Intimacy, sadness-as-courage and post-apartheid disillusionment in Nhlanhla P. Maake's *Mangolo a Nnake*

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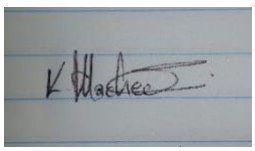
Declaration:

I declare that this research report is my unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts at University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.



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Khumo Mochechane

22 March 2024

Dedication

To Dr Stephen Mochechane

I deeply miss your wit and banter.
I imagine you would have read this over a cold glass of Coke,
while asking when the PhD is coming.
I look forward to your feedback *kwelizayo*.

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Abstract

In this thesis, I analyse Nhlanhla P. Maake's 1999 novella, *Mangolo a Nnake*. While *Mangolo* readily constitutes apartheid literature, I make a discussion around its prescient nature; that is to say, the ways in which it predicts post-apartheid neocolonialism and 'ruined time'. The overarching subject matter being black female self-actualisation, I explore Professor Roger Coulibaly's question, "What do African women need in order to write?", making a case for the responses *space*, *time* and *affective prompting*. The broad subject of psychosocial support, female solidarity and female social capital is also discussed in line with the ways in which sadness sometimes births the courage to initiate and maintain self-actualisation. By way of close reading of the novella, I discuss various literary devices that are able to cultivate intimacy in a reader. The reader of an epistolary novel can be considered an 'eavesdropper', and I show the ways in which literary 'eavesdropping' makes way for simulation with a literary character to take place as abstract spectator – that is to say, as reader. I also discuss psychosocial support vis-á-vis female solidarity as an additional need for black women writers. These sometimes find expression by way of storytelling and humour. The latter two are explored in this thesis for their therapeutic and healing abilities. I also read Ntshebo's disappointment and hurt as allegorical of the larger disappointment of the post-apartheid nation as a result of neocolonialism. A running trope throughout this thesis is the ways in which the concept of the 'New Woman' found place and proliferation under the apartheid regime.

Keywords: intimacy; 'New Woman'; disillusionment; epistolary form; 'ruined time'; female solidarity; female social capital; self-actualisation

Introduction

Synopsis and background

Nhlanhla Maake's *Mangolo a Nnake* is an epistolary novella set in 1990s Thokoza. Through his protagonist, Ntshebo, her husband, Molemi and her sister, Mmasetjhaba, Maake details commonplace household occurrences as they unfold within the civil unrest of the early 1990s Thokoza that took place as a result of political differences and tribal wars. Drawing from the insights of Gary Kynoch (2013), one can observe that the civil unrest in 1990s Thokoza was owed to the clashing of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) with supporters of the African National Congress (ANC). Kynoch has been in the practice of interviewing those involved in the socio-political turbulence of 1990s Thokoza, and he informs us that "Inkatha was responsible for much of the violence," by way of their state security units known as the 'third force', and "the co-opted impis of the Inkatha Freedom Party," but also that "ANC-affiliated militants also conducted murderous campaigns" (283). I also use the valuable insights of Timothy Wright who describes post-apartheid South Africa as being given to a "ruined time" (198). I form the argument in this thesis for the reasons why and the ways in which the post-apartheid ANC government is responsible for this "ruined time".

The Victorian Woman and the New Woman

An element that typified the Victorian era – i.e. around 1820 to 1914 – was the treatment of women as secondary to men in society. Economic advancement was particularly difficult for women during this time when pursued through any avenue other than marriage into a wealthy family. While society did provide room for working class women during the Victorian era, "[w]omen were very restricted within their classes and were even more restricted in the work place" (Barrett, 1). Catherine Gallagher observes that "[w]hatever their social rank, in the eyes of the law women were second class citizens" (57). Women's different roles in society were dictated to and for them by men. The power and authority to do this was afforded them by way of their 'first-class citizenship'.

Women's second-class status in the eyes of men, then, placed them in a position to be dictated to both in the workplace as well as in their households. Victorians believed that a woman's acceptable and suitable place was within a household, occupying herself with domestic tasks. "The women were expected to marry, have children, and keep a nice household," Barrett observes (1). In her thesis "Victorian Women and their Working Roles", Barrett discusses novels in which women's lives are set in the Victorian era and observes that these struggle to make it through each day without being agitated or provoked by men. She also echoes and mentions Wanda Neff's observation that "[t]he worker with her own earnings was, accordingly, an affront against nature and the protective instincts of man" (Neff, 37).

