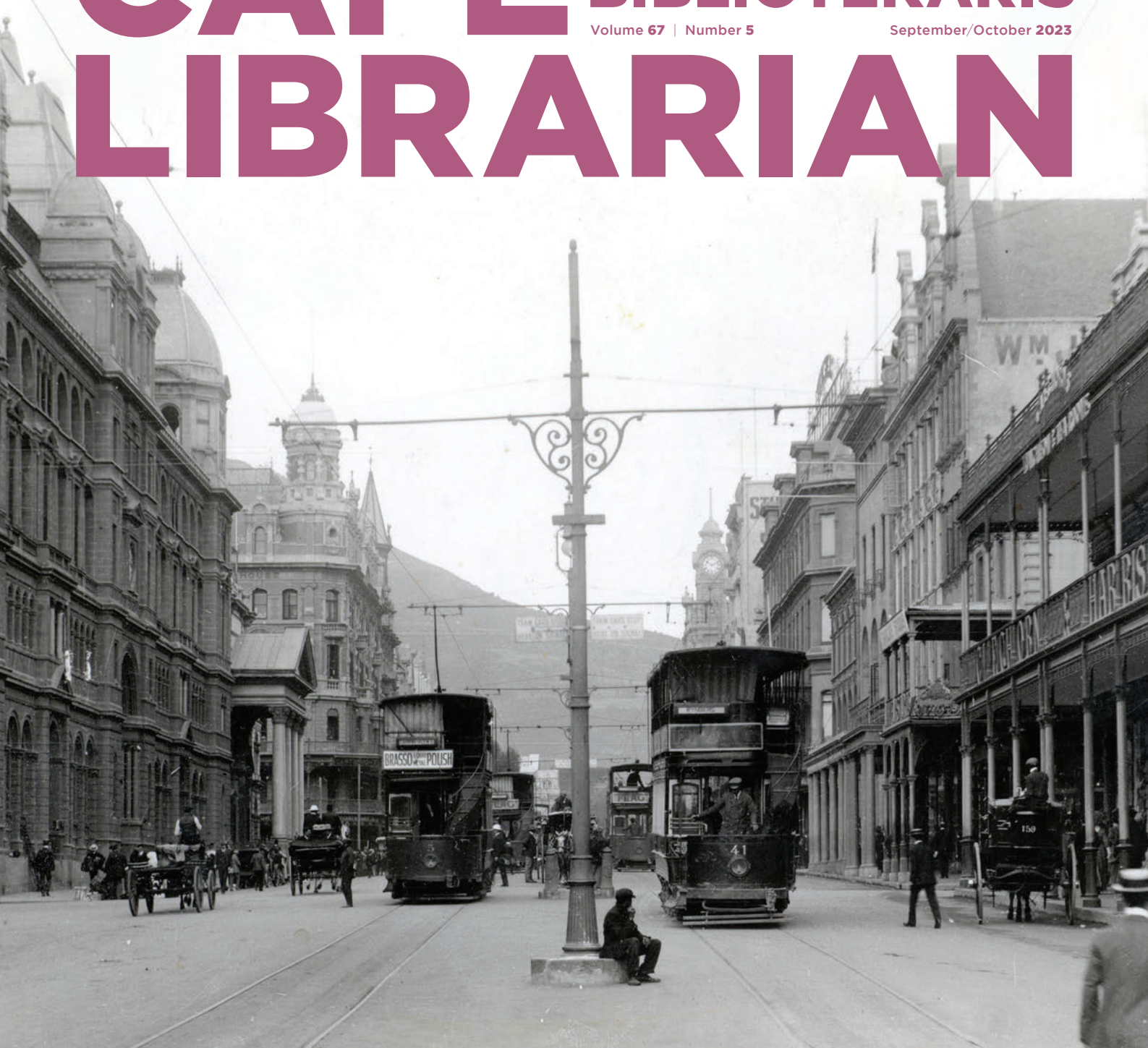


CAPE KAAPSE LIBRARIAN BIBLIOTEKARIS

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FOR YOU

Although International Literacy Day has evolved into an institution that is celebrated annually on 8 September, in truth its continued existence points to more of a blight on humanity than an event worthy of any conviviality.

The reason? Amidst a planet that's drowning in technological interventions aiding quantum advances in (among others) healthcare and — whatever you may think of it — artificial intelligence, the divide between the literate haves and have-nots is simply not shrinking at a suitably satisfactory speed given the potential solutions on offer.

Today, globally one in five adults are illiterate and of which two-thirds are female. Contrasted against developed nations sporting a 99,2% literacy rate, it is perhaps unsurprising that third-world regions such as south and west Asia (70,2%), as well as sub-Saharan Africa (64%) — languish at the opposite end of the scale.

Research by UNESCO has over time repeatedly proven the link between illiteracy and poverty, but what's less known — though equally devastating — is the connection between illiteracy and prejudice against women.

That said, from a progress perspective, it's not all doom and gloom. On the one hand, the continued need for the commemoration of International Literacy Day proves that there is still some way to go in eradicating reading incapacity; on the other, the worldwide youth literacy rate has shown a welcome increase from 77% in 1975 to nearly 92% in 2019.

But it's still not enough.

The reasons for the lack of a genuine breakthrough are multiple, complex and geo-specific. In Afghanistan, for example, the establishment of a new Taliban government in 2021 negatively affected literacy rates for schoolgoing girls in particular. Here in South Africa, 98% of children attend school, although this illusory healthy figure also hides high drop-out rates. These have been reported as 98% for 15-year-olds, 96% for 16-year-olds, 92% for 17-year-olds and 83% for 18-year-olds.

In hard numbers, that amounts to one-quarter of a million school dropouts per year.

Despite globally competitive per capita spending by the South African government on education, these disturbing numbers point to a failure in the education system which is exacerbated by — on the student side — financial constraints, exclusionary policies, teenage pregnancy and disabilities.

Be it for schools or libraries, the hydra of advancing education and literacy against almost insurmountable socio-economic pressures in not just here, but all over the developing world — is an endeavour that is exceedingly noble as it is challenging. And one which therefore makes the observance of International Literacy Day all the more necessary — as a painful but absolutely necessary reminder of the work that still needs to be done.



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ON THE COVER

Adderley Street's trams and cabs

Cape Town's renowned Adderley Street is considered by locals as its main artery. After the settlement of the Dutch East India Company at the Cape, the name of this thoroughfare constantly changed; initially being christened Burgwal, then Voorste Straat — and owing to the strolling of affluent Dutchmen alongside the *gracht* (or water canal), it later became known as Heerengracht.

In the successive British period, when proposals for the Cape to be transformed into a colony for convicts were successfully contested by the British politician Charles Bowyer Adderley, the street's name was renamed to Adderley Street in 1849.

With Cape Town established as a stopover for ships voyaging between Europe and the East, the city rapidly developed during the late-19th century.

Buildings with curved gables and streetlamps were constructed in the Victorian style. The majestic Standard Bank building, as depicted on the far left on the cover photograph; and department stores such as Garlicks and Stuttafords towered as skyscrapers.

What sprouted from the modernisation was the advent of the tram cars in 1863, that gradually replaced horse-drawn passenger cabs. In her description of this main route, the author Barbara Campbell Tait noted the 'picturesque hansom cabs, fresh from the London scene, appeared in Adderley Street to lend a Strand and Piccadilly touch to the traffic. They outlived coaches and Dutch calashes and curricles, and stayed on to see horse trams, penny-farthing cycles and electric trams come and go'.

During the heyday of the tram, this means of public transport was deemed glamorous against horses still clip-clopping down Adderley Street. The stylish double-decker trams, as well as trolley buses, were powered

by overhead electric cables. However, increased accidents saw the tram fall into disfavour with the authorities after the 1920s, eventually leading to the last tram ceasing service in 1939.

Today, the idea of tram cars and horse-drawn carriages on such a busy route seems unthinkable. For Tait, though, the street would forever remain known for its charm, because, as she expressed, 'in spite of worldly progress Adderley Street retained a homely air'.

The **Cape Librarian** extends its gratitude to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service (WCARS) for making available its rare collection of vintage photographs for the cover images of the magazine in 2023.

Picture credit: WCARS, R1089 Adderley Street, Cape Town

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D’Almeida turns the big four-o

D’Almeida Public Library has been serving its community since 1972 as a library depot in a single-section room in an area called Tarka in Mossel Bay. On 1 February 1972 the library moved to a township administrative office that quickly grew too small before, on 2 August 1983, a newly built library officially opened its doors to the public where it still is today.

The library has certainly come a long way. It now boasts facilities including an ICT section with 17 computers, free internet and Wi-Fi; a mini library for the blind and a project for the visually impaired that allows the library to provide extended services to relevant user groups.

The staff complement comprises one librarian, one library assistant and two library aids.

On 2 August the library celebrated this special day with their patrons, as no library can exist without them. Staff spoiled and served library members with tea and cake.



D’Almeida Public Library has over the years celebrated several achievements, notably:

- Nominated for best medium-sized library in 2015 by the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport
- Awarded Best Children’s Library in 2017 by the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport
- Nominated for a substantial contribution towards the development and advancement of reading and literacy (including IT literacy) in 2021 by the Western Cape Department of Cultural Awards and Sport.

D’Almeida Public Library strives to create awareness in the community about the essential services it offers and promotes the establishment of a reading culture. These include:

- Access to information
- Printing and scanning
- Story hours
- Libby App online reading assistance
- Library orientation
- User education
- Holiday programmes
- Reading programmes
- Training.

Leilani van der Berg, Librarian: D’Almeida Public Library

George makes magic in Women's month



The month of August is dedicated to celebrating women all over the world. At **George Municipality** we celebrated the phenomenal women who are an inspiration to their colleagues.

On the last day of celebrating the *My Inspirational Woman of the George Municipality Campaign*, we celebrated Sandra van Vught, who was nominated by Thembekile Precious Spengana, Senior Library Assistant at the Uniondale Public Library.

To every woman nominated, thank you for being the inspiration you have been to those around you. Take a moment to pause and remember to celebrate yourself; you have come a long way to be where you are today.

Thank you to each and every person who nominated their inspirational woman for the month of August.

Not by Erin Hanson

*You are not your age,
Nor the size of clothes you wear,
You are not a weight,
Or the colour of your hair.*

*You are not your name,
Or the dimples on your cheeks,
You are all the books you read,
And all the words you speak,
You are your croaky morning voice,
And the smiles you try to hide,*

*You're the sweetness in your laughter,
And every tear you've cried,
You're the things that you believe in,
And the people that you love,
You're the photos in your bedroom,
And the future you dream of,*

*When you decided you were defined,
By all the things you're not.*

Rachel Williams, Manager: George Municipality Library Service

Cloetesville shares the Mandela Day magic



(Ltr): Sister Fortuin (clinic manager), Sulinda Petersen (library assistant), Siyasanga Mhleka (Yeboneer), Sister Olga (clinic pharmacist), and Nizam Bray (senior librarian)

This year, **Cloetesville Public Library** delivered more than a double-dose of Mandela Day magic to its surrounding community on this special day.

In the morning we partnered with the local Aan-Het-Pad Clinic and served 100 sandwiches and more than 100 cups of hot beverages to the public that day. People were so thankful for the nourishment that they could not stop thanking us.

In the afternoon library staff visited the Home from Home foster care home and handed over party packs and colouring books. We also promoted the library services to the foster mothers and children. They were very excited and promised to join the library to make use of our services.

Nizam Bray, Senior Librarian: Cloetesville Public Library

Bredasdorp vier Nelson Mandeladag



Personeel van **Bredasdorp Publieke Biblioteek** het 'n verskeidenheid selfgemaakte brei-items by die plaaslike Our Lord-skool vir kinders met gestremdhede ter viering van Nelson Mandeladag gaan aflewer.

Hermanus heats up its community spirit



At **Hermanus Library** we believe that a community is only as good as the people it serves. Therefore, we as staff are forever seeking ways to bring kindness and service into where we live. Hermanus hosts many growing families, but also has a fair amount of retirement villages. This has meant that we have had to get quite creative with the structuring of our community outreach efforts by providing quality programmes, especially for the adult and senior crowd.

For winter in July we decided to organise an evening of reading and port tasting at the Overstrand Municipal Auditorium. It was important for us to keep things local and support businesses from the area. So we asked Stephen from Hermanus Wine Village to pair a port with each of our three featured local authors. The authors that joined the evening were Trisa Hugo from Kleinmond, Elsa Winckler from Betty's Bay and Tinus Horn from Sandbaai. Each author was invited to write a piece on what they feel embodies winter.

We prepared and served a lovely homemade butternut soup with lots of fresh bread and butter for our 60 guests, along with milk tart and coffee to end off a wonderful warm and entertaining winter's evening.

We would like to continue our work to inspire and uplift the spirit of our community by bringing as much joy as we can, to both young and old. We believe that well-organised outreach programmes relieve stress from volunteers and donors alike, as we feel more at peace and fulfilled knowing that we have done our part; and for their part, recipients sense that they are not alone in their journey. We look forward to hosting many more events and programmes in future.

Lizé Richter, Senior Library Assistant: Hermanus Public Library

Huguenot Square hosts employment programme

On 30 August, **Huguenot Square Library** hosted a transformative employment programme in collaboration with the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), YoungPeople@Work and Avon Cosmetics.

The event attracted 77 community members eager to explore employment opportunities and gain necessary insights into career development. The programme, as the first of many, marked an essential step towards addressing unemployment and empowering local residents. The EPWP played a pivotal role in this employment initiative. They presented the public with information on the programme, assisted with the jobseeker applications, as well as updating the details of those who are already on the database.

YoungPeople@Work is a local organisation whose mission is to equip individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to secure meaningful employment. They informed the community on the wide array of workshops and mentoring sessions they provide including computer classes, resumé building, interview preparation and soft skills development.

Avon, a renowned cosmetics and beauty company, contributed to the event by emphasising entrepreneurship as a viable career path. They showcased opportunities for community members to become independent entrepreneurs through their Avon Representatives programme. This highlighted the importance of self-employment and small businesses as a means of financial independence.

The programme left a lasting impact on the community as the attendees left with newfound knowledge, improved



EPWP-staff assisting patrons

job-seeking skills and a sense of empowerment. Many expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to learn and connect with potential employers and mentors.

Cheryl Petersen, Assistant Librarian: Huguenot Square Library

Durbanville Yeboneers

Two passionate YearBeyond participants residing at **Durbanville Public Library**, Lethi Nhlangothi and Storm van der Burgh, recently performed their debut puppet show (written by themselves), leaving an indelible mark on children's literacy journeys. Their performance not only transported young minds to magical worlds but also ignited a newfound enthusiasm for reading. Through interactive storytelling, the duo blended entertainment and education, fostering an experience that captivated the young audience. As children embraced the characters and narratives, their curiosity for books was kindled.



Matzikama maak 'n vakansiefees

Biblioteke in die Matzikama-streek het behoorlik uitgehaal en gewys tydens die lang Julie-skoolvakansie, waartydens hulle 'n rits treffende uitstallings en gepaardgaande uitreik-aksies aan die gemeenskap onderneem het.



Oral history helps Langebaan and Robertson remember its past

On Monday, 4 September, the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport launched the 2023 Oral History Initiative at Langebaan Town Hall. The event was hosted by the Western Cape Library Service in partnership with the Saldanha Bay Municipality.

In her keynote address, Minister Anroux Marais said: 'It is said that if someone dies, an entire library and history is lost. That's why we started with the oral history so that we can understand each other and know where our hurt comes from and how we can process this hurt. We must be able to learn from each other.'

Minister Marais continued: 'South Africa is a rainbow nation with one country, one province, one Langebaan and one Saldanha Bay municipality. It's important that we understand each other and be good to each other.'

DCAS also launched the 2023 Oral History Initiative at Robertson Town Hall on Wednesday, 13 September. The launch was hosted by the Western Cape Library Service in partnership with the Langeberg Municipality.

In her keynote address, Minister Anroux Marais said: 'What an absolute pleasure to be in Robertson today to hear you, the people of the Langeberg, tell your own stories. From Nkqubela to Ashton, from Montagu to Zolani, from Robertson to Bonnievale, the hard-working Western Cape Library Service staff travelled far and wide to find the truths from the mouths of our people.'

Minister Marais continued: 'It is more important because what history truly does — if done correctly — is to enable us to see the world through other people's eyes — to truly listen and understand what other people did, and why — how they thought, why they acted, what they regret, and what they are proud of. Unity is what the Western Cape provincial government strives for, because we are in it for you — for all of you. It is the Unity in Diversity our country's motto promises, put into practice — for you. In a country with a past as divided and contested as ours, we can only achieve unity if we understand each other and respect each other by listening to each other.'

The department recognises the importance of collecting, preserving, protecting and disseminating living heritage. With this aim in mind the department embarked on a process to record the oral histories of the people of the Western Cape. Through this initiative, the oral histories of local communities across the province have been captured and preserved so that future generations can hear first-hand accounts of the histories of their areas and will continue rolling out this initiative in various communities across the province.

Neville Adonis, Assistant Director: Information, Research, Publication and Promotions, Western Cape Library Service



The Oral History Initiative at Langebaan Town Hall on 4 September. (Top ltr): Minister Anroux Marais; Oral History participant Pauline Lakabane; and Charmaine Laubscher, Executive Deputy Mayor (Bottom ltr): Minister Marais; Selvyn Booysen, Assistant Director of the West Coast District; and Charmaine Laubscher



The Oral History Initiative at Robertson Town Hall on 13 September. Here is Minister Anroux Marais with storytellers and guests

City librarians address community needs in public seminar

The City of Cape Town's Library and Information Services (LIS) Department, in collaboration with the Western Cape Government's Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport and Western Cape Library Service, presented the second Public Library Seminar last week.

The seminar focused on initiatives taken by the LIS staff to address the needs of communities across an evolving city.

'Public libraries have faced unprecedented challenges and changes in service delivery in recent years, much of it as a result of the pandemic which deeply impacted the profession and services,' said the City's mayoral committee member for community services and health, Patricia van der Ross.

'The seminar provided an opportunity to reflect on the experience and to share the challenges, best practices and innovative solutions introduced in public libraries to enhance the services provided and to remain relevant.'

'The presentations shared by our staff will improve the knowledge and understanding of the environment as public library workers in leading key projects that are current and related to the public library sector.'

Van der Ross added that while also facing the ongoing energy crisis, libraries have been forced to reconsider ways of reaching patrons and communities.

'During these vexing times, libraries have remained a beacon of hope and continued to offer much-needed services in innovative ways. This means they have to keep up with the demand for services with proactive



involvement in the development and promotion of varied collections, including e-resources on digital platforms, different applications and enhanced technologies, which are accessible at library facilities and remotely.'

