walked out of the class.

When he was outside, he looked at Oliver and asked her: "Oliver, are we friends?"

At first break, they somehow got into the topic of capitalism and socialism and politics. They both had very strong opinions on each topic. For 13-year-olds, they were oddly into these topics such that they also found a common interest in Ben Shapiro.

"She is so amazing," Zafar thought.

"He is so cool," Oliver was thinking.

At second break, they found out they live on the same side of town and could walk to school and home together. Zafar felt like he had the best, best friend ever.

After school, they went to a nearby park and bought sweets. They decided to do their homework together. When it was getting late, they both ran to their sides of the street. After promising they would meet at the same place for a few hours on certain days, they both went home.

When Zafar got home, his mother looked worried. Immediately he explained everything. She settled down and returned to her usual loud phone calls.

"Did I mention Oliver is a girl?" Zafar said at the dinner table. His mother and father looked at each other with concern, but his mother spoke up: "It doesn't matter if your new friend is a boy or girl, as long as you are happy, right honey?"

"Mmmm hm-mm," responded Zafar's father.

Zafar was happier than ever. "I-I love you guys." He said, staring at his plate.

His mother hugged him and said: "We love you too."

The next morning, Zafar met Oliver at their marked spot. They walked to school. During exam time, they would study together. Zafar introduced Oliver to his family and she was surprised about how nice they were to her and how they treated her like family. Oliver's family did the same. Both parents became close and that helped to secure their friendship.

Their friendship lasted until the last day of high school. That same year, they were both accepted at the same university about six hours from their homes. On the last day of his matric year, Zafar went back to the same teacher's class who "made" him become friends with Oliver.

He walked up to his teacher's desk and gave him a long hug and thanked him for that scary but wonderful thing he did to him almost six years ago. His teacher hugged him equally back.

"Don't tell anyone, but you have and will always be my favourite student ever. Watching you blossom from a self-absorbed loner to a boy who had company has been the highlight of my teaching career."

Zafar was stunned, but also happy that he managed to fulfil or highlight a teacher's career. His teacher then invited him to have tea at his house any time they returned from university for a home visit.

"Don't wait too long Zafar. Time is limited for me," he said with a slight smile.



THE HEAD THAT WON'T WEAR THE CROWN

By Babatunde Fagbayibo

No one could have predicted the event that finally shattered the tranquillity of the small, cocoa-growing town of Temidire. It happened on 20 February 1979, just three days before the community was supposed to welcome the campaign train of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the presidential candidate of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). The whole town was awash with excitement, with every cultural and age group planning to outdo each other. Another reason behind the heightened anticipation was the plan to use Chief Awolowo's visit as a platform to display the Crown Prince's achievement.

It had only been six months since Crown Prince Adelana returned from Moscow, where he studied and practised medicine for ten years. He was the first indigene of Temidire to become a medical doctor.

"Omo Oba, Prince, Adelana came back from overseas with a degree unlike indigenes of some villages we shall not mention, who only came back from Lagos as drunkards", so goes the famous line used in taunting neighbouring towns and villages.



Although many were proud of Prince Adelana's achievement, and his plan to upgrade the clinic in Temidire into a hospital, there were reservations about his choice of a Russian woman, Galina, as wife. This also unsettled the royal family, making some Chiefs broach the idea of shifting the Crown Prince status to his half-brother, Aderopo. The fact that Galina was already pregnant further complicated the succession equation.

"How would the Gods recognise what is growing inside of this white woman? The child would probably speak that foreign language she is always speaking to Adelana. No, this cannot happen, eewo orisa!" lamented Chief Ojoge, one of the Kingmakers.

The community's displeasure did not last long as Galina cleverly inserted herself into the ways of doing things in Temidire. Adelana also deserved some credit here as he carefully took her through the process of capturing Temidire's heart.

"My people are not that complicated", he'd always tell Galina, "all they want is an acknowledgment of their way of life."

Galina followed the steps like a student preparing for an examination. She quickly learned how to pound yam and cook Egusi soup for Adelana and his friends. She was always on her knees every time she was in the presence of her father-in-law and the chiefs. She also insisted on going to the market herself, joined the biggest women cooperative group in Temidire, and befriended the other wives in the royal compound.

"Aya'ba oyinbo", the white queen, soon became the affectionate nickname the community gave to her.

If the community was happy about Prince Adelana's achievement and Galina's quick assimilation, why then were they both murdered? Their bullet-ridden bodies were found at around 6.15pm on 20 February 1979 by a group of farmers by the edge of the River Ayelala.

It was common knowledge that Prince Adelana and Galina loved going to relax by the River around 5pm on weekdays. It was their quiet time, as all the bustling activities around the River would have come to a stop at that time. Adelana would regale Galina with tales from his childhood, and tease her about his traditional duty to take more wives. He'd also reveal his fears about becoming a King. She'd smile and reply with a proverb Adelana's mother has told her so many times: "Even if the head dons an ordinary

cap for forty years, its destiny to wear a crown will never elude it."

"Yeepa, this is Omo Oba Adelana and his pregnant wife o," screamed Ajala, the farmer who was walking briskly ahead of the group.

Having confirmed their identity, the group quickly mandated Ajala to run as fast as his legs could carry him to the police station.

"Don't raise any alarm on your way o, just go directly to the police," instructed the head of the group.

The whole community was thrown into palpable grief by this horrendous act. In line with custom, all the markets in Temidire were closed for seven days, with the royal masquerades having a four-hour procession on each of those seven days. Chief Awolowo's campaign was immediately cancelled as a sign of respect to the King and the community. The King couldn't eat for days as he gawked into blank space, asking the Gods why he had to be punished in this manner. The thought of Aderopo becoming the next king made him more depressed. Aderopo was the black sheep of the family. He had dropped out of high school, took to drinking and womanising. The joke around the town was that every pregnancy in the town was Aderopo's doing until proven otherwise.

Adelana's mother was inconsolable. To her, everyone was a suspect. She had confronted Aderopo's mother, who is the second wife, accusing her of finally paving the way for Aderopo to become King.

"Let's see how far that drunkard son of yours will drag this town into the pit of hell," she yelled at Aderopo's mother.

There were no experienced detectives in the Temidire police station. The station head then sent a request to the divisional office in Akure for help. Detective Ikemefuna, a soft-spoken and respected officer, was immediately seconded to Temidire, with the purpose of leading the investigation. All officers in the Temidire police station were instructed to report directly to him on any matter relating to the double homicide case.

Detective Ikemefuna had the reputation of solving complex crimes across the division. He had single-handedly apprehended the dreaded kidnapper, Ajigijaga, in a brothel in Oke-Odo.

How Ikemefuna had gathered information about Ajigijaga's preference for that particular brothel, the way he hid in the room that Ajigijaga liked to use, and then finally arresting him with his pants literally down, and without firing a shot, made Ikemefuna an urban legend of sort. The many versions of the story told by people further mythologised Ikemefuna's detective prowess. There were rumours that Ikemefuna gets his powers from a particular medicine man in Sapele.

Ikemefuna arrived in Temidire three days after the murder, and headed straight to the police station for a briefing session with the officers. After assessing the bodies at the morgue, he was taken to the crime scene, where he silently checked out the angles surrounding the particular spot where the bodies were found.

"Officer, did you say that the Prince's body laid over that of his wife like a protective blanket?" he asked rhetorically.

"Yes sir", replied Officer Aremu, who had questioned the group of farmers after the incident.

"One thing is for sure then, the Prince was trying to protect his wife from the killer. I suspect that his wife must have been the target," Ikemefuna wondered aloud.

As they drove back to the police station, Ikemefuna brought out his notepad and drew a diagram of three circles. He labelled the first circle as PALACE SUSPECTS (Adelana's mom, Aderopo's mom, and Aderopo), the second as CHIEFS (especially Chief Ojoge), and the third as COMMUNITY (especially the women's group Galina belonged to).

"Aremu, please take me to the palace," Ikemefuna said in a tone that presumed that the clue to the murder riddle was within the royal household.

It's been two months since the murder, and Ikemefuna was yet to find any meaningful angle. Around the same time that Adelana and Galina were murdered, the King was having a meeting to settle a dispute among his six wives. The youngest wife, Remilekun, had complained to the King that the fourth and fifth wives were spreading false stories around the town that she regularly puts love potion in the King's food.

It couldn't have been Aderopo too, as it was confirmed that around the same time, he was with one of his concubines. Ikemefuna had also ruled out Chief Ojoge

since he was at his courtyard addressing his son's marital dispute during the same time.

The other Chiefs had alibis to confirm their whereabouts on the fateful day. The head of the women's cooperative group Galina belonged to dismissed the idea that any of the member could be responsible for the murder.

Ikemefuna was now getting edgy as he continued to hit dead-ends with the investigation. He worked and reworked the three circles, even replaced them with tables and arrows but still had no luck. He was, however, still insistent that Galina was the main target, with the Prince been a collateral damage. He decided to go alone to the River. As he watched kids swimming and women washing clothes and singing by the River, it suddenly hit him that this could be a case of a jealous lover. He took out his note again, and scribbled CHECKOUT ADELANA'S GIRLFRIENDS, PRE AND POST MOSCOW.

When he returned to the station, he asked Aremu if he knew any of Adelana's close friends.

"The Prince had only one bosom friend, Adio. He has a cocoa trading store close to the market square," Aremu promptly responded.

Ikemefuna and Aremu immediately drove to Adio's store, and found him busy with customers when they arrived. Adio was Adelana's confidante. Only Adio knew about his marriage to Galina in Moscow, and he had kept it a secret from everyone until Adelana decided to break the news to his parents two weeks before his arrival. Ikemefuna started by commiserating with Adio, and then jumped straight to his main question.

"Do you know of any girlfriend that Prince Adelana had either before leaving for Moscow or upon returning?" Ikemefuna asked as he stared directly into Adio's eyes.

"Hmmm, detective, my friend Adelana was not a womaniser like his brother. I can tell you for a fact that he never cheated on Galina," Adio responded in an emotion-laden voice.

"What of before he left for Moscow?" Ikemefuna asked again.



"Oh yes, there was Sefi, the daughter of the farm labourer. She was our classmate and they were quite close. But it ended when Adelana went to Moscow," said Adio.

Ikemefuna knew that there was more to the story, so he asked where he could find Sefi.

Sefi's parents had moved to Temidire from Okene, Central Nigeria in the mid-1940s, shortly before she was born. Temidire's thriving cocoa farms, and its legendary tranquillity, attracted many from all over the country. Sefi's father quickly found a job in one of the cocoa-growing farms as a labourer, where he lived and raised Sefi and her four siblings.

Both Sefi and Adelana were classmates at Temidire Grammar School, and were the top students in the entire school. Only Adio knew that they were dating. Adelana had begged him not to reveal this to anyone since the royal family was bound to disapprove of it. Aside Sefi's father being a farm labourer, there was an unspoken code in Temidire that frowns upon inter-marriage with the Ebiras. The few that had done it were considered insane rebels.

"Those Ebiras are cannibals," Adelana once heard his mother saying to her friend.

Sefi discovered that she was pregnant about six months before Adelana left for Moscow. Adelana was distraught, and persuaded Sefi to abort the pregnancy. This shattered Sefi as she felt that Adelana never wanted her. Adio was also brought into the picture by Adelana to help convince Sefi. Eventually, Sefi agreed. They found a doctor in Owo, who operated from a dingy, dirty room. The whole process was very quick but it left both Adelana and Sefi empty and gloomy.

Adelana had promised that he would write Sefi all the time from Moscow, and upon his return, they would get married, regardless of his parents' view. Sefi was very hopeful, and looked forward to Adelana fulfilling his promise. Adelana left for Moscow on 10 June 1968. He sent just one letter to Sefi throughout his ten-year sojourn in Moscow. That was on 30 August 1968. He expressed his love, and told her to remain positive about their future union.

Sefi waited in vain for Adelana's letters. As no one but Adio knew about the relationship, she couldn't discuss her pain with anyone. Adio also feigned ignorance, and never revealed to her that Adelana regularly sent

him letters. Sefi's frustration grew, as she couldn't go to university because her father was unable to afford the fees.

After five years of little progress, Sefi decided to learn dressmaking. She threw herself into the apprenticeship, and finished the learning process in a year. She then opened a small shop in town. It was during this period that she met Akanbi. Akanbi already had two wives but he told Sefi that he wanted a male child and he could sense that Sefi's body had the answer to his question. After much persuasion, Sefi agreed to become Akanbi's third wife. With three years of no pregnancy, she decided to go see a specialist in Akure. The specialist told her that she had a damaged womb, and would never be able to bear a child.

Sefi was devastated.

Ikemefuna made his way to Sefi's shop. When he got there, he introduced himself to her, and explained that he would like to ask her questions regarding Adelana.

"There is nothing to be said, detective" Sefi curtly replied.

It was at this point that Ikemefuna knew that Sefi had something to hide.

"Madam, you cannot choose to remain quiet on this. We can either do it gently here or at the station," Ikemefuna said with a stern look.

Sefi quickly re-adjusted her sitting position and agreed to cooperate. She told Ikemefuna that the relationship ended when Adelana left for Moscow. Ikemefuna then asked if she had met Adelana after he returned.

She paused for few seconds, gave a stiff grin, and blurted: "Why would I want to meet him and his trophy white wife?"

"So were you hurt about the break-up then ... or let me rephrase, did you see his return as an opportunity to exert vengeance?" Ikemefuna asked. Before Sefi could utter any word, Ikemefuna followed with another question: "Were you jealous of this trophy white wife?"

These questions resurrected suppressed pains, and Sefi broke down in tears.

As if propelled by an unknown spirit, Sefi told Ikemefuna about the abortion and the hurt that she still carries.

These questions resurrected suppressed pains, and Sefi broke down in tears. As if propelled by an unknown spirit, Sefi told Ikemefuna about the abortion and the hurt that she still carries.

"So where were you on the 20th of February 1979, between 5pm and 6.30pm?" Ikemefuna asked.

"I was, I was...at my father's place. No, no, I was in the shop," muttered Sefi.

"Shop or your father's house," Ikemefuna asked in an angry tone.

"No, I was preparing food for my husband," Sefi quickly responded.

"So do you have an alibi?" Ikemefuna asked as he buried his chin in his palm.

Sefi started sobbing again. Before she could gather her thoughts, Ikemefuna told her that he knew she

was behind the murders. He threatened to take her to the station if she failed to confess.

It was at that point that Sefi started to reveal how she had taken her father's hunting gun, and kept it in a sack for days, plotting how to hurt Adelana.

"The plan wasn't to kill Adelana. All I wanted to do was kill his pregnant wife to avenge the loss of my womb. When I pointed the gun at Galina, Adelana quickly jumped to shield her. This made me angrier as I saw in his eyes the kind of love he had denied me".

The shocking news of Sefi's arrest for the murders gripped the entire town. The King pleaded with the community not to retaliate by attacking the Ebiras. Sefi was charged with murder, and was sentenced to death by hanging on 30 July 1979. As he walked to his car after the sentencing, Ikemefuna couldn't help but feel sorry for Sefi. He had never felt sorry for any of the criminals he had successfully apprehended. "Why Sefi?" he wondered as he drove back to the station.



WHAT THE OLD MAN HAD TO SAY

By Liso Zenani

In the summer of 1855, I made my way to the mountain, after the tradition of my fathers. When the long and painful months were over, I was proud to find myself seated back at my father's kraal, fully initiated into manhood. My father was the chief of a small, prosperous village called Ngolo, half a day's walk from the Thume valley, and, like every young man in my position, I was overjoyed at the prospect of starting my own household, and at the opportunity of training and commanding my own men to supply King Sandile's army. It was then,

however, that a decree went forth from King Sarhili of AmaGcaleka. At first it sounded quite incredible, but as each week brought evidence that the wisest men in the Xhosa-speaking world took it seriously, we each fell in line. The ancestors had spoken, and the colonial scourge would soon be no more. After months of indecision, King Sandile, paramount chief of AmaRharhabe, issued his own decree: every citizen in the land of Ngqika was to slaughter all cattle in their kraals and burn every grain in their fields.



The great cattle killing brought nothing but misfortune to the Xhosa nation. At first – like every sacrifice – the hardship seemed worth it, as any day we expected the great warriors of the past to rise out of their graves and drive the kind who had brought blood and war to our land back to the sea. But as months passed and more cattle died and the smoke kept ascending from the fields, we were forced to ponder the question of our subsistence, once more. Gone was our wealth, and with it, a great deal of our pride and traditions. For the first time ever, reports reached us that bandits and cattle raiders had surfaced along the valley of the Kei and the outlying villages of the AmaRharhabe kingdom, and King Sandile soon found his power threatened by the newly established government of the British Kaffraria. Before we knew it, we had lost even more of our land to the colony, our borders shrinking by the day.

To my family, the movement brought the end of life as we knew it. Despite the best efforts to preserve all we could, my mother – along with six of my siblings – did not survive the resulting famine. In desperation, my father married off the remainder of my sisters from his right-hand house to the land of AmaGcaleka. But the hand of misfortune was yet to conclude with my family, and my father soon met his own death at the hands of bandits raiding the very cattle we had received in lobola. With twenty-two years to my name, few blood relatives, no cattle in my kraal and a hungry village to lead, I thus found myself alone in the world. In the circumstances, King Sandile resolved that not a moment be lost in suspending my chieftaincy and bringing my people under the authority and protection of the neighbouring chiefs. Sympathy to my plight, however, led him to extend to me the honour of serving him at his Great Place, and like so many young men in such conditions, I uprooted what was left of my life and soon found myself installed as one of the Abasengi Basekomkhulu at King Sandile's court.

Life at the king's court was fast-paced, demanding and rewarding. It was our duty to look after the king's property, run some of his errands and enforce his authority across the land. On occasion, we accompanied some of his councillors on delicate errands and, on the best of days, observed the Council on judicial appeals from the lower chiefs. Although a part of me – hollow and restless – never quite recovered from my family's demise, I found as good a home in King Sandile's court as such a place was possible to be. Though perhaps not fully content, I had found my niche in the hallowed grounds of the AmaRharhabe seat of power.

The relative peace of the 1860s was a calmly floating duck that hid the underwater chaos and tension that crept across the land of Ngqika. Attempts to recover from the famine were frustrated by the relentless efforts of bandits raiding what crops and cattle the nation attempted to grow; the colony's arrest of Chief Maqoma spread further despair and rumblings of another frontier war; and, finally, rumours surfaced that John MacLean's administration would soon be dissolved and British Kaffraria re-absorbed into the Cape Colony. Faced with such uncertainty, King Sandile promptly prepared the kingdom for another frontier war, and, in a campaign to maintain his authority over the subordinate chiefs, sporadically dispatched his councillors to assert his presence in every court in the land.

It was on one such assignment that a great crime was prevented and one of the AmaRharhabe's deadliest criminals brought to justice.

The sun was making its reluctant descent towards the tall Amathole Mountains, which stood nearby like gigantic tabletops patterned in the orange foliage of autumn, and a healthy breeze swept across the village. It had been a long day, and, forgetting my manners, I sighed loudly as the current breezed through Chief Lupondwana's court. The chief, who was a short, stout man with a thick mane of beard, sent me a sharp glance, then turned his attention to a man who had just gotten to his feet on his right.

"I am given to understand that was the last matter before us, madoda?" asked the man in a calm, quiet voice. He was tall and thin, with a broad forehead, a shrivelling grey beard and a bald head. He had the most piercing pair of eyes I had ever known, his face painted in the same ochre that brightened his blanket.

"Er – surely you will have some amarhewu before you depart, Chief Dingane?" said Chief Lupondwana. "My daughters are preparing a calabash as I speak."

I was relieved to see Dingane's manners gain the better of his impatience; he resumed his seat with a nod, and we soon quenched our thirst with the cool, refreshing drink. Afterwards, we thanked the chief and promptly took our leave. "Ah, Lupondwana!" we called as we turned away and made for the horses.

"I wonder what kept King Sandile's most eloquent councillor so quiet today," I said, once we were out of earshot.

"Hmm?" said Chief Dingane, bending to light his pipe on a log as we passed by the outdoor hearth. I could see by the lazy smile across his face that he was as glad to be heading home as I was.

"It was unlike you to miss the chance of making long explanations in court."

"Sometimes silence is the best thing a man can contribute."

"I think it more likely you were simply bored to death."

He raised an eyebrow as he took a long puff.

"I know you very well by now," I laughed. "You considered this assignment a disfavour. Tyeni is a tiny village in the pocket corners of the kingdom – none of those cases that excite you have any occasion to arise out here."

That evening's events were to prove me woefully wrong.

"On . . . on the contrary, Ntsika, my boy," he said, coughing, "the first step to becoming any decent councillor is to realise that no assignment is above or beneath you. Of course, I prefer matters of the more challenging variety, and neither, it appears, do I have the passion to pamper newly crowned chiefs. But we were about the king's business – that is what matters."

"But it wasn't entirely uninteresting!" I protested. Referring to a case that had seemed to stretch the wits of Lupondwana's advisers: "Take those twin brothers disputing over which of them was heir to their family's homestead, for instance. The court could certainly have used your long explaining, there."

"Any points of interest in that matter were resolved decades ago, in the late King Hints'a's court." He sighed. "That justice is tradition, and tradition justice is the only thing that you must – what have we here?"

We had reached the small cluster of yellowwoods where we had tethered our horses, that morning, and I had just assisted the old man onto his mount, when we spotted a young boy running towards us as though every leopard in the wild were behind him.

"Tat' omkhulu! Tat' omkhulu!"

"Ewe, nyana!" said Dingane. "What is it, my boy?"

"The . . . the chief, sir," said the boy, out of breath. "H-he says . . . he says something else came up, sir, and he needs your help at once."

"Now, look," I said, "give the chief our apologies. But we have a long way ahead of us, and it is almost sunset."

"P-please, sir. The chief says the strangest thing has happened, and he fears only Chief Dingane can help him now."

Dingane and I exchanged a look. We dismounted and retied the horses, then followed the boy back to the chief's homestead. A haunted silence had descended upon the men we had left cheerful and chattering only minutes before. We resumed our seats, and my attention was drawn immediately to the man seated within the circle. He was old and wizened, with a small head and the most anguished pair of eyes in the hollow sockets of a gaunt and narrow face. He was dressed fashionably in a rich ochre tunic and white blanket, but his manners showed the symptoms of a man in the throes of a serious mental illness. He would jerk his hands behind his head, twist his face in the most anguished contortion and whisper brokenly about making something stop.

"Now, Hleke," said the chief's spokesman, seeming to shake himself out of a trance. "Let us hear it, one more time."

"Why must you treat me so?" cried the old man. "Have I not lived through this curse long enough?"

"Er – just this once, man of my people," said Chief Dingane. The court took a sigh of relief. "I see some water over there . . . Ntsika . . . good, good . . . now, let us hear it."

The man downed half the calabash I handed him, then began slowly, "I thought I could bear it. I told myself it would go away. And now, even Zingela thinks –"

"I'm afraid I shall need to hear the full story, from the beginning. I am a stranger to these parts, you see."

"It begins somewhere, I suppose. It was about seven months ago, when it started. See, I am a very private man, mntan' omhle. My homestead lies on the hillside just over the river, and I employ a young man who looks after my kraals and cattle.

¹ It would appear that Chief Dingane was referring to the lawsuit of Vuyisile's twins, which had appeared before the court of the Great Hints'a KaKhawuta, a few decades previously.



Besides a girl who comes down from the village to clean and cook during the day, this man and I live alone. I – er – keep about five hundred cattle – or so I did, before this catastrophe."

Surprise flickered through Dingane's face before he sat back and closed his eyes, entwining his thin long fingers beneath his chin. "Not many people still possess such wealth, in these trying times."

"I came over from the land of Gcaleka during the cattle killing, mntan' omhle. I have been living at the village for the past five years – the chief's late father sold me a portion of the hillside."

"Please, continue."

"It is a long-standing habit of mine to take my baths in a small pool by the riverbed every evening. One night, I was heading down to the river, you understand, when a warm, most unnatural fog descended upon the path. Nociko, the girl, happened to be fetching water at the river about the same time, and I remember the poor child being so afraid and telling me it seemed the sort of mist in which one might encounter the dead.

"Don't you go filling your head with Zingela's old superstitions, you hear?" I told her, for Zingela, my manservant, had recently taken to recounting silly stories of acquaintances of his who claimed to have heard their forefathers speak to them from a mist.

"But I would take those words back, mntan' omhle, for a bodiless voice called out to me from the mist when I was heading home that night." He shuddered at the memory, then whispered: "It was the voice of my ancestors! I could hear it as clearly as I hear you."

"Could you describe it, this voice?"

"It was cold and lifeless. The most ominous thing I have ever heard. It . . . told me dreadful things. It said I had forsaken my departed fathers . . . I had turned my back on our customs, and they required atonement."

Asked whether he had been alone when the incident occurred, the old man responded in the affirmative, and told us that when he had gotten home, his manservant had convinced him that the whole incident must have been the trick of an old imagination. He had found this much easier to believe, until the same man had informed him, next morning, that over sixty cattle seemed to have vanished in

the night.

"Vanished?" I exclaimed. "Whatever could you mean?"

"Oh, it was the strangest thing. I had counted them myself the previous evening, see, and I happen to keep a pair of greyhounds on the grounds, so either of us should have heard the commotion had a thief visited the kraals."

"And you did not notice anything amiss with the dogs, in the morning?" asked Chief Dingane.

"Nothing, whatsoever, mntwan'omhle."

The servant had persisted that the old man must have miscalculated, the previous evening, and that the cattle had probably never returned home. Too frightened of the alternative, Hleke had conceded that his arithmetic came much harder to him in old age and that the cattle must have indeed slept at the velds. When the next few weeks yielded a fruitless search, he had been forced to conclude that bandits had been involved. But the herd was soon replenished by the winter calving, and he had pushed the incident out of his mind, until it repeated itself, five months later.

"This time, when I returned from the river, Zingela had counted the cattle himself and assured me that each one was accounted for.

"Good!" I told him. "Get the spears ready; you and I shall guard the kraals tonight."

"I am not a superstitious man, mntan' omhle, but when . . . when twenty cattle still turned up missing, the following morning, well, there was no point denying the truth any longer." Hleke had then instructed Nociko to brew a pot of umqombothi and had begun preparations for cleansing his household from the wrath of his ancestors. He had invited the village to his homestead, slaughtered a goat and his fattest ox and thrown a feast in honour of his forefathers. "But it happened again last night, mntan' omhle," Hleke cried. "Oh, I cannot bear it anymore!"

Dingane was the one to break the long silence that followed.

"I have just one or two more questions, Hleke. This young man in your employ – how long has he been with you?"

"Er – just under two years. He was recommended by old friends of mine from Uniondale when my last servant left to make his way in the world."

"Uniondale?" Dingane sat forward, a curious gleam in his eye. "Please describe this man's appearance, if you can."

"He is a towering fellow. About thirty years of age. Bulky, light-skinned."

"Any features that stand out?"

"I suppose . . . he does have that odd birthmark on his chest he always tries concealing."

Dingane sat back, his expression distant. After a few minutes: "Why here? I would have thought this a matter for healers, not courts. Why bring it here, instead?"

"That is what I thought at first, mntan' omhle. But Zingela suggested I bring it to the chief first. He had a point, for the chief must know what happens in his land."

"You mean this man advised you to come forward?"

"Yes, he insisted. Why do you–"

Dingane sprang to his feet with great excitement, another sharp glint in his eye.

"I need you to listen carefully, man – your life may depend upon it," he told Hleke. "Go home and retire for the night. If your servant asks, tell him the chief said he will send you with his men to consult a healer in the village of Ngele tomorrow morning. Make sure the dogs are tied up for the night. And whatever you do, do not touch your supper."

Hleke blinked several times in confusion. When no further detail seemed forthcoming, he nodded at the councillor, got to his feet and trotted off the chief's homestead.

Dingane turned to the rest of the chief's advisers. "The twelve of us will have to do, gentlemen. If we are quick enough, we may be on time to prevent a very serious crime. I need you to man every route that leads out of the village – the hillside, the stream, the forest. Make sure nobody enters or leaves the village tonight."

After a curt nod from the chief, the men got to their feet and hurried off in different directions.

"Now – eh – look, Dingane, what is this about?" said Chief Lupondwana, once only the three of us remained.

"If you could lead us to Hleke's homestead, mntan' omhle, I shall endeavour to make any explanations on the way. But first, we need weapons."

The chief led us to his armoury, located at the back of his homestead, where he and I picked a pair of spears, while Dingane selected a heavy knobkerrie.

"I believe we have crossed paths with none other than Zembe KaMdaka."

"Impossible!" cried the chief. "The name is a mere rumour."

"Indeed. Not more than a handful of people in the land of Ngqika know he exists – even fewer are more cunning."

"Who are you talking about?" I asked, my curiosity finally gaining the better of me. "What does he have to do with anything tat' uHleke was saying?"

"By far the most dangerous bandit in the land of Ngqika, Ntsika. His record ranges from extortion to theft, and even murder. I would be hard put to find anyone in recent years who has trampled on what our nation stands for more than he. As to how he comes to – "

"But he is just a rumour!" repeated Lupondwana.

We had fallen onto a narrow footpath that ran through a gully, flanked by dry acacias with drooping branches. Through the faint light of the gibbous moon, we successfully evaded hanging thorns.

"That is what makes him dangerous. While most bandits forcefully raid cattle at the point of a spear, this man is always associated with large numbers of cattle disappearing in the strangest of ways. But, each time, there seems to always be an elusive presence in the background – shepherd boys spot a peculiar stranger in the fields, or a neighbour suddenly dies in his sleep after a long walk, the previous night."



Always a presence that lurks in the shadows and vanishes before anyone cares to look. But I myself came close to running him to ground in a village outside Uniondale two years ago."

"But you can't dismiss the supernatural in this case, surely," I said.

"We shall soon find out!"

We had crossed one of the river's tributaries, left the valley and ascended a small hill, atop which lay a grand homestead with handsome, neatly thatched huts and large kraals that stretched far into the night. Light flickered from the windows of two of the huts, and as we approached, a tall figure emerged from the biggest and walked briskly towards the second lighted hut. We crouched on the grass as the figure passed, then rushed towards the hut it had just left once it disappeared into the other. The dogs began barking as the last of us bustled in through the door.

The interior of the hut gave the impression of a warm, cosy cavern. An assortment of dry reeds drooped from the ceiling like thin stalactites, and a small fire burned in the centre of the room, bathing the hut in light and warmth. On the left side, cattle hide hung from the ceiling like blankets on a washing line, their long shadows casting a part of the room into darkness. Towards the right, Hleke knelt on his sleeping mat, folding several blankets into a pillow. Task complete, he picked up a bowl of what looked like lamb stew at the foot of his mat and placed it next to the fire. He gave a cry of surprise when he finally spotted the three of us.

"Did you do as I asked?" whispered Chief Dingane, his index finger pressed to his lips.

Hleke nodded. His eyes darted around in confusion, finally locking with mine in a silent plea for explanation. I shrugged. To claim that I had much more of a clue than he did would have been a most ambitious overstatement.

Dingane picked up the bowl of sheep meat and began sniffing and examining its contents. Seconds later, he placed it back with a satisfied look.

"It appears that you truly have outlived your purpose, Hleke."

"What?"

Before Dingane could explain any further, we heard muffled footsteps approaching the hut, and he told Hleke to tell no one of our presence. The three of us dived into the shadows behind the hide.

"Are you talking to someone, tat' uHleke?" said the newcomer in a low baritone. The man was tall and muscular, with a dark beard and a striking pair of emotionless black eyes. In the firelight, I could make out a large, jagged birthmark that spread across his chest like a splash of dark liquid.

"Zingela! You frightened me, my boy. What is it?"

"The dogs were barking, and I thought I heard voices."

"Probably just me. You know I talk to myself a lot."

The younger man's gaze swept across the room. It lingered for a second over the spot where we sat hiding, then – seeming satisfied – wandered over to the bowl that lay neglected by the fire.

"Anything wrong with the stew?"

"I – I don't appear to have any appetite, tonight."

"I thought you'd felt better after talking to the chief." When the other offered no response: "What did you say the chief said, again?"

"He will send his men with me to consult a healer, in the morning."

"You are sure he will do nothing about it until the morning?"

"I told you this already. What is this about?"

"I apologise. Here, let me help you with the pillow . . ."

What followed next happened in a blur. With striking speed, Zingela seized the bundle that Hleke had been folding into a pillow and pressed it firmly over the latter's face. The old man thrashed and wriggled in vain under the younger man's strength, his cries muffled by the blankets. Zingela's eyes never lost their passive detachment, watching the other man's struggles as he might the throes of a dying goat. I sprang forward, just as Chief Dingane reached the scene and swung his knobkerrie at the killer's head.

My sudden movements seemed to have alerted him, however, and with remarkable quickness, he ducked his head in the nick of time and missed the blow by inches. Shock, followed by anger, shattered the cool of his gaze, and for a moment, he seemed about to spring at Dingane with his bare hands. Seeing my raised spear, he spat and sprang for the door in the same phenomenal speed, where he found Chief Lupondwana already standing with his own spear at the ready.

The man's eyes wandered sharply around the room with the air of a cornered and calculating jackal.

"You do not know who you are dealing with," he said at last.

"On the contrary, it is a pleasure to finally meet you, Zembe KaMdaka," said Dingane, and knocked the bandit out with a blow to the head.

It was late in the night and we were seated around a fire at Chief Lupondwana's homestead. Our escapade at Hleke's home had ended with us binding up the criminal and, once he had come to, leading him back to the chief's homestead, from where he would be transported to face justice at King Sandile's court in the morning. Owing to the lateness of the hour, Dingane and I would also spend the night and ride out with the chief's men on the morrow. Lupondwana's advisers, however, had dug in their heels and expressed their determination not to leave the homestead until Dingane had explained everything that had taken place.

"What occurred tonight started two years ago," he began. "The most elusive criminal in the whole of Ngqikaland begins to suspect that the king's forces have discovered his location. Needing a quick escape, he hears of a reclusive man in an even more remote village who needs a capable manservant. Securing the position is easy enough, and he soon finds himself in what my young companion here – pardon him – has called "a tiny village in the pocket corners of the kingdom". Well, you know what they say about old habits, but our man risks his credibility with his employer should the cattle simply go missing. So, instead he taps into his considerable imagination and cooks up a scheme which could also provide him a profitable departure once he decided that the coast was clear.

"The first thing he does is condition his victims. He fills the household with stories of the dead speaking

to the living through a mist, such that the dead are the first thing the maid thinks of when she encounters a mist. Next, he creates the actual thing. I take it you are aware of the white-flowered sneezewood shrub, madod' akuthi?"

"Yes, yes, the bush grows at the foot of the mountains," said one.

"You are also aware, no doubt, that the plant is popular for its calming and nearly odourless smoke. Now, you will recall that Hleke remarked that one of the strangest things about this mist was that it was warm. It is not hard to imagine this man then concealing himself in the smoke and, using knowledge of Hleke's family history gained from years of treatment as the son the old man never had, pretending to be the voice of Hleke's ancestors. This time, should the cattle mysteriously disappear, it would be no trouble connecting one incident with the other."

"I would not have believed a word of it had I not seen the man attempt murder with my own eyes," said Chief Lupondwana. "All the evidence pointed to the ancestors – most still does."

"I never discounted the possibility. Sadly, one thing the cattle killing has taught us is to consider all likelihoods before settling on the supernatural. And the more I thought it over, the more human the forces we were dealing with appeared. Just consider the outcomes for a minute – nothing but the outcomes. If this plot succeeded, what would remain once all the chaff had blown away is the simple fact that large numbers of cattle would have vanished, and the best anyone would offer in explanation is a vague idea about the ancestors. No, this bore the mark of a particular criminal in the land of Ngqika."

"Why should Zing – this man – want to murder me?" Hleke asked, seemingly perplexed. He was so shaken by the night's events that the chief had invited him to spend the next few days at his homestead.

"I think it most likely that he decided he had been in one location long enough. He could not, of course, leave such wealth behind and, quite ironically, it would have been far less suspicious in the circumstances if Hleke had disappeared with his servant and cattle overnight than if only the servant and cattle turned up missing. Once I heard that it was this man who had suggested that Hleke bring the matter to the chief, I knew time was of the essence."



Why should a man who lives in the shadows purposely draw attention to his activities, unless he is sure he shall shortly be beyond the village's reach, and desires to leave it asking all the wrong questions about his departure?"

"It still makes no sense how the cattle disappeared, though," I said, grudgingly.

"Ah, that was perhaps the most compelling evidence against the supernatural. So long as no trace of them turned up, the cattle must still be found on this side of the grave. It was then easy to determine the how. That first night, our man simply opened the kraals in the middle of the night and drove off with the cattle. Hleke heard nothing because dogs are not bound to raise the alarm when the intruder is someone they are well acquainted with. On the second, he seems

to have predicted Hleke's insistence to stand guard overnight, so the missing cattle never came home." He got to his feet and yawned. "But Zembe's plan did have a fatal flaw that made it transparent to any serious traditionalist."

"What was that?"

"He portrayed our ancestors as cruel. Bad traditionalism, that. All they want is communal balance and the preservation of our traditions, you know. Now, Ntsika, I advise that we turn in. We know not what the morning brings."

The councillor turned and headed towards the huts, humming and puffing his pipe into the night.



LOWERING THE BAR

By Patrick Kenny

Claren Smith, 1986 South African Defence Force (SADF) conscript 83379214BG, stared at his image in the boots of his tormentor, C.O. Fourie. The boots were very neat and well-polished. Even the laces were beautifully tied and balanced with care and precision. Of all the things you could accuse C.O. Fourie of being, unkempt was not one of them. He was always well turned out. Like an SS officer.

Candidate Officer Fourie, or as he preferred being called C.O. Fourie, was a bully. He was a bully before he was made a candidate officer. And in spite of being encouraged at the highest levels to move beyond being a candidate officer he seemed destined to remain a candidate officer and a bully. The Highest Levels weren't that concerned about him being a

bully. In the SADF bullies were useful.

Candidate officers didn't actually hold rank. They existed merely because they'd been offered a commission but had not earned one yet. Lance Corporal Fourie landed in this mysterious netherworld when he made his girlfriend, a Captain in the SADF, pregnant. In order to protect her reputation, they got married.

The SADF, however, did not allow its female officers to outrank their husbands if both partners were in the SADF. So Lance Corporal Fourie was offered a commission and placed on the officer's course. He wore his bars, little white strips of material on his epaulettes that denoted his status as a candidate officer, with pride.

The plan seemed to solve the problem until the Higher Levels discovered that C.O. Fourie didn't have a High School Matric certificate. . The rules at the time were that a Matric certificate was the basic requirement for enrolment in the six-month long officer's course, where you would earn your commission. Upon graduation, the white bars were solemnly removed, replaced by a star on each epaulette and the candidate was awarded the rank of officer, second Lieutenant.

So C.O. Fourie was temporarily suspended from training. Since he was technically still on the officer's course he was still technically a Candidate Officer and thus fulfilled the marital requirements for the SADF. He was also allowed to keep wearing his beloved white bars on his epaulettes. He was the only candidate to use cloth strips for his bars. All other candidates simply used two pieces of white cardboard for their six months of training. During an internal review of the incident, training officers made special mention of his very professional appearance.

Fourie roamed the Heidelberg military base wearing his little white bars, with none of the responsibility or authority of a ranking officer, while conscripted soldiers were obliged to offer him all the respect due to an actual officer. He especially relished it when conscripts mistakenly confused him for a Commanding Officer.

The biggest obstacle to the Higher Levels' plan to move Fourie through the ranks of high school education towards completion of the officer's course was, of course, the demands of high school education. And C.O. Fourie himself. It wasn't that he was so stupid that he couldn't get a basic high school pass if he applied himself. It was that he was more guileful and lazy than stupid. He reckoned that he'd eventually be "pushed through" high school if he just waited long enough. And so, for the second year in a row, C.O. Fourie failed his matric exam. Spectacularly badly. As the local high school headmistress tasked with educating this wayward son of the SADF explained: "Not only did he write the wrong date on his paper, he also misspelled his own name!" Ironically those two mistakes weren't deliberate.

Owen Smith encountered C.O. Fourie during his second phase of basic army training at the Heidelberg Army Signal School in Bush Camp Alpha. Alpha was a tented barracks on a former fruit farm stuck at the arse end of the main base. Rumours abounded of the

ill treatment of the conscripts who were sent there.

Owen was sent to Alpha along with the other one hundred and fifty English-speaking white South African boys, most of whom were from the port city of Durban, notorious for surfers, hippies and the early English colonists who repelled an attack by the Boers in a decisive battle.

The Boers were a mix of white supremacists and Calvinist fundamentalists, originally from Holland. When the British announced the end of legal slavery, they left the Cape Colony in an ox-wagoned huff called the Great Trek and headed for the hinterland. There they discovered gold and declared independence. The British Empire fought them for the gold, won and South Africa was born. In its efforts to placate the vanquished, the Empire offered people regarded as "White" the vote and other special privileges, while people of "Colour" had to scale the ever-increasing legal barriers to be considered worthy of suffrage. That wasn't good enough for the Boers who had evolved into Afrikaners. Afrikaners made up the majority of White South Africans and politically grew very powerful. After the Second World War, with many of its political leaders freshly released from internment for supporting the Nazis, the largest pro-Afrikaner political movement, the National Party, won political control of South Africa.

During the 70's and 80's all White males were required to join the SADF. The Afrikaner-dominated SADF regarded English-speaking conscripts with suspicion and scorn.

Due to political indoctrination, the Heidelberg officers genuinely believed that English-speaking boys, especially English-speaking boys from Durban, were weak and never ventured outdoors. They figured putting them in tents on an old farm away from the main camp would toughen them up – once they had broken their spirits, of course. The idea was that once the conscripts were thoroughly broken – through a strict programme of verbal and physical abuse – they would be built up in the image of their creator, Magnus Malan, Minister of Defence for the National Party-led apartheid regime. The ones who didn't attempt or threaten suicide in the first three months then entered their second phase of training.



The others were sent away. A few were buried. It was said that English-speaking conscripts were treated a lot more gently at Heidelberg than the ones at infantry bases in Ladysmith, Grahamstown or Phalaborwa.

What the officers of Alpha Camp didn't know was that Owen and four other "English" lads were avid Boy Scouts, spending many holidays camping and doing outdoor activities, and attaining the highest level of achievement in the movement, the Springbok Badge. They had all spent their last summer holiday before conscription on an International Scout Camp in the South African bush. Between them they had pitched and dropped over 100 army tents. So, thanks to five boy scouts the English-speaking company of Bush Camp Alpha settled quite comfortably into their brand-new army issue tents. The isolation from the main camp and canvas barracks came to suit them just fine.

In March 1986 Prime Minister P.W. Botha announced the end of the partial State of Emergency he'd instituted the previous year. On 12 June 1986, Botha introduced a much more rigorous countrywide State of Emergency that granted the authorities far-reaching powers to suppress political dissent and civil disobedience.

The troops at Alpha were informed that they would be used in township operations. C.O. Fourie had found his calling in township operations. Many professional soldiers used the war for independence in Namibia as an opportunity to advance up the SADF ranks without too much involvement in domestic politics. But C.O. Fourie wasn't interested in going to "Nam" or neighbouring Marxist Angola to fight communists because, well, there existed the actual possibility of being shot at by a trained enemy. In the townships the "enemy" was armed with rocks, sometimes petrol bombs, but mostly anti-apartheid power-salutes, slogans, pamphlets and a dark skin. Plus, the SADF normally accompanied the South African Police (SAP) riot squads that were staffed by unbelievably large police officers who wouldn't hesitate to beat up a child or granny who looked at them the wrong way.

Owen Smith's introduction to township operations came when the police called in the army to help them after an abortive attempt to intimidate the locals at an informal pub in Alexandra township. The SAP hadn't realised that some ANC uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) operatives were in the back of the venue having a few beers. After a brief shoot-out the MK opera-

tives commandeered the police armoured vehicle and casually drove up the road into the local police compound. Once inside they opened up fire, killing at least two police officers and wounding several others.

Owen and his colleagues were roused in the early hours of the morning and instructed to don their riot gear. They were transported, half-asleep, in open-topped armoured vehicles called Buffels (Buffaloes) to an unnamed destination. Unfortunately hunger, a lack of sleep and pressure from officers to drive the Buffels over their 60km/h speed limit took their toll on the inexperienced drivers. With more than 20 vehicles riding in convoy the safe travelling gap grew smaller and smaller. When a tractor suddenly pulled out from the side of the road in front of the lead vehicle, its driver slammed on brakes causing about fifteen vehicles to either land in the roadside ditch or flip over on their sides. Most of the soldiers were fast asleep when the accident occurred and woke to find themselves rather inconveniently dangling upside down, but securely strapped in. Only one soldier who had been asked before the accident to unstrap himself in order to assist the driver wasn't so lucky. His Buffel had rolled and come to rest on top of him. Miraculously, somehow, Sergeant Pretorius, Owen and just four others were able to lift the armoured vehicle and slide him out. Apparently the young man survived but he was never seen again.