The black woman's desire to work was one that was met with great repression under the South African apartheid regime, repression with remnants of and lucidly influenced by the Victorian Age. Liezel Lues highlights that,

> Although the stage was set for transformation and change early in 1990, the history of South Africa had left deep-rooted traces of discrimination on the grounds of race and gender. The Black Administration Act, Act 38 of 1927 stated that: "a Black woman who is a partner in a customary union and who is living with her husband shall be deemed to be a minor and her husband shall be deemed to be her guardian" (Robinson, 1995:461; Abrahams, 1997:4; Budlender, 1998:11) (2005).

Apartheid acts played a great role when it came to keeping women oppressed under an organisational system that had as its crucial tenets directives that kept in accordance with Victorian bureaucracy. Lues goes on to highlight that traditional African societies maintained a visible margin between women and men's duties, and that within this margin, African women traditionally raised children and performed domestic tasks, while the men in the households would attend to the households' financial upkeep. This resulted in the women playing a very minor role in the decision-making both in their households and in the community at large. Formal education only became obligatory for black South African women during the late 1980s (see DeVries 1991 and Santho 1995). Lues proceeds to highlight that even this education was limited to nursing and teaching schools, while mathematics and technical schools were primarily reserved for the men. Teaching material favoured young men over women, portraying men as fit for leadership and active roles in the economy, while women were portrayed as passive and were encouraged to adopt more traditional and domestic roles. Maake is particularly skilful at portraying the ways in which Victorian tenets regarding the treatment of women remain

deeply ingrafted in Ntshebo's husband, Molemi, as seen in his refusal throughout the novella for Ntshebo to work. One of the reasons *Mangolo a Nnake* is a text worthy of intricate study is the lucidity of Maake's didactic ability, that is to say, how he is able to capture and encapsulate within sixty pages the trickling down of Victorian perspectives, principles and behaviours into the apartheid regime.

Mangolo depicts the Victorian era's influence of the South African apartheid regime, along with the introduction of The New Woman in South Africa. The term 'New Woman', while popularised by Henry James, was coined during a debate between the late pro-feminist writer Sarah Grand and late anti-feminist Ouida (Maria Louise Ramé), and makes reference to a woman who is independent, sexually autonomous and well-read. These traits are in vivid opposition to Victorian principles, and the New Woman can indeed be said to have risen up as a contestation of oppressive Victorian principles such as limited education and job opportunities for women, and limited opportunities generally to improve women's quality of life without connection to any man. The third chapter of this thesis explores the rise of the New Woman in apartheid South Africa, and how the South African New Woman arose as a contestation of apartheid principles seeking to repress women's pursuit of independence.

Female social capital

Alongside the propagation of the idea of the New Woman, this thesis explores how Maake alludes to the occasioning of female social capital in townships. Homelands and townships themselves were effectuated as a result of growing industrialisation and urban settlements among the black population. The apartheid government sought to cause tribal division amongst the black population, masking their malintent as concern for African self-actualisation. Homelands and townships were direly destitute, and this caused – along with conflict over resource ownership – solidarity over overthrowing the regime as a whole. One witnesses solidarity between Ntshebo and her neighbours when she is faced with hardship and affliction. By way of this solidarity, Maake writes female social capital into *Mangolo*, alluding to how experiencing and overcoming hardship alongside one another during the apartheid regime yielded commiseration and loyalty, and thereby increased female social capital.

Maake includes a 'forced removal' of sorts in *Mangolo*. Ntshebo is chased away from her matrimonial home by a love interest her husband, Molemi, has. It appears, however, that the girl is only there for monetary gain in the form of the little money and assets Molemi has. Her basis for instructing Ntshebo to leave is, of course, that Ntshebo is an obstruction to her money-making strategy coming to fruition. Forming an allegory within an allegory, Maake draws the reader to give thought to the ways in which the apartheid government enforced internal displacement so as to secure their own political and economic standing; that is to say, that they might maintain econo-political supremacy over the black population. One can also form the reading that Maake offers commentary here on the 'New Woman' within the context of apartheid industrialisation. Molemi's girlfriend advances her own financial interests at the expense of another woman.

