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FOR YOU

With South Africa commemorating Youth Day in the month of June, it's an apt moment to pause and take stock of one of the most fundamental challenges still facing the majority of our country's children; nearly 30 years after the advent of democracy.

The *2023 Background Report for the 2030 Reading Panel*, penned by prominent education economist Prof. Nic Spaull and released in May, is an ongoing project that aims to increase literacy rates to the end of attaining a 100% reading rate among all South African children by 2030.

It is a tsunami of gloom.

The ability of Grade 4 learners to read for meaning has been found to have decreased from 2016's 78% to 82%. This takes South Africa back ten years in reading performance, as measured against other years of research (2006: 87%; 2011: 82%; 2016: 78%; 2021: 82%).

Spaull warns that compared to Brazil, a country of similar GDP per capita and comparable inequality, South Africa is 3.3 years behind.

Funding shortages and ineffective teaching are identified as the low-hanging scapegoats, but in truth the COVID-19 pandemic has outdone all as the primary stumbling block. With the report estimating that to reach the pre-pandemic improvement trajectory, it will now take until 2108 until all South African Grade 4s will be able to read for meaning. That's 85 years.

While education falls outside of the official remit of libraries, however informal, their function in assisting with literacy development cannot be underestimated. In fact, to foster a lifelong reading culture to the end of a fully literate society, a 2016 UNESCO-titled *UIL Policy Brief 6: Using libraries to support national literacy efforts* suggested that libraries be involved in the formation of literacy policy from early learning levels all the way up to advanced proficiency.

If such interventions appear outlandishly first-world (and in South Africa, sadly out of reach), it's nevertheless important not to discount the impact of the explosively fertile potential of the humble reading competition in the community library.

To move towards a better future for all South Africans, there's a mountain of rebuilding ahead. The first steps await in our local libraries.

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ON THE COVER

Rondebosch along the old woodcutter's route

After the Dutch settled at the Cape in 1652, Governor Jan van Riebeeck observed the nearby countryside and came to view the Liesbeeck River on the mountainside as a potential site for agricultural produce, mainly for the ships of the Dutch East India Company calling for port. Yet, what intrigued Van Riebeeck was a circular grove of thorn trees, probably from a Khoi cattle kraal — which led him to name the area 'Het Ronde Doornbosjen'.

The area subsequently developed alongside a pathway for mainly woodcutters and tradesmen commuting to the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town, thereby becoming the first Cape Highway. Despite the bustle of the transportation by carts

and later also tramway (the tramlines are noticeable in the photograph), Rondebosch gradually developed as a tranquil haven for prominent residents. The clergy of the Anglican church were especially influential and founded the Rondebosch Chapel, which was built from stone in the Gothic style on an elevated slope where squatters once resided. After the opening of the chapel by Sir Benjamin D'Urban in 1834, the first chaplains, Holt Okes and Rev. Edward Judge, were consecrated. Canon Hewitt afterwards described the thatched roof chapel as '...the beautiful village church of Rondebosch raising its sacred head above the surrounding woods'.

As if time has stood still, today St. Paul's Anglican Church continues to proudly exist as a religious-historical landmark. Rondebosch, with its lush gardens and Victorian style buildings, together with Groote Schuur and

the open barrens of the Rondebosch Common which was once a military campsite, over time became an esteemed suburb. It has also evolved into a major educational hub, which includes, amongst others, the Bishops Diocesan College and the University of Cape Town; the latter famous for being set against the majestic backdrop of Table Mountain.

Picture credit: R1130 Main Road, Rondebosch, Cape Town

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

libraries | biblioteke | amathala eencwadi

Matzikama-streek betower jong biblioteekgangertjies

Biblioteke binne die Matzikama-streek het in Maartmaand behoorlik uitgehaal om die jeug in die omliggende gemeenskappe met 'n rits aktiwiteite te vermaak.

Bitterfontein, Lutzville, Klawer, Vredendal, Uitkyk en Troe-Troe se onderskeie biblioteke het almal met kleurvolle en pittige uitstallings vorendag gekom om die waarde van storievertelling te beklemtoon.

Lutzville het ook 'n spesiale rangskikking tentoongestel om besoekers se aandag op koddige wyse op minder gewilde boeke te vestig, sowel as 'n aansporingsprogram geloods om jong lesers as lede in te skryf.

Leerders van die plaaslike kleuterskool, Kekkelbekkies, het die biblioteek besoek en na 'n storie geluister. Intussen is 'n foto wat vooraf van elke kind geneem is, uitgedruk en in 'n raampie geplak (getiteld 'Kyk Mamma/Pappa, ek was by die biblioteek vandag') om huis toe te vat, saam met 'n lidmaatskapvorm vir diene wat nog nie lede is nie.

Bogenoemde was deel van 'n inligtingspakkie vir ouers wat inligting verskaf oor die belangrikheid van lees. G'n so 'n besoek is natuurlik volledig sonder 'n pakkie skyfies en 'n stokkielekker nie!



Huguenot Square rocks a long-lost reading competition



On Wednesday 3 May, **Huguenot Square Library** in Belhar hosted a successful reading competition where several surrounding primary schools participated. This competition

was the first of its kind to be held since the COVID pandemic of 2020 struck.

For obvious reasons, after a four-year absence we were super excited to host this event again.

The three participants were Matroosberg, Symphony and Riebeeck Street primary schools.

Nine Grade 7 readers competed in both Afrikaans and English categories, respectively; after which three winners in each category were chosen. They were judged for presentation, comprehension, speed and spelling.

As the points were very close, the judges really had a tough time in choosing the winners.

All contestants were rewarded with a medal, certificate and goodie bag. Beyond that the top three winners in each category received a special goodie bag and a certificate.

We look forward to hosting the competition in the near future.

Cheryl Petersen, Assistant Librarian: Huguenot Square Library

D'Almeida celebrates World Book Day



On Friday 21 April, **D'Almeida Library** staff celebrated World Book Day by dressing in wacky outfits and visiting surrounding schools. The staff emphasised the importance of books and reading and why this day is celebrated. The library also invited Kiddies Corner Daycare for a story hour and a sweet treat afterwards.

Greenhaven Poetry competition



Greenhaven Public Library near Groot-Brak celebrated World Poetry day in the month of March. It was the library's third year of running a poetry competition for its little poets and patrons. Local author Lluyle Arendse was on hand to announce the winners.

Melkbos Pre-Primary touched by magic during Koeberg staff visit



On Wednesday 22 March, Annan Adams and Glenda de Klerk from **Koeberg Library** visited Melkbosstrand Pre-Primary School as part of a membership drive and South African Library Week.

With **The cat in the hat** by Dr Seuss as theme, the stage at the school was transformed into a library. School and library staff dressed up as Dr Seuss characters. Thing 1 and Thing 2 demonstrated to the children how it works to join the library, as well as showcasing the different available materials that may be borrowed and how one should behave in a library. There was even a grumpy newspaper reader, who kept on telling everybody to keep quiet.

154 new LiBee cards were issued, as well as some LiBee booklets, and buttons provided by the school. Annan and Glenda stamped all the little hands at the end of the proceedings as badges of honour.

Roelda Brown, Senior Librarian: Koeberg Public Library

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.

Hospital Street Depot Easter display



Ashton Assure

This artistic Easter 'eggs-hibition' display by Sandra Kingswell at the **Hospital Street Depot** shows that a lot can be done with a little imagination and creativity.

Paas-uitstalling deur Proteem



Nog 'n treffende Paas-uitstalling deur die klein, landelike biblioteek op **Protem**. Ten spyte van beperkte spasie in die biblioteek, is hulle ywer en vindingrykheid oorgenoeg bewys van hulle toewyding en kreatiwiteit.

South African Library Week celebrations in Swellendam

On Wednesday, 22 March, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport's Library Service Directorate hosted the 2023 South African Library Week event in partnership with the Swellendam Municipality. The **Archbishop Desmond Tutu Library** was the chosen venue to kick off the festivities.

The theme for the National Library Week 2023 is *Libraries: telling powerful stories*. Humans have told stories for as long as we can remember. These stories are used to share news, amplify accomplishments of heroes, pass on cultural traditions and transfer knowledge and history. Libraries have been central in collecting, preserving and sharing these stories.

The Head of the Department, Guy Redman, highlighted the importance of the role of libraries, noting they should be considered an essential service, and that they are critical for stimulating imagination that leads to hope. He confirmed that public libraries play a very important role in the society as it fosters thoughtful communities.

In her keynote address the Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, Anroux Marais, indicated that libraries are the heart of the community: 'Libraries are such magical places in our communities, and it is important that we celebrate them as safe spaces, where young and old can go to learn so many exciting new things. Through books, we can travel to many different places and we can learn about so many people and events through these stories. Studies have also shown the benefits of reading for children, which include improved reasoning skills, better memory and wider vocabularies,' she said.

The WCLS further embarked on an exciting programme of events that continued at various public libraries across the Swellendam Municipality for the rest of the week.

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



Minister Anroux Marais with MC Ruwayne October



Library Week in Swellendam with a performance by the Kaapse Klopse

A librarian remembers

I grew up as an only child in the district of Robertson, where I lived from 1963 to 1981. For as long as I can remember, my mother introduced me to the fascinating world of books at the town's local library.

There were not many children's books available in Afrikaans, but I devoured everything that was available: **The wonderful adventures of Nils Holgersson (Nils Holgersson se wonderbaarlike reis)** was my favourite story and later *Saartjie and Trompie*, *Die Maasdorp-series*, *Nancy Drew*, and of course, all the Enid Blyton and Beatrix Potter titles.

We lived on a farm and my mother had to hide the books from me because I would finish reading them in the car, even before we were back home on the farm when travelling back from the library. I also subscribed to the *Bollie* and *Tina* Afrikaans magazines and could never wait for them to be delivered in the post!

Robertson's special library staff — Suzette Marais (Le Roux), later the library manager at Bredasdorp, Corina Nothling and Bessie van Heerden — even allowed me to borrow *Die kinders van die wêreld* encyclopedia, although it was kept in the reference section. I devoured the facts about every country, after which the highlight was the fable unique to that country.

As the internet had not even been born at that stage, these librarians also assisted me with gathering information for school projects. I took music as a school subject and just could not believe how clever these library ladies were to know where exactly to find the required information about composers and music periods. They simply knew everything.



Christine Gerber

I have the most wonderful memories of my hometown library: the books, the smell of the building, the very clever librarians and the wonderful world that books and stories opened to me.

I have been a librarian for the past 38 years and although many things have changed over the years, I would choose working with books and people all over again.

May many more be inspired to follow this richly rewarding and impactful career path.

Christine Gerber, Library Manager: Breede Valley

Libby app makes learning dreams come true



Naledi Mothibe is the daughter of a colleague and a Grade 12 student from Worcester. After obtaining a score of 32% in the third term of Grade 11 for Afrikaans Second Language, she approached me for assistance. I encouraged her to start reading Afrikaans, but she told me that she struggled with the language because she didn't understand the words she read. Naledi had a poor track record with losing library books and was therefore hesitant to borrow any more. However, she always has her phone and Wi-Fi at home, so I thought the Libby app could help. I helped her register on OverDrive and download Libby. She then started borrowing Grade 1 level books in Afrikaans. She also started reading the Oxford *Storieboom*-series and progressed to about Grade 4 level. She looked up all the words she did not understand in the dictionary. By the end of 2022 her marks for Afrikaans had improved to 45%. Her mother showed me her results for the first term of 2023 and Naledi got 59%! Her teacher commented that a C grading was within her reach. Her lovely smile in this photo says it all. She also enjoys the usefulness of the Libby app and has started reading more English books too.

Karen Jorgensen, Worcester Library



The oldest libraries in the world (Part 1)

by Yvette Herbst



Who doesn't love the smell of old novels, the grandeur of wooden tables and the beauty of ceiling-high bookshelves? Libraries are centres of knowledge and learning around the world. They are also home to all of the world's printed works and other forms of media including films, CDs, videotapes, DVDs, Blu-ray discs, maps, ebooks, audiobooks and databases. The earliest libraries emerged not long after the first civilisations started keeping written records.

These first libraries consisted of clay tablets dating back to around 2500 BCE. While many of the libraries on this list have been destroyed, several complete works and fragments from their collections have survived.

Here are some of the most ancient libraries from around the world.

Ebla Library — archives and records

It was the desire to keep track of their busy economic-commercial life that led the Eblaites in Syria not only to establish an extensive bureaucracy, but also to create and maintain records. The first such texts that can be read date from perhaps 2900 BCE and are in the Sumerian language, written on clay tablets.

In the early 1980s, archaeologists uncovered four archives in the royal palace of Ebla. About 15,000 tablets were found in the main palace archives; another 600 in one antechamber; 800 in another and 1,000 in the third. Unfortunately, many of the tablets are only fragments, having been broken when the wooden shelving that held

them collapsed during the fire that destroyed the city around 2220 BCE. The Eblaite tablets, inscribed in the Sumerian and Eblaite languages, vary in dimension and shape. They also frequently contain a brief identifying inscription on their edges, like the title on the spine of a book.

The Ebla tablets were transported to their storage locations by means of wooden planks. The tablets were then shelved vertically, resting against each other like books in a library on wooden shelves or on brick benches. The main archives' tablets were shelved two to three high on wooden shelves. Custodians of the clay tablets, realising the necessity of preserving their tablets against deterioration in the hot Mesopotamian climate, attempted to provide proper storage facilities for their tablets. This was generally accomplished by several means, including storing them in underground rooms; having thick walls for their above-ground rooms and by utilising different water systems to ensure proper humidity. As an extra measure of preservation some tablets were stored in clay containers and wooden chests.

By today's definitions we can describe Ebla's clay tablets as being records, archives, library material and non-record material.

The Ebla tablets cover about 150 years, estimated in age by one archaeologist at 2500 to 2360 BCE and 2400 to 2250 BCE by another. The tablets consist of legal, executive, administrative, military, economic, lexical, and literary texts as well as academic exercises.

The legal texts include judicial decisions and contracts. The military texts include correspondence concerning military actions, the use of mercenaries and the status of prisoners of war. The executive texts include royal ordinances and edicts, letters of state and of officials, lists of cities subject to Ebla; and treaties. The administrative texts include payroll listings, tribute payment listings, lists of rations for the royal family; functionaries, and messengers traveling to other city-states, personnel assignments, and lists of offerings for the temples and divinities. The lexical texts include syllabaries, splitting words into syllables; encyclopedias, which were lists arranged by subject,

(Left): Parts of the Ebla excavations
en.wikipedia.org

such as professions, stones, metals, woods, animals, fishes, birds, and geographical names; as well as monolingual and bilingual dictionaries and vocabularies.

One bilingual text contains approximately 1,000 words of Eblaite listed in columns and in parallel columns, the meanings of the word being given in Sumerian. The literary texts include myths, epic narratives, hymns to gods, incantations, rituals and collections of proverbs. Among the literary texts are a Creation story and account of the Flood. The largest collections of texts are economic-commercial related, which is not surprising, since about 90 percent of all the clay tables that have been uncovered in the Near East are economic-commercial related.

Royal Library of Ashurbanipal

Before the discovery of older ancient libraries in the early 20th century, the Royal Library of Ashurbanipal was considered the first library or the oldest surviving royal library in

the world. Although we now know that older libraries exist, this Middle Eastern library was one of the first to implement a systematical organisation of its material.

The Royal Library of Ashurbanipal was founded sometime in the 7th century BC for the royal contemplation of the Assyrian ruler Ashurbanipal.

Located in Nineveh in modern-day Iraq, the site included about 30,000 script tablets organised according to subject matter and covering a wide variety of subjects, including medicine, mythology, magic, science, poetry and geography. Most of the titles were archival documents, religious incantations and scholarly texts, but it also housed several works of literature including the 4,000-year-old *Epic of Gilgamesh*, regarded as the earliest surviving great work of literature. The collection of documents has been described by some as 'the most precious source of historical material in the world'. The book-loving Ashurbanipal compiled much of his library by looting works from Babylonia and other territories he conquered. Archaeologists later stumbled upon

its ruins in the mid-19th century, its contents now kept in the British Museum in London. Even though Ashurbanipal acquired many of his tablets through plunder, he seems to have been particularly worried about theft. An inscription in one of the texts warns that if anyone steals its tablets, the gods will 'cast him down' and 'erase his name, his seed, in the land'.

Library of Alexandria

Few legendary institutions rival the fame and magnificence of the Library of Alexandria. It is the best-known and largest of the ancient world libraries. It was located in the city of Alexandria in ancient Egypt, which was the major economic, cultural, and intellectual centre of the world at the time.

Alexander the Great, who is believed to have founded Alexandria, got the inspiration for his own grand library after visiting the Royal Library of Ashurbanipal. He wanted to collect the works of the people he conquered, convert them to Greek and store them in a library of his own.

Following Alexander the Great's death in 323 BC, control of Egypt fell to his former general Ptolemy I Soter, who sought to establish a centre of learning in the city of Alexandria. The result was the Library of Alexandria, which eventually became the intellectual jewel of the ancient world. The library is famous for collecting all of the world's knowledge at the time, translating the found works onto papyrus scrolls and storing them. Little is known about the site's physical layout, but at its peak it may have included over 500,000 scrolls containing works of literature and texts on history, law, mathematics and science. The library and its associated research institute attracted scholars from around the Mediterranean, many of whom lived on site and drew government stipends while conducting research and copying the contents uncovered. At various times the likes of Strabo, Euclid and Archimedes were among the academics on site.