By the time the SADF had sorted out what had become the largest traffic accident in its history it was dark again. And Owen and his colleagues were on their way to the mystery destination. They arrived cold, tired and hungry under cover of darkness. Immediately they were dispatched to some hills to guard the truck-mounted spotlights. These massive intrusive searchlights illuminated the area below. The ground seemed to move. At first Owen didn't know what he was looking at.

"That's them, marching through the streets below," said the sergeant in charge. "The police told them to go indoors when the curfew started, but there they are, doing their big fuck-you march through the streets."

Owen was too tired and hungry to bother to ask the sergeant where he was. He just lit another cigarette and stared at the strange river of humanity that flowed below.

The next morning, while Owen was wolfing down his breakfast at the hastily erected mess tent, C.O. Fourie sauntered in. He looked immaculate.

"I need some troops to come with me. We're driving into the operational area with the police. Any volunteers?"

His gaze fell on Owen and his friend Terry.

"You English boys are always eating. Come get in the back of the Land Rover and you can see what happens when you liberals feel sorry for the blacks."

Owen and Terry stuffed the remaining food into their mouths, some bread in their pockets and gulped down their coffee. They were crammed in the back of the Land Rover with two other "English boys". Owen had noted that many of the officers referred to the English-speaking soldiers as boys and the Afrikaans ones as "manne", men. The policeman sat in the passenger seat while Fourie took the wheel.

The ride in the back was stifling hot and deliberately bumpy. Owen could see very little through the dirty windows and security wire. He bumped his head on the roof and sides more than once. Fortunately, the riot helmets provided some measure of protection. The vehicle stopped and C.O. Fourie yelled through the little back sliding window in the front passenger cabin.

"Get out and take a defensive position!"

That was an order for Owen and friends to get out the back of the Land Rover, cock their rifles and stand in a circle around C.O. Fourie and the police officer.

The dirt street was empty, save for a couple of cows walking slowly past, a goat chewing on a plastic bag and a pack of scrawny dogs. Owen stared at the shacks. The poverty was abject. He had never seen anything like it.

"Where are we?" he thought out aloud. Kenya was the answer that sprang to mind but he knew that was ridiculous.

"We are in Joburg," replied one of the other soldiers.

Owen was incredulous. "Joburg? I've been to Joburg

before. It didn't look like this!"

"Look there, above those houses. In the distance. Do you see it? The top of TV tower."

Owen stared at the SABC TV Tower in distant Auckland Park. This symbol of the South African Broadcast Corporation was beamed into their home every evening before, during and after the TV news. It reminded him of home. Owen felt very lost.

"Stop talking shit and move your fucking arses. There are fucking ANC fucking terrorists waiting to kill stupid fucking idiots like you. They don't give a fuck if your liberal fucking kaffirboetie parents voted against the National Party. They will kill you, rape your fucking mother and sister and the Russians will pay them a bonus."

The invective was normally delivered in a mixture of English and Afrikaans. There were some Afrikaans imprecations that defied translation and beggared belief in their crudity. C.O. Fourie was well versed in all of them. Soutpiel – salty cock – was a common and slightly amusing epithet reserved exclusively for English-speaking South African men. You had one foot in England, the other foot in South Africa and your cock hung in the sea; ergo, soutpiel. After a while it got rather annoying. Especially since all Owen's ancestors were either of Scottish or Irish ancestry.

"You should feel at home here, Engelsmanne (Englishmen)," sneered C.O. Fourie. "Do you know the name of this road? It's London Road."

Owen couldn't stop himself.

"Oh really, C.O. Fourie. And is that Big Ben?" he said, pointing to the TV Tower. Even the policeman sniggered. Fourie's face was one of cold hatred. As they continued their walk down London Road some curious little children came out from the shacks to look at them. Fourie turned to Owen. "Look, Smith. Your kaffir family has come out to greet you."

The children were all barefoot in the bitter cold of the winter morning. In their wide-eyed innocence – and their sometimes too large, sometimes too small tattered clothes – they looked like cherubs in some post-apocalyptic scene. A young teenage boy who seemed to be looking after the little ones caught Owen's eye. Owen smiled and the boy smiled back.



"What are you fucking kaffirs staring at!" screamed Fourie, shattering Owen's reverie. "Fuck off back to your cages!"

The children froze. Owen's stomach knotted. The teenage boy looked at Owen with a pained expression. Owen wanted to cry.

A large jam tin lay on the road. Fourie's scowl morphed into a menacing grin as his gaze moved from the tin to the children and then back to the tin as he prepared his run-up. He took aim at the little ones' heads as he pulled his right leg back and kicked with all his strength. But Fourie completely missed the can. The sheer momentum of his kicking leg propelled him into the air. He came down hard on the stony road. The boy stared at Owen. Owen tensed his cheek muscles in a vain attempt to suppress the only correct response to Fourie's fate.

An enormous "Wha haha!" erupted from deep inside Owen's belly.

The children and the other three conscripts shook with laughter.

"Shut your fucking mouths you little communist cock suckers!" yelled the policeman as he rushed to help C.O. Fourie to his feet.

C.O Fourie stuck his face into Owen's and screamed: "If this is how you English treat an officer of the SADF in front of the kaffirs, God help us!" The dusty, humiliated and very sore mess that was C.O. Fourie stormed off to the Land Rover.

The children retreated into the shadows of the shacks. The teenage boy stopped, turned, looked at Owen and winked.

With a straight face, as he and the other conscripts moved slowly back towards their vehicle in a protective shield around the police man, Owen winked back.

They drove out of the operational area in silence, the conscripts sharing a single cigarette between them in the back of the Land Rover. Sergeant Pretorius was waiting for them at the armoury tent.

"Go inside the tent and remove the live round from your rifle's firing chamber and take off the magazine.

After that present me with your magazine and the round."

Inside the tent they followed procedure, removing the unused bullets from their chambers, then removing the magazines from the rifle. They had just removed the magazines when one of the other soldiers turned to Owen.

"Imagine if we had come across a group of terrorists. We could have had a big shoot-out." He lifted his rifle at Owen. "Hey Punk do you feel lucky? Go ahead make my day. Bang, bang."

Owen was about to oblige him by falling to his knees in a spectacular death scene when he saw Sergeant Pretorius. Pretorius was built like a rhino with a face like a hippo.

"So, soldier, do you feel lucky?" he growled. "Pointing a loaded weapon at a fellow soldier, even in jest, is a prosecutable offence."

The soldier went pale. "I have safely emptied the chamber of the round and removed the magazine, Sergeant."

He opened his hand to show Pretorius the gleaming brass bullet he had plucked from the rifle's firing chamber and the magazine he'd safely removed from the rifle. Pretorius examined them and then motioned for the soldier to pass him his rifle.

"The trouble with the R4 automatic rifle is that the spring-loaded magazine pushes the rounds through quickly. Sometimes jamming during firing. Or creating the impression that the firing chamber is empty when it actually is not."

He rapidly re-cocked the weapon and out flew a shiny brass bullet. Punishment was swift. A hand the size of the soldier's face connected with his cheek and projected him across the tent. He lay on the floor struggling to hold back his tears.

The sergeant faced the group: "Remember men, this is not a toy. It maims and kills people."

Then he leaned over to the soldier on the ground, offered him a hand, pulled him up to his feet and gave him back his rifle.

"Next time you might not be so lucky, soldier. If C.O. Fourie had been on duty he probably would have laid charges. We all know what a cunt he can be. You can go to the mess tent now. I told the chef to put some lunch aside for you."

The chef had put aside an extra piece of steak for them and a reasonably large portion of bread pudding. They were busy enjoying the lunch when C.O. Fourie walked in and started screaming.

"What the fuck are you lazy little shits doing here? Everybody is outside either cleaning the site or making themselves useful while you little fucknuts are still sitting around and eating! It's way after lunch. Fuck off out of this tent now and report to your corporals! Why are you boys still sitting? You stand when an officer is addressing you."

"But you are not an officer, Fourie. You're a Candidate Officer."

C.O. Fourie spun around and stood face-to-face with Sergeant Pretorius.

"You are a Candidate Officer. That's like being something between a cock and an arsehole but with no fucking purpose." He smiled at Fourie as he pushed past him with a plate of food and sat down. "I thought I'd join these men for lunch. Why are your pants so dirty, Fourie?"

"While you were hiding up here I was down in the location helping the police look for terrorists," retorted Fourie.

"Oh! I heard you were surprised by a mob of kaffir children and shat yourself."

Fourie stiffened and stared at them all. Owen and the others kept their heads down.

"I was not scared of those kaffir children!"

"Why? Were some of them yours?"

Fourie leaned over to Pretorius and spoke softly: "I know we have our differences but you shouldn't disrespect me in front of the troops."

"Fuck off. I'm trying to eat my lunch."

Fourie left the tent.

Sergeant Pretorius poured himself a large glass of water.

"Have you men given thanks to the Lord for your food? We are here to help these black heathen kaffirs not become like them. Remember you are White men, so behave like it." He bowed his head, clasped his enormous hands together and led them in prayer.

They hadn't been back at Alpha Camp for a day when the officers started their nonsense. Run here, run there, surprise early morning inspections, surprise midnight inspections. The exercise and inspections were accompanied by lots of screaming and shouting that involved the calling into doubt the honour of Owen's mother, his sister's chastity and his genealogy. Apparently that brief moment of usefulness that Owen and his fellow soldiers experienced in the service of their country may have filled them with ideas above their station. The officers at Alpha Camp wanted to make sure the English soldiers knew their place in the pile of shit that was the SADF. At least that's the way Owen explained the officers' strategy to his fellow soldiers. Most of the English-speaking conscripts at Alpha camp had long realised that nothing they did would ever be good enough. They would always fail the inter-troop inspections and be given, officially, corrective drill. The corrective drill would develop into a full blooded Opvok, loosely translated as " Fuck You Up". An Opvok consisted of using unorthodox, if not forbidden, training exercises. They would continue for an unspecified length of time that depended on how much the corporal in charge was enjoying himself and whether there were other activities planned for the day. The one time the English troops actually won an inspection they were still given an Opvok after the morning's drill. Some of the Afrikaans soldiers, who were forced to sing rousing patriotic songs while viewing the spectacle, actually cried with embarrassment and shame. Later they sent a delegation to apologise for this travesty of justice. After all, "You English had won the inspection fair and square." Owen was really touched by the genuine anguish, basic decency and naivety of those men. Even if they still insisted on calling them the English Troop. Of the 150 soldiers in Troop Two, only two were actually born in the UK. The rest were either second, third or even seventh generation South Africans. Owen was fourth generation. But their mother tongue was English and this presented a problem – politically and culturally – for the SADF.

They had just walked back to their tents after breakfast when the other boot dropped for Owen.



Major Du Toit, the Commanding Officer of Alpha Camp, and all the other lieutenants had gone off to the main camp for a function. As part of his preparation for candidate training C.O. Fourie was put in charge. The corporals came screaming and shouting about getting their "fucking arses" onto the parade ground. C.O. Fourie followed this with a farcical personal inspection which Owen and a few other select Englishmen failed. All the men knew the ensuing Opvok was going to be a long one. This time all the good English soldiers had to sit on the bank of the parade ground with their Afrikaans friends and watch how slack Engelsmann were dealt with. C.O. Fourie was never satisfied with an Opvok until there was some crying for mercy and vomiting. While Opvoks were technically illegal in the SADF, due to the death of one too many conscripts, the line between corrective physical training and an Opvok was notoriously thin.

But Owen understood the rules of the game. As long as he showed that he tried to follow C.O. Fourie's commands, he couldn't be accused of deliberately refusing to obey a command. So, he would stay in the middle of the group in whatever task they were told to perform. After nearly an hour under the hot African sun the first soldier started to cry.

It was the Afrikaans soldiers who first broke ranks. All the men on the bank had been ordered once again to sing rousing patriotic songs about killing various enemies of the state. Under the cover of the masses, one or two soldiers started to shout encouragement to Owen and the others.

"Keep going you can do it! Show the corporals a finger! Don't give up!"

The more the other corporals tried to rein the men in the worse it got.

"Fuck the corporals, keep going. Don't give up for these arseholes".

Sergeant Pretorius said nothing. C.O. Fourie walked over to Owen who was trying to comfort a friend who was crying in a heap on the ground and screamed.

"Who gave you fucking permission to stop?"

Owen stood up on his very wobbly legs.

"I was trying to help a fellow soldier like we've been trained, C.O. Fourie."

Fourie looked at the soldier on the ground.

"Fuck off back to your unit crybaby."

Then he turned to Owen. For the next while C.O. Fourie personally ran Owen ragged. The trouble was that Owen didn't cry, he just started to laugh. It was more an exhausted giggle than a laugh but Owen couldn't help himself. The absurdity of the situation broke through his fatigue and he developed this involuntary giggle. C.O. Fourie was apoplectic with rage. Sergeant Pretorius stepped in.

"This soldier needs water, C.O. Fourie. It will be your responsibility if something happens to him."

Fourie eyed Owen coldly.

"You are right Sergeant. Give him your water bottle. Finish this, engelsman. I don't want you to die on me." Then in Owen's ear, "Not yet."

Owen gratefully drank the water. Fourie presented him with his water bottle.

"Here finish mine as well. I don't want you to dehydrate."

Fourie beckoned to a nearby corporal.

"Corporal Mittens, bring your water bottle here. The engelsman needs water. Drink soldier, it's an order!"

Owen started to gag but managed to finish it. His stomach was bloated with water. Fourie circled Owen and looked up at the conscripts who lined the bank overlooking the parade ground. "Come Englishman, have you had enough of running? Would you like to stop?"

Owen sensed a trap.

"Yes C.O. Fourie"

"I know you are tired Englishman but let's not forget our manners. Please, C.O. Fourie, can I stop running?"

Owen tried as best he could to make it not sound like he was begging.

"Please, C.O. Fourie, can I stop running?"

"Of course my boy, you can join your unit on the bank in the nice cool shade."

He smiled at Owen and gestured with his hand.

"Thank you C.O. Fourie." Owen started to run towards the bank. Towards respite. His friends. The shade. Safety.

"Stop!" screamed Fourie. "No fucking running remember. You are tired! You can roll to your fucking friends. I wouldn't want anything to happen to you in front of your fucking friends. You asked me so nicely if you could stop running and now you treat my kindness with fucking disrespect. Typical fucking Englishman. Roll, you fucking cunt, roll!"

It was just over two hundred metres along the hard stony dirt parade ground to the bank. Owen started to roll. Fifty metres in Fourie stopped him and gave him another water bottle.

"Have some water, Englishman. I don't want you to dehydrate."

Owen started to gag, his bloated stomach protesting. He finished the water bottle and started to roll again. The troops sitting on the bank fell silent. He held the vomit in. Fourie stood over him screaming.

"Do you want to stop, engelsman?"

Owen stared at his image in C.O. Fourie's boots.

And then he puked as hard as he could. All over them. He sprayed Fourie's legs with vomit. Owen stood up and wiped the vomit from his mouth and started giggling again. "Sorry C.O. Fourie. I'm not feeling very well. I didn't hear you properly, Could you repeat the question again please?"

Fourie screamed like a pig and launched himself at Owen grabbing him by his shirt collar. That was his mistake. Owen's stomach gave one final heave and the remaining vomit flew straight into Fourie's face. Fourie threw Owen to the ground. Sergeant Pretorius moved quickly to the scene and stopped the screaming Fourie from kicking Owen who lay giggling in the dirt. Fourie went berserk with rage.

"I'll have you charged you insolent shit!"

Owen got up and stood to attention. "It's illegal for an officer to physically attack a soldier. I was only defending myself. If C.O. Fourie would like to remove any form of rank from his uniform and take this matter to the gym while I'm still tired, I'd be happy to oblige him."

Sergeant Pretorius and all the other corporals stared at Fourie. Fourie smiled thinly at them. "No I won't fight the engelsman, like he said, he's tired, so it wouldn't be fair." Then he turned and went off to his room. To clean his pants and polish his boots once again.



NGUMNTU WAPHI LO?

(IsiXhosa)

Madoda Ndlakuse

Kusekusasa, phakathi ebhankini kwilokishi yaseMotherwell eGqeberha. Oosisi abangaphaya kwekhawuntara babonakala berhuqa iinyawo ngeli lixa abahlali bengxame kakhulu. "Ndinos'ke mos ndize nevaskom egcwel' iimpahla ezimdaka ndizokuyihlambela apha ebhankini xa kubonakala ukuba ndiza kutshonisa ilanga apha. Kucac' ukuba ngoku singqatylewe yinto yokwenza sinesiyali na, sas'ke sazokubuthisa oomabuy'

ekwendeni nonondala abaxakene nezifuba ezingoogqampombo!" Ivungame ibhomboloza enye intokazi ebonakalayo ukuba ngokwenkangeleko iyaya pha kumashumi amahlanu eminyaka.

Umjongile nje lo mama uyabonakala ukuba ngaba dabawo bathetha kuthethwa baze ukuba bakhe baqlis' ukuthetha iqale inkathazo. Nangoku ke ibengathi ibacelile abantu ukuba bangenelele koku kumbombozela kwayo.



Hayi ke batsho ngesankxwe sengxolo eyogqitha ivuvuzela ekhaliswa ziinyosi.

"Khanibize nokuba ngutata azondikhulula ndisemzini wegintsa-a-ha." Loo mazwi afana nengoma kaNathi Mankayi atshivo ngumfo othile ekubonakala ukuba ivayivayi yinto yakhe. Wayicula le ngoma eyiphindaphinda enendawo engathi angenyuka aphinde acinizele ilizwi ngeli lixa izandla zenziwe zangathi zidlala ikatala engabonakaliyo. Umfo omkhulu kwakubonakala ukuba wenza into ayithandayo kunjalo nje akayenziswa kukucel' injezu. Indoda inxibe ijezi ebonakalayo ukuba yayikhe yamhlophe ngaphambili, ntonje ngoku seyijike yamnyama ngendlela eyaziwa yiyo yodwa. Le jezi ke ikwanento engathi yakrazulwa ngamazinyo enja okanye emela ngokungenalusini. Ebusweni konakele mpela, amehlo ndawonye nomlomo ashiyisana ngokubabomvu krwee. Izihlangu eyayizinxibile zazingafani ngoba esinye sasiqhotyoshwe ngemitya yeteki njengokuba esinye yayiluhlobo lwestihlangu ekwakusithwa kudala yiMoccasin. Yayintle ingoma eyayiphuma kumlomo waloo mfo futhi nokuba kwakunokuthiwa ukhe wabelana ngeqonga neemvumi ezifana nooRingo nooTsep Tshola, okanye ke ooAmi Faku nooAmanda Black, wawungekhe wothuke tu. Wayesesaa stokhwe uye usibone sintiloza phaya kwii-Idols kumabonakude mlesi.

Ukumbombozela kwanqamka ebantwini, bonke bethe ntsho kule mvumi neyavele yathi xa igqiba ukucula, "Molweni mawethu, ndinibonile ukuba nine-stress ndaqonda ukuba makhe ndinithi rhawurhawu ngombengo wengoma emnandi. Ndicela nje nokuba yimalini bantu bakuthi ndithenge oku kwesonka." Zange kube kudala abahlali baphosa emnqwazini iiponti ngeeponti,bekhona ababethubelezisa iirandi ezelishumi zonke mfondini, kubonakala ukuba anyanisile amaXhosa xa esithi, "Usana olungakhaliyo lufel' embelekweni." Abanye baye bathi isizathu sokuba baxhase le ndoda kangaka kukuba ikwazile ukwenza umgudu wokuba ibaculele kamnandi ibathomala-lisa nakwintlungu ebebekuyo yokungahoyeki ncumebhankini.

Kwakubonakala ngathi le ngoma inento eyenzi-leyo naphaya emva kwekhawuntari ngoba yaba ngu tshe-tshe-tshe, abantu bencedwa kunjalonje babuye ekhawuntarini leyo benoncumo. Ithe le ndoda iyimvumi xa iza kuqokelela imali, kwasuka kwee gqi kwalapha kule nyambalala umfo othile oswenkileyo. Yayingumfo ojongekayo ebusweni apha, entsundu ngebala enamehlo amakhulu ngendlela ephawule-kayo. Impumlo yakhe yayiliqunkya elikhulu. Mde umfo ezweni kangangokuba xa ethetha abantu be-

mjongile kufuneka benyuse iintloko ukuba ngaba bafutshane. lindlebe zakhe zazinkulu ngokungathi zezikanogwaja. Umfo omkhulu wayekwanomhlantla ofakte izinyo legolide, isincuma-kuhle sokwenene! Wayenxibe isuti emenyezelayo okomsesane wesilivere. Intw' enkulu ifake ihempe emhlophe yesilika yaza ikhola yayo yaqatylelwa ngobuchule phezu kwebhatyi yesuti. Isihlangu salo mfo esasitsobhile siside, kubonakala ukuba senziwe ngofele lwenciniba.

Wakhala nje umlozana ophantse ulingane nowezi ntaka kuthiwa ziingqabe okanye amanqilo. Ufike wajonga emehlwani imvumi yeso sihlandlo, "Bhut' omkhulu ukucula oku sisiphiwo sakho kwaye soze sohluthwe mntu kuwe. Bekufanele ukuba wena usestudio sakho buqu ngawo lo mzuzu, ushicilela ingoma eza kubalasela. Umculo uyafa kweli lizwe ngenxa yeBubble gum nabantu abangakholelw ncum ekubuhleni izinto ezakhayo." Njengokuba ithetha le ndoda inde bonke abantu baqalisa ukusondela kuyo ngabanye ngabanye. Noosisi abangaphaya kwekhawuntari babemane beyithi krwaqu kubonakala ukuba iyajongeka, inomfaneleko yaye iyamameleka.

Le ndoda ikhuphe amakhulu amathandathu eerandi yaza yafumbathisa imvumi le yesi sihlandlo, "Jonga ke bhuti, ndiyakucela le mali uze uyisebenzise kakuhle uyeva? Ungahambi uthenga ngayo izinto zoonontyintyi apha esithubeni. Ndiyakucela ukuba uthenge into eza kukhulisa isakhono sakho noba yiCD kaZahara, okany' uBlaq Diamond akukho ngxaki." Imvumi yabantu yemka ithe gwantyi iinyembezi ekubonakala ukuba zezovuyo. Bashiyea abantu bebambe engezantsi imilomo.

Kubekho mfazana othile okhanyayo ngebala onxibe amajalimane nobeyithe ntsho le ndoda yesuti. Ibangathetha le ayilandele ngamehlo kubonakala ukuba inene inene. Lo mfazana wayeze ebhankini ezokufaka isikhala zo sokuba umane ekruntsulelw imadlana yimithombo angakhangabe naziqibyo nayo. Way-enemizuzu eliqela efikile aphi ebhankini enomdlala wokuba akhawuleze ancedakale naye. Ngezizathu ezaziwa nguye, wayehleli nje uthe ntsho amehlo kule ndedeba inxibe ezimenyelzayo iisuti futhi wayengafuni kwanto imphazamisayo ekumjogeni.

Omnye ubhuti wabuza ukuba likhona na ishishini elenzayo le ndoda lento kulula kangaka ukuvele ithi jize umntu engamaziyo imali 'egqitha nakwifafandredi'. Umfo omkhulu ubengathi kudala elilindele eli thuba, "Ndiyayazi into yokuba sisebhankini. Andizukuwenza abe made sani ngokuba sele ndiza kubizwa kulaa mnyango. Mna ndikhule ndiyintlekisa ndilamba Bro, yaye ndingahoywanga nangabazali bam."

Phantse bonke ubomi bam bendihlala ematyotyombeni ndilala nditye ibona ukuba phofu uyayaz' ibona. Ngoku xa ninokuyibona indlu yam, akukho mahluko ungako phakathi kwayo nezi hotele kulaliswa kuzo ooMongameli bamazwe. Nantsi ibusiness card yam, oyifunayo angayithatha kwaye ndiyanithembisa niza kubazizityebi ezingawothiyo umlilo ngexeshana nje elingephi. Amade ngawetyala."

Emva kokuba ithethile le ndoda kwavela kwathi cwaka. U-Asakhe, lo mfazana ebesikhe sakuthela thsuphe ngaye apha ngasentla walithatha eli qweqwana lineenkucukacha zale ndoda, emane eliqwalasela enovuyo olungummangaliso. Bachithachitheka abantu ebhankini de kwalixesa lokuba abasebenzi baye ekhefini kushiyeku abambalwa ukuze babambele nabangekhoyo emsebenzini. U-Asakhe wayesele encediwe kunjalonje eqinisekisiwe ukuba imali yakhe uza kuyibuyiselwa ngobunjalo bayo. Ugqotsile ke ukuya kwivenkile ethengisa inyama yenkuhku eqhotsiweyo kufutshane nalapho ebhankini, kodwa wafika kuzele mome ngabantu. Uye wacingela ngaphandle, "Ndithini bethu? ndiyokubenga eKamva okanye ndiye kwesaa silarha saseNU-9?" Waye waqonda ukuba afowunele abahlolo bakhe abahlala ngakwezi ndawo ukuze eve kakuhle ukuba kumele enzeni ngoba inyama wayeyirhalela ngokwenene. "Khanya ntombi, ithini into kweso silarha saseKamva? Akugcwelanga?"

"Yho peto, sana uMafa ulapha bhabha, kuza kuthin' ukungagcwali ke sana? Sendilindele elam ithuba ndifote naye ndidinwe kukumbona kwikhala qha bhabha futhi andisoze ndiliyeku tu eli thuba sana."

"Utya i-airtime yam ngoku wena ngowuvele wafowuna ngokwakho qha qwaba, tshin' utsho ngokuthand' izinto apha!"

Uthe akubona u-Asakhe ukuba ayilungi le yaseKamva watsalel' umnxeba uLindelwa waseNU-9, "Andizokuba sabuza nempilo wethu, my friend, ndicela ukubuza torho ukuba akugcwelanga na kweso silarha senu?"

"Ha-a mtshan' am bekukhe kwagcwala but at least ngoku ikhona igap ekhoyo. Sukuwara, ndiza kukumela qha ndiyacela ungandilindisi because sana kubusy, uyabo?" Ungenile kwisithuthi sakhe u-Asakhe, iFord Ascona esasigezelwa gqitha eNU-4B apho wayehlala khona kusithiwa 'sisinyanya'. Babekhona nababathi le nqwelo-mafutha yaazalwa kuqala kunezo zisaphilayo ngoku emhlaben. Usifikile isitshixo kodwa ayaduma. Ubheke kwakanye bancuma 'oomasitshaye', wabancumela naye ebatyobel neliso. "Oku kwenkawza eyi-one qha, sister yam e-nice." Nangoku bamtyhalisa yaduma inqwelo-mafutha, wabanika iirandi ezintlanu wayincothula ukuba eNU-9.

Endleleni uzive ecinga umyeni wakhe uMzwakhe nendlela abaphethene ngayo kakuhle emtshatweni nakuba nje bengenazinto zingako. UMzwakhe indoda enciphileyo, ingende ingemfutshane, koko inesithomo nje esiphakathi. UMzwakhe ke mlesi wayemhlopho gqitha, ebufana nonkosikazi wakhe kangangokuba abantu abaninzi babeye bacinge ukuba ngumntu nodadewabo, okanye ke ngamawelete. Kwakusele iyiminyaka betshatile no-Asakhe. Akuzange uyibone mlesi into yabantu ababini abathandanayo bade bafane, xa ubona omnye akukhumbuze omnye?

Lo mfo wayephangelia eDasi kwenye inkampani eyenza iimoto. Wayengena ngentsimbi yesithandathu kusasa ayokutshayisa ngentsimbi yesithandathu malanga okanye ngeyesibini emva kwemini. Babehlala bobabini kuphela kwindlu uMzwakhe awayishiyelwa ngabazali bakhe. Nabantakwabo babezhialela qelete kweyabo imizi.

U-Asakhe ufile kwiziko lokubenga waza wamisa isithuthi sakhe kufutshane nenqwelo-mafutha eyiBMW yohlobo IweMini Cooper, ngaxeshanye wenza umthandazwana wokuba mhla kwaze kwalunga kuye noMzwakhe inene soze angazibambeli le nqwelo-mafutha. Wayeyithanda kanye nangale nto yokuba inombala obomvu kuba lo mbala wayewuthand' egazini kakade. UMalindi umhlobo wakhe umbulise nje wamyaleza kubantu abafolileyo bagonana baza bavalaletisa omnye komnye. Emva koko kwamisa inqwelo-mafutha yohlobo IweJeep emthubi, ikhwele oosisi bodwa abafak' amazaza bonke bekwanxibe neelokhwe zamaggabi. Nca izaza lakhe uMalindi waxway' ubupesana bakhe.

Lwavulwa ucango lwesthuthi kwatsho kwavakala ingoma eyayisithi, "Imal' eningi." Yajika inqwelo-mafutha kwedini yathi chuu ukudlula kwaye iphepha ezo zazize kwelo ziko lokubenga emva koko yaphel' emehlwani ishiya uthulikazi olukhulu. Ungenile u-Asakhe ezikweni lokubenga. "Sisi singakunceda ngantoni?" Ibuze inoncumo buntlonirha enye intombazana. Ibile ithe xopho kuyabonakala ukuba oko ibiyibambile kwakusasa.

"Okay sis' wam ndiza kucela iipork rashers zetwo hundred rand, undiphe nechicken yehundred and fifty rand, and then undinike isausage yehundred rand." Emva koko yamanxadanxada intombi ngaphaya kwekhawuntari yaza yamlungiselela u-Asakhe njengoko ecelile. "Okay sis' wam ndiza kucela iipork rashers zetwo hundred rand, undiphe nechicken yehundred and fifty rand, and then undinike isausage yehundred rand." Emva koko yamanxadanxada intombi ngaphaya kwekhawuntari yaza yamlungiselela u-Asakhe njengoko ecelile.



Yavel' intw' enkulu yathi rhuthu ikhadi layo lebhanki. Nanko ke u-Asakhe usakube usondeziwe kuy' umtshini efaka ikhadi lakhe. "Ayivumi tu sisi," utshilo ongaphaya kwekhawuntari. "Hayibo, ntombazanan-dini lingandenzi loo nto na eli khadi? You mean like liyadecliner nyhani?" Yaxakwa intombi kwela cala imane izesul' ukubila phofu ijonge u-Asakhe ukuba uza kuzikhulula njani kuloo ngxuba-kaxaka.

La mfo obekhe wadibana noo-Asakhe apha ebhankini, nditsho kanye lo wesuti emenyezelayo, wavela wathi gqi sele ecela ukuba kusetyenziswe elakhe ikhadi. Ngelo xesha u-Asakhe wayothuke oku ingathi uyelama. "Enkosi kakhulu bhuti wam, undincedile." "Kuncedwana kulo mhlaba sisi wam. Namhlanje ndim ngomso nguwe."

"Ndiph' i-account number yakho please so that ukhawuleze uyifumane imali yakho. Awukwazi kaloku ukukhupha imali engakaya usipha laa mvumi kusasa and then ngoku uyidilizela kum." "Hayi suka nontombi, sukuba nangxaki apha wena yithathe le mali njengesipho esisuka kuMsamariya olungileyo."

"Hamba Msamariya, ndiza kukufowunela wethu kamnandi ndilithathile ikhadi lakho." Yenza ngathi ayiva le ndoda kwesi simemelelo sokugqibela yatsho yangena kwiMini Cooper yayo yahamba. Uthe u-Asakhe akubona ukuba le Mini Cooper yeiale ndoda yangathi angavele abenemilingo atshintshise le yakhe inqwelo aze azithengele iMini Cooper ebizwa ngegama lakhe nkqu nakwinkcenke eneenombolo-mbhalo zemoto, "ASAKHE-EC" How nice? Uzibuzile watsho wancuma yedwa unkabi.

Ugenile u-Asakhe kweli cala kojiwa kulo. Bamojela abafana kakuhle ekwavuyiswa nakukubabona bezihlambil' izandla. Zibaninzi kaloku izinto eziye zithetheke malunga nabantu abojayo. Ubanikile imali ka-enkosi besakuggiba. Emva koko wayindlela egodukayo. Ufikisene noMzwakhe emva kwentsimbi yesithathu malanga ekhaya. Bayitya loo nyama yayoxela kodwa ke bayishiya ukuze babuyele kuyo ngesopholo, eseleyo uMzwakhe wayeza kuyiphatha emsebenzini kusuku olulandelayo.

Bancokolile aba babini elowo nalovo ukuba usuku lwakhe belunjani na. U-Asakhe nakuba nje ebelivezile ibali lendoda eyimvumi engqibayo kodwa ugxile kule inobubele kakhulu. UMzwakhe umlumkisile u-Asakhe ngamadoda akhupha lula iimali ezinkulu emehlwani abantu ngelithi kusengenzeka ukuba ngumgulukudu omkhulu nekusenokwenzeka ukuba akanguye lo mntu azibonakalisa enguye.

U-Asakhe ngalo lonke elo xesha wayezixelete ukuba yena ufuno ukuba nento ayingenisayo emtshatweni

ukuze imali ithi tata kubo. Wayedikiwe ngabula yena kukuuhuba ibukubela lesithuthi esingaxeli nokuba kuyasa, esithi ayikhuselekanga le nto yale nqwelo-mafutha ngob' ihleli nje imenza acele amaphara ukuba amtyhalise yona. Ngubani owaziyo ukuba loo maphara awambekelanga mbeko na? Echaza ke bethu nenqwelo-mafutha yakhe yephupha iMini Cooper nendlela ayithanda ngayo. Wakhathazeka nyhani uMzwakhe ngoba iimeko zakhe zezimali zazingekavumi nciam. Enyanisweni ukuba uMzwakhe wayenokuvel' abethe esicithini kuvel' imali wayenokumthengela ngoko nangoko u-Asakhe le nqwelo-mafutha yakhe alilisela ngokuyifuna. Imali ke mlesi uyayazi nawe ihamb' indlela yayo. Ithi ngeli xesha ikhona iipokotho zigcwele ngayo ibe lixesha ngoku engekho ngayo. Ithi ifika imali ibe ilingenwe zizinto zayo.

Zihambile iinyanga ubomi buqhubeka kungekho nto imbi. Ngenye intseni u-Asakhe wayeye kurhafela inqwelo-mafutha yakhe edolophini. Esakuggiba uqonde ukuba makakhe afumane okusiwa phantsi kwempumplo kwenye indawo yokutyla. Ungenile kule ndawo wakhonjiswa nendawo yokuhlala. Bamkhawulezele ngemenyu walondlalondla ekhangela ukuba yintoni na anokuitya. Urhalele amaphiko amathandathu adyojwe ubudyubhu obubonakala bunencasa waza wacela ukuba kongezwe isaladi, ispinatshi kwakunye nombona. Walile uku-odola isiselo ecatsukiswa yinto yokuba zisuke zibize intloko kalolive kanti ke umsebenzi wesiselo kukuthoba nje. Uzixelete ukuba unokusela namanzi la kanonkala ukuba uyathanda. Ekwanayo nento ethi isisu sakhe ngeke sikhala sakwamkela loo nto siyinikwayo ngoba sisusu apha wena esinembecho kakhulu kakhulu.

Lihambile ixesha elindisiwe u-Asakhe kungade kufike ukutya. Yayimenza umsindo into yokubona abantu ingakumbi belinye ibala bekhawulezelwa bencunyelwa beququzelelwa. Kwakukho into engathi ithi makasitsho isikhalo athi, "UKUKHETHA OKU KOKWANTONI? NGABATHENI ABA BAKHAWULEZELWAYO? INGABATHENI ABA BANGAHOYWAYO? IMBI LE NTO NIYENZAYO MAAN SONKE SINGABANTU!"

Wabuya wazinganda ngelithi akakhuliswanga ngolo hlobo kowabo. Yaziqoqosha intomb' enkulu yathoba i-emele kuloo ndawo yayikuyo. Nangoku ke kwafika ukutya sele kusisia yintombazana ekhanyayo ngebalta nenoncumo ke wethu. Zange u-Asakhe abe ezikhathaza ngelokuba kutheni kungazanga le yokuqala kwathini kwathini. Wangqal' ekutyeni exabanisa ifolokhwe nemela kujoliswe emlonyeni.

Uthe sele ephakathi ekuhlafuneni wacinga ukuba tyhini kanene ulibe ukuthandaza.

Wamanyonywana kancinci ezicenga ukuba awutsholo ngaphakathi, sele ecela uxolo kuMdali ngokutya ngetyala. Emva koko wakunambitha ukutya oku wakut' ekubuz' imvelaphi. Yayikhe yavel' ingcingane yokuba njengokuba eginya kamnandi loo maqathan' amuncis' iintupha inokuba utsyan yena uMzwakhe? Wabuya wazithuthuzela ngelithi uMzwakhe umke nododorhoi onesibindi waphath' umxobokazi ugcwel' uthe mome ngumongimali, ngoko ke akangekhe aqalise tu ukubanengxaki ngento eya ngasethunjini. Uthe xa esosula ngaloo maphetshana eza kubhekabheka ukuze abhatale ashiye lo mnconwana kulowo ebemdekele itafile wasuka weva ngesandla simbamba apha emagxeni, "Hi stranger, uzifihle phi na wena?" Ucinga ukuba mlesi yayingubani lowo? Yayiyila ndoda inguvuz' imali kaloku. Izinyo layo elimenyezelayo legolide laba nento eliyenzayo ukuxhasa olo ncumo yayilujolise ku-Asakhe. Ecaleni kwayo yayingulaa mfo wayecula ebhankini emdaka yaye engqiba. Ngoku wayemhle mpela iinwele zichaziwe, yaye etye ilaphu kanobom. Wayebonakala enobuso obukhangaleka busempilweni ngeyona ndlela izidlele zitukutuku.

Waxakana nento u-Asakhe, le ndoda imphek' imophula imteketsa ngezincomo ngezincomo. Ukususela loo mini baqalisa ukufowunelana kusasa, emini maxa wambi nasezinzulwini zobusuku. U-Asakhe wayesele engamboneli ntweni tu ngoku uMzwakhe, kunjalo rje kwakuvakala kakuhle oko kwiingxabano zabo. Wazama uMzwakhe emva kokucetyiswa ngabahlobo bakhe ukuba amane emkhupha u-Asakhe lo babethwe ngumoya. Wayeye amse kwindawo apha wayeza kuthi ambanjezelwe ngobunono emqolo kucujwa kuphululwa ze kuphoziswe kupholiswe nayiphi na ingqaqambo esemzimbeni. Wayenyusa nemali awayemnika yona ukuze azithengele ooni noon, kodwa u-Asakhe wayenganeliseki ngoba wayefuna uqobo lweMini Cooper.

Ngaminazana ithile wathi uMzwakhe ebuya emsebenzeni wabuya echazelwa ngowakwakhe ukuba uzithwele. Wothuka uMzwakhe kakhulu zezi ndaba. "Uthini na apha kum, Sakhe?" Watsho enoncumo olunentwana yeenyembezi ngoba ke umfo omkhulu wayekhawuleza nokufixiza yimivuyo. Wathi ngentsasa elandelayo ucela baye kwaGqirha ukuze kuqinisekiswe oko kuza kosana. Yayingathi akusasi kuMzwakhe engazikholelwa tu ukuba uza kuba ngutata. Wayesele eceba phakathi kuy' entliziyweni ukuba olo sana luza kuthi gqi lumhlophe njengabo uza kulikhulisa njani yaye uza kuqinisekisa njani ukuba lonwabile yaye londlekile. Kwas' okungaliyo bakhawuleza bahlamba balungisa bayindlela.

Inqwelo ka-Asakhe yayisele ime ngamatye apha

phandle emva kokubiwa kwamavili ayo. Umzimba lo wenqwelo-mafutha wawugcwel' irusi nemigqobho kubonakala ukuba imundwe lulwandle kanobom. Bafunzel' eteksini neyavele yabazulazulis' ixesha elide. Emva kwento engaphaya kweyure bayokufika kuGqirha wabo abamthandayo phaya ePier 14 edolphini. Nangoku ke uGqirha wababonisa iscan esichaza usana Iwabo oluyintombazana. linyanga zazisele zintlanu. Baxhabasha ukuthengela usana izinto zokuhlamba, ezokuba lunuke kamnandi, ezokunxiba njalonjalo. Bazixeleta ukuba enye nenye bakuyibona xa kusondel' ixesha. Ngobo busuku kwakumnandi kwesi sibini kukhangelwa amagamaaza kuthi afanele lo mntwana. U-Asakhe wakhetha ukuba igama lomntwana libe ngu-Unako kuba esithi uMdali unako ukuyitshintsha into yokuba bengenazo ezi zinto bazifunayo ebomini ngokuthi bancedwe yile ntombi izayo. Wayenayo nento ekwathi hlez intombi le yabo izayo ibenako nokumthengela iMini Cooper. Waye wala uMzwakhe kwelakh' icala esithi baninzi oo-Unako apha esitratweni sabo yaye kukwakho neenkampani ezisele zilithathile elo gama. UMzwakhe wacebisa ukuba usana Iwakhe ibe nguLisoletu, yaye wacacisa ukuba intsingiselo yeli gama iyelelene kule ka-Unako. U-Asakhe zange abe nangxaki. Kwatywiya isopholo kwathotwyu ngekofu kwalalwa. Ngengomso uMzwakhe waphangela njengesiqhelo, wabe u-Asakhe ecofa into engapheliyo kunomyayi wakhe etsho ngoncumo olungapheliyo.

Lahamba lona ixesha yabe iMini Cooper iqu' ibuyeleta okwezulu laseMthatha kwaMzwakhe. Yayikade kuqala xa imisa ibengaphandle kweyadi kodwa ngoku yayisele ingeniswa ngaphakathi amasango atshixwe ukujinisekisa ukuba iMini Cooper le ikhuselekile. Abamelwane zange bayithande tu le nto yale moto ingaziwayo ixhaphakileyo kwa-Asakhe xa kanye umyeni wakhe engekho. Babezithetha abantu izinto ababecinga ukuba ziyanzeka kwa-Asakhe, kodwa kungekho bani ude abenobuganga bokuyisa kuMzwakhe okanye angqal' ukunqanda u-Asakhe lowo ngale nto inuk' ukutsha azifake kuyo.

Kwakukho umfana wangaph' emaMpundweni ekuthiwa nguNqaba, owayengoyiki ngokoyikiswa. Wayengomnye wabafana abalwa ulwaphulo-mthetho nababesebenzisana neeNkonzo zesiPolisa. Wayeye ingozi ayibone iseza kunjalo nje ayibinz' ingxaki isaqala. Zange abe eyithetha mntwini into aza kuyenza kodwa kwathi ngenye imini uMzwakhe engaphanelanga no-Asakhe esathiwe ngqwa torhwana esindwa nalilanga. "Mfondini, khawundikhaphe sikhe siye aph' eshopping centre kukho impuku endinqwenela siyihlinze." Phambi kokuba ahambe uMzwakhe watshixa iminyango yomibini ukuze unkosikazi wakhe amthandayo angangenelwa zizigilamkhuba elele.



Bangcambaza ke ukuya ngakwindawo ethengisa ukutya neempahla ezinxitywayo yaye baye bema ngakwithafa elikufutshane nesports centre.

"Uxolo maan ngale nto ndiza kuyithetha, kodwa ke ndimele ndiyithethe nokuba andithunywanga. Akukho mntu ungayiboniyo engingqini qha wonk' umntu uts' amacwaka."

"Yintoni ngoku leyo Nqeydo, thiza wam sani?"

"Mzwakhe, qho xa ungekho wena phaya kwakho fondini, kukho indoda ebaphaya izenze wena." Uthe esakutsho uNqaba uMzwakhe waphants' ukuwa kukothuka, intlizyo ibetha ngamandla. Yaykwakho nendawo engath' uphefumla nzima yaye umoya wokusezelwa uyawuphuthaphutha kukuminxeka, kodwa njengandoda unkabi waziqinisa. Ubuso obu basuka bamila imithambo namehlo la angathi anayo indawo efun' ukuba bomvu-buluhlaza. "Uthi kutheni na, Nqaba? Hayi hayi fondini, sukundixeleta into engekhoyo maan ngoSakhe wam. He fondini, uyayiqonda into yokuba ngumfazi wam lo umtyhola ngento embi kangaka? Utheni na Nqaba, ufunu ndohlukane nevrou yam? Unotshe ntanga soze!"

"Ndiyayiva yonke le uyithethayo ntanga qha bendithi mna mandikuxelele into ongasokuze ukiyelelwe ngabanye, nkqu naba ucinga ukuba bayakuxabisa."