More than 400 people attended the seminar each day.

'Our librarians are innovators making use not only of technology, but also finding new ways to encourage our young patrons to visit the library and explore the vast expanse of knowledge contained at these facilities,' said Councillor Van der Ross.

(capetownetc.com, Murray Swart, 13/09/2023)

On the lighter side

Since 1982 the Bulwer Lytton Fiction Contest has challenged participants to write an atrocious opening sentence to the worst novel never written. Our whimsical literary competition honors Sir Edward George Bulwer-Lytton, whose 1830 novel *Paul Clifford* begins with 'It was a dark and stormy night.'

The contest receives thousands of entries each year, and every summer our Panel of Undistinguished Judges convenes to select winners and dishonorable mentions announced in August.

2023 Grand Prize Winner

'She was a beautiful woman; more specifically she was the kind of beautiful woman who had an hourlong skincare routine that made her look either ethereal or like a glazed donut, depending on how attracted to her you were.'

We're laughing and hungry! Chosen from over 6,000 entries, the winner of the 41st(!) Annual Lyttoniad is Maya Pasic of New York, New York.

When our champion isn't busy working at Penguin



Sir Edward George Bulwer-Lytton

Random House, you'll find her knitting, listening to Balkan folk music, and, *of course*, prowling local bookstores. A true noble Bulwerier. Congratulations, Maya!

(bulwer-lytton.com, Sent by Luinda Lilley from City of Cape Town Library and Information Service)

Belinda is bobaas!

Vir meer as 'n dekade is hierdie staatmaker, Belinda May van **Hawston Biblioteek**, al betrokke by ons skool. Elke projek doen sy met oorgawe en groot sukses.

Belinda bedryf 'n uiters suksesvolle leesprogram by ons skool waar sy en haar goed-opgeleide span (deur haarself) leerders met taalhindernisse help om met selfvertroue en begrip te lees. Sy maak altyd seker dat sy saam met die opvoeders elke leerder se behoeftes aanspreek. Daarbenewens het sy ook lede van haar span, wat tydens taalonderrig, gereeld vir die leerders in die klasse kom stories voorlees. Alles om leerders se liefde vir lees te verhoog.

Sy bedryf tans ook 'n goedbeplande naskoolse leesprogram waar die leerders Maandae tot Vrydae by die biblioteek met klanke en lees in beide Afrikaans en Engels gehelp word. Ons as skool kan met trots noem dat leerders wat deur hierdie naskoolse program ondersteun word, akademies baie beter vaar. Dit het ook ons sistemiese uitslae ten goede bevorder.

Hierdie entoesiastiese dog toegewyde mens sal jaarliks die volgende kalenderfeesdae met sukses by die skool kom aanbied:

- Wêreld Hardop-leesdag;
- Wêreld-boekedag; en
- Mandeladag.

Hierdie jaar het sy ook ons skool se grondslagfase-opvoeders gehelp wat op 15 Augustus die *Word of Art* Festival vir die Wes-Kaapse Onderwysdepartement aangebied het. Ek kan nie nalaat om te noem dat sy die damespersoneel verlede jaar vir Nasionale Onderwysersdag met 'n spa-behandeling in ons skoolsaal bederf het nie. Ons almal het so gewaardeerd en spesiaal gevoel.

Hierdie staatmaker het ook 'n fantastiese skoolvakansie-program. Tydens hierdie program word leerders met akademie, sowel as kuns en kultuur (met inheemse speletjies) gestimuleer. Ouers wat werk hoef geensins bekommerd te wees nie, want leerders word van wonderlike etes en geskenkpakketjies voorsien. Dit is alles te danke aan Belinda May se goue hart en insiatief ter opheffing van ons gemeenskap.



Belinda May

Vir die afgelope sewe jaar glimlag ons breed oor haar groot impak op ons skool se Eisteddfod-leerders. Danksy haar harde werk en opoffering vertoon ons skool jaarliks van krag tot krag met ons leerders se prestasies. Aanvanklik kom sy eers die leerders keur vir watter gedig die beste by die betrokke leerder se persoonlikheid pas. Daarna kom sy weekliks die opvoeders help deur die leerders individueel af te rond vir hul verhoogoptredes. Hierdie jaar is ons supertrots en spog ons in die grondslagfase Eisteddfod wat op 2 en 3 Junie plaasgevind het met 25 Cum Laudes en 36 leerders wat goud ontvang het.

Graag wil ek die graad 1 leerder Donte Pinto uitlig. Hy het aanvanklik baie gesukkel met klanke en lees. Danksy Belinda se ingryping deur haar puik leesprogram en haar afronding met die Eisteddfod het hy ook weggestap met Cum Laude vir sy gedig. Nog 'n hoogtepunt van hierdie jaar se Eisteddfod is die feit dat Kelvin Slabbert, danksy Belinda se volgehoue hulp deur die Eisteddfod-beoordelaars verkies is om aan die *Huisgenoot* Eisteddfod te gaan deelneem. Hy het natuurlik ook Cum Laude ontvang.

Belinda May is vir ons skool goud werd, nee, nog meer — sy is voorwaar platinum!

MV Crowley, Grondslagfase Hoof: Hawson Primêre Skool

Bathandi, babhali, bafundi besiXhosa, sihlaba ikhwelo kuba ikhwelo lityala. Sicela nithumela amabalana, amanqaku, nako nakuphi okunokuphucula, kufundise, kwazise, kukhulise, konwabise kuphinde kukhuthaza ukubhalwa nokufundwa kolwimi lwesiXhosa. Sikhuthaza ooSozilwimi ukuba imisebenzi yabo yophando eshankathelweyo ngesiXhosa ingangeniswa nayo ukuze ipapashwe njengenqaku eliyakufundwa luninzi lwabantetho isisiXhosa nabanqwenela ukusifunda.

On reading, books and libraries

I was raised and grew up in Wynberg. I spent the first five years of my life in Standard Lane in what is now called the Chelsea Village above Maynardville. In 1960 we moved into 236 Rosmead Avenue Wynberg, just down the road from this hall. In those days our address was 'Nobeda' Prince George Drive, Wynberg. When the M5 was built, it changed to Rosmead Avenue. My parents were Mogamat Noor and Gadija Moerat. Many Wynberg residents, and here I'm referring to the area that used to be the former coloured area — bounded by the railway line, South Road, Rosmead Avenue and Broad Road — would have known them or knew of them. Something that many did not know, was that my father had to get special permission from the neighbours to buy a plot and build a house on Prince George Drive, because in those days the area below Ottery Road was reserved for coloured professionals — and my father was classified Cape Malay. It was preferred and assumed that Muslims would live near the mosque in Park Road and Christians near the churches. This was just one of the many absurdities of separate development and social engineering under apartheid.

My other memory is of the Castletown Post office which we used frequently, as my father subscribed to English newspapers like the *Daily Mail* and both my sister and I were pen pal enthusiasts and wrote to youths our age around the world. The post office had entrances designated for white and non-white people — and this in a so-called coloured area. I don't actually recall white people using this post office; our side was always crowded and the other side empty but never was there an attempt made to ease the congestion or shorten the wait.

I mention these impressions of a young child, not to embarrass anyone, but because I think we don't speak about it enough and then we wonder why we (still) struggle with social cohesion. It is my hope that in telling our stories through oral history projects like these that we will eventually reach an understanding of our history as a people to eventually forge a nation.

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 one's children from the time they are born. An early childhood memory that has stayed with me is my father reading **Lorna Doone** by RD Blackmore. I have no idea why he would have thought a swashbuckling romance novel written in 1869 was suitable reading material for a young child, but I have never forgotten the title, the rain sweeping across the English moors and the highwaymen.

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 having just turned five two months earlier. 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, the series comprised topics from nursery rhymes to short stories, fairy tales and folklore to myths and legends. Some volumes also covered geography, mathematics and science. The aim was to make learning fun. It also included a

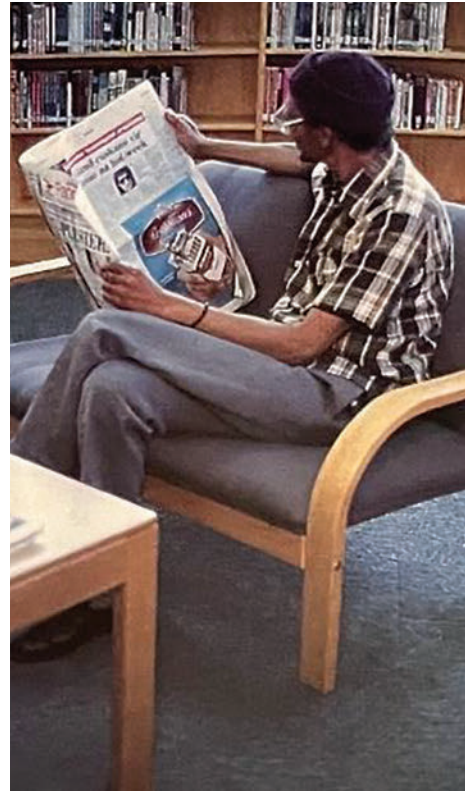
guide to parenting from infant to adolescent and preparing one's child for school. Only Volume 12 has survived the years and I treasure this reminder of the important role that parents play in their child's education.

The primary school I attended valued reading highly; and prizegiving concerts at the end of the year included book prizes for star 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*, or prescribed textbooks from which we learnt to read. In senior primary we were expected to write 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 reading all the children's classics like Hans Christian Andersen and Grimm's fairy tales, there were **Alice in Wonderland**, **The wind in the willows** and **The Arabian Nights**. But the books that really stand out for me are **Anne Frank's diary**, **Uncle Tom's cabin**, **Up from slavery** by Booker T Washington, **The last of the Mohicans** (which made me cry), a children's version of **The Iliad** and **The Odyssey** and a title I will always remember — **Tales from Shakespeare** by Charles and Mary Lamb. Besides the regular visits to 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 50c could buy you five children's books. I recall my sister buying all the Enid Blyton *Famous Five* books she could find but as for myself, I can only remember an illustration of a gypsy caravan in a book about a travelling circus. A vivid memory from this period is of a stormy winter's night, a log fire crackling merrily in the fireplace, my father reading the newspaper, my mother knitting while listening to a story on Springbok Radio — and me stretched out on the carpet, reading Charles Dickens' **A Christmas carol** while the wind howled outside and the waving branches of the trees lining the road cast eerie shadows on the walls.

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 the following 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 photos are from a January 1994 **Cape Librarian** article on Adriaanse Library, written by librarian Nohra Moerat (bottom left)

In September 1967, Castletown Library (a branch of Cape Town City Libraries) opened to serve the 'non-White' members of Wynberg Library and the coloured population of Wynberg. My father, a staunch supporter of SACOS and its campaign of 'no normal sport in an abnormal society', never used the library again. Us children didn't have much choice as we needed a variety of books to read, so he would drop us off and we would walk home.

In 1968, having just turned twelve, I started high school. I was old enough to be put in charge of my sister but more than that, I graduated to the Adult section of the library. My joy was short-lived. The adult section was a dingy space on the ground floor of a small shopping centre. The entrance to the library was flanked on the one side by a fish and chips shop and a jewellery shop on the other. The children's section and small activity area were upstairs.

At least this space was expansive, with open windows that let in the light and fresh air. Bexhill Road, where the library was located, led to the railway station and was always noisy with hawkers plying their trade and the hustle and bustle of commuters forever on the move. Definitely no quiet study areas here! More than 50 years later, the building is now called Castletown Centre and the fish and chips shop and jewellery shop are still there; according to Google Maps anyway. It was a far cry from the beautiful parkland setting of the Wynberg Public Library from which we had so recently been ousted.

The high school I attended, just like my primary school, placed a premium on reading; and teachers of all subjects gave us recommended reading lists in addition to the prescribed textbooks. The maths teacher would ask you to read up about ancient Greek mathematicians like Pythagoras; the writer Richard Rive was my Latin teacher in Standard VI, and one was as likely to learn to conjugate verbs as you would a passage from a Shakespearean comedy.

All our teachers, from Standard VI to Matric, expected us to read beyond the curriculum to offset the limitations of Coloured education. The school had no laboratory and no library; the public library provided the reading material while pretend experiments and our imaginations did the rest. One of the school's mantras was, 'Don't say you failed because of; say you succeeded in spite of.'

The collection at Castletown Library was too limited to serve our needs and we had to request books to be brought to us from Wynberg Library (or so we surmised). I asked my sister about what she recalled about Castletown Library and all she could remember is putting in a request almost every week and having to go back the following week to collect the book. I became so frustrated that eventually I just started on the Fiction shelf at A which was positioned near the entrance to the library and carrying on until I reached Z. Then I would move on to Biography and do the same. And then go back to A. This method taught me the beauty of serendipity — an unplanned fortunate discovery — which for me is the absolute best thing about libraries. Besides the recommended reading list from school which mainly included all the classics of English literature from Charles Dickens to Thomas Hardy and not forgetting William Shakespeare, I also read DH Lawrence (all the titles on the shelves) and Victor Hugo's **Les Misérables**. My father continued to recommend books that he had read as a student and young teacher and so I encountered authors as diverse as Guy de Maupassant and Emile Zola to James A Michener.



Nohra Moerat and Anroux Marais, Minister: Cultural Affairs and Sport

I particularly enjoyed biographical or historical novels and I actually remember the names and works of artists because of the books written about them. There was Irving Stone who wrote **Lust for life** (about Vincent van Gogh) and **The agony and the ecstasy** (about Michelangelo); **Moulin Rouge** by Pierre la Mure (about Henri Toulouse-Lautrec) and **Naked came I** by David Weiss (about Auguste Rodin). I could not remember the names of the authors and had to look them up, but I have never forgotten the names of the artists or their work. When I finally had the good fortune to see the works of these artists in museums and art galleries in Europe, they were as familiar to me as anything I had grown up with.

With my method of reading from A to Z, I encountered writers that I would not necessary have been exposed to at school or at home. Thus, I encountered James Ngugi (later Ngugi wa Thiong'o); I read **A grain of wheat** because the writer's name intrigued me. It was the first novel by an African writer that I read. I found a book by Frank Yerby not knowing he was an African-American author and my absolute prize, **To be young, gifted and black** by Lorraine Hansberry.

But libraries in those days were not only places about books. At a time when there were limited opportunities for entertainment for young coloured people with cultural interests, the library was also a social space where a boyfriend could take you on a date for an evening performance of live folk music or a poetry recital: a feat impossible to imagine today; but for me the memory will last forever.

Nohra Moerat

This is how to change young people's lives



The role of YearBeyond ICT Champions is to assist computer users to do the basics; create their own Gmail accounts, submit applications for further studies and introduce them to different job hunting sites.

The ICT Champions also help facilitate information sessions and workshops to help build the relevant IT skills. On the other hand, as Reading Champions our role is to encourage and build a strong culture of reading in communities, particularly amongst younger children. In this line of work, you will also work on exhibitions, offer administrative support to the librarian and help host outreaches to promote literacy.

National Book week is an important event, where we as library staff, and Yeboneers, can encourage children and youngsters to become members of the library, and teach them the importance of reading to cultivate a reading culture.



Edwin Jacobs (ICT Champion) busy with a reading activity during National Bookweek

As Yeboneers, we take part in the full YearBeyond Youth Development Programme and receive the support in person or virtually, depending on one's location. We are in the library service programme.

YeBoneers progress into further work or studies at the end of the experience. The programme, with the support of a mentor, provides young people with the opportunity to develop several key skills needed in the workplace, while also learning to serve the children in their own community.

A library is a very useful platform that brings together people willing to learn. It helps us expand our knowledge. We develop our reading habits from a library and satisfy our thirst and curiosity for knowledge. This helps with a person's personal growth and development. People of every age group can find resources such as books, magazines, periodicals, audios, videos and materials in other formats according to their reading interests and tastes. We always try to do our best and help where we can. Putting a smile on faces and sending them away happy.



Faizel Conradie (Reading Champion) during a reading activity

When patrons are satisfied, then we are happy.

This programme means a lot to us. It enables us to go far and beyond. For us YeBoneers, this is the ultimate programme to prepare us for the next chapter in our lives, be it studying or working full-time.

As library staff we are privileged to have vibrant young people to fill the positions as reading and ICT Champions. They are really a big help to us and it is fun to teach them. They are fast learners and come up with the brightest ideas. In turn, we can also learn a lot from them when it comes to computers and mobile phones, and in this way we complement each other. The programme has motivated the participants to continue their studies and it is obvious that they are now familiar with the work environment and how it functions.

Romano Griebelaar, Reading Champion: YearBeyond Programme

Paving a way for the future



Tamanisha Witbooi

My name is Saadiqah Omaidien. I am part of the YearBeyond Programme. I am an ICT Champion. The programme has taught me how to be a better team player. I learned how to better understand people and their behaviours. The programme allows me to help more people from the community. I get to show the patrons a few tricks about computers. I learned more about the library environment, and am still learning more every day.

The programme means a lot to me — because of the programme I can do what I love and serve the community. I love reading and I have a passion for working in the ICT field. Another thing I absolutely love is helping people and I like to exchange the skills I was taught to others.

This programme has honestly taught me a lot. I am honoured to be part of the Yearbeyond.

Saadiqah Omaidien, Reading Champion: YearBeyond Programme

My name is Tamanisha Witbooi. I am part of the YearBeyond library stream and work at Avian Park Library in Worcester as a Reading Champion.

This programme gave me a chance to develop my skills and communicate better with people. I also learnt how to be more patient and gentle with children. To see that I can put a smile on their faces and how they are so happy to see you and excited for you to read to them — it means a lot to me.

I learnt that the programme is not only about the stipend but also about gaining more experience. And that you need to love what you do and give back to the community by assisting them when they come to the library.

The Programme has also boosted my self-confidence. This has benefitted me not just when reading to children, but to help with the computers and wherever else I am needed in the library. I am a very caring person and this programme helped me to be more dutiful and to understand people more.

YearBeyond really helped me discover where I want to be in the future and what I want to do after this programme.

Tamanisha Witbooi, Reading Champion: YearBeyond Programme

Learning about books and people



Hlumisa Binca

My name is Hlumisa Binca and I am a Reading Champion, so I'm going to talk about what the YearBeyond programme means to me as an individual.

This initiative has helped me improve my vocabulary and reading skills. It has helped me to be able to work with people and learn to be patient and control my emotions. With the work that is given to me, I can say I have an idea of how things work at the library and that is thanks to the programme.