Disillusionment and the birth of a 'new' South Africa

Maake expertly forms a post-apartheid South African allegory in *Mangolo*. Post-apartheid South Africa is typified by disillusionment. Timothy Wright eloquently explores this disillusionment in his essay titled "Ruined time and post-revolutionary allegory in Nthikeng Mohlele's *Small Things*". Wright expounds on David Scott's observations on "emancipationist redemption" and "anticolonial revolution" and relates them to post-apartheid South Africa, discussing what he terms the "ruined time" – that is, a time that is joyfully anticipated but woefully mourned even as it comes to pass due to its absence of elements it was expected to possess – with which post-apartheid South Africans grapple. I put it forward that the promise of egalitarianism being met with the manifestation of neocolonialism is the primary source of the disillusionment that so riddles post-apartheid South Africa. Still in the third chapter, this thesis discusses how in synchrony with the impending 'new' South Africa, Ntshebo begins to explore herself as a 'New Woman'. She initiates multiple business endeavours, much to her husband's dismay, and she wilfully moves out of her matrimonial home and finds a place of her own, so as to be financially self-sufficient rather than dependent on her emotionally and economically abusive husband. Through his crafting of Ntshebo's independent and self-sufficient character,

Maake draws the reader to consider and reflect on post-apartheid efforts to grant the black South African woman occupational opportunities withheld from her under the regime. Programmes and initiatives such as the Black Economic Empowerment programme were meant to uplift the post-apartheid black population's socio-economic status. This thesis explores the failure of many of these initiatives and how they did not differ much in their racial, gender and class distribution from the tenets which typified the apartheid era.

Psychosocial support and female solidarity

The female solidarity that Ntshebo experiences does not only come in the form of that which her neighbours offer, but it is primarily displayed by her sister, Mmasetjhaba. When Ntshebo decides to pursue opportunities at generating her own income, she needs a measure of start-up capital, capital that her sister generously offers without hesitation. Mmasetjhaba's support can also be counted psychological, and counters the psychological and emotional abuse Ntshebo experiences from Molemi. The kind of psychological abuse Molemi subjects Ntshebo to is such things as asking her what skill she thinks she could possibly learn now that she is over the age of thirty. Mmasetjhaba's responding by way of funding her sister's clothing and sewing business is reflective of the faith she has in her as one who is able to generate her own income and is a tacit yet distinct expression of the positive beliefs she holds regarding her sister's business capabilities. Omofolabo Ajayi-Soyinka's discussion on Mariama Bâ's Ramatoulaye as displaying a feminism that "supports self-fulfilment but not self-centredness" (169) has been most helpful in my reading of Mmasetjhaba. Mmasetjhaba is not opposed to Ntshebo's business pursuits in any way, but rather contributes to her sister's self-actualisation.

This thesis also briefly explores the transformative power of affect. "[M]y friends drink too much/ like sadness is the place where courage begins" (42) – a profound quote from Danai Mupotsa's poem "my friends drink too much" – is the inspiring quote of this thesis' second chapter, and I relate this excerpt to Ntshebo and how in spite of (or as a result of) the sadness in her life, she begins to grow in courage. Ntshebo shows great ease at voicing indignation and dissatisfaction, although there are points at which one would expect that

she speak against the maltreatment receives, yet she keeps mum. These are instances where Molemi comes back home visibly returning from a moment of infidelity, or when he is meant to be there for the birth of their child and he disappears without explanation of his whereabouts on his return. I discuss these instances of silence through Nthabiseng Motsemme's "The Mute Always Speak". Ntshebo does indeed speak by way of her moving out and other such instances of independence, showing that sadness is, indeed, the birthplace of courage.

Let it also be noted that all translations in this thesis from Sesotho to English are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

Chapter 1: Literary devices and the cultivation of intimacy

Introduction

The apartheid regime of South Africa ended as a result of multi-party negotiations between 1990 and 1993. During the final years of the regime, in the wake of the nation's transition to democracy, South African writers acted in response to the ubiquitous political unrest and its effects on the people of the nation by narrativizing state-imposed violence. This genre of writing has been dubbed 'apartheid literature' and precedes post-apartheid literature which is typified by questions around reconciliation and nation-building (Blyn, 2001). Popular texts that constitute apartheid literature are K.P.D. Maphalla's *Tshepo le metswalle* (1982), his 1982 *Tshiu tseo*, Alan Paton's 1948 novel, *Cry Freedom*, and Bessie Head's 1968 novel, *When Rain Clouds Gather*. While some texts that constitute post-apartheid literature are J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) and Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun* (1998) to name just a few.

