

A Gesture of Defiance: Selected Texts by Black South African Women Writers

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Summary

The emergence of a tradition of autobiographical writing by Black South African women accentuates the contributions of an alternative, matrilineal line of heroes and women writers to an alternative history of the country. In shaping their own identities and in countering the prescriptions of the authorities with alternative scripts, these women engage in a gesture of defiance. One aspect of this defiance in texts which thematise the imperative for nation-building within the context of political oppression is the emphasis they place on the continuity between the self and her community.

Opsomming

Die ontwikkeling van 'n tradisie van outobiografiese tekste deur Swart Suid-Afrikaanse vroue beklemtoon die bydrae van 'n alternatiewe matriliniêre lyn van heldinne en vroueskrywers tot 'n alternatiewe geskiedenis van die land. Deur hulle vormgewing aan hulle identiteite en daardeur dat hulle die voorskrifte van gesagsinstellings met alternatiewe tekste teëstaan, voer vroue 'n handeling van verset uit. Een aspek van hierdie verset in tekste wat die noodwendigheid van nasiebou in die konteks van politieke onderdrukking tematiseer, is die klem wat hulle op die kontinuïteit van die self en die gemeenskap plaas.

This colloquium¹ provides us with another platform from which we can add more colour and character to an often neglected piece of the literary portrait of one of the youngest democracies in the world. Whichever way we view this portrait before us, we cannot help but envisage the emergence of a very rich and colourful picture. What joy and pride it will be for us all one day, to realise that we also seized a moment, and, so lovingly, and ever so dedicatedly, stretched our hands, dipped our brushes into the gourd of the rainbow paint, and added a line or two on this celebrated picture of the South African literary historiography.² The colloquium is therefore more than a literary affair. It is a celebration of ideas and voices which forces of darkness had connived to keep hushed forever. Let us thus not tire to reminisce on these his-tories and her-

stories in this and other forums. As we grapple with the continuous challenges of defining our self-identity and becoming speech, let us not forget to return to the lessons our literary ancestors taught us about telling our stories in ways that more than affirm us.

The corpus of black South African women's writings of the sixties to the nineties is a recollection of different facets of a displaced people. These were people striving to have their stories told within a political milieu which legislated against, not only their survival, but their very being. Most of the women who contributed to this body of literature, wrote without the benefit of being formally schooled in any aspects of the novel as postulated by E.M. Forster.³ Neither did they bring to the existing body of literature any learned appreciation of what a good poem is, or what it should look or sound like. They also lacked instruction on the structural rigours of a tight cohesion of ideas in writing their short stories. To add to that, nobody had told them about Aristotle's (1994) prescription for plays or drama, namely, that a play has to observe the three unities of time, place and action. That most of the women writers making up the corpus of black South African women writers wrote without any of these benefits attests to their determination to rise above the ashes of their circumstances. These women simply wrote out of a passion and sensitivity to communicate what was before them, behind them, and in some cases, what was still to pass.

They brought to light lives interlaced with hardship, misery, and pain, all of which jockeyed for position with an insatiable hunger and zest for life. Whatever their lot was, they also celebrated life. Their narratives are a recording of song and dance, a touch of humour and at other times, downright jollity and frivolity, all the while bearing the cross of abuse, poverty, oppression, humiliation, detention, exile and finally, death. They wrote, using a multiplicity of genres, and defined new areas of writing, as we find in Miriam Tlali's *Amandla* (1980), and particularly so in *Mihloti* (1984), by the same author. They also introduced new discourses that enabled them to negotiate communion with political power and influence. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, for example, the author of *Part of My Soul Went With Him* (1985), was elected a member of the first democratic parliament of South Africa in 1994. So was Ellen Kuzwayo, the award-winning author of *Call Me Woman* (1985) and *Sit Down and Listen* (1990).

Whether any of these writers consciously set out to tell their own lives as part of creating a national consciousness during which process they contributed to the recording of an alternative history of the country, is a subject for another forum. In addition to that, I doubt if we shall ever get to know that if by telling their lives in pen and ink, these writers were consciously aware of entering a literary tradition, that of autobiography. What stands out clearly is that by telling their lives, they demonstrated an act of courage and resilience, what bell

hooks refers to as a gesture of defiance. “Moving from silence into speech”, so says hooks in *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*,

is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible. It is that act of speech, of talking back, that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of our movement from object to subject – the liberated voice.