The great library's demise is traditionally dated to 48 BC, when it burned after Julius Caesar accidentally set fire to Alexandria's harbour during a battle against the Egyptian ruler Ptolemy XIII. But while the blaze



The Library of Ashurbanipal in the British Museum



Artistic rendering of the Library of Alexandria based on archaeological evidence

may have damaged the library, most historians now believe that it continued to exist in some form for several more centuries. Some scholars argue that it finally met its end in 270 AD during the reign of the Roman emperor Aurelian, while others believe that it came even later during the 4th century.

Library of Pergamum

The Library of Pergamum was established in the city of Pergamum, also called Pergamum, by the Attalid King Eumenes II (197-159 BCE) and became the most famous and well-respected centre of learning after the Library at Alexandria in Egypt. The library continued in use from the reign of Eumenes II through the Byzantine Period.

The Attalid Dynasty (281-133 BCE) of Pergamum (in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey) came from humble origins and to establish themselves as rulers of note, patronised the arts and letters. Eumenes II especially held literature and learning in high regard and built the library as an annex to his Temple of Athena on the acropolis of Pergamum. At its height, the library held 200,000 books, mostly written on parchment. The demand by visiting scholars for writing material encouraged parchment production in the city and Pergamum became the leading supplier of the material during the Roman Period, so much so that the English

word *parchment* comes from the Latin *pergamenum* referencing Pergamum.

Rivalry between the libraries of Pergamum and Alexandria led to both working constantly to acquire more books, leading some scholars to hide their private libraries to prevent Eumenes and his brother Attalus II, or the Egyptian pharaohs Ptolemy V Epiphanes and Ptolemy VI Philometor and others, from confiscating them. After Attalus III willed the Kingdom of Pergamum to Rome, the Romans continued maintenance of the library.

According to the historian Plutarch, Mark Antony gave the library's complete collection to his lover, Cleopatra VII, as a gift for the Alexandrian library in 43 BCE. After they were defeated by Octavian at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE, Octavian, as Augustus Caesar gave some, though not all, of the scrolls back to Pergamum.

The library was damaged along with the rest of the city in an earthquake in 262 CE, but evidence suggests it was still in operation during the early years of the Byzantine Empire (330-1453 CE). The final fate of the library is unknown, but most likely the collection

was removed by the librarians and other scholars before the city was finally abandoned sometime after c.1300. Pergamum, outside of Bergama in Turkey, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2014.

Al-Qarawiyyin Library

The al-Qarawiyyin Library in Fez, Morocco is the oldest continuously running library in the world.

The library was founded in 859 CE by Fatima Muhammad Al-Fihri Al-Quraysh; a woman challenging commonly held assumptions about the contribution of women in Muslim societies. The al-Qarawiyyin further incorporates a mosque and a university. Well-educated and devout, Fatima vowed to spend her entire inheritance on building a mosque and knowledge centre for her community.

According to UNESCO, the result is the oldest operational educational institution in the world, with a high-profile roll-call of alumni. Mystic poet and philosopher Ibn al-'Arabi studied there in the 12th century, historian and



Ruins of Pergamum, present-day Bergama, Turkey

economist Ibn Khaldun attended in the 14th century, while in medieval times, Al-Qarawiyyin played a leading role in the transfer of knowledge between Muslims and Europeans. The library was restored recently by another woman, Canadian Moroccan architect Aziza Chaoui.

The library houses a collection of 4,000 rare books and ancient Arabic manuscripts written by renowned scholars of the region. The manuscripts include a 9th century version of the Quran and a manuscript on Islamic jurisprudence written by philosopher Averroes.

Today, it is still considered a leading religious and educational institution in the Muslim world. The University of Al Qarawiyyin has since moved away to another part of Fez, but the mosque and the library remain at the ancient complex.

Imperial Library of Constantinople

In about 357 CE the Byzantine emperor Constantius II, son of Constantine I, became aware of the deterioration of

early texts written on papyrus rolls. He then began the formation of the Imperial Library of Constantinople by having the Judeo-Christian scriptures copied from papyrus onto the more permanent medium of parchment or vellum. The person in charge of the library under Constantius II, thought to have been Themestius, had undertaken the task to reconstitute and collect the literary heritage of ancient Hellenism in Constantinople, by having the works of ancient authors, including minor ones, transcribed by a team of scribes and librarians copying the texts from papyrus rolls to parchment or vellum. All worked at imperial expense.

Such an undertaking — even if not established by Constantius — owed its character and early development to him. The emperor Julian (361-63 CE) lent his backing to the library and enlarged its holdings with his own. In 372 CE the emperor Valens ordered the employment of seven copyists (four for Greek and three for Latin texts) and some assistants to maintain and repair the books of the imperial library. The library housed both Greek and Latin texts.

There is no way of telling exactly how many books the emperor's library contained. Obviously, it was a large collection by the standards of the day, since it had to satisfy the demands of the imperial family and probably the civil service officials employed in the palace.

According to conjecture by some authorities, the Imperial Library of Constantinople might have eventually grown to about 100,000 manuscript volumes, presumably book rolls and codices; however, so little is known about it that it is impossible to estimate how many volumes it might have genuinely housed at any time.

Remarkably little is known about any Byzantine libraries, but it has been assumed that the Imperial Library in Constantinople preserved many of the Greek texts and some scholars have declared that in the 8th century Charlemagne was able to obtain copies of classical texts from the Imperial Library; though it is much more likely that books at Aachen were copied from those in monastery libraries under Charlemagne's rule.

Another aspect was that the Imperial Library is known to have been extensively damaged in the Fourth Crusade when Norman crusaders attempting to form a Latin Empire, ransacked Constantinople and almost wiped out the city. They burned the Imperial Library, probably nearly destroying its collections. The 1204 plundering of Constantinople has been described as one of the most profitable and disgraceful of a city in history. Crusaders may have sold some rare Byzantine manuscripts to Italian buyers.

Of the books known to have once been held in the Imperial Library of Constantinople, only a handful have survived, like a copy of Galen's works given to Robert I by Andronicus III. Galen's works were used as a basis for Latin translation by Niccolò of Reggio.

*Part two will follow in the July/August edition of this year's **Cape Librarian**.*

Yvette Herbst is the assistant director of the Cape Winelands and Overberg regions at the Western Cape Library Service



The reading room of the Qarawiyyin Mosque in Fez



Attack of the Crusaders on Constantinople, miniature in a manuscript of *La Conquête de Constantinople* by Geoffroy de Villehardouin, circa 1330

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Gril gerus... Daar is plek vir Kitsch Lit op rak

deur Sidney Gilroy



Daar behoort vir almal 'n plekkie te wees onder die literêre son, skryf Sidney Gilroy.

Die uitgewersbedryf is 'n dobbelspel en die boekhandel 'n ongetemde, wilde dier. Gerekende skrywers (en minder gerekend, afhangend van wie se mening jy sou vra) dra steeds die letsels van 'n onlangse debakel wat in die baie klein poel van die Afrikaanse literati ontketen is. Op 'n rustige Sondagoggend verskyn 'n resensie van 'n pas vrygestelde boek op hierdie blaaie wat bo-aan die topverkoperlys boer. Daar is nie veel oor hierdie 'boekie' te sê nie, lees die resensie. Resepmatig. Nie dit nie. Nie dát nie. Goeie skrywer, twak genre. Power probeerslag. 'n Pot tjol, as jy my vra, skryf die resensent. Die gevolgtrekking: Is dit ooit regverdig om spasie in 'n weekblad aan hierdie tipe boekies, hierdie kitsch, af te staan? Watter tipe lesers wil nou daarvan lees?

Dis toe dat die pawpaw die fên strike.

Op sosiale media vlieg die hare. 'Daar is plek vir hierdie tipe boeke, kyk dan hoe verkoop dit?' skerm een skrywer en 'Asseblief! Kan ons om Godnaam tog net ophou om boeke se waarde aan hul verkoopsyfers te koppel?' klap 'n pryswenner terug.

Behalwe dat **Die kontrak** pal onder die Top-10 van Amazon sowel as die barometer van boekverkope, die Nielsen Book scan, verskyn — is die boek sopsas herdruk. Weke nadat dit verskyn het. Sout in die wonde van dié wat meen dat hierdie tipe skryfwerk op die agterste rak van die boekwinkel hoort.

Die relaas duur 'n week of twee. Ou wonde word oopgekrap. Die skeur

tussen gerekend en gering verdiep. Aan die een kant van die skeidslyn is die skrywers wat boeke op strepe publiseer en

- a. selde in dagblaaie genoem word, watwou geresenseer word;
- b. as ontspanningsliteratuur geklassifiseer word, oftewel: Boeke vir die massas, sogenoemde Kitsch Lit.

Aan die ander kant is die 'ernstige' skrywers wat om die kuns van die saak, die vooruitgang van die taal en, in baie gevalle, die sertifikate vir vertoon bo hul eie boekrak publiseer. Die gerekende versus die geringe.

'Ek het al meer as 'n miljoen rand met my kitsch boeke verdien,' merk een van my skrywersvriende op toe die geveg op sy felste woed. 'En ek hoor (skrywer x) kon skaars 300 eksemplare verkoop.'

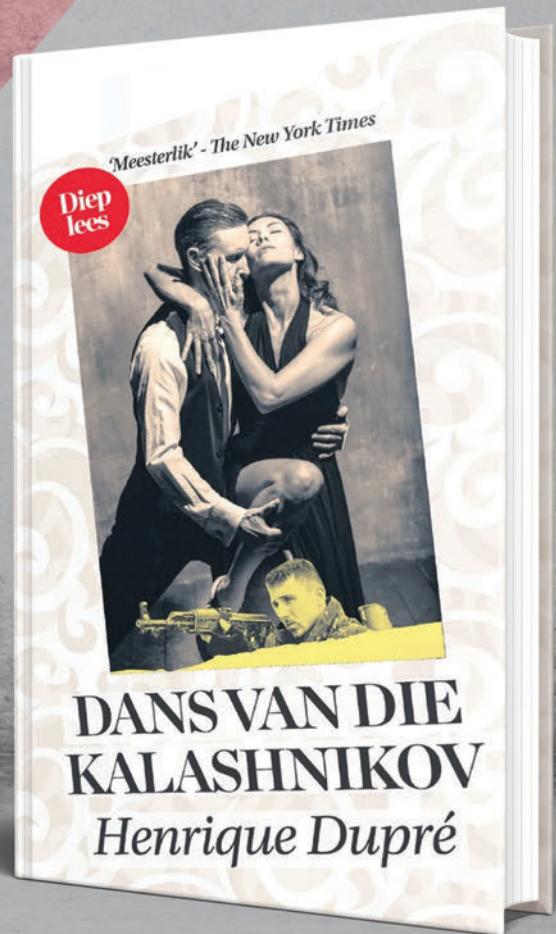
Dae krap ek kop oor dié dilemma. Ek is 'n skrywer. Ek skryf boeke vir ontspanning. My eie en dié van die lesers. My boeke skat ek nie meer werd as die liefdesverhale van 160 bladsye wat soos grofgeskut deur die boekwinkels gesaai lê nie. Ek skryf, per slot van sake, vir die ander genre in oorvloed: misdaadverhale. Tog skat ek my boeke nie minder werd as die herhaaldelike pryswenner wie se volgende novelle met trompettergeskal aangekondig word om 'n maand later weer van vergeet te word nie.

Dit is 'n hartseer waarheid dat die raklewe van 'n nuwe boek net 'n paar maande lank strek. Steeds jubel en juig ons groepie skrywers as een van ons publiseer. Ek was egter naïef genoeg om te glo dat die uitgewersbedryf en die skrywers van Suid Afrika almal mekaar goedgesind is.

Die debat oor die waarde van boeke bedoel vir die massas en boeke bedoel vir die uitverkorenes is al so oud soos die drukpers self.

Dit is 'n onbetwiste feit dat Kitsch Lit se verkope stof in die oë van 'ernstige' literêre werke skop.

Sonder om 'n enkele skrywer uit te sonder, sal 'n vinnige kykie na die Nielsen Bookscan se jongste syfers 'n skreiende tendens blootlê: Vir die eerste weke van hierdie maand was nie minder as tien van die Top-20-verkopers uit die stal van liefdesverhale, ses was misdaadverhale, twee was jeugverhale en een 'n bundel van kortverhale. Min spasie bly oor vir



die roman wat jou laat terugsit om te dink, nuh?

Boeke wat verkoop, is niks minder as 'n spieëlbeeld van populêre kultuur nie. Verkoopsyfers dui aan wat gelees en derhalwe gekoop word.

Waarom bly liefdes- en misdaadverhale die topverkopers? Dit is meer toeganklik, is die kort antwoord. Min mense wil deur 'n boek vol innuendo's, vlietende woordbeelde en versplinterde verhaal worstel. Ook wil die leser nie teen hoofstuk vyf 'n morele krisis beleef nie. Lesers wil vermaak word. Lesers wil nie gedwing word om te dink nie. Daarom die eenvoudige storielyne, die herkenbare karakters en die simplistiese gebruik van ruimte, tyd en ritme in hierdie boeke. Wanneer 'n leser R120 vir 160 resepmatige bladsye betaal, weet die leser reeds dat die kans min is dat hulle nié 'n namiddag tussen die paragrawe sal ontvlug nie.

Dit word 'n ander storie as die lees van 'n boek inspanning van die leser vereis. Komplekse storielyne. Obskure verwysings. Taalgebruik wat die deursnit-leser kniehalter. Uitdagend, om dit ligtelik te stel. Dit kielie nie almal se serebrale korteks nie. Dit is 'n taai toffie om te kou en derhalwe word die boek onbelangstellend op die rak teruggeplaas en drentel ons terug na die topverkoper-rak.

Daar is natuurlik die uitsondering: Die prysweners wat in hul soveelste oplaag is. Die tamentejie wat aanbrand net om die soetste lekker uit te draai. Boeke wat die goue middeweg vind om 'n generasie van lesers en nielesers te beïnvloed en te bekoor. Uitsonderlike vakmanskap met storielyne, karakters en ruimtes wat kwalik veel van die leser vra, behalwe om hulself daarin te verdiep.

Dink maar aan **Kringe in 'n bos**, byvoorbeeld. Onsterflike boeke wat die oersnare van Afrikaans tokkel. Van hierdie tipe boeke het Afrikaans bitter min en juis daarom het ons elke moontlike skrywer agter 'n woordverwerker nodig. Skryf, of dit nou resepmatig is of nie, verg talent en nog meer: Die bemeestering van skryfegnieke en woordkuns. Dieselfde tegnieke en kennis word in prysweners sowel as Kitsch Lit aangewend. Ad infinitum.

Daar is plek vir almal op die boekrak. Afrikaans kan nie die verlies van een enkele skrywer bekostig nie.



Erla-Mari Diedericks se roman **Die kontrak**

Die uitgewersbedryf is 'n besigheid. Dieselfde beginsel wat die KFC op die hoek aandryf, dryf die Michelin-sterrestaurant in Clifton. En hoe dit ook al sy, en hoe ons ook al baklei: Kitsch Lit hou die boekwinkels se deure oop. In die afgelope boekjaar het die verkoop van Afrikaanse fiksie 'n groot inkrimping beleef. Ek daag jou uit om die naaste kettingboekwinkel te besoek. Neem vir my 'n foto van die Afrikaanse boeke in die winkelruit, as jy dit kan vind? Boonop steel boekdiewe die heel nuutste boeke om dit listig op WhatsApp en Telegram te deel. Dieselfde kanker wat koerante wurg, doen dit nou aan boeke.

Boeke en 'boekies' is ook deel van die gesonde kern van Afrikaanse literatuur. Om die pryswenner te verbied, en vice versa, is om die kern 'n virus toe te dien. Jy dink dalk dat om 'n 'boekie' in die enigste Afrikaanse weekblad te resenseer die eindtyd aankondig, maar wees gerus dat daardie einste 'boekie' iets vermag waaroor die Afrikaanse uitgewersbedryf al jare lank kopkrap: Hoe kry ons mense weer aan die lees?

In baie opsigte is Kitsch Lit die drywer agter die leeskultuur. Boeke wat wyd gelees word, het die mag om

mense wat andersins nié lees nie, aan die lees te kry. Ons lewe in die era van BookTok. Blitsverkopers word met die lens van 'n selfoonkamera geskep. Boonop het Kitsch Lit 'n breë kulturele impak. Dink aan Stephen King se **Carrie** wat 'n hele rolprentbedryf van rillers tot gevolg gehad het. Of Marita van der Vyver se **Griet skryf 'n sprokie** wat dit in die 1990's oukei gemaak het vir Afrikaanssprekende mans om 'n boek saam met hul *Scope*-tydskrifte in die geweerkluis te versteek.

Daar is mag in woorde. Enige woorde. En of daardie woorde in 'n boek vol goue plakkers kom en of daar 'n hings met 'n deurtrekker tussen sy tande op die voorblad pronk, is onbelangrik. Daar is plek vir almal op die boekrak. Afrikaans kan nie die verlies van een enkele skrywer bekostig nie.

Die resensie van die grootste deel van die boekbedryf staan nou selfondersoekend voor die spieël.

Sidney Gilroy is 'n skrywer van misdaadfiksie. Hierdie artikel het oorspronklik op 26 Maart 2023 op netwerk24.com verskyn

Decolonising the bookshelf

by Nkosinathi Mahala



Decolonisation, in the contemporary context, means to let go of the colonial legacy and identity. The course of decolonisation must culminate in the cultural, psychological and economic freedom for indigenous people with the ultimate goal of achieving their own sovereignty. In other words, the central theme is the affirmation of the right and ability of indigenous people to attain self-determination over their land, cultures, political and economic systems.