Nhlanhla Maake's *Mangolo a Nnake* is a text that explores apartheid in its final stages and reprehends the regime as a whole. *Mangolo*, as befits apartheid and post-apartheid literature, draws attention to questions around nation-building, though, in this regard it can be said to focus on black women's positionality and situatedness in the building of a democratic and post-apartheid South Africa. This research is interested in what African women need to write; the necessity of isolation in epistolarity; muzzled voices in romantic heterosexual relationships; the capacity for sadness to birth courage as well as psychosocial support in female friendship, and how all these work together for the cultivation of female self-actualisation in the midst of domestic and state oppression. This first chapter identifies and explores isolation and literary techniques as conceptual tools that initiate and encourage a process of 'identification' with a written text and its author and thereby cultivate intimacy on the part of the reader with a text's narrators and sometimes a text's author too.

Literary devices and intimacy

This chapter introduces Ntshebo's pronounced interest in the literary. This is as a starting point to exploring Ntshebo as a writing character. I seek to explore the extent to which literary techniques are able to cultivate intimacy in and through the epistolary form, intimacy with the narrator, experienced particularly on the part of the reader. A strong body of scholarship exists on epistolary prose as it dons women characters as narrators. I am reminded of seminal texts in African literature like Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre* (1979). Suzanne Marie Ondrus writes extensively on the *female writing character*. "This categorization of female writing characters," she writes,

> includes novels that have any mention of a female character writing, as well as novels with a writer as a primary protagonist; it also includes male authors writing about African female writing characters. The African female writing character trajectory emerged from mere scenes of women characters writing and now features women writers as characters whose prime action is writing. Calixthe Beyala's C'est le soleil qui m'a brûlée (1987) (The Sun Hath Looked Upon Me,1996) includes a few brief scenes of the female protagonist's desire to write, her acts of writing, and her imagination. Agaat (2004) by Marlene Van Niekerk and The Mirror by Lynn Freed 1997 are first person narrations in the form of a diary (2).

Ntshebo is a writing woman whose interest is in the literary. We see this, amongst other things, in her creative use of language. Ntshebo has extensive knowledge of literary devices and we see these in the letters she writes Mmasetjhaba. In one of the instances in which she details the apartheid violence in Thokoza, she writes, "Ho thwe madi a kopana le lerole, ka moo ho neng ho dubehile ka teng" (4) – "It is said that blood and dust combined, the way things were so deeply kneaded together". She uses a word that translates to "kneaded" to describe heightened violence in the community. She also writes of "blood and dust combining" to describe human deaths. Of other people, who later would become casualties, she writes, "Lefu ba le tadimile mahlong, le ba tjametse le lona" (5) – "They looked Death right in the eye; it, too, stared right back at them". This personification of death is illustrative of Ntshebo's literarily creative mind. Ntshebo later asks Mmasetjhaba for a supply of Sesotho books. She asks specifically for "[tse hatiswang] ke Morija le Mazenod… empa o a se tseba Sesotho sa mona hore se ngolwa jwang. Nna ke utlwa se sa nkgahle le ho nkgahla" (18) – "…[those printed] by Morija and Mazenod… you

know how our Sesotho here is written". Ntshebo's knowledge of publishing houses only further illustrates her literary creative abilities and proclivities.