"Hayibo yinyani le uyithethayo na, Nqaba?"

"Injalo mfondini, kwaye akukho mntu ungayaziyo. Andiyazi kutheni bengakuxeleli nje," "He, madoda!" Ngelo xesha uMzwakhe wayesebarek' amanzi umzimba wonke, ekhefuzela ngamandla. "Inyaniso yile yokuba iyandonzakalisa le nto uyithethayo, akwaba ibenqeyonyani kodwa ke akunakuxoka ngento efana nale fondini, kodwa still maan ayenzi sense yonke le nto." Esaxakwe njalo ukuba uMzwakhe uza kuthini, uNqaba wamcebisa ukuba kwiveki ezayo az' athi ngemini ethile alucele emsebenzini olu suku IwangoMvulo. Esakuggiba wathi umele apha endlini azenze umntu oza kungena ngo-6 kusasa aphume ngo-6 ngenjikalanga. Wade wathi ibhasi aze ayikhwele nyhani ade ayokufika ngasemsebenzini, andule athenge nokuba yibhiya nje enye kodwa ukuyiggiba kwakhe abuye. Babeza kudibana noNqaba kanye kule ndawo bagqugulela kuyo bathi chuu ukuya kwaMzwakhe enye nenyen iya kucaca ngelo xesha.

Yakhawuleza loo mpela-veki uMzwakhe engatsho nelimdaka. Wayesithi xa ebuzwa ngu-Asakhe ukuba, "Yintoni Mzwakhe, wasuke wantshingintshingi ngathi nguwe lo uzithweleyo? Iza kubanzima le yokuba si-bengamabhinqa sibe babini aph' endlini."

"Ndinezinyo elibuhlunga mfazi, nantso nje ingxaki

yam khawume ngochuku torho." "ULiso andingeth-andi afikele kutata oqumbayo ke mna ke. Angayithini umntan' am azibone sele enotata oneecravings?"

Lufikil' usuku IwangoMvulo wabe sel' echazile uMzwakhe ukuba ubiziwe emsebenzini kwabe kufika abaphathi abavela pheshaya. U-Asakhe wacelwa nguMzwakhe ukuba angazikhathazi ngokumlungiselela ukutya ngoba ufun' akhe ajongane nale nto yeli 'zinyo'. "Baby ingathi ngowulikhupha because xa libolile lenza nesisu, sisu eso xa uthewanaso ku..." "Ndisemkile." Mba ucango, yakroxoma igeyithi ngokungathi unkabi uvala ngetsheyina. Wan-cothuka ukuya kwindawo ekulindwa kuyo ibhasi. Ufike kwindawo ekulindwa kuyo ibhasi kucac' ukuba kukho nto ibithethwa kodwa xa kufika yena ngoku wonke umntu uthewa cwaka abanye batshintsh' incoko. Ukhwelite umfo omkhulu wabhatala wagcina itikitilakhe kuteyila ukulungiselela la madoda adla ngokuthi gqi esithubeni ezokujonga ukuba ngubani obhateleyo ingubani na ongabhatelanga.

Utsibelesi situlo sithand' ukubasinye ebhasini ukuze acingisisise amacebo akhe kakuhle. Ufikelwe bubushushu nesiyezi. Ngoko nangoko uvule ifestile yebhasi ukuze kungene umoya. Abahlali kuvele kwacaca ukuba bayamchuba. Wayeyiqonda eyokuba akazokumelana nokuhletywa ekhona engayang' okukha iimbotty. Uvile ukuba apha ngasemva kuthethwa ngeMini Cooper eggiba imizi yabantu waziva engakwazi ukuzibamba. Wasitsho esofelweyo uMzwakhe ngaphakathi ebhasini. Omnye ubawo kule bhasi ekuthiwa nguTshonyane wayalela ukuba ayekwe akhale onele echaza kananjalo ukuba kukhala umntu kwaye kuza kuphinde kuthule umntu akonanga mntu umntu ngokukhala xa kukho nto emtyayo.

Kwakunkandwa amahayihayi abantwana besikolo bethe qhiwu oonomyayi babo befota uMzwakhe bekwafota naba banqandayo.

Abanye babenale mbudane kwiingcinga zabo zokuba indoda ayikhali futhi xa ngoku oko kusenzeka yayiyinto apha ebanyumbazayo. Ngelingeni, wathula uMzwakhe, kwabe kusondela nendawo adla ngokwehla kuyo. Yayiyingxangxasi indoda kubonakala ukuba yenzakele kakhulu, kunjalo nje yaphukelwe yinqanawa yothando nentembeko.

UMzwakhe wacinga mhla abantakwabo babemchazela ukuba angamtshati u-Asakhe kuba besithi uhlal' ahlal' avukwe likakade. Wabaxeleta ukuba wonke umntu ebomini uyadinga ukunikwa ithuba lesibini nelokukhula, hayi elokujawa ngenxa yeempazamo. Wayemthanda nyhani u-Asakhe kodwa ngoku way-enamathandabuzo.

Wacinga mhla bequbha kunye kulwandle lwaseSum-merstrand, yaye aphi wayetshona. Wahlangulwa ngu-Asakhe, Asakhe lowo ongeyiyo nendadi enamava yena kuqala. U-Asakhe wazixeleta ukuba uya kufa aphi kufa khono umyeni wakhe. Kwiminyaka emihlanu awathi akaphangela ngayo uMzwakhe u-Asakhe wayevele' angene ngeAscona erenki abuye eze nengakanani yon' imali, kanti useza kupheka into eshoqololo yesidlo esimnandi.

Ekwezo ngcinga wafika kule ndawo ithengis' umabil' ebonda kuthe nkcwe. Wangqal' ekhawuntarini imali sel' eyifumbethe esandleni. Yabakhona into ethi makathenge into ekrakra ayimhomhe kube kanye qha. Wabuya wazinqanda watheng' ibhiya ebandayo waza wasondez' igilasi ukuze ayithi qongqololo. Umdla wavela awabikho tu waza waphisa ngayo komnye umaqwayipile owaziwayo ngokusarha utywala endaweni yesonka. "Nantso ibhiya mahala mfo, betha kuwe." Watakata' umaqwayipile ewelwe ngumq' esandleni. Wayigona loo bhiya wajikela nayo ngasebhulorhweni.

UMzwakhe ukhwele iteksi eya edolophini eTerminus, waza ekhawulezile wabamba ebheka eMotherwell. Ufike yangathi bekulindwe yena kakade. Emva kokuqokelelwa kwemali yaphuma erenki iteksi, yagwejela phantsi kwebhulorho yaqabela ukuyokungena kuhola wendlela uN2. Ingoma ebezisitsho kule teksi zivele zamenza waxakek' ingqondo. Yayimchukumisa mpela ingoma yeMafikizolo ithi, "Mas'thokoze sthandwa sam, ngoba mina nawe siqed' iminyaka." Ngokwenene yena no-Asakhe babeza kuggiba ishumi elinesibini leminyaka betshatile.

Yahamba iteksi yangathi ityhalwa ngumoya ukubheka eMotherwell. Behlika abantu kwiindawo zabo. NoMzwakhe wehlika elindelwe nguNqaba. Babhunga ngokukhawuleza bethethela phantsi. Bandula bahamba bexhabashile ukuya kwaMzwakhe. Bavula ngokungxama baza balukhab' ucango. Bagagana nesikhalo sika-Asakhe ngaphakathi, "Yhuuuu, yhuuu! Ndixolele Mzwakhe, yhuuuuuuuu!!!" u-Asakhe ekhala nje uzigqume ngeengubo.

"Uphi lo mntu?" Ubuzile uMzwakhe elugcalagcala ngumsindo. UNqaba umkhombise ngamehlo ngaphaya kwewodrobhu. Ngaxesha linye uNqaba noMzwakhe bangqala ewodrobhini baphawula ukuba kukho into eshukumayo emva kwewodrobhu. Yayiyila ndoda yeMini Cooper. Bayicinezela ngewodrobhu le kanobom beyicumzela ukuba ityumke amathambo ukuba ayatyumka. Yaphuma phakathi kwemilenze kaNqaba yaza yabaleka ize injalo. Bayileqa ooMzwakhe beyigibisela ngako konke

okushukumayo. Yaqhawula indoda ibetha ngesuti yesele kubukele bonke abantu basebumelwaneni. "Yhu, yhu, yhu, unamanyala umfazi walo mzi."

"Yhu, esingako ukuba mnyama sona isibindi!"

"Shame isiaram esinguMzwakhe siphangelela unondindwakazi ohamba engenisa onke amamenemene ale dolophu." Babesitsho njalo abahlali kwizindlu zabo bebuкеle loo 'mboniso bhanyabhanya'.

Yabaleka indoda ende igxanya iphinyela ize. Nantso iyokutshona kweli cala liya ngaseSwartkops phofu ishiya naloo nwelo-mafutha yayo. Isikhalo sika-Asakhe satsho isitalato sonke sema ngxi. Abantu bokuhlala basondela beyokuthuthuzel ngoba babeqjinisekile ukuba inokuba ukhona umntu oswelekileyo. UMzwakhe wayebuza umfazi wakhe umbuzo omnye, "NGUMNTU WAPHI LO? Asakhe! khawuphendule wena maan, ndiyabuza, ngumntu waphi maan lo?" U-Asakhe enesingqala enjalo wachaza ukuba elona gama lalo mfo akalazi oko nje emane xa embiza athi 'bhuti', kube kuphelele aphi. UMzwakhe wamxeleta u-Asakhe ukuba aphume aphele kulo mzi wabo akhe ayokuqweba inyani kowabo. U-Asakhe wabe esithi akayi ndawo tu.

Kusuku olulandelayo kwiphephandaba lokuhlala kwakho gqiyazana lithile elalisithi lilahlekelwe yiMini Cooper yalo ebomvu, phofu ibiwa kwakhe ephesheyahambe nomsebenzi. Ephepheni wabongoza ecela nabani na othe wayibona akhawuleze eze ngaphambili.

U-Asakhe wacenga uMzwakhe owayesele equalise ukulala kwelinje igumbi ukuba batsalele umnxeba elo gqiyazana kunye. UMzwakhe wabhokoda oku kwenkomo engafuni ukungena ediphini. Walitsale' umnxeba ngokwakhe u-Asakhe echaza ukuba inqwelo-mafutha ikwakhe kwaye ukulungele ukuchaza ukuba ize njani na aphi. Leza igqiyazana ladibana no-Asakhe, lazazisa ukuba igama lalo nguAsavela, uM-aMdlangathi, owayehlala eSummerstrand. UAsavela ukhawulezile waza wathi wakuva ukuba kwenzekeni wasikwa yimfesane ngoAsakhe, wampha iMini Cooper ngokusesikweni. Zaye zivuleka iintanda zokungathethisani kwelo khaya. Lahamba ixesha kwade kwafikelela nelokuba u-Asakhe abeleke usana lwakhe.

Walala iintsuku zambalwa esibhedlele walunywa ezinzulwini zobsuku. Wathi gqi ngosana olunobuso obukhanyayo buneendlebe ezimnyama nezinkulu okwebhaku. Impumlo yayiliqunkunyakazi. Umntwana owavela sele encumile kakade amehlo akhe amakhulu ayenendawo elaqazayo. Wanikin' intloko uMzwakhe into engapheliyo.





KASRI YA WAKE WANNE

(Kiswahili)

Anna Samwel Manyanza

Bi. Samia aliridhia kufunga ndoa na mzee Bakari. Alimfahamu bwana huyo kupitia kaka zake. Nidhamu ya mzee Bakari iliridhisha wengi. Utulivu wake wa kuzaliwa na ustadi wake wa kazi vilimpatia jina la heshima la mzee Mufti. Tangu kukatiwa jina hili, hakuna aliyekumbuka tena kumwita kwa jina lake la asili.

Kila mwezi, Bi. Samia alipatiwa pesa na mumewe za kwenda kununulia doti ya kanga. Mzee Mufti alipendezwa sana na vazi hilo, kadhalika, alifurahishwa mno na maneno ya kanga aliyochagua mkewe:

Tabia zikilingana daima tutapatana.

Wema wako ni hazina ya milele.

Mungu akupe kheri daima.

Pendo langu kwako halina maficho.

Kila ampendaye mwenzake ametimiza sheria za mungu.

Miezi hadi miaka iliyoyoma, lakini Bi. Samia hakutunga mimba. Hali hiyo ilitesa sana roho yake kwa sababu alifahamu kuwa mumewe, wakweze na wazaziwe walikuwa na hamu ya kukaribisha mtoto kwenye familia. Waja nao walianza kumtetu kuwa hana kizazi. Alikonda mwili na roho, usingizi ulimkimbia, chakula kikamshinda kula. Jakamoyo hili liliakisi pia chaguo la maneno ya kanga zake:

Mola ibariki harusi yetu iwe na heri.

Sitajali kuumia mengi nimevumilia.

Yarabi tupe salama tuishi kwa kupendana.

Hizi ni rehema za mungu.

Ee Mola wangu ipokee dua yangu.

Jioni moja, mumewe alimwita ili waliongelee suala hili la kutafuta mwana.

"Samia nyonda wangu, hali ya kutopata mtoto, sote wawili twailelewa vizuri sana. Tumehangai kila mahali, na tumejaribu kila kitu. Twafanyaje sasa, nyonda wangu?"

Bi. Samia alitamani kumjibu kuwa wavumiliane tu, ela hakuthubutu kumwambia kwa sababu vishawishi vyta kijamii viliwaandama wote wawili. Alimjibu, "dini yetu pia inakuruhusu, mume wangu, hivyo timiza tu hilo lililoko moyoni mwako."

"Sitaki kuukwaza moyo wako, mahabubu wangu."

"Usijali na wala usihofu. Alipangalo Rabana, kamwe mja hatoweza kulipangua."

Fununu zilipoenea mitaani kuwa mzee Mufti anatafuta mke wa pili, wazazi waliokuwa na mabinti walitamani kupokea barua ya posa kutoka kwa mzee huyo. Ijapokuwa nyumba ya mzee Mufti ilikuwa ya kawaida tu, ilivikwa sifa ya kipekee na kuitwa Kasri. Sifa hii ilitokana na moyo wa asali wa mzee Mufti mwenyewe. Bi. Khadija ndiye aliyebahati kuchumbiwa na hatimaye kuolewa na mzee Mufti. Mzee Mufti alimfahamu bibi huyu kupitia rafiki yake aliyekuwa akiimba taarab na Bi. Khadija katika kikundi maarufu cha watribu wa taarab huko Tanga mjini. Bi. Khadija aliacha mara moja kazi hii kwa sababu mzee Mufti hakupenda wakeze watange na dunia. Aliwahudumia kwa kila kitu. Bi. Khadija alifahamika kwa uhoodari wake wa kujipodoa. Nje hakutoka bila kujipulizia marashi yake ya kutoka Pemba.

Alipopita mtaani, alinukia kama Jini Huba. Licha ya mvuto huu, alivuma pia kwa kinywa chake kilichokuwa chepesi na kichafu. Bi. Samia hakuchoka kumuadibu mke mwensiwe ajirekebishe.

"Kauli yako, mke mwenzangu, i chafu sana. Kinywa chako hakitoi tui bubu bali chatoa chicha tu lisilo na faida yoyote ile kwenye ndoa."

Bi. Khadija naye hakucheleva kumropokea, "na weye kizazi chako kimekosa faida kwenye ndoa maana hakitungi mimba wala hakijawahi kuzaa mwana. Mkosi mtupu!"

Bi. Samia alibaki tu kujinyamazia huku roho ikisonon-eka. Haikuwa siri kuwa Bi. Khadija alikuja kwa vishindo kwenye ndoa maana aliyajua mapungufu ya Bi. Samia ya kututunga mimba. Bi. Khadija alipobeba mimba, alimnyanyasa sana mke mwensiwe na kumwita pazia la mlango. Manyanyaso hayo yalioneckana pia kwenye kanga alizovaa:

Kipi cha kung'ang'ania hakutaki timua.

Uzuri sio kinga ya mapenzi.

Mume wangu anikanda nikilegea hunipamba.

Anilea vyema ndio naringa.

Alichokikosa kwako kakipata kwangu.

Bi. Khadija alijifungua mtoto wa kike – Mwajabu. Mzee Mufti alifurahi pasina kifani, alipasuka kwa majivuno. Kila mtu alizipata habari za kujaaliwa mtoto. Bi. Khadija hakuchoka kumcheka Bi. Samia na kumwambia kuwa aondoke, arudi kwao maana ameshindwa kutimiza jukumu la ndoa ambalo ni kumzalia mume watoto. Bi. Samia aliyavumilia yote. Kanga zake zilibeba maneno yaliyopevuka tu:

Mungu hana hiyana ni mwingu wa rehema.

Maisha ni kutafuta na sio kutafutana.

Upendo wa amani huanza ndani ya nyumba.

Naishi kiungwana sitaki kushindana.

Subira ina malipo.

Mimba ya pili ilipopanda, Bi. Khadija alizidiwa na

majukumu ya kulea. Hivyo, alitafuta fadhila kutoka kwa mke mwensiwe. Bi. Samia hakuwa na hiyana. Alimwekea mke mwensiwe bega popote alipohitajika. Siku moja, Mwajabu alikuwa akisumbuliwa na maumivu ya tumbo. Bi. Samia akamwambia, "mama alikuwa akitupa dawa iitwayo ndago, ni nzuri sana kwa watoto, ngoja nikaitafute."

Miezi kenda ilipotimia, Bi. Khadija alijaaliwa mtoto wa pili – Aziza. Cha ajabu ni kwamba hakufurahishwa na tunkuu ile. Mke mwensiwe alitamani kuijua sababu, Bi. Khadija hakumficha, "nilitarajia kupata mvulana zamu hii ili hapo baadaye arithi mali ya baba yake," Bi. Khadija alisema kwa sauti ya simanzi.

"Mimi mwenzio hata wa kufutia chozi sina. Mshukuru Karima kuwa umejaaliwa watoto, tena wazuri na wenye afya. Kipi cha zaidi ukitakacho?"

"Dume! Dume! Dume!"

"Usimkufuru Jalali, Bi. Khadija, maana yake ghadhabu kamwe haina simile."

Mwaka ulipotimia, mzee Mufti alimwita mke mkubwa na kumwomba wawe faragha kidogo.

"Nimewaongezea mwenzenu. Anaithwa Bi. Sada."

"Nakusikiliza mume wangu," sauti iliishia tumboni.

"Sasa naomba andaa vile vyumba vitatu vyenye makorokoro ya zamani. Waite vijana wa kijiweni waje wayaondoe."

"Nakusikiliza, mume wangu."

"Kisha mwite fundi. Mwambie avipake rangi vyumba vyote – ngazi pia azipauwe vizuri. Bustani nataka ipendeze kama hii yako. Sakafu ya jikoni nataka iwe ya marumaru."

"Nakusikiliza, mume wangu."

"Choo na bafu nataka viwe vipyta kabisa. Halafu msisitizie kuwa choo lazima kiwe cha kukaa kwa sababu Bi. Sada hawezu kuchutama. Nyumbani kwao, vyoo vyao vyote ni vya kukaa tu. Tumeleewana nyonda?"



Bi. Samia alimwangalia kwa sekunde kadhaa kisha alimwitikia kwa sauti tulivu, "hewala, mume wangu. Lako ombi, kwangu faradhi."

"Mwenzenu anatarajiwa kuingia humu ndani muda si mrefu."

"Usihofu, mume wangu."

Bi. Khadija alipoona mafundi wanapishana langoni, alimwendea mke mkubwa kudadisi, "hivi vyumba vyenye makorokoro, mbona mafundi wamevivalia njuga namna hii, kunani nisichokijua?" Aliuliza huku akimbembeleza Aziza, alale.

"Mzee Mufti kaagiza kuwa visafishwe, bafu na choo pia vikarabatiwe, ving'are."

"Kwa malengo yapi?" Macho yalidadisi.

Bi. Samia alisimama na kumgeukia. Ufagio wake wa njiti, kiganjani ulitulia. Jasho la Tanga lilimchuruzika kuanzia pajini hadi kwapani. "Bi. Sada anatarajiwa kuingia muda si mrefu," alimjibu huku usowe umechujuka.

"Bi. Sada?" Jicho la mshangao lilimtoka, "ndiyo nani huyu?"

Jibu la Bi. Samia lilikuwa pevu kama majira ya magharibi. "ulipokuja weye kwenye ndoa yangu, sonona yangu niliimalizia kitandani. Walahi kama mto ungekuwa na mdomo, bila shaka ungesimulia mengi sana yaliyoko kifiani mwangu."

"Kaoa lini huyu mzee Mufti, zee lisiloridhika na mke mmoja!" Alisema kwa sauti ya jazba.

"Hayo uyanenayo yalitakiwa yatoke kinywani mwangu na si kinywani mwako, Bi. Khadija. Hivyo kichunge kinywa chako."

"Kwa vile tu sikumzalia madume ndiyo kaamua kutafuta kwengine?"

"Dini yake bado inamruhusu kururundika humu ndani hadi tufikie wake wanne. Hivyo huyu wa tatu akiingia, tujitayarisha kumkaribisha mwингine wa nne. Mambo ni kuvumuliana tu."

"Na atanitambua akirudi!" Kisha alisonya.

"Jaribu kuwa mke mwenye staha, Bi. Khadija. Kinywa

kishonee uzi, we mtoto wa kike, loh!"

"Katu sinyamazi!" Alikuja juu kama moto wa kifuu.

"Mwanamke anatakiwa kuwa na staha, Bi. Khadija. Tulia tumtunze mume. Mume hateswi. Mume hapendi karaha bali raha tu. Mume ni sawa na yai bichi, haliminywi sembuse kuangushwa. Maana chini likaanguka pwaa! basi sote tumeapasuka paa!"

"Nasema atanitambua akija. Nitamtaka anieleze, kipi kakikosa kwangu hadi kuamua kuongeza mke mwengine!"

"Uamuzi wa mwanamume kamwe hautuhusu sisi watoto wa kike. Mtoto wa kike hashindani na mtoto wa kiume. Hivi hukufundwa huko kwenu, we Bi. Khadija!"

"Akija lazima nimpakie maneno yake!" Aliapa.

"Mwanamume hang'akiwi. Utajiponza."

"Naponzeka kwa kipi, kwani kuuliza ishakuwa haramu tayari?"

"Shauri yako, Bi. Khadija!"

Majuma mawili yalipotimia, Bi. Sada aliwasili. Roho ya Bi. Khadija iliteseka kwa wivu alipobaini kuwa Bi. Sada yu mjamzito.

"Tena ana mimba tayari!" Alikwenda kumlalamikia Bi. Samia.

"Ndiyo maisha hayo. Mzee Mufti bado atafuta wana."

"Je, akimzalia dume, nafasi na hadhi yangu kwa mzee Mufti si ataichukua huyu Bi. Sada?"

"Mume wangu alipokuingiza weye ndani, moyo wangu ulikonda kwa wivu. Sasa ngoja na weye pia yakufike ili ujionee mwenyewe jinsi moyo unavyokereketa."

"Halafu wala sio mrembo kunishinda," alijipa moyo.

"Kama urembo ungekuwa ni hoja, basi maisha ya ukewenza yasingalinikuta mimi. Changamoto ni nydingi sana." Bi. Khadija alilielewa fumbo lile maana hakufua dafu mbele ya uzuri wa Bi. Samia. Alibaki kukufuru tu, "na sintomsaidia kwa lolote huyu Bi. Sada maana hata kumtia jichoni simtamani."

"Sisi kumsaidia mke mwenzetu shuruti. Hali aliyokuwa nayo weye pia waifahamu. Kumbuka jinsi niliyoyokuhudumia ulipokuwa mjamzito. Au umekwishahau tayari?"

"Hapana, sijasahau, ila huyu mwenzetu kamshikilia sana mzee wetu. Kamtawala kuanzia unyayoni hadi utosini."

"Hata sikuelewi una maana gani."

"Huyu Bi. Sada kawekewa choo cha kukaa. Sisi vyetu ni vya kuchutama tu, yeze kawa nani? Mimi pia nakitaka choo cha kukaa. Sakafu ya jiko lake ni ya marumaru, yeze kawa nani? Mimi pia naitaka sakafu ya marumaru. Ana jiko la umeme na mashine ya kufua nguo, yeze kawa nani? Mimi pia navitaka vyote hivyo."

"Mimi nakushauri tuyachilie mbali masuala ya ushindani."

Miezi kenda ya mwanzo, Bi. Khadija hakumsabahi Bi. Sada. Alimpita kama apitavyo kizingiti cha mlango. Ghadhabu yake alionyesha kwenye mafumbo ya kanga zake:

Yataka moyo kuishi na jirani.

Wawili wakipendana adui hana nafasi.

Usimwingilie aliyepewa kapewa.

Wapendanao ni sisi hebu tupeni nafasi.

Nimemuweka moyoni kumtoa siwezi.

Bi. Sada naye hakukubali kushindwa, alirudisha mashambulizi kijemedari. Vijembe vya kanga zake vilikuwa pasua kichwa:

Twapenda mahaba wala hatuombi msamaha.

Wacheni majungu mapenzi yetu hayawahu.

Waja mmeshazoeya wawili kuwaftini.

Haya tena wenye kijicho kazi kwenu.

Siwajali wambea, kusema wamezoea.

Bi. Sada alijifungua mtoto wa kike – Nafisa. Bi. Khadija alitamani kupiga vifijo vya furaha, sababu ni kwamba, Bi. Sada hakujaaliwa dume. Bi. Sada alimpuuza tu. Muda mwiningi aliumalizia kwa mke mkubwa. Bi.

Samia alimshauri asishindane na huyu Bi. Khadija, pia alimfundisha kuhimili maisha ya ukewenza, "mzee Mufti hapendi kuambiwa maneno ya kichonganishi. Hata kama ni ya kweli, hataki kuyasikia," sauti yake ilikuwa kongwe kama umri wake wenywewe.

"Nakusikiliza, Bi. Samia."

"Huyu bwana namfahamu tangu utotoni. Kaka yangu – Abdi – alisoma naye darasa moja. Ni baba mtulivu sana."

"Bi. Khadija ana kauli chafu sana. Ananitia majoribuni kila nimtiapo jichoni."

"Kwani asiyemjua huyu bibi n'nani? Mimi mwenyewe alinitesa sana mwanzoni. Nikampuuza tu, ndipo akajirudi."

"Sitaki mzee Mufti akwazike kwa ajili yangu."

"Basi fuata ushauri wangu maana huyu baba ni mkimya sana, isitoshe, anatujali kama mboni ya jicho lake. Hivyo si uungwana kuitesa roho yake."

"Nakushukuru sana, Bi. Samia."

"Wala usihofu."

Mimba ya pili iliposhika, Bi. Sada alijaaliwa mtoto mwininge wa kike - Saumu. Uhasama baina ya Bi. Khadija na Bi. Sada ukapungua hadi kwisha kabisa. Hawakuwa wapinzani tena maana wote wawili walijaaliwa watoto wa jinsia moja. Hata sokoni walikwenda pamoja. Hatimaye, wote wawili walisaahau fadhila ya mke mkubwa, walidiriki hata kumcheka hadharani kuwa hatungi mimba. Walivaa kanga zenye vijembe vilivyotesa roho ya mke mkubwa:

Watoto ni pambo la mzazi.

Umoja ni nguvu.

Raha ya dunia ni watoto.

Mwenye kijicho hafanikiwi.

Bahati ikikukataa, hata kwa mganga haitafaa.

Kanga za Bi. Samia ziliikuwa na maneno ya hikima tu:

Mwenye radhi hasumbuki.



Moyo wangu tulia mtegemee Mungu.

Mungu akikulinda hakuna atakaye kushinda.

Sitokula gizani kwa kumuogopa jirani.

Naogopa simba na meno yake, siogopi mtu na maneno yake.

"Natoka kidogo, naenda mazishini," sauti ya mzee Mufti ilikuwa nzito.

"Nani tena katutoka, mume wangu?" Bi. Samia alidadisi.

"Mamiye Bw. Malik."

"Usiniambie kuwa Mama Matumbo kaaga dunia, jamani!"

"Ndiyo hivyo tena, mbele yake nyuma yetu."

"Aliugua maradhi gani?"

"Wanasema alipata shinikizo la moyo la ghafla."

"Mola amfanyie maghfira, Inshallah."

"Inshallah."

Huko huko matangani alimwona msichana aliyejewa mzuri mithili ya malaika.

"Ni binti wa rafiki yangu, mzee Nguwa." Bw. Malik alimfahamisha mzee Mufti kwa

sauti ya chini.

"Keshaolewa tayari?" Yeye pia alinong'ona.

"Nijuavyo mie, bado, ela nimesikia kuwa keshachumbiwa tayari. Vipi, umeshapenda, mzee mwenzangu?"

"Kabisa, kabisa, mzee mwenzangu. Kachumbiwa na nani huyu waridi?"

"Hata sijui," kisha alimkumbusha, "lakini fahamu ya kwamba huyu binti ni Mkristo."

"Kwani dini ni hoja basi! Hebu nifahamishe jinale tafadhali."

"Aitwa Biti Rehema."

"Basi tutamsilimisha tumwite Biti Rahima."

"Ukimpata huyu binti, kasri yako itakamilika kabisa, au nimekosea, mzee mwenzangu?"

"Hujakosea hata kidogo. Huyu nikimwingiza ndani tu, kasri yangu itakamilika kabisa. Itakuwa ni Kasri ya Wake Wanne."

"Basi kazi kwako, mzee mwenzangu."

Mzee Nguwa - babaye Biti Rehema, alifurahi sana kupokea washenga wa mzee Mufti. Hata hivyo, mkewe hakutaka binti yao aposwe na mzee Mufti kwa sababu alishachumbiwa tayari, "mume wangu, si unajua mwenyewe kuwa Rehema ana mchumba tayari, au umeshasahau hili?"

"Uchumba sio ndoa, mke wangu."

"Tukikubali mahari ya mzee Mufti tutaiumiza roho ya Bw. Kitwana."

"Maisha ndivyo yalivyo, mke wangu. Maisha ni kupanga na kupanga ni kuchagua. Roho yangu im-emridhia mzee Mufti zaidi ya Bw. Kitwana."

"Basi tusubiri kwanza, tusiwe na pupa. Lazima tulifikirie hili suala."

"Hatuwezi kukataa ombi la mzee Mufti, mke wangu. Huyu mzee ana sifa za kinabii. Tutapata hishima na wadhfa mwingine kabisa. Angalia jinsi wazazi wa Bi. Khadija wanavyotamba sasa hivi! Mimi pia nataka kutamba kama wao."

"Halafu nani kasema kuwa binti yetu atakubali kuolewa na mzee Mufti? Isitoshe, tutampa Bw. Kitwana jibu gani sisi!"

"Bw. Kitwana niwachie mimi. Rehema nakuachia weye. Rehema lazima aolewe na mzee Mufti!" Alisisitiza.

"Na dini nayo, au umeshasahau kuwa sisi si Waislamu?"

"Kwani hiyo ni hoja? Hili pia totalitatua. Usihofu kabisa."

"Unanipa mtihani mkubwa sana, mume wangu."

"Si mtihani, mke wangu, bali baraka tele. Mzee Mufti lazima apewe kipaumbele yule."

Mkewe alitafuta kila sababu ili tu binti yao asiposwe na mzee Mufti, "huyu mzee Mufti ameshakuwa babu kizee tayari. Umri wake ni sawa na wako. Au hili pia umelisahau?"

"Kwa hiyo?"

"Binti yetu hawezi kuolewa na mwanamume anayeweza kumzaa mara dufu. Rehema ana miaka kumi na minane tu, mzee Mufti sitini na minane. Wapi na wapi!"

"Maadamu anawenza kuwakidhi wakeze, hatoshindwa kumkidhi pia Rehema."

Tarehe mosi ya mwezi wa kenda, Biti Rehema alisilimishwa na kuitwa Biti Rahima. Bi. Sada na Bi. Khadija hawakupendezwa kabisa na ujio wa Biti Rahima. Bi. Samia, kwa upande mwengine, alifurahi sana kumpokea Biti Rahima maana alipata mtu wa kuzoeana naye. Tena waliihana majina mapya kabisa - Bimkubwa na Bimdogo.

Bimdogo alijaaliwa mtoto wa kiume – Kibadeni. Mwaka uliofua alijaaliwa mtoto wa pili, pia wa kiume – Riziki. Vivu wa Bi. Sada na Bi. Khadija haukuelezeza. Walivaa kanga zenyenjewa vijembe vikali:

Usitake ushindani huniwezi asilani.

Nipende kwa nia nipate kutulia.

Yetu yatawachoma sana.

Kwangu keshafika kwako apitisha tu.

Bimkubwa alimshauri Bimdogo kamwe asichuanne nao. Hata hivyo, Bimdogo hakukubali kushindwa. Alichuana nao kisawasawa. Yeye pia alivaa kanga zenyenjewa vijembe vikali:

Mtasema asubuhi usiku mtalala.

Wachemshe hao hao kwangu utapoa.

Sina siri nina jibu.

Wambea hawana shule huteta popote pale.

Wasifiwa kwa umbea ya nini kuringa?

Mpaji ni mmoja usiudhike na yangu hali.

Mungu akisema ndio hakuna wa kupinga.

Vita vyta kanga vilipamba moto kwenye Kasri ya Wake Wanze.

Baada ya miaka mitano, hali ya kiafya ya Bimkubwa haikuwa nzuri.

"Bimdogo!"

"Labeka, Bimkubwa!"

"Hebu njoo huku kwangu, tafadhali."

"Si punde, Bimkubwa."

"Mwenziyo sijisikii salama kabisa."

"Masahibu gani, Bimkubwa?"

"Kizazi chanitesa, ni mwaka sasa."

"Basi ngoja niite teksi tuwahi hospitali."

"Ningekushukuru sana."

Kansa ilishamla Bimkubwa hadi mapafuni. Habari ile alijua mzee Mufti, Biti Rahima na Bi. Samia mwenyewe tu. Bi. Khadija na Bi. Sada walifichwa kwa kuhofia vinywa vyao zilizokuwa nyepesi.

Jioni moja, Bimkubwa alitafuta faragha na Bimdogo.

"Huyu Bi. Khadija ana lake jambo."

"Usinipasue roho, Bimkubwa, hebu nipashe!" Jicho lilimtoka.

"Unamfahamu Bin Issa?"

"Hata simfahamu."

"Basi tupatapo muda wa kutosha, nitakueleza habari nzima."

"Hapana, Bimkubwa, hapa sibanduki hadi unambie."



"Ni habari chafu sana."

"Inamuhusu Bi. Khadija?"

"Naam! Inamuhusu huyu huyu kirukanjia!"

"Unataka kuniambia kuwa ana tabia mbaya na huyu Bin Issa?"

"Yaani we acha tu!"

"Aibu gani hii, masalaale!"

"Ni fedheha sana."

"Mzee Mufti analijua hili?

"Hata sijui kama analijua."

"Nani kakutonya?"

"Mama Baruani, yule mama mwenye nyumba ya kulaza wageni"

"Mama Baruani namfahamu vizuri kabisa."

"Nasikia Bi. Khadija na huyu Bin Issa wameonekana huko kwenye nyumba ya kulaza wageni."

"Maradhi ya siku hizi, tutapona kweli sisi!"

"Halafu huyu mke mwenzetu hakumbuki kuwa yeye ni mke wa mtu tayari."

"Fedheha gani hii, Yarbi!"

Yalikuwa majira ya adhuhuri pale Mwajabu aliporudi nyumbani mbio huku machozi yakimchuruzika, "Kibadeni kagongwa na mkokoteni!" Alisema huku akimkimbia mama yake. Bi. Khadija alimvuta Mwajabu ndani na kubuta mlangowe. Bimdogo alipotaarifiwa, alifyatuka kama mshale na kutoka nje. Alikimbilia barabarani. Alipofika kwenye eneo la tukio, aliambiwa kuwa wasamaria wema wamekwishamuhisha Kibadeni hospitali. Mzee Mufti aliwahi pia hospitali.

Hakuna aliyeamini kuwa maisha ya Kibadeni, mvulana mdoogo kama yule, yangefikia ukingoni mapema kiasi kile. Bimdogo hakutoka nje mwaka mzima kwa simanzi iliyomtesa. Kila siku aliomboleza. Mwili ulimnyauka, hamu ya maisha ikamtoka kabisa.

"Imani fulani nafsini mwangu inaniambia kuwa kifo cha Kibadeni hakikuwa cha mapenzi ya Jalali bali kuna mkono wa mtu umepita hapa," Bimkubwa alimnong'oneza Bimdogo.

"Hainisaidii kitu chochote maana sintokaa nimwone tena Kibadeni wangu," machozi yalimchuruzika kila alipotaja jina la mwanawe.

"Nina mashaka sana na huyu Bi. Khadija."

"Hainisaidii mimi tena. Maji yameshamwagika tayari, hayazoleki."

Mwaka uliofuata, maradhi ya Bimkubwa yalikuwa jeuri. Yalimtia pingu kitandani. Umri nao pia ulichangia. Bimdogo alimuugusa mke mwensiwe kwa ujasiri wote hadi dakika ya mwisho roho ilipoacha mwili. Kifo cha Bimkubwa kilimtesa Bimdogo kila siku. Upweke ulimkondesha.

Bi. Khadija na Bi. Sada wala hawakumwonea huruma. Walimwandama na vijembe vyao vikali. Masimango yalipozidi, aliomba ruhusa ya kwenda kumtembelea shangazi yake.

"Shangazi ana hamu ya kumwona Riziki kwani tangu azaliwe, hajapata kumpakata."

"Ila usiende kukaa muda mrefu, tafadhalii," mumewe alimsihi.

"Kwenye majuma mawili hivi nitakuwa nimesharudi."

"Hapana, huo ni muda mrefu sana, nusu yake, tosha kabisa."

"Yaani juma moja tu!"

"Basi umeshanielewa tayari."

Hata juma halikupita hadi mzee Mufti kupokea taarifa mbaya kutoka kwa wazazi wa Bimdogo. Zilisema kuwa Riziki kang'atwa na nyoka wakati yuko shambani na shangazi yake Bimdogo. Isitoshe, Bimdogo mwenyewe kawahishwa hospitali maana alizirai baada ya kupata taarifa hiyo mbaya. Mzee Mufti alimwita dereva wake mara moja ili wawahi hospitali. Mwili wa Riziki ulipumzishwa bila ya mama yake kuwapo maana alipoteza fahamu juma zima. Bimdogo aliporudi nyumbani, hakutoka tena nje kwa kuhofia masengenyo ya waja na vijembe vyaa wake wenziwe.

Maisha bila ya wanawe hayakuwa maisha kamilifu. Alikonda mwili na roho. Mzee Mufti alihakikisha Bimdogo hanyanyasiki na maneno ya waja. Hivyo alimwekea mjakazi ili asitange na dunia. Wake wenza walikereketwa kwa wivu maana wao pia walitaka kuwekewa vijakazi.

Jioni moja, Mwanakiti, mjakazi wa Bimdogo, alimletea Bimdogo habari nzito.

"Nimemwona Bi. Khadija na mtu fulani," alitaarifu wakati anamtenga Bimdogo chakula cha jioni.

"Twende chumbani kwangu mara moja!" Aliamri. Hamu ya kujua kila kitu ilimjawa.

"Nasikia anaitwa Bin Issa. Bi. Khadija akapanda kwenye gari lake, wakaondoka. Nimewaona kwa macho yangu mwenyewe!"

"Muongo, Mwanakiti, muongo!" Jicho la mshangao lilimtoka. "Basi nenda kachunguze sasa hivi kama kesharudi nyumbani au la. Nakusubiri."

Kijakazi alikuwa kama mpelelezi wa Rais. Wajibu wake aliutimiza pasi kukosea. Alirudi na jibu la uhakika, "yupo kwake. Tena kajaa tele kama pishi ya mchele."

"Siri yetu sawa?"

"Kwani kunani, mama?"

"Huna haja ya kuyajua. Hayakuhusu."

"Sawa, mama."

Tafrija ya Ramadhani ya mwaka ule haikufana kwenye Kasri ya Wake Wanne. Mkuu wa kaya, kichwa cha kasri, rubani wa ndege, nahodha wa meli, mzee wa wazee – mzee Mufti – aliaga dunia ghafla.

"Na watakoma zamu hii. Bila ya mzee Mufti hawana mbele wala nyuma," Bi. Zuhura, mke wa Bin Issa, alilaani.

"Kwani kunani, shoga?" Rafikiye mpenzi aitwaye Rukia, alimdadisi.

"Kwani hujui?"

"Sina nijualo, hebu nipashe, shoga." "Mtoto wa mwisho wa Bi. Khadija na Bi. Sada ni wa mume wangu."

Macho ya Rukia yalikodoa, "Mtumeeee!"

Bw. Kitwana alipopata rambirambi za kifo cha mzee Mufti, alijua mara moja kuwa muda wake sasa umetimia. Hakucheleva kufunga ndoa na Bimdogo. Bimdogo alichukua jina lake la awali la Biti Rehema. Baada ya hapo, alihamia Mkoa wa Dodoma ambako Bw. Kitwana alikuwa tayari amejijenga kibishara. Kijakazi wake aliondoka naye. Bin Issa naye hakucheleva, tena ye ye alifunga ndoa mbili kwa mpigo. Bi. Khadija na Bi. Sada wakawa wakeze kihalali.

"Sonona ndio iliyouua mzee Mufti," mzee Khamisi, msiri mkuu wa marehemu mzee Mufti, alimfahamisha mkewe. "Usaliti wa Bi. Khadija na Bi. Sada ulimtesa sana mzee wa watu!"

"Mola amlaze mahala pema peponi," mkewe alimpa faraja.

"Mzee Mufti alifahamu vizuri kabisa kuwa hawa wakeze wa kat i wamekuwa virukanja. Aliwavumilia tu."

"Maskini mzee wa watu. Aliwajali wakeze kama sultani kwa malkia wake. Lakini haikusaidia kitu."

"Tetes zinasema kuwa Bi. Zuhura anahuksika na kifo cha mzee Mufti ili kuwaadhibu Bi. Khadija na Bi. Sada."

"Iwapo fununu hizo ni za kweli, basi Mola kamuadhibu Bi. Zuhura mara dufu maana wapinzani wake wamehamia kwake sasa."

"Malipo ni papa hapa duniani, akhera kwenda hesabu tu."

"Naam! Mume wangu. Kijasho kitamtoka Bi. Zuhura zamu hii maana Bi. Khadija hafai hata kwa kurumangia."

"Maadili mabaya ya huyu Bi. Khadija ndio yaliyobomoa Kasri ya Wake Wanne."

"Kabisa mume wangu!"

"Mzee Mufti alikuwa akilalamika kila siku. Alikuwa akija kwangu kila siku kunitaka ushauri."

"Mola amfanyie maghufira mzee wa watu!"

"Inshallah!"





SECRET FAMILY RECIPES

By Gloria Bosman

My mother gave a new twist to the saying, "the way to a man's heart, is through his stomach", or she probably didn't even care about it. My father never ate at other houses; whenever he felt hungry, he made his way home.

Food at home is a safety net. I remember how my mother would tell us to get up and ask to be excused when visiting a friend and you hear them preparing dishing up plates. She said it was a private and sacred moment for them and shouldn't be invaded by some strange kids from down the road. So, for every meal time, we were instructed to make our way home.

Regardless of what it was that we were about to eat, taking a sit on our table should be done with pride. There were times we just ate to fill up our tummies and there were those days we feasted on special treats. No feeling is greater than that of knowing you can always go home to eat and your parents do whatever they can to make this a good experience for you. At my home, we never had meal times, we ate when we felt hungry and that on its own was such a gift. It made us feel safe and loved. Food remains a very significant language of love.

Food is a whole world on its own, still a mystery to most. I would envy those who told tales of how their mothers taught them how to cook certain foods. To them, chicken was not just a bird thrown in boiling water. It could be stuffed with vegetables and grilled in an oven, also, in some cases, served as mush pullet in a creamy mushroom sauce. Their cows were beef stroganoff, not always stewed in potatoes and carrots. They had pancakes for breakfast, when our treat was mostly fat cakes from a corner shop. Our eggs were fried in a block of Holsum frying fat, because we were not introduced to cooking oil. They had to be eaten immediately, straight from the stove.



I have sat through lunches at some of the neighbouring houses on special occasions, like; the festive season, weddings and funerals, giving me the opportunity to taste the most delicious foods ever. I asked myself if they bought their vegetables and meat from a special supplier, because ours tasted nothing like theirs. I guess my mother had no passion for food, or was she challenged by budget constraints? It also could be that it was just one of her duties she needed to fulfil and she just had too much on her plate to focus on what seemed irrelevant.