Working with children, one realises their individual abilities. For each child you have to be thoughtful and patient: sometimes you find six-year-olds who haven't even been to preschool yet, but they come to the library to read, or, more to look at the pictures in the book. As a reading champion one has to be patient with them and try to teach them some new words. But then again we have so little time with them that we cannot fully do the job that teachers do.

Working in a public space you have to be a team player and adjust to dealing with different patrons. And what I learnt is that all people are the same: you have to treat everyone equal — from old to young, poor or rich and even literate and illiterate. I am really grateful to have been chosen to be part of the YearBeyond programme.

Hlumisa Binca, Reading Champion: YearBeyond Programme

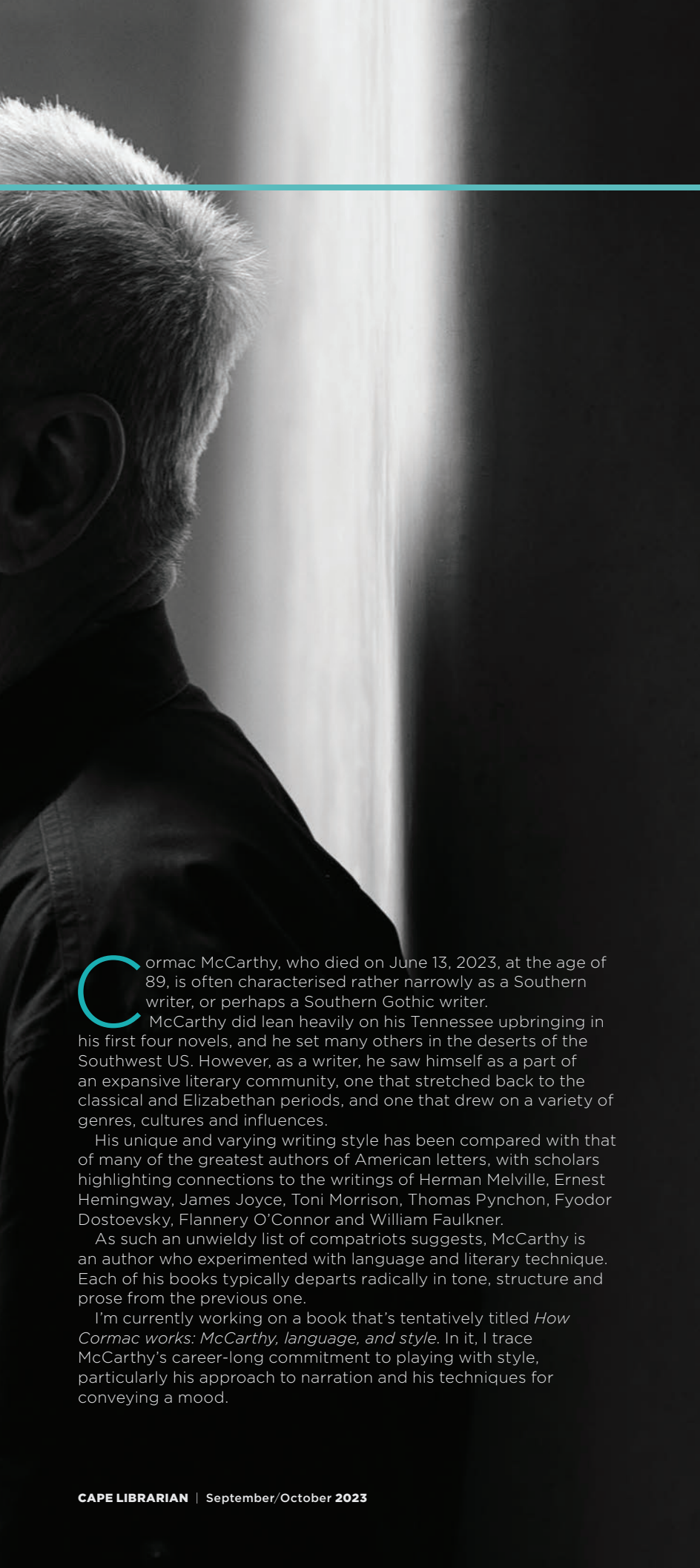


Cormac McCarthy's fearless approach to writing

by Bill Hardwig

Cormac McCarthy at his home in New Mexico, 12 August 2014
Beowulf Sheehan





Cormac McCarthy, who died on June 13, 2023, at the age of 89, is often characterised rather narrowly as a Southern writer, or perhaps a Southern Gothic writer.

McCarthy did lean heavily on his Tennessee upbringing in his first four novels, and he set many others in the deserts of the Southwest US. However, as a writer, he saw himself as a part of an expansive literary community, one that stretched back to the classical and Elizabethan periods, and one that drew on a variety of genres, cultures and influences.

His unique and varying writing style has been compared with that of many of the greatest authors of American letters, with scholars highlighting connections to the writings of Herman Melville, Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, Toni Morrison, Thomas Pynchon, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Flannery O'Connor and William Faulkner.

As such an unwieldy list of compatriots suggests, McCarthy is an author who experimented with language and literary technique. Each of his books typically departs radically in tone, structure and prose from the previous one.

I'm currently working on a book that's tentatively titled *How Cormac works: McCarthy, language, and style*. In it, I trace McCarthy's career-long commitment to playing with style, particularly his approach to narration and his techniques for conveying a mood.

Two radically different reading experiences

Depending on the book — and even passages within certain books — McCarthy's writing can be characterised as minimalistic, meandering, esoteric, humorous, terrifying, pretentious, sentimental or folksy.

Some novels depend heavily on dense passages of narrative exposition and philosophising, while others lean heavily on everyday dialogue. Some books celebrate regional voices and vernacular, and others adopt a neutral, removed and clinical tone.

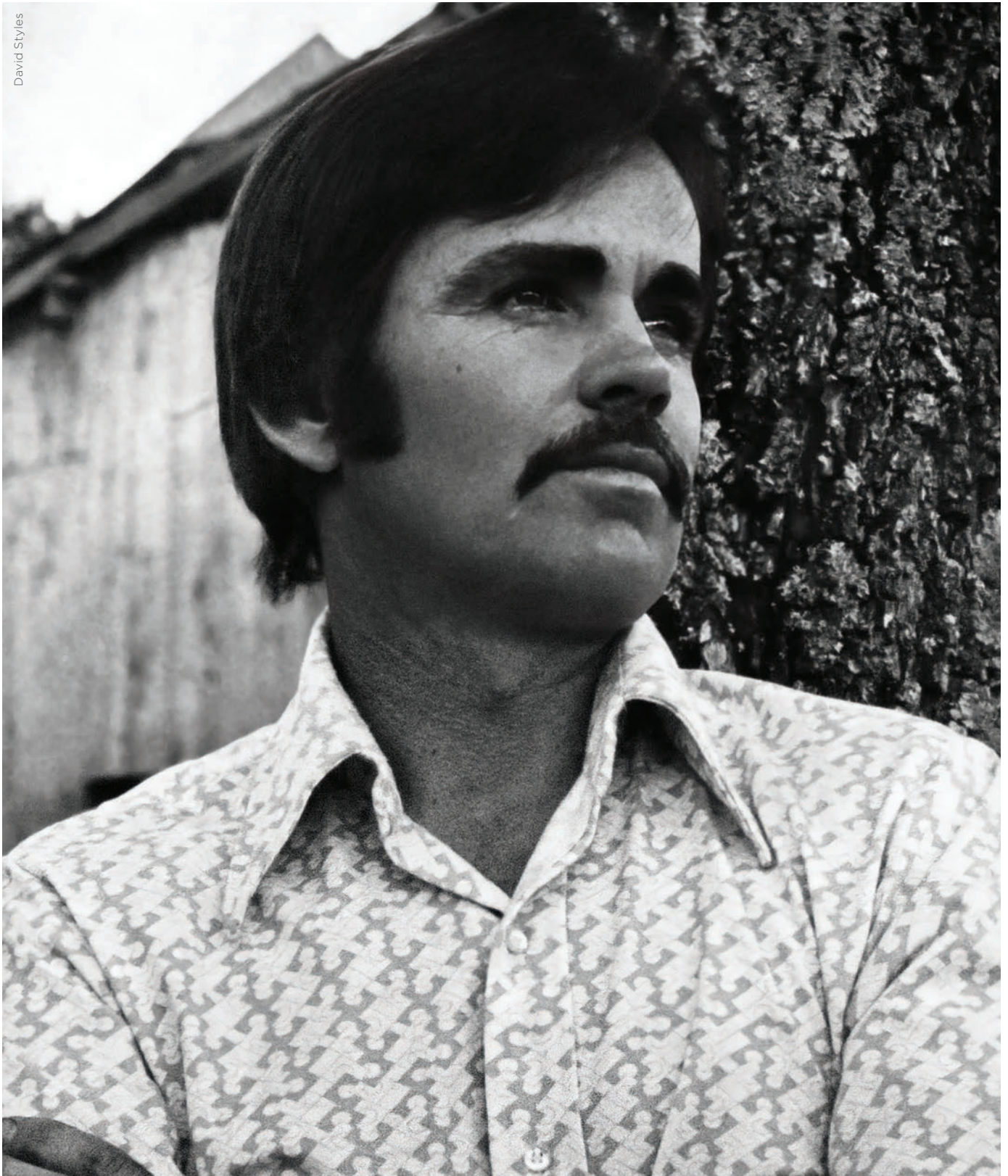
It is possible to see McCarthy's literary range and stylistic experimentation in two of his most famous novels, **Blood meridian**, which came out in 1985, and **The road**, which was published over two decades later, in 2006, and was turned into a movie in 2009.

In **Blood meridian**, set in the desert of the Southwest US and Mexico, McCarthy's prose is dense, with details piling up one after another.

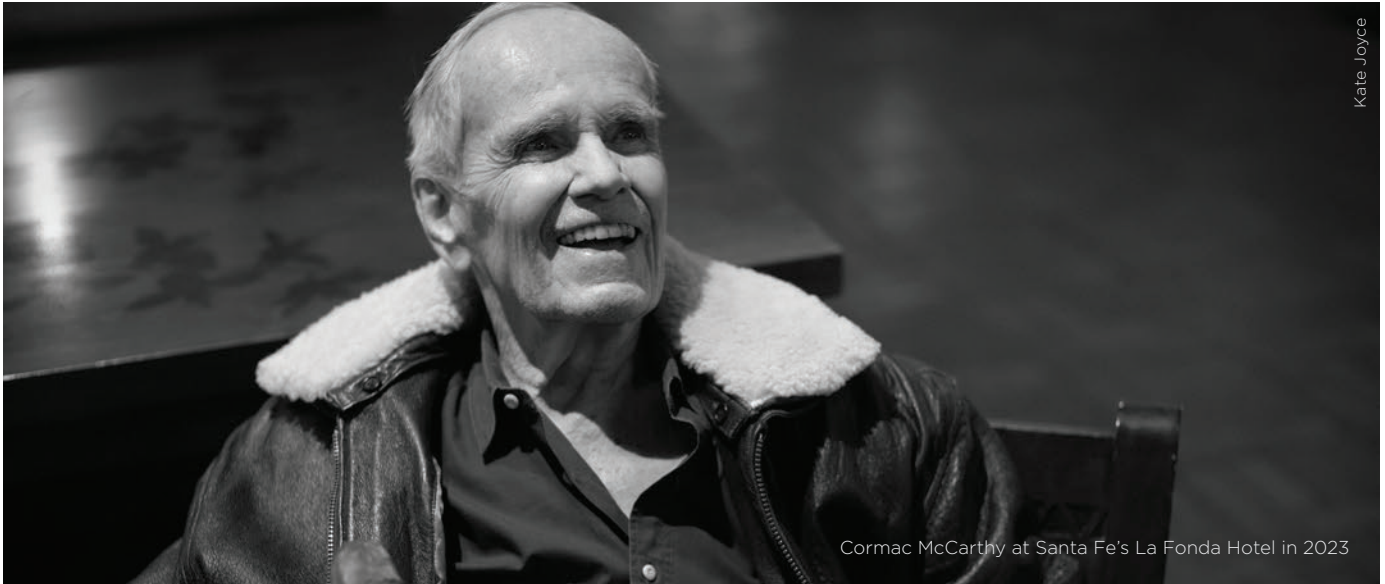
Take the famous scene in which a mercenary gang of American scalp hunters encounters a band of Comanche warriors:

A legion of horribles, hundreds in number, half naked or clad in costumes attic or biblical or wardrobe out of a fevered dream with the skins of animals and silk finery and pieces of uniform still tracked with the blood of prior owners, coats of slain dragoons, frogged and braided cavalry

David Styles



Portrait of Cormac McCarthy used as the first-edition back cover of his 1973 novel **Child of God**



Cormac McCarthy at Santa Fe's La Fonda Hotel in 2023

jackets, one in a stovepipe hat and one with an umbrella and one in white stockings and a bloodstained wedding veil and some in headgear or crane feathers or rawhide helmets that bore the horns of bull or buffalo and one in a pigeontailed coat worn backwards and otherwise naked and one in the armor of a Spanish conquistador...

The entire sentence is much too long to quote here. But you get the picture: There is very little punctuation and there are few places to even take a breath.

The narration in other moments of the novel catalogues the desert landscape of the US West in similarly painstaking and tedious — if also beautiful — detail. The prose feels drawn out, slow and repetitive, like the subject of the novel: the United States' western expansion in the 19th century, a campaign of escalating destruction that McCarthy characterises in the novel as 'some heliotropic plague'.

The road, a later novel similarly committed to the idea of incessant movement, could not be more different in its style, pacing and rhythm. The prose in that novel, which won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for fiction, is concise and is marked by a linguistic restraint that's entirely absent in **Blood meridian**.

Rather than dense and overwhelming passages, this novel is constructed of short and distinct paragraphs that are separated by white space and often unrelated to what comes directly before or after:

It was colder. Nothing moved in that night world. A rich smell of woodsmoke hung over the road. He pushed the cart on through the snow...

In his dream she was sick and he cared for her. The dream bore the look of sacrifice but he thought differently...

On this road there are no godspoke men. They are gone and I am left and they have taken with them the world. Query: How does the never to be differ from what never was?

Dark of invisible moon. The nights now only slightly less black...

People sitting on the sidewalk in the dawn half immolate and smoking in their clothes. Like failed sectarian suicides...

Each paragraph in this passage is different in tone, subject matter, place, and time from what comes before and appears after.

A lasting legacy

It might be tempting to see such difference as an evolution, as McCarthy honing and taming his narrative voice from his earlier work. But his final long novel, **The passenger**, which was published in 2022, returns again to the rambling prose reminiscent of McCarthy's big novels in the middle of his career, **Suttree** and **Blood meridian**.

Some readers find McCarthy's stylistic flourishes and experimentation excessive — or, even worse, pretentious. But they always struck me as reflecting his love of words and the endless possibilities of language.

In a blurb that was originally written for McCarthy's first novel, **The orchard keeper**, Ralph Ellison wrote, 'McCarthy is a writer to be read, to be admired, and quite honestly — envied.'

As I learned of McCarthy's death, I couldn't help but think of this quote that marked the beginning of his career, and to think how right Ellison was to champion McCarthy's craft — the careful use of language that sustained his work for six decades across 12 novels.

Bill Hardwig is Associate Professor of English at the University of Tennessee. This article was first published on theconversation.com on 16 June 2023



The best things in life are free: In praise of our libraries

by Nick Dall



In 1761, a German colonist by the name of Joachim von Dessin bequeathed a few thousand books, two 'skulls of savages', a collection of 'native craft' and a fund for the development of a library at the Cape. It took a while, but a library was eventually established in part of the Slave Lodge at the bottom of the Company's Garden.

Back then the literary world at the Cape was pretty limited. So much so that one wag remarked it was sad that Von Dessin could not have donated to the Colony 'a collection of readers to go with his collection of books'. But little by little, and thanks to the efforts of people like Thomas Pringle, John Fairbairn, Olive Schreiner and Sol Plaatje, South Africa developed a library culture.

The writing is on the walls

Fast forward to modernity and it is still often said that one of the problems with South Africa is that *we do not read*. As an author looking at my biannual royalties statements, it's very easy to agree with this assertion. But my experiences in the libraries of the Western Cape provide some evidence for the defence.

As someone whose job entails digging up the forgotten and fascinating stories of South Africa's complicated past, I end up visiting quite a few of our libraries. Often, I find myself needing one particular book — and this book can sometimes be found in the most unlikely of places. Trying to shed light on the lives of pyromaniacs, prophets and presidents has sent me to the public libraries of Lentegeur,

Simon's Town, Plumstead and Athlone, to name but a few.

Whenever I enter these public buildings, I feel a little better about the future of our country. Granted, they could often do with a lick of paint and some fresh flooring. But this is more than made up for by the people who work at and use our libraries.

On random weekday mornings, I've found students making use of free Wi-Fi and pensioners coming to read the newspaper. Knitting circles and moms' groups. On equally random afternoons I've encountered matric study groups and kiddies' reading corners. Book clubs and author talks. And on weekends I've come across craft markets, heritage walks and book fairs.

While it would be hard to describe our libraries as 'cutting edge', they have also made some concessions to modernity. The Libby app allows you to take ebooks out, free; the online catalogue makes it easy to pinpoint a particular book, and the NLSA's digital collections contain some incredible online resources.

Going above and beyond

In my experience librarians are invariably knowledgeable, friendly and helpful. Always happy to assist in the search for a book that's been incorrectly shelved or to help with sourcing a book from another library.

But some librarians go the extra mile. Just last week my hunt for some 1897 issues of the *Eastern Cape Herald* led me to the Cape Town campus of the National Library of South Africa. Not only did the librarian show me how to load the microfilm into the projector, but, once I'd found the articles I needed, he also spent well over an hour trying to manipulate the digital files so I could actually read them. (As an aside, the National Library — with its elegant architecture, fantastic collection, and soothing views of the Company's Garden — is a wonderful place to while away an hour or two.)

A few years ago, I was blown away by the kindness of two librarians in particular. Sir George Yonge (who was so hopelessly inept and corrupt that he barely lasted a year as governor of the Cape Colony) would become one of the most memorable characters in **Rogues' gallery**, a book about the long history of

corruption in South Africa. But his brief and forgettable tenure also meant that very little had been written about him. I managed to buy one of the two books about Yonge's governorship online, but I couldn't find the other anywhere. I knew (from the aforementioned online catalogue) that the Western Cape library system had copies in Milnerton and Mossel Bay. But my hands were tied by the Level 5 Covid lockdown.

I tried phoning both libraries, but got no answer. On a wing and a prayer, I fired off emails to some addresses I found online. Not even 10 minutes later, I got a reply from the district librarian for the Southern Cape region, connecting me with the Mossel Bay librarian. Within the hour, I had received a scan of the entire chapter about Yonge's despicable reign at the Cape. The show could go on. And, like all the services offered by our libraries, getting the info hadn't cost me so much as a cent.

