BETWEEN TWO BOOKS, *BETWEEN TWO WORLDS*: POLITICS AND POWER IN THE PUBLISHING OF MIRIAM TLALI'S FIRST NOVEL – A CASE STUDY OF THE CENSORSHIP PROJECT'S LEGACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

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For many Black learners entering the university space, the university curriculum provides their first encounter with not only Black thought but also Black feminist thought and literary works. Almost three decades after 1994, many Black university students have never engaged with seminal texts by prominent Black writers, scholars, and activists such as Tlali, Lauretta Ngcobo, and Bessie Head (who is arguably the most studied and/or recognised Black South African woman writer). There are necessary questions to ask in this dilemma: what causes this (sometimes) acute disjuncture? The apartheid Bantu education and censorship projects were created to separate Black learners from Black intellectual history for fear of a Black intelligentsia that might overthrow them. Have these systems ended or are they reproduced in print culture and the current education systems? Tlali, as the pioneer of novel-writing in English for South African woman[i] writers writing and publishing in the country, forms the first point of analysis into this greater interrogation.[ii] The experience of getting her debut novel published is intimately tied to the way that the current publishing world in South Africa has come to be and how it was constructed.

BETWEEN TWO BOOKS

Tlali's experience was not as pleasant as would be expected for such a breakthrough moment in the history of Black intellectual and feminist thought in South Africa. Instead, it was a traumatic experience that she would still speak about with sadness and regret decades later. The manuscript that Tlali submitted to her then-prospective publisher Ravan Press in 1969 is drastically different from what Ravan printed in 1975 – it is as though the two texts exist in two different worlds. This change is understandable and expected considering the general tradition of book editing, but it is also inevitable considering the repressive operations of the apartheid regime at that time.[iii] Ravan had established a reputation for disregarding the reigning government and publishing material by Black writers that was inherently, assertively, and unapologetically acting against the government's ideals of national consciousness, and they suffered significant banning[iv] from the government because of this.

Founded by Peter Randall, Danie van Zyl, and Beyers Naudé in 1972, Ravan Press was among the only three publishing houses at the time that published Black writers, alongside Ad Donker and David Phillips. While all three publishing houses were fundamentally liberal, Ravan Press is seen as the one that was solely focused on ideology –building ideals of a unitary, non-racial, and democratic South Africa. Notably, it was also the only publisher willing to publish Tlali at the time and, consequently, became the first publisher of a Black South African woman novelist publishing in the country. Ravan Press was interested in a certain ideal of national consciousness that was mirrored in the Black Consciousness Movement[v] of the late 1960s, which coincided with the publishing of Tlali's manuscript. Nerusha Baldevu goes as far as to say that Ravan Press was the only one of the radical publishers that was not driven by commercial standards or profitability.[1]

What was it then about Tlali's manuscript, the ordinary experiences of an ordinary woman working at a furniture shop during apartheid that made her text so unpalatably dangerous that even a progressive publisher such as Ravan Press felt the need to edit it extensively (thereby participating in censorship)? How do her gender and her race factor into the labyrinth of hierarchies and power relations between a Black woman novelist and her White publishers, as well as the resultant censorship? It, therefore, becomes important for scholars and critics to engage with these questions in order to better understand the experiences of a Black woman writer like Tlali and the kind of power that (White) publishers would have on her, and what it says about the configurations of South Africa's current publishing sphere, and who it benefits.

For this article, there are three significant editions of Tlali's published manuscript that form the most discussed and contested versions of the novel in its book and publishing histories. The first, and arguably the most significant and certainly the most critical in the history of Tlali's publishing history, was published by Ravan Press in 1975,[vi] under the title *Muriel at Metropolitan*. The second edition of Tlali's published manuscript was published by Longman Publishers four years later in 1979. This edition also bore the name *Muriel at Metropolitan*, but it is exponentially different from the earlier Ravan edition – not only is it longer by over 100 pages, but it is also the edition that is, according to Tlali,[2] most similar to her original manuscript. After the South African government banned both the earlier Ravan as well as the Longman editions, the latter became largely out of print and difficult to access. In 2004, Broadview Press revived the novel, publishing a reprint of the earlier Longman edition. Most significantly, this edition of the novel had finally been renamed *Between Two Worlds*, one of the two titles that Tlali had initially proposed and preferred.