She cared about full stomachs and was very generous with the helpings, not focusing much on the taste. There is also a chance that there was nothing wrong with her food, our taste buds just became a bit sophisticated as we added years to our lives and we were exposed to new tastes, from eating take-aways and feasting at other people's tables. I guess when one's eye starts to wander, they question what they have.

FOOD IS A WHOLE WORLD ON ITS OWN, STILL A MYSTERY TO MOST.



Oh, but the chicken! There was something very special with just boiling a freshly slaughtered chicken in salt, chicken stock and onions. The pureness of the taste can never be likened to any taste of some flame-grilled, fancy restaurant chicken. That was the best recipe of all time. My mother gave us this finger-licking, mouth-watering gift. It tasted heavenly with pap! At that very moment you forgave all the sins committed against all other foods in our home.

My brothers had a call and response song they used to tease each other with:

The younger one would ask;
'Mkhuluwa, mkhuluwa,
Sawutya ntoni na mkhuluwa?'

The older one would respond;
'limbotyi mninawa!'

Together;
'limbotyi ekuseni, iimbocyi zaphezolo,
limbotyi emini, oh safu ngumbeko!
limbotyi ebusuku, amaqhingga aphelile'

Loosely translated; 'Oh big brother, what are we going to eat? Beans baby brother! Beans in the morning, beans in the day time, the leftovers will be the death of us! Beans at night, there is no hiding place.' You would hear them singing so loud, walking home from school. They hoped my mother would hear them, feel

embarrassed and possibly come up with another plan.

My brothers shared a room. Walking in there in the morning was a deadly adventure. Mama would tease them: "Oh goodness, the farting contest is rife in that room. You farted so hard, you had to chase your blankets as they hit the door, from the wind impact." Believe me, she was not making most of it up. The thunderous sounds were unbelievable. I bet they didn't even need pest controls; they killed the bed bugs with the fumes. That is the definite outcome, following heavy beans intake.

MEALS SERVED AT HOME CANNOT BE LIKENED TO ANY.

There will always be something very beautiful and powerful about going home to eat. Meals served at home cannot be likened to any. They symbolise love and the parents' respect for their love driven duty to feed their offspring. One of the most romantic things a lover could ever say to another is: "Can I offer you something to eat, my love?"

I rest!





NAMBU WA RIFU



(Eka sesi Agnes Ruth Newlook Mawila 1950-2020)

Vonani Bila

Photo: Sophie Kandaourff

ngayila xi ku gi...!
xi ku gi-gi-gi!
xi ku gi...!
xi ku gi-gi-gi!
ngayila xi ku cha...!
xi ku chaa-chaa-chaa...!
xi ku cha...!
xi ku chaa-chaa-chaa...!

xi kaveta bya mangadyana,
giyelo ra kona –
nkhinyavezo wa kona –
marhambu ku nembuca onge i nxorhonxorro.
nghunyuto wa kona –
onge xo cina xi tlhengusa makala na matandza.

loko xi twa Mahlathini a hokoloka a ku: Uyavutha
umlilo
u yavutha umlilo enkundleni wa mgqashiyo
jaivha kgona!
n'wayitelo wa kona,
xikhiyana xa kona,
hinkwaswo leswi a swo va swa ka Bila,
swona a wu ta cina u lungha ka bava Mcalus?
leswo cina a swo va engatini,
mi nge swi koti va ka hina,
hi tlhaveriwile hi ku cina!

malembe ya kona, va 19 seventy man' man...
yi bonga nghala ya Soweto
melodi ya laa pitseng tse dikgolo
tsheletsa meropa ka pitseng tsekolo
phalafala ya lla pitseng tse dikgolo
tsheletsa meropa tse pitseng
ku hokoloka nkulu wa munhu Mahlathini,
nghundhu yi damarherile enhlokweni.

loko ku twiwa leswaku Mahlathini dyi fikile e-Elim,
mugudu wa vantshwa, ticece na swikoxa,
vakhalabya, swihotha na tingengenda hi ku hambana-
hambana ka miganga,
ku ku thwilili, ku ku makamakaa, bya vusokoti byi
vona chukele,
a ku nga ri riweloveloo,
a ku twiwa tinanga na mindzhumbha ya Mahlathini
na Mahotel Queens,

R1 yo nghena yi fumbarheriwile kunene;
xa ka hina Newlook xi rhange ndlela bya xitlhengoma,
ku kongomiwa eholweni ya Elim,
hikuva a ku fike Dumakude the quintessential
Mahlathini “the bull”,
nghala ya Soweto yi ri karhi yi qaqa, yi guba, yi giya,
West Nkosi a ri karhi a pfurhetela rimhondzo ra
saxophone,
Marks Mankwane a ri karhi a nkekerisa swinari,
ivi migilu yo cina exitejini yi damarhela Newlook.

vuvabyi byona i khale byi ku dlokolota-dlokolota,
byi ku jovota-jovota onge i n'warikolwana a ri karhi
a lwa na mamba,
byi ku tovatova, byi ku luma onge i bawa; byi ku
cinisa hi nhlana,
xinghunghuman i xi ku gogonya-gogonya, xi khokhosa-
khokhosa,
onge i gogosani nyenyana yo hanya hi swivungu,
kambe wena u ku qhuqhululuu, bya xidzidzi.
vuvabyi byi ku yimisa hi nenge wun'we byi ku
pfukunya-pfukunya,
onge i muhlwa wa matheza wo xurha hi tshenga,
kambe wena u yima i ku dzii, bya pala ya gezi yo
swekiwa hi xikontiri,
byi ku lata ehansi, kambe wena u dzenengela harhi
ya vutomi,
hambileswi mbita ya vutomi a yi pfa yi xungeta ku
xupuka yi fayeka.

malandza ya Xikwembu ma khidzamile ri kondza ri xa,
mihloti yi xiririka, ku tlakusiwa mavoko ehenhla ku
kotisa magama,
ku khongeriwa hi tindzimi – Xindawu xa le kerekenei,
tsolo ri guvuka, ku huweleriwa Yehova nghenelela,
hikuva hambiloko nyama na marhambu swaku swi
pfa swi tereka,
swi phijiwa hi vutsulu makwa rifu,
hambiloko rixweva ri tsandzeka ku pfala mati ya
xigubu lexi mpfepfaka,
a wu nga pfumeli ku tshoveka moyo bya nsinya wa
xifiringoma
loko wu biwa hi tilo,

hikuva mbilu yaku a yi ri vurhempfa onge i voya bya nyimpfu lebyo kufukufuu!
a wu fona u pfuxela maxaka,
hambileswi a ku ri maxaka na vanghana a va fanela
ku fona va pfuxela,
wena na ntiyiso wa vuvabyi bya wena
a mi haha swin'we empfhukeni nje nga majuva,
hikuva ntiyiso a wu wu kongoma thwiii!

le kerekeni eka Dokodela Jennifer Makhanani Ringani [Nkomo] a va swi tiva leswaku a wu mangumani, donono ro etlela na maphaxani, futhi loko a va lo ku kuma wa ha tsakama, i mani a ta suma –
a vhuma na wena tikhораси nsoto ni nsoto?
kereke a yi to mphaa, yi khapa-khapa, ku pfumaleka na vuphelo bya marha,
na vufundhisи a wu ta va u byi bvunghile hi tinghitsi takу!

Exibedhlele a ku ri ekaya,
kambe siku u nga gotsa swa laha misaveni,
u khoma ndlela ya masimu yo ya eka Tatana,
hi tlhelerile emakaya hi lo dhlengwa dhlengwa!
hi khomiwile hi sululwana, hi onyiwile hi gome,
matsolo yerhu ya ri karhi ya gudlagudla
onge a hi lo tlakula dliridliri –
poto ro kula ku hundza hinkwawo mapoto!
a wu swi twa engatini leswaku 2020 i lembe ra wena
ro pela nambu wa rifu,
xikumakumani a xi ku kumile n'wana Tlhelani,
hambiswritano, n'wayitelo wa wena a wu nga xaviwi.

Prrruu! Yi hahile ngayila, nsini ya tinsini,
nhlalala endzeni ka xihirihiri sweee!
yi thlelela ekaya ku ya nkekela na tin'wana tinyenyana.
prrruu! Hi lo sala hi khome tinsiva
yi khupukile Hlamba Vunwa na Mudzwiriti
ku ya hlamba na swikwembu swa ka Jonasi ematini.
Prrruu! Yi vembile ndzeyana,
mapapa ya ta songana, mpfula yi jhakana
a wu hi siyelanga momu na dyandza
Khasaa! Yi chachile ntombhi ya ka Bila

New-Look tetee!
famba u ya va rungula,
wena ntombhi ya Mcalus Tlhelani na Lukazi N'wa-Dumazi –
ntombhi ya ka Makhubele lithaga la metsi,
we xihlakala milenge mbilu a yi hlakali,
we ntukulu wa Piet na N'wa-Mahuza,
we xitukulu-ndhuwa xa Jonas,

wa Makhayingi,
wa Mpumari,
wa Ricece,
wa Xanjhinghu,
wa Ntshovi,
wa Xisilafole,
xi nga ri na nhonga xi sila hi mandla,
Bilakhulu! Mhlahlandhlela!
Bilakhulu! M'sengana!

Famba kahle N'wa-Xigalu,
wena kondlo lerikulu, mutshetshi wa tindlela,
rixaka ri navile hikuva magondzo hi hina hi pfulaka,
hikuva hina a hi dyi mulaza,
hi dyi lebyo virivirii!
nkekela bya tolo na tolweni,
nkelenkelee!
a yi vuye mpfula!
nkelenkelee!
a yi vuye yi tata magova!
nkelenkeleee!
a yi vuye yi tata milambu!
nkelenkelee!
a yi vuye hi ta dya marhang!
chachamela ngayila wee!
cinela vakokwana va kondza va xiririka mihloti ya ntsako,

Mbewu ya wena ya vunene na nsovo a yi baleki,
a yi mili emisaveni ya ntima,
misava ya mafurha,
misava yo nona, ya vutomi,
misava ya ka Bila,
N'wa-Xigalu Chakaza –
ndzi ri titlonyi hi swa tihos,
hlambela etiveni ra ka Bila ro rhula,
navi milenge, u dya u raha,
N'wa-Xigalu, dyana byi rhelela,
etlela vurhongo bya hombe,
hikuva ndzima ya wena u boxeketile,
khatsaa!





MATŪHŪHŪ MA WANDAHUHU

(Kikuyu)



Maina wa Mütonya

maroona gīkorora gī korona
mägeciria ūrīa me kūnora
makīrora harīa nyama yanora
na kūnoora tūhiū marīe nyama

twahenirio cia mīcinga
ta tūrī ajinga

makīhūrithia thimū cia goro thī
metuaga nī thimū marahūra
ya kūrūrīra mūruti wīra
na hīndī ūyo no kūmarutithia wīra

makarīa cia makondo
tondū nī marimū ma nyakondo

manoretio ni mai
nī kūiya njūū na maaī

angī maiyūirie nda rūharo
nī kūiya cia ihaaro

Wandahuhu angī, nī kūhūna no gūtahīka
rīrīa tūrahuna na gūtangīka

marigiti makēndia thūkūma
Wandahuhu no gwītua thūkūmū
magītūhenagia cia mbimbi
ta tūrī mbūri

Wandahuhu makūnorio nī imira
nī kūmiira mūrīmi

gūcuuria nda nī ūthuri
makiugaga nī ūthuuri
no gūthuria, ūthuri wa ndonga
mategūthuthuria cia arīa mamathurire
tondū no kūmathūra mīnyīrī
nī ūtetī wa ūrimū
na kūnyua kīrimū
kīa iria rīa mūrīmi.

Wandahuhu no kūhurutīka
na njīra cia mūrengō, na angī no maraira
makīrīaga matunda, atī matunda ma wīyaathi!



RENDEZVOUS WITH THE SON OF MAN – MAN OF THE PEOPLE



Eugene Skeef

i had driven thousands of miles
without sleep
when suddenly
i found myself surrounded
by bluegreen grasslands
a myriad seedheads
swaying gently
in supplication to the winds
to spread the seeds
of their buried wisdom
beyond the nascent horizons

i paused
to listen
to my heart
fade
beneath the crescendo
of the chorus of cicadas
and succumbed
to the unfolding tones
of inflorescence
rising from the valley
of burial mounds

i nourished my determination
to reach the source
of my people's river
by uprooting the tallest stem
from a tuft of *umazi*
crowning
a pyramid of pebbles
at the confluence
of ancient paths
concealed among the verdant wetlands
where untamed *nguni* cattle
seasonally graze
to reveal the sacred site
isivivane
a pile of stacked seeds of time
testament to the travels
of african sages
who in search of the truth
of their origins
humbly followed
the cosmic river
that gave my people its name

among the strewn stones
that hold the story
of the universe
the last sage
had found a perfect pebble
still shimmering with memories of immersion
and shifting his balance
to his right
picked up the pebble
in the original fashion
of the long migrated forest dwellers
raised his curled foot
to his lips
spat a blessing of saliva
as he had been taught
by his mother
the goddess of the seas
and deposited it
on the pinnacle of the pyramid

i raised my weary eyes
to the bleeding skies
and saw the diaphanous imprint
of the posture of balanced poise

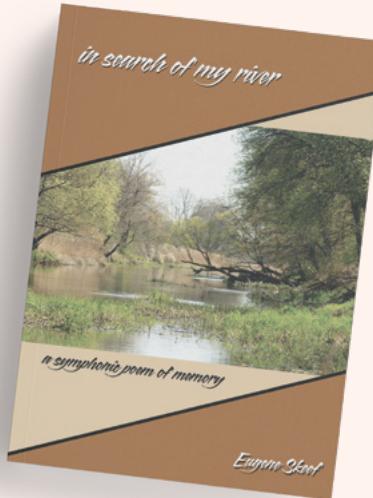
i unsheathed
the grass
and sucked the sweet juice
of its succulent stem
i spread my arms
to embrace the heavens
like the horns of a sacred black bull
from the hills of a long history
then i clasped the moist tuft
with my calloused hands
and drew the secret dew of darkness
and drank till my thirst
was drowned
i performed
the ritual
of my morning ablutions
with the humility of a cowherd
facing the blood red pool
of sky
sanctified by the sacrifice



of the son of the soil
 the son of man
 son of woman
 child of the african sun
 whose name
 was canonised
 by the bulrushes
 slain for prayer mats
 and chanted by the stars
 and forever resonates
 beyond the cosmic ocean of dreams
 he who fended the ferocious hounds
 that bayed for the blood
 of our innocence
 by giving his own
 beatitude of paupers' beads
 inspiration of our dreams
 king whose crown parts with a smile
 omnipresent spirit of freedom



This poem appears in Eugene Skeef's poetry book, *In Search of My River* (2020), Published by Ssali Publishing House.



MALOHLÉ



*Moses Seletisha
 (Go, Matete Motsoaledi)*

A mantši ga'rena, Malohle.
 Ga e sa le meno re šinne
 Dipounama di ngamotšwe wa mphaka go ilalo
 Mola le diatla hlogong re fega re fegile
 A gago mafotwana ke a bone maloba
 A setla le ya moloi pelo
 Ke nnete, Matete.
 Nkgo ya babina tlhantlhagane e ribegilwe
 Go lla go tla thušang?
 Nama še le yona e latola letsawai
 Re hlahuna phure re hlokola
 Mola tala re gata e bola
 O re šiile tsatsanka ya leswene la Rakgwadi
 Dipelo ga di dudišege Motebejane
 Di sa tšwela pele di gerema le a bjaša mafata
 Wa hlogo moro re o fokoditše
 Mekgokgo e thenkgolloga makaleng a sefahlego
 Re hutša go go bušetša popoleng
 Gore nke o leke bophelo ka leswa

Malohle 'a Matlala 'a Motebejane
 Phorogohlo košeng ya 'go ruta bothaga bothakga'
 Ge e le peu o gašitše ka tša gago tša makgwakgwa
 Re tla šala re lema joko e dutše 'phogong
 re e hlwa re go belegi magetleng a kgopolو tša ren
 #RE BATHO LE MMINO, MATABANE!

KGADIME II



*Moses Seletisha
 (Go, OK Matsepe)*

Mphe serokolo ke kgeme,
 Ke tla tshwelatshwela thoko, ka se metše Kgadime.
 hle nkadime Kgadime!
 Nkadime sa gago sefepi, goba sona selepe
 Ke kgone go rema ka dika,
 Ke kgone le go rothiša ya bjoko megokgo
 ke tseparele bjalo ka Matsepe lenna,
 Ke tsebe ge fegelwana le khutlo e le mathomomayo,
 Ke go gomarele bjalo ka boreku
 Gore lenna laka leleme lese gwame
 Le se gatikwe ka mpashaše

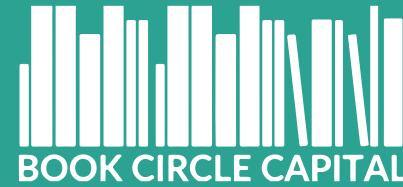
Hle nkadime Kgadime
 Ke ra kotse le lerumo e sego lehumo
 Gobane la gago lehumo
 O le šikere bohunamatolo
 Bontši o ba tshwišitše mare
 Ka go ikgethela ya gago tsela
 O latotše go ntšha mantšu ka dinko
 O ikgethetše go ba morogomotala
 Mola bontši e le bašweu ka leleme!
 Hle, nkadime Kgadime!
 La gago lehlotlo ke hlotlele,
 lenna ke be monna
 ke kgone le go tsena kgorong ya mošate.





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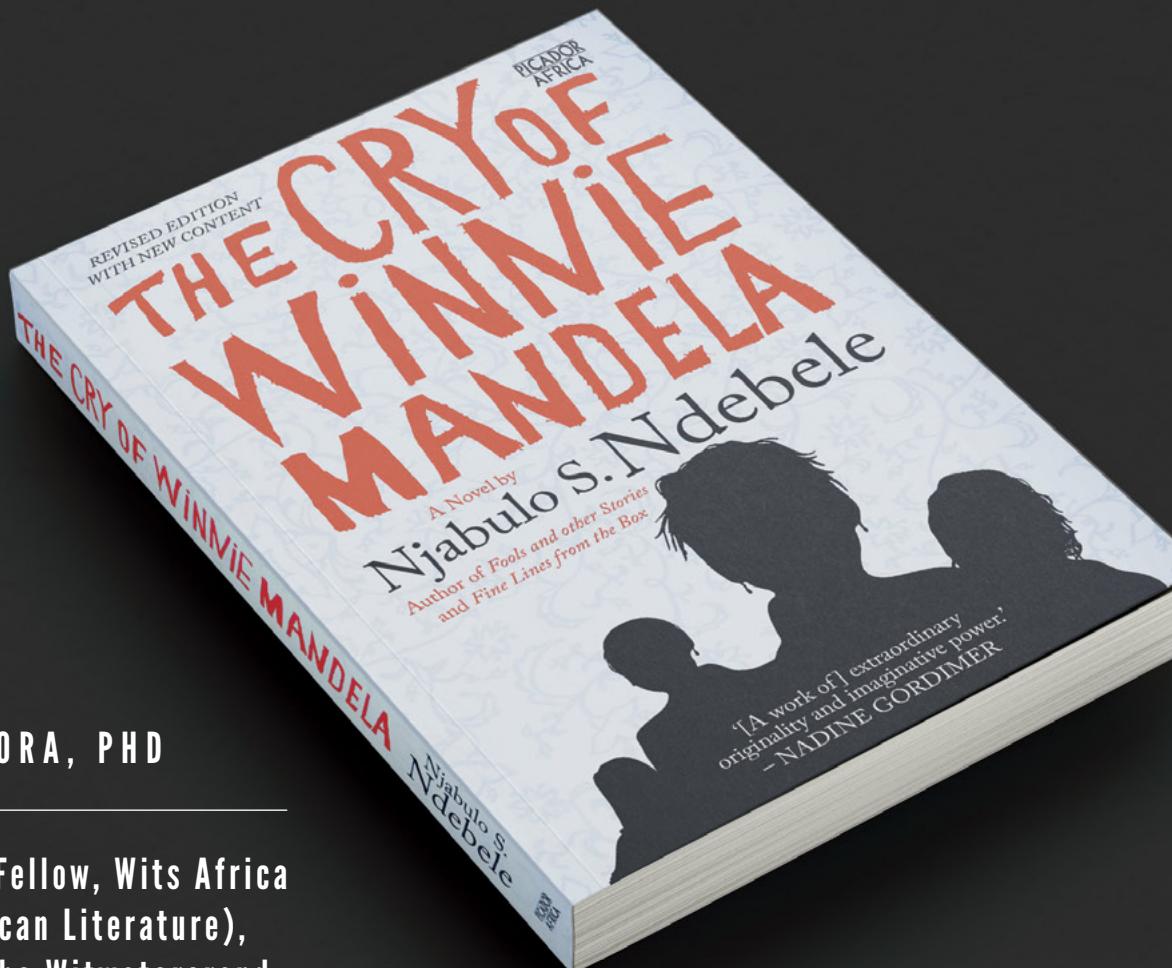


“THE OTHER SIDE OF APARTHEID MEMORIES”: THE ‘WAITING’ MOTIF¹ IN NJABULO S. NDEBELE’S *THE CRY OF WINNIE MANDELA*



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INTRODUCTION

In one uniquely reflective moment, Lewis Nkosi, one of the finest and perceptive scholars of African literary modernity, made a statement that captures the South African mind following the collapse of official apartheid. Nkosi's proclamation attends to the inquest on the responsibility of the artist, particularly for an "emergent nation" whose cultural past was inundated with narratives attuned to utilitarian ideals. In the context of the liberal order where there are persistent calls for the rediscovery of the ordinary² and the imperative of historical and cultural retrievals of the people's past and recent shared experiences, narratives of sensibilities must not be neutralised as a consequence of the prevailing docility inspired by the people's new sense of freedom. Although Nkosi's position is not entirely a fresh call in the discourse of postcolonial African literary imagination, his careful localisation of the statement within the context of South Africa's racially defined literary traditions incites a challenge to the Black literati to invest on self. His voice:

The novelists, dramatists and poets remind the public constantly what the public wishes to forget. Black writers in particular, feel an urgent sense of obligation to expose the wounds and to make the 'knowledge' public; but such an attempt by black writers only creates for the other side huge anxieties and discomfort (Quoted in Stiebel, 2005: 169).

The effort to "remind the public constantly what the public wishes to forget", and the "urgent sense of obligation to expose the wounds" seem inevitable. Interestingly, however, the exposition seen in the narratives of South Africa after apartheid is not limited to writings by Black South Africans. Nearly all the writers across racial divide seem fascinated with the mission of narrating past and current "wounds". Pamela Jooste, Imraam Coovadia, Sindiwe Magona, Zakes Mda, André Brink, and even the new entrants such as Fred Khumalo, Zukiswa Wanner, Nthikeng Mohlele, Niq Mhlongo, and so on, have all continued to explore the past in varying degree of interest as a site worthy of narrative commemorations. Many of the most established writers such as

Nadine Gordimer, Brink, Coetzee, and Mda have done excellent jobs in this respect. But there is something very fascinating about Nkosi and Njabulo S. Ndebele. Where both scholars have made very influential statements that help to build the theorising of African literary scholarship, their adventure into creative writing seems tailored toward impugning the old assumption of black writing as one overwhelmed by the journalistic imperative³. Their trained choices of deploying psychology in the creative process⁴ present a narrative rhythm that is at once as lyrical as it is cerebral. In three successive novels, for instance, Nkosi writes stories that take the reader beyond the every day events. We find instances in his *Mating Birds*, *Underground People* and, especially in *Mandela's Ego*. But, in all of these, memories are directed to different kinds of repression and their consequential subversions.

One novelist and scholar who takes us through an entirely different planetary rendition of apartheid memories is Ndebele. Like Nkosi, Ndebele's scholarship enjoys a global reach particularly when he writes about South African life and culture. As an academic administrator, Ndebele's impact cuts across universities that range from Lesotho, Witwatersrand, the University of the Western Cape, University of the North, and the urbane University of Cape Town where he eventually took up a position as Vice Chancellor. Some of his most celebrated essays are contained in *Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Essays on South African Literature and Culture*. His story for children, *Bonolo and the Peach Tree*, and the short story collection *Fools & Other Stories* appeared before his beautifully crafted *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, a novel that takes us, quite persuasively, to a different kind of memory recovery that hardly ever resonates in the struggle discourse of Black liberation in South Africa. *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* stands out among the corpus of post-apartheid narratives that address the sordid South Africa's past. The novel picks on a seemingly simple narrative motif: "Waiting". Ndebele creatively challenges us into basic questions about matters that are often taken for granted, and one is left with questions that demand difficult responses.

¹ The concept of motif is deployed, here, in its general sense as "a conspicuous element, such as a type of incident, device, reference, or formula, which occurs frequently in works of literature". See, for instance, M. H. Abrams' elaboration in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7th ed. Boston (Massachusetts): Heinle & Heinle, 1999: 169 – 170.

² See Njabulo S. Ndebele's seminal essay of the same title in his collection of essays, *Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Essays on South African Literature and Culture*, Johannesburg: COSAW and Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press, 2006: 31 - 54.

³ Nkosi's statement to this effect remains immortal. Luckily, there has been a resurgence of technical innovations in Black South African writing, especially since the collapse of official apartheid. Ndebele's *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, Nkosi's *Mandela's Ego*, as well as Zakes Mda's masterful rendition of Africa's colonial encounter and the religious catastrophes emanating from Christian missionary evangelism in *The Hearts of Redness* remain some of the best imaginative writings in this respect. David Attwell has observed this development in what he calls "The Experimental Turn in Black South African Fiction". See David Attwell's essay in Leon de Kock, Louise Bethlehem & Sonja Laden, *South Africa in the Global Imaginary*, Pretoria: Univ. of South Africa Press & Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2004: 154 - 179. See also David Attwell, *Rewriting Modernity: Studies in Black South African Literary History*, Pietermaritzburg: Univ. of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005.



For instance, how is the notion and motif of "Waiting" novelistically universalised in the narrative? How does the author's polemic evocation of Greek mythology, particularly his foregrounding of the novel with the invocation of Penelope in Homer's *The Odyssey* inhere a sense of globality to *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*? Why should Ndebele's novel be useful in a discussion of "World Literatures"? Does the feminised notion or motif of "Waiting", here, draw any support from J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*? Does it draw upon Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*? How does the novelists' motif of "Waiting" lean upon the Christian belief in waiting for the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ? What is the artistic intentionality invoked in the novelist's allusion to the Indian narrative of Shamanic necromancy as exemplified in the analogy of Quesalid and Winnie Mandela? What, indeed, does it mean to "Wait" as a cardinal motif in classical and contemporary mythologies?

Evidently, for Ndebele, the subject of "Waiting" seems to inspire a profound sense of both philosophical and psychological fascination. Ndebele is not a mundane narrator of unilinear realist stories. There is a consistent predilection in his narratives of a seasoned contemplation of abstractions in the course of narrativity. For instance, in the very beautifully written novella, *Fools*, the subject of "Waiting" appears intermittently as a caesural or pause element in the narrative process. In this fascinating narrative of agony, which scorns the collective foolishness of a repressed people who are too lazy and complacent in confronting their common oppressor, "Waiting" is the abstract action of docility witnessed in strategic zones where it is only momentary and almost, always, attended to in anticipated interludes. In *Fools*, the Boer emerges as the primary culprit who exploits the privileges of whiteness as a racial category in their abrasive display of economic, political, and other inexhaustible powers that control the agencies of violence to intimidate the Blacks. But, even here, the narrator manages to foreground the narrative incidents within waiting centres: the terminus, the taxi ranks, the home, the classroom, the picnic arena, and the cornfield. At such moments, it is only coincidental that "the train arrived", or "the friend arrived", just when the driver got tired of "waiting". In *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, however, "waiting" becomes a subject of obsession; it emerges so ubiquitously as the central focus of narrativity that it readily assumes an elemental motif.

The motif of "Waiting", here, evokes a number of mythological narratives that extend to the Christian theological faith system that urges adherents to "hope and pray" for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, a "waiting" that, in literature, is immediately reminiscent of William Butler Yeats' "The Second Coming"⁵. It also lures an understanding of the modernist theatrical tradition that yearns to comprehend the meaning and meaninglessness of life as exemplified in Samuel Beckett's 1952 absurdist play, *Waiting for Godot*⁶, just like J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, takes the phenomenon and idea to the challenges incited by all imperialist regimes anywhere and everywhere in the world. Where Christians derive their strength for the interminable moment of "Waiting" from their faith that promises a destination to the immortal realms of a paradise after a tortuous spiritual peregrination that involves moral purification, Beckett's "Waiting" creates a complex interplay of confusions that wean humanity of its invincibility and evanescent pretensions. Coetzee's "Waiting", however, takes the narrative to a postcolonial realm where the idiom of 'waiting' for the troublesome barbarians ends in an endless, fruitless exercise. The novel examines "the imperialism and moral flaws of political powers", and we watch the magistrate with awe as the narrator portrays his "thoughts as he experiences the events of torture and power by the Empire". In Coetzee's novel, the barbarians emerge as "the imaginary dangers which are preparing to attack the town". Empire, personified by the brutal and paranoid Colonel Joll, mobilises all the arsenals of violation at his disposal and **waits** for the imaginary enemy who never arrives; instead, every "foreigner" or non-members of the town who come visiting for whatever purposes, gets categorised as the enemy and is thus humiliated and subjected to the most tortuous, agonising traumas. At the end, however, it becomes obvious that the real barbarian is, indeed, the Empire, since "under the name of self-defence, they are making a self-destruction".⁷

In poetry, no one captures the rhythm and typology of "Waiting" associated with South Africa of the separatist era better than the poet Arthur Nortje. In an eloquent poetry of incarceration and solitude that compels "Waiting" as a defining state of anxiety and vulnerability, Nortje constructs a poetic moment that presents the experience of apartheid brutality as an "imagination of disaster".

It is significant that Nortje appropriates the title, "Waiting", even though the trauma of solitary confinement, loneliness, and hard labour emerge as the envisioned strands that punctuate every rhythm of pain in "Waiting". Nortje's "Waiting" is funereal: the racialised Other is a living dead whose one option is to either escape to exile from the claustrophobic apartheid society, be imprisoned, or killed.

Notje's "Waiting" is beyond the apocalyptic; it is somewhat purgatorial. Notje, Kumalo, and the "crowd" of "stone breakers" emerge collectively as victims who wait in this purgatorial zone of "Waiting". If poetry is the soulful chronicler of honesty, which must demystify modernist technological inventions that tend to diminish humane essences, then it must be deployed to record the "faces of pain", especially "now that the computer, the mechanical notion/obliterates sincerities". Like all the racialised Others who got killed, imprisoned, or exiled, "Waiting" seems to be the only uniting idiom.

Whether the victim is in exile in Europe, or imprisoned somewhere in apartheid South Africa, the pains and sorrows associated with displacement are essentially the same: loneliness and solitude should be for the dead, not for the living. It is solitude, the terrifying sense of loneliness instigated by the brutal regime which many a South African man or woman experienced in the course of "Waiting" that would then trigger the interest of South African mythologists, poets and novelists into exploring the many facets of the psychology of "Waiting" and its debilitating consequences. In fiction, Ndebele's *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* is an important statement in this mission of mythologising solitude as we find in the next segment of this discussion.

The Cry of Winnie Mandela, Njabulo Ndebele's masterful rendition of the psychological traumas and burdens associated with the phenomenon of "Waiting", is not just a story. It is, in fact, a robust cerebral narrative that immediately evokes memories of William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*, and K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, at least, at the levels of style and narrative idiom. Art and psychology are, here, manifestly deployed to explore humanity's dispositions and predilections

when faced with extreme difficult choices. Human vulnerabilities emerge as subjects that are placed on trial and, at the end, it seems reasonable to conclude that humanity is constituted of mortal beings with emotions and needs that only tell of their vulnerabilities and unflattering capitulations to their biological desires. In a way, art and psychology connive in the aesthetic investigations of the dynamics and philosophy of life.

Here is an excellent example of a transnational aesthetic whose claims to a global mythology does not necessarily draw upon topographical placements of actions and incidents. Instead, the primary voices are all women who reside in South Africa during the long and tortuous years of racial separatism. While four cardinal voices are presented to convey their experiences in the traumatising moments of "waiting" for their loved ones, however, we observe that many of these "loved ones" were displaced by the ordeals created by the hostile political system. Husbands had to literally "disappear" from their wives; some went for "studies abroad", some fought as "guerrilla fighters", some were "inmates" in the many notorious incarceration facilities, while others were forced into "exile" or even "got killed" by the murder squad of the separatist regime. "Waiting", for these women, then, transcends the mere physical absence of their husbands who journeyed through various parts of the world in search of personal development and elusive freedom; "waiting" was more than the desire and hope for a "return" from their "departures" to, most times, "unknown destinations", and the women were just there, resigned to faith as they awaited such returns that, most times, never materialised.

"Waiting" becomes the summative idiom for the many women who, given their experiences, gradually submit to stoic resignations as the journeys of their husbands totalise the physical and spiritual peregrinations of a nation's soul desperately in need of justice and social redemption. Yet, in spite of all these, the globality of *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* takes its nurture and luxuriance from the structures of memory provided as much by South Africa's narratives of commemorations as it draws from other global mythologies.

⁵ Yeats' poem is particularly interesting, here, as it generously problematizes the uncertainties that come with the idea and practice of "waiting". In this instance, the "waiting" could, like any other "waiting", end up in disappointments and confusions. The messiah may never arrive and, instead, the waiter may be confronted with confusions arising from the arrival of a destroyer rather than a messiah in the same way that "the rough beast, its hour come round at last, Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born". (See, A. Norman Jeffares (Ed). W. B. Yeats: Selected Poetry. London & Sydney: Pan Books & Macmillan, 1974: 99 – 100.

⁶ An existentialist play which premiered on 5 January 1953 at the Théâtre de Babylone in Paris. The English-language version premiered in London in 1955. Wikipedia. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>. Accessed: 29 October, 2019.

⁷ See Pelin Aytemir (2016). "Victims of the Empire: An Analysis on Coetzee's Waiting for the Barbarians". IRES Conference Proceedings: 113th International Conference on Economics and Social Sciences (ICES), 28-29.12.2016, Florence, Italy. <https://www.academia.edu/899043/Victims>, p. 5. Accessed: 31 August, 2019.



Perhaps, the two most resounding instances of such classical universalism are the novelist's analogical evocation of the Homeric story of Penelope and the Indian story of Quesalid. In Greek mythology as recorded in Homer's *The Odyssey*, Penelope was that quintessential woman of all women who totalised the ideals of the chaste wife as shown in the narrator's exploration of the phenomenon of "Waiting"⁸. Penelope's husband, Odysseus, a gallant military general had embarked on a mission of military adventurism, demonstrating an untrammelled sense of patriotism as nations after nations capitulated to his military prowess. The fact that Odysseus "lived" at a time in history when nations survived and were built on booties and taxes from their conquests and military exploits meant that the dominance of Greece as a global power depended on the successes of her military. This boosted the drive of the Greek soldiers who went to war, almost always, with the mission to conquer other territories.

But this embrace of civic responsibility also meant an abdication of personal responsibilities. Odysseus spent nineteen years at war fronts without taking a pause to attend to the demands of the home-front. His wife, Penelope, was, given the circumstances, left in a wilderness of prolonged loneliness that made her vulnerable to the amorous demands of other men at "home". She lives through the nineteen years, maintaining her fidelity to Odysseus who returns unannounced and consequently slaughters all the men who made advances to his lonely wife. The matter, of course, would have ended here. But just after a night of passionate intimacy with his wife, Penelope, he "disappears" again the next morning, without informing his wife. His reason, this time, was to search for atonement in order to avert any possible strife that could result from his killing of the men who sought the hand of his wife in marriage while he was away for nineteen years. This time, however, Penelope could not bear to wait any longer. She, too, decides to leave on a personal adventure in search of women who suffered the ordeals and torments of "Waiting" for their husbands across the planet. Penelope's adventure, however, is an imaginary construct by the novelist of *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* to capture the phenomenon of "Waiting" as a psychological condition, a torment that transcends all geographical, historical and racial boundaries. The pains and anxieties of Penelope, some two thousand years ago, the narrator seems to be affirming, are not different from the anxieties and torments suffered by **many** South African women or women of whatever clime who had had

the unpleasant experiences of "waiting" for their husbands in political seasons of the anomalous and other indefinable conditions.

A second analogy that inheres a breath of the transnational to Ndebele's narrative is the Indian mythology of the Shamanic necromancer, Quesalid. Here, we encounter a patriot who was determined to expose the hideous activities of fraudsters who use the art of magic to deceive members of the public. Seeing the impossibility of engaging these clever men openly, he decides to get closer to them so as to learn the art of magic. Soon, he perfects the art, surpassing in every respect all those from whom he served as an apprentice. He then displaces them by taking over their jobs and thus renders them incompetent and invisible. It is interesting that Ndebele mobilises these mythologies in his mission to explore and thematise the subject of "Waiting" as it affects South Africa during the long years of racial segregation. That the novelist confines the narrative eye to the unique experiences of women makes this work particularly exhilarating. *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* is definitely not a feminist narrative; it is simply a blend of stories exploring a specific subject from the perspectives of "those left at home" to piece together whatever was recoverable from the broken memories of families and communities oppressed by the notorious forces of apartheid. The ingenuity of Quesalid, a skill acquired patiently through a rigorous tutelage from several "masters", as well as Penelope's mythical exemplification of marital fidelity then provide the pivots through which the narrator of *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* would want the reader to view the experiences of global women, placed in a similar circumambient universe: in this instance, South African women in the "Waiting" zone of their troubled society.

Ndebele foregrounds the narrative with the story of Penelope, but moves almost immediately to construct four female characters that converge in imaginary sisterly conversations to narrate their memories of "Waiting" to each other. Each, as if programmed, tells their stories with the mission of taking their challenge to the most visible public person at the time, Winnie, the domineering but controversial wife of the iconic, legendary South African hero and political activist, Nelson Mandela. Through the four women— Delisiwe Dulcie S'khosana, Mamello Molete, Marara Joyce Baloyi, and 'Mannete Mofolo – we listen to "voices whose stories resonate not with identical experience, but with affirming familiarity" (*Cry of Winnie*, 117).

The Cry of Winnie Mandela is a very tricky narrative where the authorial recourse to the deployment of the first-person narrative voice and the deliberate but careful fictionalisation of the actual and the imaginary create a complexity of narration that slows, rather than hasten the readerly experience. Where narrative pathos should ordinarily be tracked within the personality of the weeping subject, the reader is both entertained and subjected to the task of decoding mentalised puzzles as he struggles to identify the primary heroine of the narrative. We are aware of a human personality known and venerated globally as Winnie Mandela.

In Ndebele's novel, we recognise this larger-than-life female figure in actual political activism toward the liberation of the oppressed in the selected quotations from correspondences from her incarcerated husband in Robben Island, as well as in reports in the public domain drawn from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's sittings, and other newspaper reports. Yet, as an art form, the novelist constructs two additional "Winnies": thus we have the real-life Winnie from whose real-life correspondences and pronouncements the author was able to refract relevant statements, the fictional Winnie who has been created to respond to questions from other South African women who suffered the "torments of waiting" with her, and yet a third Winnie who appears audaciously in the narrative as the alter ego of the fictional Winnie. Thus, the reader has the task of merging the three "Winnies" into a single fearless agency who is, at once, a mother, a fighter, a lover, a politician, a motivator, a dictator and, yet, an ordinary mortal with emotions and desires that yearn for biological cravings and fulfilment.

The Cry of Winnie Mandela, then, is a narrative of remembering. It is tailored to enable our collective apprehensions of the psychology of a humanity imprisoned in the unpleasant cell of freedom and its denial at the same time; it is a narrative of commemoration from the perspectives of women who endured their rights to being cuddled by their husbands and lovers by a system that considered their humanity as inconsequential. In the final analysis, it is from the voice of the fictional Winnie that we encounter the summative humanity of all women, but especially the women of South Africa who suffered the agony of "Waiting" during the years of segregation. It is from this Winnie that

we listen to, and feel the pleasures, the pains and pathos that go with her self-definition:

This is one thing I will not do. It is my only defence of the future. I will not be an instrument for validating the politics of reconciliation. For me, reconciliation demands my annihilation. No. You, all of you, have to reconcile not with me, but with the meaning of me. For my meaning is the endless human search for the right thing to do. I am your pleasure and your pain, your beauty and your ugliness. Your solution and your mistake. Your hell and your heaven. I am your squatter camp shack and your million rand mansion. I am all of you who maim and rape. I am all of you who give love and succour. I am your pride and your shame. Your honour and your humiliation...." (*Cry of Winnie*, 113).

In rejecting the elites demand to be used as an agent for "validating the politics of reconciliation", it could be submitted that our "Winnie" equally rejected a fundamental principle of the "negotiated settlement" that ushered in the new democratic ethos that surrendered political power without an economic foundation to the new black leadership. Like Quesalid, Winnie is the new champion who refuses to surrender. Instead, she goes to defeat her fellow competitors in the public domain and, like Penelope, she rebels against a returnee husband who shows more commitment to his civic responsibility without demonstrating a similar commitment to the demands of his family.

Ndebele's *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* is impressively a narrative of commemorations told from the purviews of "waiting women". Its beauty lies as much in its lush idiom as its narrative complexity; it is as strongly the narrative of many African women as it is attuned to locating its narrative semantics within a transcendent, transnational mythology of "Waiting".



⁸ Richmond Lattimore beautifully captures the personality of Penelope in his modern translation of *The Odyssey* of Homer: "Penelope, in particular, is done with great subtlety. Desperately pressed, with no power but her wits, charm, and heart, she plays a waiting game and never commits herself" (my emphasis). Note that Ndebele constructed the four female characters that anticipate both motherly and activist response from "Winnie Mandela" on the subject of "waiting". Thus the entire narrative design is built on the women's decided mission to "play the waiting game" (*The Cry of Winnie*, p. 38 – 39).



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FEATURED ARTIST KHEHLA CHEPAPE MAKGATO

Khehla Chepape Makgato is an independent visual artist who exhibited his works throughout the world in group exhibitions, art fairs and eleven solo exhibitions. He is the winner of 2016 ImpACT Award for Visual Artist from Arts & Culture Trust of South Africa. Khehla Chepape Makgato is an independent visual artist who exhibited his works throughout the world in group exhibitions, art fairs and eleven solo exhibitions. He is the winner of 2016 ImpACT Award for Visual Artist from Arts & Culture Trust of South Africa.



GRAPPLING WITH ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT BROADCASTING HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA: ON POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND THE ANC'S ANTI-APARTHEID RADIO FREEDOM



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INTRODUCTION

During South Africa's 25-year democratic celebrations in 2019, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture announced that the equipment of the African National Congresses' (ANC) legendary clandestine and political communication broadcaster, Radio Freedom, had been successfully repatriated back to South Africa¹. For a radio station that had initially operated from South Africa, and then Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Ethiopia and Madagascar, this announcement marked a homecoming of a broadcaster and political communication platform that came into existence in 1963 as a response to the apartheid government propaganda that aimed to frustrate all political activity in apartheid, South Africa. "Established during the apartheid [era], Radio Freedom provided waves of mass of resistance to the regime with broadcasts from different radio stations..." (South African Government News Agency, 2018:1)². Within the context of the repatriation ceremony that was held at the Freedom Park Heritage Museum by the ministry of Sport, Arts and Culture in the year 2018, Radio Freedom's repatriated material was returning to a democratic South Africa that was a far cry from the apartheid era. The repatriation of the radio station equipment also took place at a moment when South Africa's post-apartheid project was being scrutinised in light of settler-colonial legacies that are ingrained in post-apartheid South Africa. Thus to understand the continuing struggle of forging ahead with the strategy of eradicating colonial legacies and coloniality (cf. Tuck and Yang, 2012; Grosfoguel, 2004; Maldonado-Torres, 2007), and the role of the media in this struggle, this article revisits the historical media archive as per the role that was played by the ANC's Radio Freedom in the continuing struggle to advance political communication and eradicate settler-colonialism injustices and legacies.

While there is much literature on various forms of mediums that were used for political communication during South Africa's anti-apartheid moment, there is only a handful of literature when it comes understanding the complex role that was played by the ANC's Radio Freedom (Tyali, 2020). Much of the historical literature on the

ANC's Radio Freedom is found in biographical and autobiographical work that captures the lives of anti-apartheid activists (Kathrada, 1999, 2004; Suttner, 2008; Gevisser, 2007). A large body of work that is linked to these anti-apartheid activists has either alluded to the role of this radio station in a footnote or has nostalgically reflected on Radio Freedom. Except for work drawn from a handful of media or history academics (Davis, 2009, 2011; Lekgoathi, 2010, cf. Bosch, 2006) who have examined or commented on the role of this radio station, there is some research gap in the historical and intellectual understanding of the role that was played by the ANC's political communication machinery through its Department of Information³ (DIP) in general and Radio Freedom in particular. With the assistance of primary archival research data, this article contributes to the history and the historical understanding of colonial and apartheid era media institutions by focusing on Radio Freedom and how it enabled political communication through its broadcasts and communication strategies. Furthermore, the article also illustrates how the ANC's DIP in general, and more particularly the Radio Freedom platform, assisted the political party with political communication battles against apartheid South Africa.