The phenomenon of decolonising a library's collection demands a paradigm shift of the collections in our libraries to evolve to a more relevant model. That means that traditional Western-oriented genres in the form of fables, fairy tales, fantasy, folklore, thrillers and others — has to be curbed to allow space for other more Afrocentric ones.

If not, the resultant effect is that such untransformed collections promote cultural assimilation, Western values and Eurocentric belief systems that perpetuate colonial legacy.

Based on the above viewpoint, the author puts forth a proposition to decolonise the library bookshelf. In their current state, our library shelves serve as extant symbols of colonial legacy as they still display titles in accordance with the old order. It is, therefore, the duty of role players to ensure that there are greater selections reflecting relevant and ideologically appropriate content.

Once we are moving towards collections that are more reflective of indigenous values, it will be incumbent on us in our quest as Africans to rediscover ourselves and our belief systems. Our collections must emphasise Afrocentricity as Africans, as we are all of the view that an African is anyone who resides in Africa; and who pays his/her allegiance in Africa as well as accepting the majority rule of Africans on our continent.

Decolonising the bookshelf is meant to examine the books intended for retention and similarly what titles have served to uphold the acts of colonialism. Therefore, decolonising our collection seeks to address the damaging psychological effects of the past.

The lasting legacy of the latter has injected a degree of psychologically damaging effects into our well-being. This must change as a matter of urgency through identification and recognition of our own African authors and books.

Western popular culture equates Eurocentricity to purity and goodness — and Afrocentricity with impurity and evil. To break that cycle, it's imperative that we decolonise the bookshelf through a greater inclusion of indigenous art, books and visual material.

As Frantz Fanon argues, 'Every generation has a mission to fulfil or betray.' Our mission is to ensure that we decolonise our collection. Such actions will liberate our collection from Eurocentric assimilation, which ensures that an African culture and mindset of colonised people is replaced by the dominant culture of the colonial power, thereby ensuring independence and a sense of identity, which in turn will have a positive effect on our psychological development.

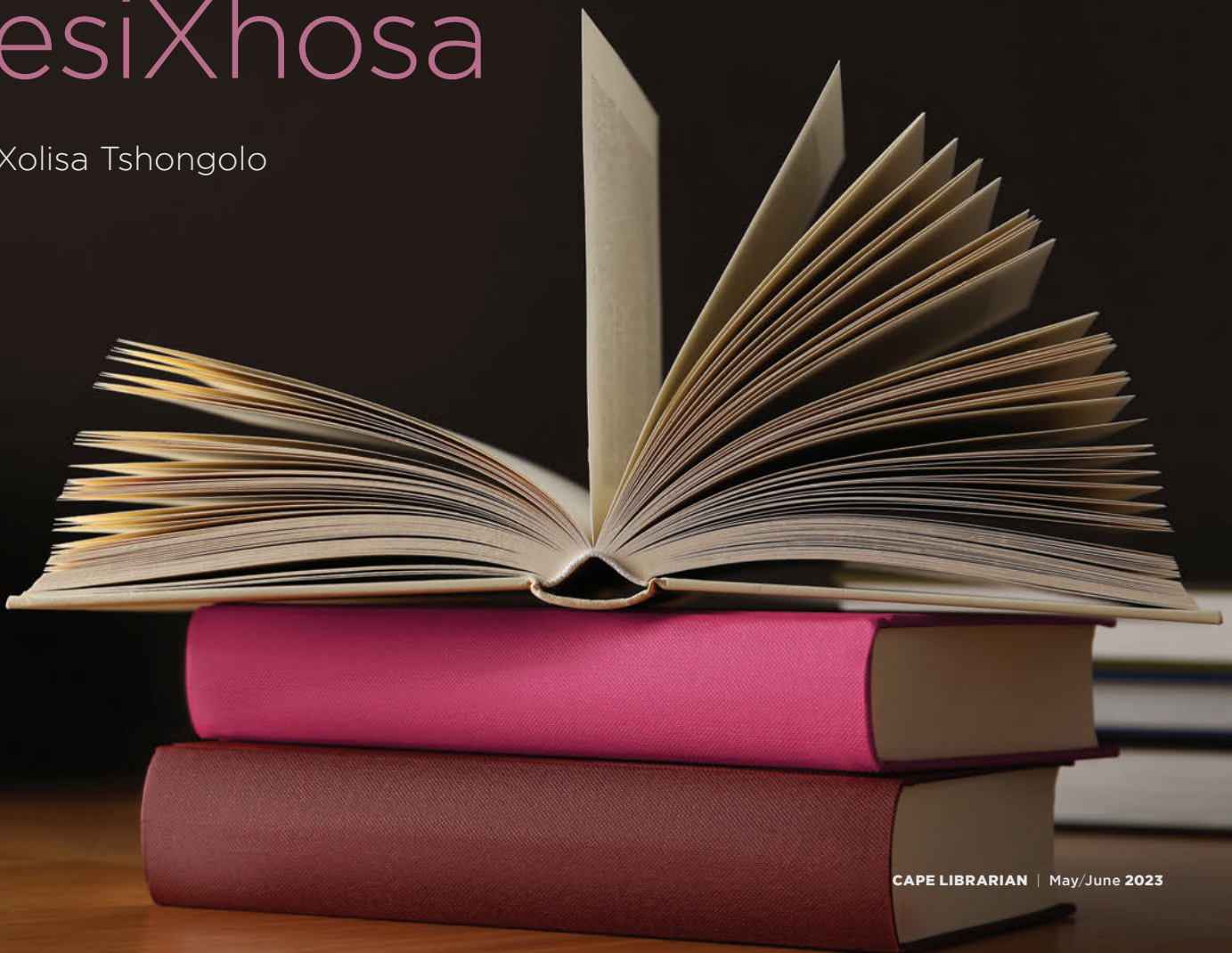
Should we fail, people grow up aspiring to be what they are not, thus re-enforcing psychological repercussions of colonialism and a sense of alienation and questioning who we actually are; and with whom we should identify.

Nkosinathi Mahala is a librarian in the Cape Town Region of the Western Cape Library Service. The views contained in this article do not necessarily reflect those of the provincial Library Service or the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport.



Ukuduntswa kweencwadi zesiXhosa

ngeXolisa Tshongolo



Andiqinisekanga nokuba kwezinye iilwimi akhona na amasiko okubhala iincwadi. Ndithandatyuziswa kukuba kuxhaphakile kulwimi isiNgesi nakulwimi isiBhulu ukukhupha incwadi ngokukhawuleza, ipapashwe kwisithuba seenyanga ezimbalwa. Kodwa kulwimi isiXhosa nakwezinye iilwimi zabantsundu kuthatha iminyaka ukukhupha incwadi, kuthathela ekuyibhaleni ukuya ekupapashweni kwayo.

Umzekelo wakutshanje, uCEO waseEskom obasandula kubeka phantsi iintambo emsebenzini wakhe kuthiwa sele ekhuphe incwadi ngezinto ezingqongwe umsebenzi wakhe awushiyileyo. Ndisitsho nje andinalwazi lokuba uqale nini na ukuyibhala incwadi leyo lo mnene, kodwa ekuthiwa kuqulethwe kuyo kwenza ndikholelwe ukuba uyigqibezele ukubeka phantsi kwakhe emsebenzini. Kambe ke, enokuba ebesele eyigqibile na ngethuba ebeka phantsi, ixesha elithathiweyo ukuyipapasha ibe kukuqhwanayaza kwemehlo!

Mininzi ke imizekelo enje kulwimi isiBhulu nakulwimi isiNgesi, kodwa andikhumbuli nomnye onjalo kulwimi isiXhosa okanye nakoluphi na ulwimi kwezabantsundu. Ukubhala nokupapasha incwadi kwiilwimi zabantsundu kuthatha iminyaka, ngathi kukwakhiwa kwesikhululo sophehlombane, xa ndibaxa ke. Uyakwazi umpapashi ukuthi ayamkele incwadi ngelithi uza kuyipapasha, suka ayigcine kuye iminyaka evisayo. Kangangokuba kuthatha ixesha ukupapasha ngeelwimi zabantsundu, ezikolweni sikhule sifunda iincwadi zabantu abasele bafa, zimbalwa

ezabaphilayo. Kodwa ke noko sele landile ngoku inani leencwadi ezibabhali bazo basaphilayo.

Ndinezinto ezininzi ke ezilapha kum engqondweni malunga nokuba kutheni kuthatha ithuba elide kangaka ukupapasha ngeelwimi zabantsundu. Eyokuqala yileyo yaziwayo yokuba abapapashi bamadolonzima ukupapasha iincwadi ngezi lwimi, kuba azithengwa iincwadi ezo. Abantu abantsundu, ngaphandle kwesimo sezozoqosho, abanayo inkcubeko yokuthenga iincwadi. Lithontsi elwandle inani labantu abantsundu abazithengayo iincwadi; kwakwelo gcuntswana ke uninzi lwabo zizifundiswa ezimke nolwimi isiNgesi, nto leyo ibenza bangabalwa kwinani labantu abathenga iincwadi xa kusingiswe kwintengiso yeencwadi zabantsundu. Ukunqongophala kwenkcubeko yokuthenga nokufunda iincwadi kubantu abantsundu liinqaku lenye imini ke.

Abapapashi ke ngoko intengiso yeencwadi ezingeelwimi zabantsundu bayijolise kwisebe lezemfundo kuphela, ngeenjongo zokuba zisetyenziswe ezikolweni. Oku kwenza ukuba incwadi bayithengise kwisebe lezemfundo iselubhalongqangi, ze yakwamkelwa kube kukhona baleqa ukuyipapasha. Ukuba ayithanga ichongwe lisebe, leyo ncwadi ibuyela kumathala ompapashi, iqokolele uthuli apho kulindwe elinye ithuba lokuthengiswa kwayo. Uve kusithiwa makulungiswe izinto ezithile kuyo ekuthiwa zizo ezibangele ukuba ingathathwa lisebe lezemfundo. Umbhali azibone sekufuneka eguqule izinto ezininzi angathaneni nazo kwincwadi yakhe kuba efuna ipapashwe. Athi sele ezenzile ezo zilungiso incwadi yakhe ingachongwa, kubekwe zizathu zimbi, kube ke kakade nesebe lezemfundo lifuna inani leencwadi eliqingqiweyo.

Umbhaleli wamaXhosa ophum' izandla, uNjingalwazi PT Mtuze, ukuchaphazele oku kwincwadi yakhe ethi **Indlela eya enkundleni**. Kuba le ncwadi kaMtuze ingobomi bakhe, bomi bakhe obo bubandakanya ukuba ngumbhali weencwadi zesiXhosa. Uwadakancile ke amalinge akhe okupapasha iincwadi zakhe. Uthi incwadi ebencama ayiyeke akudinwa kukumane esenza izilungiso azixelelwa ngabapapashi, abhale enye, nakuleyo kube kwaseso, naleyo ayiyeke akudinwa yiyo abhale enye; suka

ethubeni afake eyayikhatyiwe komnye umpapashi, yamkelwe, ipapashwe sele kuyiminyaka ngeminyaka wayibhalayo.

Okunye endingakubalulayo njengonobangela wokuthatha ithuba kokupapashwa kweencwadi ezibhalwe ngeelwimi zabantsundu yimigaqo yokubhalwa kweendidi zeencwadi, ingakumbi eyesiXhosa. Udidi lwencwadi ngalunye lunemigaqo yalo eyahlukileyo; isihobe sinemigaqo yaso eyahlukileyo kweyemidlalo nakweyamabali nakweyenoveli nakweyamavo, njelonjalo. Esikolweni le migaqo ayifundiswa njengemigaqo yokubhala, koko ifundiswa njengoku-fundiswa koluncwadi. Kokwam ke ukuthabathisa, ababhali bathi bedunyelwe nje kukuba nombongo okanye ibali bayiphose le migaqo. Leyo mposo ithi ibambezele kwinqanaba lopapasho, kufuneke ukuba makuqale kulungiswe le migaqo.

Omnye ke uya kubuza ukuba yimigaqo eyayivela phi yona leyo sele ixakile nje. Ukuphendulwa kwemibuzo enjalo liinqaku lenye imini. Kodwa endingakugxininisayo kukuba ababhali mabaziqhelanise nale migaqo, ngokoncwadi anomdla kulo umbhali. Ukuze umbhali ayiqhele ke kufuneka ufunde iincwadi zodidi loncwadi olo anomdla kulo, afumane iindlela ezahlukileyo zokuphuhlisa izinto ngezinto encwadini. Ukuba awuzifundi iincwadi awungekhe ube ngumbhali ophume izandla. Ukubunjwa kwabalinganiswa nokwakhiwa kweendima nokulungelelaniswa kweempawu zesihobe zizinto ezibalulekileyo neziwuchaphazela kakubi umgangatho wencwadi. Ababhali bale miha bahlulwa nakubhala isingeniso sangemva kuqweqwe lwencwadi, umbhali asuke abhale ngaye.

Mabangxame ke ababhali ukuwazi amasiko oluncwadi ukuze baphungule olu libaziseko, zikhawuleze ukuphuma iincwadi abazibhalayo, ingabi koku kuduntsa ikuko ngoku into yokupapashwa kweencwadi zesiXhosa. Ukuba abesiNgesi nesiBhulu bayayikhupha incwadi ngeenyanga, siqandwa yintoni kwezabantsundu iilwimi?

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



Ruminations on professional service delivery: parting shots from a librarian

by Leonard Fortuin



Advocating the diverse developmental roles of education, development, upliftment, empowerment, entertainment and acculturation that library services play, is best done when professionally equipped front-line and library support staff jointly delivers relevant services to the public. I am using this opportunity to ruminate on elements of professional service delivery that I encountered and observed throughout my professional career.

The challenge of professionalism

Adequately skilled individuals have a clear understanding of what a professional service is, and this guides

their service delivery deliberations and initiatives. Professional services are intangible products or outputs (services or expertise) provided to clients that assist them to satisfy their needs and or solve their problems. It is entirely client-centred and implies a certain degree of selflessness on the part of the professional; and is further characterised by an ongoing interactive relationship between the two parties. This interaction establishes a shared understanding of the client's needs, which enables the professional to navigate their particular body of expertise to find appropriate solutions.

In any business, your clients are the reason you exist; and also why you have a career. If services or solutions rendered are experienced as irrelevant or unprofessional, you lose them — and with that, your professional purpose. Their needs and requirements shape your service delivery initiatives, not pre-conceived ideas of what may be good for them (which is a common failing in bureaucracies and dictatorships). Pre-packaged services that are rendered to all and sundry is a thing of the past. Our diversity and its associated expectations should shape our actions henceforth.

Therefore, our first challenge as a profession is addressing the approach of knowing what's best for the customer — and is especially prevalent (and dangerous) in the public services sector. We consider our services as our unique prerogative, shaped by our specialist skills and knowledge. We are both judge and jury and beware anyone who dares to question this paradigm. In this context, clients are viewed as static, grateful (ungrateful when they complain!) and passive recipients.

The second challenge is the equation of a formal educational qualification with automatic professional status. This challenge is prevalent particularly in an environment where the trajectory of qualitative education is nose-diving. Within such an environment one should maybe consider the possession of a qualification as merely an entrance requirement to the profession and start to develop separate indicators for measuring professional behaviour. Related to this challenge is that our existing performance measures do not really measure our impact — just activities.

Another challenge to be addressed is the creeping entitlement culture that is slowly nibbling away at our professional ethos. This leads to the client becoming a secondary focus; with our own wants, needs and expectations now the primary focus. Fortunately, we are becoming gradually aware of these challenges and are slowly inching forward in addressing them.

Addressing elements of professional service delivery transformation

As dictated by the needs of evolution and survival, our services are becoming more diverse than ever before. Internationally, public libraries are taking on other core functions. They began to aid local people to figure out the complexities of their lives, from navigating health and social support systems to assisting those with housing needs. Library programmes and events increasingly reflect activities pertaining to advice and referrals to health, housing, literacy and other areas of social need. During this process they collaborate with partners that share similar goals and objectives (e.g. prisons or cultural, archival, sport,



heritage, social development and health institutions). A positive spinoff is that these sectors are beginning to view public libraries as a critical community resource partner and safe spaces to use.

Such collaboration usually starts with specialists providing librarians with orientation training in their areas of expertise, as most librarians have not been trained to handle many of the issues and requests they now encounter. These include the provision of guidance on resources for substance abuse and mental health issues. Some libraries even go as far as hiring in-house specialists to address the needs of visitors.

Cross-professional (shared) planning and implementation initiatives (also referred to as the shared network approach) have substantial cost, achievement, and efficiency benefits — as resources and efforts are pooled — which accelerates the advancement of the holistic well-being of society.

Factors contributing to the rendering of a creative professional frontline service

As previously mentioned, professional services are entirely client service oriented. Libraries have for a long time operated as silos and to change this, we are beginning to relook the manner in how we interact with our clients. Dealing with government can at times be a challenging experience and many client frustrations arise from interacting with fragmented, incoherent, onerous and lengthy procedures coupled with a lack of transparency. This makes dealing with government costly and time-consuming (for both government and the client).