The best things in life are free

And that, I guess, is the point of this column. It's easy — and entirely justifiable — to moan about how our hard-earned taxes are not being used for their intended purposes. Our electricity, rail, health and road systems are all in a sorry state. But, in my area at least, the library system appears to be an exception to this rule.

So, this Library Week, why not pay your local library a visit? You could apply for a library card (it's always free), take advantage of the week-long amnesty on fines to return some outstanding books (in Cape Town alone there are 40,000 overdue items!) or see if there's a regular group or a once-off event you'd like to be a part of.

And if you don't know where your local library is, google it. As Einstein said, 'The only thing that you absolutely have to know is the location of the library.'

Nick Dall has an MA in Creative Writing from UCT. As a journalist covering everything from cricket to chameleons, his favourite stories are always those about people — dead or alive, virtuous or villainous. He is the co-author with Matthew Blackman of Rogues gallery: An irreverent history of corruption in South Africa. This article was first published on dailymaverick.co.za on 21 March 2023



Imigaqo yokubhala neyokupela ulwimi isiXhosa

nguXolisa Tshongolo



A ndinangqiniseko yokuba iilwimi zasemzini zinayo kusini na imigaqo esesikweni yokubhala nokupela.

Nangani kunjalo, sinabo ubungqina bokuba ezi ilwimi zinendlela ezibhalwa nezipelwa ngayo, enokuba asinayo na esandleni imigaqo yazo. Iilwimi zabantsundu zona zinemigaqo esesikweni yokuzibhala nokuzipela nethi imana ukuhlaziywa ngamaxesha afanelekileyo.

Isizathu sohlaziyo lwayo kukuba ezi lwimi zaqala ukubhalwa ngabantu ezingezizo ezabo, abangazazi ncamatshi, abazifundileyo. Ekuhambeni kwethuba abantsundu baye bakwazi ukubhala nokufunda, bazibhaqa ke iintsilelo ezikuyo. Ukwenziwa kwemigaqo yolwimi ngabantu abangagabo abelo lwimi ke kudinge ukuba iqwalaselwe ngokutsha kwakube umsebenzi lowo uthathwe ngabanikazi beelwimi.

Imigaqo yokubhala neyokupela ulwimi isiXhosa emiyo iluhlaziyo lonya 2017. Kwaye kwabizwa imbizo yabanini nabasebenzisi bolwimi isiXhosa ukuba kuboniswane ngeendawo ezidinga ingqwalasela kwimigaqo ebimi. Ezo nkalo ingaziindawo eziguqulwe kukuhamba kwamaxesha okuze nezinto ezintsha, okanye zizinto ezifunyanwa ziyingxaki ngohlobo ezamiswa ngalo, njalunjalo ke.

Ngumngeni ke ukuhlaziywa kwemigaqo emiyo ukuba imiswe ngandlela yimbi kunaleyo yaziwayo. Inxalenye yabantu iye ingafuni ukusuka kwimigaqo emidala, ingakumbi abo bangakhange babe yinxalenye yohlaziyo olo. Kambe ke aba 'xhathisa' andibathathi ngokuba bachasile, koko ndibathatha ngokuba bakhusela oko bakwazi kulungile, ibasithele into yokub oko bakukhuselayo sele kududelwe ngunjambase. Isizathu esiphambili ke sobukho babo 'xhathisa' singenxa yokuba bengakhange babe yinxalenye yeenguqu, ukutsho oko iinguqu ezo abazazi ukuba zize njani na, ke ngoko bazibona zikukubhoxa. Akekho ke umntu owamkela into angayaziyo endaweni yaleyo ayaziyo. Umzekelo omtsha wale meko kukuguqulwa kwenguqulelo yeSitsonga (Xitsonga) kwigama leBhanki enguVimba ukuba uguqulo olo lulandele imigaqo ehlaziyiweyo yolu lwimi. AmaTsonga alwe abomvu esithi loniwe ulwimi lwawo, kanti ashiywe ziinguqu, bakwimigaqo yamzuzu.

Ababhali ngolwimi isiXhosa nabo bayabetheka ziinguqu zonyaka 2017 kwimigaqo yokubhala neyokupela olu lwimi. Ushiye ke ukuba ababhali banamhlanje bebehleli besoyiswa nayileyo ibimi, apho bekufuneka ukuba umhleli abe sisapetsu eswantsuliswa kukusetyenziswa gwenxa kwemigaqo ngumbhali. Kule ihlaziyiweyo ke ngoku imigaqo kumnyama mpela kubo.

Owona mgaqo ubasokolisayo ngowokusetyenziswa kweqhagamshela kwizakhi, kwizibizo ezimbaxa, kwizimaphambili zeedijithi kumanani, nakungquzulwano lwezikhamiso. Ababhali abanyali ukubhantseka iqhagamshela nalapho lingafuneki khona. Bathi bakungazi ukuba liyafuneka kusini na bazihlangule ngokuliqhawula igama, kuthi ebekumele ukuba kuisakhi udibane nako kuthiwe geqe phaya. Oku akuveli kuba kuyimigaqo ehlaziyiweyo, bebehleli besokola ababhali,

bekuphambanisa oku, baqatsele ke ukuphambana kwimigaqo ihlaziyiweyo.

Omnye umgaqo obooyisayo ababhali banamhlanje ngumgaqo wophawu lwesimelinobumba. Owona mkhuba wabo apha kulo mgaqo kukungashiyo sithuba phakathi kwegama eliguzulwe nobumba wokugqibela ngesimelinobumba negama elilandela elo gama liphunguliweyo. Ababhali bavele bawadibanise la magama enziwe eli siko lokuphantshwa nangani ingamagama ohlukileyo, athi ukuba ayalandelelana bavele batsho ngesidili lomtsheko omnye! Ukusetyenziswa kwesimelinobumba kunceda ukufunda ngokuchebeleza, ingakumbi kwisihobe, akwenzelwa ukuhlanganisa amagama ohlukileyo. Amagama ohlukileyo akadityaniswa, ingekuko ekwaxhiweni kwezibizo ezimbaxa apho lingasebenziyo olu phawu. Awenziwanga hlengahlengiso ke lo mgaqo, ngumgaqo omdala lo, kodwa ababhali bayawugwenxa.

Owokugqibela umgaqo abawophula kakhulu ababhali nongumgaqo omdala ngumgaqo wokwahlulwa kwamagama. Ababhali banamhlanje andazi bawulahle phi na lo mgaqo mdala kangaka! Bohlulwa nakukuqaphela ezikhombisi okanye izalathisi xa bebhala, badibanise isalathisi nesibizo. Kow madoda! Into esisiseko ngolu hlobo! Ababhali bohlulwa kukukhomba. Ufundiswa kwakumabanga asezantsi esikolweni lo mgaqo. Kambe ke kule mihla uphoswa nangabahlohi bolwimi isiXhosa ezikolweni andazi ke ngoku xa kunjalo! Inene kugoso okwaphukayo!

Luxanduva lweBhodi yeeLwimi yoMzantsi Afrika ke ukuhlaziya nokwazisa ngeenguqu kwimigaqo. Iyazama ke, kodwa umonakalo lo ungaphaya kwayo njengoko ukufundisa ngeendlela yokubhala nokupela iluxanduva lweesebe lezemfundo. Omabini ke la maqumrhu ayazama ukwazisa ngezinto eziluhlaziyo, kodwa owona msebenzi ngulowo wesebe lezemfundo ezikolweni. Nababhali ngokwabo luxanduva lwabo ukuqinisekisa ukuba bayazazi iintsokotha zolwimi ababhala ngalo. Goba msenge iibhokhwe zikutye!

UGq Xolisa Tshongolo nguManejala oPhezulu wePhondo leMpuma Koloni kwiBhodi yeeLwimi zonke zoMzantsi Afrika (PanSALB)



Ideas on an improved public library service delivery model in South Africa

by Leonard Fortuin



Leading up to the dawn of our then-new democracy, those in the library profession in South Africa were actively and enthusiastically engaged in crafting the future of their facilities, with particular reference to the provision of public library services. Within the province, the latter service sector at the time was fragmented between the Cape Provincial Library Service; which reflected historical developments (such as the independence of the Cape Town City Library Service), as well as apartheid-inspired library service constructs.

Post-democracy was an ideal opportunity to re-align the province's public library service offering towards the ideals and the aspirations of the new democratic dispensation (as well as the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto). However, it was not satisfactorily concluded, hence the continued efforts towards its finalisation. It is envisaged that these efforts, besides unlocking new perspectives — will also enable us to bring the transformation to its final conclusion.

It is within the above context that I posit elements of a transformation-focused service delivery model deserving of further exploration. It should be noted that some (if not most) of these elements are already receiving attention.

History

Both the Library Professional Associations, South African Institute for Library and Information Services (SAILIS), and the Library and Information Workers Organisation (LIWO), have been part of crafting this future.

LIWO previously advocated that the public library service function should be located with municipalities, as they believed that such duties are best served closest to its users under those controlling parameters.

On the other hand, SAILIS argued that the function should best reside with the provincial government, as the positioning of a public library service within a provincial governance framework would enable equitable and transformational interventions to be applied across the board, thus eradicating vestiges of the apartheid legacy.

Ultimately, the latter approach prevailed, as this rationale was in

line with the aspirations of the new democratic dispensation; and ensured that the Cape Provincial Library Services (with its substantial capacity and expertise) remained unchanged. Unfortunately, the failure of locating the library service within the required legislation, led to public library services not being considered in the equitable share budget framework. Hence the existence of the unfunded (and currently underfunded) mandate.

A positive perspective on the current legal status of public library services in South Africa is that it affords us the opportunity to look anew at its governance, which opens the space for a public debate on defining the transformation parameters of public library service delivery (if deemed necessary), with particular reference to the Western Cape.

Legal overview: current

The mandate of rendering public library services is drawn from Schedule 5A of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; which describes public library service as a functional area of exclusive provincial legislative competence. The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) and the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) as a consequence do not provide for public library financing.

The urban/rural divide is underscored by stark differences; not only in terms of geography, travel time, human and financial capacity, infrastructure and socio-economic conditions, but also in terms of psychology. Any service delivery model should be flexible enough to accommodate these differences, as a one-size-fits-all approach seldom yields the desired outcomes. For instance, norms and standards — as well as staffing considerations (salary grades and designations, job descriptions, performance standards and others) for rural and urban areas — will be differently manifested.

The only scenario where the impact of this divide will not be as significant is when the Metropolitan Library Services are allowed complete independence. Urban nodes are usually well-capacitated (be it professionally, financially, infrastructural or through

governance and human resources) and used to operate independently. There is usually an undercurrent of displeasure if they identify attempts at interference.

In the above scenario the national and provincial spheres will have a primary and concentrated focus on rural library service delivery. If not, a differentiated set of all standards needs to be developed; and separately applied for rural and urban areas respectively.

It is therefore critical that capacity assessment of municipal ability to deliver services should guide model development; as the centralised model suited to urban areas is not necessarily ideal for a rural area, where mobile and decentralised service delivery makes more sense.

An ideal opportunity also exists to streamline library service delivery funding. The model should delineate what funding is the responsibility of which tier. For instance, the equitable share framework can provide operational budgets and infrastructure maintenance budgets, whilst provincial government and local government can provide targeted top-up funding to accelerate and promote their specific strategic priorities.

The development of new infrastructure development projects, which has operational budget implications, should be a separate approval stream. When a project is approved, funding for construction and subsequent operation and maintenance can be folded into the equity share.

Economies of scale efficiencies usually influence the centralisation versus the decentralisation debate. The former considerations imply that certain professional support services are more effectively and efficiently delivered from a central point (such as information resources, marketing and LIMS). My concern is that when the centre does not perform its functions effectively, the entire edifice malfunctions, with economy of scale efficiencies usually its first casualty. Service delivery the second. And wastage the third.

It is my opinion that governance occurs at its best when closest to the recipients of service, as in such a scenario there is a direct influence on related matters, thereby increasing

accountability. The further the seat of governance is removed from them, the less control they are able to exert. Local government bears the brunt of service delivery failures by provincial and national government. For locals, local government *is* government. They generally do not distinguish between the three tiers.

However, the three-sphere governance system (national, provincial and local government) seems to be an ideal framework for a governance system for public library service delivery.

Three spheres of government: functions

National

To ensure continued equity and transformation of public library services, it would be the responsibility of national government to develop and promulgate broad overarching policies, standards and legislation. The development of policy, norms, and standards (including staffing) should follow a bottom-up approach where commonalities (or non-negotiables) can be cemented nationally. Staffing standards should include designations, job descriptions (with competencies and performance measures) and salary scales that pertain to part-time, contract or permanent. A matrix of membership types can also be formulated and aligned to reporting requirements.

Once national norms and standards (including staffing) have been formulated, these will inform targeted equity share budget allocation, as well as the formulation and promulgation of legislation. These should be broad and flexible to allow for the diversity prevalent amongst (and within) provinces, yet specific enough to ensure accountability all at levels.

A key developmental oversight intervention would be the formulation of indicators that broadly specify qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure effective, efficient and professional library service delivery. These indicators should also guide a national cyclical impact research intervention. Information flowing from such research should influence annual equity share adjustments and inform national, provincial and local government strategic and operational

planning processes; as well as the required interventions.

Linked with the above is the development of a broad guideline of the range of services that public libraries render. This will also specify the different types of libraries that are or could render a public library service, specified among others as regional, district, area, community, public, municipal or institutional library depots (at old age homes or prisons), dual-resource, et cetera.

The library service delivery mix would further specify the diversity of services that libraries deliver directly to the public; distinguishing between those services that they facilitate themselves (books, periodicals, audio visual) and those that they provide through collaboration (internet access, outreach, reading and literacy programmes). The two dimensions (mix and type) could be cross-referenced to formulate ideal scenarios. This would be a substantial document essential in equity deliberations, as well as

targeted marketing endeavours to decision-makers and potential clients.

An ideal opportunity also exists to establish a national library service delivery facilities map. A national template can be designed which can be populated and maintained by municipal library services. This will provide qualitative information towards the establishment of new library facility infrastructure projects as informed by individual community needs. As part of its oversight function an annual, flexible national reporting framework for provinces should be put in place, taking all of the above into account.

Provincial

Once the national legislative and standards framework has been finalised, provinces can begin to construct their respective legislative governance frameworks, guided by their individual regional diversity requirements. This will include policy and strategy formulation, as well as other strategic operational





matters with reference to community participation, monitoring, oversight, evaluation, SOPs, reporting, protocols, planning, agreements and guidelines.

For instance, a standardised provincial reporting framework, aligned to the national reporting requirements, will facilitate streamlined channelling of relevant information across the different spheres of government. This will guide the allocation of targeted provincial funding allocations; inform provincial strategic planning, as well as direct professional support interventions.

Staffing standards referred to elsewhere above should guide provincial capacity-building initiatives; whilst the broadly specified qualitative and quantitative indicators that measure effective, efficient and professional library service delivery serve as benchmark for provincial professional support interventions, as well as provincial monitoring and evaluation activities.

Municipalities

The primary focus of local government should be direct, public-facing service delivery. To this end, operational policies, strategies, by-laws and plans in aid of such service delivery, aligned with national constructs — should additionally be developed for implementation. As an entity uniquely

aware of their clients' needs and aspirations, such institutions must have the authority to develop, implement or influence any other measures required (reporting, capacity-building, infrastructure projects, staff assessment, recruitment, membership and community consultation). As the bedrock of our governance structure, they should be respected as such: should they crumble, systemic failure is inevitable.

Conclusion

Our libraries stand at a critical juncture. As an agency that facilitates access to information (in competition with other agencies) there is intense competition for public, private and institutional budgets. This makes it more crucial than ever that library services are positioned high on decision-makers' agendas.

Resolving the underfunded mandate in an appropriately structured and funded manner will ensure that the integral role of libraries within society is not only maintained, but also strengthened. Only through strong and unified efforts will libraries continue to guarantee and uphold the principles of universal access to information and its associated developmental impact.

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YearBeyond Libraries programme:

a beacon of light in a time of literacy darkness by Wayde Groep

Libraries are integral to nurturing reading cultures worldwide and are adapting to the evolving digital landscape by incorporating digital services and materials into their offerings. Moreover, libraries globally are embracing Design Thinking principles to envision their spaces as versatile hubs for an increasingly diverse demographic of users. Locally, it is imperative to consider how libraries can help address some of our most pressing problems.

One such challenge is the state of literacy, as revealed by the recent PIRLS study, which paints a grim picture of literacy levels among primary school students in South Africa. Shockingly, 81% of Grade 4 learners struggle to read for meaning. This alarming statistic calls upon all of us to take action in combating this growing crisis.

The National Reading Barometer 2023 Survey Report¹ further states

that 65% of homes with young children (under 10) do not own a single children's book; only 10% of homes with young children have more than ten picture books; and only 31% of adults who live with children said their oldest child received their first book before the age of 5.

How can libraries help move the dial on these challenges?

Considering the significance of these stumbling blocks, libraries have a pivotal role to play. The 2023 reading barometer found that 86% of people in the Western Cape access and see libraries as a resource for free reading materials. The barometer further found that almost half of adults surveyed access digital materials, although only 5% of adults who live with children use digital materials to read to them. In this context, the challenge is how to enliven libraries and increase their foot traffic, especially amongst children.

The YearBeyond Libraries Programme has become a powerful beacon of hope, promoting literacy and community engagement. By harnessing the potential of youth, the programme creates a communal culture of reading and utilises the skills of young individuals as Reading or ICT champions.

YearBeyond is a youth service partnership between the Western Cape Government, donors and NGOs. It aims to provide unemployed youth (18- to 25-year-olds) with a meaningful work experience and a pathway to further studies or work, while at the same time encouraging a culture of service to their communities.

The programme also understands that families play a crucial role in a child's educational journey.

By involving parents and guardians in various library activities, such as storytelling sessions, literacy workshops and book clubs, the



programme fosters a strong support system for children's education. As families actively participate in these initiatives, they become more invested in their children's literacy development, resulting in improved reading habits and academic performance.

By recruiting and training youth, the YearBeyond Libraries Programme not only addresses literacy challenges but also provides a platform for youth to make a tangible impact in their communities. Youth also further develop their competencies in work readiness, emotional intelligence, and agency. This holistic approach equips them with the tools to navigate challenges in both their personal and professional lives.

The impact of the 2023 intake has been significant, with its reach expanding to numerous libraries across the province. From starting as a small pilot programme in 2021 with just

just one participating municipality, it has since grown to 174 libraries in all districts across the province.