(hooks 1988: 9)

The act of telling our lives, whether verbally, in action or in print, sometimes comes in guises that obscure the underlying processes of “moving from silence into speech”. Autobiography is thus notoriously difficult to define or even classify, and any interaction with it produces diverse meanings and expectations. For example, while some people might see it as within, and even confined to the literary domain, others may see it in history, philosophy, religion, politics, economics, etc.. What this means then is that the concept of autobiography is descriptive but not necessarily definitive as we may want it to be. And much as a deconstructive analysis of the concept alludes to the writing of the life of the self, or the self writing its life, we cannot confirm that with confidence until we reach that impossible common and perhaps exhaustive definition and analysis of what we mean by self, life and graphe, irrespective of whether we look at the concepts individually or collectively.

What we have characteristically come to term autobiography is a concept that encompasses virtually all aspects of our lives (cf Swiddels 1995). Consequently, James Olney, author of *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (1980) and *Tell Me Africa: An Approach to African Literature* (1973), boldly states that “all writing that aspires to be literature is autobiography and nothing else”. He supports his position by quoting Nietzsche’s observation in *Beyond Good and Evil*, namely that “[l]ittle by little it has become clear to me that every great philosophy has been the confession of its maker, as it were his involuntary and unconscious autobiography” (Nietzsche quoted by Olney 1980: 4-5). While the statement may be comforting, it is also perplexing at the same time, as it raises the question as to whether we are in agreement with Olney in his meaning and definition of literature. Even though a definition of autobiography eludes us, we cannot dispute the assumption that it has been in practice since humankind started breathing. Let me take the liberty to say that whoever reaches the microphone first has the power to manipulate the slant or direction that his/her idea of autobiography will take, and that all what follows will go according to that slant. Needless to say, the authors of the narratives under discussion got hold of the microphone before we did, so that our reading of their particular autobiographical narratives needs to serve as our guide in

our understanding of what the genre is. As we turn to them we find ourselves here trying to retell, if not rewrite their lives. Does it then mean that we are also partaking in the practice of auto/biography?

My choice of the narratives for this article is partly personal in that, in addition to being a means towards intellectual pursuit, the reading process of the narratives is also important in advancing my understanding of my own life. Chronologically, the publication of the narratives under discussion spans a period of thirty-odd years, beginning with Noni Jabavu's *Drawn in Color* (1960), to Sindiwe Magona's *To My Children's Children* (1990). The narratives that I shall be paying particular attention to in this paper are Jabavu's *Drawn in Color* (1960) and *The Ochre People* (1963), Laretta Ngcobo's *Cross of Gold* (1981), Miriam Makeba's *My Story* (1988) and Sindiwe Magona's *To My Children's Children* (1990). Much as I do not make any claims at a historical analysis of the selected texts, I do take into account the sociopolitical context within which they were conceived and produced.⁴ The fact that I cast only a cursory glance at other genres like poetry and short stories, and I am totally silent on drama and other literary subgenres, is not to suggest a privileging of one genre over others. For the purpose of this paper, I shall not pursue such debates on the merits or demerits of particular genres in certain contexts; suffice to say that my preponderance on the autobiography is because of what Bakhtin (1990: 137) calls its obliqueness and inherent dialogised voices.

While the selected narratives can be classified as autobiographical, they also elucidate more and more qualities of automythology and folk-tales. The self refuses to stand on its own, and reinvents itself by continuing to mirror its actions and thoughts on the community, and what the community restricts or embraces. This continuum from self to community looms even larger within texts whose themes are about the imperative for nation-building within the context of political suppression. In short, what these texts proclaim in their use of autobiography, automythology, dreams, trances and folk-tales is that the self is the indisputable child of the community, in as much as the community feeds on the self in defining its character (Kuzwayo 1990: 121-122). For this reason, political agency and social transformation can never be conceived to be an individual project, but one inherently intertwined with the heartbeat of the community, and by extension, the nation (cf Mbeki 1999; and the contribution to Makgoba 1999, especially Parts One and Two).