The answer to the above conundrum lies in forging novel open, shared, and transparent service delivery models to make transactions and engagement with government easier, faster and more convenient. In this regard, the digital environment can play a critical role. Digital applications (especially cloud technology) can streamline interactions, processes and systems that can enhance the government's responsiveness (not only to external, but also to internal clients).

When implementing such systems, the setting of appropriate impact performance targets and indicators is critical; as well as achievement tracking, monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms. It is true that what gets measured and monitored gets done. This in turn ensures that processes are improved and with greater reliability; are uniformly implemented, transparent, and ultimately lends itself to efficiency and cost-effectiveness — apart from increasing the client's sense of control of the process. The above are powerful indicators of accountability and good governance that can lead to performance measurement moving from mere compliance to processes, outputs, activities, and procedures towards measuring joint impact. This makes the product or service more tangible.

When implementing such IT support systems, one has to ensure that their agents are reliable and dependable; as system downtime (not to mention its reliance on a steady and uninterrupted

power supply) negates the positive spin-offs of IT solutions. We should remain aware that:

- the human touch is paramount, and
- our varied cultural, economic, and social backgrounds present their own intrinsic challenges.

Making ground-breaking shifts such as these introduce their own challenges in the change management paradigm. It requires stocktaking of our pre-conceived notions; discarding those that are outdated; and introducing new and refreshing approaches. The development of new service delivery models is a major step in that direction, depending on the tool used and manner of its deployment.

A major focus of service delivery transformation must be on empowering and winning staff over towards a new way of seeing and doing things. This can be achieved by making them an integral part of the new system creation process (as the doers they have unique insights



into processes and procedures); and providing them with appropriate training and empowerment interventions before and throughout the process. If the desired level of commitment is not achieved, only limited success can be expected, or at best, a new system that is merely complied with.

Such transformation interventions will also address the creeping entitlement culture.

Whilst employed as a manager of the South Peninsula Library Service (SPM), I opted for a competency performance-based service delivery tool to manage the diversity brought about by the amalgamation of various smaller municipal library services. A task team comprising all SPM librarians-in-charge was established and tasked to develop an organisational structure linked with staff job descriptions (complete with competencies and responsibilities). This structure was evaluated and adopted and eventually replicated elsewhere.



Increasing and enhancing existing competency skill sets

I have always highly valued competence in myself and others as it enables one to achieve and realise vision and aspirations. A competent person is able to carry out duties assigned to him or her because they possess the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge, skills, experience, abilities and personal characteristics. Such people have the appropriate authorisation to use their skill set to resolve complex issues.

There are many methodologies available to empower staff professionally. The literature mentions interventions such as behavioural interview questions, platforms for creating and sharing expectations, onboard training, customer surveys and sharing their results, novel reward and incentive schemes linked to the achievement of stated performance targets, celebrating growth and successes and so on. These interventions can be particularly beneficial to those in professional positions who have, due to externally related factors, lost their professional passion and only perform tasks as box-ticking exercises.

Within a competency skills framework, we can distinguish between soft and hard skills. Soft skills (generically known as EQ) are intrinsic elements which govern a person's relationships with others, whilst hard skills (IQ) are generally extrinsic and refer to the application of technical knowledge and occupational skills.

Examples of soft skills are creativity, inquisitiveness, collaboration, adaptability, verbal and non-verbal communication, patience, empathy, active listening, collaboration, trustworthiness, conflict resolution and problem solving. Examples of hard skills are technical ability, IT literacy, analysis, marketing, presentation, management and writing.

Hard skills can be learned through courses, vocational and on the job training, whereas the acquisition of soft skills is less measurable and emotionally more demanding. Employees who demonstrate that they have a functional combination of hard and soft skills are often in greater demand (especially in a culturally and socially diverse society).

The quality of the leadership team who manages professionals is another area that requires special focus, especially as their actions and decisions shape the practices, habits, and culture of the organisation. Professionals reporting to their leadership have exacting requirements and do not hesitate to criticise managerial actions and directives (also known as speaking truth to power). If not listened to, they either leave or retreat.

When we treat each other with respect, understanding and care — we create an environment where we listen and work together to improve the quality of life of everyone in our service delivery spheres. In delivering a relevant service (support or otherwise) when and where needed, we are in effect performing processes of social upliftment and development. When you help someone in need, you buoy that person up — spiritually, mentally, and emotionally, thus increasing their well-being.

I am again taking this opportunity to mention three projects that, for me, have been particularly relevant to social upliftment and development processes. The new Mitchell's Plain Town Centre (District), Valhalla Park (Community), and Pelican Park (combined school and public) library projects were initiated just after the new democratic dispensation was inaugurated. The project management team responsible for these projects included community representatives, thus exposing them to the dynamics of planning, building, and resourcing a new community-based facility. This eventually increased community ownership, facilitated skills transfer, created temporary local employment opportunities, and enhanced the communal understanding of municipal functioning (especially budgeting!).

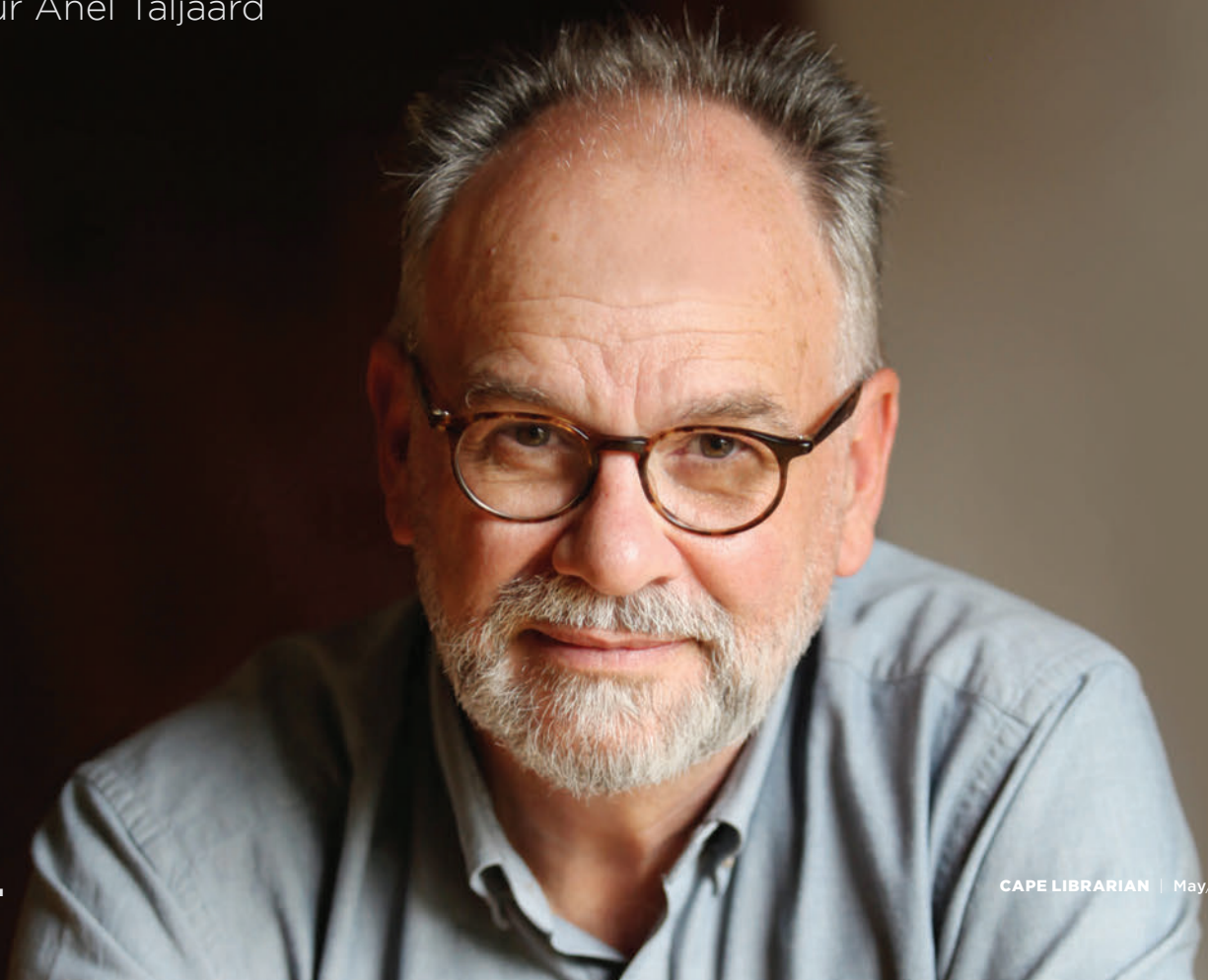
Participating in positive transformation processes is at best a daunting and challenging undertaking and at worst a traumatic experience. But evolve we must, as it is a basic precondition of human civilisation to advance. To remain static in a rapidly changing world is in reality moving backwards.

Leonard Fortuin is the assistant director of the Metropole Region at the Western Cape Library Service



Zirk van den Berg: Veelsydige skrywer van spanning-, misdraad- en raaiselfiksie

deur Anél Taljaard



Al woon hy sedert 1998 in Nieu-Seeland, is Zirk van den Berg welbekend onder Suid-Afrikaanse lesers. Hy skryf in beide Afrikaans en Engels in verskillende genres en het alreeds menige benoemings en pryse vir sy werk ontvang.

Van den Berg behartig nie net die vertalings van sy eie boeke nie, maar het ook al van Wilbur Smith se boeke vertaal, onder meer **The sound of thunder/Donderslag** (Quillierie, 2015); **A sparrow falls/Wildernis** (Quillierie, 2016) en **Gold/Goudmyn** (Kwêla, 2017).

Sy vertaling van die laaste twee boeke van Philip Kerr se wêreldbekende *Berlin Noir*-trilogie met Bernie Gunther as die speurder- en hoofkarakter, is **A pale criminal/Doodsbleek** asook **A German requiem/Doodslied vir Duitsland** (albei uitgegee deur Jonathan Ball, 2019). In 1988 was hy betrokke met die vertaling van RL Stine se jeugreeks **Goosebumps/Grillers**. En in 2016 vertaal hy AB de Villiers se outobiografie, **AB** (Pan Macmillan).

Tussen 1990 en 1998 en voor sy vertrek na Nieu-Seeland skryf Van den Berg kortverhale; 'n historiese roman asook verskeie dramas. Sy debuut in Afrikaans was **Ekstra dun vir meer gevoel** (Tafelberg, 1990), 'n kortverhaalbundel waarvan sekere van die verhale ook in ander versamelbundels verskyn het. Die titel is afkomstig van 'n advertensie vir kondome, wat subtiel verwys na die uitbuiting, vergryping en eensaamheid van die moderne mens; wanneer voorsorgmaatreëls (soos wat die titel suggereer) nie voldoende beskerming bied teen die aanslag van die lewe se uitdagings, ontnugtering en ontbloting van die self nie. Sy drama, **Draadwerk**, is in 1994 uitgesaai.

In 1992 verskyn die historiese roman, **Wydsbeen** (Tafelberg, 1992) en haal

die kortlyste van die *Rapport*- en CNA-debuutpryse. Dit is die verhaal van die teregstelling van die opportunistiese Fransman, Estienne Barbier, wat in 1734 as soldaat en 'n sersant in diens van die VOC (*De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) na die Kaap gekom het om sy fortuin hier te kom soek. Hy lei 'n opstand teen die korrupte VOC in 1738, word gevang en die jaar daarna tereggestel. Hy was 40 jaar oud.

Die titel verwys na Barbier se teregstelling as eerste gewapende rebel in die Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis. Die slagoffer word fisies uitmekaar geskeur en is simbolies van die soeke na die droom teenoor die werklikheid (en die wette) wat hom andersyds daarvan beroof het. Sy oorskot is agterna tentoongestel as afskrikmiddel vir diesulkes met soortgelyke gedagtes.

Die kultuur en agtergrond van die 18de eeuse Kaapse kolonie; die klassestryd in die afgeleë dele van die destydse Wes-Kaapse platteland en die aggressiewe uitbreidingsbeleid van die Kaapse grense het Barbier se verwysingsraamwerk beïnvloed.

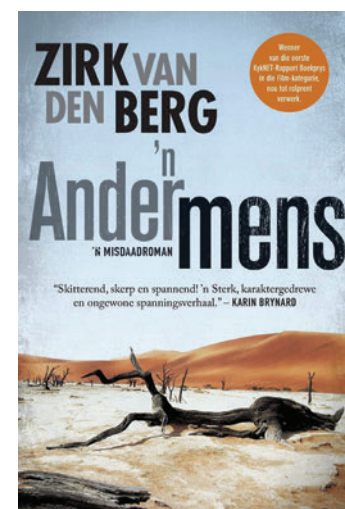
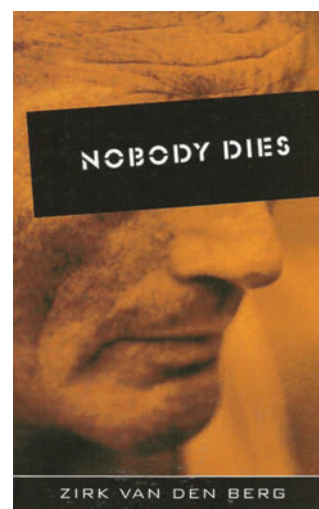
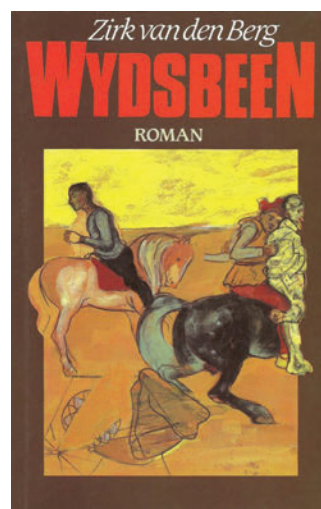
Wydsbeen is egter fiksie en net gedeeltelik geskoei op sekere historiese korrekte feite. André P Brink het ook aan Barbier gestalte gegee as onbekende historiese figuur in sy boek **On the contrary** (Minerva, 1993), waarin die dilemma van die status quo bevaagteken word.

Die historiese agtergrond van ware gebeure word vervat in Van den

Berg se verhale wat afspeel in Duits-Suidwes-Afrika, die Namib-woestyn en die Kaapse Kolonie. Sy liefde vir Namibië is gevestig in sy vroeë grootwordjare in Suidwes-Afrika en later Suid-Afrika.

Die misdaadverhaal met die Engelse titel **Nobody dies** (Random House Nieu-Seeland, 2004) het heelwat positiewe mediadekking ontvang nadat dit deur *The New Zealand Herald* as een van 2004 se vyf beste internasionale spanningsverhale benoem is. Dit was die enigste benoeming uit Nieu-Seeland en het daarom Van den Berg se beeld as een van die beste rillerskrywers uit sy aangenome tuisland versterk en sodoende internasionale erkenning aan hom besorg.

Hy het dit in Afrikaans vertaal as **'n Ander mens** (Kwêla, 2014). Dit vertel van Daniël Enslin as 'n doodgewone stadsamptenaar van Kaapstad wat 'n voorspelbare lewe lei. Hy verrig wêl allerlei klein takies vir 'n gewaande vriend en erkende skelm, Frank Redelinghuys — wat 'n bietjie kleur aan eersgenoemde se andersins saai lewe voorsien. Hy word 'n toevallige getuie wanneer Frank 'n moord pleeg. Daarna moet hy saam met die polisieman, Mike Acker werk, wat al lank poog om Frank te vang. Mike plaas Daniël in 'n sel in 'n poging om hom veilig te hou en in die sorg van die polisievrou, Erica van der Linde, wat hom moet voorberei vir 'n lewe in 'n getuiebeskermingsprogram. Hy oorleef 'n aanslag op sy lewe.



'Erica van der Linde, in beheer van die polisie se getuiebeskermingsprogram in die negentigs, is 'n skander, mooi vrou met onpeilbare grys oë en haar eie sin vir geregtigheid. Sy het ook 'n tragiese geheim wat haar pa en haar eie lewe onherroeplik skade berokken. Om seker te maak dat die getuies in haar bewaring nooit weer met 'n oog gewaar word nie, het dié onwrikbare vrou skynbaar die perfekte oplossing: sy vermoor hulle. So maklik is dit.'