The team at Esselen Library praises Mayberine du Plessis, their Reading Champion, as a positive and dedicated individual; and her work ethic reflects this positivity. She consistently goes the extra mile to find solutions and approaches her tasks with a cheerful attitude. She is known for assisting customers with a warm smile, creating a comfortable atmosphere for everyone. Her commitment to engaging with children, both within and outside the library, is unwavering.

Mayberine has actively participated in various outreach programmes, making weekly visits to schools and Educare facilities. Thanks to her efforts, Esselen Library has established valuable partnerships with organisations such as Nal'ibali, RK Primary, Moslem Primary, Bollieland

and Julie Naude. Her dedication to promoting reading among children takes various forms, including story time, crafting sessions, traditional games, after-school activities, crèche visits and more. As a result of her leadership in these outreach campaigns, there has been a noticeable increase in children enrolling in library programmes, and circulation figures have shown marked improvement.

According to Mayberine, 'my role goes beyond assisting children with their schoolwork; it also involves helping students with their studies, fulfilling my aspiration to contribute to the community. This means I can have a positive impact on both the neighborhood and the lives of the children. With YearBeyond I also get to gain experience in the working world, learn about the values you need to in the workplace as well as the contributions you can make as an individual.'

According to Cecilia Sani, Director: DCAS Library Service, 'The critical role libraries play in people's lives is unquestionable. Not only are they important for providing library material, internet access and other future-enabling information, but they ensure a community's vitality and promote strong social ties. Certainly, as the Western Cape Library Service, we are fully committed to providing library and information services that are free, equitable and accessible and to promote a culture of reading, library usage and lifelong learning.'

Libraries are not just repositories of knowledge but dynamic centres for community skills development and social interaction. The YearBeyond Libraries Programme is playing its part in shaping a brighter future for communities across the Western Cape, one page and one click at a time.

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<https://www.readingbarometersa.org/system/files/resourcefiles/Summary%20Report%20Final.pdf>

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Feiteboeke vir leergierige jongmense

deur Stanley Jonck

Om kennis in te win hoef nie 'n stryd vir jongmense te wees nie. Aantreklike, kindervriendelike nie-fiksie boeke is ideaal om nuuskieriges se belangstelling te prikkel, hulle aan die lees te kry en hul leefwêreld te verbreed. 'n Paar plaaslike uitgewers het die afgelope jare 'n verskeidenheid feiteboeke in Afrikaans uitgegee. Daar is iets vir elke smaak, met pret en plesier hoog op die lys van kenmerke.

LAPA het in samewerking met Dorling Kindersley 'n bekostigbare, volkleur geïllustreerde nie-fiksiereeks uitgegee wat spesiaal vir kinders van vyf jaar en ouer ontwikkel is.

'Dit bied die perfekte mengsel van opvoedkundige inhoud en eenvoudige, stap-vir-stap praktiese aktiwiteite soos handwerk, kookkuns en tel. Jong lesers kan hier meer leer oor 'n verskeidenheid interessante onderwerpe en kry die geleentheid om prettige projekte aan te pak wat by die temas aansluit. Die eenvoudige

aktiwiteite dra by tot die ontwikkeling van geletterdheid, syfergeletterdheid, geheueontwikkeling en handvaardigheid. Kinders kan besig gehou word terwyl hulle speel-speel leer.' (Uitgewersprikkel)

Die teks is in grootdruk. Die reeks bestaan uit ses titels, waarvan Mia Oosthuizen die vertaling van meeste behartig het. Boekprikkel deur LAPA:

- **Goggas en ander gediertes (Bugs, bees and other buzzy creatures)** / senior redakteur, Wendy Horobin.
'Hierdie boek stel kinders aan inseklike bekend — besige bye, wriemelende wurms, oulike skilpadbesies en al hul goggavriende. Lesers kan hul eie pragtige skoeklappers maak, koekies versier en insekte se pote tel, terwyl hulle allerhande feite oor goggas leer.'

- **Haaie en ander seediere (Sharks and other sea creatures)** / senior redakteur, Carrie Love.
'Hier word jong lesers aan die wonderwêreld onder die branders bekendgestel — harlekynvisse, spelerige dolfyne, honger haaie en al hul ander seelewende maats. Aktiwiteite sluit in hoe om jou eie jellievisse te maak en pragtige papierbord-harlekynvisse te ontwerp.'

- **Plaasdiere (Farm animals)** / projekredakteur, James Mitchem.
'Jongmense leer hier meer oor die lewe van plaasdiere en ontdek interessante feite oor die plaaslewe

terwyl hulle verskillende handwerk-aktiwiteite, raaisels en leerspeletjies voltooi.'

- **Van my kop tot my tone (My top to bottom body book)** / redakteur, Helene Hilton.

'Nuuskierige kinders kan ontdek waarom hulle 'n sekere haar- of oogkleur het en waarom hulle 'n naeltjie het. Dan kan hulle 'n oulike familiestamboom ontwerp, 'n stel papierlonge maak en kyk hoe dit werk, en kreatief raak met vingerafdrukke. Hierdie boek is vol fantastiese feite en aktiwiteite wat by mekaar aansluit, ideaal vir jong slimkoppe wat meer oor die menslike liggaam wil leer. Lesers kan selfs ontdek hoe hul liggaam inmeekaarpas deur 'n lewensgrootte buitelyn van hulself op papier na te trek.'

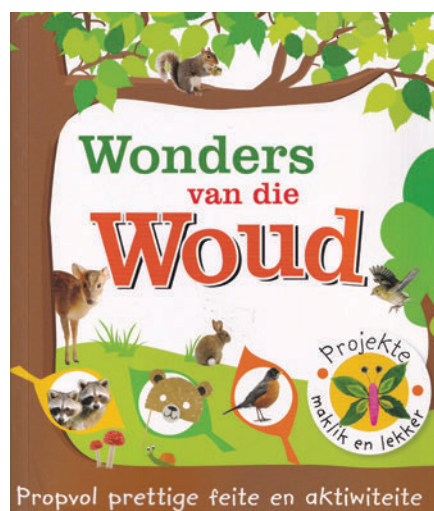
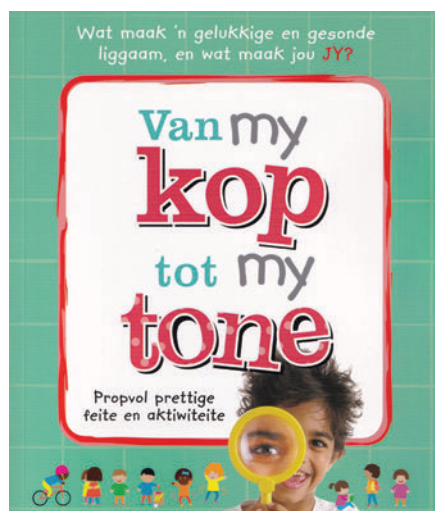
- **Wonders van die woud (Forest life and woodland creatures)** / redakteur, Violet Peto.

'Jongmense maak hier kennis met oulike diere en die ongelooflike dinge in 'n woud — van hasies tot bere en goggas. Elke bladsy bevat asemrowende foto's met maklik verstaanbare teks en eenvoudige stap-vir-stap instruksies wat kinders kan volg om elke projek te voltooi. Hulle kan 'n oulike dennebol-uil maak, 'n beermasker, heerlike bessie-syses, en vele meer. Perfek vir kinders wat versot is op die buitelewe.'

- **Weer en die seisoene (Weather and the seasons)** / redakteur, Violet Peto.

'Voorskoolse natuurliefhebbertjies kan in hierdie handwerk-wetenskapboek leer oor die weer — van die son tot sneeu, waarom dit reën, donderweer en weerlig, hoe 'n reënboog vorm en waarom die seisoene verander. Die boek spog met helder foto's en prettige illustrasies. Eenvoudige handwerkprojekte sluit in hoe om 'n sonvanger van ys te maak en te sien hoe dit smelt; hoe 'n weerhaan windrigting toets; en hoe om 'n reënwolk in 'n bottel te maak. Die teks is vertaal deur Jaco Jacobs, gewilde skrywer van talle bekroonde topverkooperboeke vir kleuters, kinders en tieners.'

Twee praktiese, interaktiewe boeke in die *Hoe dinge werk*-reeks is in 2021 deur Human & Rousseau uitgegee: **Biologie-eksperimente in**



jou agterplaas (**Backyard biology experiments**) en **Fisika-eksperimente in jou agterplaas** (**Backyard physics experiments**). Die skrywer is Alix Wood en Anita van Zyl het die Afrikaanse vertaling behartig. Hierdie volkleur geïllustreerde boeke verskaf doen-dit-self instruksies om prettige eksperimente in die agtertuin aan te pak. Projekte sluit in, hoe om 'n bonsende eier te maak, bakterieë te groei, vrugte vars te hou, 'n ballon op te blaas deur gis te gebruik, 'n papierstoel te maak en 'n vuurpyl te lanseer. Jongmense kan hier leer van fungusse en ensieme, hoe jou longe en spysverteringstelsel werk, gravitasie, lugweerstand, statiese elektrisiteit en chemiese reaksies. Die boeke sluit vasvrae in om kennis te toets, 'n woordelys, 'n indeks en aanbevole boeke vir meer inligting.

Nog 'n fassinerende titel is **Briljant!: opwindende eksperimente vir jong wetenskaplikes** (LAPA, 2019) geskryf deur Jack Challoner. Jaco Jacobs het die Engelse uitgawe, **Outdoor maker lab: exciting experiments for budding scientists** in Afrikaans vertaal.

'Hierdie prettige, feitebelaaide boek is propvol ongelooflike buitelug-eksperimente wat ontluikende jong wetenskaplikes help om hul omgewing te verken. Huishoudelike items kan gebruik word om 'n watervuurpyl te maak wat in die lug opskiet om jou meer van lugdruk te leer, of blaas reusagtige borrels om te wys hoe oppervlakspanning werk. Maak 'n wurmplasie en kyk hoe wurms in die grond rondolwe, of bou 'n vlieër en ontdek die sleutel tot aërodinamika. Met fantastiese foto's, duidelike stap-vir-stap illustrasies, en gedetailleerde instruksies sal jong slimkoppe sommer uit die staanspoor nie kan wag om weg te spring met die eksperimente nie. Elke aktiwiteit bevat 'n duidelike *Hoe werk dit?*-verduideliking, wat die fassinerende wetenskap agter die eksperiment verduidelik, asook voorbeelde uit die regte lewe gee om alledaagse wetenskaplike beginsels in aksie te sien.' (Uitgewersprikkel)

Steve Mould is die skrywer van **The bacteria book: gross germs, vile viruses and funky fungi**. LAPA het dit in 2018 in medewerking met Dorling Kindersley in Afrikaans uitgegee as **Kieme: bose bakterieë, woeste virusse en vieslike fungusse**. Linda Roos is die vertaler. Louise Viljoen resenseer die boek by



Maroela Media as volg: 'Hierdie leersame nie-fiksie sagtebandboek in 'n gerieflike groot formaat is geskik vir kinders sewe jaar en ouer. Die publikasie stel die jongspan bekend aan die wonderwêreld van mikrobiologie waar bakterieë, viruses, fungusse, alge, protosoë en archaea — wat natuurlik nie met die blote oog waarneembaar is nie, maar slegs onder 'n mikroskoop — floreer. Jong wetenskaplikes sal hulle verlustig in die wonderlike foto's, grappige karakterillustrasies en verstommende feite wat die wonderwêreld van 'n piepklein, grilligerige en fantasiiese wetenskap omskryf. Interessante

inligting, soos dat die chemiese stowwe binne-in die spesiale bakterieë wat in stomptert-pylinkvisse leef, hulle laat gloei, maak dat geen leser hierdie fassinerende boek maklik sal neersit nie. Die boek bevat 30 hoofstukke plus 'n inleiding en handige woordelys en indeks. Van die hoofstukke se opskrifte is: *Jou liggaam se verdediging, Die storie van antibiotika, Bakterieë met superkragte, Bakterieë aan die werk, Die oorlog teen virusse, Plantvirusse, Megamuf, Mikrosjefs en Mikrodiere*. Het jy, byvoorbeeld, geweet dat 99% van alle bakterieë nuttig en geensins skadelik is nie? Ons het bakterieë nodig om kos



soos brood en kaas mee te maak, en ook sodat ons liggame optimaal kan funksioneer. 'n Mens dra omtrent 2 kg bakterieë in en op jou lyf saam. Daar is wraggies meer bakterieë in jou mond as wat daar mense op aarde is. Ná 12 uur kan een bakteriesel tot 'n verstommende 70 miljard aangroei en verdeel. Daar kan ook soveel as een triljoen mikrobespesies op aarde wees! Een vreesaanjaende fungus verander selfs miere se gedrag en maak van hulle zombies. Daar is ook 'n klewerige bakterie genaamd *Caulobacter crescentus* wat drie keer sterker is as supergom. Die skrywer, Steve Mould, is 'n wetenskapaanbieder en komediant en kan op YouTube gevolg word.' (maroelamedia.co.za)

Kingfisher het 'n interaktiewe reeks van agt boeke oor beroepe uitgegee wat LAPA in 2019 in Afrikaans gepubliseer het.

'Die *In opleiding*-reeks bevat nuttige inligting en interessante feite oor die lewens van verskillende beroepsmense en kan jong lesers leer hoe om wiskunde en wetenskap te gebruik om die wêreld te ontdek, mense se lewens te red en geboue en masjiene te bou. Eenvoudige aktiwiteite help kinders om hul vaardighede op 'n prettige wyse te toets en die inligting wat hulle geleer het te versterk.' (Uitgewersprikkel)

Catherine Ard is die skrywer, Sarah Lawrence die illustreerder en Linda Roos die vertaler. Die titels is:

- **Atleet in opleiding (Sports star in training)** met inligting oor hoe om 'n atleet, sportvrou of sportman te wees. Lesers kan 'n prettige toets doen om te sien in watter sportsoort hulle die beste sal presteer.
- **Brandbestryder in opleiding (Firefighter in training)** bevat inligtingbrokkies oor brandveiligheid en die belangrike werk wat brandbestryders doen.
- **Dokter in opleiding (Doctor in training)** vertel lesers hoe dokters, verpleegsters en paramedici lewens red.
- **Ingenieur in opleiding (Engineer in training)** wys jong kinders hoe ingenieurs wiskunde en wetenskap gebruik om die geboue en masjiene te bou wat ons elke dag sien.
- **Ruimtevaarder in opleiding (Astronaut in training)** leer jong lesers alles oor die ruimte, sterrekunde en lewe aan boord van die Internasionale Ruimtestasie.
- **Veearts in opleiding (Vet in training)** is propvol nuttige inligting oor diere en hoe om hulle te versorg; die verskillende tipe veeartse; hoe 'n veeartspraktyk werk; hoe om diere se liggaamstaal te verstaan; en hoe om gesondheidsprobleme te diagnoseer en behandel.
- **Wetenskaplike in opleiding (Scientist in training)** leer kinders oor basiese chemie, biologie en fisika.

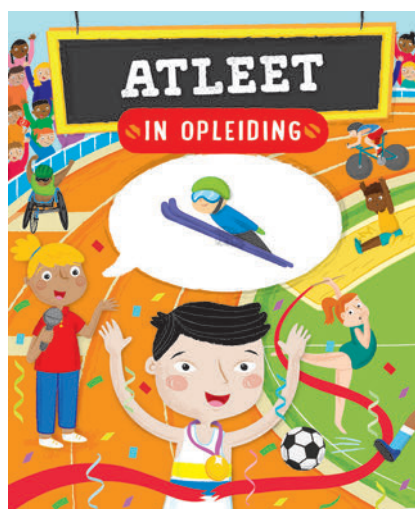
- **Kodeerder in opleiding (Coder in training)** geskryf deur Craig Steele, bevat inligting oor hoe om kodes te skep, watter vaardighede 'n kodeerder nodig het en hoe om jou eie webwerf te skep.

'In **Regte-egte raaisels: help verklaar die onverklaarbare!** kan jongmense lees oor die grootste kopkrappers in die geskiedenis. Die raaisels wat ondersoek word, wissel van narige, harige gediertes, vreemde vlieënde voorwerpe, tot monsters uit die dieptes. Kinders kan die verstommende stories oor die raaisels lees en dan kyk na elkeen se raaiseldossier met feite oor wat regtig gebeur het. Boonop is daar by elke raaisel 'n nuwe raaiselwoord. Sommige van die raaiseldossiere verskaf selfs wenke vir jou eie opvolgondersoek!

In **Regte-egte rampe: ondersoek wat regtig gebeur het!** word ondersoek ingestel om uit te vind hoekom sekere rampe gebeur het en hoe dit in die toekoms voorspel en verhoed kan word. Die rampe wat ondersoek word, wissel van reuse-uitbarstings, die dinoramp tot vreesaanjaende mensgemaakte katastrofes.' (NB-Uitgewersprikkel)

Susan Martineau is die skrywer van hierdie twee boeke, Vicky Barker die ontwerper en illustreerder en Fred Pheiffer het die Afrikaanse vertaling gedoen. Human & Rousseau (2020) is die uitgewer en die Engelse titels is **Real-life mysteries** en **Real-life disasters**.

Tim Grabham is die skrywer van die Dorling Kindersley-boek **Video ideas**. LAPA het dit in 2019 in Afrikaans





koelkoppe met stap-vir-stap aanwysings hoe om konkoksies van glibberige slym by die huis te maak. Eksperimente sluit in, hoe om 'n eier se dop te verwyder sonder om dit te breek, hoe om yslike koekies seep te kweek, hoe om 'n mummie van baie stinkerige vis te maak, ontploffende vulkane en vele meer.

'Elke eksperiment word gevolg deur die ware en interessante wetenskaplike feite. Wetenskap is glad nie droog en vervelig nie, want hierdie boek borrel van pret en ontplof van verbeelding!' (NB-Uitgewersprikkel)

Asemrowende foto's en lekkerkry grilligerige kleur illustrasies deur Santy Gutiérrez vul hierdie versameling van eenvoudige dog gek wetenskap eksperimente aan. Die veelbekroonde Kobus Geldenhuys het die Afrikaanse vertaling behartig.