Suzanne Marie Ondrus poses the question, "Can emotionally engaging texts that provide access to the intimate sphere of creation, intellect and sentiment, produce change in readers and thereby possibly change society?" (1). To this I venture the answer that they, indeed, can. The epistolary form automatically renders the reader an eavesdropper. The protagonist's use of tone and diction resemble that of a real-time conversation and this causes the reader to feel at ease with proffering their own opinion due to a kind of simultaneous spectatorship and identification that takes place. The reader thereby forms part of the conversation themselves. I also posit, however, that the epistolary makes way for simulation with the character to take place on the part of the reader. In the case of the epistolary – as opposed to, say, third person narration – the reader can take the above position of *spectating* or that of *identifying* with or as the narrator themselves. In another context, Keith Oatley argues that, "[s]tream of consciousness allows the reader into the very most intimate moment-by-moment sequences of a character's thoughts, and is a … means of identification" (Oatley 445). He further notes that, "the meeting of identification is a species of *empathy*, in which we do not merely sympathize with a person, we become that person" (446)(my italics). Oatley's observations resonate with *Mangolo* in that Ntshebo employs colloquial diction, causing the reader to feel as though Ntshebo's words are addressed directly to them. This is a skilful device to employ on the author's part, as it brings about nimble identification with a narrator, identification which doubles as Oatley's 'species of empathy' in "which we do not merely sympathize with that person," to use Oatley's words, "but we become that person" (446). Oatley's posited empathetic identification is then able to initiate behaviour simulated with that of the narrator, that is to say, "[t]he act of simulation expressly functions on readers assuming characters' goals" (Ondrus 8).

Therefore, Ntshebo's pronounced interest in the literary leads us to believe that all that forms her subject matter, her diction, her tone as well as her vocabulary are not chosen arbitrarily, but are employed with the intention of cultivating intimacy with the reader for the purposes of conscientizing them with regard to the importance of the rise of the New Woman at the same time as that of a New South Africa.

"What do African women need in order to write?"

Mangolo's protagonist Ntshebo is a female writing character whose connection to the process of writing traverses mere pragmatism – that is to say, goes beyond writing for the sake of writing, or for purposes related solely to duty, and is energised partially by pronounced interest in the literary. Ntshebo states the initial reason for the decision to write as the pain she experiences being in the thick of apartheid violence as well as varied kinds of violence in her personal life and homespace. She writes, "Ke ngola tjena, ke diphateng, ha ke na le motho ya ntlhokomelang. *Pelo ya ka e dutla madi ka moo ke sa kgoneng ho hlalosa*…" (1)(my emphasis). Which translates to, "I am in bed as I write this, with no one to even take care of me. My heart bleeds in a way that I cannot describe…". The reasons she writes her sister, Mmasetjhaba, become compounded as apartheid violence intensifies and as the order and calm of Ntshebo's personal life become increasingly disrupted.

Ondrus' sentiments and findings on the epistolary narrative have helped me greatly in the putting together of this project. She writes on African women's epistolary narratives, arguing that "the detailed characterization of the writing narrators cultivates intimacy, making these works worthy of serious literary consideration" (i). She writes that her interest in the epistolary form and African Literature as a writing category was informed in part by Université d'Ougadougou Professor Roger Coulibaly: "While discussing Mariama Bâ's epistolary text, *Une si longue lettre*," she writes, "[Prof. Roger Coulibaly] asked, "what do African women need in order to write?"" (1). I attempt my own answer to this question in this chapter, offering space, time and affect as responses.

Virginia Woolf's adage that in order for a woman to write, she "must have money and a room of her own" easily forms what might be the most widely held opinion on women's writing needs. Iranian writer and researcher Atoussa S. writing for the European VLBI Network posits that

> [t]he room is the symbol of financial security, time and individual freedom. Before the 20th century, the majority of women, even in industrial nations, were deprived of basic requirements that enabled them to write. Writing was considered an extravagant activity that belonged mainly to those aristocrat women with strong social connections who could get their works published (1).

Ursula LeGuin in her 1988 non-fiction essay, "The Fisherwoman's Daughter", revisits Woolf's claims that a woman ought to have money and a room of her own in order to write. LeGuin's essay considers the struggle to combine writing and motherhood. She reflects on Margaret Drabble's *The Millstone* in which we see the narrator unaware that her eight-month old baby is eating her flatmate's novel manuscript (see Liverpool Biennial 2019)[1]. This scene can be read as "symbolic representation of the dilemmas women face in being forced to choose between writing or having children, with the implication that one would necessarily kill the other" (1). Ann Aronson mentions LeGuin, correctly observing that LeGuin does acknowledge "the gross inequity in the writing situations of male and female writers" (282), but mentioning also that LeGuin argues that there is in fact no need for women to have *rooms of their own* – that is, financial security and freedom, along with other material conditions that are devoid of household distractions – in order to write.