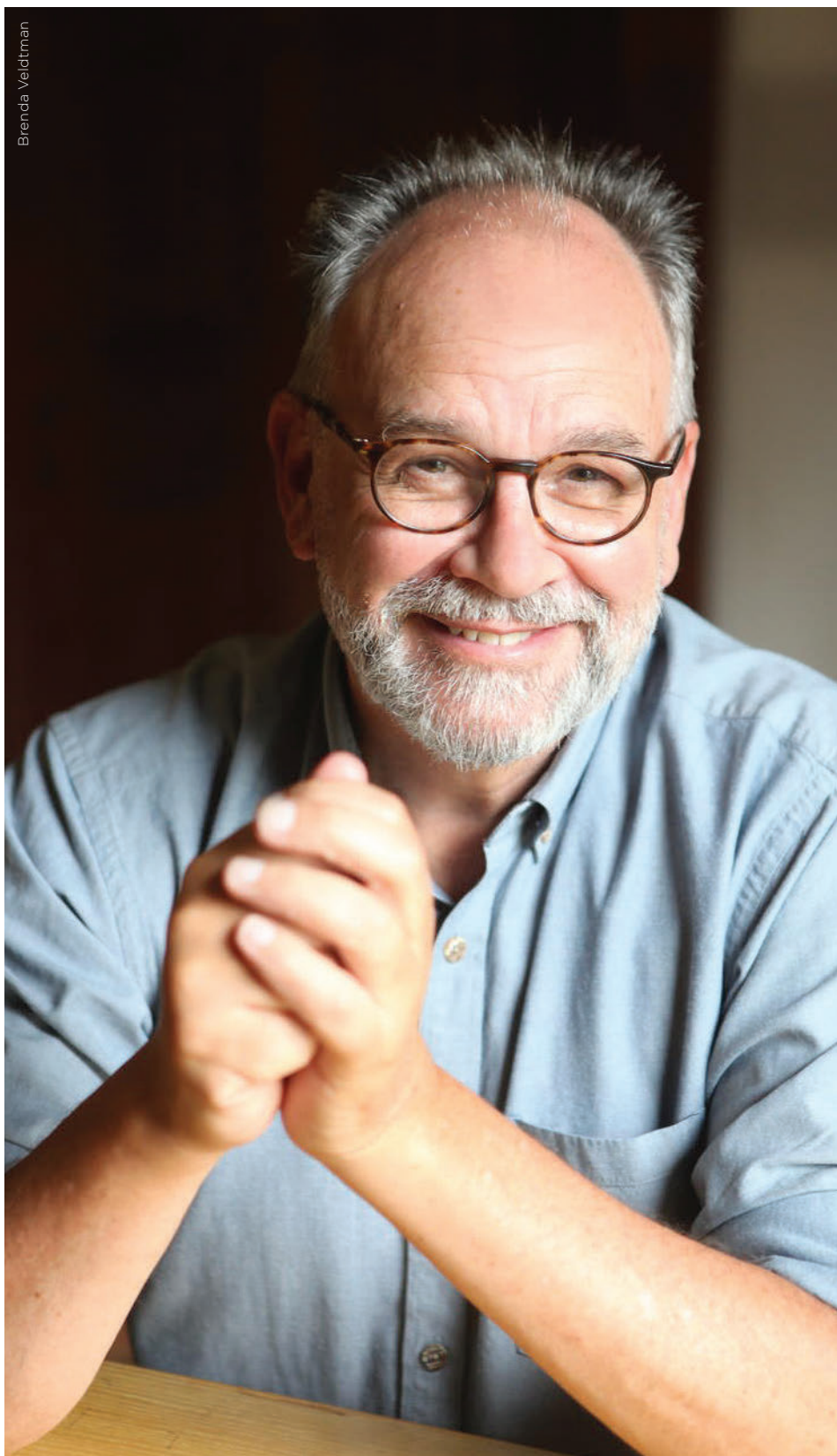
Die onsekerheid waarmee die getuie vir sy nuwe identiteit moet wag, staan sentraal as tema. Dis ook hier waar hy maklik in die stelsel kan verdwyn. Die spanningslyn word onderstreep deur die agtergrond van identiteit wat wegslyt terwyl die kandidaat afwagtend is vir sy nuwe lewe in 'n getuiebeskermingsprogram. Die boek se rolprentweergawe het in 2019 die kykNET-Rapportprys vir Film ingepalm.

In 2016 was Van den Berg 'n finalis vir die SALA-prys (South African Literary Awards) vir die vertaling van sy roman **Halfpad een ding** (Penguin, 2014). Die Engelse titel is **Half of one thing** en handel oor 'n Nieu-Seelandse soldaat wat in die Anglo-Boereoorlog veg. Gideon Lancaster veg vir die Britte, al is hy 'n Kiwi. Sy ma is Hollands en dus praat hy beide tale vlot. Hy kry opdrag van die Britse Intelligensiediens om hom voor te doen as 'n Hollander van Java wat by die Boerekommando's wil aansluit sodat hy vir die Britte kan spioeneer en inligting inwin oor Generaal Christiaan de Wet. Soos die tyd aanstap en hy al meer met die boerekrygers te doen kry, ontwikkel hy empatie vir die Boerevolk.

Dit word versterk wanneer hy verlief raak op die boeremeisie wat hom verpleeg na 'n besering. Gevolglik word hy gedwing om kant te kies tussen sy empatie met die Boere en sy plig as Britse soldaat. Eindelik lei hy die Engelse magte op soek na De Wet met 'n slinkse plan weg van die Boerekommando's. Wanneer die oorlog kort daarna tot 'n einde kom, is dit egter tyd vir Gideon om terug te keer na sy tuisland. Dis 'n spioenasieverhaal met 'n sterk romantiese komponent te midde van die geweld van 'n oorlog.

Die eerste titel in die Duits-Wes trilogie is **Die vertes in** (Kwêla, 2018), met die Engelse vertaling getiteld **Parts unknown** (2019).

'Die tengerige Siegfried Bock kom as soldaat na die protektoraat om





sy staal te wys. Maar hy word gou ontngugter toe hy vergrype aanskou wat hy nie kan vergeet nie. Lisbeth Löwenstein is hier om met 'n man te trou wat sy skaars onthou, 'n setlaar wat vir haar armlastige ouers geld gestuur het om haar as vrou te neem. Mordegai Guruseb ontsnap uit 'n konsentrasiekamp waar gevangenes van ontbering omkom. Maar kort voor lank word sy vryheid weer bedreig. En dan is daar die mislukte dokter Albert Pitzer wat homself 'n wetenskaplike ag en hoop om data te versamel wat sy teorieë staaf. Alvaus LuiPERT, 'n plaaslike skoolmeester, duld egter nie sy arrogante aannames en vernederende metodes nie. In die uitgestrekte, majestieuse landskap van Duits-Suidwes-Afrika word dié vyf mense se lot vervleg en elke een se menslikheid tot die uiterste beproef.' (kwêla.co.za)

Tweegevreet (Kwêla, 2020) is die tweede boek in die trilogie wat sentreer rondom die persoon van Siegfried Block. Soos sy voorganger speel die verhaal af in die Duits-Suidwes-Afrika van die vroeë-1900's en die politieke bestel rondom die Herero-oorlog van 1904-1907. Die leser is reeds bekend met Siegfried wat as 'n bleeksiel en ietwat onbeholpe voormalige soldaat na die Kaiserlike Landespolizei gesekondeer word en by 'n beskeie polisie-eenheid in die Hochnamib gestasioneer is. Hy kry opdrag om die dood van Herr Jürgens, die boer wat oënskylik deur 'n luiperd gedood is, saam met sy kollegas Feldweibel

Dudeck en Fefreiter Stempsky van die Kaiserlike Landespolizei te ondersoek. Waar Siegfried in **Die vertes in** 'n fisieke en geestelike reis onderneem het, word sy karakter in **Tweegevreet** meer gedefinieer wanneer hy deur vals fronte moet sif en die gevaar loop om deur sypore verwar te word. Siegfried is veral gemotiveer om homself te laat geld wanneer hy mense en hul motiewe moet deurgrond, maar terselfdertyd homself moet handhaaf. Hierdie titel ontgin die konsep van identiteit.

'Hier in Suidwes-Afrika ontdek hy veel meer as 'n eksotiese vasteland, want hier kan hy sê hy het "nuwe aspekte van homself ontdek".'

In hierdie vreemde land, meer as ooit, voel Bock gemaklik in sy eie vel. En dat die masker ook dit wat opreg en goed is, kan verberg. Hoe ook al, misverstand gaan tragedie dikwels vooraf.

'Wisselende vokalisering verseker die leser se empatie met die verskillende karakters en dra by tot 'n groter verstaan oor die kompleksiteit van hoe individuele keuses op ander mense en hul reaksies inspeel.'²

Die laaste boek in die trilogie is **Een of ander held** (Kwêla, 2021), wat in 1905 oor 'n tydperk van maande afspeel. Hoewel elke titel in die reeks op sy eie gelees kan word, is daar tog karakterontwikkeling wat deurlopend oor al drie boeke plaasvind.

'Siegfried Bock is in die vroeë-20ste eeu nie 'n gerekende man in Duitswes-Afrika nie. Vir die pa van die vrou op wie sy verlange toegespits was,

is hy trouens 'n intense verleentheid en Siegfried het dit uiteraard nooit sover kon bring om haar om haar hand te vra nie. Vir die jong vrou het hy nooit eintlik bestaan nie; haar hart was op 'n man wat die hoogste offer vir sy land gebring het, wat haar tot eer strek. Op die lange duur blyk dié man allermins dit te wees, met ramspoedige gevolge vir die vrou wat hom vereer het. Bowendien ontstaan daar agterdog uit verskeie oorde oor Siegfried se motivering toe hy daadwerklik in sy vaderland se belang opgetree het, wat blyk uit die verhoor van die beskuldigde in 'n moordsaak en dié se advokaat. Daarbenewens is 'n ander man, een van dié aan wie die land behoort het voor die Duitsers soos Siegfried dit hulle land gemaak het, op sy spoor met wraak in sy hart — en moord, beslis. Van den Berg se derde roman in sy Hochnamib-trilogie ondersoek die konsep van 'n held. Die grootbek en die aanskoulike minnaar, die doener, die Saarlander met patriotiese vuur in sy are — dit is Siegfried allermins. Hy is betreklik klein van gestalte, onseker oor die uitwerking wat hy op vroue het (en hulle op hom), onseker oor die waarde wat hy toevoeg tot sy vaderland se inbesitneming van die kolonie, en of hulle hoegenaamd waarde toevoeg en nie eerder mensonterend optree nie. Sy uitstaande persoonlikheidskenmerk — en -fout — is binne hierdie opset dat hy in wese die mens nie sien as deel van sy volk nie, maar as mens.

'Siegfried is, sonder dat hy hom dit voorgeneem het, in die eerste plek 'n individu en nie 'n Duitser nie. Dit is wat hom op die lange duur dryf om sy teenstander en die dood oop en bloot tegemoet te gaan. Nie omdat hy meen dit sal hom uiteindelik 'n held maak nie, bloot omdat hy glo dit is wat 'n mens doen, een of ander man, in hierdie geval 'n held. Só ontmoet ons onverhoeds die soort held wat absoluut die moeite werd is.¹³

Ek wens, ek wens (Kwêla, 2019) is 'n novelle wat in 2020 met die WA Hofmeyer-prys vir literatuur en kykNET-Rapportprys vir fiksie bekroon is. Dit haal die kortlys vir die 2022 Hertzogprys vir Prosa, asook die kykNET-Rapportprys vir beste verfilmbare boek. Die Engelse titel **I wish, I wish** (2020) word in Nieu-Seeland benoem vir die NZ Booklovers Award for Fiction.

Dit handel oor 'n lykbesorger by White Lily funerals, Seb, wie se lewe baie vaal en eentonig voorkom. Roetine het hom in 'n gemaksone laat verval waar hy daagliks lyke moet balsem, organe moet rangskik en dooie gesigte moet inkleur vir die roubeklaers se laaste besigtiging. Hy het gemaklik geraak met hierdie eentonige bestaan en voel soms asof hy nie veel lewendiger is as die lyke waarmee hy daagliks werk nie. Dis maar net nog 'n werk. Ook by die huis funksioneer hy onder 'n pantoffelregering; en is hy heeltemal verwyderd van sy vrou en kinders. Aangesien hy nie weet hoe

om hulle te bereik nie, doen hy liever ook geen moeite om na hulle uit te reik nie. Tog wens Seb heimlik dat iets die slepende doodsheid van sy bestaan moet kom verbreek.

Op 'n dag kom daar 'n terminaal siek seuntjie, Gawie, saam met sy ma by die lykshuis aan. Die seuntjie is besig om gereed te maak vir sy dood en wil alles sien en ervaar wat met sy liggaam gaan gebeur as hy eers dood is: hy gaan immers eersdaags deur Seb onder hande geneem word. Laasgenoemde laat hom by 'n doodskis inklim en gesels met Gawie oor sy drie laaste wense.

Seb ervaar die besoek as positief en onthou later die gesprek oor die wense – veral toe hy agterkom hy sêlf het drie wense waarvan hy reeds twee op onverantwoordelike wyse gebruik het. Hy dink lank na oor die laaste wens. En hy moet veral nadink oor sy werk met dooie mense, maar hoe lewendig is hyself? Hy worstel dus met sy eie bestaan en die sin van sy lewe. Die tema van drie wense is 'n verhaallyn wat regdeur die verhaal loop en herinner sterk aan soortgelyke temas in sprokiesverhale.

Susannah Whaley skryf in haar resensie op die NZ Booklovers-webwerf: 'Regardless of its genre, it is one of those books that causes you to re-examine your own thoughts and desires when you lift your eyes from the page.'¹⁴

Die onsigbare pou (Kwêla, 2022) se verhaal speel af in Bellville in die 1980's.

Die sewentienjarige George Oberholzer weet reeds op sy jong ouderdom wie hy is en waarheen hy oppad is, asook hoe hy daar wil uitkom. Van den Berg meld in 'n onderhoud met Elna van der Merwe dat Oberholzer het "'n soliditeit, onbelemmerde selfvertroue, lyk of hy presies weet wie hy is en vrede daarmee het, wat raar is vir 'n tiener'.¹⁵ Hy deins nie daarvan terug nie en as groot Afrikaanse musikster wat volgens sy eie oortuigings leef, word hy vir baie aanhangers die verpersoonliking van ontvlugting. Oor tyd verdwyn hy uit die openbare oog. Sybie de Waal is 'n ou klasmaat en vriendin. Oberholzer se kreatiwiteit en pad van sukses word vergestalt in haar plakboek van woorde. Dit onderspan die tydperke van politieke oproer tussen die sewentiger- tot negentiger jare totdat 'n rits dramatiese gebeure alles beëindig het. Daar is onderstroming van beskuldigings en oneer wat kop uitsteek, en net toe George vir Sybie vir oulaas nodig het, moet hy besluit wat hy bereid is om op te offer om te verhoed dat sy vriendin iets onwys aanvang. Die verhaal is 'n blik op ons eie ideale self en Oberholzer die verpersoonliking van gewete.

Geheim van die gruwel sand (Kwêla, 2023) is 'n historiese roman wat afspeel in 1942; waarin een van die skrywer se geliefde omgewings as agtergrond gebruik word. Die verhaal ontvou algaande soos wat Barra Nel deur Luitenant Hennie Koorts ondervra word oor gebeure wat die





ondervraging voorafgaan. Nel was teen sy wil opgekommandeer om wetenskaplikes by Lüderitz van 'n Duitse duikboot te gaan haal en na die Namibwoestyn te neem, vir hulle kamp te maak en toe te sien dat hulle gelaat word om hul eksperimente uit te voer. Barra wil eerder wegkruip, maar het min beweegruimte omdat die korrupte Kolonel van Arkel valse bewyse geplant het wat Barra as 'n moordenaar inkrimineer en dit teen hom sal gebruik as hy nie wil saamspeel nie. Dit help ook nie dat een van die wetenskaplikes die skone Hedda Lafrentz is nie. Hulle vurige romanse smokkel met Barra se kop wat haar wil bevry van haar baas, Professor Grohman — wat 'n houvas op haar het oor iets wat vantevore in Duitsland gebeur het.

'Die Tweede Wêreldoorlog is aan die gang en Suid-Wes se eertydse Duits-Wes gesels op 'n paar maniere saam. Daar loop nog baie mense rond met sterk pro-Duitse gevoelens, soos Kol. Van Arkel, tweede in bevel van die polisie in die land. Maar die belangrikste is die klandestiene teenwoordigheid van Nazi-wetenskaplikes diep in die Namib, waarin die leser die rede vir die "gruwel sand" op die voorblad gaan ontdek.'⁶

'n Spanningsverhaal met spioene, moorde, diamantsmokkelaars, afpersing, raaisels en intrige.

Dit is duidelik dat Zirk van den Berg se skryfstyl verfyn met die verloop van tyd. Die genres waarvoor hy skryf is veelydig; sy karakters dikwels figure wat ontwikkel na volronde karakters

deur die verloop van die verhaal — wat soms empatie uitlok, maar ook onafhanklik sterk kan staan.

Lesers kan uitsien na verruklike leesplezier in enige van hierdie skrywer se titels.

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

Bronnelys

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Anél Taljaard is 'n boekkeurder by die Wes-Kaapse Biblioteekdiens



Book reviews

compiled by book selectors

ADULT FICTION

KAY, Elizabeth

Seven lies. - Sphere, 2020.

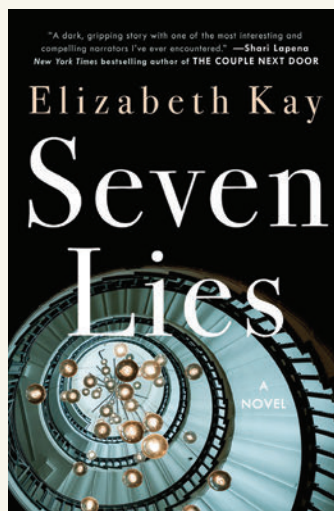
'An obsessive friendship leads to tragedy, one lie at a time. Jane Baxter and Marnie Gregory were the best of friends until Marnie's marriage drove them apart. Jane hated Charles from the beginning, but to avoid a confrontation with Marnie, she told her she thought they were good together — the first of seven lies that led to Charles' death and Jane's undoing. The story begins with this plot spoiler and counts down to the moment when it happened. It's as if Jane is begging the reader to get through the first few chapters. Jane's own husband, Jonathan, died a while ago in a terrible accident. And the coincidence of two best friends losing two husbands in close succession has a nosy reporter scrambling to do the math, but with little evidence, the accusation doesn't stick. Jane isn't an especially likable character. The value she places on her friendship is relatable right up to the point when it leaves her morally bankrupt. It's no surprise when Jane's

frantic efforts to keep her friend close after Charles' death pushes her away instead. The real tension lies in learning the truth about Jane's intentions and the person who hears her confession. Frustrating, fascinating, and wicked entertainment.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

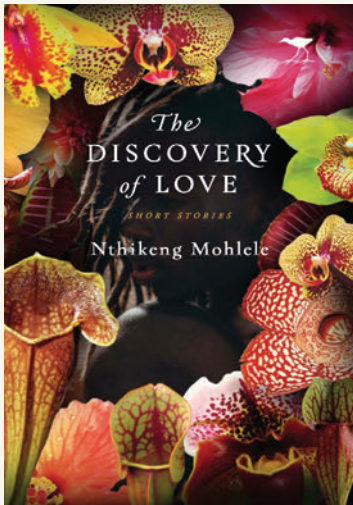
MOHLELE, Nthikeng

The discovery of love: stories. - Jacana Media, 2021.