1 Nerusha Baldevu, "Progressive publishing: the Ravan Press experience," Khanya: A Journal for Activists, July 24, 2010, http://khanyajournal.org.za/kc-journal-no-24-july-2010-progressive-publishing-the-ravan-press-experience/.
2 Miriam Tlali, "My Background and How I Began to Write", Between Two Worlds (Broadview Press, 2004), 10.

'THE EXPURGATED VERSION': CHANGES MADE BY SHEILA ROBERTS AND RAVAN PRESS EDITING DUO

Throughout her extensive literary and feminist career, Tlali was forthcoming about her contemptuous experience with her novel's publishing history – how drastically Ravan Press had altered her manuscript to publish their 1975 version. The controversy began with the first edition published by Ravan Press. Tlali expressed repeatedly during different interviews[3] that the publishers and Sheila Roberts, the editor they employed for her work, expurgated a lot of material from her manuscript. This section of this article is a literary and critical exploration of Roberts and Ravan Press's editing of the manuscript – a comparative analytical reading of the first version published by Ravan under the title *Muriel at Metropolitan* and the 2004 version published by Broadview Press, under the title *Between Two Worlds* (which is a replica of the 1979 version published by Longman Publishers under the *Muriel* title).[vii] The changes that the editing duo made to the novel were blatant as well as inconspicuous, yet equally significant. Tlali speaks of the text being "expurgated", but the scale of alteration ranges from minute syntactic details such as rewording, sentence structure, and tense changes, to the titles of chapters being replaced with generic numbering, to characters' names being changed, to paragraphs being removed, to five whole chapters being stripped away.

As Leah Price observes, "editing [has] been central to scholarship (and not just literary scholarship) since at least the fifteenth century".[4] It is true that book editing, as a long historic practice, is necessary and expected; however, the kind of editing done to Tlali's manuscript begs the question: where does editing end and censorship begin? Furthermore, how much of the author's original text is left behind? And how is the reader supposed to read the text in its altered state? Most of the changes to Tlali's text were paratextual, which is especially important to study because the paratext, as an abstract active element, is how the text tells the reader how it wants to (and should) be read – according to how the writer produced the complete text. This section of the article is dedicated to studying these paratextual[viii] changes and how they contribute to a reading of Tlali's text as purposefully staged in a certain way[ix] – to placate the apartheid-era white South African reader.[x] These decisions then directly impact the reader, and none of them can be viewed as innocent.

The most noticeable change between the Ravan and Broadview Press editions is, of course, the title change – from *Muriel at Metropolitan* to *Between Two Worlds*. While the former might invoke the story of a (assumed) woman at a particular place (with no understanding of what this place entails or means for her), the latter allows the reader to creatively conceive of a character that faces a significant dilemma. A similar effect applies for the titles of chapters. The numbered format of the chapters in the Ravan version produces a clinical feel to the reader's experience of the text, as opposed to the named 1979 Longman and 2004 Broadview editions (from "How It All Began" to "While the Boss Is Away", to "Resign!" to "My Mother's Beckoning Voice"), which contributes to the vibrancy of Muriel's story and draws the reader closer and deeper into the life of a Black South African woman living in the country during apartheid.

OMISSIONS

In 1998, André P. Brink writes that "the experience of apartheid has demonstrated that different levels of silence exist".[5] He continues: "apartheid presented the "kind of situation in which any utterance invited scrutiny in terms of what was not said: each word spoken/written implied the imposition of silence on another that might (or even 'should') have taken its place in the paradigm.[6] The parts that the editing duo cut out from Tlali's manuscript speak to the silences that Brink highlights and why they ought to be studied. The ending to the 2004 Broadview edition's first chapter, titled "How it all began", provides a clear reasoning for the novel's title and lays out the apartheid setting for the reader, and why a tale by a Black woman typist should exist. Tlali writes:

> The Republic of South Africa is a country divided into two worlds. The one, a white world – rich, comfortable, for all practical purposes organised – a world of fear, armed to the teeth. The other, a black world; poor, pathetically neglected and disorganised – voiceless, oppressed, restless, confused and unarmed – a world of transition, irrevocably weaned from all tribal ties.[7]

One of the sections that is particularly interesting for Roberts and Ravan to have cut out was about White fragile femininity (or "white tears" and "Karenness"[xi]). In the Broadview edition, Muriel recounts how when Hudson, another of the Black employees, noted that Mrs. Stein could not read properly, she exclaims: "'I tell you, I was upset the whole day. I couldn't eat. It was my nerves, you see. I couldn't sleep either.