Of all the writers under discussion, Sindiwe Magona is the most expressive and demonstrative of this link between self and community, as she titles her first autobiographical writing *To My Children's Children* (1990). The book is an effort to draw in generations of her family within a milieu that indeed legislated for their death. She prefaces her narrative thus: FROM A XHOSA GRANDMOTHER, thereby emphasising the link within and across genera-

tions, and continues:

When I am old, wrinkled, and grey, what shall I tell you, my great-granddaughter? What memories will stay with me of days of yesteryear? Of my childhood, what shall I remember? What of my young womanhood, my wifehood, and motherhood? Work has been a big part of my life. Of that, what memories will linger, what nightmares haunt me forever? How will you know who you are if I do not or cannot tell you the story of your past?

(Magona 1990: Preface)

In opening the narrative, she affirms the value of this intergenerational continuity which is increasingly under threat of extinction:

Child of the Child of My Child. As ours is an oral tradition I would like you to hear from my own lips what it was like living in the 1940s onwards. What it was like in the times of your great-grandmother, me. However, my people no longer live long lives. Generations no longer set eyes on one another. Therefore, I fear I may not live long enough to do my duty to you, to let you know who you are and whence you are. So, I will keep, for you, my words in this manner.

(Magona 1990: 7)

Endearing and intimate, this is the kind of opening that compels one to sit down and listen, because here unfolds an important generational her-story. The opening of the narrative also sets the scene for us, in that it promises us a journey into a revelation of our own identity, as Magona says: “to let you know who you are and whence you are” (p. 7).

Magona maintains this link between generations by intermittently intimating dialogue with her audience, by addressing them directly, as in the beginning of Chapter 2 where she says, “Then, my child, your great-great-grandmother, my mother ...” and later in Chapter 4 when she says: “What then, of my childhood, child of the child of my child?” It is this recognition that unless she tells the story, the story that begets her children and her children’s children, she would die having failed to fulfil her obligation as a grandmother and mother, namely that of recorder of and mouthpiece for progeny’s stories. The need for passing this knowledge from generation to generation is rather urgent. Far from being romantic and idealistic, it also provides necessary ground for the preservation of tradition and culture, as well as help to shape one’s identity. For this reason, it also emerges as a gesture of defiance to the authorities whose mandate had been to obliterate all traces of the narrator’s history through poverty, forced resettlements and migratory labour systems.

By contrast, in Laurretta Ngcobo’s *Cross of Gold* (1981), we come to learn of this role of recorder of progeny’s stories posthumously. Mandla and Temba, the two sons of one of the book’s protagonists, come to know what their

mother has written to them only after her death. Their mother, Sindisiwe Zikode dies after sustaining a bullet wound on her thigh on the night she clandestinely goes across the border from her exile in Botswana into South Africa, in order to help her sons cross into what she hopes is freedom. Just as death crumples the hopes and lives of people like her, so do Mandla and Temba receive a pile of crumpled and soiled papers which were buried in their mother's suitcase – their mother's story – their story. What Mandla, the eldest son, reads at the top of the pile, written in bold handwriting, is: "TO MY HUSBAND AND OUR CHILDREN." He reads on:

I cannot say this is a letter, for I shall not post it; at least not yet. I write this to you, Siphso, and to you, my children, for I feel you all deserve an explanation. I do not know if we shall ever meet again, though I shall devote everything I am capable of towards our family reunion – to reunite my family, to live again and be deserving of that life. I am writing in the searing heat of exile. Events are crowding in and I fear I may forget the occasions that are the sum total of my life since we parted, but I fear I may forget the strange all-powerful emotions that accompany them. So when we meet somewhere, somehow, some day, I shall have recorded both the events and the feelings as untarnished as they are now.

(Ngcobo 1981: 19)

It is of dire importance that the writer keeps this intergenerational and family link alive. Her yearning for a family reunion is pitted against the uncertainty of life as prescribed by the experience of exile which separates people from each other. For now, she has to contend with what the separation of exile offers. She can only hope that one day they shall meet, and she will be able to continue the story face to face.

Although not as elaborately as Magona, Noni Jabavu too employs a similar approach of addressing the reader and establishing intergenerational communication. Like Magona, Jabavu assumes the role of public grandmother who pays tribute to her target audience, young South Africa, the generation which, until only a few years ago, was dismissed and referred to as the "lost generation". This is the generation that actually set Soweto on fire on 16 June 1976, and irrevocably swayed world attention on the then South Africa. In her preface to the 1982 Ravan Writers Series to the *Ochre People*, Jabavu says to this generation:

I hope that in reading this book which one of your "grandmothers" wrote long ago and far away, you will see how vastly you have progressed and brought us

forward from the views we beheld when we were your age in those times long-gone. We were scarcely peering, even dimly; whereas you see things clearly now.