'Award-winning novelist and, recently, short-story writer, Nthikeng Mohlele is among a new generation of diligent creative writers in South Africa. His 2014



Charlie Hopkinson



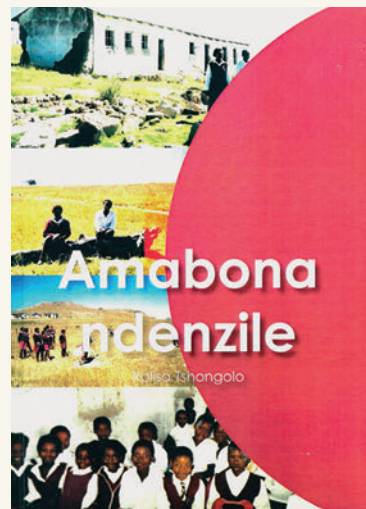
Nicolise Harding



novel **Rusty Bell** struck me as a lucid, racy and provocative piece of work. It tackled identity, race and class by invoking sensual themes in their historical South African political precarity. Mohlele is at his finest when he delves into difficult existential realms such as the excesses of living in a fast-paced material world. As a storyteller, he is concerned about the fact that even good people can screw up, big time. Truly postmodernist but from the South African condition, Mohlele draws on voices, experiences and longings that belong to people who are not hankering after a lost golden past, nor those confined to the narrow and staid material and mental geographies. His debut short story collection... is strong. That is its charm. Love is presented through many lives – especially those for whom life is a bag of thorns. The first story, *Lessons in love*, is about a loving father who is raising his son after having separated from his mother. The story is an essay on adulthood and parenting from the perspective of a modern and open-minded black man... Mohlele also tackles the bigger political themes such as racism. He alludes to the murder of George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man killed by a white police officer in the US in 2020. “There are other searching and often bewildering questions: If white people oppressed black people for over four hundred years, how come black people are so nice to them, including in America

where police seem to kill them for sport? A policeman kneed a grown man to death, ignored his pained pleading until he took his last breath – how can humans be that heartless?” [Nthikeng] succeeds in offering a series of tantalising lectures on love and the black condition...’
(*mg.co.za*, Sandile Ngidi)

TSHONGOLO, Xolisa
Amabona ndenzile. - Tshongolo, 2015.
Umbhali kule noveli ubalisa ngamahlandenyuka kamama uNothemobile. Kuqala abalise ngomyeni



kaNothemobile othinjwe lilizwe, ze azibhaqe uNothemobile enoxanduva lokuzikhulisela abantwana bakhe eyedwa. Eyonanto emenze akwazi ukumelana nale ngxuba kakaxa kukulima imifuno ukugxotha ikati eziko. UNothemobile ebekwanguye nomfuyi weebhokwe, iigusha kwakunye neenkomo. Kuthe kusaphileka kakuhle kolu sapho, agaleleka amasela emfuyo, azithathela ngokungena sini de iintlanti zekhaya zoma qoko. Waze waxakeka umfazi wabantu, akazi noba athathe adibanise nantoni ukondla usapho lwakhe kuba nodaba lomyeni wakhe owatshiphayo alizange libenamkhondo. Kobo bunzima ke, unyana kaNothemobile u-Esilona uthathe ebeka ngengcinga de wazibhaqa eyincama imfundo, wasuka wathatha ijoyini ukuze asebenzele ikhaya elo. Kuninzi okuvezwa ngumbhali kolu ncwadi okufana nemeko zolwaphulo mthetho, ukuhlukumezeka koluntu ngokwasemphefumleni, ulutsha oluthi lunyanzeleke lushiye ezemfundo luyoxelengela inyama. Ezi meko zidandalathiswa ngumbhali nolwimi lwimi lolu ncwadi ziyawutsala umxhelo womfundi zomtsho avakalelwe. **NNG**

VAN TONDER, Jan
Sagie se storie. - Human en Rousseau, 2023.
‘Die storie van Sagie, seun van die Klein-Karoo, wat oor soveel jare heen in soveel harte gekruip het, word eindelijk hier in een band klaar vertel. **Is Sagie** het die eerste keer in 1987



verskyn, **Is weer Sagie** in 2013, en nou, tien jaar later, verskyn die slot in dié besonderse trilogie: **Sagie is**. In die eerste boek, **Is Sagie**, word ons betower deur die weerloosheid en onskuld van Sagie se half-verstaan. Tog weet hy baie van boerdery. En wanneer hy Ansie ontmoet, word sy wêreld volmaak. Hy leer Ansie van die veld en die wonder van die Klein-Karoo. En oplaas loop hy verlies op die lyf. In **Is weer Sagie** beleef Sagie opnuut eensaamheid. Klip vir klip begin hy bou aan 'n huis langs die kleidam vanwaar hy die Dwarsrivervallei en Towerkop mooi kan sien. Hy glo Ansie sal terugkom na hom toe sodra daar rook uit die skoorsteen trek. En dan, **Sagie is**. Sagie boer nou alleen op Greundal en kry meer te doen met die goed en kwaad in ander mense. Maar deurentyd bly Ansie in sy kop, al is daar die vertroostende teenwoordigheid van Sofia. Eendag sal hy op die Makkadas-trein klim en na Ansie soek tot hy haar kry. Jan van Tonder het in 1983 gedebuteer met die roman **Wit vis**. Hierna volg kortverhale, **Aandenking vir 'n vry man** en die roman **Is Sagie**. Die kind het die ATKV-prosaprys en ook die FAK-prys vir ontspanningsleesstof ontvang. Sy romans **Roepman**, **Die verevrou** en **Grootgeluk** is vir verskeie literêre pryse benoem, en **Roepman** is ook verfilm.' (bookhubpress.com)

Hierdie titel is ook beskikbaar in e-formaat op die Wes-Kaap Biblioteekdiens se OverDrive webblad en Libby-toepassing.



WASSERMAN, Elizabeth
Die fantastiese Mevrouw Smit. - Penguin, 2023.

'Skaars op Aronspoort, of Mevrouw Smit hoor sy slaap in die polisie-selle – vir haar "onaanvaarbare gedrag" en drink-agter-die-stuur. Wanneer sy die volgende oggend uiteindelik by haar nuwe huis instap, wag 'n lyk op die kombuisvloer. Moes dit dalk eerder sy gewees het, daar in die bloedkol? Maar Mevrouw Smit is nie 'n lelie wat jy sonder 'n skêr pluk nie. Sy gaan die moordenaar vastrek, maak nie saak op hoeveel tone sy trap of hoeveel van die dorp se skandes uitpeul nie.

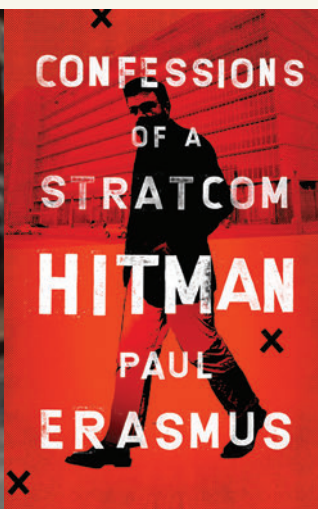
Die sterftesyfer styg en sy raak al hoe meer ongewild. Haar skerp tong spaar nie eens die dokter met die mooi blou oë nie. Want sien, sy is 'n vrou met 'n donker verlede. Wat sy met los klere, gemaklike skoene en natuurlike, grys hare probeer verbloem. As die polisie te lank krap, kom hulle dalk op haar spoke af. En dit mag nie gebeur nie.' (penguinrandomhouse.co.za)

Hierdie titel is ook beskikbaar in e-formaat op die Wes-Kaap Biblioteekdiens se OverDrive webblad en Libby-toepassing.

ADULT NON-FICTION

ERASMUS, Paul
Confessions of a stratcom hitman. - Jacana Media, 2021.

'Paul Erasmus' searing account of his time as a security policeman during apartheid is nothing short of explosive. In this book, remarkable for its candour as for its effort at Erasmus' attempt at coming to a reckoning with the atrocities he committed and was party to, we read of the National Party's determination to destroy Winnie Mandela, to terrorise anti-apartheid activists, to smear and compromise people who did not accept the *Volk en Vaderland* way. Erasmus lays bare the corruption and power mongering in the South African Police, and the fascist associations that some cops were linked to. He names, but ultimately asks himself how he could have done





families; the author discusses the realities of alienation and the longing for connection. Ultimately, she writes, "May you love yourself exactly as you are." In *Survivor solidarity*, she speaks to girls who have suffered sexual violence and assault from "the other side" of trauma, reminding them that what happened is not their fault. While many other similar books are how-to guides written by and for other teens, most of which focus primarily on boys, this collection is written by older black women for younger black women with the intent to provide vital knowledge, to instruct in how to build a sense of self-worth, and to be passed on from one generation to another. Interspersed throughout the book are sharp *Know this* sidebars, which feature further resources and concrete information on such topics as "black name bias", "radical self-care", *Planned parenthood*, and the *Trevor Project*. A valuable combination of encouragement, empowerment, and instruction.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

MACKINNON, JB
The day the world stops shopping: how ending consumerism gives us a better life and a greener world.

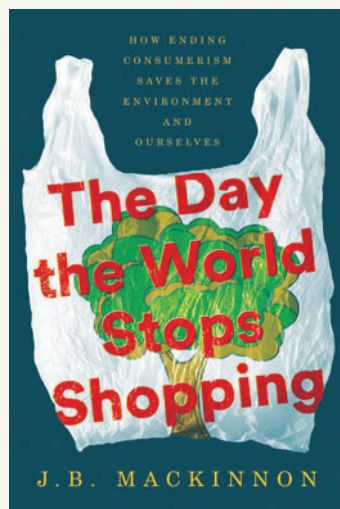
- Bodley, 2021.
 'In this fresh take on consumer culture and its devastating effect on planet Earth, author MacKinnon imagines what the world would look like if humans adopted less consumption-

what did. His testimony before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was extensive and allowed a view into the world of Stratcom. This book takes that testimony a step further. At this time of fake news, of populism and misinformation, of privateers in the state security system and of state capture by the governing party, this book could not be more urgent or apt. It is a disturbing and furious attempt by Erasmus to explain his own depravity and that of his colleagues, bosses and government's operating under the Stratcom project. Erasmus frames this within the tyranny of the racist, banal and ideological state during apartheid. This book is a letter from history, a visceral confession to South Africans and a letter of love to his family.' (*johannesburgreviewofbooks.com*)

educating and healing, this collection of letters is reinforced by vocabulary, words and history lessons necessary for any black girl to know. It is also a self-affirming workbook prompting readers to supplement the letters and lessons with love letters to themselves. Winfrey Harris highlights the spectrum of blackness and the black experience, writing with necessary candor throughout. Beautifully written, the letters often feel like a collection of essays and poems. One standout contribution features the perspective of a "transracial adoptee" writing to other black girls raised within white

HARRIS, Tamara Winfrey
Dear Black girl: letters from your sisters on stepping into your power.

- Berrett-Koehler, 2021.
 'A collection of letters written by black women to encourage, educate, and uplift black girls. "The world does not value black girls like it should," writes Winfrey Harris. With chapters dedicated to "black girl magic", family, friendship, mental health, and romantic relationships, the author seeks to rectify the devaluing of black girls by connecting them with black women through sage advice focused on meaningful topics. With an eye toward





belangstelling sodoende geprikkel is. Aleit, wat op Worcester grootgeword het, het ook sy eie kosskool besit waar sy kennis voortleef. Die boek is 'n wonderlike nalatenskap van iemand met 'n fyn siel en vir wie alles mooi is. **AT**

Hierdie titel is ook beskikbaar in e-formaat op die Wes-Kaap Biblioteekdiens se OverDrive webblad en Libby-toepassing.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

COSIMANO, Elle

Seasons of the storm.- HarperTeen, 2021. 'Seasons are meant to hunt and destroy each other, but what happens when two Seasons fall in love? Jack is a Winter. With the help of his Handler, he hunts down the Autumn who comes before him, kills her, and runs from the Spring who comes next — until she kills him in turn. This cycle maintains the seasons and the weather, which is why Seasons are regulated: kept to their own territories when out in the world and to their own sections of the compound they call home. But since the beginning, Jack has sought out gaps in the system, which may be why he finds himself drawn to Fleur, the Spring tasked with killing him. Monitored both by technology and the magical creatures controlled by Chronos and Gaia — the beings responsible for the Seasons — as well as watched over by their own skeptical Handlers, Jack and Fleur nevertheless take a risk that could destroy the

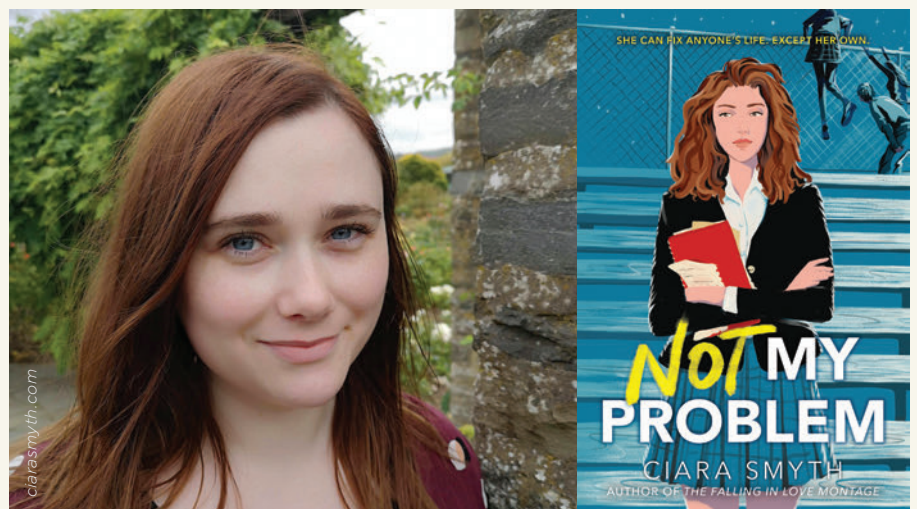
oriented lifestyles. He uses a global perspective to show how modern culture is steeped in consumerism. He decries the overabundance of material goods, and suggests that once individuals re-evaluate what and how much they really need, worldwide production rates will go down, resulting in meaningful reductions in carbon-dioxide levels. He addresses such topics as economic indicators, advertising, green "demarketing", our 24-hours-a-day commercial society, and the psychological and ethical aspects of materialism. Pages are filled with examples, statistics, profiles, quotes, and anecdotes, many relating to the worldwide COVID-19 shutdown. MacKinnon reassures readers that no, civilisation probably won't collapse if people stop shopping. Great things might even happen: renewed respect for wildlife, less stress and competition, and more personal satisfaction. MacKinnon's writing flows effortlessly and logically, incorporating solid research, relatable scenarios, and compelling arguments. Hopefully readers will stop and think the next time they're about to click *Buy*.' (booklistonline.com)

en versiering en het die voorsit en aanbieding van smaaklike geregte en dekor vervolmaak. Hy het veral tydens die aanbieding van glansgeleenthede soos bruilofsontvale uitgeblyk. **AleitApteit** is 'n versameling resepte wat saamgestel is van verskillende spesiale mense wat hy geken het. Baie resepte is ook deur Aleit self in sy eie kombuis geskep. In die boek deel hy hartskos saam met sy stories en die nostalgie en passie waarmee hy geleef het, is duidelik te bespeur. Hy vereer sy ma by wie hy die liefde vir geregte, geure, kook en die aanbieding van kos van kleins af aangeleer het — en sy eie

SWANEPOEL, Aleit

AleitApteit.- LAPA, 2022.