3 Cherry Clayton, Between the lines: interviews with Bessie Head, Sheila Roberts, Ellen Kuzwayo, Miriam Tlali, ed. Craig MacKenzie and Cherry Clayton (Grahamstown National English Literary Museum, 1989).
Cecily Lockett, "Tlali, Miriam Mesoli (1933–)", (Routledge Encyclopaedia for Post-colonial Literatures in English, Second Edition), 71.
4 Elizabeth le Roux, "Miriam Tlali and Ravan Press: Politics and Power in Literary Publishing during the Apartheid Period," Journal of Southern African Studies 44, no.3 (April 2018): 431, https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2018.1450007.
5 Le Roux, "Miriam Tlali and Ravan Press", 432.
6 Le Roux, "Miriam Tlali and Ravan Press", 432.
7 Le Roux, "Miriam Tlali and Ravan Press", 432–433.

I cried the whole night… Fancy, a stupid animal like that saying I should go back to school! A thing which can hardly write its own name correctly!' And she sighed."[8] The ridiculousness that Tlali highlights is almost comical and reveals the gendered complex of white women in apartheid.

Apart from shorter paragraphs, sentences, and phrases that Roberts cut out of Tlali's manuscript, the five stripped chapters drastically alter the storyline. In an interview with Cecily Lockett, Tlali argues against what this kind of stripping did to the text: "[T]he first version – the South African version [by Ravan Press] – does not have all the right terms, the originality, that I had in my manuscript."[9] Indeed, in one of the chapters removed, titled "A Token of Love" (chapter nine), Tlali brings terms and concepts such as "colonialism", pan-Africanism, and labour, capitalism, and "the slave trade" explicitly into the storyline,[10] and these are stripped away by the editing duo. Chapter 21, "'What's happening to us?'", was also edited out and is about the contested ownership of land in the country. In a conversation with Muriel, Anna, a Black woman, argues: "'And the land really belongs to *us*, mind you', put in Anna. 'The fact is that Africa – from Cape to Cairo – is the black man's country, just as Europe is a white man's country'".

In chapter 22, "One human heart for another", Muriel exasperates: "And about speech – the blacks are not free to say what they feel. How can they? ... The blacks are voiceless'". This speech is particularly poignant because it highlights the repressiveness of the apartheid regime and eerily foreshadows Tlali's own censorship as a writer by the Ravan Press editing duo that cut this speech out. Following this kind of editing, it cannot follow that Ravan Press did not participate in the censoring of Tlali's manuscript.

REWORDINGS

The alteration and addition of single words also changes the dynamic and experience of reading the text. These changes are evident from the first chapter. The 2004 Broadview edition reads: "His companions were laughing, their gleaming white teeth contrasting sharply with their black faces."[13] However, the 1975 Ravan edition reads: "His companions were laughing, their gleaming white teeth contrasting sharply with their pitch black faces."[14] The addition of the adjective "pitch" to the men's "black faces" is heavy with connotation and is derogatory and excessive.

In an eerie and pitiful example that proves that Ravan Press and Sheila Roberts were indeed invested in a particular project that went above and against Tlali's authorial voice, Adam (a character in the novel) utters the word "Miriam" instead of the protagonist's name 'Muriel'.[15] This is significant because when Mike Kirkwood, one of the publishers at Ravan Press, insisted on changing the title of the novel to *Miriam at Metropolitan*, Tlali immediately refused: "No… I will not have my name used like that!", to which Kirkwood "smiled and asked: 'How about 'Muriel at Metropolitan' then?'".[16] This blatant error raises questions about Roberts and the publishers' unwillingness to follow Tlali's preferences and authority of voice.