(Jabavu 1982: Preface)

While Jabavu sees this clarity of thought and action in the June 1976 generation, Miriam Makeba assumes those very characteristics herself as she prologues her collaborative autobiography *My Story* as follows:

I LOOK AT AN ANT AND I SEE myself: a native South African, endowed by nature with a strength much greater than my size so I might cope with the weight of a racism that crushes my spirit. I look at a bird and I see myself: a native South African, soaring above the injustices of apartheid on wings of pride, the pride of a beautiful people. I look at a stream and I see myself: a native South African, flowing irresistibly over hard obstacles until they become smooth and, one day, disappear – flowing from an origin that has been forgotten toward an end that will never be. If given a choice, I would have certainly selected to be what I am: one of the oppressed instead of the oppressors. But, in truth, I had no choice. And in a sad world where so many are victims, I can take pride that I am also a fighter. My life, my career, every song I sing and every appearance I make, are bound up with the plight of my people. I have been denied my home. We have been denied our land. I have watched my family diminish as relatives are killed by soldiers. We have seen our best blood spilled in Sharpeville, Soweto, Crossroads. I am in exile on the outside. We are in exile on the inside.

(Makeba 1988: 1)

In this prologue, Makeba develops another theme foregrounded by Ngcobo and other Black women writers, namely the ways in which discrimination and oppression damage those relations between people that make them human. She does this by juxtaposing the existential situation of being an oppressor with being an oppressed; the duality and tension of “us” and “them”, a result of colonial experience, which thrives on the dichotomy. That she would rather be an oppressed than an oppressor is because no pride can ever be derived from being an oppressor. She recognises her ability to rise above the ashes of oppression. She may never remember her past, as in where her people come from, but she knows that her life is like a stream that can only get clearer and clearer during its course.

Makeba’s narrative is a series of juxtapositions and extremities. Early in the book she tells how, as a young girl, a friend of hers is struck by lightning on their way home from school, and dies on the spot. Her friend’s body is charred black. Makeba runs all the way home, gripped by an indescribable fear. She gets home and the door is closed. Very strange, she thinks. Out of fear, she knocks the door down, and what does she find? She recalls:

A GESTURE OF DEFIANCE: ...

Below me, lying on a mat on the floor, is my older sister Mizpah. She is covered with blood. Sweaty strands of hair fall over her face as she looks at me, too exhausted to speak. I am so terrified I cannot talk or even scream. A woman I do not know is here. A squirming, newborn baby is in her arms. The woman is a midwife. My sister has just given birth. The world has lost a life and has gained a life almost at the same moment. I have witnessed both.

(Makeba 1988: 16-17)

A similar event takes place later on in her life. The scene is April 1968. The United States of America announces the assassination of Dr Martin Luther King. Makeba had had an opportunity to meet him, and, like a lot of people in America and around the world, is shocked into muteness and crying. When she gets back to her hotel room, a telephone call comes through for her. It is her only daughter, Bongki, calling from New York. Bongki has just given birth. Makeba is now a grandmother, what can she do? As she says:

I cry. I cry out of sadness and gratitude. I fear for what is happening to our beloved leaders. I am happy that Bongki is well. A great man is dead. A child is born. My head feels so full. I just lie down and let all the confusing feelings roll over me.

(Makeba 1988: 159-160)

Yes, a friend dies, and a sister gives birth to a child; a great man dies and a daughter becomes a new mother. Such is her life, full of contradictions. How does she take it all? Is she alone in this?

We are reminded of Sindisiwe Zikode in Ngcobo's *Cross of Gold* which tells of similar contradictions. Sindisiwe Zikode's fight to see her children into freedom costs her life. What kind of freedom is this that snatches her away from her children at this particular moment? When she realises that she is about to die, Sindisiwe thinks

about her children and why they had to come, only to see her die. What punishment was this; what for; and which God visited parents' punishment on children – had she really sinned to suffer this? She did not fear death as such; she had toyed so often with the idea of dying that she had often pictured herself actually welcoming death. But she had thought of only one kind of death – dying while resisting the tyranny of oppression of her people; certainly not so defencelessly while running away from the Boers who had made her whole life, and those of others, such a misery. She had dreamt of heroic death, not this.