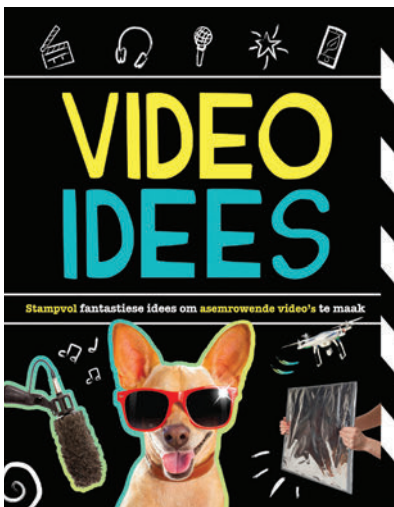
Elizabeth Yeates en Clare Lloyd is die redakteurs van **Die slymboek: meer as 30 fantastiese resepte (The slime book)**. Dit is in Afrikaans deur LAPA uitgegee (2018) en Linda Roos het die vertaling gedoen.

Oud-kinderbibliotekaresse Lona Gericke beskryf die boek as volg: 'Meer as 30 fantastiese resepte word hier aangebied. Voorbeelde van nie-eetbare slym word gevolg deur eetbare slymprojekte. Die slymprojekte het name soos rekkerige, skuimerige, sterretjies; lekkerruik, krakerige, knetterige, monsterslym; dinosourusse in amber en gloeiende slym! Basiese slymbenodighede word gelys, en elke individuele projek meld wat jy hiervoor

uitgegee as **Video-idees: stampvol fantastiese idees om asemrowende video's te maak**. Jaco Jacobs is die vertaler. Jongmense leer hier hoe om video's en animasie op YouTube te plaas en met vriende te deel. Aspekte wat gedek word sluit in: hoe om 'n videojoernaal vir 'n skoolprojek te maak; die videomaak-proses van draaiboek tot skerm; praktiese wenke, raad en kortpaaie vir tuisprojekte; die beste kamerahoeke vir 'n tuisvideo; hoe om videomateriaal te redigeer; hoe om jou video aanlyn te kry; hoe om veilig te wees op die internet; kostuumkeuses; en post-produksie-

kortpaaie. Of lesers 'n weervoorspelling wil opneem, 'n kosmaakdemonstrasie wil verfilm, 'n troeteldier se lawwe toertjies op video wil vaslê, met die kamera oor hul geheime talente wil gesels, spesiale geleenthede wil opneem, animasievideo's wil maak, 'n rekenaarspeletjie wil resenseer, of 'n musiekvideo wil maak, hierdie handige boek kan lesers leiding gee in videojoernalistiek.

Die slymerigste, stinkerigste eksperimenteboek (The sticky, stinky science book) deur Kris Hirschmann is in 2019 deur Human & Rousseau uitgegee. Dit is 'n prettige, praktiese boek vir



benodig, die tyd betrokke, hoe maklik of moeilik dit is en met 'n waarskuwing dat dit eetbaar of nie-eetbaar is nie. Basiese stappe is gemerk van 1 tot 3, en 'n knippie wetenskap word by elke projek ingesluit, byvoorbeeld, waaruit gom bestaan, wat skeerskuim spesiaal maak, en dat party diere ook slym maak. Die boek is deeglik uiteengesit met kleurvolle illustrasies wat die prosesse eenvoudig verduidelik. Bladsy 64 verduidelik hoe jy jou slym moet bêre, hoe om op te ruim, basiese wenke word gegee as die slym te taai is, of as dit breek as jy dit rek, of as dit nie genoeg glinster nie. Kinders wat hou van kreatiewe handwerk doen en nuuskierig is om nuwe projekte aan te pak, sal die boek verwelkom. Onthou net dat die opruim en bêre aspekte baie belangrik is.' (*lonareviews.blogspot.com*)

Die gewilde, veelbekroonde Jaco Jacobs het die Dorling Kindersley-boek **Unlock your imagination** (senior redakteur, Sam Priddy) in Afrikaans vertaal as **Gebruik jou verbeelding: meer as 250 opwindende idees vir speletjies, handwerk en meer** (LAPA, 2019). Peter Judson is die illustreerder.

'Hierdie boek bevat meer as 250 ongelooflike dinge wat jy kan maak en doen. Kinders kan hulle elektroniese toestelle afskakel en hulle kreatiwiteit vrye teuels gee met speletjies, uitdagings, handwerk en hope ander prettige idees. Bou 'n minigholfbaan, hou 'n skattejag, of leer hoe om 'n spioen te word. Hierdie boek is stampvol prettige idees en perfek vir

ouers wat iets soek om hulle kinders deur die lang skoolvakansie mee besig te hou — sonder dat hulle heeldag voor 'n rekenaar- of TV-skerm sit. Of dit nou 'n reënigerige oggend of 'n sonskynmiddag is, sal jy genoeg hê om te maak, doen en speel.' (Uitgewersprikkel)

Knip, verf, plak: 50 prettige kunsprojekte (LAPA, 2018) deur Susie Brooks is 'n pragtig ontwerpte, stap-vir-stap handwerkboek wat jong kunstenaars touwys maak hoe om vinger- en voetafdrukke en alledaagse materiaal te gebruik om inspirerende, goedkoop en ekovriendelike kunswerke te maak. Die boek is ideaal vir ouers met min tyd en skole met 'n klein begroting waar hergebruik en herwinning aanbeveel word.

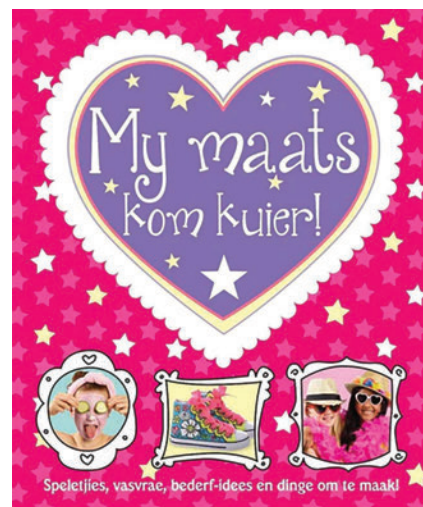
Kindertoekenners Lona Gericke beskryf die boek as volg: 'Handwerkprojekte help kinders en onderwysers met idees om kuns te maak. Basiese kunsbenodighede word gelys met nuttige wenke oor hoe die spesifieke projek aangepak kan word. Van vlermuis-skaduwees, hand-diere, prettige pikkewyne, robotte wat *rock*, swemmende skillies tot 'n monstermakietie — die idees is eindeloos en stapsgewys genommer en kleurvol geïllustreer. Daar is vier bladsye met patrone wat gebruik kan word, en 'n volledige inhoudsopgawe. 'n Nuttige boek vir biblioteek-, skool- en tuisversamelings.' (*lonareviews.blogspot.com*)

Jaco Jacobs het die Afrikaanse vertaalwerk gedoen. Engelse titel: **Paper, print, stamp**.

Oorslaappartytjies verg goeie beplanning. Dorling Kindersley se boek **Sleepover party** met besturende redakteur Penny Smith aan die hoof, is volgepak met idees en aktiwiteite vir meisies. LAPA het dit in Afrikaans uitgegee as **My maats kom kuier!: speletjies, vasvrae, bederf-idees en dinge om te maak!** (2018).

Dave King is die fotograaf en Lydia du Plessis die vertaler. Temapartytjies met idees vir uitnodigings, speletjies, versnaperinge en geskenkpakkes word hier aangebied. Die fokus is grotendeels op skoonheid en mode, met idees vir 'n spa-aand (manikuur, pedikuur, naelkuns, vars vrugte gesigsbehandeling), handwerkprojekte (tutus, juweliersware, haarstyle) en aktiwiteite soos geboortestene, waarheid of durf-speletjie en vasvrae om jou ware vriendskapstyl te ontdek. Idees vir kamma-skemerkelkies en middernagfeeste is ingesluit. Daar is ook 'n film- en binnenshuise kamptema met 'n kegelvormige lakentent en sneesdoekie-vuurtjie. Die boek is gerig op jonger meisies (sewe tot negejarige) en sluit wenke in vir diegene wat 'n temapartytjie vir die eerste keer aanpak met stap-vir-stap handwerk aanwysings, resepte en sjablone. Pienk en pers vier hier hoogty.

Stanley Jonck is die Assistentdirekteur: Keuring by die Wes-Kaapse Biblioteekdiens



Book reviews

compiled by book selectors

ADULT FICTION

KARA, Lesley

The rumour. - Bantam, 2018.

'Estate agent Jo has moved back to the seaside town where she grew up, to be closer to her divorced mother and to create a new and safer life for her mixed-race son, Alfie, who was being bullied at school in London. Jo still has

a friends-with-benefits relationship with Alfie's father, a journalist, but he has stayed in London. Finding her way into the new community, Jo joins a book group and tries to make friends with other mothers at the school gates. One of them says she's heard a rumour that a notorious child killer is living among them... Jo finds herself repeating the rumour to gain social

currency, both for herself and for Alfie, who is once again being bullied. Soon Jo suspects first one local woman and then another. Jo feels guilty about her part in spreading the rumour and inciting some of the harassment that falls on one particular woman. At the same time, Alfie's father pursues the story for his own purposes...'

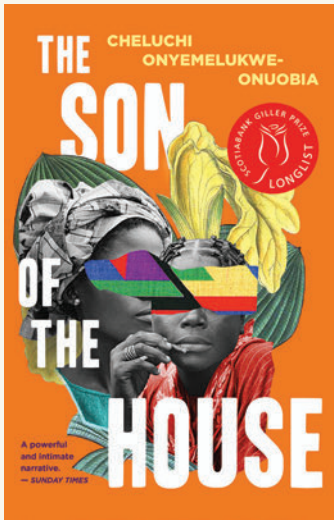
(literaryreview.co.uk)

ONYEMELUKWE-ONUOBIA, Cheluchi

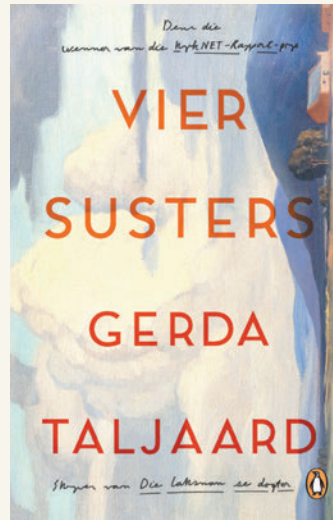
The son of the house. - Penguin Random House, 2019.

'In a damp, musty room in southeast Nigeria, two women, shackled and handcuffed, are being held for ransom. Unemployment plagues the country's young people, and extortion is a way of life. As Julie, a wealthy widow, and Nwabulu, her dressmaker, await word that their families have complied with the kidnappers' demands, they agree to pass the time sharing their life stories. Each represents the changing roles of women in Nigeria's patriarchal Igbo society, where a lower-class girl like Nwabulu, smart and ambitious, faces a life of servitude by the age of ten, while the more fortunate Julie, educated, independent, and successful, is pitied for her lack of a husband and





festivalofauthors.ca



netwerk24.com

sons. Though their origins are wildly divergent, Julie and Nwabulu discover a devastating bond that, once revealed, evokes both rage and joy for Nwabulu and a redemptive sense of peace for Julie. In cinematic prose, debut author and women's rights attorney Onyemelukwe-Onuobia unveils the contradictions between tribal traditions and colonial English laws affecting marriage and parenthood, while imbuing her characters with the canny ability to overcome the system's liabilities and to thrive. With its strong feminist themes, this 2019 winner of an International Fiction Award in Sharjah will resonate with smart discussion groups.' (*libraryjournal.com*, Sally Bissell)

'n hoender kon slag nie, word nou beskuldig van moord en hoogverraad. En dan is daar Yingwe. Of, soos sy beter bekendstaan: Kietie. Altyd op die agtergrond; suster en ook nie suster nie; die een wat nêrens heeltemal inpas nie. Dis 'n tyd van onrus en wantroue; die Tweede Wêreldoorlog woed en in Suid-Afrika — en ook op Broedersdraai — woed die oorlog tussen Nat en Sap; die Rooilissies en die Stormjaers. En dan word dinge verder gekompliseer deur die aankoms van 'n beseerde Italiaanse ontsnapte gevangene; Domenico Valente. Die kunstenaar wat 'n soldaat moes word, maar steeds

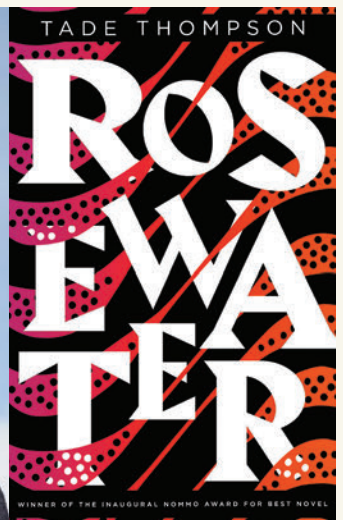
droom van 'n huis op hoenderpote. Die skryfster vermeld dat **Wit Terroriste** van Albert Blake 'n bron van inspirasie vir hierdie historiese roman was en verskeie werklike geskiedkundige karakters word vernuftig in die fiktiewe storielyn geweef: Dice Lötter (Dice Liebenberg), Blossom Kotze en Greta Wolf (Grieta Wolff). Laasgenoemde dra ongetwyfeld by tot die geloofwaardigheid van die roman in geheel, maar die grootsheid van hierdie werk lê vir my opgesluit in die ongelooflik veelkantige vrouekarakters wat deur die skryfster lewend gemaak word. Vrouekarakters, veral in

TALJAARD, Gerda

Vier susters. - Penguin Random House, 2021. '27 Februarie 1945 word daar gereedgemaak vir 'n begrafnis op die plaas Broedersdraai in Magoebaskloof. Beatrice se man, Boas, haar onbeholpe en onopwindende Mister Peanut, wat altyd in die skadu van haar groot, eerste liefde moes leef, is oorlede. Sophié, die naasoudste Dippenaar-suster, die een wat geweier het om haar voete weer op die plaas te sit uit verbittering teenoor Beatrice, is in liggaam daar, maar in gees korrespondeer sy met haar Engelse man, Robert, in Johannesburg. Ivy, die jongste, het soos 'n vlugteling daar opgedaag. Dieselfde Ivy, wat nie eers



SFX Magazine/Future via Getty



historiese fiksie, het die geneigdheid om oënskynlik slegs daarna te streef om goeie vrouens vir hulle mans en goeie ma's vir hulle kinders te wees. Hierdie karakters is egter ligjare van daardie stereotipe verwyder: hulle durf droom; begeer; wegbreek van aanvaarde norme; hulleself blootstel aan kritiek en boonop uitgesproke wees daaroor. Soos die gekantelde Pierneef-skildery op die voorblad, kanteel die skryfster weereens, soos in haar vorige romans, vooropgestelde idees ook op hulle sye. Die gevolg is 'n roman en karakters wat my baie lank sal bybly en verdien vyf sterre.' (*goodreads.com*, Anschen Conradie)

THOMPSON, Tade

Rosewater.- Orbit, 2018.

'When a detective with psychic powers begins to investigate a mysterious sickness plaguing those like him, he uncovers sinister truths that may very well call into question the survival of the human race... Thompson's debut novel brims with inventive and seamless worldbuilding, eloquent prose, a strong cast of powerful black characters, and cutting-edge social commentary on the current geopolitical shift toward authoritarianism and post-colonial trauma. Thompson's rendering of the "xenosphere", a theoretical dimension into which psychic characters can project their consciousnesses, is nothing short of brilliant. Perhaps

Thompson's most impressive feat is his use of Kaaro's psychic powers to assert unprovable facts... Though the novel feels slightly overlong and the way the chapters rigidly alternate between past and present feels forced at times, it never fails to intrigue and entertain. A captivating, cerebral work of science fiction that may very well signal a new definitive voice in the genre.'

(*kirkusreviews.com*)

VAN ZYL, Irna

Op 'n mooi dag.- Penguin Random House, 2021.

'Dis seker die meeste van ons se grootste vrees: dat 'n geliefde op 'n mooi dag spoorloos verdwyn; nie tuiskom soos gewoonlik nie. Dis die situasie waarin Kristien haar bevind: haar geliefde Louw verdwyn sonder taal of tyding. En, asof dit nie erg genoeg is nie, moet sy by die polisie hoor dat Louw 'n voortvluggende moordverdagte is. Ten spyte van 'n hele paar jaar saam, moet Kristien die werklikheid in die oë staar: Louw het dinge vir haar weggesteek. Aanvanklik is die leser net so in die duister soos Kristien: wie het die moord gepleeg en waarom? Waar is Louw? Die hoofstukke is kort en die hele roman — met die uitsondering van terugflitse na Louw se verlede — speel oor slegs enkele dae af. Die tempo is dus vinnig en het my gereeld soos 'n Pac Man-speler laat voel: storm in 'n rigting, slaan remme aan en storm in

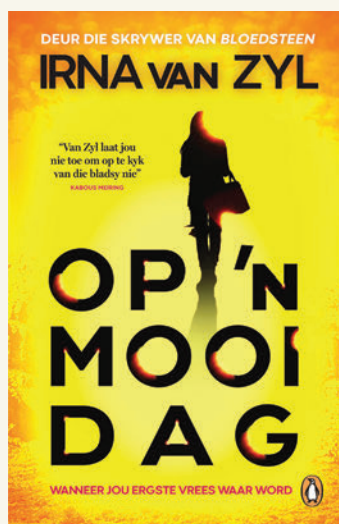
die teenoorgestelde rigting. Herhaal. Daar is op die ou end verskeie raaisels wat deur die leser ontrafel moet word, baie meer as net die identiteit van die moordenaar en die motief vir die moord. Die leidrade is subtiel en, alhoewel ek reg geraai het oor wie die moord gepleeg het, was ek heel verkeerd oor die motief. Die roman was met tye dalk effe vergesog, maar op 'n speelse wyse; ook ontspannend en vermaaklik (behalwe dat ek 'n hele paar keer gewens het ek kon Louw aan haar skouers gryp en rondpluk weens frustrasie met sommige van haar besluite); perfek vir lesers wat dit geniet om leunstoelspeurder te speel.'

(*goodreads.com*, Anschen Conradie)

WAXMAN, Abbi

Adult assembly.- Headline Review, 2022.

'Laura Costello moves from New York to Los Angeles for grad school, but a debilitating car accident and PTSD leave her scarred. She's hesitant to branch out on her own but desperately needs the time and space away from her overbearing ex-boyfriend and overprotective family. When Laura finds herself homeless after her apartment building catches on fire, she stumbles into the perfect place, where she meets a cast of quirky characters, including Impossibly Handsome Bob. Laura and Bob have even-keeled voices that match their personalities, but the rest of the characters are appropriately off-beat, with unpredictable tones.