Here I read Ntshebo through Ann Aronson and Ursula LeGuin's perspectives. Ntshebo's initial reason for beginning to write to her sister, Mmasetjhaba, is the emotional turmoil she experiences as a result of being an eye-witness to the varied kinds of apartheid violence that take place in 1990s Thokoza, as well as the abuse that transpires in her home space. She begins her opening letter relating the pain she feels for the child she has just lost. This is not her first pregnancy, nor is it the first of her children whose life she has not been able to experience at length. She writes, "Aubuti Molemi o ne a le siyo, ha ke tla utlwa hore nako e se e atamela" (1) – "Aubuti Molemi was not home when I felt that I would soon go into labour". She goes on to write,

> … pelo yaka e ne e nahana ha ke ne ke kgolehile kgetlo la pele, esitana le la bobedi. Ka la pele… ka ha o tseba, ho ile ha hlaha ngwanana, empa a ikela ho eso fete le hora, dingaka tsa re o hlahile a kgathetse, hoja ba mpa ba mo ntsha ka ho mpuwa (1-2)
>
> … my heart was thinking about my first pregnancy, even the second, for that matter. The first time around… as you know, I gave birth to a girl, but she left us before we could even be with her an hour; doctors said she was born tired, and they regretted not having done a Caesarean".

About the third child she writes,

[1] https://www.artinliverpool.com/events/liverpool-biennial-the-liquid-club-8-the-fisherwomans-daughter-by-ursula-le-guin/

> Ha ke sheba moalong, ka fumana ho se le sephuthelwana sa mothwana. Ka tseba hantle hore bomadimabe ba ka bo mphetile hape. Ke ile ka lla ka ba ka itshedisa. Aubuti Molemi o ne a itse o tla tla mpona sepetlele, ka mora hore ba mo letsetse mosebetsing, empa a se ke a fihla (2)
>
> When I looked on the bed, there was not even a small, little bundle. And I knew very well that my bad luck had followed me again. I cried until I comforted myself. Aubuti Molemi had said he would come see me in hospital after he was called back to work, but he never came.

Ntshebo's vivid recollection of all three of her lost pregnancies takes place when she writes to Mmasetjhaba. She gives intricate descriptions that rouse aural as well as visual imagery, allowing Mmasetjhaba a glimpse into her mind and heart, that is to say, her very intricately woven interior life. I do imagine, however, that during the birth of Ntshebo's third child, she had been thinking deeply back on her first two pregnancies. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines trauma as "an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident… or natural disaster" (Medical News Today, 2020). I find no definition to be as simple as this – *trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event*. Esther Giller writing for the Sidran Institute finds that "the individual may feel emotionally, cognitively, and physically overwhelmed. The circumstances of the [traumatic] event commonly include abuse of power, betrayal of trust, entrapment, helplessness, pain, confusion, and/or loss" (1). Ntshebo is one of the women LeGuin and Aronson write about. Not directly, of course, but they certainly do write about Ntshebo in the sense that Ntshebo becomes the "materialised" woman they expound on who does not need money or a room of her own to write. I do not do away with Virginia Woolf's adage completely, however. While Woolf writes of a "room" – "the symbol of financial security, time and individual freedom," according to Atoussa S. (1) – I offer the response that the surpassing need is space, the space and the time to write. Space and time can be said to be unable to find definition outside of each other. Encyclopedia Britannica defines space as "a boundless, three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction". Minkowski, too, mentions that

> …[t]he views of space and time which I wish to lay before you have sprung from the soil of experimental physics, and therein lies their strength. They are radical. Henceforth space by itself, and time by itself, are doomed to fade away into mere shadows, and only a kind of union of the two will preserve an independent reality (75).

LibreTexts define time as “change, or the interval over which change occurs”. One can, then, form the conclusion that events and change require space, and that these cannot occur outside of time, causing space and time to find definition through each other.