(Ngcobo 1981: 19)

What kind of woman dreams of heroic death? It is a woman who has faced these harsh realities of being black and female in apartheid South Africa. (For an analogous question regarding America's slave dream of death, see Gilroy 1993: Chapters 2 & 6). It is the experience of sometimes being ridiculed by one's own family and society. Magona knows what it means to make all the sacrifices as a woman, wife and mother, only to be called an *isidikazi*, simply because her husband chose to desert her. *She* carries the stigma. When she dreams of a heroic death, it is because no other death will befit her. What kind of woman dreams of heroic death? It is a woman who has vowed to resist this abominable system by whatever means necessary. Makeba, for example, does it by song and dance. She sings and tells about the evil of apartheid in every appearance she makes, so much so that she is unofficially dubbed South Africa's ambassador in the countries she visits, especially, the African states. Again, what kind of woman dreams of heroic death? It is a woman who has come to the understanding that exile – that condition of capricious physical freedom forever assaulted by mental and emotional torture – could never offer her any spiritual security or safety. In a country riddled with every possible form of unrest, exile becomes one of the tangible daily realities, the ultimate of which is death.

Exile is a beast with many faces confronting these different women in many piercing ways and is another central theme in their narratives. Sindisiwe, in Ngcobo's *Cross of Gold*, is in exile just across the border in Botswana. Her husband, Siphon, is already exiled, as he is locked in prison many miles away in Robben Island. What guarantee is there that Sindisiwe will not be picked up as well? Her children, Mandla and Temba come to experience exile in that both their parents are away, and they have to rely on their grandparents for their upbringing. Likewise, Makeba tells of her own exile in the United States. She comes to feel its separating sting when she is refused a passport to visit her family and bury her mother. She is to cross many borders, feted by kings and celebrities alike, before her own country embraces her again, and she gets the opportunity to visit her mother's grave. As she says: "I am in exile on the outside. We are in exile on the inside" (Makeba 1988: 3).

Not surprisingly, many of these books tell of a pain that lingers on. This pain however, largely fails to numb our emotions as the zest for life increases with each passing day. Magona illustrates this quite effectively:

Siziwe, our beloved sister, died and was buried from this house. She died during my first year at school. I was still too young to grasp the meaning of the event fully. But I know that it was the very first time I saw father cry. And, although I didn't know exactly why, that made me also cry. It is here, too, I learned to read my first word – VASELINE!

(Magona 1990: 23)

Magona's childlike simplicity, bewilderment and innocence in this passage breaks the yoke of the heaviness of the moment. The heaviness of the mixture of death and the accompanying confusion brought to a young, impressionable mind in seeing an adult she holds in high regard cry, is broken by the assertion: "It is here, too, I learned to read my first word – VASELINE!" An accomplishment as in reading a word for the first time is set against the crush of death and all its mysteries. Not only does the ability to read the word give her confidence, the lubricant itself serves as it is expected, to soothe and give appearances of health and wellbeing in a confusing and hurting world.

A look at the South African literary output of the 1960s and 1970s reveals a distinct absence of writing by some sectors of the population. This paucity in the country's publication record was due to the passing and enforcement of such ridiculous censorship legislation as the Suppression of Communism Act and the Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963. Being in possession of material that the government deemed indecent, obscene, offensive or harmful to public morals, was a criminal offence. Writing, publishing or circulating any material or ideas thought to be critical of the apartheid policy was undesirable in the eye of the then government. Anecdotes of how the police barged into people's homes at awkward hours in search of banned material abound. Under such conditions, some writings were to incur the wrath of the powers that be more than others. It is thus not surprising that the first novel by a black South African woman, Miriam Tlali's *Muriel at Metropolitan*, was published in the country only in 1976. It is quite safe to assume that her compatriot, Noni Jabavu's *Drawn in Color* (1961), saw the light of day simply because it was published in London, where Jabavu had been staying for three decades. Such were the effects of legislation at the time. The legislation silenced a whole section of the population of the country, thus closing the window into the narratives and the her-stories. Today however, we have the pleasure and privilege to peruse and enjoy the ways in which a few women, in a gesture of defiance, moved from silence into speech, in the face of silencing forces, as bell hooks would say.