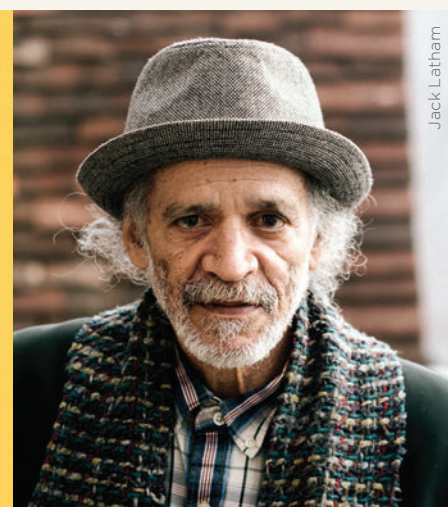
Aleit Swanepoel was besig met die sewende reeks van sy gewilde *KykNet*-televisieprogram, *Tyd met Aleit*, die dag voor sy afsterwe in Mei 2022. Hy was veral bekend vir sy onthaalkuns-



delicate balance in their lives and in the world. Merging high-tech bunkers in London and secretive road trips across the US with mythology and magic, Cosimano tells a story of the bonds of friendship and the power of hope for the future. Though the large cast is sometimes cumbersome, the themes of friendship despite differences and self-sacrifice nevertheless shine through. Jack and Fleur seem to be white while a secondary character is cued as Latinx. A solid urban fantasy with a novel premise.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

SMYTH, Ciara

Not my problem.- Andersen Press, 2021. 'In this witty and engaging novel, Irish author Smyth creates a flawed teen girl, Aideen, who makes a credible journey from self-protectively tough to ready and willing to face her main problem: her single mother's neglectful alcoholism. When Aideen makes a snap decision to help the principal's overachieving, overscheduled, and generally disliked daughter, she begins doing secret favours for classmates in return for them owing her their help. She develops unexpected feelings for one of her clients and makes a new friend in Kavi, who is chatty and humorous but also has his own problems as, Aideen discovers, everyone does. The story unfolds effortlessly, detailing both suspenseful and hilarious moments, as does real life. Populated with believable high



Jack Latham

school friends and very few adults... this engaging novel will hook readers immediately...' (*slj.com*, Francisca Goldsmith)

JUVENILE FICTION

AGARD, John

Books make good pets/illustrated by Momoko Abe.- Orchard, 2021. 'A book can really take you anywhere and in this particular book, [the readers] are taken on a wonderful imaginative journey to show how

fantastic and powerful books are. [The author's] lyrical story begs to be read out loud and the beautiful illustrations tell their own wonderful detailed stories about all the places books take readers. The little animated books in the illustrations, complete with arms and legs, do indeed look like adorable animals. With just a pinch of imagination, children can find out that books can be their pets, their best friends, or anything they want them to be — and they are so easy to have around! A charming and imaginative book about books to be enjoyed by all.' (*booktrust.org.uk*)

DEEN, Sophie

Agent Asha: mission shark bytes/illustrated by Anjan Sarkar.- Walker, 2020. 'Eleven-year-old Asha Joshi is an ace coder. Her constant companion is an annoying, but endearingly funny and anxious, toy hamster, Tumble, which she created when she was six — using a motherboard from an old games console and a teddy bear. Her nannybot, Drone, is also always with her; its function is to make sure she does her homework. Asha never told her mum and dad that she has been hacking Drone for years to get away from annoying parental controls and to help keep her out of trouble... [A] fast-paced adventure... [with] masses of intriguing illustrations, plentiful humour, an interesting accompanying app, and a great protagonist...' (The School Librarian, Anne Harding)



HUDSON, Katy

The perfect birthday recipe.- Raintree, 2020.

'Can this birthday be saved? Beaver is an exacting sort, and he's planned the perfect birthday cake for his upcoming celebration. Unlike a certain little red hen, from the start he'd prefer to do it himself, but his enthusiastic friends Tortoise, Bird, Rabbit, and Squirrel are determined to help bake the cake. A series of mishaps on the parts of these well-intentioned pals makes for a result that is less than perfect according to Beaver's perfectionist point of view. In a rage, he tells everyone to leave and then starts all over, following the complicated recipe to the letter and into the night. This time, the cake is perfect, but when Beaver digs into a slice, he also begins to sob with loneliness and regret. His friends overhear his cries and graciously return to his side and comfort him, resolving to celebrate the next day after everyone's had a good night's sleep. When they do celebrate, they use the original cake (what becomes of the "perfect" one is unclear), and all's well that ends well. Throughout, Hudson's accompanying illustrations use a nice balance of spot and full-page compositions to support pacing and offer faithful depictions of the characters and events in the story. A good sense of movement and expression animates the anthropomorphic characters, adding humor to the telling. Sweet as cake.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)



Lisa Brethrick

WALTER, Jackie

My dad's in prison/illustrated by Tony Neal.- Franklin Watts, 2018.

A powerful and touching picture book that tells the story of a young girl named Tally who is very sad because her dad is in jail. The book has been written with the advice and support of Storybook Dads, a charity that seeks to help children and parents maintain their relationship during imprisonment by providing CD recordings of fathers reading bedtime stories to their children. The book raises important questions about the impact of imprisonment on families

and particularly on children. The author's writing style is simple and effective, making it easy for young readers to follow and engage with the story. The author does a great job of exploring complex feelings such as abandonment, anger, and guilt, and she offers valuable insights into how children process these emotions. This is a great book for anyone who is dealing with a loved one in jail, regardless of age. It provides valuable perspective and offers hope for anyone who is struggling with similar challenges. At the back of the book there's advice for parents and guardians. **AM**

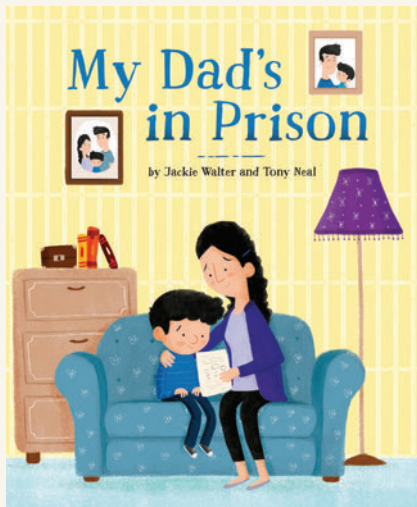
SERUMOLA, Tshwanele

Sibunjwe ngokukhethekileyo/imizobo nguSubi Bosa. - Macmillan, 2022.

Olu yincwadi lulungiselelwe abafundi abaselula libali elakhayo nelinika inkuthazo kumantombazana antsundu. Incoma indlela la mantombazana antsundu angayo ngokwahlukileyo, anemizimba eyahlukileyo namile ngokwahlukileyo ngayo. Le ncwadi fundisa amantombazana hayi ukuzamkela nje kuphela koko ukubhiyozela indlela adalwe ngokukhethekileyo ngayo ngokwasemzimbeni, ngokweentalente zawo ngelixa ikwakhuthaza ukuba abe namaphupha amakhulu aphuhlise nesakhono sawo sokuyila. Imizobo emabalabala yenze ibali eli litsale umdla kumfundi oselula. **NNG**



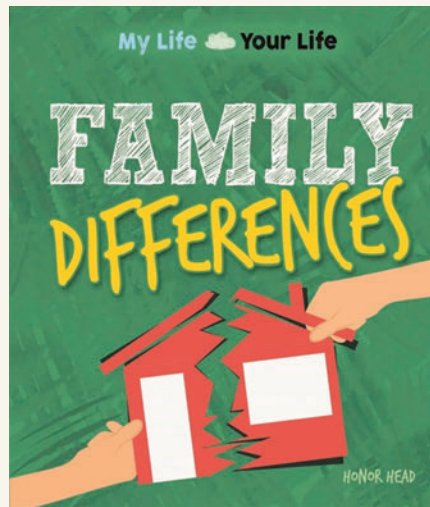
facebook.com



JUVENILE NON-FICTION

HEAD, Honor

Family differences.- Franklin Watts, 2019. A compelling and thought-provoking book that explores the various types of families and the differences that exist within them. The book is written in a clear and concise manner, making it accessible to readers of all ages and backgrounds. One of the notable features of **Family differences** is the author's ability to provide a balanced perspective on the topic. While acknowledging the existence of family differences, the book emphasises



the importance of recognising and respecting those differences without judgment or prejudice. The book covers a wide range of topics, including single-parent families, blended families, same-sex families, and families with disabilities. Each topic is approached with sensitivity, and the author uses real-life examples to illustrate the challenges and rewards of each family type. This is an important and relevant book that encourages readers to celebrate diversity and embrace differences. It is an excellent resource for families, educators, and anyone who wants to understand and

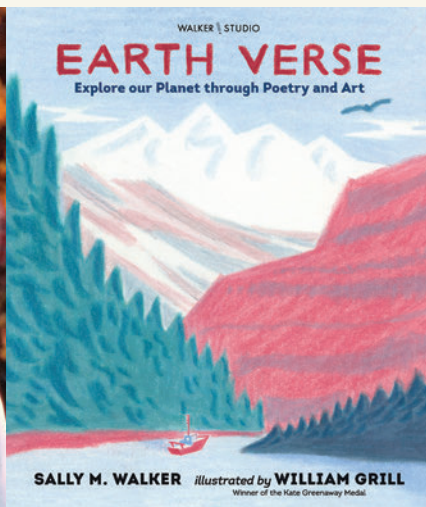
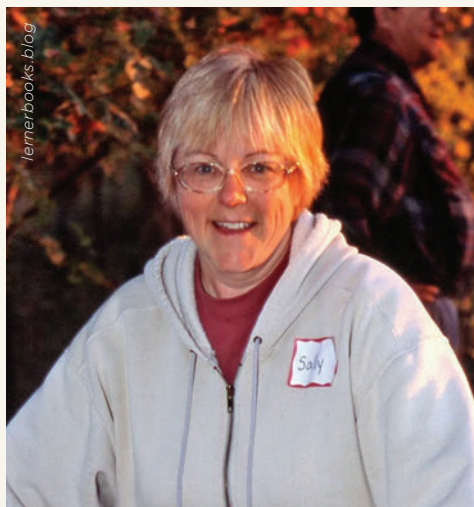
appreciate the many different types of families in our world today. **AM**

WALKER, Sally M

Earth verse: explore our planet through poetry and art/illustrated by William Grill.- Walker Studio, 2018. 'From up-and-coming illustrator Grill and seasoned non-fiction author Walker comes an intriguing collaboration exploring Earth's makeup. Though choosing one of the sparest verse forms, Walker manages to capture this planet's rich geologic features while simultaneously introducing tricky vocabulary with a specificity middle-grade readers can yet relate to: fragile outer crust / shell around mantle and core / Earth: a hard-boiled egg. Focused on haiku's concentrated descriptive aims, Walker crafts exciting characterisations of literally explosive acts, such as a volcanic eruption: hot headed mountain / loses its cool, spews ash cloud / igneous tantrum, along with informative prose endnotes, which include vivid descriptions of phenomena such as magma, toothpaste-thick, fiery-hot melted rock, and engaging scientific facts. Throughout the collection, Walker's pithy portraits are accompanied by Grill's trademark coloured-pencil illustrations, here expressively and somewhat abstractly rendered in muted tones, and this, perhaps, is where the work misses its mark. Given the ravishing detail presented in but a few syllables in these suggestive haiku and the fuller explanations provided at volume's end, Walker's thematic intentions might have been better served by an illustrative medium that more realistically shows what, for example, stalactites or swirly pahoehoe lava actually look like. In all, a provocative verse introduction to what lies on and deep below the Earth's surface...' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

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
- NNG** Nomonde Ngqoba



Gloria Bosman was more than a South African jazz vocalist, she was a guiding light

by Gwen Ansell

At the 2020 Feather Awards Bosman received the Simon Nkoli Award for her support of the LGBTIQ+ community
Oupa Bopape/Gallo Images/Getty Images



The immediate public reaction to the death of Gloria Bosman from a short respiratory illness on 14 March 2023 was shocked disbelief. The multiple award-winning South African jazz vocalist, composer and teacher was only 50.

She had just launched a new album, **Live**, her first in a dozen years, and was on the eve of a promotional tour.

Warm tributes followed, from family, friends and industry colleagues, and from a whole generation of singers for whom — directly and indirectly — she had served as a mentor and role model.

Bosman was an early challenger of stage stereotypes about South African female vocalists, their lyrical content and singing style. In her career as a teacher, she supported new generations to follow that lead.

Early career

Born in Mofolo and raised in Pimville in Soweto township in Johannesburg, Bosman's appearance in a 1993 Market Theatre musical drama scored her an opera scholarship to what was then the Pretoria Technikon (now the Tshwane University of Technology). Her vocal abilities attracted the attention of the late South African vocalist Sibongile Khumalo, an early mentor. By the time she graduated she was already gathering fans as a performer.

Her stage persona in those days was low key. On intimate stages such as that of the tiny Bassline club in Johannesburg she was often barefoot; from the start she interrogated the stereotyping of female vocalists as pop divas defined by flamboyant costumes and personality. Instead, she performed with the minimum

of staging, making audiences focus instead on her vocal power, timing and command over material. She wrote or co-wrote many of her own songs; the lyrics were almost always hers.

Bosman always covered the songs of others alongside original material. They were never merely 'covers'. It's what jazz singers do. With historic songs from the South African repertoire like Alan Silinga's *Ntyilo Ntyilo*, or Alpheus Nkosi's *Lizzy*, they were a way of acknowledging and revisiting a tradition that strongly informed her own style.

She chose her songs, often, simply because they gave her the space to stretch her voice and conception in new and intriguing ways: 'Songs that made me feel alive,' she sang in *Play me the love songs*. Her technical understanding let her bring surprising vocal textures — bird-chirps, cat-growls and more — and challenging, socially and personally aware lyrics to songs old and new.

Trailblazer

As much as the male instrumentalists more often mentioned in histories, Bosman was key in the ground-breaking first generation of players recording on the South African Sheer Sound label, who signalled the post-liberation renaissance of original South African jazz.

Her debut album, the 1999 **Tranquility**, was co-produced with pianist Paul Hanmer and featured him, guitarists Louis Mhlanga and Lawrence Matshiza, reedmen Steve Dyer and McCoy Mrubata, bassist Herbie Tsoaeli, and more — almost a roll-call of the jazz generation of the 1990s. It also had lyrics in the Zimbabwean Shona language as well as more familiar South African ones, backing from a string quartet, and Matshiza playing kora. It was pan-African, innovative and yet catchy enough to feature regularly across pop music radio.

Five more albums followed: **The many faces of Gloria Bosman** (2001), **Stop and think** (2002), **Nature dances** (2003), **Emzini** (2006) and **Letters from the heart** (2010). On each, her role as lyricist, arranger and producer grew, and she always reached out to new and exciting musical names, such as rising bassist Dalisu Ndlazi on **Live**.



Oupa Bopape/Gallo Images/Getty Images

Bosman won numerous awards, including the Standard Bank Young Artist award and two South African Music Awards

Finding her feet again

When I interviewed Bosman a month ago about that latest album, she explained the hiatus in recordings as not only about the COVID conditions constraining the past two years, but the deeper changes in the South African music industry.

As physical products like CDs have been shouldered out by digital music, independent musicians increasingly carry their own burden of recording,

distribution and marketing costs:

But we come from the era of record labels. It all became a long process of finding one's footing as an independent artist and learning how to run your business. It gets tricky when the recording bill is your responsibility and you still have to keep food on the table ... I watched and learned from the young ones; their courage gave me flight.



Lefty Shivambu/Gallo Images

Bosman performing at the Standard Bank Joy of Jazz 2007 held in Newtown, Johannesburg



Gloria Bosman during a T-Musicman music workshop for the Joy of Jazz festival at Joburg Theatre on 23 November 2022 in Johannesburg



Gloria Bosman during the Wine, Women & Jazz Experience at Hard Rock Cafe, Nelson Mandela Square on 10 August 2019 in Sandton

More than a jazz singer

A business as well as a vocal innovator, Bosman also put together a creative patchwork of music to keep food on the table, including theatre, cabaret and corporate work, teaching and other non-performing roles when the club scene went through dry periods. She stretched across genres, including Afrikaans and gospel music. But it wasn't only structural industry changes that posed challenges.

Although she always saw herself as a jazz singer, Bosman saw that term as defining an inclusive, not an exclusive territory. So she would employ her extended vocal technique wherever it felt right, something that didn't always meet the conventional expectations of show bookers. Sometimes, she had to stifle her creativity.

Like many female performers, she also constantly battled quite extraordinarily backward perceptions about her image, fielding innuendo-laden interview questions. When the stylist for her **Emzini** album cover shoot put her in heels, one headline heralded, not new music — marking, among other things, a creatively important reconnection with her extended Eastern Cape province family — but, 'Gloria shows her legs.'

Overcoming tough times

All that led to some tough economic and emotional times. On her bluesy



Lefty Shivambu/Gallo Images

Bosman performing at the Standard Bank Joy of Jazz 2007 held in Newtown, Johannesburg

composition *Uzowuzw'umoya*, she sang:

*I've been up, I've been down.
Out in the cold, out in the rain.
I'd go out, to the rain, so that
no-one can see my tears.*

But she worked it out. Bosman was always fiercely protective of her personal life; when we spoke at the time of **Nature dances** in 2003 she made it clear that nothing was more important than protecting her then-young daughter Boikarabelo from what she dismissed as the 'nonsense' of showbiz

journalism. There's a powerful version of *God Bless the child* on that album.

Over the years — possibly honed by those stony corporate audiences — she grew a powerfully commanding, sometimes audacious stage presence, on full display in **Live**. The intention of her final album was to assert that. But also, she said, to 'remind people how special (after COVID) it is to be part of a live show again'.

Bosman's memorial service was replete with tributes on how she guided and supported others. One of her most important contributions was to constantly pose — and answer — the question of the lyrics to her 2001 song *Why not?* 'How brave can you be ... who makes the rules?' And also this translation of a proverb from her song *Remembering Thami Mnyele* (a visual artist who fought against apartheid's white minority rule) on her debut album:

*People may die leaving only
memories, but their loss need
not be in vain, because they pave
the way forward for the living.*

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Oupa Bopape/Gallo Images/Getty Images

Gloria Bosman during Metro FM Dinner In South Africa on 30 October 2007 in Johannesburg

Latest arrivals at Central Reference (SN)

by Sandra Kingswell

Over the last few months Central Reference (SN) has received some new and exciting items to add to its already extensive collection. A total of 45 new books have been shelved and are waiting to be borrowed.