SEEDS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: BRIEF NOTES ON RADIO FREEDOM AS A RESPONSE TO APARTHEID COMMUNICATION MACHINERY

As indicated above, Radio Freedom was created as a response to the clampdown on anti-apartheid activity of South Africa (cf. Lekgoathi, 2010). For instance, much research literature illustrates that leading up to the year 1963, mainstream political activity and activism against the apartheid state of South Africa had been suppressed (Gevisser, 2007; Mandela, 1994; Massey, 2010) due to anti-dissidence nature of the then apartheid authorities.

1 The equipment of the radio station is currently housed at the Freedom Park Heritage Museum.

2 Further report about the repatriation of Radio Freedom equipment can be accessed on this link <https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/radio-freedom-equipment-finds-home-freedom-park>

3 The DIP had a total control of the communication strategies of the ANC. Thus it is impossible to understand Radio Freedom outside of the workings of the broader ANC communication machinery which was planned and executed by the DIP officials.



The clampdown on such political activity in apartheid South Africa meant that anti-apartheid political parties such as the ANC, Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), the South African Communist Party (SACP) and, later, the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) had to conduct their political work "underground". The banning of such political work also meant that the leaders of anti-apartheid political parties were not allowed to give any politically related public speeches in South Africa. While the public banning of political party address in South Africa is a widely known historical fact (Gevisser, 2007; Feinstein, 2007; Mandela, 1994), what is relatively unknown is that on 26 June 1963, the birth of broadcasted political communication against the apartheid state took place. History records indicate that the following statement was heard on a then recently established anti-apartheid broadcasting radio medium:

I speak to you from somewhere in South Africa. I have not left the country. I do not plan to leave. Many of our leaders of the ANC have gone underground. This is to keep the organisation in action, to preserve the leadership, to keep the freedom fight going. Never has the country and our people needed leadership as they do now. In this hour of crisis⁴.

These were the first words uttered on Radio Freedom. The announcer was Walter Sisulu, an anti-apartheid stalwart. He was accompanied on air by another major stalwart, Ahmed Kathrada (Davis, 2009; 2011). This maiden political communication message on airwaves of Radio Freedom would mark a significant shift in the battle of communicating political activities by the ANC. Not only did the broadcast mark the birth of being in control of its political broadcasting narratives but the message also signalled a shift from relying solely on print political communication strategies by the ANC to a range of media platforms that were to be used for political communication by the political party. The broadcast would also commence a three-decade-long use of broadcast media by the ANC to communicate with its exiled as well as its South African-based constituencies during the apartheid era. The broadcasting and control of such electronic media messages by the ANC buttressed a prolonged period of being in charge of its narrative, thus making the airwaves a useful political communication tool against the government of apartheid South Africa (cf.

Lekgoathi, 2009). The apartheid regime, of course, quickly moved to clamp down this clandestine radio station in its early days of broadcasting in South Africa⁵ and this clampdown forced the radio station to be moved outside of South Africa and operate from exile.

CLANDESTINE MEDIA HISTORY CONTEXTUALISED: ON RADIO FREEDOM

Radio Freedom, the former radio station of the exiled ANC, is arguably the oldest politically aligned and anti-apartheid media institution to be dedicated to political communication against segregated South Africa. Launched as a counter-response to the void left by the banning of anti-apartheid political activity in South Africa, Radio Freedom initially conducted its broadcasting activities within the country. While based in South Africa, the radio station operated from the Lillieslie farm, north of Johannesburg. The station was later forced to broadcast from several African countries (Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Ethiopia and Madagascar) that hosted the then exiled ANC.

Broadly speaking, broadcasts by Radio Freedom generally could be classified as "clandestine broadcasting, [which] is a method used by revolutionary groups. It has been argued that this type of radio broadcasting can be classified as illegal, political, and can frequently be misleading. Operators broadcast from stations without licences or registration with the International Frequency Registration Board (IFRB)" (Downer, 1993: 98). Radio Freedom thus needs to be understood as squarely fitting this tradition of clandestine broadcasting. Within the context and urgent need for the existence of such a political communication platform in South Africa, Radio Freedom became necessary when the ANC's political activity and the anti-apartheid struggle in the country was officially banned by the apartheid government in 1960. The historical need for the existence of this broadcaster has been put into context by Riddle (1994:17), who indicates that "the ANC's Radio Freedom is only part of the story of clandestine radio in this country. South Africa has a long, largely untold, experience of illegal political broadcasting." He further elucidates that, "the country can lay claim to no fewer than five 'freedom radios', all of which have transmitted illegally, mostly against the government of the day" (*ibid*:17).

The seeds of such “radio freedom(s)” can be traced to as far back as the 1940s – 1942 to be exact. These varying forms of “radio freedom” were initially assumed to have been staffed by English-speaking employees of the then South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). Their modus operandi was based on the urgent need to embarrass white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans who opposed South Africa’s participation in the Second World War. The other example of the “radio freedom” model emerged in 1956 and was also poised at attacking the government of the day. Later, came the ANC’s Radio Freedom, followed by Radio Vryheid [Radio Freedom], “a right-wing station supporting the ‘Boer cause’” (Riddle, 1994:17).

When it comes to the ANC’s Radio Freedom, Davis (2011:225) indicates that “the story of Radio Freedom begins with the turn to the armed struggle undertaken by the Congress Alliance in 1961”. Thus, after this decision of the Congress, sometime in the beginning of June 1963, the now struggle veterans, Ahmed Kathrada and Walter Sisulu, recorded and broadcast a message that indicated that the ANC would operate its activities ‘underground’ as it had become illegal to conduct political activities under the then apartheid system of the country. At the time, these young anti-apartheid activists recorded statements (see the introduction of this article as an example), each political statement lasting about 15 minutes. Hence on the eve of 26 June 1963, Kathrada, Sisulu and some of their comrades, including Denis Goldberg, travelled to suburban Parktown, Johannesburg. Here they “connected [a] jury-rigged transmitter to a tape recorder, pressed play and broadcast [the ANC’s version of] ‘Radio Freedom’ to an uncertain number of listeners” (Davis, 2011:226–227). And so, the project of using broadcast media against anti-apartheid rule officially began for the ANC. The Radio Freedom service “[operated] from five African capitals [broadcasting] for several hours a day, several days a week until the early 1990s” (*ibid*:224). Lekgoathi (2010:139) notes that “through Radio Freedom, the ANC could directly connect with its supporters inside the country and influence political mobilisation particularly during the 1970s and 1980s”⁶.

According to Kushner (1974:299), Radio Freedom was established as a result of African

liberation groups increasingly recognising the use of broadcasting in political communication purposes: radio’s potential for reaching and enlisting the support of the largely illiterate masses, in time, nearly all the major movements gained access to radio transmitting facilities, whether through clandestine transmitters or through airtime granted by the national states of countries sympathetic to the cause.

More importantly, by the 1980s, the ANC’s political communication machinery had built up a formidable and somewhat respectable response to the apartheid propaganda machinery. By this era, “the ANC had built similar ‘portable studios’ in five additional countries – Zambia, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Angola and Madagascar – with each state broadcaster granting an hour to Radio Freedom programmes” (Davis, 2011:230). This means that the ANC used broadcast media to portray a certain image of itself to its audience – “in-xiles” and exiles (South African and none country-based constituencies). The use of broadcasting facilities by the ANC also means that the political party aimed to control its narrative concerning how it was seen by the broader global public. Thus, the broadcasting content of Radio Freedom “was addressed to three audiences: one at home in South Africa, one abroad comprising foreign patrons and one in exile among those in the training camps” (*ibid*:236). In this way, the ANC had unfettered control of its image among its primary stakeholders.

This article, therefore, responds to how the ANC executed its political communication practice, and how its constituencies may have received this control of broadcasting and strategising. To make sense of the objective of this article, the research heavily relied on archival data that had been donated by the ANC in post-apartheid South Africa to educational institutions. The ANC donated the examined archived material to the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS) at the University of Fort Hare in present-day Alice, Eastern Cape. The section below illustrates the research process followed in gathering data for the study underpinning this article.

⁴ The rest of the maiden speech by Walter Sisulu on clandestine Radio Freedom can be accessed on the following: <http://www.anc.org.za/content/broadcast-clandestine-anc-radio-wm-sisulu>

⁵ The station piggybacked on various stations within the African continent. Largely the countries hosting the radio station had also been hosting ANC exiled members.

⁶ In this interview, Z Pallo Jordan reflected on the history and his role in the ANC’s DIP and more particularly on the history of Radio Freedom that was used as a propaganda and counter-propaganda platform: <https://readinglist.click/sub/z-pallo-jordan-says-the-assassination-of-ruth-first-was-no-mistake/>



COLLECTING DATA: BRIEF NOTES

The data that underpins this article was sourced from historical archives currently based at NAHECS at the University of Fort Hare in Alice (also see above). The centre is the custodian of liberation archives that were donated for preservation, research and scholarship purposes by various anti-apartheid political associations of South Africa, including the ANC, PAC, AZAPO and the Black Consciousness Movement (BC), among others⁷. While the Mayibuye Centre of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) houses an additional archive containing audio recordings of Radio Freedom, for this stage of the research, the purpose was to analyse documented correspondence, planning and strategy documents as well as other related documents that pertain to the history of the ANC in relation to Radio Freedom and the use of this radio station for political communication activities.

Largely unexplored by researchers aiming to understand the history of media institutions in and about South Africa, the NAHECS archive consists of Radio Freedom scripts, and historical letters to the radio station (mostly authored by South Africans during apartheid). It also includes documents authored by the ANC's DIP staff members on how to make better use of Radio Freedom as part of the ANC's political communication machinery mix. This article, therefore, unearths a layered narrative of the broadcast history and role of radio in apartheid South Africa. For the research study underpinning this article, the following documents were analysed:

- Twelve internal correspondence (letters, strategy documents and reports) documents. These documents were drawn up by ANC staff members working for the DIP (as part of the anti-apartheid propaganda, DIP also used Radio Freedom).
- Seven radio broadcasting scripts (Radio Freedom) documents. The radio scripts were drawn around various themes and issues that were affecting the ANC's constituency in apartheid South Africa (see the thematic section below).
- Five external correspondence (listener engagements with Radio Freedom) documents. On examination of these documents, it was clear that the documents were received from listeners of Radio Freedom.

All of these archived documents were accessed between various periods of visiting the Radio Freedom archive at NAHECS. These visits took place between January 2015 and August 2018. While assessing the Radio Freedom archive, I also formed an opinion that the NAHECS centre needed to be better organised and store these vital historical records about the media history and political communication of South Africa⁹. At the moment, the documents are illogically scattered across a set of boxes. The lack of proper organisation of such important research material hinders and delays the research process because the researcher spends much time trying to make sense of how the archive is organised. It would be ideal to have a chronological flow of dates for the broadcasts scripts, dates of listeners letters received, and dates of strategy documents.

These documents were analysed and grouped according to themes emerging from each category. The researcher sifted through hundreds of documents and meticulously gathered Radio Freedom documents over two years, and then read and analysed them to understand the emerging themes in the radio station's planning, tactics and strategy documents. It was qualitative research with a thematic focus. Braun and Clarke (2006: 5) indicate that "through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data". Hence, it is often argued that "thematic analysis should be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis" (*ibid*:4). For the research process underpinning this article, the document data were sufficiently analysed, and themes that pertain to 1) community responses to Radio Freedom political communication and 2) politics of managing propaganda, emerged from the data. Therefore, these broader themes constitute the subtheme that is captured by the discussion that appears below.

COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO RADIO FREEDOM'S POLITICAL COMMUNICATION TASK

Audience reception of the role of Radio Freedom's political communication messages, and its strategies and planning for reaching these audiences, can be understood through the responses of what constituted its listening public. Lekgoathi (2010) argues that Radio Freedom was an instrumental platform in the attainment of information/intelligence about the apartheid state. He has also demonstrated that the listenership of Radio Freedom had an impact on the struggle against apartheid. Although it was illegal to listen to Radio Freedom in South Africa - this act carried a jail sentence if caught - the DIP wing of the ANC always tried to get an idea of how its broadcast content was received in South Africa. Data emerging from the archived content illustrates that the Regional Political Committee of the ANC "feels strongly that the availability of up-to-date information on our struggle at home is essential for the development of political consciousness and maintenance of revolutionary morale" (Manicom, L, 19 September 1980, Lusaka). Furthermore, the archived data suggests that there was concern about the availability of political communication content from the ANC and its distribution in South Africa.

The problem Comrades is that the Department of Information and Publicity, especially its internal organs, the radios, *Mayibuye* and leaflets are out of touch with the internal situation they have the task to mobilise and prepare for our cause, e.g. the combat operations (Sizakele Sigxashe, 14 April, Lusaka).

Therefore, through its assessment of the listenership trends in apartheid South Africa, the ANC had noted that its machinery was weak and was not serving its intended strategy when it comes to its intended aims of radical political communication strategy. Lekgoathi (2010:143), in a study of the Radio Freedom listenership trends in South Africa, indicates that "by the early 1980s, according to the information in *Sechaba* (1981), the ANC's monthly journal, listeners in

South Africa could access Radio Freedom via at least four state radio services on the continent, namely Radio Madagascar, Radio Lusaka, Radio Luanda and Radio Tanzania". However "...tuning into Radio Freedom was considered subversive and thus occurred within the realm of illegality in South Africa" (*ibid*:145).

Archived data on the response to the political communication machinery of Radio Freedom illustrates that the station was continuously supplied with information of developments in apartheid South Africa. A close analysis of the archived material (scripts) reveals that the broadcasts of Radio Freedom were continuously up-to-date on the then-current affairs of South Africa. For instance, the scripts, which illustrate the broadcasting of Radio Freedom programming, show that constant reference was being made to the current events in the then apartheid South Africa. Among others, these broadcast included the following current affairs issues: 1) a Women's Day programme on 6 March 1980 that alluded to the Crossroads struggle and how the apartheid regime of South Africa was oppressing women in particular; 2) a 17 April 1978 broadcast on unemployment in South Africa that spoke to the then proposed Bantu Laws Amendment Bill that would re-settle "idle" and "lazy" black workers to the Bantustans; 3) the then relations between apartheid Pretoria and Tel Aviv; and 4) the unjustified sentencing of Solomon Mahlangu.

Further analysis of how the ANC broadcast these current events through its political communication platform, Radio Freedom, suggests that there was constant contact and feedback between the then exiled ANC and its South African based constituency. For instance, some archived correspondence (data) to the ANC's Radio Freedom gave the following information:

We are sitting quietly watching what is happening and if any developments, I will keep you posted. I am listening to our freedom radio whenever possible and I hope you receive my letters and broadcast them (Mkhalaabye, nd)

⁷ Further information on the centre, which houses these liberation archives, can be accessed on the following link: <http://www.ufh.ac.za/ufh101/liberation-archives/>
⁸ In my interactions with archivist assistant at the University of Fort Hare (NAHECS) it was indicated that the Radio Freedom archive has since its handover by the ANC been explored by only two researchers: 1) a former broadcaster of Radio Freedom who had explored it with an interest of writing an autobiography as well as 2) as a Canadian researcher who was doing research on the history of the ANC.
⁹ Looking at the size of the archive dealing with only Radio Freedom, I have no doubt that some of the historical data about this radio station may have been lost. For instance, the radio station operated from a number of countries during its exile days and this may have meant that the archive, which had been scattered across many African countries, might have been lost at the time of relocating the ANC materials after the unbanning of apartheid in South Africa.



This and some other archived documents reveal exchanges between the exiled ANC and its South African-based constituency. Most of the analysed exchanges were crafted and sent anonymously, indicating how people were careful not to reveal their identities in discussions about Radio Freedom.

Although the data illustrates that some correspondence was signed with names and surnames, the researcher of this article has concluded that there is no manner of verifying if these were the actual names or actual pseudonyms of the letter senders. However, what is most relevant here is that there was a constant exchange between the ANC and its South African-based constituency. This exchange was not unidirectional; the archival data illustrates that there was in fact "interactive" communication between the ANC and its South African-based constituency. Additional data, which illustrates the correspondence between the ANC and its country-based constituency, suggests that there were friendly and familiar relations with the broadcasters of Radio Freedom, for instance, one exchange reads as follows:

How are you, my friend in the struggle? Did you receive my previous letter? This time I want to tell you what has happened to my cousin Sibongile Mthembu. She was sent to jail by the Boers for two years this year in Kempton Park (Nathaniel Matiwane, 29 November 1979).

The correspondence from this listener to Radio Freedom also illustrates how news and current developments in South Africa were made available to the then exiled ANC. While the apartheid government aimed to curtail any communication between exiles and "in-xiles", the role played by Radio Freedom suggests that this clampdown on communication was not successful. The following additionally archived data material illustrates other exchanges from South Africa to the Radio Freedom platform:

I am a Tswana 24 years of age. I was born at a place called MUNSIEVILLE LOCATION, KRUGERSDORP – Republic of South Africa and as a staunch listener of your radio programs which come strong and clearly through my radio receiver. I wish to submit herewith for your information some local news (KF Mogotsi, nd)

Thus, Radio Freedom had a somewhat strong frequency which made it available to the ANC constituency in South Africa. The availability of Radio Freedom in South Africa also meant that people in the country could rely on the radio station to report on the atrocities that were being committed by the apartheid state:

Greetings to you all brothers and sisters there in Tananarive. (The Spear of the Nation). First of all, comrade I want to tell you what is happening in Natal farms. By what the fascist farmers are doing on our people (From your brother of South Africa, 10-11-79)

This last correspondence, which was sent to the ANC on 10 November 1979, also continues the theme of updating the ANC about developments in South Africa. It also illustrates the two-way communication between Radio Freedom and its South African-based listenership during the apartheid era.

RADIO FREEDOM AND ITS POLITICAL COMMUNICATION PRIORITIES

How the ANC was preoccupied with its image and the role a broadcasting platform played in this preoccupation can be discerned from the data that constitutes the archived scripts of Radio Freedom. Although the scripts have been selected and analysed using a qualitative research process, the readings of these clandestine radio scripts illustrate that the ANC aimed to respond to both the South African public under apartheid and the "international community" on the following key concerns: 1) the unity of the anti-apartheid movement; 2) police brutality in South Africa; 3) the murder/sentencing of political prisoners by the apartheid government; 4) the conduct of White soldiers of the South African Defence Force (SADF); and 5) an appeal against the solidarity that the apartheid regime of South Africa aimed to make with international partners.

For instance, in a radio script dated 3 March 1978, the ANC – through its international political communication platform, Radio Freedom – appealed for unity in the struggle against the apartheid regime.

A broadcast script that is marked Vol.1 No.1, notes the following:

Our feature here again, will deal with the stand of the Coloured and Indian sections of the population, with particular emphasis on the former, with regard to the new constitutional proposal (script author: Sipho Moloto, 3 March 1978).

In this document, which was drafted and prepared for broadcasting in no less than five countries, including South Africa, Radio Freedom is used to appeal to the moral conscience of the Coloured Federal Party and the Indian people of South Africa. In this broadcast script, the broadcast platform exposes the divide-and-rule tactics that were being planned and executed by the Nationalist government of apartheid South Africa in its quest to weaken the anti-apartheid movement. For instance, in that script, the author notes that "as Mr Mayet stated as early as last year, the Indian people reject the idea of 'power-sharing', as long as it excludes the African majority" (Sipho Moloto, 3 March 1978). Thus, this broadcast script reveals that the Nationalist government was in the process of creating a "power-sharing" deal with the Indian and Coloured populations of the country. Additional broadcasting scripts of Radio Freedom reveal that the broadcast institution was also used to attack the police and army machinery of the apartheid state of South Africa. In a script dated 4 March 1978, some commentary notes that "the biggest menace today to the security, property and wellbeing of all South Africans (black and white) is the police".

The broadcast material further notes that:

These thugs have such tremendous powers that they think they are actually above the law and are not subject to punishment for crimes committed against the people. This was clearly shown in Vorster's words when the police were shooting school-children during the June uprisings (Don Ngubeni, 4 March 1978).

In this document, various transgressions that the police have inflicted on the black and oppressed population of the country are highlighted. And thus, in response to these transgressions, the broadcast institution uses the words "thugs", "hungry wolves", "devour" and "bloodthirsty" to describe the apartheid regime of South Africa and its agents.

The trend of attacking and sometimes appealing to the conscience of apartheid South Africa had been a continued tactic in the propaganda strategy of Radio Freedom. In another script publication, the ANC's propaganda machinery notes that "the Pretoria Fascist regime stands condemned for the innumerable crimes it has committed [and] continues to commit against humanity" (Sipho Moloto, 4 March 1978). The commentary on Radio Freedom, therefore, continues to illustrate the strategy that the DIP had undertaken in the process of delegitimising the apartheid government of South Africa.

CONCLUSION

In post-apartheid South Africa, there is a continuous tension between the media and the governing ANC. This tension has been demonstrated by various exchanges and developments that have taken place between the ANC and the South African media industry (Berger, 2010). However, and despite these tensions, the research underpinning this article illustrates that the ANC relied on the media to achieve its objectives of political communication during apartheid, South Africa. The tension between the media industry and the ANC thus seems to be at odds with how the ANC has traditionally understood the role of the media in advancing democratic principles. In the case of this research, the data illustrates how radio was instrumental to this particular cause and how the ANC used the media to advance its political objectives. Carpin (1995:21) indicates that "the history of radio is inextricably suffused with politics".

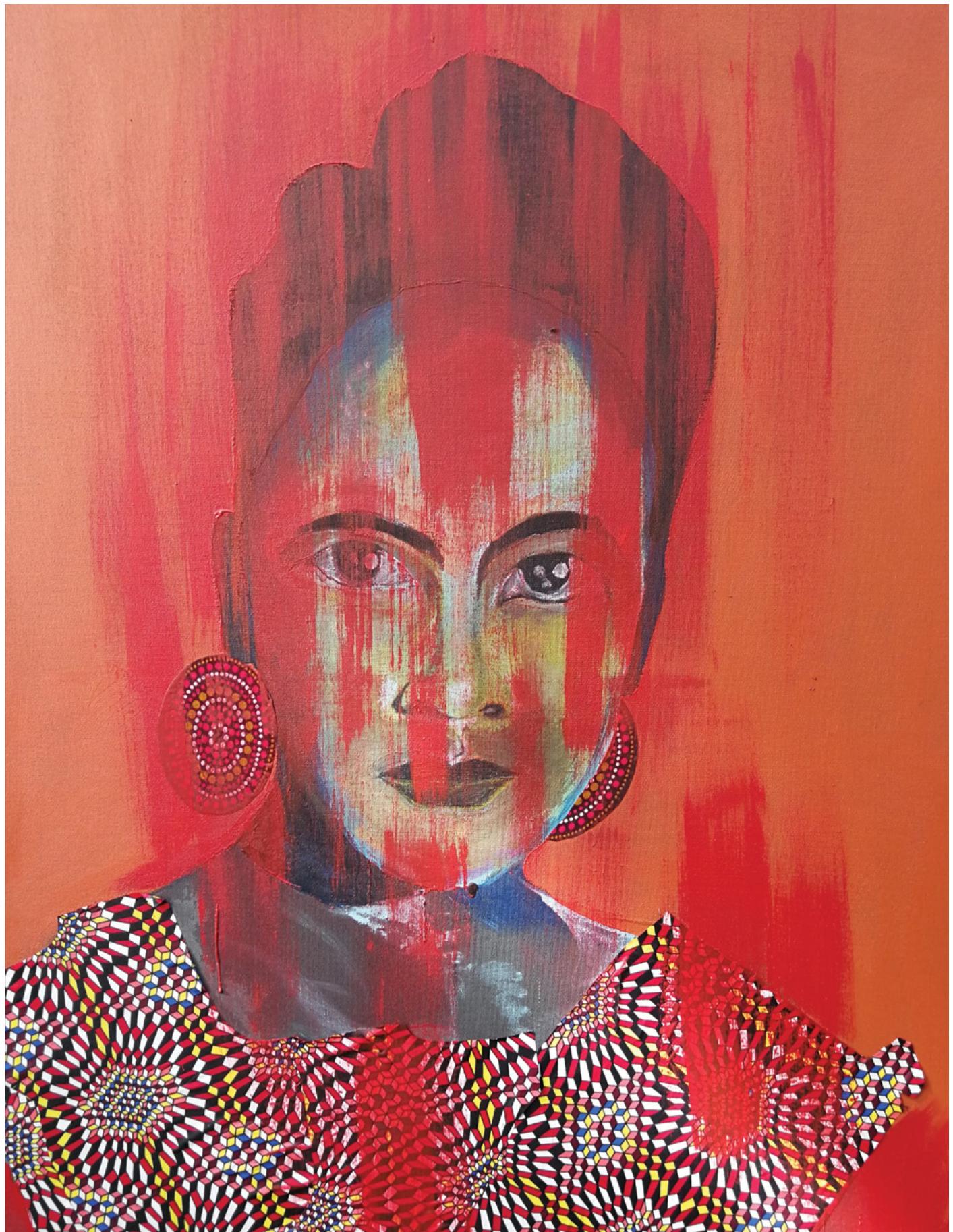
Furthermore, Davis (2011:224) argues that "simply put, radio emerged as both the point and counterpoint of the construction of apartheid and anti-apartheid struggle". This means that the ANC used a broadcasting institution such as Radio Freedom to challenge apartheid policies. The archived data on Radio Freedom suggests that the ANC meticulously planned and strategised its virtual presence in South Africa to counter various forms of propaganda that were created by the apartheid government of the country. Thus at the level of virtual presence, Radio Freedom simply illustrates that the ANC was within the borders of the country, instead of being exiled.



Therefore, in a way, this presence of the ANC through Radio Freedom suggests that the political party maintained a simulated presence even at a time when the apartheid government of South Africa had banned all political activity (Wieder, 2013; Dlamini, 2014). This conclusion has been discerned by sifting through the research data and understanding how the radio station employed political communication strategies to remain relevant and accessible to its listening constituencies. ☀

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Chepape's work explores the intersectionality of gender and class within the African lineage of women. He is fascinated by the erasure and muted voices in the historical context of African women leadership, particularly across generations.



"REMEMORYING OF SLAVERY": SOUTH AFRICAN WINE FARMS AND INTANGIBLE SLAVE MEMORY



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INTRODUCTION

When the #RhodesMustFall movement was ignited by Black students at the University of Cape Town (UCT), one of the listed demands on their manifesto evoked the memory of slavery in South Africa. They demanded that UCT:

"Recognise that the history of those who built our university – enslaved and working class black people – has been erased through institutional culture. Pay more attention to historical sites of violence, such as the slave graves beneath the buildings in which we learn" (2015:8)

Less than three decades ago, when South Africa entered its democratic dispensation, several academics and artists reflected on the silences around South Africa's slave past. Feminist thinkers such as Gabeba Baderoon, Zoë Wicomb, Pumla Dineo Gqola and Yvette Abrahams all pointed to the fact that a "few remember" that slavery was the forbearer to the violent and systematic racialized and gendered oppression enabled by colonialism and apartheid in occupied settler colonies such as the Cape from 1658 to 1834 (Baderoon, 2014). However, slave memory in South Africa today is evoked in many aspects of public discourse, as with the #RhodesMustFall activists.

In this essay I will look into the ways in which slavery is connected to our lived reality in post-apartheid South Africa and the ways in which its memory is evoked. In her book, *What is Slavery to Me? Postcolonial/Slave Memory in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Gqola (2015:5) affirms that "slave memory is evident in various sites in post-apartheid South Africa". Within these various sites of slave memory in South Africa, I am particularly interested in the South African wine industry which is grounded in the Western Cape province. I am interested in the ways in which the industry is influenced by its slave past; as well as the power dynamics within the relationship between farm owners, who are largely descendants of White colonial settlers, as well as the descendants of slaves who still work and live on the farms. I seek to unpack the role that wine had in relation to slaves in the Cape, and the role it currently occupies to its descendants in post-apartheid South Africa. My intention is to demonstrate that the 2012 and 2013 farm

workers' strikes in De Doorns in Western Cape was a revolt against the continued exploitative relationship of Black and Coloured workers by the wine industry, forms of engagement that date back to slavery. Lastly, I argue that the 2016 boycott campaigns against wine companies such as Robertson Winery products, whose workers were on strike for two months over exploitative wages led by the Commercial, Stevedoring, Agricultural & Allied Workers Union as well as the Black feminist-run advocacy site *Amandla.mobi*, not only worked to disrupt the historically grounded worker exploitation influenced by slavery, but also the protests were a call for loving Blackness.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WINE INDUSTRY: A SITE OF SLAVE MEMORY

In 2016, a South African wine was voted "best chardonnay in the world" (Pitjeng, 2016). This is not the only form of recognition that the industry has received. Yearly, South African wines are honoured in wine ratings lists. They dominate lists such as "Winemaker of the Year" as well as "Winery of the Year", as they did again in 2016 (Froud, 2016). However, with all these celebrations of the SA wine industry, the Black and Coloured hands that produce these wines, people who are mostly descendants of slaves in the Western Cape are not mentioned. As the Iziko Museum highlights, "slaves formed the backbone of the Cape economy, especially in Cape Town itself and on the grain and wine" (2016).

The memory of slavery on which this industry is built is erased within news articles and reviews celebrating the "excellence" of the South African wine industry. As emphasised by Mahr (2016), "the history of wine in South Africa is long and, for quite some time, dark". This "dark" side that Mahr references is largely the history of slavery. The hands that cared for the land so it can bear fruits for wine, the ones who watered the land and later picked the grapes were the hands of slaves; some of the descendants of these slaves continue to work the land that produces this globally renowned wine.



Slavery was established in 1658 by the Dutch as well as the English at a later stage, the enslavers transported people from South East Asia, East African islands (Mauritius and Madagascar), East Africa and southern Africa (Gqola, 2010:6). Mahr (2016) makes us aware that "the first vines were planted in the gardens of the Dutch East India Company in the early 1650s, after Dutch colonizer Jan van Riebeeck landed in the Cape to set up a refreshment station for company ships traveling between the Netherlands and Asia. When the vines finally bore fruit, Van Riebeeck wrote in his diary: 'today, praise be to God, wine was made for the first time from Cape grapes'".

This complicated history of a celebrated product and its dehumanising history for a long time was erased along with the entire history of slavery in South Africa. Referring to this erasure, Gqola (2004:4) wrote that in 1996 a:

"writer would feel the need to draw attention to the fact that most people never noticed the steel plate on a traffic island in Steel Street in Cape Town. The plate marks the spot where the slave tree once stood. The writer, Mark Nicol, notes that stranger still, 'that's it. No dates. No reason for remembering. No meaning. Just this strange need someone once had not to forget'. This plaque in front of the South African Cultural Museum, as it was then, used to be easy to miss. Perhaps it is less so now, and easier to be mindful of slavery's imprint now that the building has been renamed in accordance with its first name, as the Slave Lodge".

Memory is not only erased in physical spaces, it is also erased in the archives and records that are meant to "tell the official story of the past" (Badroon, 2008:279). Archives on slavery in South Africa are limited, and they are defined by "authority and visibility, conferring validation on their contents and erasing what they exclude archive holdings are marked crucially by what is not there" (Badroon, 2008:279). Archives and memory reinforce power dynamics and authority. As Worden notes: "the archive only records what 'people once thought worth recording and what other people once thought worth holding onto or suppressing, forgetting or passing on'" (2014:25). Therefore, the erasure within slave archives and records reflects the lack of interest in the humanity of slaves, as they were not viewed as significant enough beings to be recorded (Worden, 2014:27). Worden (2014:27) further notes that there was no

significant investment in archiving slave histories by White colonial settlers and their institutions. He shares that "the only archive inventory to deal specifically with slaves is that of the Slave Office, set up by the British after the end of VOC rule to supervise the registration of slaves in 1816. Moreover, some pertinent documents have been lost. For example, the records of the fiscal's office, responsible for the landing and sale of newly arrived slaves, were never transferred to the archives, nor were they sent to the Netherlands".

Referencing Hesse (2002), Gqola (2010:10) noted that "when slavery is 'forgotten' or unremembered, the connections between slavery and current expressions of gendered and raced identities are effaced". In our contemporary post-apartheid context, the act of forgetting slavery promotes the narrative that Black and Coloured people living in farm areas who are poor, who have had little to no access to education, who live with alcohol addiction are in their current structural conditions due to their own inadequacies or failures. They fail to locate the current structural conditions of this community to its slave past. Slave memories that are not as tangible as the slave castles of West Africa such as Island of Gorée in Senegal and Cape Coast Castle in Ghana, memories that speak to social and economic realities in South Africa are therefore not legitimised. The intangible memories in relation to slavery in the Cape Winelands reveal what Nzengwu (2000:20) notes as "modes that do not easily give up the story".

When people see the levels of alcohol abuse and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs), particularly in the Cape Winelands in South Africa today, they assume that is a part of the 'culture' of those communities, without fully recognising the structural design by enslavers for the lives of slaves to be defined by these social realities. Van der Merwe (2010:175) notes that when Van Riebeeck arrived in the Cape with Angolan slaves, he wrote in his journal 17 April 1658 that: "to animate their lessons and to make them really hear the Christian prayers, each slave should be given a small glass of brandy and two inches of tobacco.' This must be the earliest indication of the tot system or 'dopstsel' coming into use at the Cape". Moreover, van der Merwe (2010:177) highlights that slaves would "received a glass of brandy and a slice of bread before the morning shift (before breakfast)".

As a form of compensation for their labour, "in 1787 slaves on Groot Constantia were given up to 560 litres of wine monthly which comes to an average of 250ml a day and suggests the beginnings of a 'dopstelsel' or remuneration in wine" (van der Merwe, 2010:177). Not only did the spread of alcohol abuse in Black communities arise from the 'dopstelsel' system, during colonial and apartheid South Africa, Black townships were used as a "dumping ground" in order not to forgo the profits from surplus wines that white people did not think were adequate to consume or to export (Ewert & du Toit, 2005:318)

As reiterated previously, South Africa's slave past was largely ignored in the wake of its democracy. However, through interventions attempting to counter the silences and erasure of slavery, slave memory has been a growing field of study and artistic adaptation in the country. Worden (2014:24) has pointed out that many academics in the country were motivated by a project to end these silences in order to share the country's neglected slave past with the entire country. However, this is still a difficult and ongoing task, as "very few of the catalogues and inventories produced by Cape archivists mention slavery at all" (Worden, 2014:27).

As Gqola (2010:2) argues, slavery, colonialism and apartheid need to be read as "simultaneously connected and oppositional", in doing so, it provides us with the ability to see these historical periods "not in terms of rupture-even as we recognise what has changed – but also in terms of association. Put simply, we are both free and *not entirely* free of apartheid. These meanings rub up against each other and inflect our lives in material ways". In the next section of this paper, I demonstrate the ways in which the memory of slavery continues to affect the lives of people in South Africa, particularly in the Cape Winelands.

THE PAST IS PRESENT: THE CONTINUED DEHUMANISATION OF SLAVE DESCENDANTS

The work of Nthabiseng Motsemme (2004:5) on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) assists us with the understanding that we need to break free from the belief and idea of viewing "memory as an object" and also embrace

the notion that it includes embodied practices found in the person next to us in everyday life". In South African life today, as Gqola (2010:2) affirms, it is a country "marked by contradictions where the textures of this newness remain contested". This newness of the country has not only been questioned by academics writing on slavery or the racialised and gendered inequality within the farming/wine industry. In a documentary titled *The Dark Side Of South African Vineyards*, Shawn Yanta, who works on the farms of De Doorns in the Western Cape and one of the organisers of the farm workers' three-month strike in 2012, says this in relation to South Africa's democracy: "I still believe we are not celebrating anything, only the rich and the elite are celebrating. The working class is still struggling to continue with living so there's nothing to celebrate" (Auberi Edler, 2014). Yanta alludes to the racialised and class inequalities that continue to persist today.

The contribution of the wine industry to South Africa's economy is significant. In 2009, it was reported that exports were "\$500 million a year" (Erlichman and Lerner-Kinglake, 2009:2). The litres of wine that South Africa exported in 2009 were 300 million which ranked South Africa as "the world's ninth largest wine-producing country" (Hilary, 2009:1). However, the people producing this wine hardly see its profits due to the exploitative employment conditions that persist in the wine industry. This industry not only relied on slave labour for its earlier development and growth, after slavery was abolished, the exploitation of Black workers continued through the structurally promoted abuse of cheap Black labour. As recently as the 1980's, Ewert & du Toit (2005:318) note, "labour arrangements on South African wine farms were characterised by a racially hierarchical and authoritarian paternalism inherited and adapted from early Cape slave society."

In the current neoliberalised economic state of South Africa, the majority of farmworkers are now regarded as "seasonal labour" where they are paid only for the amount of grapes they harvest instead of the number of hours they work. Furthermore, the growth of seasonal employment in South African wine farms has been significantly high in this new democracy. Erlichman and Lerner-Kinglake (2009:6) note that "in 1995 there was an equal number of seasonal and permanent workers engaged in vineyard farming.



By 2000 this balance had shifted dramatically: over 65% of the workforce was employed on a seasonal basis, while only 35% had permanent contracts". Additionally, there are not only racialised dynamics when it comes to seasonal employment; gendered dynamics influence this industry as well. It has been recorded that "traditionally, only men have received permanent contracts, which means that women make up the majority of seasonal workers. Women are paid less than men and are frequently subject to sexual harassment at work" (Erlichman and Lerner-Kinglake, 2009:6). Monwabisi Kondile, a farmworker who appears in a documentary called *Bitter Grapes – Slavery in the Cape Winelands*, says he works for 13 hours a day in a farm. He complains that this is "a very long time to work. The farmers are aggressive, very aggressive ... whatever they want, they will obtain it by force. No matter if you get sick at work, they say: 'just rest for a few minutes and come back to work!" (Auberi Edler, 2014).

Kondile's reflections highlight the intangible sites of slave memory that are within social relations between farm owners and their workers. As Ewert and du Toit (2005:318) highlight, "to be a white farmer has been, for at least three hundred years, to be a 'master', defined not only by the ownership of a farm but also by the relationships of deference and authority that exist between farm-owner and farm-servant". The reason that Kondile's employers feel entitled to mistreat their workers and engage with them in "very aggressive" ways highlights their superiority complex. Their views on the inferiority of Black lives demonstrate the continued relationship that their colonial ancestors had with their slaves. Slavery was invested in dehumanising Black people and affirming their lack of individuality. As Worden (2014:29) further emphasises, "the lack of interest in the individual slave is reflected in the way their names shifted. Names could also change when slaves were sold from one person to another, creating a new identity in the minds of their owners".

One of the intangible sites in which slavery continues to linger is in the paternalistic relationship between farm owners and workers. Slavery went beyond using Black people for free labour. They owned and controlled their entire existence. Ewert and du Toit (2005:319) note that this relationship is based on the belief by enslavers that they are the "benevolent but firm protectors and disciplinarians of a grateful and appreciative population of on-farm servants". As Gqola (2010:32) affirms, "an

enslaved person is rendered object only because s/he becomes owned, therefore property, a thing". This paternalism not only continues due to the need for slave descendants to make a living in order to survive, but the fact that they depend on farm owners for housing. Mark Solms (2011), a White South African man who inherited land from his family that practised slavery in the Western Cape, once gave a presentation on his surprise to learn of the relationship between land owners and workers on his family's farm.

Solms (2011) said:

"I don't know how many people know that in South Africa, and in particular in the Cape winelands, when you acquire a piece of land, it comes with people who live on it.... One way or the other they are beholden to you, as I dare actually say, as their owner."

The democratic state in South Africa has attempted to challenge this paternalistic relationship by creating laws that would create "new limits to farmers' control over workers' lives. These changes seriously challenge the legal and formal underpinnings of traditional farm paternalism" (Ewert and du Toit, 2005: 324). However, as recently as 2015, investigative journalists on the television programme Check Point visited families in the Cape Winelands who had worked on farms for decades and were fired because they could no longer work due to their advanced age. The programme noted that "across the Cape Winelands thousands of farm labourers have been left destitute. Laws designed to give them some security of tenure don't seem to be worth the paper they are written on" (Abrahams, 2015). As Ewert and du Toit (2005:319) reflected on the government's actions, "challenging paternalism is not the same as replacing it", it has survived because of the government's maintenance and promotion of neoliberalism which has resulted in the adaptation of slavery with "capitalist modernisation".

In his research report titled *Farm Worker Uprising in the Western Cape: A Case Study of Protest, Organising, and Collective Action*, Jesse Wilderman (2014:1) quotes a letter from a farm owner before farm workers began their planned strikes:

"We have paid for the caskets of your families. We have paid for their funerals. We have carried their caskets in church with you, cried with you and mourned with you ... We have bought your children's school clothes

... I have personally loaned my wedding dress to staff, and the only ball gown I own has been worn to many of your children's matric dances ... When you were hungry we have brought you food, when you forgot your lunch I have made you sandwiches. You have been part of our family and part of every celebration we have ever had. If you want to strike today, then don't bother coming back."

This letter from the White employer is a significant demonstration that almost three decades after South Africa's democracy; and centuries after the abolition of slavery, the paternalistic relationship that White farm owners have with their Black workers is one of the intangible sites of memory in the Cape Winelands.

In *Creating Memory: A Conversation with Carole Harris, A Detroit-Based Artist*, Nzengwu (2010:18) asks questions that allude to the fact that slave history, its legacy and trauma continue to remain in the present:

"Yes, the colonial government had abolished slavery. But what did that proclamation mean? Did it change anything? Did it restore their roots, or assuage their anger? Did it remove the pain and stigma of being 'an owned one'?"

In Nzengwu's reading of slave memory and history, she demonstrates the ongoing trauma that resides with descendants of slavery. Granted, Nzengwu was specifically drawing on experiences of the Black Diaspora living in the United States of America. Yet her reflections equally apply to varying forms of pain that linger with slave descendants within the African continent. The wine industry in South Africa is dominated by families whose colonial ancestors utilised the labour of slaves to produce their wine. Not only that, they continue to own land that was taken from Black people through violent dispossession. Slave memory in South Africa is evoked by land and workers' rights activists; as well as the descendants of slaves today because "memory focuses on precisely its refusal to remain distantly in the past and insists instead that it has an ever-presence which is mutable" (Gqola, 2007:33).

WORKERS REVOLT: DE DOORNS FARM WORKERS' STRIKE

In 2012, in a farming community in the Western Cape called De Doorns, the country witnessed a three-month long strike by fruit farm workers in a moment that spurred an estimated 9 000 farm workers against continued economic exploitation and dehumanisation (Christie, 2012). These farm workers were demanding an increase to their minimum wage of R69 a day to R150, among other demands. They did not receive their full demand and settled on R105 per day, these strikes led to the killing of three farmers due to police violence (Davis, 2013). A year before the strikes, in 2011, the Human Rights Watch released a report, *Ripe with Abuse Human Rights Conditions in South Africa's Fruit and Wine Industries*. In this report, the organisation demonstrated that workers were not only among the least paid wage earners in South Africa, it further highlighted that they lived in dehumanising living conditions due to a lack of housing, they received no labour rights and safety equipment on farms was not prioritised which resulted in many safety casualties (Mahr, 2016). Nzengwu (2000:19) argues that "the actions of today [which] were born in the past will flow like a current to shape the future". In South Africa, through the continuation of institutionalised oppressions of Black and Coloured people, we see the remaining imprints of slavery.

Drawing from Wicomb, Gqola denotes the sentiments that Nzengwu speaks to, placing the masked or limited acknowledgement of slave memories within this population as cognisant (consciously or unconsciously) "with the ensuing regimes of terror which compounded the dehumanising experiences of slavery. The result is a collective psychic attempt to deal with these pasts, an attempt to forget shame" (2007:28). This shame is similar to the one expressed in Nzengwu's conversation with Harris on the shame and humiliation that come with the realisation of a taunting history, "to know she was somebody's property - a moving, thinking, feeling one at that" (2010:18). The farm workers' strikes in twenty-five towns around the Western Cape surprised many because of the belief that the shame of slave descendants as well as the paternalistic culture that remains between farm owners and workers would prevent these workers from ever revolting against their oppression. Wilderman (2014:1) argues that "not only was the scale and intensity of this uprising historic, it displayed a form of resistance outside the 'paternalistic' discourse that had come to characterize relationships between farm workers and farm owners".