QUOTING TLALI

The version of *Muriel at Metropolitan* that was referenced by most critics from the 1970s to 1990s was the first edition by Ravan Press. What is interesting is that the revised edition by Longman had already been published in 1979, yet it was the 1975 edition by Ravan Press that was being quoted from, interpreted, and theorised over the most. In her 1989 essay, the sections that Margaret Lenta[17] quotes from the novel are some of the ones that were more drastically altered from the Longman and Broadview editions, that is, the versions closest to Tlali's original and preferred manuscript. The Ravan Press edition, which Lenta quotes[18] from in her article, reads: "'You baboon, you chimpanzee, you monkey, you…' yelled Mrs Kuhn. 'You know, Mrs Stein, I can't stand that girl there. She and Adam are always sitting there and making a noise. One can hardly concentrate'".[19] The profuse and deeply humiliating swearing that Mrs. Kuhn throws at Muriel is, however, not at all what Tlali presented to Ravan Press, as seen in the Longman edition: "Still pointing at us, Mrs. Kuhn continued, 'I can't stand that girl. She and Adam are always sitting there and making a noise. No one can concentrate".[20] What then was the editor's motivation for adding these words, thereby purposefully over-emphasising black denigration in Tlali's text and overwriting it?

MULTIPLE NARRATIVES: TLALI VERSUS LE ROUX

The trauma that Tlali experienced in her journey to get her debut novel published continued in the way that critics spoke about her experience while she was alive and even after her death on 24 February 2017. This narrative is revealed and continued by Elizabeth le Roux's investigation into and rewriting of Tlali's experience in April 2018.

11 Quijano, "Coloniality of Power," 545.
12 Le Roux, "Miriam Tlali and Ravan Press", 437.
13 Clayton, "Between the lines", 1989.
14 Le Roux, "Miriam Tlali and Ravan Press", 437.
15 Le Roux, "Miriam Tlali and Ravan Press", 433.
16 Tlali, "My Background", 8.

Elizabeth le Roux's "Miriam Tlali and Ravan Press: Politics and Power in Literary Publishing during the Apartheid Period" serves as Le Roux's account of Tlali's experience with her publisher. The article proves the relevance of interrogating the inter-relations between politics, power, and literary publishing and how they continue to play themselves out in a grandstanding interplay of power hierarchies (based on gender and race) and authority of voice (based on positionality).

In her abstract, Le Roux rightfully states, "Ravan was harassed and subjected to censorship",[21] yet she does not begin to say how they, in turn, censored the texts they published, particularly Tlali's. In fact, Le Roux is disdainful of this position. Importantly, while intending "to tease out the power dynamics at work", she posits: "Given [Tlali's] complaints about [Ravan Press's] mutilation of her first novel, we would expect that she would have moved on from Ravan as soon as possible".[22] The first point to consider from the above statement is who is "we"? Why the collective "we" instead of "the reader" or "I"? This pronoun is important to interrogate because it speaks to self-reflexivity (or the lack thereof) and necessarily invokes a particular audience. The second point to consider is: why would "we" expect Tlali to leave Ravan after publishing her debut novel in 1975? An assumption such as this is indicative of the misunderstandings of the intricacies of what both apartheid South Africa and White publishers (however liberal these men were) would mean to a Black woman writer in the 1970s.

Le Roux asserts that Tlali had "status as the first black woman to have a novel published within South Africa"[23] yet does not interrogate how Tlali's position as a Black woman living, writing, and publishing in apartheid South Africa would affect her relationship with her White men publishers in very intimate and socially constructed ways. All of these factors have to come to play. Le Roux continues: "[I]t becomes clear that Tlali complained after the fact, not at once, as she remained closely associated with Ravan at least until… the 1980s".[24] Again, this statement neglects the internal politics implicit in the relationship between a Black woman and publishers who were White men during apartheid. The phrase "not at once" is most indicative of the selectivity and blind spots of the critique. In Tlali's introduction to the 2004 Broadview Press edition of *Muriel at Metropolitan*, now titled *Between Two Worlds*, she explains that she immediately contested the drastic changes to her manuscript and voiced them to her publishers. She explains how, when Kirkwood explained to her that the novel was "too long",[25] she voiced her reluctance to have her book reduced even before Ravan presented her with its edited version. Furthermore, Tlali explains that, in her anger and disappointment, she refused to let Ravan publish the heavily edited work for several months before giving in.[xii] It does not follow then that Tlali "complained after the fact, not at once" as Le Roux's otherwise oblivious reader might believe. In this way, Le Roux, in her position as a White woman critic in 2018, reproduces the racial hierarchy constructed in the apartheid era by overriding Tlali's voice.