I would like to conclude my paper by citing a poem by dramatist, poet and activist Gcina Mhlophe (Mhlope in Rule, Aitken & Van Dyk 1993: 2-4). This poem, "Praise to Our Mothers", celebrates the life of women from diverse backgrounds who dared to defy and speak out against the oppressive legislation of the day but who did not all get to write about it. They crossed whatever racial and social barriers that existed and gave of their time and possessions to make South Africa a better country for all. The poem encourages the younger generation also addressed by Magona and Jabavu to appreciate the heritage passed down to them by their mothers. As Ellen Kuzwayo believes in her dedication of her short story collection, *Sit Down and Listen* (1990), that this generation has a duty of commitment towards an

education and to the national struggle, so they can earn their own liberation and that of their people. Mhlophe's poem serves as an encouragement to the younger generation to stand for the beliefs and ideals of selflessness, pride and commitment that their mothers stood for and which we see so poignantly reflected in the narratives by Jabavu, Makeba, Ngcobo, and Magona above.

PRAISE TO OUR MOTHERS

If the moon were to shine tonight
To light up my face and show off my proud form
With beads around my neck and shells in my hair
And a soft easy flowing dress with the colours of Africa
If I were to stand on top of a hill
And raise my voice in praise
Of the women in my country
Who have worked throughout their lives
Not for themselves, but for the very life of all Africans
Who would I sing my praises to?
I could quote all the names
Yes, but where do I begin?!

Do I begin with the ones
Who gave their lives
So that we others may live a better life
The Lillian Ngoyis, the Victoria Mxenges
The Ruth Firsts
Or the ones who lost their men
To Robben Island and their children to exile
But carried on fighting
The MaMotsoaledis, the MaSisulus
The Winnie Mandelas?

Or maybe I would sing praises to
The ones who have had the resilience
And cunning of a desert cobra
Priscilla Jana, Fatima Meer, Beauty Mkhize
Or the ones who turned deserts into green vegetable gardens
From which our people can eat
Mamphela Ramphela, Ellen Khuzwayo

Or would the names of the women
Who marched, suffered solitary confinement
and house arrests

A GESTURE OF DEFIANCE: ...

Helen Joseph, Amina Cachalia, Sonya Bunting, Dorothy Nyembe,
Thoko Mngoma, Florence Matomela, Bertha Mkhize,
How many more names come to mind
As I remember the Defiance Campaign
The fights against Beer Halls that suck the strength of our men
Building of alternative schools away from Bantu Education
And the fight against pass laws

Maybe, maybe, I would choose a name
Just one special name that spells out light
That of Mama Nokukhanya Luthuli
Maybe if I were to call out her name
From the top of the hill
While the moon is shining bright;
No — Ku — Kha — nya!
NO — KU — KHA — NYA!!!
Maybe my voice would be carried by the wind
To reach all the other women
Whose names are not often mentioned
The ones who sell oranges and potatoes
So their children can eat and learn
The ones who scrub floors and polish executive desktops
In towering office blocks
While the city sleeps
The ones who work in overcrowded hospitals
Saving lives, cleaning bullet wounds and delivering new babies
And the ones who have given up
Their places of comfort and the protection of their skin colour
Marian Sparg, Sheena Duncan,
Barbara Hogan, Jenny Schreiner.
And what of the women who are stranded in the homelands
With a baby in the belly and a baby on the back
While their men are sweating in the bowels of the earth?

May the lives of all these women
Be celebrated and made to shine
When I cry out Mama Nokukhanya's name
NO — KU — KHA — NYA!!!
And we who are young, salute our mothers
Who have given us
The heritage of their Queendom!!!

(Mhlope in Rule, Aitken & Van Dyk 1993: 2-4)

Notes

1. This is the slightly altered opening address given to a graduate course “Writing the Self – Writing the Other: South Africa and Postcolonial Writing” offered in the English Seminar of Zürich University, 7-13 June 2001.
2. For an overview literary history of Southern African in general as opposed to women’s writing in particular, see Chapman (1996).
3. For the seven aspects of the novel he postulates, see Forster 1974.
4. For this background, see Boyce Davies 1994; Henderson 1995; Wall 1989; Watts 1989.

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