It is a memory site that has refused to be muted, because slave memory particularly facilitates the "refusal to remain distantly in the past and insists instead that it has an ever-presence which is mutable", to reference Gqola again (2007:33). These strikes signify a point echoed by Badroon (2014) who notes that in South Africa slavery was replaced by other forms of exclusion after emancipation and the strikes therefore also echoed the burning desire by workers to dismantle this system. The pain and exploitation experienced by slave descendants and farm workers in the Cape Winelands was silent or unheard for a long time in South Africa. Yet, the De Doorns farm workers' strikes spoke to exploitative labour practices that are entrenched in South Africa's slave past. They also spoke to their denied access to education and housing in their own land. Furthermore, they affirmed the historical value of their labour to the development and growth of the wine industry. As Gqola (2010:29) further argues, "given the manner in which oppressive ideologies travel, however, it is this 'truth' – of the lazy, useless, sometimes willing slave, who makes no real contribution to society- that survives". Gqola (2010:192) reminds us that "part of the racist narrative of colonialism, slavery and apartheid links with this denial and erasure of Black participation in the construction of all the facets of privilege and 'civilisation' white South Africa prided itself on". The workers in De Doorns were challenging these historical racist constructions, while simultaneously affirming that it is their continued labour that is the foundation to South Africa's celebrated wine industry. Additionally, they challenged the "tidy linearity of chronological time underpinning historiographical narration" which insisted that slavery in South Africa had been an aspect of our history that we had surprised (Gqola, 2000:21). Their reference to the intangible forms of memory of slavery, which are viewed as unreliable such as the continued economic, cultural, and social power relations, disrupted dominant historical perspectives of slavery.

"WE ARE COMING FOR EVERYTHING": A CALL FOR LOVING BLACKNESS

Gqola (2010:4) references Njabulo Ndebele (1990a) and states "in 1990 the tone that was being set was one predicated on a facile negotiation in the terrain of economics, where white business would make certain declarations which would then be seen to work as actualisation of equity, resulting

in what he called 'epistemological confusion'. This 'epistemological confusion' has been unravelled in South Africa, with many activists and academics pointing to its failure to dismantle racialised and gendered inequality. The Marikana Massacre in 2012, where the police opened fire on protesting mineworkers, killing of 34 mineworkers and leaving 78 workers seriously injured, demonstrated to the nation that White capital will continue to profit from cheap Black labour, and that when Black workers revolt there is a Black government willing to murder Black people for the protection of historically unethical and unearned wealth. Many social movements have risen to challenge systems that guarantee that "the life of a Black person is cheap", as Joseph Mathunjwa, leader of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU), stated after the 2012 massacre. In relation to the legacy of slavery in the Cape Winelands, a documentary titled *Bitter Grapes – Slavery in the Cape Winelands* by Tom Heinemann, a Danish filmmaker, was released in 2016. The documentary highlighted the exploitative labour and living conditions of farm workers in the wine industry and compared it to "slavery". Activist Trevor Christians reflected in the documentary and said: "they[farm owners] don't want you to see, the lie, you will see more than that lie, you will see people that look like slaves" (Sørensen, 2016). Henriette Abrahams, another activist with the Black women-led movement Sikhula Sonke, noted that "there are still some conservative farmers out there who thinks nothing of our workers, and who want to keep them in the enslavement of alcoholism, so that they can just have them there as their slaves" (Sørensen, 2016). After the documentary's release, "Dagrofa, one of Denmark's biggest supermarket chains, pulled some [South African] wines off its shelves – including products from Robertson Winery" (Alexander, 2016). Furthermore, Amandla. mobi, a human rights advocacy platform run by Black feminists in South Africa, supported the two-month strike by Robertson Winery farm workers against exploitative wages by creating a boycott campaign against the wine producer. In their petition, they noted:

"the gross wages of the workers on strike at Robertson range from R95.34 to R115 per day! Since negotiations started 4 months ago, workers have been disciplined and calm, yet bosses refuse to compromise or negotiate. The Robertson Winery has offered their workers a daily increase that begins at R8.80!"

The upsetting aspect for many of the Robertson Winery workers is that they realise that Robertson Winery is making hundreds of millions of Rands in profits every year" (Amandla.mobi, 2016).

These and other initiatives by Black activists and workers affirm the commitment emphasised by bell hooks of "loving Blackness" as a political project as well as a resistance project (1992:20). Their rage against the continued exploitation of Black people is a reminder of Soyinka's lecture *The Burden of Memory and the Muse of Forgiveness* in which he reflects that: "the victims are alive and in need of rehabilitation while their violators – as a recognizable group-pursue their privileged existence, secure in their spoils of a sordid history" (1999:24). The challenges to the wine industry in South Africa then becomes a challenge to the "rainbow nation" and "unity" project because it affirms Black dignity and justice. This project helps and "transforms our ways of looking and being, and thus creates the conditions necessary for us to move against the forces of domination and death and reclaim black life" (hooks, 1992:20).

CONCLUSION

This paper has looked at the South African Cape Winelands as sites of slave memory. It argued that the continued Black exploitative working conditions, paternalistic actions, and views by White farm owners as well as violent structural abuse are the intangible "modes that do not easily give up the story" about slave history in South Africa (Nzengwu, 2000:20). Furthermore, it has acknowledged that although there were silences of slave histories in South Africa in the beginning of its democracy, more people are reflecting on the continuation of our slave pasts. These reflections do not only occur in the work of academics and researchers, but within student activist movements such as #RhodesMustFall, as well as descendants of slaves who continue to work and live on wine farms. I articulated that the De Doorns farm workers' strike was a powerful language to demonstrate the commitment by workers to dismantle the legacy of slavery, their dehumanisation, and economic exploitation. The support of workers by activists and advocacy platforms run by Black women such as *Amandla.mobi* not only showcases a resistance to continued slave practices but also reflects a language of "loving Blackness".



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ELEMENTS OF CULTURE IN HEALTH COMMUNICATION: AN ISIZULU TRANSLATION OF THE PHOTONOVEL *AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION* AS A CASE STUDY



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INTRODUCTION

Health has a direct bearing on the well-being of any country's citizens and its economy. Thus, it is imperative that citizens receive health communication in a format that assists them to make informed choices about their health and welfare. Information about health should be communicated in a language with which individuals identify at a personal level, and which characterises them as members of a social community (Rimal & Lapinski, 2009). To achieve consistency in messages conveyed in different languages, and for economic reasons, translation is often used to produce multilingual health-promotion materials.

Studies that focused on the translation of health-promotion texts into mother tongue of the target audience include those undertaken by Bwanali (2008), Ndlovu (2009) and Kruger (2010). These researchers found that the translation of health promotion texts into mother tongue of the target audience yields better results as audiences understood the contents better and were, therefore, more likely to adhere to instructions. Translation is of great importance in South Africa, a country with 11 official languages, nine of which have historically not enjoyed the same privileged status as English and Afrikaans.

To appreciate the need for systematic guidelines for the translation of culturally responsive health promotion materials, it is necessary to consider the context of the health system in which these texts are produced. As Ndlovu (2009) and Kleinman (1980:24) point out, the health care system is a "component of society which includes patterns of belief about the causes of illness, norms governing choice and evaluation of treatment, socially legitimised practice, roles, power relationships, interaction settings, and institutions". Kleinman (1980:34) explains that health care, as a local cultural system, has three components: the popular (the individual, family, social network and community beliefs and activities in which illness is defined and health care initiated); the professional (the organised healing professions, which include modern scientific medicines); and the folk sectors (indigenous specialists, which include herbalists, bonesetters, midwives, and diviners). In Western contexts, lay hypnotists, lay homoeopaths and faith healers may also be included in the folk sector. These folk sectors explain why family members

of a patient will utilise their beliefs and values in tackling their illness.

Ndlovu (2009:28) also notes that the South African biomedical health care system is based on the District Health System model, which has been adopted by the National Department of Health to drive the delivery of primary health care. Using this model, the South African Department of Health also drives immunisation programmes against vaccine-preventable diseases in all children. In addition, the Department of Health has prioritised the fight against chronic diseases, such as cancer, hypertension, diabetes and osteoporosis by promoting the adoption of a healthy lifestyle.

To achieve this objective, the Department uses the photonovel genre to communicate with audiences with varying levels of literacy and to combat cultural stigma (James, Reddy, Ruiter, Taylor, Jinabhai & Van Empelen, 2005). Lee, Yoon, Chen and Juon (2013) also mention that the photonovel is a document that can be appropriately embedded in the culture of the target audience and, therefore, plays an important role in ensuring that audiences identify, understand and accept messages that are communicated.

Nimmon (2010:92) notes that the "significance of a literacy tool like the photonovel is that it is participatory, and thus allows participants to shape their own reality through the creation of images and print". Nimmon (2010) argues that photonovels are culturally appropriate as educational tools as they are characterised by image-intensive narratives with which the users can identify. They are interesting and emotional and can be used extensively in the population. This means that the designers of photonovels can constantly revise the material to make sure it is suitable for the target audience. Thus, translators need to be equipped with the necessary translation strategies to enable them to accommodate cultural differences in the translation of photonovel so that these documents will be effective in disease-prevention campaigns.



The HPV photonovel, *An Ounce of Prevention*, which is the focus of this analysis, addresses the myths surrounding the prevention of cervical cancer. Produced by the Immunization, Information and Education branch of the California Department of Public Health, this photonovel is targeted at Latino mothers of 11- and 12-year-old children and its purpose is to raise awareness about the HPV vaccine and the importance of Pap smear tests (Boyte, Pilisuk, Matiella and Macario, 2014:5). Originally, it was written in Spanish and was later translated into English. A photonovel that addresses cervical cancer was chosen because of the high incidence of this disease in South Africa. Furthermore, the decision to undertake this study was inspired by the campaign that was rolled out in April 2014 (Botha & Richter, 2015: 33) by the South African government to vaccinate all girls between the ages of 11 and 12 years (South African Government News Agency, 12 March 2014).

This paper focuses on the design of a heuristic instrument based on the principles espoused by the cultural turn in translation, Larkey and Hecht's (2010) model of Effects of Narratives as Culture-centric Health Promotion, and a model designed specifically for text evaluation, namely Nords' (2005) Functional and Loyalty model. This instrument will be used to guide the translator in identifying cultural elements in the ST, which will help them render culturally appropriate homophily in the translation of a particular photonovel into isiZulu.

A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE IN TRANSLATION

Culture is an interesting concept that has been studied by different disciplines to better understand its essence and how it affects the world we live in. Thus, this concept has come to mean many things to many researchers and individuals. However, it is important to note the constraints and restrictions that aspects of culture can impose on a text within the context of translation, hence the need to identify an efficient process for dealing with these restrictions. Translators are relaters of meaning in the act of communication. They are mediators of language and culture. For that reason, they need strategies to deal with cultural constraints as producers of target text (TT).

Furthermore, specifically within the context

of photonovels, culture plays an important part in addressing a complex set of structural, socio-cultural and psychological factors, especially those that influence health differences among ethnic minority groups (Larkey & Hecht, 2010: 115). Larkey and Hecht (2010:115) maintain that a narrative approach offers one of the best methods to capture the richness of cultural elements that most effectively reach minds and hearts for health-behaviour change. When taking this approach, two elements bring the narrative in the text alive: pictures and written words. It is through these elements that components of culture are richly contained and transmitted through in texts.

However, given the understanding that every text is different, it is also imperative that the translator has relevant factual and procedural knowledge base to ensure that these cultural characteristics will be recognised. This is even more imperative in the case of texts that rely on the receiver's cultural knowledge as a base to decode the messages in a narrative. Unfortunately, there is currently no given approach that is specifically designed to systematically transfer cultural elements in a photonovel nor is there a study focused on the effect of translating these specialised texts. One might then propose that, possibly through the evaluation of available literature on the translation of cultural elements in a text, as an initial step, one might glean principles that could be used to systematically transfer cultural nuances in a photonovel to enable a TT receiver to adequately decode this specialised text and thus effectively respond to the message. To adequately understand the principles that govern cultural transfer during translation, it is important that one should first understand the notions that introduced the concept of culture within translation.

Scholars within the translation field have described translation as a form of communication that has enabled people from different languages and cultures to mediate understanding and share knowledge. Interestingly, theorists have different understandings of how this is achieved. Some have advocated for the "literal" word for word translation, while others opt for the "free" (sense for sense) translation as they seek to find a best way to adjust the source text (ST) to the target audience's ways of expression.

Two approaches to translation are dominant. The first is a normative and prescriptive approach – led by linguists such as Catford and Nida – which sought the promotion of equivalence so that translations were accurate and faithful to the ST. The ST was always the backdrop against which translations would be judged (Naudé, 2011). However, Bassnet and Lefevere's work (1990) highlighted the need to shift from this view of translation owing to linguistic and cultural differences between languages. Thus translation is characterised by two approaches – functionalist and descriptive.

Given the nature of a photonovel, this study will focus on the functionalist approach to translation as a movement that is directly involved with the concept of communication in the fields of both translation and text design.

A FUNCTIONAL MODEL FOR SOURCE-TEXT EVALUATION

Sharing the views of functionalist and communicative theorists like Reiss and Vermeer, and Holz-Mänttäri (Munday, 2008:82), Nord (2005: 41) highlights the fact that a “communicative function is the decisive criterion for textuality, to which the semantic and syntactic features of the text are subordinate”. According to Nord, three aspects of functionalist approaches are useful for translation (Munday, 2008:82-83):

(1) The importance of the translation commission: Nord proposes that before closely analysing the ST, the translator should compare ST and translated text (TT) profiles as determined in the commission to see where they would possibly diverge from each other. Through the analysis of these extratextual features, translators should be able to develop a good understanding of the factors that constitute the communication situation of the ST and to already make assumptions about the intratextual features and how they could be used to achieve the aim of the communication in the TT. Based on this information, the translator may begin to concurrently make assumptions about the TT constraints that may be presented by the target culture when the intratextual analysis is undertaken (Nord, 2005:87).

(2) The role of ST analysis: It is used to determine the functional priorities of the translation strategy. As noted above, the analysis of intratextual features is informed by the deductions made

based on the analysis of extratextual features. Furthermore, this section of the analysis is Target Culture (TC)-orientated, as it is the goal of the translator, as the producer of the target text (TT), to ensure that these features are acceptable to the TC and thus effective in completing the aim of the communication action (Nord, 2005: 131-138).

(3) The functional hierarchy of translation problems: Nord establishes the following functional hierarchy when undertaking a translation:

- (a) The intended function of the translation should be decided (documentary or instrumental).
- (b) The functional elements that will need to be adapted to the TT addressee's situation have to be determined (after the analysis of the translation commission).
- (c) The translation type decides the translation style (source-culture- or target-culture-orientated).
- (d) The problems of the text can then be tackled at a lower linguistic level (as in the ST analysis).

Nord (2005:42) notes that the interplay between extratextual and intratextual factors, as experienced by the reader, would lead to the text having a particular effect on them. These factors are significant in that they systematically influence the choice of modes that make a text culturally acceptable and meet the demands of the translation skopos. Addressing each of these aspects would aid the successful transfer of every aspect of the text to ensure that the text (in this case the photonovel) will have the same effect in the TC.

LARKEY AND HECHT'S MODEL FOR EVALUATING CULTURE-CENTRIC NARRATIVES IN HEALTH PROMOTION

A general review of the use of texts, especially photonovels, in health promotion reveals the importance authors of these texts attach to the knowledge of their audiences, and how each element of the text is designed according to the needs of the audience. Clear evidence exists that culture is central to the construction of the relevant health messages in photonovels and facilitates the acceptance of the messages by the target group (Nimmon, 2010; Dube, 2013).



In their study, Larkey and Hecht (2010) sought to examine the effects of the narrative, as adapted in the design of a photonovel as a culture-centric medium for expressing and shaping health behaviour in health promotion.

According to Larkey and Hecht, in order to develop an effective photonovel, the narrative should incorporate the following elements: First, the photonovel should include engaging characters who are realistic and likeable, resemble the intended audience and are able to generate empathy. It is also important to have an appealing storyline with dramatic sequencing. Second, cultural grounding and embeddedness are essential to attract the attention of the reader and should expand on the concept of homophily to evoke a sense of resonance. Identification with characters, the story and the cultural elements encourages social discussion and the reinforcement of ideas.

These notions, as presented by Larkey and Hecht, are true for the ST receiver. However, as established in the above discussion of the ST analysis, the senders of the STs do not consider the TT receivers when they construct the STs. Thus one finds that there is a gap that the translators of these particular texts need to deal with as they adapt the STs from their particular situational context to those of the TTs. Unfortunately, not much has been said about the impact this gap has on the effect of the text on the TT receivers in their situational contexts.

The operationalisation of the functionalist approach in conjunction with the cultural turn approach to translation, and the conceptualization of the photonovel as a culture-centric text genre provide the translator with a useful set of heuristics to identify and address culture-specific items when adapting a text, such as a photonovel, from one cultural situation to another. The aim of these guide lines is: first, to help a translator understand the communicative situation in which the ST is produced; second, to systematically identify culture-specific elements in the ST text by using the knowledge of the communication situation and the understanding of the photonovel as a text; third, to establish the cultural distance between the ST culture and the TT communication situation; and fourth, to ensure that all the narrative characteristics from both the personal and the socio-cultural levels inform the concepts of transportation, identification and social proliferation so that the

translator is thus equipped to make informed decisions about the possible translation challenges identified in the ST, which would make the TT culturally unacceptable for the TC.

The analysis of the ST, *An Ounce of Prevention*, by using the proposed evaluation guidelines in order to identify cultural elements in the ST culture, yielded the following conclusions:

In the ST *An Ounce of Prevention*, the sender of the text was identified as the Immunization Branch: Information and Education of the California Department of Public Health, while the text producer was identified as the Fotonovela Production Company. The provision of their website addresses and telephone numbers in the text confirms that the information found in the text is authentic and that the sender and producer are experts on the subject matter and the genre used to deliver the message. Clear authentication of the sender and text producer is crucial to the authority of the message and the willingness of the ST target audience to accept it.

The analysis of the genre conventions led to the conclusion that the producers had two main intentions for the text: (1) referential (contain informative elements), and (2) appellative (contain a persuasive element). The text was meant to raise awareness about HPV and the availability of the HPV vaccine among Latino mothers of boys and girls aged 11 to 12 years, and to encourage sexually active women above the age of 21 to test for a Pap smear. It seems that the two intentions complement each other in that the appellative elements (the Latin American cultural context, the use of female characters and the impact of death on the family unit) help readers to identify themselves and the sender in the text, while the referential element (the doctor who speaks from a position of authority and is the voice of knowledge) relays the message in a manner that depicts a conversation between the reader and the sender.

It has thus been established that in order for the referential and appellative elements to be effective in a TT aimed at a similar audience demographic, the text needs to include personalities with whom the TA can identify with regard to ethnicity and knowledgeable authorities. This will ensure that the referential elements are identifiable and acceptable to the TA.

Furthermore, given the language proficiency level of the TA (Boyte *et al.*, 2014), the text will make use of simple language, pictures and non-dense information structures so that the information can be identifiable, clear and easy to understand. In addition, due to the TA's place of communication, it is essential to use a language and cultural elements that will resonate with them. The sender to ensure successful communication in the SC context uses all these elements. It is imperative for the sender to use markers that will resonate with the ST audience.

With regard to cultural embeddedness, the analysis of the ST, *An Ounce of Prevention*, reveals that the text is deeply embedded in its communicative cultural context. This can be clearly seen in the interplay of cultural distance in the photonovel. On one hand, the text world corresponds to the SC in its use of universal nonverbal elements, such as gestures and body language, and the core values associated with humanity and the family unit. These elements are generic and thus have zero distance for both ST and TT receivers. On the other hand, the text world corresponds only to the SC and thus there is zero distance for the ST receivers in its use of supportive values rooted in Spanish culture, such as the characters' ethnicity (Latin American), language, setting and cuisine. These elements reinforce a sense of identity between the characters and the ST receivers. However, this means that the TT receivers are culturally distant from the text, thus making it difficult for TT receivers to totally identify and resonate with the text in the same way the ST receivers are meant to.

Given the above context, the translator is now able to place the function of the ST in context within the TC, and thus make informed decisions regarding the function of the TT based on the intratextual factors found in the ST.

AN APPLICATION OF THE ANALYTIC HEURISTICS IN THE ISIZULU TRANSLATION

Using the information drawn from the analytic heuristics, one can provide an example of how a mirror image of the heuristics used for analysing the ST can be applied when translating the TT. Samples of the application of the analytic heuristics in the isiZulu translation of the photonovel *An Ounce of Prevention* will be provided. The objective

of this exercise is to show how the analytic heuristics may help translators to systematically analyse an ST to identify both explicit and implicit cultural elements used in a text so that they will be able to successfully transfer these elements to the TT. It would be of interest to evaluate how the aspect of naming as a cultural element (titles, characters, health terminology) has been used to construct relationships and influence decision-making processes within the text. This aspect identified through this heuristic will be discussed, while highlighting any kind of potential cultural problem that may affect the isiZulu TA. This will be followed by a proposed culturally sensitive translation in isiZulu and a back translation that allows access for non-Zulu speakers.

The translation of the title

The use of the title *An Ounce of Prevention*, in conjunction with the tagline "Vaccinate your children against the human papilloma virus (HPV)", confirms that the subject matter is the prevention of infection by the HP virus. When the meaning of the two is deduced together, it can be inferred that the subject matter of the text is about taking a simple step in order to prevent something as calamitous as cervical cancer. It is noted that the subject matter is not bound to the ST culture, but has a strong connection with sexual health, which the TA regards as taboo. In the townships young women often mention ukupreventa, a word borrowed from English (prevention) when talking about sexual health and family planning. However, this is often frowned upon and the word is used in harsh tones by mothers in the community who believe only married people should be sexually active. Nonetheless, the translator will need to be aware of the strategies used to actualise the subject matter in the translation to avoid the TA finding the text offensive and, consequently, rejecting the message.

Furthermore, the title is an idiom that contains the word ounce, a measure used in America with which South Africans are unfamiliar, and the word prevention is a semantic complex. It has two possible meanings – the act of preventing something from happening, or to a position that one can take as protection against a disease.



The slogan contains the words human papillomavirus, which is a specialised term used to refer to a DNA virus from the papillomavirus family that is capable of infecting humans (Cancer Association of South Africa: 2013). This is not a term that the TA would necessarily know.

Example 1:

"An Ounce of Prevention"

Translation:

Kungcono ukuyinqanda okhalweni kunokuyikhipha ekhaya

Back translation:

It is better to repel an attacker from afar rather than try to remove him from the homestead.

This saying means it is better for a person to guard against misfortune from afar rather than wait to be severely injured.

Explanation of translation solution:

The translator has decided to use an equivalent idiom in the TL, which has similar connotations to the title in the Source Language (SL). In the Zulu culture, this idiom stems from the constant attacks from other surrounding nations that the Zulu nation had to fend off. They always had to be on guard against intruders by identifying possible attacks from afar so they could protect the homestead. Therefore, by using such a common idiom with which the TA is familiar, the translator is able to capture the sense that something must be done now to prevent a possible catastrophe. Without being explicit, the reader is warned about something "that should rather be repelled at a safe distance". The use of the word nqanda, a Zulu word for stopping or preventing, also has connotations of containing or protecting yourself from a possible attack.

The translation of the content

The sender and the producer of the booklet are from the United States and the content of the ST contains references to the American context in which the ST is distributed and used. This information establishes them as experts on the subject dealt with in the text. The use of the content in this manner makes sense as the ST target audience would need to make use of this information with reference to their context.

However, given that the TT has an entirely different location and context of use, it is suggested that the inclusion of an identifiable health care provider will provide some sense of authority and authenticity. This function is important for the sender as it will establish rapport with the readers and assure them that the information they are reading is true. It is, therefore, essential that the translator include the name of the health care provider who can provide additional information, such as the South African Department of Health, an NGO, and so on. It is also imperative that the information provided in the text speak to the TT audience and persuade them to take action.

Example 2:

"In the United States, about 10 000 women get cervical cancer every year."

Translation:

Eningizimu Afrika abesifazane ababalelwa ku 6 000 batholakala banesifo somdlavuza wesibeletho njalo ngonyaka, kanti bangango 3 000 abashona ngenxa yalesisifo.

Back translation:

In South Africa the number of women found with cervical cancer amounts to 6 000 per year, while about 3 000 die because of this disease.

Example 3:

"The Vaccines for Children Program (VFC) offers free or low-cost shots for eligible children aged 18 or younger."

Translation:

UMnyango wezeMpilo waseNingizimu Afrika unikezela ngalomjovo weHPV kuloluhlelo lokugoma amantombazane asesekoleni.

Back translation:

The National Department of Health in South Africa is distributing the HPV vaccine for its vaccination programme for school girls.

Explanation of translation solution:

The translator replaced the American statistics with South African statistics to ensure facts are relevant to the TA and, therefore, more likely to persuade the TC audience to take action to protect themselves against the HPV pandemic. The translator also decided to localise the content by replacing the name of the American health provider vaccination programme with information about the South African Department of Health's vaccination programme for school girls. This will ensure that the TT parents have information applicable to them and on which they can readily follow up.

The translation of identified health terminology

As shown by the extratextual analysis, the sender's intention for the ST resulted in them choosing certain lexical items and concepts that resonate with and are presupposed for the SC. The text contains many medical terms, such as human papillomavirus, vaccinate, genital, shots and Pap smear. These terms link the information to the doctor, who is presented on the first page as the figure of authority and an expert on the topic. However, it has been noted that these presuppositions will cause a barrier in the conveying of the message if they are not addressed in the TT – for example, the use of the term Pap tests to refer to pelvic exams. The sender assumed that the TA knows what a Pap test is and did not explain it. However, this term may be confusing for the TT audience as their traditional maize meal porridge is also called *pap*.

Example 4:

Sarita: "Lourdes never had Pap tests, Luci. Having regular Pap tests can catch these problems before they become incurable."

Translation:

Sarita: "ULourdes akakaze aye kwadokotela ayohlolwa isibeletho ngokwenza iPap test Luci. Ukuholowa isibeletho ngePap test njalo nje kuholela ekutheni basheshe bazithole lezi zinkinga ngaphambi kokuba zingasalapheki."

Back translation:

Sarita: "Lourdes has never had her uterus checked by having a Pap test, Luci. Having Pap tests regularly results in catching these problems before they become incurable."

Example 5:

"How are HPV, cervical cancer, and genital warts related?"

Translation:

I-HPV, umdlavuza womlomo wesibeletho, kanye namashashaza esithweni sangasese kuhlangana kanjani?

Back translation:

How are HPV, cancer of the uterus mouth, and rash on the private parts related?

Example 6

"HPV causes cervical cancer and genital warts (warts on the penis and vagina)."

Translation:

"IHPV ebanga umdlavuza womlomo wesibeletho kanye namashashaza ezithweni zangasese (amashashaza ngaphezu kwesitho sabesilisa kanye nabesifazane)."

Back translation:

HPV causes cancer of the uterus mouth and a rash on the private parts.

Explanation of translation solution:

The translator decided to use an explanation of the Pap test in the conversation, as well as borrow the term from English. Explaining the term ensures the reader knows what the term refers to, while borrowing the term allows the readers to familiarise themselves with the term so they may be able to use it in future, preferably when consulting their local clinic. In addition, the translator has opted to indirectly refer to the human anatomy, rather than use direct terms, a polite thing to do especially when addressing children.

**The translation of the characters names**

Furthermore, the cultural context of the ST presupposes knowledge of family relations in the SC. This is evident from the names that the characters use for each other. For example, in the story the family uses Latino kinship terms to address each other, for example mijo, to show affection (when the grandfather refers to the children). The sender has chosen to use traditional Spanish names for the characters, such as Kati (the little girl), Luis (the boy), and Sarita (the neighbour). Since these are typical Latino names, a reader can automatically link the characters to the culture. It would, therefore, be imperative for the translator to use lexis in the TT that will be reflective (connotative) and synonymous with the TC.

Example 7:

Luci: "Umkhulu uhleze njalo ethi: 'Kungcono ukuyinqanda okhalweni kunokuyikhipha ekhaya."

Translation:

Luci: "Umkhulu uhleze njalo ethi: 'Kungcono ukuyinqanda okhalweni kunokuyikhipha ekhaya."

Back translation:

Granddad always says: "It is better to repel an enemy from a distance than to try to remove him from your homestead."

Example 8:

Mkhulu: Uyajaha manje mntanami!

Translation:

Umkhulu: Uyajaha manje mntanami!

Back translation:

Granddad: You are faster now, my child!

Example 9:

Luis: "Hi Abuelito. Kati and I raced and I won!"

Translation:

Sihle: "Kunjani Mkhulu? UZinhle nami besiqhude-lana mina ngiphumelele!"

Back translation:

Sihle: "How are you grandpa? Zinhle and I were racing and I won!"

Example 10:

Luci: "It's Sarita. She's here for our walk..."

Translation:

Ntombi: "NguSonto. Ulapha ukuthi sizoyolula izinyawo..."

Back translation:

Ntombi: "It's Sonto. She is here so we can go stretch our legs ..."

Example 11:

Luci's husband: "Yeah sure, anything you say. Pass me the salsa, will you, honey?"

Translation:

Sipho: "Yebo kunjalo, nomu yini oyishoyo. Ngicela ungidlulisele isishebo, ngiyacela s'thandwa."

Back translation:

Sipho: "Yes sure, anything you say. Will you pass me the gravy, (I am asking) please, (my) love?"

Explanation of translation solution:

The translator decided to provide an equivalent name for the grandfather in the TL. This will ensure that the TT reader knows who is spoken about and can relate to his wise words. The translator also chose to use an equivalent term, mntanami (my child), or mntano' mntanami (child of my child) to refer to the young boy. African culture believes that there are no close relatives, but that everyone belongs to one big family because we are joined by blood. Thus, the concept of relation denoted by the use of the term mijo can be easily transferred as it is similar in the TC. In addition, the translator chose to use common traditional Zulu names for all the characters to make them more easily identifiable and bring them closer to the cultural context. Traditional African names have significant meanings that might be linked to their birth (situations that are symbolic or significant in their coming into the world), or attached to a family member. It is also believed that children live up to their names, which sometimes refer to occupations or achievements that the parents wish for their children. Zulu parents also usually give their children similar names or names that rhyme – therefore the choice of rhyming names Sihle and Zinhle for the siblings.

Given the treatment of the different socio-cultural characteristics of the TT as determined through the analytic principles for ST evaluation of a culture-centric photonovel, the translator was able to determine the acceptability of the cultural characteristics used in the TT.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the findings that the functionalist approach to translation and the cultural turn in translation studies provide useful evaluation tools for identifying and addressing culture-specific items when adapting a specialised text developed for one culture for use in another. Both these theoretical underpinnings inform the process of translation as a text that belongs to a particular genre and socio-cultural context and not merely an act of rewriting of a text. It is clear from the interdependence between extratextual and intratextual elements that it would be difficult for the translator to correctly transfer a message into the TC without adequately understanding the ST communication context. These heuristics place translators in a unique position, as experts in both language and culture, to make expert assumptions about how certain items of the text might be perceived in the TC.

It is also concluded from the findings that the communication situation is informed by the cultural context in which it occurs; both explicit and implicit meanings are derived and encoded from this culture. This is first clearly seen in how the sender's message contains presuppositions in terms of the content they assume is known to the audience, what they think the audience does not know, and how this content will lead a reader to an understanding of the message and a desired action. Second, the text is governed by principles and structures with which the assumed reader has to be familiar so that meaning can be gleaned from the structured content. Finally, the audience also has certain expectations of what is acceptable in their society and acceptable to them as individuals. The acceptability of the text and the message depend on the sender's ability to construct and encode a particular text, as well as the reader's ability to correctly identify codes, to decode and to produce meaning from the text.

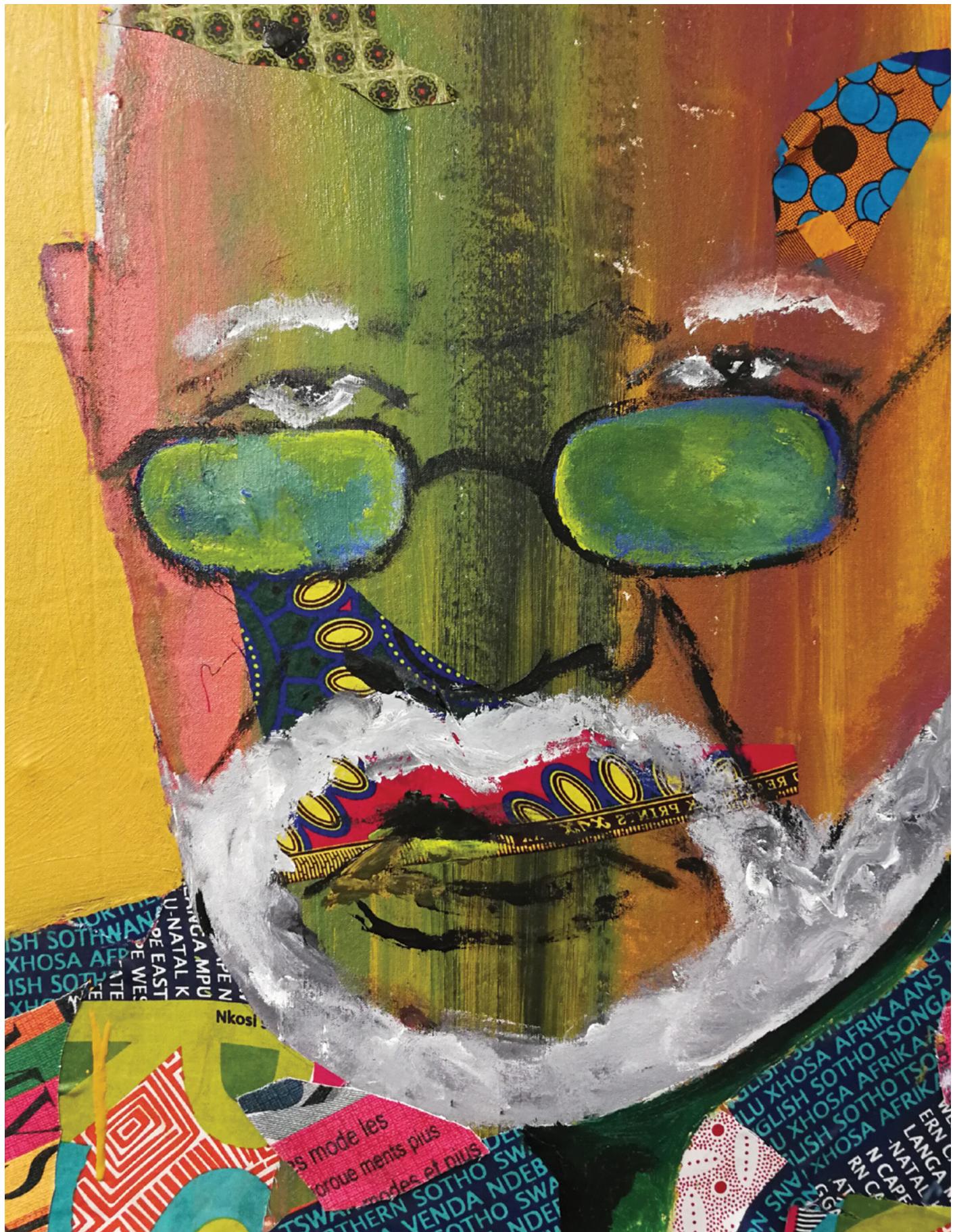


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Chapape's point of focus in engaging the historical narrative or archive inspires him to honour legends who came before him, such as the late Professor Es'kia Mphahlele, his literary idol.



THE CHANGING TOPOGRAPHY OF SHORT STORY WRITING IN SOUTH AFRICA



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INTRODUCTION

The short story remains one of the most resilient genres in the history of written literature in South Africa. The growth of South African literature, and the short story genre in particular, can be linked to periods of heightened socio-political movements. The short story responds more swiftly to emerging paradigms in the broader society than longer prose like novels.

The short story genre is conducive for both stylistic and thematic exploration. As a result, new trends often emerge through short story writing. This is not to suggest, however, that a short story is easier to write, or that there are fewer aesthetical requirements in writing short stories. Although there is no single theory that wholly defines the pathology of short stories, there are recognisable discursive features that signify this complex construct. A short story is generally understood as prose fiction that is short enough to be read within one sitting. While the "short" in short story presupposes length as a barometer, the genre does not have any clearly defined parameters in terms of length. Literary prizes and anthologies are the most common platforms for publishing short stories. These usually limit the length of short stories to anything between 2 500 and 5 000 words, thus establishing a trend which is by no means a universal rule.

The short story is hybrid in its nature, possessing elements of drama, prose and poetry. It is a sum total of all these genres, yet the tightness of the plot and lucidity of the narrative are fundamental features to keep it succinct. This assertion is enunciated by Lloren Addison Foster in his doctoral dissertation titled, "The Politics of Creation: The Short Story in South Africa and the US", submitted at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 2007. In defining the complexity of the short story, Foster opines:

It is the form's capacity to integrate the best of other genres that provides its distinctive "hybrid" nature (Foster, 108:2007).

The short story, in its ideal format, encapsulates elements of various genres while the narrative is simultaneously focused on an immediate central theme. The immediacy of the short story obliges the writer to use fewer words in telling a complex narrative. To master the brevity of the short story, the author has to account for each and every

word used and every action the characters are involved in must move the plot forward. The plot is carried forward by a single dominant theme with limited characters who ought to be utilised optimally. The short story becomes short because of the impeccable application of some of these key elements.

THE EARLY PIONEERS

The pioneers of the written short story in English in South Africa are renowned early twentieth century writers like R.R.R. Dhlomo, Herman Charles Bosman and Peter Abrahams, who largely published their works in newspapers and magazines. According to Professor Mbulelo Mzamane, Dhlomo's stories, appearing in Sjambok as early as 1929, "inaugurated the modern short story tradition among Blacks in South Africa" (Mzamane, 1986: x). However, in this generation of writers, Bosman is perhaps most revered for consistently championing the short story genre. Bosman, previously convicted for murder and sentenced to death before mercifully having his sentence converted into four-and-a-half years' imprisonment, found salvation in his writing. He carved out a new writing career, first of a journalistic kind before becoming a devoted short story writer.

Amongst this pantheon of South African short story writers in English language, it was Abrahams who outlived most of his contemporaries and proved to be one of the genre's most resilient practitioners. His tragic death in 2017, at the advanced age of 97, places Abrahams as a golden thread that cut across several generations of South African writers. Although for the largest part he was exiled in the Caribbean Island of Jamaica, where he had found a home since the 1950s, Abrahams served as the link between different generations of South African writers as well as connecting them to other global icons. He established the first contact between Langston Hughes and *Drum* magazine writers, which resulted in Hughes becoming one of the judges for the *Drum* Short Story prize in 1954.

Abrahams was the first chairman of the inaugural *Drum* Short Story Prize adjudication panel, which consisted of prominent writers Alan Paton and RRR Dhlomo.



The results were published in the April 1953 edition of *Drum*, and the winner was one Can Themba, then a 28-year-old teacher, with his story "Mob Passion". Remarking about the winning story of the prize as quoted in Mike Nichol's book, *A Good Looking Corpse* (1991:159), Abrahams notes:

"I should say that we have in this story notice of unusual literary promise and I can think of nothing more encouraging than that such promise should be rewarded with the *Drum* prize."

This was the inauguration of Themba as a formidable voice in the world of letters. As the winner of an award that was judged by these luminaries, Themba symbolically takes the baton from this pioneering group of short story writers to continue with the journey. In a sense, it can be reasonably argued that the generation of Abrahams, Dhlomo and Paton discovered Themba who, in turn, would become a very influential figure in the South African short story tradition well over fifty years after his passing. Themba belonged to the 1950s *Drum* generation of writers, an era during which the short story flourished, especially between 1951 to 1961, a period Lewis Nkosi refers to as the "Fabulous Decade". Themba mentored the likes of Casey Motsisi, who became an iconic journalist and short story writer in his own right.

Drum magazine, which ran the annual short story competition and had the likes of Themba, Arthur Maimane, Bloke Modisane, Motsisi, Nkosi and Nat Nakasa as some of its most distinguished contributors, became the major catalyst in the development of the genre. These writers were largely influenced by Black America, particularly the Harlem Renaissance which saw the likes of Hughes and James Baldwin becoming some of the most articulate voices of the living conditions of black people in the Diaspora. Motsisi's column, *On the Beat*, was modelled on Hughes' world famous *Mr Simple* articles, which in South Africa were published as a column in *Africa!* magazine, which was founded as part of the *Drum* stable in 1954 and edited by Themba. Hughes later created a very strong bond with African writers, with the likes of Themba, Modisane and Mphahlele getting published in his ambitious project, *An African Treasury* (1960). Furthermore, Hughes became the judge of the *Drum* short story competition while Baldwin judged the short-lived *The Classic* short story competition.

If the early pioneers of the written short story like

Dhlomo and Abrahams established the short story as a formidable genre in South Africa, the Drum generation of Themba, Modisane and Mphahlele, to name but a few, solidified it and entrenched it in the annals of South African literature. These writers were largely resident in Sophiatown, and depicted urban life in the pages of *Drum* magazine. Elsewhere in the country, the group that Mzamane calls the "District Six" generation in Cape Town, which included the likes of Alex la Guma, James Matthews and Richard Rive, contributed significantly to the growth of the short story tradition in the 1950s and 1960s. Matthews has outlived all of these writers, still writing at his advanced age. Conspicuous with their paucity during this period are women writers, whose voices were largely muffled in the public discourse as much as they were in their private lives. Dorothy Driver, in her seminal work, "Drum magazine (1951 – 59) and the "Spatial Configurations of Gender", published in *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature and History in South Africa and Australia* (1996) edited by Kate Darian Smith, Liz Gunner and Sarah Nuttall, argues that a woman writer like Bessie Head thrived "in spite" of and not because of *Drum*:

Despite the name, 'Dolly Drum' was in fact a contrapuntal 'feminine' voice, a voice produced partially or even largely by male journalists in the name of the ideology of domesticity and romantic love. Similarly, the South African short stories *Drum* published in the 1950s under women's signatures, under the names Rita Sefora, Joan Mokwena, and Doris Sello, were in fact not written by women. (Driver, 1996:235-236)

Notwithstanding its skewed gender representatively, the decade of the 1950s, also known as the *Drum* era, remains a significant milestone in the development of the English short story in South Africa. The prominence of short stories during this period is usually attributed to two main factors, that is the politically turbulent period in which there was virtually no time to focus on longer prose, and the fact that there was a readily available publishing platform in the form of *Drum* magazine. Mphahlele, one of the leading literary critics and most prominent short story writers from the period, opines:

It is impossible for a writer who lives in oppression to organise his whole personality into creating a novel. The short story is used as a short-cut to prose meaning and one gets some things off one's chest in quick time. (in Gaylard, 2008: 314)

The formal introduction of apartheid after 1948, the enactment of the Group Areas Act in 1950 and the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 are some of the Draconian legislative interventions employed by the apartheid regime to enforce racial division in South Africa. The exodus of *Drum* writers like Todd Matshikiza, Modisane and Themba, who streamed out of the country as the political situation became more volatile, marked the end of the fabulous decade.

THE ROLE OF JOURNALS AND MAGAZINES

In its literary production, *Drum* was replaced by Nat Nakasa's *The Classic* magazine, whose inaugural issue came out in 1963 and was headlined by Themba's "The Suit", which would remain one of the most resilient short stories by any South African. *Staffrider* magazine was founded in 1978, and it continued with the tradition of creating a platform for short stories until the 1990s. There were many other magazines and journals that emerged in the intervening period, but *Drum* magazine, *The Classic* and *Staffrider*, were some of the prominent publishing outfits and are the most germane references for the purposes of this article.