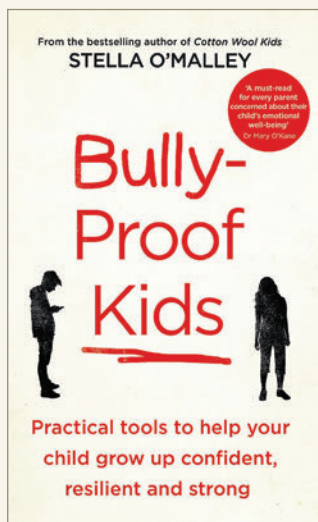
This light, heartwarming story is a good addition to any library collection, although it may be best appreciated by Waxman fans looking to reunite with beloved characters.' (*libraryjournal.com*, Emily Pykare)

ADULT NON-FICTION

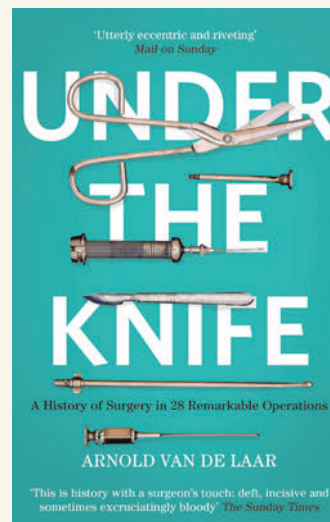
LOUW, Daniël

Daar is méér.- Naledi, 2023.

'Die merkwaardige en briljante boek van Daniël Louw open insigte wat nog nie deeglik ontgin is nie. Nuwe en opwindende perspektiewe word ontsluit. Daar is inderdaad meer as wat tot dusver gedink en bedink is. Daarom val die lig in hierdie outobiografiese reis sterhelder op mymeringe oor die spiritualiteit van skoonheid, sin, siel en sterflikheid. Daniël Louw kyk op 'n nuwe en kreatiewe manier na metafisika as paradigmitiese raamwerk om transendensie te verstaan. Transendensie het meervoudige betekenis-moontlikhede. Metaverum impliseer 'n ander en nuwe manier van dink, wees en houding. Hoe beïnvloed dit 'n antropologie wat *cogito, ergo sum* verskuif na: Ek word gedigitaliseer, daarom is ek? Homo religionis word nou gestruktureer deur Homo digitalis. Maar daar is meer aan die bod as net dit. Hierdie voortreflike boek put uit insigte van die natuurwetenskappe, mediese wetenskap, menswetenskappe, filosofie (oa Levinas), musikologie (Wagner,



Händel), skilderkuns (Van Gogh se simfonie in blou en geel) en die teologie. In die boek word die uitwerking van diakroniese denke wat steun op die kern van 'n Christelik-spirituele hermeneutiek, verhelder. Dit is inderdaad 'n akademiese boek binne die veld van praktiese teologie en die pastoraat. Dit het 'n sterk dogmaties-filosofiese inslag omdat die Godsvraag aan die orde gestel word. Maar Louw reik verder. Metafore (Paul Ricoeur) begelei die mens om sinvol en verbeeldingryk oor die spiritualiteit van skoonheid, sin, siel en sterflikheid na te dink. Die tradisionele benadering van definisies en identifikasie van Godseienskappe (hoedanighede van God) word gedekonstrueer ten einde te beweeg na hoedanighede van God. God kan nie in abstrakte definisies vasgevang word nie. Psalm 131:2 is 'n voorbeeld van God met 'n hart. "Maar ek het my siel tot kalmte en bedaring gebring. Soos 'n kindjie by sy moeder, soos 'n kindjie, is my siel in my." En die moeder is die Here. Medelye, deernis en barmhartigheid is die hartklop van die verhouding tussen God, siel (die kern van die mens se bestaan) en mens/die ander. En naasteliefde is nie maklik nie. Die boek open oorspronklike perspektiewe wat noodsaaklik is vir die teologie en denkende mense op hulle lewensreis. Ek beveel die lees van en besinning oor die boek sonder huiwering sterk aan. Dit is 'n praguitgawe van Naledi. Die voortreflike buiteblad is 'n sleutel tot die sinryke inhoud.' (*litnet.com*, Cas Vos)



O'MALLEY, Stella

Bully-proof kids: practical tools to help your child grow up confident, resilient and strong.- Swift Press, 2022.

An accessible guide that aims to equip children and teenagers with the necessary tools to have a positive social experience. The author draws from her years of experience counselling both bullies and targets of bullying to provide concrete strategies for dealing with bullying and dominant characters. The book offers effective ways for families to cope with bullying, such as approaching school authorities and communicating with the bully's parents. It also provides tips for tackling cyberbullying, which is becoming increasingly prevalent in today's rapidly changing social environment. The author takes a common-sense approach in her book, focusing on developing emotional intelligence in children, tweens and teens. Her strategies aim to provide relief for families navigating the challenges of the online and school social environment. **AM**

VAN DE LAAR, Arnold
Under the knife: the history of surgery in 28 remarkable operations.

- John Murray, 2018.

'Amsterdam surgeon Van de Laar devotes his first book to vivid descriptions of notable surgeries, from ancient times to the present. Trial, error and gore fill these lively



Fotografia Cedida

accounts of professionals (and a few amateurs) wielding the scalpel to remedy bodily affliction. Van de Laar captures the drama in the Dallas operating room where Lee Harvey Oswald was admitted with acute injuries to the aorta and interior vena cava. He depicts Italian surgeons using their hands to scoop blood clots out of John Paul II's abdomen after the 1981 attempt on the Pope's life, and recounts how a Dutch blacksmith successfully cut into his own body in 1651 to remove a kidney stone. Van de Laar also includes numerous asides on medical topics such as the causes of fever and the art of tying surgical knots. He spotlights famous practitioners, including Rudolf Nissen, who used cellophane — "essentially a sandwich bag" — to wrap a grapefruit-size aneurysm in Albert Einstein, and Malcolm Perry, who was in the operating room for both the Kennedy and Oswald shootings. Fast-paced and lucid, this is medical history not for those with weak stomachs.' (*publishersweekly.com*)

WARRINGTON, Ruby
Sober curious: the blissful sleep, greater focus, limitless presence, and deep connection awaiting us all on the other side of alcohol. - HarperOne, 2019.
 'Warrington is an evangelist for sobriety, but she isn't sanctimonious about it: her position is, firstly, that you don't have to reach rock bottom

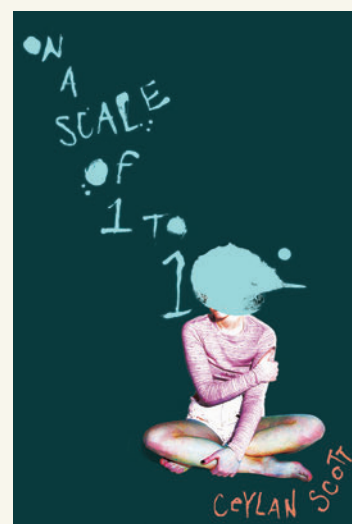
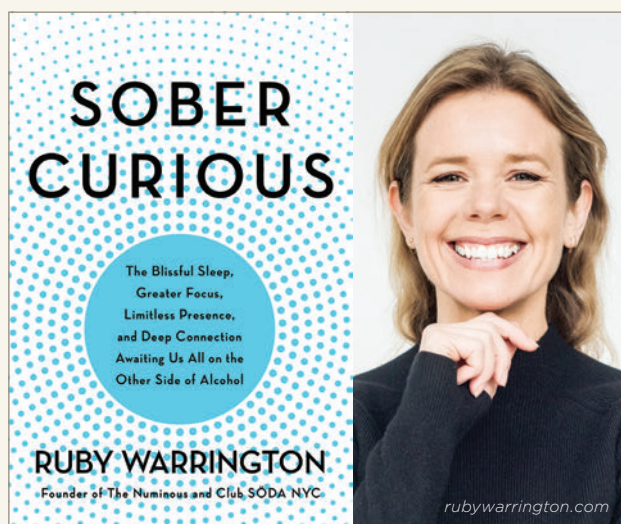
before you decide to stop drinking; and secondly, that not relying on alcohol will make you more confident, give you more time, allow you to access your creativity and leave you feeling more fulfilled. Plus — better sleep... If you are at all sober-curious as, according to statistics, increasing numbers of us are, this is an excellent manual to guide you through those first tricky steps.' (*Fairlady*, Sarah Charlston)

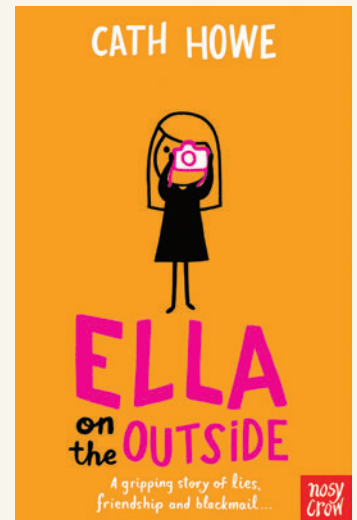
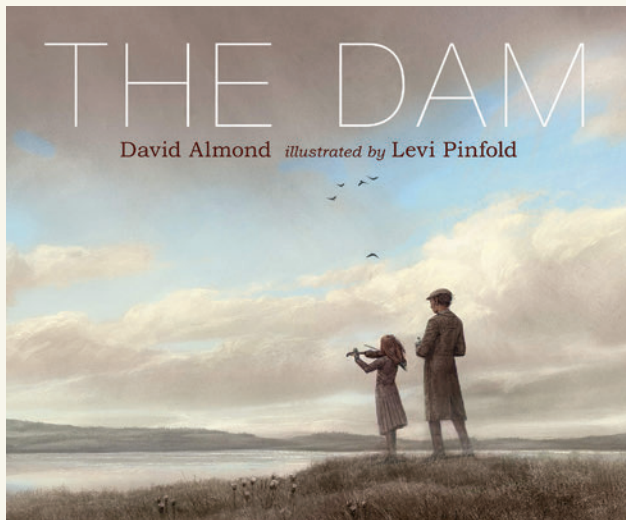
YOUNG ADULT FICTION

BUYEA, Rob
The perfect score. - Yearling, 2018.
 'The sixth-graders at Lakeview Middle School are in for a wild ride. Ms Woods has come out of retirement to teach their class, and she doesn't tolerate any funny business. Neither does Randi's mom, who values Randi's gymnastics skills over actually spending time with her. Meanwhile, Randi's best friend, sporty Gavin, really wants to try out for Pop-Warner but has difficulties reading. Natalie struggles with breaking rules and making friends, since her classmates think she's snobby. Scott seems to break rules even when he has the best intentions. Trevor, the class bully, has bad intentions, but even he latches on when Scott comes up with a plan for how all the students can ace the upcoming statewide assessment tests. When Scott's genius plan goes

haywire, the class has to step up and admit the truth and realise that even well-laid plans can fall through. Told through five students' perspectives, this novel is a heartfelt look at social interactions in middle school, a pointed commentary on standardised testing, and an entertaining read.' (*booklistonline.com*, Courtney Gilfillian)

SCOTT, Ceylan
On a scale of one to ten. - Chicken House, 2018.
 'A suicide attempt lands a teen in a British psychiatric hospital in this #ownvoices debut. "Jump, Iris", she said. "I'll follow you." Iris jumped. Tamar didn't, and she's left grappling with the belief that she's a murderer. They were both 15 on the summer day Iris drowned in the weir. Over a year later Tamar's attempt at suicide lands her in Lime Grove with other mentally ill teens. She narrates her stay there, the events of the past, her relationships with her fellow patients, and her gradual stumbling recovery in a staggeringly honest, astonishingly lucid first-person narrative. Scott, a young woman diagnosed with borderline personality disorder when she herself was committed to a psychiatric hospital at age 16, brings readers so far into Tamar's head that they truly understand what it's like to be her, participating in both her self-deception and her climb toward truth and sanity.





And sanity doesn't always look like what you'd expect: when Tamar drinks herself senseless at a party the first time she's given leave, her psychiatrist congratulates her for not doing worse. There are no stereotypes here. Even minor characters are complex and rich though they are all white and the prose is elegant and direct. "Rock bottom is always far lower and far darker than you think." An important book and a very impressive, ultimately hopeful, treatment of mental illness.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

JUVENILE FICTION

ALMOND, David

The dam.- Walker Studio, 2018. 'This takes the true story of the Kielder Dam in Northumberland and imbues it with music and a touch of mysticism. The dam was constructed in 1981 in a valley where there were farms, houses and a school. When the dam was finished, the valley was to be flooded. Almond's story begins as a father and daughter walk the valley one last time, remembering the pipers, singers, and dance parties that once filled the area with soaring sounds. The daughter has her violin, the father his voice, and together they enter abandoned homes to play and sing one last time... A powerful piece of remembrance.' (*booklistonline.com*, Ilene Cooper)

CONDIE, Ally and REICHS, Brendan

The darkdeep.- Macmillan Children's books, 2019. 'Collaboration between bestselling authors is bound to produce high expectations, and this mash-up of *Goosebumps*-meets-*The Goonies* certainly delivers. Still Cove is a mysteriously foggy area just outside the mill town of Timbers. Twelve-year-olds Opal and Nico avoid the place at all costs due to rumors of "the Beast", but after a run-in with bully Logan, the friends are forced to brave the area. What they find is incredible: a mystical water portal that sucks you in and spits you out, bringing your imagination to life — literally. When the "figments" begin to get out of control, what began as a fun game suddenly turns deadly. Nico, Opal, and their friends must find a way to work together to contain the phenomenon they refer to as the Darkdeep. The four friends at the heart of the story have distinctive personalities, with Nico and Opal narrating. The magical aspect of the Darkdeep runs parallel to the fears and worries the characters hold about their lives. Nico's father petitioned to protect an endangered owl species in the woods, resulting in job losses at the town's mill, and resentment from the community. Friction between Nico and Logan, the mill owner's son, and Opal, who's family profited from the situation, must be overcome before they can tackle the figments, and the Darkdeep. Swiftly paced and peppered

with wit, this darkly entertaining tale is sure to engage horror fans.' (*slj.com*, Lauren Jones)

HOWE, Cath

Ella on the outside.- Nosy Crow, 2018. 'Girls can be very unkind, says Mrs. Reynolds, Ella's elderly childminder, who fills the post-school gap until Mum gets home from work. Ella is in tears. She is indeed the victim of some orchestrated bullying at her new school, but it's worse than that. Her problem is that the unkind person was me. In her efforts to gain entry to the in-crowd swarming around the popular Lydia Sheridan, she's betrayed the trust of a lonely classmate — the only girl in her class with the makings of a real friend. Everything's a mess. She's got scratchy eczema all over her arms and hands, her family has had to move house to a new town (that was her dad's fault) and her new school is nowhere near as friendly as her last one. Her best friend from her old life ignores most of her texts, and when she does reply she goes on about some new friend she's made. Ella's little brother Jack is a constant pain and Mum seems too busy worrying about Jack being okay to give Ella any time. Mum says she mustn't talk to anyone about The Family Secret; but she has. We're in the know because, between each chapter recording Ella's rough ride at school, we read the letters she's writing regularly to her Dad;

he's in prison, doing three years for stealing money from the bank where he worked. Cath Howe keeps her cast small and the focus tight in her debut novel for young readers. Ella's perspective and language are just right for the ages of Howe's fictional characters and her readers. She teaches in London primary schools and she is surely a discerning watcher and listener. When you are navigating Year Five or Six, especially if you're new to a school, it can feel as though you are always going to be on the outside; the others will never let you in. Ella longs to change that. Her Mum's been too stressed to buy Ella a new uniform, so every day, all day, it's evident she doesn't belong. Her only consolation is that Grandma has sent her an iPhone with a great camera; she's enjoying using that, especially when the teacher who runs the Art Club admires the composition of one of her shots and tells her, "you are a photographer". Ella has been ensnared by the malicious Lydia. If she'd like to be admitted to the charmed circle of favourites, Lydia tells Ella she must spy on Molly who chooses to sit, silent and alone, at the back of the class. Ella is sufficiently miserable to swallow the bait, and sneaks inside Molly's mysterious house. It's like a crazy junk shop. Wardrobes, chairs, sculptures, jugs, a rocking-horse, baskets of clothes are piled everywhere. The place is damp, and it smells. In one of the darkest rooms,

Ella hears the sound of a little breathy voice and glimpses a pale face with a dark cloak wrapped round. She records the scene on her camera and fires the images off to Lydia. When Molly discovers the betrayal, Ella's world caves in. As the secrets unfold, Lydia's own frailties emerge, explaining the heartless mind-games she uses to control others and preserve her own power. With the help and renewed trust offered by Molly whose needs are as urgent as her own — Ella learns to recognise the strength of being a watcher, content that she's still a pair person really. She's seen the deceptive glamour of the group for what it is. In her growing awareness, she's even able to help her lonely Mum to begin to repair her life with Dad. Girls are the likely readers here and the novel offers them a reflective read exploring territory which may well have features they recognise.' (*booksforkeeps.co.uk*)

HUGO, De Wet
Die gevaarlikste fliek op aarde.- Human & Rousseau, 2021.