In noting how Tlali's relationship with her publishers at Ravan supposedly changed over time, Le Roux asks: "[W]hat evidence can be found in the archive that goes beyond Tlali's voice alone?".[26] In emphasising the inherent power dynamics, it is important to wonder why or if there is a need to "[go] beyond Tlali's voice alone"? The effective by-product of doing so is that Tlali's voice is undone and overridden. Anibal Quijano argues that "the racial axis has a colonial origin and character, but it has proven to be more durable and stable than the colonialism in whose matrix it was established. Therefore, the model of power that is globally hegemonic today presupposes an element of coloniality"[27] and each one of its institutions depend on each other for their existence and the existence of the entire structure.[28] As a White woman critic, Le Roux participates in coloniality in two ways: firstly, in her hold of the racial axis, and secondly, in her use of the institutions of power afforded to her in how she relates to and reconstructs the "Tlali versus Ravan" case.

'FRAGMENTS AND NOTES': TLALI VERSUS RAVAN PRESS

Tlali explains in the Broadview edition's introduction, titled "My background and how I began writing", that when she met with Kirkwood, she immediately noted how drastically different the edited manuscript was. In response, Kirkwood said that "publishing is an expensive exercise… We shall have to remove some parts".[29] As for altering the title of the manuscript, Kirkwood only says: "Miriam, we shall also *have* to remove the title… Why don't we just call it 'Miriam at Metropolitan?'… *That* sounds nice actually."[30] Longman Publishers, instead, kept close to Tlali's original manuscript. Importantly, Tlali herself notes that "happily the expurgated material was restored when the novel was published in a new edition by Longman in 1979".[31]

17 Tlali, "My Background", 10.
18 Tlali, "My Background", 10.
19 Leah Price, "Introduction: Reading Matter," PMLA 121, no. 1 (2006): 9.
20 André P. Brink, "Interrogating silence: new possibilities faced by South African literature" in Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid, and Democracy, 1970–1995, ed. Attridge Derek and Rosemary Jolly. (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 14.
21 Brink, "Interrogating silence", 15.
22 Miriam Tlali, Between Two Worlds (Canada: Broadview Press), 17–18.

In exploring "other evidence", Le Roux introduces the contesting voices of Glenn Moss and Peter Randall (White men and two of Ravan's former directors) into Tlali's narrative to "balance the story".[32] Moss states: "It is quite true that she [Muriel's editor, Sheila Roberts] cut an enormous amount of superfluous material as part of the process of creating a book from a collection of fragments and notes. In doing so, quality and publishability were the only criteria utilized." However, Tlali had said in 1989 that, "[the novel] was presented the way I had written it, but the thing is, they just expurgated a lot of material from it, which they thought would not be acceptable."[33] How does it follow then that what she had submitted to Ravan were "fragments and notes" if Tlali asserts that Ravan published an expurgated version of what she presented to them? Randall agrees with Moss' argument and affirms that Tlali's manuscript "would have been unpublishable and unreadable without Roberts's intervention".[34] Both these men go against Tlali's narrative and thereby question the authority of her voice. They also both actively suggest that Tlali did not in fact write a novel that was later edited, but rather that what she wrote were scraps ("fragments and notes") that were turned into a novel by their editor Roberts.

In the same interview, Randall continues to say that Tlali's manuscript was "a large ring binder crammed with disjointed writings including verses and prayers", describing the manuscript as a "a box of papers which lacked coherence, structure or detailed theme".[35] All of these statements undermine not only Tlali's narrative but also her identity as a writer, suggesting that she lacked talent. Interestingly, Ravan Press was also the publisher of Tlali's second novel, Amandla, in 1980. However, these kinds of critiques were not raised for her second novel. If Tlali had indeed lacked talent as a writer and could only muster up enough intelligibility to write in the form of "fragments and notes", it does not seem convincingly plausible that she would have been able to write *Amandla* without the same level of heavy editing that was given to *Muriel at Metropolitan*. This selective reading and interpretation of events shows that Le Roux's article cannot be read as an objective investigation since it effectively produces a counter-narrative that subtly discredits Tlali's voice.