While we acknowledge the existence of numerous intermittent publications throughout this period, *Staffrider* distinguished itself with its nationwide (and community-based) approach and the dynamism of its contributors. Some of the finest short story writers and critics like Njabulo S. Ndebele, Mtutuzeli Matshoba and Mzamane were regular contributors to *Staffrider*. It would appear that the founders of *Staffrider*, Mike Kirkwood and Mothobi Mutloatse, were conscious of the inherent follies of the preceding publications like *Drum*, and took a deliberate stance to amplify women's voices. They did this by appointing as one of their columnists Miriam Tlali, whose debut novel *Muriel at Metropolitan* (1975) reflected feminist perspectives. However, this was barely adequate, as the contributors to *Staffrider* remained predominantly male. In her 1999 Master's thesis,

"Black Woman, You are on Your Own: Images of Black Women in *Staffrider* Short Stories, 1978 – 1982", Pumla Dineo Gqola argues:

The establishment of a 'Women Writers' Speak' column in November/December 1979 meant that, for the first time in the two years in which the publication had been in circulation, an explicitly female voice was audible. This is not to downplay the importance of Miriam Tlali's column 'Soweto Speaking', a regular feature in the magazine, or the submissions by women to the pages of the magazine thus far. While these are evidence of important and ground-breaking work, they did not explicitly explore the role or position of the woman writer specifically. (Gqola, 1999: 55)

Despite its shortcomings, *Staffrider* became a significant vehicle for the continuation of the short story tradition in South Africa. It can be argued that *Drum* magazine from early 1950s to early 1960s, *The Classic* from the 1960s to the 1970s, and *Staffrider* from the late seventies until the mid-1990s, all became some of the most efficient vehicles that reinforced the written short story in South Africa. However, the dearth of similar publishing platforms for short stories after the dawn of freedom and democracy in South Africa spelled a bleak future for the short story genre. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of *Staffrider* in 1988, a retrospective anthology was published under the title, *Ten Years of Staffrider*. In the preface, editors Oliphant and Kirkwood rightfully observe:

Staffrider was able to become an outlet for young and often inexperienced writers and to feature the work of community-based projects, inscribed as it was with the imperative to resist officially sanctioned culture and its concomitant aims of domination. The material thus provided a seed-bed for the conceptualisation of a democratic perspective on culture and its important relationship to the resurgence of the national democratic movement.

The magazine, unfortunately, started showing signs of chronic ailment in the early 1990s, probably occasioned by the growing pangs of the birth of a new political order.



Although *Staffrider* was initially seen as a vehicle for the advocacy of the Black Consciousness ideology, in the course of the 1980s it was closely linked with the Congress of South African Writers (COSAW), which was, in turn, associated with the African National Congress (ANC) through its many conduits in the Mass Democratic Movement. It may not be too far-fetched to posit that as many of the conduits of the ANC were disbanded with the unbanning of political parties during the transitional period of the early 1990s, COSAW and, ultimately, *Staffrider* suffered the same fate. *Staffrider* released an issue in 1993, after which there was a long silence, followed by the very last issue edited by Chris Van Wyk in 1996, which saw its ultimate demise.

The demise of *Staffrider*, together with the disappearance of many of its contributors (Mtutuzeli Matshoba being one of the most notable), from the literary scene has been used as the basis of criticism against black writers who seemed to be found wanting following the removal of the grand theme of apartheid. If, indeed, the thematic content of the writing is one of the primary contributing factors to the disappearance of some of the writers post-1994, this would give credence to Njabulo S. Ndebele's 1986 call for the "Rediscovery of the Ordinary" as articulated in his seminal essay of the same title. Ndebele was calling for literature that captured the textures of ordinary life, literature that explored deep human emotions and complexities, as opposed to the sensationalist, "spectacular" literature driven by topical issues. "In this case, the ordinary is defined as the opposite of the spectacular. The ordinary is sobering rationality; it is the forcing of attention on necessary detail" (Ndebele, 1991:46).

Ndebele cites a number of examples, particularly from the 1980s generation of writers, whose works were largely published in *Staffrider* and which were fraught with political sloganeering, and totally neglected the nooks and crannies of ordinary life. This argument remains contentious as the majority of black people's lives, especially those who were conscious enough to chronicle it in their poetry, prose and paintings, were highly political. Politics was their objective reality. It stared them in the face to such an extent that when they had to imagine an "ordinary story", that story became political in its very nature.

This, however, does not discount the importance of the form as opposed to the popular modernist approach. In other words, Ndebele may be correct

about his concern over the overt preoccupation of what to write about, and the total neglect of how to write. It might have been prudent for him to consider that literature can reflect the spectacle occasioned by the politics of the people's tumultuous life in its most grotesque form, alongside the mellow, mundane and neglected aspects of everyday life. The "spectacular" and the "ordinary" are not necessarily mutually exclusive concepts, and can therefore coexist. One of the short story writers who balanced the "spectacular" and the "ordinary" with laudable excellence in this generation is Sindiwe Magona, whose short story collection, *Living, Loving and Lying Awake at Night*, was published in 1991.

THE SHORT STORY AND THE EMERGENT DISCOURSE OF TRANSITION

The political agenda driving literary output is a recurring subject in the criticism of South African literature. South African artists, to varying degrees, took to their art to challenge the system, some with resounding success both aesthetically and politically, others with less art and more political sentiment in their creative output. The latter is probably what informs Mandla Langa's scathing criticism of literature written for political expediency:

The dangers presented by creativity that merely reacted to a political system were evident in much of the output of the four decades during the National Party rule. The protest or, as some would maintain, revolutionary poetry, novels, short stories, graphic arts, music and drama, were shot through with motifs that spoke exactly to the very structure they were intent on undermining. (Langa, 2014: viii)

In a clear attempt to revive the short story tradition in post-apartheid South Africa, Oliphant, former editor of the defunct *Staffrider*, put together a collection of short stories under the title, *At the Rendezvous of Victory and Other Stories* (1999). The title, obviously taken from Gordimer's short story by the same title, had a clear objective of reflecting on the momentous occasion of the triumph of the liberation movement over apartheid. In his introduction, Oliphant describes the objective of the anthology as follows:

This anthology of stories attempts to provide a perspective on narrative responses to recent changes in South Africa.

These changes centre on the advent of democracy after centuries of minority domination. Originally conceived around the theme of independence, the anthology developed in scope to take into its purview a variety of themes concerned with social change and emancipation. (Oliphant, 1999:7)

In this anthology, Oliphant features a number of seasoned South African writers including Gordimer, Matthews, Ahmed Essop, Tlali, who appear alongside a new generation of writers such as Sandile Dikeni, Johnny Masilela, Rayda Jacobs and Phil Ndllela, among others. In addition to the stated intent of providing "a perspective of narrative responses to recent changes in South Africa", the choice of Oliphant as the compiler and editor, someone who had been instrumental in the development of the short story as the editor of *Staffrider*, was surely aimed at fostering continuity with the short story tradition in the post-apartheid stage.

The anthology might not have achieved all its intended objectives, but it served as the springboard for the development of the short story beyond 2000. The nexus of the old and the new provided the intergenerational discourse that would place the pedestal to help the younger generation climb on the shoulders of giants and continue with the journey. Although many of the younger generation writers featured in this anthology did not take to the short story with as much commitment as their predecessors did, they remained the producers of knowledge and contributors to the literary landscape. Dikeni became more well-known as a poet, Masilela a journalist, and Ndllela has made a sterling contribution as an academic and literary critic.

Other than anthologies, literary journals and magazines, literary prizes also contribute to the growth of short stories. A number of these emerged with the turn of the century, and most prominent among them is probably the Caine Prize for African Writing founded in 2000. It took six years for the first South African to win the Caine Prize, with Mary Watson's "Jungfrau" announced as the 2006 winner. She was soon followed by one of the most accomplished short story writers, Henrietta Rose-Innes, who won the prestigious prize in 2008. In the same year, Zachariah Rapola, one of the finest but most underrated short story writers in South Africa, won the coveted Noma Award for African Publishing for his short story collection, *Beginnings of a Dream*. The award was

regrettably discontinued the very next year.

In 2013, there was a significant increase in the publication of short story collections. Struggle stalwart and seasoned novelist Achmat Dangor returned to the literary scene with his own collection of short stories, *Strange Pilgrimages* (2013). A plethora of other notable authors, including Makhosazana Xaba, Reneilwe Malatji, Russell Kaschula and Liesl Jobson, published short story collections in the same year. The year 2013 also saw the launch of the first in a series of "Short Sharp Stories" anthologies, a project for which a public call is made under a particular theme and the top 20 shortlisted stories are published. The series has so far produced five anthologies under the editorship of Joanne Hitchens: *Bloody Satisfied* (2013), *Adults Only* (2014), *Incredible Journey* (2015), *Die Laughing* (2016) and *Trade Secrets* (2017). The last issue, *Instant Exposure* (2018), has only been released electronically due to a lack of funds, a perennial factor that accounts for the early demise of numerous initiatives of this kind before.

One of the exceedingly effervescent emerging voices, Masande Ntshanga, won the PEN International New Voices Award for his short story, "Space", which was also shortlisted for the Caine Prize. In 2015, internationally acclaimed novelist and former *Staffrider* editor, Ivan Vladislavić, published *101 Detectives*, alongside several other authors who wrote short stories.

To mark the 20th anniversary of South Africa's democracy in 2014, the Department of Arts and Culture commissioned the publication of a short story anthology representing this period. The project was conducted through a public call for nominations, followed by a selection process presided over by Langa, alongside his esteemed panel of judges that included Ben Williams, Karabo Kgoleng, Fiona Snyckers and Matshoba. The selected stories were published in *Twenty in 20: The Best Short Stories of South Africa's 20 Years of Freedom* (2014), a publication that was largely distributed electronically. On the blurb of the book, Langa writes: "This collection of short stories reflects the diversity that enriches our young democracy." Indeed, the collection features works by a cross-section of writers, including Magona, Diane Awerbuck, Ntshanga, Wamuwi Mbao, Nadia Davids, etc.



In 2016, Lidudumalingani Mqombothi, another young and dynamic South African writer, was announced as winner of the Caine Prize. Over the past four years, the most prolific short story writer has probably been Niq Mhlongo, who, after publishing a few novels, produced two short story collections, *Affluenza* (2016) and *Soweto, Under the Apricot Tree* (2018). Most recently, Mhlongo edited *Joburg Noir* (2020), an anthology of short stories that is not only significant because it explores the life in modern Johannesburg, but also because brings together many of the current generation of writers in a single compilation.

Mohale Mashigo followed her debut novel, *The Yearning* (2016), with a short story collection, *Intruders* (2018), which distinguished itself from many with its fantastical thrust as a piece of speculative writing. In 2019, a new voice in the literary fraternity, Keletso Mopai, who had been publishing short stories in online platforms such as the *Johannesburg Review of Books* (JRB), *Brittle Paper* and *The Kalahari Review*, emerged with a riveting collection of short stories, *If You Keep Digging*. Mopai's contribution is especially significant because she was born in 1992, during the transitional period, thus making her an authoritative voice reflecting the postapartheid sentiment without the baggage of the past.

Fred Khumalo, who is better known as a journalist and novelist, published his first collection of short stories, *Talk of the Town*, in 2019. My own collection, *Red Apple Dreams and Other Stories*, was released in the same year. Most recently, Sifiso Mzobe, author of the multi-award winning debut novel, *Young Blood* (2010), returned from a decade of near literary obscurity with a short story collection, *Searching for Simphiwe* (2020). Nakanjani Sibiya, more well-known as an academic and novelist plying his trade in Zulu language, released *The Reluctant Storyteller* (2020), a poignant collection of stories in English. .

With the benefit of hindsight, the new wave in short story writing started forming in 2011, and 2013 is the year in which it gained momentum and throughout the decade the genre quietly reclaimed its rightful place as a formidable genre in the South African literary landscape. The proliferation of short story collections, as indicated above, is indicative of a renaissance in full swing. Digital publishing platforms such as *Brittle Paper*, *Johannesburg Review of Books* and *The Kalahari Review*, enormously contributed to the growth of

the short story during this period.

The unfolding short story renaissance also translates to literary criticism, including both reviews and scholarly engagement, which increased significantly during this period. The 2013 short story renaissance can be best understood when juxtaposed with the outlook of the literary landscape a few years earlier, when only in 2010 most publishing houses had disclaimers on their websites, declaring that they did not publish unsolicited short story collections. This includes prominent publishing houses like Jacana Media, which published my short story collection *African Delights* after I had bypassed their online disclaimer. Prior to this, Jacana had been consistently publishing an annual anthology related to the Caine Prize workshop.

While this article is limited to reflections on South African short stories, reference to literatures across the world is essential to illustrate trends in short story writing. For what is happening in the global literary landscape is bound to affect South Africa as well. Zimbabwe's NoViolet Bulawayo, winner of the 2011 Caine Prize, made her winning story, "Hitting Budapest", the opening chapter of her debut novel, *We Need New Names*, which was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2013. The watershed moment for the genre was when prominent Canadian short story writer Alice Munro won the Nobel Prize for Literature in October 2013. The most recent short story sensation on the continent is Lesley Nneka Arimah, winner of the 2019 Caine Prize and author of *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky* (2017).

The contours of South African literature illustrate that the growth of the short story genre is often linked with the introduction of incentives in the form of literary prizes and establishment of regular publishing platforms like journals and magazines. In recent times, we have seen how innovatively the short story can be used across the different mediums. This has become more pronounced during the period of the nation-wide lockdown occasioned by the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in South Africa, stretching from March until the regulations were eased in September 2020.

Many literary festivals that were affected by the lockdown were conducted online, with panel discussions, book launches and workshops done via social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. Madoda Ndlakuse, a poet and storyteller from Port Elizabeth, made use of this opportunity to engender wider audiences by performing online storytelling.

One of the prominent platforms that promote the development of short stories is Short Story Day Africa, which thrives in digital publishing. Short Story Day Africa stands out as one of the prime examples of the versatility of short stories, and how they can be adjusted to appeal to different audiences. This is one of the elements that position short stories as a genre for the future, for within them, they are able to accommodate new innovations and entrench themselves into contemporary trends. Fasselt et al capture this form of adaptability of short stories in the following extract:

Contemporary short stories extend to numerous subgenres such as speculative fiction, crime fiction, and erotic fiction, and increasingly examine and challenge conventional sexuality and/or gender-based norms and include characters who identify as LGBTQI. This notable emphasis on the popular, rather than a shift towards a more modernist aesthetic, is visible in most of the selected stories and collections. (Fasselt, 2018:3)

The emergence of the various subgenres, as described in the above extract, make the shorter narrative the most viable literary form. Technological innovations have the ability to create a point of convergence between the oral narratives and the written mode of literature. The rise of electronic publishing platforms has opened up the playing field and contributed immensely to the resurgence of the short story over the past decade.

CONCLUSION

The short story is one of the literary genres that registered positive growth, maybe the most rapid growth throughout the decade, thus we can easily claim the period 2011 – 2020 as the “fabulous” decade for the short story in South Africa.

The burgeoning of new short story collections, anthologies and digital publishing platforms

brought about a new reawakening in the South African literary landscape. This might not have been easy to notice, as it is in the nature of a renaissance not to be immediately recognisable in its wake, instead it sets itself apart when looked at from a distance.

Taking a retrospective view and retracing the South African literary contours since 2000, it is easy to recognise that there has been a gradual recovery in the publication of short stories, particularly from 2011 onwards. This recovery was given further impetus in 2013, as the emerging South African writers established themselves in the world of letters through digital publishing and entering competitions, thus prompting publishers to be more receptive to short stories, resulting in numerous publications in a single year. Consistent with this trend, a number of short story collections and anthologies are currently in the process of getting published and are due for release later in the year.

The proliferation of new titles, alternative publishing platforms and incentives that advance short narratives, evince the burgeoning of a new literary renaissance. The short story is at the forefront of changing the topography of South African literature. It may take long for hermeneutists to coin an appropriate name for this unfolding short story renaissance, but just because it has not been named as yet, does not mean the renaissance is not unfolding. The short story is enjoying its finest hour since the dawn of democracy in South Africa.





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DECOLONIALITY IN THE FICTION OF NGUGI WA THIONG’O



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INTRODUCTION

This article uses the fiction of Ngugi wa Thiong'o to demonstrate decoloniality in his thought and work. In doing that, this article relies on decolonial critical theory as its lens to decipher and demonstrate decolonial insights, concepts and philosophy in the work of Wa Thiong'o. In his own self-examination and expression, Wa Thiong'o took a philosophical interest in human relations in society in the context of politics, culture and economics. Enrique Dussel (1985) and Paulo Freire (1972), as decolonial philosophers of human liberation from oppression and exploitation, human beings and their relations in the world are at the centre of humanist philosophy. Further, Wa Thiong'o's philosophical interests in the spirituality of life and liberation draws his thought closer to decolonial liberation theologians and philosophers that challenged conquest, slavery and colonialism in the world since 1492 (Dussel, 1996). Wa Thiong'o, in his fictional works, delineates the exploitation of the Africans by the Whites and the consequential effect of such exploitation on the lives of the Africans. He vividly identifies three facets of the encounter of the Africans with the European imperialists – slavery, colonialism and neocolonialism. His first three novels – *Weep Not, Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1965) and *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) – deal with the period of slavery and colonialism. They explore the detrimental effects of colonialism and imperialism. On the other hand, *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982) and *Matigari* (1986) are about Wa Thiong'o's bitter criticism of neo-colonialism. In fact, there is also an attack on slavery and colonialism. Wa Thiong'o's latest novel, *Wizard of the Crow* (2006), is his conscious effort to sum up Africa of the 20th century.

ENCOUNTERING COLONIAL CONQUEST

By way of background, Wa Thiong'o, when he came to recreate the history of his people through fiction, selected for his first two novels – *Weep Not, Child* (1964) and *The River Between* (1965) – the events relating to the introduction of western education as well as Christianity. *The River Between* is wa Thiong'o's first attempt at novel writing, but it was published after *Weep Not, Child*. In fact, it contains the period of Kenyan history prior to that of *Weep Not, Child*. To use the genre of fiction and the novel to engage with colonial and imperial

history is a philosopher's choice of expression. Okolo (2007) insists that Wa Thiong'o and Achebe are philosophers who elected to express their philosophy of liberation through fiction and essays.

In *The River Between* (1965), Wa Thiong'o uses a distinction in setting between two mountain ridges as an organising conceit that dramatises the antagonism between two competing native constituencies and their seemingly irreconcilable belief structures. Because the setting (presumably the late 1940s or early 1950s) precedes the emergence of substantive attempts at decolonisation, Wa Thiong'o's novel portrays not so much the conflict between "coloniser" and "colonised", but the internal conflicts and plural ambitions of native people themselves. The novel's opening situates the narrative's broader conflicts within a Kenyan landscape that has yet to experience the effects of British colonialism:

The two ridges lay side by side. One was Kameno, the other was Makuyu. Between them was a valley. It was called the valley of life. Behind Kameno and Makuyu were many more valleys and ridges, lying without any discernible plan. They were like many sleeping lions which never woke. They just slept, the big deep sleep of their Creator. A river flowed through the valley of life ... The river was called Honia, which meant cure, or bring back- life. Honia river never dried: it seemed to possess a strong will to live, scorning droughts and weather changes (wa Thiong'o, 1965:1)

The image of the two mountains captures, symbolically, the political binary that separates the coloniser and the colonised. Albert Memmi (1974) philosophised on the separation of the worlds of the coloniser and the colonised. Enrique Dussel (1985), Samir Amin (1997), Walter Rodney (1972) all described the separate centre and periphery relations between the colonisers of the world and the colonised, Wa Thiong'o is not solitary in deciphering political relations thus, but he is together with other decolonial thinkers. Wa Thiong'o (1965:1) stretches the image thus: "When you stood in the valley, the two ridges ceased to be sleeping lions united by their common source of life. They became antagonists. You could tell this, not by anything tangible but by the way they faced each other, like two rivals ready to come to blows in a life and death struggle for the leadership of this isolated region."



Wa Thiong'o's *The River Between* is mainly concerned with the exploitation of the Africans by the Whites and adverse impact of colonisation on the culture of Kenya. In the very beginning the novelist emerges as a true advocate of the cultural glory of Africa. He describes at length in the novel the impenetrable Kenya in all its beauty. He explains that the Kenyans had been without any fear of intrusion by "ukabi" (outsider). They used to lead a happy, peaceful and united life with their traditions and customs which bound them to their land. The African people believed that their land is their God, Murunga's gift to their first parents-Gikuya and Mumbi. Anibal Quijano (2000:533) describes the clash of civilisations and invasion of the cultural universe of the conquered and the colonised that Empire and the world system does, a description that Wa Thiong'o captivately captures in the foregoing. In the novel Wa Thiong'o captures the history of conquest and its progression in the manner Enrique Dussel (1985) describes the conquest and subjugation of the Americas in 1492, where the conqueror used God and religion as an excuse to racialise and oppress the natives, robbing them of their God given resources.

The breaking down of the old world of the native in Wa Thiong'o's fiction, which Achebe (1958) dramatises in his *Things Fall Apart* is described also by Ramon Grosfoguel (2013) and Enrique Dussel (1985) as the violence of conquest that integrates the native world into the modern colonial world system of capitalism, Christianity and monotheism. The preaching of new ways and values of life through a new religion had a drastically adverse effect on the old beliefs. The collision between the two antagonistic ways of life was, indeed, most catastrophic and tragic. Wa Thiong'o remarkably portrays in *The River Between* the tragic predicament of the Kenyans torn by a lacerating conflict between the loss of cultural heritage and identity in the exploitative colonial context at both the individual and societal levels. Thus "the disinheritance of the Gikuyu religion and tribal culture by White colonialism figures in this novel" (Ravenscroft, 2000:695).

The novelist clearly draws our attention to the exploitation of the Africans in the field of education imparted by the colonisers. In fact, the education imparted to the students at the Siriana missionary school was directed mainly to advance interests of the British Empire. They wanted to convert the Africans to believe in their faith and help them

spread Christianity. They also wanted the students to help them in the administration of the natives. Livingstone recognised Waiyaki to be "a possible Christian leader of the church". Such education began to condemn the native rituals, customs and traditions. Wa Thiong'o critiques this education system and the coloniality of knowledge.

The colonised Black people of Africa were paganised (Dussel 1985) and their gods called the Devil, their religions reduced to Satanism, "those who refuse him are the children of darkness; these, sons and daughters of evil one, will go to Hell. They will burn and burn forever more, world unending" (wa Thiong'o, 1965:29). True to what Edward Said (1983) described as cultural imperialism, which Anibal Quijano (2000) describes as coloniality of knowledge, and Wa Thiong'o himself calls the colonisation of the mind. Joshua, as a converted Christian, began to hate his African culture. He repented all his life for having married circumcised Miriamu. He also did not want his children to have any inclination for their African culture. Joshua began preaching to the people to believe in the Bible and give up their traditions. Thus, by condemning the native tradition in favour of the new faith and by becoming a preacher himself, he was at once the exploited as well as the exploiter. Coloniality can use the colonised to advance its imperial projects. Chege was hurt to see many Africans converted. He was also disappointed as he was unable to do anything to save his culture. He feared that even his son, Waiyaki, might begin to dislike the ways of the ridge and its rituals. We find clearly the impact of missionary education on him. The day before circumcision Waiyaki hesitated to join other boys. At first, he stood as an outsider. He grew uneasy to listen to the songs of circumcision sung by the young Kenyan boys and girls of his age. When he was pushed into the circle dancing around fire, his body moved mechanically. The voice of Whiteman's education made him guilty so he could not put his heart in it. Wa Thiong'o comments thus on the disruptive influence of Christianity on the African life: "Christianity as an organised religion is corrupt and hypocritical, besides acting as an agent of Imperialism. It exercised a highly disruptive influence on African life and was the chief villain in alienating the African from his own culture" (Wa Thiong'o, 1986:31).

The instrumentalisation of religion in conquest and coloniality was, according to Enrique Dussel (1985), the collapse of Christianity to Christendom, a corrupt kingdom of this world. Wa Thiong'o makes circumcision the central point around which he rotates his novel and describes, in a telling manner, the cultural exploitation of the Africans by Whites. Robson comments: "In his narration of the ceremony of circumcision, he draws a number of elements closely together" (Robson, 2003:8). In chapters three and four of *The River Between*, Wa Thiong'o describes at length the importance of circumcision to the people who lived there. He makes it explicitly clear that the act of circumcision is the most central in the Gikuyu way of life:

Circumcision was an important ritual to the tribe. It kept the people together, bound the tribe. It was the core of the social structure and something that gave meaning to man's life, and the custom and spiritual bias of the tribe's cohesion and integration would be no more (Wa Thiong'o, 1965:79).

The insistence on indigenous cultures and practices is what Walter Mignolo (2008) called epistemic disobedience, a decolonial practice and concept of resistance to the Empire and its colonial projects. Indeed, Wa Thiong'o, as a devoted Kenyan wants to emphasise that colonial rule in Kenya destroyed the entire culture and social peace. It not only divided the society but also the inner beings of Africans. As a sensitive artist, *The River Between* is Wa Thiong'o's cry for the loss of African culture and the glory of the rich heritage. We are reminded of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, which sums up the African religion thus:

How can he when he does not even speak our tongue? But he says that our customs are bad; and our own brothers. He came quietly and peacefully with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer be like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart (Achebe, 1958:158).

The people of the ridges, the natives, ceased to talk to each other. The real charm of life has completely disappeared under the impact of White man's religious attitude towards the natives. The natives suffered the coloniality of being (Maldonado-Torres 2007) and became what Frantz Fanon (1967)

called the wretched of the earth, by-products of Empire and the debris of conquest in the world system and its orders.

AGAINST COLONIALITY AFTER POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE

The most, perhaps, vivid description of coloniality after African independence is found in Kwame Nkrumah (1965) in his neocolonialism as the last stage of imperialism. In her essay "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-Colonialism,'" Anne McClintock problematises the term "post-colonial," arguing that it reinscribes the colonialist discourse of linear time and progress and ignores the continuities of imperial power in the post-independence period: "the historical rupture suggested by the preposition 'post' belies both the continuities and discontinuities of power that have shaped the legacies of the formal European and British colonial empires" (McClintock 2000:178). She also argues that one of the problems of the term "post-colonial" is that it signals "the privilege of seeing the world in terms of a singular and a historical abstraction" and suggests that post-colonialism encourages "a panoptic tendency to view the globe within generic abstractions voided of political nuance" (McClintock, 2000:177). What she is warning against, in other words, is the generalisation of the term "post-colonial", which is considered to be applicable to all previously colonised nations despite their different cultural, social and historical specificities. Wa Thiong'o's fourth novel, *Petals of Blood* (1977), demonstrates the validity of McClintock's argument that imperialist practices continue in the post-colonial era and manifest in a variety of forms, particularly in the guise of transnational capitalism in post-independence Kenya. Keeping McClintock's framework in mind, an analysis of "the post-colonial" conditions in Kenya requires an understanding of Kenyan historical contexts which shaped the country's neocolonialism in specific forms and thus required specific solutions.

Here the focus is on Wa Thiong'o's critique of the processes and effects of neocolonialism on the colonised subjects of the Kenyan nation state. The neocolonial nation state that is controlled by an indigenous bourgeoisie not only exploits the oppressed economically but also deprives them of their history.



As Peter Nazareth notes, "colonisers steal not only labour and resources, they also steal history. If a people believe they had no history before the coming of the colonisers, they can be exploited more easily" (Nazareth, 1986:122). Despite the demise of colonialism, Wa Thiong'o illustrates that the neocolonial nation state, far from embodying the new hope of the masses, is a replica of the colonialist master's political system negating the history of its own peoples and perpetuating colonial authority and legacies. *Petals of Blood* tells the story of the transformation of a rural community named Ilmorog and of the four major characters who come from outside and yet play vital roles in changing it: Munira, a school headmaster; Abdulla, a former Mau Mau fighter, then barkeeper, and now a seller of oranges and sheepskins on the street; Karega, a former teacher and now a trade unionist; and Wanja, a prostitute and a barmaid at Abdulla's old bar. All of them have unresolved pasts with which they have to come to terms in the new era. Aligning with the genre of the detective novel, *Petals of Blood* revolves around the mysterious murder of Mzigo, Chui and Kimeria, the most well-known businessmen in the community. Like A Grain of Wheat, the novel is narrated through different points of view by the four main characters and employs the flashback as one of its main techniques to give an overview of Kenyan histories from the pre-colonial to colonial and to "post-colonial" eras. The temporal focus of the novel is post-independence Kenya in the 1970s, and, through his characters, Wa Thiong'o explores how the fruits of Uhuru (freedom) have been unequally eaten, how the ideals of the national liberation are betrayed by the new ruling classes who align themselves with the exploitative ideologies of a transnational neocolonial bourgeoisie, and how those who actually fight for Uhuru are unrecognised in Kenyan history. *Petals of Blood* can be said to be Wa Thiong'o's attempt to expose the exploitative features of neocolonial capitalism and to speak as a representative voice of the marginalised. In the novel, the villagers of Ilmorog form a delegation and set out on a journey to see Kimeria, their MP in the capital Nairobi to ask for a solution for their drought-stricken community. The drought has a significant meaning in that while it suggests the geographical fragility of the area, it also evidently symbolises the hardships of the peasants in neocolonial Kenya who suffer from the lack of practical connection between the politicians and the people. The departure of the British colonisers does not mean the end of colonial power. On the contrary, the educated

elites and middle-class people who take over the political and economic controls from the colonisers reconstitute the colonial regime and exercise power over their own people. Merely seeking to create connections with multinational businesses for their own benefits, they do not, in fact, practically establish economic and political plans that would transform the country after independence. As Fanon puts it:

The national bourgeoisie of underdeveloped countries is not engaged in production, nor in invention, nor building, nor labor; is it completely canalised into activities of the intermediary type. Its innermost vocation seems to be to keep in the running and to be part of the racket. The psychology of the national bourgeoisie is that of the businessman, not that of a captain of industry (Fanon, 1963:149-150).

In imitating the role of the Western bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie in the post-colonial countries functions as "the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the mask of neocolonialism" (Fanon, 1963: 152). Instead of being the voice of the nation, as they once were during the decolonisation period, the elite betray the ideals of the nationalist liberation struggle and the hope of the people by fully embracing imperialist capitalism. The MP in the novel, for example, aligns himself with transnational companies in the tourism business. Given capital from foreign investors, he buys the land from the peasants, transforming Ilmorog into a tourist centre where tourists from outside the country outside come for young prostitutes. He has no mind to modernise agriculture but concerns himself with only the development of business.

As Fanon says, "the landed bourgeoisie refuses to take the slightest risk and remains opposed to any venture and to any hazard. It has no intention of building upon the sand; it demands solid investment and quick returns" (Fanon, 1963:155). *Petals of Blood* is a demonstration and, at the same time, a critique of the processes and impact of neocolonialism on the marginalised peasants and the workers who, for Wa Thiong'o, are the principal actors in the anti-colonial struggle. These two lower classes are on the verge of disappearing in contemporary Kenyan history.

The interventions of imperialist powers manifest themselves in the forms of transnational corporations and international development organisations, which are, of course, sanctioned by the national elite and the bourgeoisie. These organisations give loans to the peasants and encourage them to do various kinds of big-scale farming with machines, imported fertilisers and paid labour as well as persuading the workers to sell their plots and invest in commercial businesses instead. Unable to produce agricultural products at the expected level, the peasants accumulate debt, and their land is thus confiscated by the bank. This is the second robbery of the land after it was once stolen from them by the colonialists during the colonial rule. The peasants are disillusioned with independence which does not secure their land against foreign intruders. The advent of imperialist economic planning inevitably leads to the restructuring of the mode of production, and fundamentally transforms human and social relations in post-colonial societies. An epitome of a new Kenya affected by capitalism, Ilmorog has gone through just such a transformation.

This is perhaps best captured in the consumption of Theng'eta in different historical periods. The changes, symbolised by Theng'eta production, show that Ilmorog, once a drought-stricken community, now fully embraces the ideology of capitalism and transforms itself into national economy controlled by international owners. The once-communal drink made for ritualistic purposes is turned into a commodity produced to make profits in an international market. Mysticism becomes mass marketing. This is a good illustration of Marx's criticism of exploitative capitalism that "turns use value (Theng'eta made with care by people for their own use in important community ceremonies) into exchange value (Theng'eta commercially produced simply as a commodity to be sold for the greatest possible profit)" (Wa Thiong'o, 1999:83). The profits from the drink never return to local people like Abdulla, but go to black businessmen who share them with foreign investors. Looking at it from a Fanonist perspective, Mzigo, Chui and Kameria – the representatives of businessmen – do not produce anything but borrow capital from foreigners and buy the Theng'eta business, a move initiated by Abdulla. In this sense, they act merely as the intermediaries who seek to construct Ilmorog (Kenya) in the image of the metropolitan mother country. Post-colonial modernity materialised in the construction of the Theng'eta factory, the New Ilmorog shopping

centre, and the New Ilmorog tourist village – at the expense of the land of poor peasants and the working-class people – engenders a new social organisation, altering human relations and consciousness.

Dispossession and displacement are the first weapons of Empire and coloniality on a world scale. The invasion of capitalism into Ilmorog has also affected the main characters. After his shop is bought off by Mzigo, Abdulla finds himself selling sheepskin and oranges on the street for tourists, whereas Wanja now runs a brothel targeting high-class businessmen. Neocolonialism not only manifests itself in terms of economic oppression, but it also has psychological effects on the colonised subjects. The competitive and exploitative nature of capitalism invites them to think like business people, who are only concerned about themselves. The invasion of capitalism into Ilmorog has also affected the main characters.

Coloniality of power that is in capitalism (Quijano, 2000) morphs up and produces coloniality of being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) and renders the world of the conquered desperate and beastly. Wanja's worldview - that "you either preyed or you remained a victim" (wa Thiong'o, 1977: 294) - is a manifestation of how the subjectivity of the colonised is deformed by the exploitative ideology of capitalism. As a product/subject of the capitalist epoch, Wanja defines things along the axis of exchange value where human beings are commodified and deprived of their essence and so she turns women into sex objects for profits.

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By creating a brothel, Wanja falls into the trap of the vicious circle of capitalism which turns her into an exploiter herself. In this sense, she is both a capitalist victim and a predator. Wa Thiong'o points out that capitalist ideology is sustained and perpetuated by a variety of social organisations. In his famous essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Louis Althusser notes that under capitalism, the state creates two kinds of apparatuses to maintain its domination, Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). While the first one is maintained by overtly coercive institutions such as the army and the police, the latter is enforced by religious, educational, political and cultural institutions such as the church, the school, the political party, the press and by cultural products such as literature and history (Althusser, 1971:143). Educational and political institutions in the novel illustrate how dominant practices and values of capitalism are reproduced. Kareja is the character who has doubts about formal education as a tool to bring about a people's liberation. In the words of the human rights lawyer in the novel, formal education does nothing more than "obscure racism and other forms of oppression. It was meant to make us accept our inferiority so as to accept their superiority and their rule over us" (Wa Thiong'o, 1977:165). Under the rule of headmaster Cambridge Fraudsham, the colonial discourse of progress and order is reinforced in the classroom where the students do not study their own history but rather the history of the Celts, for example. His teaching is colonialist in perspective in that it reinscribes the colonial rhetoric of the master-and-slave relationship: "In any civilised society, there were those who were to formulate orders and others to obey: there had to be leaders and the led" (Wa Thiong'o, 1977:170).

In *Petals of Blood*, Wa Thiong'o not only focuses on Ideological State Apparatuses as seen in the educational institutions, but also on Repressive State Apparatuses in form of the police. Suspected of being involved with the murder of the three businessmen, Munira, Abdulla, Wanja and Karega are put into jail. In this carceral environment, we see the perpetuation of the capitalist ideology by Inspector Godfrey, who helps maintain social stability and order to protect all kinds of industries and foreign investment. In *Petals of Blood*, Wa Thiong'o not only illustrates for us the plight of the peasants and working-class people in its material aspects, but he also demonstrates how these people are marginalised in Kenyan historiography.

Since history is a discourse where language can be a tool of domination and a means of constructing identity, the question of who writes it, who the subject of history is, and how it is written becomes an important issue. Wa Thiong'o's concern is that the sacrifices made by the masses in the war of liberation have been erased from national memory. The groups of people who are given special attention in the novel are peasants and working-class people who, for Wa Thiong'o, are national heroes of Kenya. Despite being agents of historical change, they are not given a place in national history which, like the national economy, is controlled by a neocolonial state. What national development has caused for the masses is a sense of isolation and alienation. Their lives have been neglected by the government since they have no control or power. A cry for historical existence is uttered, for example, by Munira. Wa Thiong'o's confrontation with the neocolonial world is at once an engagement with coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of being, even as Nkrumah himself and Wa Thiong'o do not use the terminology of decoloniality.

CONFRONTING COLONIALITY AS THE DEVIL

Wa Thiong'o's Devil on the Cross (1982) is more remarkable in his life as it was written in Gikuyu. Its original title was in Gikuyu as Caitaani Hultharaba Ini. It first appeared in 1980 and later in English in 1982. When he was in prison, he wanted to express his emotions regarding the neo-colonial exploitation of ordinary Kenyan people. Wa Thiong'o, as a sensitive writer, is worried about corruption that prevails in the Kenyan society. He believes that capitalism is a systematic robbery of peasants and workers. It is a robbery protected and sanctified by large courts, parliament, religion, armed forces, police and educational institutions. The novel opens at a crush in a realistic society. There is a journey in a taxi from Nairobi to Ilmorog; during the journey, the driver and five passengers discuss social issues, which are the most central to the novel.

They are going to attend the gathering in Ilmorog. The scene in the minibus simply melts into the voice of the meetings of the masters of ceremonies:

And now, before I sit down, I shall call upon the leaders of foreign delegation from the international organisation thieves and robbers whose headquarters are in New York, U.S.A. to talk to you. I think you all know that we have already applied to become full members of IOTR. Their visit to this delegation thus, the gifts and the crown they have brought marks the beginning of even more fruitful period of co-operation (Wa Thiong'o, 1988:87).

The seven representatives are the neocolonial powers indulging in the most heinous corrupt practices and exploitation. Each one wears shirts made of paper money of their respective homelands and reveals his grabbing of the Kenyan economy. They take away the natural resources of Kenyans and also indulge in the exploitation of the workers and peasants. Gitutu is a big-bellied person who fattens on land. He proudly relates how he has taken over vast estates from the White settlers, subdivided into plots and sold them at high prices to the citizens. He accepts without any hesitation for "the land wasn't mine and the money with which I had paid for wasn't mine, and I hadn't added anything to the land where did I get the 2, 20,000 shilling? From the pockets of the people. Yes, because the land really belonged to people and the money with which I bought it came from the people" (Wa Thiong'o, 1988:106). Gitutu celebrates coloniality and its capitalist modernity that punishes the poor. *Devil on the Cross* is a dramatisation of coloniality, and it impacts in the Global South. As a result, workers and peasants gather and seek to overthrow the system:

We, who are gathered here now, belong to one clan: the clan of workers – I think all of us saw the incredible spectacle of those who have bellies that never bear children come to scorn us. Those bellies are not swollen by disease. They have been fattened by the fruit of our sweat and blood. Those bellies are barren and their owners are barren. What about us the workers? ... Today here, we refuse to go on being the pot that cooks but never tastes the food (Wa Thiong'o, 1988:208).

Here, the novelist argues that the cook, in spite of his tasty food, is deprived of eating it as he is not allowed to eat the pudding by the master of the house. Similarly, the peasants and the workers in Kenyan society toil and produce resources they never enjoy. Neocolonial Africans exploit the poor and the indigent.

Most readings of *Devil on the Cross* have adopted a Marxist posture of the novel where workers and the peasants seek to dethrone the exploitative ruling class to establish utopian communism and have accused Wa Thiong'o of yearning for the idyllic pre-colonial era where even "if a bean fell from the sky" the people would "split it" among themselves and "share" it in the true spirit of African village democracy. While other readings have placed *The Devil on the Cross* in the realm of post-colonial literature and thought. The exploitation of women and the poor by the rich "robbers and thieves" does in imagery and grammar compare to that of post-colonial theorists such as Achille Mbembe, the gist of *Devil on the Cross* refuses the confines of post-colonial thinking in that it insists in the presence of the "Devil" of coloniality in post-independence African contexts. The emphatic presence of the resurrected "Devil" and his works forbid imagination of the "post" that post-colonial theory envisages. The decolonial reading of *Devil on the Cross* critiques it as an act of epistemic disobedience couched from the locus of enunciation of "colonial difference" by a writer whose work is enmeshed in the political struggles of the peasants and the workers in the "zone of none-being" that is represented in post-independence African locale.

Long after juridical colonialism has been de-stooled, political and social conditions of coloniality continue in Ngugi's fictive universe as they do in the lived experiences of Africa to squeeze life out of the poor and to squeeze the poor out of life.

Okolo (2013:18), while observing that "Marx has no defined theory on literature" states that according to the Marxist literature of Wa Thiong'o:

Literature then should function as a reflection of the economic arrangements in society and the nature of relationships they foster. Its purpose is to analyse society in its own terms, to present a fictional world that is a lifelike representation of the real world. Writers should approach their task as a social act that entails evaluating the mode of production in society, the nature of the relationship between the various classes, and how to bring about a revolutionary end to the oppression of one class by another (Okolo, 2013:18).



From what Okolo says and what Marx and Engels (1968:51) say that “the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of the ruling class” the Marxist way of reading literature sees the trouble in the world as the trouble of one class of rich capitalists exploiting poor workers (and peasants.) There is no doubting throughout *Devil on the Cross* that Ngugi himself espouses Marxism and envisions a form of communist future for his struggling workers and peasants whose catechism of struggle says:

I believe that we workers are one clan

I believe that in the organisation of workers lies our strength

I believe that imperialism and its local representatives are the enemies of the progress of the workers and the peasants

And of the whole nation...

(*Devil on the Cross*, 1982:210)

This “workers anthem” rhymes in sound and in meaning with the international Marxist slogan of “workers of the world unite”.

There is more to Wa Thiong’o’s revolutionary fiction than there is to Marxism and its limits when decolonial reading of Wa Thiong’o is used. There is doubt that the worker that Karl Marx talks of is the same worker that Ngugi writes about, let alone the peasant. In short, a European worker and peasant and African colonial and post-independence peasant and worker might share the same name but are not the same subjects to the same power that allegedly oppresses them. The Orwellian aphorism of “some workers” being “more equal than others” might be applicable here.

Ramon Grosfoguel debunks Marxism as located inside Empire and as not fundamentally antagonistic to imperialism and coloniarity. Although Marxism sings the anthem of the proletariat that must dethrone the oppressive class of capitalists, it is not removed or insulated from the pulls and pushes of epistemic racism and the ego-politics of conquest:

Marx situates his geopolitics of knowledge in relation to social classes. Marx thinks from the historic-social situation of the European proletariat, and it is on the basis of

this perspective that he proposes a global/universal design as the solution to the problems of all humanity: communism. What Marx maintains in common with the Western Bourgeois philosophical tradition is that his universalism, despite having emerged from a particular location – in this case the proletariat – does not problematise the fact that his subject is European, masculine, heterosexual, white, Judeo-Christian etc. Marx’s proletariat is a conflictive subject internal to Europe, which does not allow him to think outside the Eurocentric limits of Western thought (Grosfoguel, 2012:91).

The Marxist reading of Wa Thiong’o is limited by its locus of enunciation, which is North and its failure to read what Walter Mignolo (1999) calls “colonial difference”, which locates the African subject in the periphery and ‘imperial difference’ that positions the Western subject at the centre. The experience of colonialism, coloniarity and racism that Wa Thiong’o’s workers and peasants are confronting is not exactly uniform with that of Marx’s workers, who were not exactly at the receiving end of the stick of Empire in the context of coloniarity and its racist expression. By this failure to read and be alive to the “colonial difference” of African workers and peasants, in this blindness, which emanates from its “imperial difference”, Marxism, from a decolonial vantage point, collapses to another imperial technology of dominating the global South and enveloping it as an appendage of the titanic ego-politics of Empire.

INDIGNATION AT THE BETRAYED STRUGGLE

One of the major themes in Wa Thiong’o’s *Matigari* (1986) is the deceptiveness of any notion of an epistemological rupture between colonial and post-colonial society. The confrontational tone of *Devil on the Cross* is retained, and *Matigari* posits a vision of utopia, which must be obtained through armed struggle. While Wa Thiong’o, also in *Matigari*, is reversing the colonial binarism in order to combat the hegemonic interpellations of the neo-colonial regime, there is a paradigmatic shift in *Matigari* as the novel transcends the thought of *The River Between* in its Marxist, materialist discourse of *Devil on the Cross* (1982).

By including magic and supernatural elements, Matigari propagates an utopia which is based on what one could call an "ethical universal", in Wa Thiong'o's case premised on the ethical principles of Gikuyuism Christianity and Marxism. This non-materialist discourse with its magical aspects involves, as Brink states in another context, an acknowledgement of a more holistic way of approaching the world, an awareness of more things in heaven and earth than have been dreamt of in our philosophy, a free interaction between the living and the dead (Brink, 1998:25). Wa Thiong'o's extension of his ideological base is premised on a profound disillusionment with the concrete socio-economic, cultural and political realities in the 1970s and the 1980s from which Matigari is generated. It is my contention that Matigari addresses the urgency of the polarised situation of post-colonial Kenya, not only by transgressing his former, materialist discourse but by having only one story to tell and thereby distancing his narrative from the multiple stories of post-modern fiction. Wa Thiong'o discusses the relationship between Matigari's role as a prophet and the decentred, fragmentary voice of post-modern literature. In *Penpoints* Wa Thiong'o claims that art has more questions than it has answers. Art starts with a position of not knowing and seeks to know, hence its exploratory nature (Wa Thiong'o, 1998:15).