Space is one thing Ntshebo does have. Ondrus observes that epistolary and diary novel forms employ isolation: “[i]n these genres writing occurs when writers are secluded; the writers write individually, not collaboratively” (44). She writes of isolation as “necessary for writing,” “and as a hallmark of the writing tradition” (ibid 44). Ntshebo’s, however, is not a voluntary isolation. She details her final admission to hospital in her opening letter:

> Aubuti Molemi o ne a itse o tla tla mpona sepetlele, ka mora hoba ba mo letsetse mosebetsing, empa a se ke a fihla. Ke dutse sepetlele matsatsi a mahlano, ba nto ntokolla… ha ke fihla ntlo e bata po! Ke ho ba mong, motho waka a iketse moo a ratang teng… Ha ke sheba dikamoreng, ka bona hantle hore matsatsing ao ke a qetileng sepetlele Aubuti Molemi ha a a ka a robala mona lapeng (2-3).
>
> Aubuti Molemi had said he would come see me in hospital after he was called back to work, but he never came. I stayed in hospital for five days before I was discharged…when I got home, I found the house unbearably cold! The coldness may have been compounded by aloneness, for my person had gone where only he knows… When I checked our bedrooms, I realised that for the duration of my stay in hospital, Aubuti Molemi had not slept at home.

Elizabeth Campbell finds that,

> The letter writer in epistolary fiction is usually isolated, especially in novels in which there is no exchange of letters, and very often when there is an exchange. In fact, the isolation of the writer is essential to the epistolary urge (338).

Along similar lines, Ruth Perry in Campbell finds that the epistolary novel is brought to life through,

> a self-conscious, self-perpetuating process of emotional self examination which gathers momentum and ultimately becomes more important than communicating with anyone outside the room in which one sits alone writing letters" (117).

We are made to understand, then, that isolation is imperative to the process of letter-writing. Ntshebo is afforded space by Molemi’s regular absence. In these moments of isolation, she undertakes emotional self-examination, opening up to her primary reader, Mmasetjhaba, and cultivating intimacy with her.

Aloneness as the space to write

In this home that Ntshebo and Molemi share, Ntshebo experiences what I term non-elective aloneness. That is to say, Molemi's regular absence renders her isolated against her wishes. I distinguish non-elective aloneness from loneliness. Loneliness can be said to be a personal, unpleasant feeling of loss of companionship. This differs from what Ntshebo experiences, as the abstract presence of Mmasetjhaba – that is her presence by way of letter-responses – forms a companionship between her and Ntshebo. Ntshebo comes back to an empty house upon return from hospital and realises that the house has remained unoccupied each day that she has been away. This first letter she writes Mmasetjhaba introduces us to Molemi, and as the novella progresses, we witness his absence both in the household and in Ntshebo's life generally. Ntshebo is *Mangolo's* sole narrator and therefore the only one from whom we get an account of Aubuti Molemi's words, deeds and character traits. There is an instance where the reader is given a brief and light glimpse of Aubuti Molemi in the novella's 'real time'. Ntshebo closes off one of her letters, "Aubuti[2] ke eo o se a kena. Ke tla tlohela mona mme ke mo phomotse, hore ha a kena mosebetsing wa ho lebela motse a be a jele hantle. Ke tla o letsetsa ha mohala o lokile, nnake" (10). This translates as, "There's Molemi now. I will end off here, mama, so I can give him a chance to rest in order for him to have eaten well when he goes patrolling later tonight. I will call you once the phone comes right, my dear sister". We only see him coming back from work, and even then, we are not informed that he says or does anything interesting or worthy of mention in any way. This being the only instance in the novella where we see Aubuti Molemi in the text's 'real time', we are compelled to depend on Ntshebo's accounts of his words and deeds in order to learn of his personality. The first pointer that we are given to his proclivity for dishonesty as well as for absence is found in the first letter. He promises Ntshebo that he will be there when she gives birth to their third child, then he does not show up, nor does he wait for her at home so she can find him there when she returns. One would have hoped he would even nurse her following

[2] The title 'Aubuti' (sometimes spelt 'Oubuti') is said to derive from the Afrikaans, 'ou boet' and directly translates to 'older brother'. This is a term used to show respect when addressing a male person older than the addresser. It is often also used by black South African married women to address their husbands arguably respectfully.