The result is the continuation of the age of censorship that the apartheid regime began, specifically aimed at a Black woman writer. The process and experience of the publishing world cannot be separated from the hybrid embodied experiences of writers – with race and gender right at the core – since social hierarchies are necessarily invocable. Keeping in mind the project of knowledge segregation that the apartheid government's education system was focused on, and the disjuncture that it has continually produced in Black learners who do not substantially know the history of South Africa's Black (and feminist) intellectuals three decades later, as well as the devaluing of those voices by White voices, the "black world" still seems to be a "world of transition", as Tlali described back in 1975 – a world where Black women speak beyond their graves to reiterate what they had already said in the living. Tlali's experience and Le Roux's article, especially, raise concerns about whether print culture actually does benefit Black writers' voices at all, especially those who traverse the world as women. If Le Roux can present her debate, alongside Moss and Randall, only a year after Tlali died, then no Black woman writer's voice can be seen to be notably valuable in this country.

CONCLUSION

While it is true that the Ravan Press founders, directors, and publishers used the protection that their White masculinity afforded them to advocate for Black writers, this power also, in turn and simultaneously, allows them to override those voices (whether intentionally or not) and/or to present them in ways that they have structured. A similar power applies to White critics and editors such as Roberts and Le Roux. The way that Le Roux delivers her account is telling of the lack of scrutiny that critics subject themselves to while critiquing various institutions of knowledge production and dissemination and how unjust they can be.

The collective account that Randall, Moss, and Le Roux bring forth fragments knowledge. In reality, the 1970s presented an age of fragmented knowledge – it was a generation where material, and, therefore knowledge, was being fragmented by the censorship board and had to be fragmented by those who were under its forcible influence, such as White anti-apartheid publishers of Black writers. In this light and through this article's analysis, the novel was censored by Ravan Press even before it reached the censorship board. Most importantly, Le Roux's article highlights how the age of censoring and fragmenting knowledge in South Africa has not ended but has survived into the present day.

23 Miriam Tlali, Between Two Worlds, 68.
24 Cecily Lockett, "Tlali, Miriam Mesoli", 71.
25 Miriam Tlali, Between Two Worlds, 70–76.
26 Miriam Tlali, Between Two Worlds, 198.
27 Tlali, Between Two Worlds, 201–211.
28 Tlali, Between Two Worlds, 208.
29 Tlali, Between Two Worlds, 17.
30 Tlali, Muriel at Metropolitan (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1975), 17.
31 Tlali, Muriel at Metropolitan (Ravan), 57.
32 Tlali, "My Background", 10.
33 Margaret Lenta, "Intimate Knowledge and Wilful Ignorance: White Employers and Black Employees in South African Fiction" in Women and Writing in South Africa: A Critical Anthology, ed. Cherry Clayton (Heinemann Southern Africa, 1989), 237–251.
34 Lenta, "Intimate Knowledge", 243.
35 Tlali, "Muriel at Metropolitan" (Ravan), 42.
36 Tlali, "Muriel at Metropolitan" (Ravan), 85.

While this article focuses on Tlali's contribution and experience of censorship, other Black women writers who contributed to the pioneering of Black intellectual and feminist thought in the country and continent have received similar denigration by the White-dominated print culture and publishing spheres of South Africa – writers such as Bessie Head, Noni Jabavu and Lauretta Ngcobo. Issues of authority of voice, race and gender hierarchies, and their effect on knowledge production and dissemination have to be considered and interrogated simultaneously if post-apartheid critics are to construct lasting and effective black intellectual, decolonial, and feminist work – especially the kind that centres on and privileges the voices of Black woman writers.