Decoloniality is the philosophy of those thinkers who have been outgrowing colonial ideologies and dominating Eurocentric doctrines. In fact, art has hardly any answers. Wa Thiong'o even goes on to illustrate his point by using *Matigari* as an example, who was going about asking questions related to the truth and justice of what was going on in the country. Actually, *Matigari* was only asking one question: where could a person wearing the belt of peace find truth and justice in a post-colonial society? Wa Thiong'o's emphasis on art's and literature's function may in some way seem to contradict wa Thiong'o's own development from *A Grain of Wheat* to *Devil on the Cross* (1982) and *Matigari*. In the first part of *Matigari*, there is a sense that this Socratic, exploratory mood is being introduced where *Matigari*'s quest is governed by two questions "where is truth and justice to be found" and "Had anything really changed between then and now?" (Wa Thiong'o, 1998:9). These questions are being tested as *Matigari* explores the ideological cartography of the country after independence. *Matigari* confirms the impression from *Devil on the Cross*

(1982) that the expected discontinuity between the colonial and post-colonial times is illusory. In fact, any idea about a new land as a result of the liberation struggle is being queried and eventually pulverised as a result of *Matigari*'s numerous, depressing experiences after his return from the forest. Whereas Wa Thiong'o's earlier fiction has been focusing on objectifying the reality of grim post-colonialism with an underlying aspiration for revolution, he seems in *Matigari* – even though the idea of revolution is by no means forgotten – to realise the historical limitations of Marxism and its resultant lack of elasticity. *Matigari*'s response to the repression and exploitation of the present regime represents, in one way, a paradigmatic shift in Wa Thiong'o's development as an author. As a prophet, *Matigari* not only passes judgment on the present state of affairs but also projects a vision of a New Jerusalem. By straying away from a strict materialist discourse, Wa Thiong'o lifts the novel beyond a mere reiteration of Marxist jargon by widening the scope of combat strategies, thus challenging in multiple ways the present order and the inevitability of the post-colonial situation. By transcending in this way the fixity of the post-colonial situation, the response to post-colonial imposition is more complex than Brenda Cooper's somewhat condescending remarks about "the biblical tone of tilling and reaping and the exaction of godly vengeance" attest to (Cooper, 1992:177).

The dual and enigmatic nature of *Matigari* (moving beyond time and space and still having a material reality) does not, however, detract from the overall focus on the ethical and political realities of the novel. In a sense, *Matigari* functions as the beautiful one who comes back from the bush and queries the healthiness of the post-colonial situation, captured in the heading of the second part of the novel: "Seeker of Truth and Justice." As a prophet who tries to reinvigorate the spirit from the days of Mau Mau, Matigari represents these ideals of resistance against oppression. Embodying the double-edged role of the prophet Old Testament style, Matigari both projects the truth to the people and passes judgement on the present state of affairs. But Matigari seeks beyond the limits of a traditional prophetic role by claiming a Christ-like stature. This can be attributed to the various specific New Testament allusions coupled directly to *Matigari*. Religion and spirituality, typically of the philosophy of liberation and liberation theology, permeates *Matigari* and represent liberation as a human and spiritual mission par excellence.



"I have also drawn from the Bible in the sense that the Bible was for a long time the only literature available to Kenyan people that has been available to them in their national languages" (Wa Thiong'o 1978:10). In true epistemic disobedience, (Mignolo, 2008) Wa Thiong'o usurps and appropriates the colonial canon and archive for liberation.

CONCLUSION

This article has explored the selected fiction of Wa Thiong'o and has used the same to decipher the radical decolonial philosophy that he exudes. Fiction is to Wa Thiong'o just a genre and a channel to express his decolonial philosophy. As the article has shown, Wa Thiong'o's philosophy has been growing and expanding from communalist, Marxist, nationalist and post-colonialist categories to decoloniality as a philosophy of liberation.



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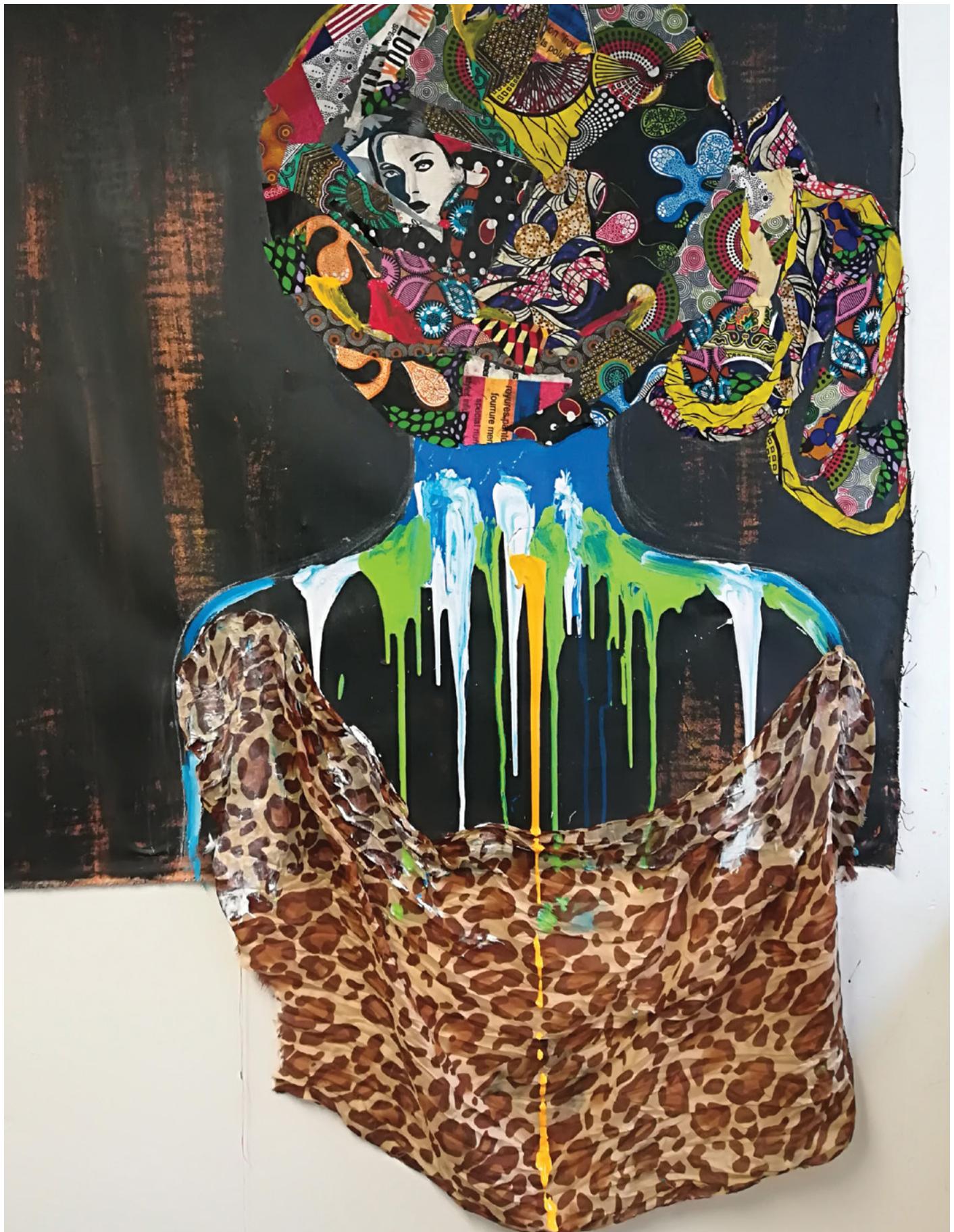
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Celebration of women in Chepape's work is nothing next to saving them nor speaking for them. Raised in a matriarchal community, he feels an urge to work with or through them as a guide while continuing to tell the untold stories of phenomenal women whom history often tends to forget.



Photo: Victor Dlamini

WAYFARERS' HYMNS

An extract from an upcoming novel by Zakes Mda

1. THE DEATH OF FAMOLE THE BIRTH OF BOY-CHILD

She was the one I sang my hymns to, Moliehi, child of my mother. Though she was not there to hear them with her own ears, they told her when they returned from the mines of Welkom, Rustenburg and Johannesburg that hey, Moliehi, your name is famous among travellers and their lovers. Your name and your beauty. Drunken men and women perform to your name at famo parties. They dance the focho dance to your poppy-seed beauty. They make love to it. The accordion goes maniacal when the kheleke – the eloquent one, the one who can compose verse at the bat of an eyelid – describes you against the background of the valleys and the rivers and the fountains and the hills and the deep dongas that cut ruthlessly through the land, leaving it wounded and bleeding.

She only smiled shyly when she heard these stories and carried on with her life as if the fame meant nothing to her. As if it was about someone else. As if she was just an ordinary village girl whose brother was not a revered kheleke.

That is what a sister means to any boy-child who is a singer of hymns. Lifela tsa litsamaea-naha; lifela tsa liparola-thota. The hymns of those who traverse the land; those who roam the valleys. Woe unto a kheleke who has no sister, for the best he can do is sing about his paternal aunt, his rakhali, unless there is another formidable woman in his life. Provided it is not his wife. No self-respecting kheleke sings the praises of his wife in public, lest he invite vultures to his homestead while he rambles the land to the rhythm of the accordion and drums. But a sister, yes.



A great hymn begins with the kheleke introducing himself to the world, repeating his name and his father's, against his father's if his father was a reprobate as men tend to be, and praising the virtues of his clan, his village and his chief. The lie of the land and its overwhelming beauty is never left out, even when the hymn is a lamentation. Even when the land is barren. There is beauty in starkness. And then the sister. A kheleke dwells on his sister and her unsurpassed qualities of womanhood. Especially if she does not stand any rubbish from any man. Like Moliehi. I, boy-child, often add in mock lamentation, Oh, Moliehi, lioness of the Bataung clan, the dark one from my mother's womb, Mmantšo, unlike most of her clan who are descendants of Barwa and are therefore yellow-coloured, how will I ever get cattle through you when you're so full of shit?

She was the one whose beauty I sang about. Moliehi, khaitseli ea motho. And then she was lying there with a gaping wound on her head.

They could have killed her, said the male officer. And then he added after a pause, If they wanted to.

They obviously wanted you to see her like this, said the female officer. In pain. Not dead, but almost. Perhaps they wanted her to die in your arms so that you feel the pain more acutely.

Twisting the knife in my heart while her wound was pulsating as if she was breathing through it. If there was the slightest breath, whether through the nostrils, the mouth or the gaping wound, there was hope of life.

They had no name. The officers obviously knew who they were. The officers knew their methods too. They killed when they wanted to. Or they just gave you a few whacks with a panga and left you at death's door so that your kin could learn a lesson. Stop your shit once and for all, that's what they were saying, or the subject of your hymns – the object of your love, khaitseli ea motho, she whose name you repeated over and over, invoking protective female spirits as you rambled over hills and hillocks even from the days the concertina was your instrument instead of the accordion – will die for real next time.

We'll do our best, said the doctor.

Reassurance was proffered by Toloki, the Professional Mourner, the votary I first met during the days of the concertina.

Be joyful, boy-child, he said, or at least be relieved. I do not mourn the living. Only the dead.

The concertina keened across the gorges and was echoed by boulders on the hills and cliffs on the mountains. Even the rock rabbits stirred, and women gathering firewood in the bush stopped their gossip and paid attention to the song undulating from the bellows. They must have muttered, there he goes, the boy-child whose body will end up being food for the vultures, Moliehi's brother, there he goes, giving himself to the land.

Usually giving myself to the land meant rambling, without any specific destination, heading where the wind blew me, until the smell of fermented sorghum stopped me in my tracks and led me to a place of abandon where buxom women performed focho, the dance that young South Africans have appropriated and call vosho. This time it is different. The road has a destination. It leads to Matelile Ha Sekhaupane. To pay my last respects to Famole, the greatest singer of hymns that ever lived.

Opinions will differ, of course, as they differ on everything else in life, but I have long worshipped at the altar of Famole. He was the greatest both in making the accordion moan with pleasure as his fingers tickled it and in the manner that he selected his words so that they went straight to your heart. Famole, in my opinion, was more talented than all hymn singers, including his own mentor, Mantša Mohale. But I am only allowed to whisper this out of earshot of some people in our villages of Matelile, Likhoele and Thabana Morena, which are pulsating with rival musicians, or even in our whole district of Mafeteng that is populated by followers who take such matters personally. Giving such praise to a singer of hymns can be a death sentence if the listeners are supporters of a different musician. I still want to live.



They say Famole prophesied his own death. The last CD he released contained a lamentation titled Lebitla le Nkemetse – the grave is waiting for me – that followers (they prefer to be called followers – balateli – rather than fans) played over and over again because it spoke so directly of his final journey. After a searing accordion and drums that throb with the heartbeat, his voice – in a phefa tone, as Basotho would say when they describe the clarity and mellifluousness of a voice – creeps in and repeats that the grave awaits him, awaits him, awaits him. Jo nna oeee! He proceeds to sing that he knows for sure that the grave is waiting for him. Then he gets to the hymn part of the song where he recites poetry in that modulated space that exists between talking and singing. The sing-song voice of an accomplished kheleke backed by a demented accordion. He tells us that everyone is born already with the number of his grave. But no one knows his or her number except Father God.



He tells his followers they should not be angry or sad, for they are going to meet him in heaven. His final wish is that his old-time mentor, Mantša Mohale, should be the speaker who passes condolences at his funeral.

Jo nna oeee, these songs talk! Maybe that's why their poetry is called lifela – hymns. Nothing to do with church hymns, though. These are secular hymns that suppliants dance to. Most of the hymns, even from their origins, never had anything to do with religion. Famole's swansong of course had a touch of religion because it was about his impending death.

And people spoke at that funeral, each trying to outdo the one who spoke before. Basotho are a speaking people; they value the music that words strung together with care and love can produce and are competitive in the originality of their metaphors. People spoke, some calling him by his birth name, Teboho Lesia, to show that they knew him long before he was Famole, when he was still a herdboy looking after his father's cattle, when his mother was an ardent believer of the Anglican Church, and how that instilled the love of Christianity in him. And, of course, his apprenticeship to the mentor of many musicians, Mantša Mohale.

The mentor was really the person I was waiting to hear as I stood at the margins of the funeral crowd, my concertina hidden under my donkey blanket, so named because of its grey colour. I observed people in different coloured blankets. People were obviously not afraid to wear their colours because of the strong presence of the police and the military. The police from the nearby Ha Seeiso Police Station had been reinforced by those from the district headquarters of Mafeteng, and by a few officers from the Lesotho Defence Force. The pretext was that law enforcement was here because of the heavy presence of government officials and political leaders. To look after their safety. But everyone knew that the main reason was to quell any fight that might arise from rival groups. A cynic might say even to take sides, as people have always said politicians and their minions are not neutral in this war of the musicians.

We wear our blankets even in the hottest of summers, hence most of the people here were in their colourful blankets, ranging from the thick qibi blanket, otherwise known as serope sa motsoetse – a nursing mother's thigh – because of its warmth, to the ornate seana-marena, lefitori and letlama. All these are just elegant blankets to the rest of the Basotho nation, but here in Matelile and in Thabana Morena, the homes of famo musicians, and perhaps in the district of Mafeteng, these blankets, and especially their colours, represent feuding factions.

At the margins of the crowd, close to where I was standing, I spotted a strange-looking couple. Neither was wearing blankets of any kind, which made them stand out. But it was what the man was wearing that made him even more conspicuous. A black cape and a black top hat. The pants and shoes were also black. He was quite short and broad-shouldered, with a yellow-coloured face and sorrowful eyes that were glassy from unshed tears. Perhaps one of Famole's followers from the Land of Gold, people nearby speculated. Perhaps himself a musician. You know how musicians like to call attention to themselves by dressing and behaving differently from the rest of humanity. He could not be from here. The woman too looked strange, but in a normal way. She was tall, dwarfing the man, and carried herself with so much dignity you would think she was the reincarnation of Queen 'Mamohato, the queen-mother who passed on a year before. Except for the fact that the queen-mother was of a much shorter stature than this long-limbed beauty and would certainly be wearing a blanket like all her subjects.

I was staring at this strange couple when Mantša finally took the podium and spoke the words that later became his popular recording called Lerumo la Nthlaba – the spear has stabbed me.

Jo nna!! Jonana oeee! A spear has stabbed me, he wailed to the sound of the accordion and drums. The death of Famole has touched me so painfully. Where do you go when you feel the pain? The child of Lesia has left us. Then Mantša wept like a woman. No, not just wept, he wailed like a widow after being informed of the death of her husband. Then he spoke the hymn part of the song, the sing-song poetry, repeating that the spear had stabbed him in the heart, and consoling the children of Lesia and all Famole's followers. He went on to appeal to the chief of the area, Morena Selomo, to look after Famole's children, so that their life was as good as when Famole was still alive. He ended his hymn by warning Famole's wife not to listen to people's gossip but to focus on raising Famole's children.

It was as if he knew that gossip would begin even before people left the funeral that day. When I, boy-child, was in the queue to wash my hands in the water mixed with aloe, part of funeral etiquette, the people behind me could not stop jabbering about which funeral orator was good, which one lied, how did the Nurse know how Famole died since he was not in that car accident, or if it was true at all that Famole died in a car accident and was not killed by rival gangsters.



This one about the Nurse was nit-picking really. We all know that these days the Nurse at a funeral can be any orator who can share the details of how the deceased died, not necessarily someone who was personally there as a nurse – mooki – when the deceased was sick, as it originally used to be.

We of the margins were served samp in a big basin, I suspect someone's bathtub though no one would ever confess to that, or it was just my ungenerous thought, and a whole mountain of meat in yet another giant basin. We dug in with our own hands, while a man with an accordion played what passed for a church hymn. I noticed that the strange couple was sitting on the grass, a few feet away, and was not partaking of the food. Perhaps they felt they deserved to be in the tent where important people ate from plates and even had green salads, chakalaka and beetroot. Perhaps where they came from they were not people of the margins like us.

The gossip continued about Famole's death. He didn't die like a warrior in war, a man said. Anybody can die in a car accident. Nothing special about it. It seemed the gossips despised Famole for dying in a mere car accident instead of being mowed down by the bullets of rival musicians.

I could not hold myself any more. You, I yelled, who are you to hate a man because he died a peaceful death?

A car accident is not peaceful, said one of them, with a what-business-is-it-of-yours sneer in both his voice and on his face.

You despise him because he did not die in a gunfight. You heard from funeral orators that he was a gentle soul, not involved in the war of the musicians.

The gossip broke into a mocking laughter. You pretend that Famole was holy, he said. Yet he was one of the leaders of MaRussia gangs in Soweto. Ask anyone from Senaoane, Phiri and Mapetla. They will tell you he was a gang leader.

When the funeral scones and the gemmer, or ginger beer, were brought, the gossip became even more animated, crunching the hard scones with the noise of an industrial grinder. I glanced at the strange couple. Now they too were eating the hard scones. They were dunking them in the gemmer first, hoping to soften them. You don't mess with funeral scones.

You can't tell lies about a man in his own homestead at his own funeral, I said in disgust.

It was Famole these clowns were talking about; the man on whose hymn-singing career I aimed to model mine. Thebe e seheloa holim'a enngoe. A new shield is stencilled from an old one. Everything is built on something that came before it.

Take it from me, mate, there is no musician who is totally clean of blood.

Another man, wearing a similar coloured blanket, added, It is the money, the recording contracts that make them insane.

It is jealousy, said the gossip. Jealousy eats them all.

A Mosotho does not want to see another Mosotho succeed, declared his friend.

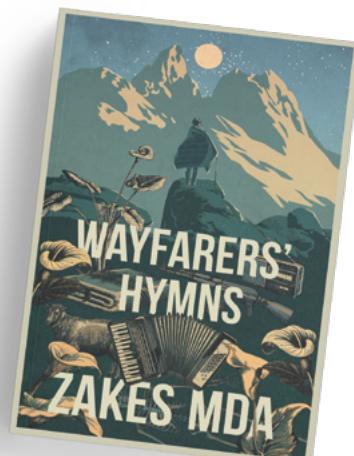
Not Famole, I said. He was the most successful. He was well trained by Mantša who is also a man of peace.

Was it not this very Famole who shot Khosi Mosotho Chakela because Chakela was now overtaking him in popularity?

I knew that story. Everyone in Matelile, Likhoele and Thabana Morena knew that story. Chakela claimed that he was shot by Famole in Phiri, Soweto, and had to escape to his headquarters in Bloemfontein where his people nursed him back to health. Brought him back almost from the throes of death. I never believed that Famole was capable of such brutality, judging from the gentleness of his music. And if you heard the wonderful things they were saying about him at his funeral you wouldn't believe it either. I am not saying Chakela was lying when he accused Famole. I am saying maybe, just maybe, he was mistaken. Maybe it was not Famole but somebody who looked like him. Maybe the gangs used Famole's name to terrorise Chakela out of Phiri. Maybe. Maybe.



Wayfarers' Hymns will be published by Penguin Random House South Africa later in 2021





The Story of The Forgotten Scientist (An Interview)

Nokuthula Mazibuko Msimang



Nokuthula: Last year was rather busy for you. You continued with your wonderful series called the *Unsung Heroes* series for young adult readers in which you excavate hidden histories and hidden heroes. Please tell us about your series and your latest book.

Lorato: My *Unsung Heroes* project has been such a beautiful journey. My first book was on champion sprinter Mme Rosina Sedibane Modiba, the first black South African woman athlete to compete in multi-racial championships back in the 1970. The book is called *Rosina Sedibane Modiba – A Dream Denied*.

Last year, I launched a second book in the series titled *The Forgotten Scientist – The Story of Saul Sithole*. Ntate Sithole was a pioneering anthropologist and ornithologist who remained unsung for many decades. I first learned about this remarkable man from Professor Nancy Jacobs, a historian from Brown University in the United States, who researched the work of Ntate Saul Sithole for her own book. I accompanied Professor Jacobs to the Sithole family in Mamelodi.

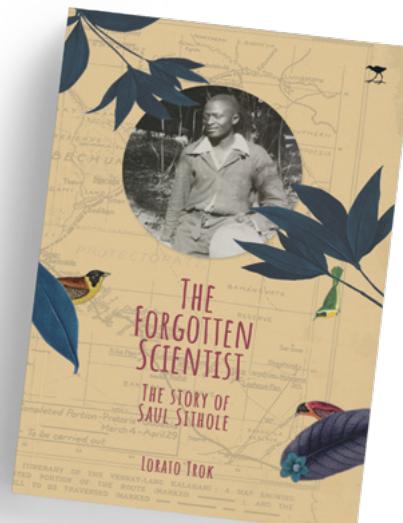
I thought it fitting that Ntate Sithole's story should be the second one in the series. Fortunately, I struck up a relationship with his daughter, Mme Zondi Zitha. At the time she was already in her eighties. I spoke to her at length about the work of her father, about which she knew a great deal because she spent a lot of time with him when she was a young girl. Unfortunately, Mme Zitha passed away in February 2019. I was very sad. She was so eager for her father's story to be finally told and was very excited that I was writing it. After she passed, I started talking to other family members, particularly Divine, his granddaughter, and Themba, his great-grandson. They shared family albums, and memories about their grandfather and great-grandfather. I also referenced Professor Jacobs' book, and I reached out to some of the people she had interviewed. If it wasn't for apartheid, the Sithole family would have been a renowned family of scientists.

Born on 20 September 1908 in Standerton, Mpumalanga (then known as Eastern Transvaal), he only went up to Standard 6 (Grade Eight) at school. He qualified to be a teacher but he couldn't find a

job. Someone found him employment at the Transvaal Museum, now Ditsong Museum, in Pretoria. He first worked as a cleaner and, later, helped out with some skeletal displays of animals and birds.

In 1930, Ntate Sithole joined the Vernay-Lang Kalahari Expedition, a collaboration between the American Museum of Natural History in New York and the Transvaal Museum. He was later promoted to being an Ornithological Assistant to Herbert Lang. His main job was to take photographs, and preserve fossils and birds. He started learning more and more about fossils and birds and soon was practically doing most of the work. For more than sixty years he made massive contributions to the field of anthropology and ornithology. He was never given the title of scientist but he was a natural scientist at heart.

Lorato Trok's latest book *The Forgotten Scientist – The Story Saul Sithole* is published Jacana Media and is available at all good bookstores.



JOBURG NOIR: A GATHERING OF CITY TROUBADOURS

By Outlwile Tsipane

The noir series, as a concept, offers an arresting allure, engaging the dark underbelly of a city, and perhaps, too, its twilight zone.

The first published noir book was *Brooklyn Noir* in 2004. Since then, more than 90 cities across the world have published the series. In Africa, depictions of Lagos, Nairobi, Marrakech, Addis Ababa and Accra have followed too.

With Joburg's turn having come in a compilation arranged and edited by acclaimed writer Niq Mhlongo, the collection delivers appropriately on its mandate and with the requisite fervour.

The different contributors of *Joburg Noir* – who come from an assortment of art genres – well capture the contemporary city. Some of the stories straddle time and epochs, while others illustrate the gloomy side of the city, a seemingly permanent feature of the city of gold.

It was a crafty and notable feat to assemble musicians, journalists, broadcasters, poets, established and emerging writers for the *Joburg Noir* anthology. What then has cropped up from their contributions are tales of beguiling, nostalgic flair, leading to layers of questions yet holding a reserve to inform. Some of the offerings are genre-bending, but certainly in line with the noir theme.



Sydney Majoko, with his "Man of God" short story, gives a ghoulish account of new-age Christian eccentricity, and perhaps then its unknown, deeper brutality.

Sibongile Fischer with "Feasting", although a tale from an individual lens about what is termed illegal mining, when mapped out, begs the unresolved question of what is to be done now with Joburg's (remnants of) gold that made the city what it is. The large white-owned corporates have long abdicated their responsibility after decades of satisfying themselves.

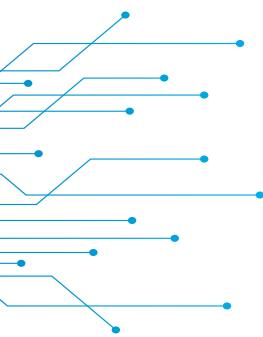
Contributions from Keletso Mopai and Lidudumalingani read like epistles to the youth, sounding caution that it takes more than just dreams to make it in the ruthless and unforgiving world that is Joburg.

There are also personal and enjoyable narratives from the book that cast a spotlight on the pockets of Joburg that often receive very little attention.

The crime motifs contained in the book are done with twisted efficacy, bringing to the fore the flaws of the tender system: how horrid it has become not only in Joburg but throughout the country.

This kind of compilation can give rise to varying expectations on the spectrum of issues or subjects it could cover, but what *Joburg Noir* offers suffices. It is as fascinating as it is timely.





LEADING IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE CALL FOR A NEW TYPE OF AFRICAN LEADER

By Tshilidzi Marwala

Fourth Industrial Revolution in South Africa

Herein lies the crux of the work of President Cyril Ramaphosa's 4IR Commission, which was established in 2019 and of which I am deputy chair. The role of this commission is to assist the government in taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the digital industrial revolution. This, of course, requires collaboration between the government, the private sector, the unions, and civil society to be effective.

How do we go about this?

The Commission has formulated eight recommendations.

Firstly, the government needs to prioritise a redesign of the human capacity development ecosystem in order to link our entire pool of potential employees into productive and decent work. In order to achieve this, a comprehensive view of the entire human capital system must be developed, and the leverage points which can be accelerated by the 4IR need to be identified. This will be facilitated at the Human Resources Development Council, assisted by the 4IR committee and driven by the Digital Skills Forum, which will include timeframes on deliverable objectives. Through the adoption of a skills revolution, both primary and secondary students must, at the least, be equipped with communication (both verbal and written), logical and numerical skills. These skills should feed into the ability to code, think computationally and should have a holistic approach to problem solving. Tertiary education must become multidisciplinary for all students where the curriculum blends science and technology with human and social sciences.

The second recommendation is to develop 'The National Artificial Intelligence Institute' which will focus on the application of AI to health, agriculture, finance, mining, manufacturing, and government as well as regulations. It would be responsible for keeping abreast of and support capacity building in Neural Networks, Natural Language Processing and Computer Vision, among others. To spur the industrial and research applications of AI, we need to make high-performance computing available

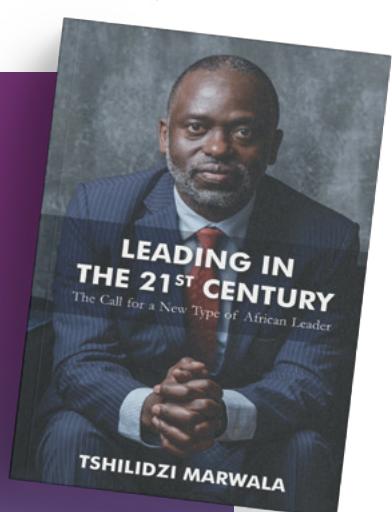
for widespread use. This institute will focus on research and development, as well as implementation capabilities in AI. A mandate to include training will bolster the investment in human capital. In order to achieve this, the government needs to establish the institute within one of its existing structures. Then the business will need to collaborate on implementation of the institute's programmes while labour unions drive training in AI.

The third recommendation is to establish a platform for advanced manufacturing and new materials. In 2019, manufacturing was South Africa's fourth-largest industry and contributed 14% to the GDP, making it an important job creator and imperative for the country's global competitiveness. In the context of the 4IR, nevertheless, it has to be supported by a state-led research initiative, which will grow the sector and develop and apply new materials through the technologies of the 4IR. Similar to the proposed AI institute, this requires collaboration across government, business, labour and civil society.

The fourth recommendation is to secure and make available data to enable innovation. This is critical for building e-government services across sectors such as health, transport and justice. This could be achieved through the creation of the National Data Centre, which consolidates the available computational power. This will become the national data repository for all of our data, including health data. This can be done alongside existing data centre companies.



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21st Century: The
Call for a New Type
of African Leader by
Tshilidzi Marwala.**
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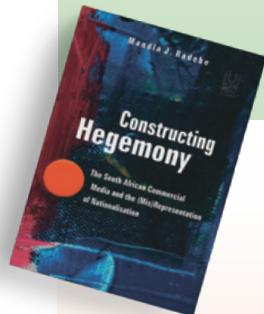


A FAMILY AFFAIR

By Sue Nyathi
Published by Pan MacMillan,
South Africa, 2021

Meet the Mafus, a close-knit, traditional family with three daughters. As leaders of their church, The Kingdom of God, Pastor Abraham and his wife Phumla are guiding the community of Bulawayo in faith, while trying to keep the different branches of their family intact.

The Mafus always present a united front, but as their personal lives unravel, devastating secrets are revealed that threaten to tear the family apart. For how long will they be able to hide behind the façade of a picture-perfect family?



CONSTRUCTING HEGEMONY

The South African Commercial Media and the (Mis) Representation of Nationalisation

Mandla J. Radebe
Published by UKZN Press, 2021

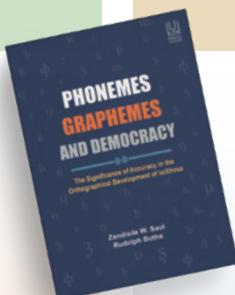
This book provides a Marxist critique of the representation of the nationalisation of the mines debate by the South African commercial media. Radebe examines corporate control of the media in order to articulate the interrelations between the state, capital and the media, and the way the commercial media represents, shapes and influences public policy. He concludes that beyond factors such as ownership, commercialisation and the influence of advertising on news content, the global capitalist hegemony has a more powerful influence on the commercial media in South Africa than previously thought. (UKZN Press)



MIRIAM TLALI: WRITING FREEDOM

Edited by Pumla Dineo Gqola
Published by HSRC Press, 2021

Miriam Tlali was a novelist, short story writer, playwright, essayist, and an activist against apartheid and patriarchal confinement. Hailed as the first Black woman to publish a novel in English in South Africa, and as the first Black woman to significantly impact the male terrain of South African short story writing, Tlali held the title of many firsts. *Miriam Tlali: Writing Freedom* brings together three essays on Tlali's work, standing, and legacy with extracts from her work. In different ways, these framing essays highlight how Tlali is a 'voice of liberation', a key thinker on race and feminism. The volume seeks to bring Tlali to a new readership, while also suggesting new directions in Tlali scholarship.



PHONEMES, GRAPHEMES AND DEMOCRACY

The Significance of Accuracy in the Orthographical Development of IsiXhosa

Zandisile W. Saul and Rudolph Botha
Published by UKZN Press, 2021

This book provides comprehensive guidelines on important aspects of isiXhosa orthography such as word division, spelling and capitalisation. However, the authors' primary focus has been those challenging areas of standardisation which have not yet been attended to. This work will make an important contribution to the development of isiXhosa into a fully functional medium of teaching and learning in Higher Education, and facilitate the enhancement of its status as one of South Africa's official languages. (UKZN Press)

THE POWER OF AUTHORS

29-30 APRIL 2021

A conference among authors, about authors.

Join us as we celebrate the Power of Authors.

The Academic and Non-Fiction Authors' Association of South Africa (ANFASA) is hosting a two-day virtual international conference, which will have two distinct parts;

1

Debating, exploring and re-establishing our role and status in society.

2

Claiming our right to earn an income and exploring ways of strengthening our income.

The programme will offer a highly relevant, stimulating and immersive conversation, drawing on some of the best minds and scribes of our time.

For more information please email info@anfasa.org.za or visit our website: www.anfasa.org.za

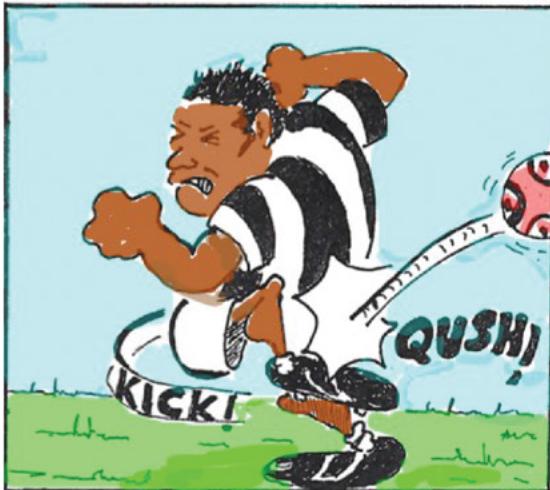


Norwegian Embassy
South Africa

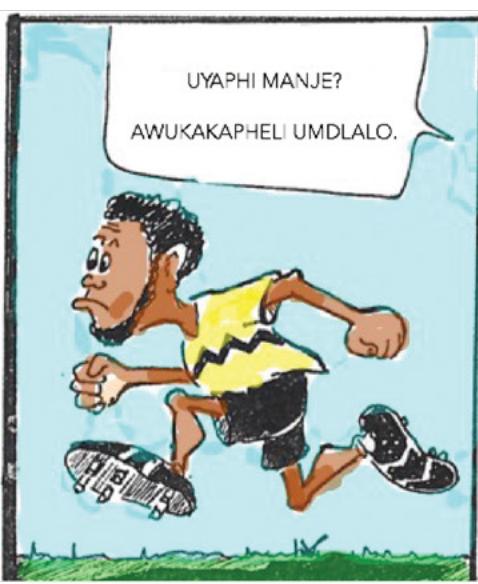
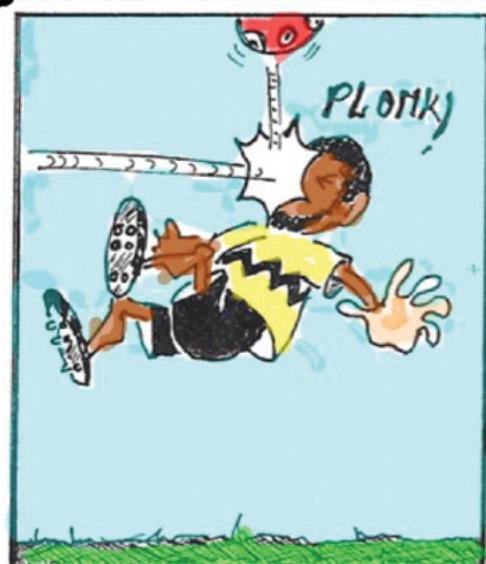


CARTOONS & HUMOUR

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Themba Mabaso



EMUMVA KWESIKHASHANA



HSS AWARDS LONG LIST 2021

BOOK, CREATIVE COLLECTION AND DIGITAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Six years later, the HSS Awards are riding the crest of the wave

Sometimes, only sometimes, the best way to drive a point home is to use the dreaded cliché. If you want to understand the excitement around the upcoming 2021 HSS Awards, to be held on 31 March this year at a venue still to be confirmed, imagine letting loose a child in a candy store!

To get a cue from the entries alone into the awards, that grew from a modest 36 books in 2017, this year sees a mammoth 82 submissions! Throughout the years, the HSS Awards have adjudicated over the literary merit of 293 books.

Outside literature, the HSS Awards also judge other creative pursuits like exhibition catalogues, musical composition/arrangement, public performance, and visual art, all of which have attracted a steady increase of entries since the inception of the awards.

Typical of the child with the freedom of the candy store, it proves difficult to resist the urge to whet the appetite of the bookish around this year's entries.

They rank from as high up as the Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of Johannesburg (UJ) Professor Tshilidzi Marwala, whose book *Closing the Gap: The HR in Africa*, Pan Macmillan SA, 2000, is among the hopefuls, to younger academics like Sabata-Mpho Mokae,邦古尼 Nyoka and Jacob Dlamini.

Something of interest about Dlamini and the HSS Awards is that he is a returnee. His previous books have vied for the HSS, that, in his motivation, he hopes to win.

He has entered two books this time around – *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police*, Blue Weaver (for Harvard University Press), 2020 and *Safari Nation: A Social History of the Kruger National Park*, Jacana Media, 2020.

Dlamini obtained a PhD from Yale University in 2012 and is an assistant professor of history at Princeton University.

Writing his second book, another memoir, former deputy chief justice Dikgang Mosenke is among those vying for the top honours this year.

His book *All Rise: A Judicial Memoir*, Picador Africa, 2020, is in contention.

The genre of biography is the latest addition to the canon of the awards.

From the high and mighty writing about their fields of expertise and their own life stories, on one end, lies, on the other end, debutants writing fiction, to great effect.

This year's field of Best Fiction Single Authored Volume has 15 entries – up from a meagre nine in 2017.

Sue Nyathi, Angela Makholwa, NR Brodie, Craig Higginson, Olivia Coetzee, Shafinaaz Hassim, among others, who ordinarily write for a living, are writing for their lives in this competition. Look out for the work of Olivia Coetzee; her *Innie Shadows*, Modjadj Books, 2020, is a marvel.

There are entries from The Caine Prize for African Writing. Edited by the celebrated J.M. Coetzee in 2011, it is often referred to as the African Booker Prize. The Caine Prize, we are told “has often signalled the vanguard in writing on the continent across the ages and today”.

Needless to say, The Caine Prize longs for the HSS! One publisher is a serial entrant for their authors. Modjadj Books have entered anything from collections of short stories to an anthology of women's poetry, this “to make the private voices of women audible”.

Just like biographies, anthologies abound.

The city of Johannesburg has received special attention from the entries across the genres. *Joburg Noir*, Jacana Media, 2020, is a collection of stories on the city, edited by Niq Mhlongo. Opposite this ode to Jozi is one to Eldorado Park, the Coloured township just south of the City of Gold. *Those Who Live in Cages*, another Jacana Media offering by Terry-Ann Adams is a new novel by a new writer who says “writing this novel was an experience in learning and unlearning. I set out to tell the story of my woman ancestors and in so doing, I told the story of my community”.

Maboneng, a neighbourhood in the inner-city of Johannesburg, features in the digital humanities segment of the awards through the works of Samkelisiwe Khanyile, who looks at facets of graffiti, including urban art, in the area.

Dogs feature a few times, for example, in the digital humanities through an entry by Karli Blitz. There is also the macabre, as represented by Covid-19, from the *Visualisations and Maps of the Month* by Gillian Maree to a timely non-fiction book by medical doctor, Anna Biccard, who chronicles her work with Covid-19 patients. The book is titled *Saving a Stranger's Life: The Diary of an Emergency Room Doctor*. Economist Raymond Parsons has a dog in this fight too: His book *Recession, Recovery & Reform: South Africa after Covid-19*, Jacana Media, 2020, is in the hat.

There is a dime a dozen more. *New Frontiers in Forensic Linguistics: Themes and Perspectives in Language and the Law in Africa and beyond* by Monwabisi K. Ralarala, Russell H. Kaschula and Georgina Heydon, African Sun Media (Sun Press), 2019, is one that vies for attention. There is going to be blood on the floor when a billion-Rand lawsuit involving Deputy President David Mabuza comes to court this year. Veteran journalist Rehana Rossouw has a book out in the stands now contesting for recognition in the HSS Awards. It is called *Predator Politics: Mabuza, Fred Daniel and the Great Land Scam*, Jacana Media, 2020. While transformation at universities remains a thorny issue, especially at the University of Cape Town (UCT), the institution receives special attention in a book titled *UCT under Apartheid, part 1 from Onset to Sit-In: 1948 – 1968* by Howard Phillips, Jacana Media, 2019.

You think your life is difficult? Spare a thought for the judging panel of the 2021 HSS Awards! ■



Fiction

BEST FICTION SINGLE AUTHORED VOLUME



A Family Affair
Sue Nyathi,
Pan Macmillan SA, 2020



All the places
Musawenkosi Khanyile,
Uhlanga Press, 2019



Born Free-loaders
Phumlani Pikoli, Picador Africa
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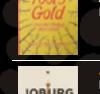
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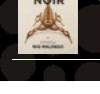
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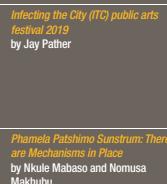
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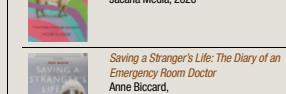
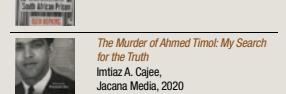
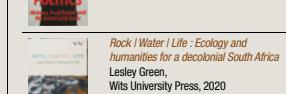
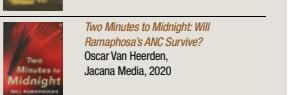
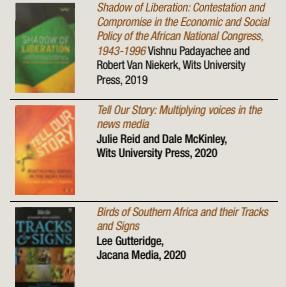
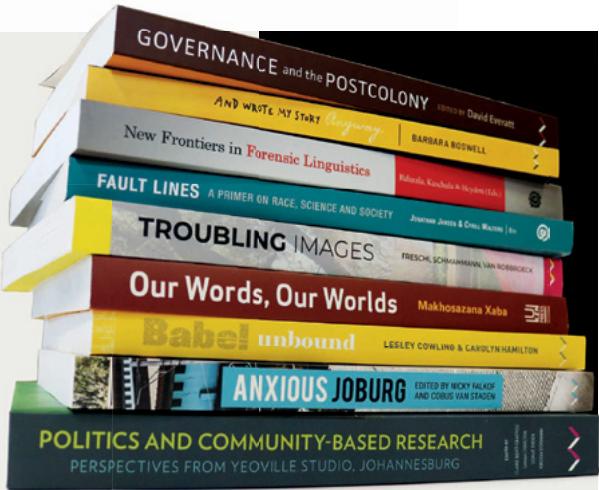


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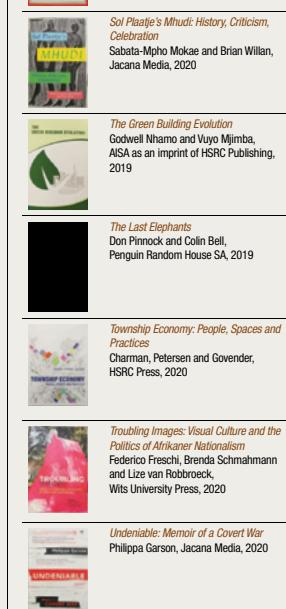
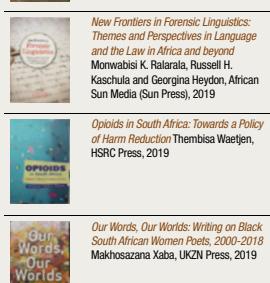
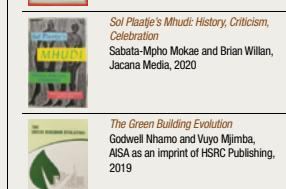
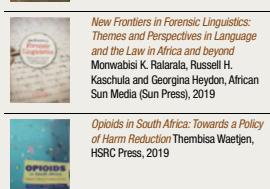
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