'Dieter is 'n ware fliekvlooi. Maar gaan al sy filmkennis hom help as 'n hologramreus hom en sy tweekingbroer, Darius, na 'n virtuele fliekwêreld ontvoer? Hulle moet van ruimtewesens, booswigte en monsters vlug, saam met 'n superheld veg en nog meer — alles om vier fliekkaartjies te vind en te ontsnap. Maar wat het die ou

wetenskaplike in die spookhuis op die bult daarmee te doen? 'n Kies-jou-eie-avontuur-storie propvol avontuur en naelbyt-aksie!' (*Uitgewersprinkel*)

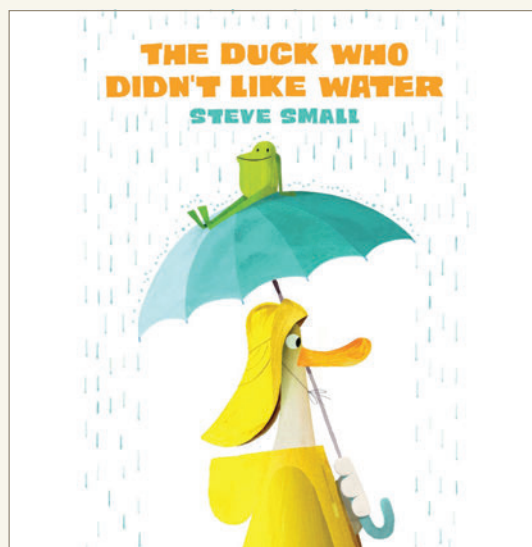
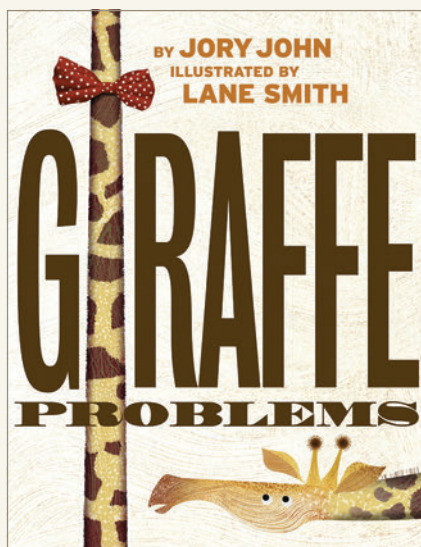
JOHN, Jory

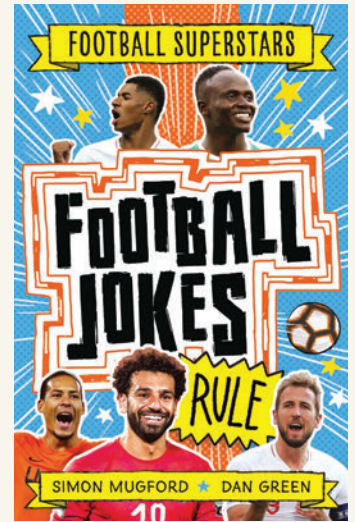
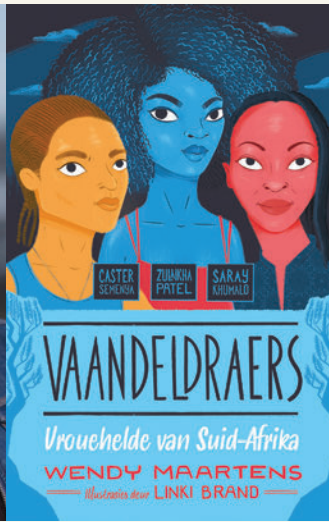
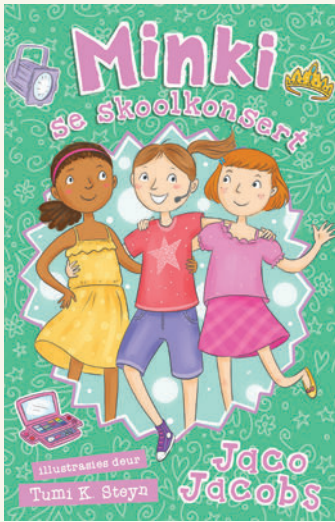
Giraffe problems.- Walker Books, 2018.
 'Less acerbic but no less engaging than the avian whiner in **Penguin Problems** (2016), Edward the giraffe frets about his prominent neck... Never one to let an opportunity for caricature go to waste, Smith stretches Edward's neck to comical length... That it's just right for a giraffe is a notion that Edward, not to mention young readers with self-consciousness issues of their own, will have no trouble swallowing.'
 (*booklistonline.com*, John Peters)

SMALL, Steve

The duck who didn't like water.- Simon & Schuster, 2022.

'Duck dislikes swimming, boating, and (basically) water. One stormy night, he discovers a very wet frog at his doorstep and gives him shelter. The next day, they search for Frog's home, without success. When the mail-delivery pelican arrives, he recognises Frog and offers him a ride home across the river. After thanking Duck, Frog leaves. For several days, nothing seems right to Duck. Something is missing. Crossing the river despite pelting rain, he finds





Frog and, after a joyful reunion, says, “Home doesn’t feel like home if you’re not there!” Frog concurs with a hearty “RIBBIT” and happily moves back in with Duck. Small, who illustrated Smriti Prasadam-Halls’ *I’m sticking with you* (2020), makes his authorial debut with this sweet-spirited offering in which the narrator smoothly interprets Frog’s ribbits, adding to the story’s levity. The book’s charm and gentle humor lie in Small’s expressive depiction of characters in the artwork. The richly coloured, dramatic storm scenes, which contrast beautifully with the otherwise light, bright illustrations, are particularly fine. A fortuitous, foul-weather friendship.’ (*booklistonline.com*, Carolyn Phelan)

JUVENILE FICTION

JACOBS, Jaco

Minki. - Pan Macmillan Kinderboeke, 2021. ‘Die *Minki*-reeks deur die bekende en bekroonde Afrikaanse jeugskrywer, Jaco Jacobs het vyf boeke in die reeks. Die derde boek, **Minki se skoolkonsert**, handel oor die skoolkonsert wat voorlê en waarvoor Minki en haar maats baie opgewonde is. Hulle klas gaan Aspoestertjie opvoer, en dit gaan fantasties wees! Minki en Natalie is seker Lara gaan die hoofrol kry. Sy kan baie goed dans, en boonop is Aspoestertjie haar gunsteling-

sprokiesprinses. Hulle kan nie wag om te sien hoe sy in haar droomrok lyk nie! Maar by die oudisie loop dinge onverwags skeef... Gaan Minki dit regkry om soos ’n regte Goeie Fee haar towerstaffie te swaai en die konsert te red? Die vierde boek in die reeks is **Minki se avontuurkamp**: Minki en haar maats sien al weke lank uit na die skool se avontuurkamp! Hulle gaan in die bos kampeer, swem, kampvuuraande hou en in tente slaap. Boonop is daar allerhande lekker uitdagings waaraan hulle kan deelneem. Dit klink na vet pret! Maar Danika is vasbeslote om weer dinge vir Minki-hulle so goor as moontlik te maak. Sy besluit dat haar span as die Kampkampioene gekroon gaan word en dat niks in haar pad gaan staan nie. Nie eens al beteken dit sy moet vuil speel nie.’ (Uitgewersprikkel)

JUVENILE NON-FICTION

MAARTENS, Wendy

Vaandelraers: Vrouehelde van Suid-Afrika. - LAPA Uitgewers, 2021. “n Reeks van vier boeke oor merkwaardige vroue in Suid-Afrika onder die reeksnaam *Vaandelraers*. Hierdie besonderse reeks bevat die verhale van twaalf vrouens wat verdien om gevier te word; vrouens wat enigteen sal inspireer. Van bekende vrouens soos Thuli Madonsela, Caster Semenya en Vanessa Govender, tot

meer onbesonge helde soos Grizelda Grootboom en Suna Venter. Met unieke, kleurvolle illustrasies deur Linki Brand, is hierdie reeks ’n moet-hê vir elke jong leser.’ (Uitgewersprikkel)

MUGFORD, Simon

Football jokes rule/illustrated by Dan Green.- Welbeck Children’s books, 2021. A collection of jokes in the *Football superstars*-series, with fascinating football facts, quizzes and black-and-white illustrations throughout; which has wide appeal to football fans and early and reluctant readers. **AM**

Most of these titles are available in e-format on the Western Cape OverDrive webpage and Libby app.

Die meeste van hierdie titels is ook beskikbaar in e-formaat op die Wes-Kaap Biblioteekdiens se OverDrive webblad en Libby-toepassing.

Note: At the time of going to press some of these titles are not yet available at the libraries.

AM Ayanda Majola
AT Anél Taljaard

Libby: an additional literacy resource for public libraries

by Luinda Lilley



September is celebrated as Literacy Month, and, correspondingly, National Book Week is South Africa's official annual reading awareness week. This year it was celebrated from 5 to 11 September. It is an important initiative in encouraging the nation to value reading as a fun and pleasurable activity, as well as to showcase how reading can easily be incorporated into one's daily lifestyle.

Locally, many know it as Fine Free Week, which is an incentive to get long outstanding books and patrons back to their libraries.

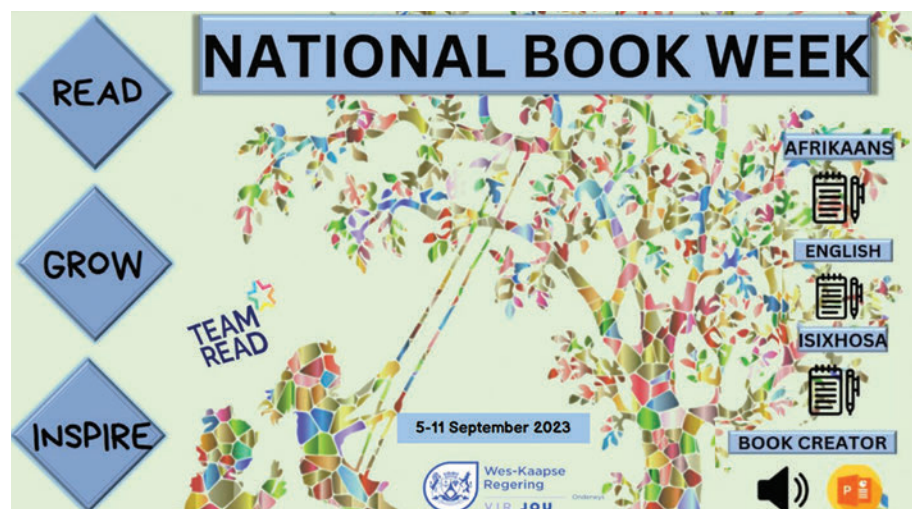
I am acutely aware of how the world around us is rapidly changing. It leads one to ask: What can we do to make sure that our public library services are realising their fullest potential? All too often we fall into the trap of thinking that the past is another country which

we visit from time to time. The reality is that the past is more like an ever-present shadow. Post-apartheid we would talk about the lost generation of our friends and colleagues whose schooling was interrupted by the former government's institutionalised racial oppression.

I recently heard a colleague talk about the new lost generation — those children whose schooling was negatively impacted by COVID-19. Our public library staff have already seen what a severe impact this has had on the reading levels of the next generation of library patrons. To put it rather bluntly — it has left a huge gap in our 'marketplace'.

In *Under African skies* (1986), Paul Simon sings these words: 'This is the story of how we begin to remember.' We need to use all available resources at our disposal to balance the detrimental effects of an economy under strain, adapt to technological changes and emerge from the upheaval of the pandemic. All these factors can be rather overwhelming for both librarians and parents who are shouldering more and more responsibilities. In my work life, I actively seek every opportunity to create a positive future for my library patrons. This article looks at what help our digital tool, Libby, has to offer.

A positive first step we can take is to acknowledge that the technology we make available for use in the library has value and provides a vital service to



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our communities. This includes public internet computers and the free internet and/or Wi-Fi access on offer; specialised equipment for the disabled (e.g. SA Library for the Blind's 32 mini library programmes) and electronic resources. One of the key findings of the National Reading Barometer 2023 (NRB) relating to digital reading was the need to 'Reduce barriers to internet access to enable more reading'. Across both Western Cape and City of Cape Town public libraries there are various initiatives to install Wi-Fi and more PCs. Cultural Affairs and Sport MEC Anroux Marais said: 'In most of the smaller communities, the free internet services offered at the libraries are the only internet services available to those communities.' (Cape Times, 28 June 2022)

Dr Xolisa Guzula from UCT, speaking at the Public Libraries Seminar 2023, talked about libraries being 'third spaces' between school and home. The role of libraries is recognised as being fundamental to developing literacy. We must further recognise that the expertise of library staff translates to an immense value-adding benefit.

In a country where poverty levels are on the rise, libraries continue to play an essential role in creating well-informed communities and therefore a healthy democracy. Our public libraries represent free spaces where people can learn, especially in impoverished rural areas. Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that lack of reading comprehension and low literacy levels will negatively impact a child's development and lifelong opportunities. Worldwide, research has shown that the amount of time children spend with books is crucial to reading achievement, and in turn, to school achievement in general. Furthermore, the link between reading levels and employability is well documented. Of the many services that librarians assist with is helping

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job seekers hunt for employment, teach basic computer skills, improve digital literacy skills to enrol their children in schools and generally help find appropriate levels of reading materials. Many programmes are run that serve an important role in helping prepare children for kindergarten and school transition. Story times, vibrant board and picture book collections and easy or graded readers all provide assistance in the area of early literacy.

The City of Cape Town libraries have seen an increase in kids and teen book clubs. Apart from a vast fiction collection available through the Libby app, we also have many titles which can assist to develop the job seeker and entrepreneur. Few libraries can afford the high cost of the expensive graphic novels that our juvenile and teen patrons love. This medium has proven a powerful tool for encouraging reading because these books come in many different forms. Some are aimed specifically at younger, reluctant readers who need books with high interest content, but low reading ability levels. On Libby we have developed a collection that will appeal to all ages.

The National Reading Survey clearly shows that in South Africa, libraries are recognised as facilities and services that people value. We need to tap into this by attracting community partners who can work with us to elevate and broaden our services on offer. Library partnerships have value because community engagement has value. It follows then, that the involvement of library volunteers from the communities includes benefits for volunteers in terms of enhancing their confidence, skills and levels of employability. An exciting example of this is the YeBoneer programme that the WCLS is spearheading.

Looking further afield, the *Libraries Connect* report of 2022 noted that '[UK] libraries have a specific and unique contribution to make in post-pandemic literacy recovery. The universal, free service of a public library service has a vital role to play in promoting reading and literacy in society'. In South Africa, public libraries remain a precious resource, but continued budget cuts are limiting the services that can be offered. This eroding of a basic right further increases the divide between the information rich and poor.

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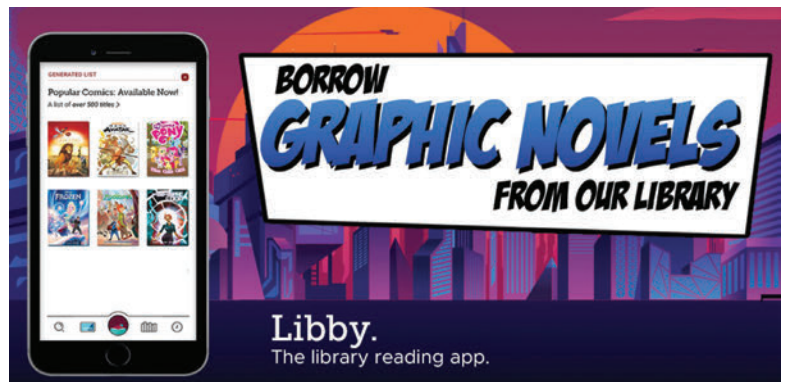
The digital library is
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even when school
is closed!



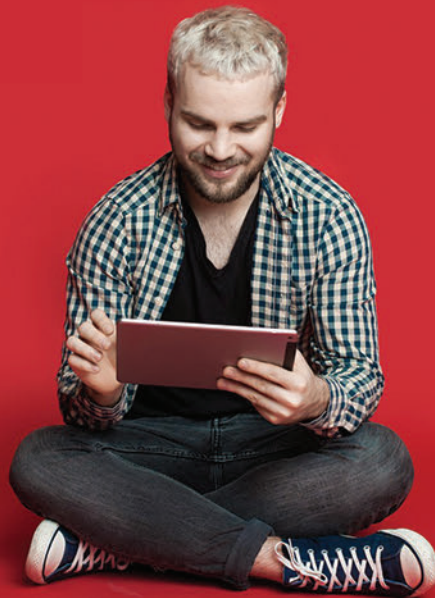
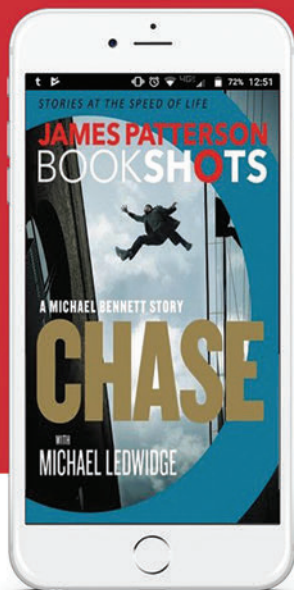
The NRB clearly shows that print remains the preferred medium for reading. I would like to make a case for the role that audiobooks can play to engage reluctant readers and underrepresented children and young people. Key findings from the 2021 Annual Literacy Survey of the National Literacy Trust (NLT) in the UK noted:

- one in four (25.4%) children and young people are listening to audiobooks, with one in eight (12.8%) only listening to audiobooks.
- Of those who listen to audiobooks, two out of five (44.5%) children and young people said that listening to an audiobook or podcast has got them interested in reading books.
- There is a link between listening enjoyment and an interest in diversity, with more children and young people who enjoy listening saying that they like to read or hear about characters or people that are different from them, compared with their peers who do not enjoy listening (65.1% vs. 51.7%).

Libby can be an unexpected provider of assistance when it comes to audiobooks to encourage reading. Karen Jorgensen from the Worcester Region related how she used one of Libby's read aloud audiobooks as part of story time. It was a Roald Dahl book which then led into the children handling some of the author's books and an informal talk about the story. This is supported by OverDrive who says: 'Our browser-based eReader, OverDrive Read, supports narrated ebooks. This exciting ability to read along with verbal storytelling is



Build reading skills with these quick reads!



Libby.
The library reading app

perfect for helping developing readers learn.'

Libraries need to embrace technology and library staff need to be comfortable using it; and showing others how to make use of our digital services. All library staff should, at the very least, have downloaded the Libby app and be familiar with its functions. To remain relevant to our existing patrons and be attractive to potential patrons, libraries must adapt to new technologies like ebooks. All around us we are seeing changes in the digital landscape — and need to tap into these resources that have so much potential for growth and a more prosperous future for all.

Additional resources

1. *Public Libraries and Literacy Recovery* by National Literacy Trust and Libraries Connected (2022) https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/sites/default/files/Public_libraries_and_literacy_recovery_-_final_version.pdf
2. *National Literacy Trust – Children and young people's reading in 2023* <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/children-and-young-peoples-reading-in-2023/>
3. *OverDrive Read-Alongs* <https://resources.overdrive.com/library/libby-features/overdrive-read-alongs/>
4. 'This is the story of how we begin to remember': 30 years since Graceland by Julie Wagner, HUFFPOST, 25 August 2017 https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/julia-wagner/graceland-paul-simon_b_11679772.html
5. *YearBeyond or YeBo (YeBoneer)* <https://www.yearbeyond.org>

The 2023 National Reading Survey (NRS) is a nationally representative survey that describes access to reading materials, attitudes towards reading, reading practices and barriers to reading in South Africa. 4,250 adults ages 16+ were recruited through face-to-face stratified sampling and interviewed by phone or in person. Results were weighted by age, race and province.

Digital reading

55% of adults read online materials, excluding social media (up from 7% in 2016)¹ **24%** of adults have read an ebook



i Most popular: online news, magazines and blogs, religious material

i Less active readers prefer print
Young people are more likely to read digitally



Book readers prefer: **47%** print | **19%** digital | **34%** both

Source: National Reading Barometer Project: 2023 Summary Report



(Ltr): Dave Sanderson: Regional Librarian, Eastern Cape, en route to a film show with Mr DA Dowse: Driver, 1962

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