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i In this article, I use the word 'woman' instead of 'female' because the latter term follows the narrow and

ii Two factors made Tlali's emergence particularly interesting in apartheid era environment. The first is that she was the only black woman gaining notable prominence at the time as a fiction writer in South Africa. While two other black South Africa women writers Noni Jabavu and Bessie Head's careers preceded hers, Tlali was the only writer of this kind to write and publish inside the country. After Tlali came Ellen Kuzwayo, who published her autobiography *Call Me Woman* with Ravan Press in 1985 and subsequently became the second black woman writer to be published by Ravan, a significantly long 10 years after it published Tlali's work.

Apart from Tlali, the only black (successful and) published fiction writers in the country were men — writers such as Lewis Nkosi, Can Themba, and Es'kia Mphahlele. The only other woman who gained prominence as an anti-apartheid fiction writer and who was published by Ravan Press was a white woman — Nadine Gordimer, complicating the gender hierarchy that Gordimer shares with Tlali as a woman by her position as white. The second factor that distinguished Tlali from her anti-apartheid writer contemporaries is that while the black revolutionary men were engaged with the short story and autobiography forms, she was contributing to the development of the novel form in South Africa. Michael Chapman's *The "Drum" Decade: Stories from the 1950s* (1989) is an example of the bourgeoning use of the short story form in the country before and after Tlali's emergence as a writer.

iii One of the apartheid government's biggest tools in their nationalist idealism was to control all content being produced and circulated within the country's borders as much as possible, leading to an age of censorship in South Africa. In detailing the extent that the regime went to gather and sustain this control by burning books they believed went against their ideals, Archie Dick writes that "State sanctioned book burnings were common as authoritarianism accompanied a growing Afrikanerisation of South African society as the dominant, ruling Afrikaner elite started to impose its culture on all spheres of society". This environment was what Tlali's publishers at Ravan Press had to contend with throughout their existence as a publishing house, from 1972–1996. It follows then that this environment would, to a certain extent, inform their publishing style and the extent of their editing(/censorship) practices.

iv Ravan Press was charged under the Suppression of Communism Act (1973–1974) in 1973, two years before it released Tlali's *Muriel at Metropolitan*. Furthermore, the repressive Publications Act of 1963 was revised (with a more severe version) in 1974, one year before Ravan published Muriel. In 1977, Ravan Press's founding partner Peter Randall was banned from Ravan Press as well as from publishing, as explained by Evans and Seeber (47).

v In 1999, Pumla Dineo Gqola explains that, "Black Consciousness [BC] aspired to liberate all Black people from the shackles of oppression. While BC's stated purpose was the complete emancipation of all Black South Africans, the only oppressive force acknowledged (in early BC) was race. Black Consciousness rested on the premise that Black people had been and would continue to be oppressed because of internalised inferiority due to institutionalised racism" (2). Similarly, in 1972, Mafika Gwala writes that "Black Consciousness calls for a redefinition of concepts. Cultural, economic, social and theological concepts as seen by the Black and seeing them through his own Black self" (13).

vi Longman Publishers took up the publishing rights for the novel's international marketing.

vii The only noteworthy distinction between the 1979 and 2004 versions is the title. The Broadview edition is effectively a reprint of the Longman edition, without the many grammar and language errors found in the 1979 Longman version.

viii In the opening page of his seminal work, Gerard Genette defines paratext as, "those liminal devices and conventions, both within and outside the book, that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher, and reader: titles, forewords, epigraphs, and publishers' jacket copy are part of a book's private and public history".

ix These paratexts serve as signals in the same way that a visual artist would purposefully and carefully select the lighting, corner, and position of their artwork at a museum — to create a certain (engineered) reaction in the viewer.

xx In his influential work on radical democracy in South Africa, Anthony O'Brien writes that South Africa became a "contested cultural space in which black writing and reading crosses white reading, editing, and publishing" (50). This was precisely the case with Ravan Press as a publisher of black writers. This contestation is highlighted in the case of Miriam Tlali.

xii See Young, Damon. "White Tears, Explained, For White People Who Don't Get It." VSB, 7 October 2015. https://verysmartbrothas.theroot.com/white-tears-explained-for-white-people-who-dont-get-i-1822522689 and Nagesh, Ashitha. "What exactly is a 'Karen' and where did the meme come from?". BBC News. 31 July 2020. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-53588201

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