The following titles are reviews of the latest arrivals at Central Reference.

Create a fantastic world of delight with these 35 inspiring projects, all made from old books. Get folding and make a beautiful bird, a sailor's knot, and a shining star — they look impressive but are deceptively simple to make.

In Clare Youngs' **Folded book art**, she shows you how to cut and glue splendid scenes such as delicate paper mushrooms and ferns, a fairy castle, and a winter reindeer, all of which would make great gifts, or just to keep and display them yourself. There are also ideas for transforming the pages cut from books — you'll learn how to make greeting cards, a botanical print lampshade, and hanging birds. All the projects have helpful step-by-step instructions and illustrations so all you need are a few old books and you are ready to begin. Find new uses for old books as you take tattered, smudged, or torn-out pages and turn them into brand new works of art, giving your old books brand new shelf life.

Dr Gwen Adshead has spent thirty

years providing therapy at secure hospitals and prisons. Whatever her patient's crime — serial homicide, stalking or arson — she helps them to better know their minds by enabling them to articulate their life experiences. Through a collaboration with co-author Eileen Horne, Adshead brings her work to life in these fascinating, unflinching portraits of individuals who headlines newspapers, TV dramas and crime fiction as 'monsters'. Case by case, Adshead takes us into the treatment room and reveals these men and women in all their complexity and vulnerability. She sheds new light on the unpredictable nature of the therapeutic process as doctor and patient try to find words for the unspeakable. These are stories of cruelty and despair but

also of change and recovery. Adshead speaks to our shared humanity and makes the case for compassion over condemnation. **The devil you know** challenges what we think we know about evil. It is a rare book that has the power to change minds.

Infant Natal was a tough and perilous place. Dense bush surrounded the Bay and wild animals roamed the countryside: elephant and lion were common; crocodile and hippo were a constant danger. The terrain called for strong characters who could fend for themselves and survive the many pitfalls. Dick King was one such person. He has become part of South Africa's folklore for his brave and adventurous exploits. His modest nature precluded him from talking about his life and it was left to others to chronicle his story. This has been done several times and much useful information has become available. Jacqueline Kalley's book **Mlamulankunzi: the life and times of Dick King** is an attempt to bring together available strands from various sources, and to place them in the context of the Natal of his time. The author has a special interest in his life, as Dick King was her maternal great-great-grandfather.

Kora or !Ora in the language itself, was the Khoisan language spoken by the Khoi herders of the early Cape and the Gariiep. It was believed to have disappeared until only a few years ago, when Mike Besten, an historian at the University of the Free State, discovered a few elderly people who still retained some fluency in the language. The

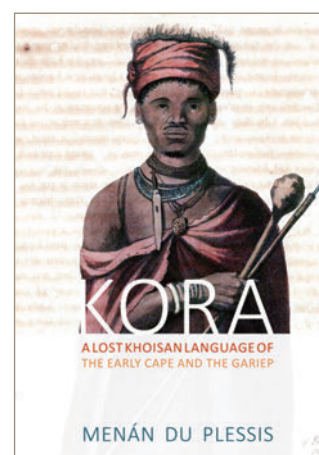
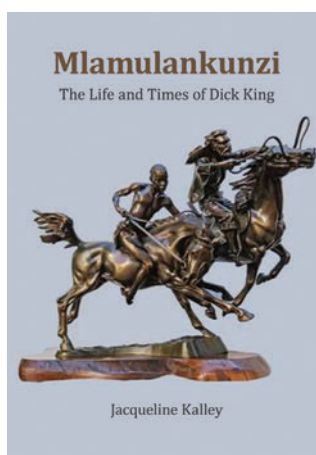
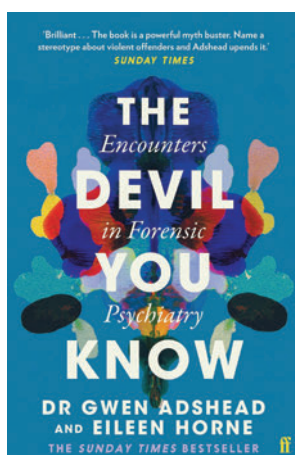
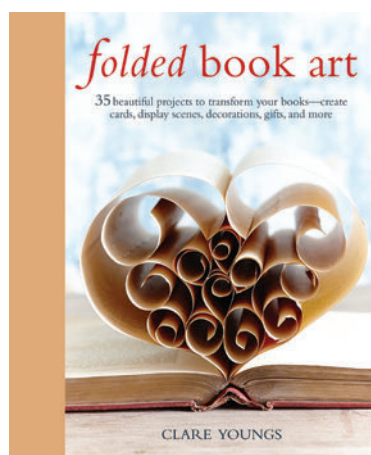
author devised and carried out an emergency documentation in 2011, when she and her small team managed to obtain recordings from two of the last living speakers. It was out of this experience that the idea for this book emerged. The overriding purpose of the work, which is envisaged as an act of cultural restitution, is to retrieve the all but discarded linguistic heritage of the Korana and Griqua people of South Africa — not only for the latter-day descendants of these communities, but for all South Africans. The two opening chapters of Menán du Plessis' book **Kora: a lost Khoisan language of the early Cape and Gariiep** describes the linguistic classification of the language, and the sources of our earlier information about it. The third and fourth chapters describe the sounds and structures of the language while the work also includes 43 heritage texts in the original language, and a dictionary. The texts, which consist of historical narratives, accounts of cultural traditions, personal histories, folktales and the lyrics of songs, have been newly edited and are presented with parallel translations in English. In the online version of the book, approximately one third of the dictionary entries are linked to spoken examples provided by the two elderly speakers who worked with the linguists.

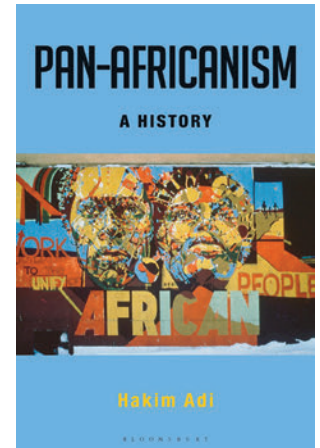
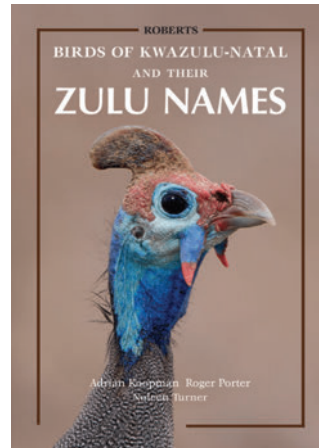
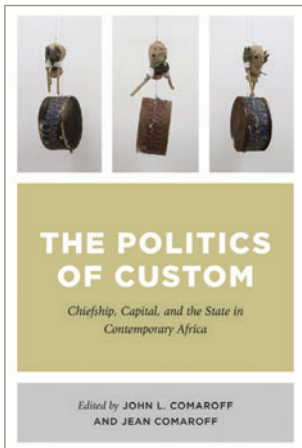
How are we to explain the resurgence of customary chiefs in contemporary Africa? Rather than disappearing with the tide of modernity, as many expected, indigenous sovereigns are instead a

rising force, often wielding substantial power and legitimacy despite major changes in the workings of the global political economy in the post-Cold War era — changes in which they are themselves deeply implicated.

The politics of custom, edited by anthropologists John L Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, explores the reasons behind the increasingly assertive politics of custom in many corners of Africa. Chiefs come in countless guises — from university professors, through cosmopolitan businessmen to subsistence farmers — but, whatever else they do, they are a critical key to understanding the tenacious hold that 'traditional' authority enjoys in the late modern world. Together the contributors explore the counterintuitive chapter in Africa's history, and in so doing, place it within the broader world-making processes of the twenty-first century.

From rustic walking sticks to fancy canes, woodworker and author Charlie Self shows you how to craft more than a dozen different staffs in **Make your own walking sticks**. Whether you are looking for something simple and practical or looking to make a statement, you will find everything you need to know inside this fun and easy-to-follow book. The first part covers what wood to use, the tools and hardware you'll need, and the basic construction and finishing techniques necessary to complete your project. The second part is devoted to 15 projects ranging from a simple pine branch cane for the beginner to





a brass-handled and stylishly turned two-piece cane for the advanced craftsman. To ensure your success, step-by-step directions, helpful sidebars, and full colour photographs are all provided. Also included is a helpful guide to North American woods, 25 original carving patterns from renowned artist Lora S Irish, and a stunning and inspiring gallery of canes and walking sticks from the private collection of Albert LeCoff, executive director of the Wood Turning Center in Philadelphia.

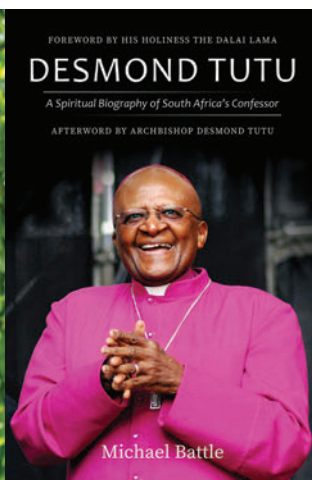
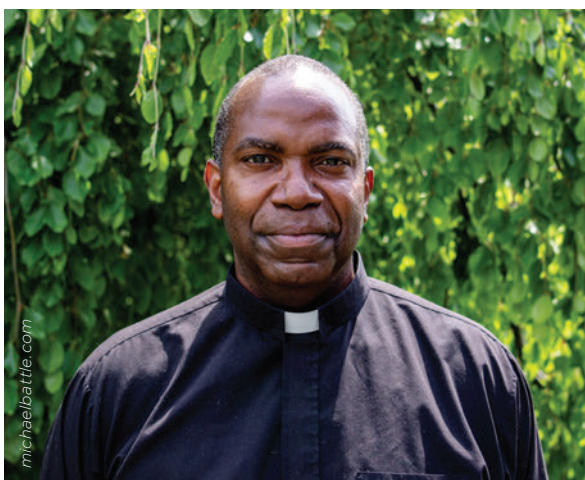
The John Voelcker Bird Book Fund, publishers of the Roberts bird books, is proud to launch the **Birds of KwaZulu Natal and their Zulu names**. With superb photographs, this groundbreaking book is the first practical

bird field guide to give individual Zulu names to 550 species. It is the result of a six-year Zulu Bird Name Project facilitated by the authors (Alan Koopman, Roger Porter, and Noleen Turner) together with eighteen mother-tongue Zulu-speaking bird experts. This book, based on sound linguistic principles, adds new names that have been crafted for 67% of birds which hitherto had no names in Zulu. The authors hope that this book will be used and inspire a greater interest, awareness, and protection among the Zulu people of the avifaunal heritage of KwaZulu-Natal and beyond.

The first survey of the Pan-African movement this century, this book provides a history of the individuals

and organisations that have sought the unity of all those of African origin as the basis for advancement and liberation. Initially an idea and movement took root among the African Diaspora, but in more recent times, Pan-Africanism has been embodied in the African Union, the organisation of African states which includes the entire African Diaspora as its 'sixth region'. Hakim Adi's **Pan-Africanism: a history** covers many of the key political figures of the 20th century, including Du Bois, Garvey, Malcolm X, Nkrumah and Gaddafi, as well as Pan-African culture expression from Negritude to the wearing of the Afro hairstyle and the music of Bob Marley.

Michael Battle is undoubtedly right: you cannot possibly understand the life and legacy of the Arch unless you recognise the vitality of his spiritual life. Of course, we need the biographical details if we want to know who he is from the outside — his background and his achievements. But if you fail to appreciate the journey of his soul, what made Tutu 'tick', and therefore made him the warm, compassionate fighter for justice we all know, then we will never grasp who he really was. Battle knows this because he understands that inner journey and has the personal resources to explore and share that with us. **Desmond Tutu: a spiritual biography of South Africa's confessor** is an insider's account of one of the greatest spirit-filled human beings of our time.



Philosophy and psychology

- 155.232 ADS Adshead, Gwen. The devil you know: stories of human cruelty and compassion.
- 155.6463 KRU Kruger, Lou-Marie. Of motherhood and melancholia: notebook of a psycho-ethnographer.
- 158.1 GUN Gunguluza, Lerato. The awareness effect: elevating the power of shaping your experiences.

Social sciences

- 305.896875 BUT Butler, Jeffrey. Cradock: how segregation and apartheid came to a South African town.
- 321.022 ADI Adi, Hakim. Pan-Africanism: a history.
- 321.1096 POL Comaroff, Jean. The politics of custom: chiefship, capital, and the state in contemporary Africa.
- 327.68 MAL Maloka, Eddy. When foreign becomes domestic: the interplay of national interests, Pan-Africanism and internationalism in South Africa's foreign policy.
- 362.88 WHE Nyathi, Sue. When secrets become stories: women speak out.
- 395.22 BLI Bliss, Dominic. Stag dos and speeches: sound advice for sending your groom off in style.

Languages

- 496.1 DUP Du Plessis, Menán. Kora: a lost Khoisan language of the early Cape and the Gariep.

Science

- J 567.91 WOR Wormell, Chris. Dinosaurium.
- 598.29684 KOO Koopman, Adrian. Roberts birds of KwaZulu-Natal and their Zulu names.

Technology

- 615.7827 MCQ McQue, Kelly. At home with cannabis: how to make and use cannabis products safely and effectively at home.
- 616.83 WRA Wray, Alison. Why dementia makes communication difficult: a guide to better outcomes.

- 617.09 SCH Schneider, David. The invention of surgery: a history of modern medicine — from the Renaissance to the implant revolution.
- 641.5638 AXE Axe, Josh. Keto diet: your 30-day plan to lose weight, balance hormones, boost brain health, and reverse disease.
- 645 VAN Van Overbeek, Hester. Wooden furniture hacks: over 20 step-by-step projects for a unique and stylish home.

Arts and recreation

- Q 736.4 SEL Self, Charles R. Make your own walking sticks: how to craft canes and staffs from rustic to fancy.
- 745.54 YOU Youngs, Clare. Folded book art: 35 beautiful projects to transform your books, create cards, display scenes, decorations, gifts, and more.
- 792.028 TWI Twijnstra, Roel. Acting in South Africa: skills and inspirations.
- 799.0968 REA Reardon, Mitch. Shaping Addo: the story of a South African national park.

Literature

- 810.809287 WEL Edim, Glory. Well-read black girl: finding our stories, discovering ourselves.
- 821.008 IWI De Lange, Johann. I wish I'd said. Volume 4: a product of the AVBOB Poetry Project.
- 821.914 MAP Maponya, Maishe. Da's kak in die land — truth be told.
- 821.92 DOW Dowling, Finuala. Pretend you don't know me: new and selected poems.
- 821.92 STA Skinner, Douglas Reid. Stanzas. Number 15, March 2019.
- 823.914 COE Driver, Dorothy. A book of friends in honour of JM Coetzee on his 80th birthday.
- 828.914 PLA Mokae, Sabata-Mpho. Sol Plaatjie's Mhudi: history, criticism, celebration.
- 882 ARI Kruger, Van Wyk Gerrit. Die Griekse ou komedie — Aristophanes.

Geography/History/Travel/Biography

- 915.695 JOR Walker Jenny. Jordan.
- 916.2 EGY Lee, Jessica. Egypt.

- 920 BRE Galloway, Francis. Breyten Breytenbach: woordenaar, woordnar — 'n huldiging.
- 920 CHO Kildea, Paul. Chopin's piano: a journey through romanticism.
- 920 GAU Jackson, Julian. A certain idea of France: the life of Charles de Gaulle.
- 920 SWA Swartz, Ivor. Die verlore seun vannie gaatjie.
- 920 TUT Battle, Michael. Desmond Tutu: a spiritual biography of South Africa's confessor.
- 956.91042 THO Thomson, Mike. Syria's secret library: the true story of how a besieged Syrian town found hope.
- 966.02 GOM Gomez, Michael. African Dominion: a new history of empire in early and medieval West Africa.
- 968.048 DEJ De Jongh, Michael. The forgotten front: untold stories of the Anglo-Boer War in the Karoo.
- 968.21 CAV Cave, Lincoln. Eersterust: a historical exploration of its origin.
- 968.4 MIC Mchunu, Mxolisi R. Violence and solace: the Natal Civil War in late-apartheid South Africa.
- 968.404 KIN Kalley, Jacqueline A. Mlamulankunzi: the life and times of Dick King.
- 968.6 SMI Smith, Keith, 1936 — The wedding feast war: the final tragedy of the Xhosa people.
- 968.703 OOS Oosthuysen, C. Marius. Die trekos en trektoerusting in Suid Afrika: 'n historiese perspektief.
- 968.72 SLE Sleigh, Dan. Bokbaai: the farm and its people.

All items listed in this article as well as the other items already in SN's collection may be requested via IMPALA or email.

For all book requests please email Sandra.Kingswell@westerncape.gov.za and all film, video and DVD requests can be directed via email to Hoeda.Salaam@westerncape.gov.za.

Sandra Kingswell is the senior library assistant at Central Reference



Gilbert Morris: Director, 1964-1985

www.westerncape.gov.za/library



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