her stay at the hospital, which very likely was taxing emotionally as well as physically. It is a sobering thought that it is likely Aubuti Molemi remains unaware of Ntshebo's miscarriage until he comes back home. At any rate, the foundation he lays out for himself to be received by the reader is one of dishonesty and absence. He gives Ntshebo space – that is to say, she finds herself alone as a result of his absence. Additionally, we are not told by Ntshebo of any explanation that Aubuti Molemi offers regarding his absence. We are, however, given a second pointer to Molemi's regular absence, in the letter that follows, which I reintroduce here. Ntshebo opens her second letter to Mmasetjhaba with the mention that she is alone at home, as Aubuti Molemi has left the house in order to patrol their community. We learn from subsequent letters that Molemi patrols their area with other men in the community, and that this is a regular practice. In her letter dated 1 *Motsheanong* (1 May), Ntshebo informs Mmasetjhaba that,

> Aubuti ha a fihla mona o fihla a kgathetse ho tswa mosebetsing. Ha a qeta ho ja, ha a sa na le nako ya ho phomola, o se a nka dihlomo tsa hae, a kena tseleng. Ba lelera le motse ona bosiu kaofela, ba lebetse hore re se hlaselwe ke batho ba hostele (8).
>
> When *Aubuti* comes back from work, he is always tired. Once he has eaten, he no longer even has time to rest, he simply grabs his weapons and goes on his way. They patrol our area the whole night to protect us from violent hostel dwellers.

Aubuti Molemi purchases a new car as the text progresses. "Ha e le tsa koloi e ntjha tsona," Ntshebo writes,

> …ha ke sa batla le ho bua ka tsona hobane motho wa rona o ntse a le jwalo. Eka o se a qadile le ho nwa jwala, ntho eo a neng a sa e thetse le ho e thetsa. Ha a sa fihle ka nako ke dula ke balabala ka pelo, hobane ha ke tsebe ebang ba diehisitswe mosebetsing kapa o iketse mabakeng a hae, kapa hona hore o hlasetswe ke batho ba hostele a bolawa (14).
>
> As pertains to the new car, I do not even want to talk about it, because our person remains the same. It seems he has even started drinking alcohol – something he never even used to touch. When he does not get back on time, anxiety weighs my heart down, because I do not know whether they are delayed at work or if he has gone to run his own errands, or if he indeed has been attacked and killed by the hostel dwellers.

This is only one instance where Ntshebo details Aubuti Molemi's tendencies to disappear following his purchase of a car, leaving her unaware of and concerned about his whereabouts. In a subsequent letter, Ntshebo mentions that she has developed the skills of a private investigator and jokes that if she were to become one, she would undoubtedly

excel for how skilled she is at detecting and uncovering the truth. “O tla makala hore ntho tsena di kena kae,” she writes, “empa ke hona ho fetoha lefokisi hoo ke neng ke bua ka hona, mme ke a bona hore ha nka fuwa wa bofokisi mosebetsi, nka tswa ka ntlha tse hodimodimo” (26). “You may wonder what these things have to do with anything, but this is what I mean when I say I have turned into a detective. In fact, if I were to be given this job formally, I have no doubt I would do it with effortless excellence”.

When Aubuti Molemi is not at work, he is out patrolling. When he is not patrolling, he either returns home with his underwear and socks turned inside out, giving a lucid impression of infidelity, after the men with whom he patrols have come looking for him at the house, or he leaves saying he is going to look for an electrician to rectify a faulty fuse in the house, then returns five hours later saying the person he was looking for was not there, offering no explanation at all for the remainder of the time he was gone. Molemi is in no way a present character. While Ntshebo would have him be present – we see this in her deep disappointment at Molemi’s absence when she returns from hospital following her stay in hospital to find that he has not been home in almost a week, in the worry and concern that she expresses to Mmasetjhaba overcome her when Molemi is out patrolling – Molemi grants Ntshebo a great deal of space. And in granting her space, he inadvertently grants her time.

Enterprise as black female resistance

Ntshebo writes,

> Ha ke mmolella hore ke batla ho kgutlela mosebetsing, o mpolella hore nka kgutlela jwang… hara dintwa tsena tse ngata tjena. Le teng ha ke mo kopa tjhelete o lla ka hore o ntse a lefa molato wa koloi (21).
>
> When I tell him that I would like to go back to work, he responds by asking me how I can think about going back amidst such great violence. Even then, when I ask him for money, his cry is that he is still paying off the car.

Postmus et. al. define economic/financial abuse as “a deliberate pattern of control in which individuals interfere with their partner’s ability to acquire, use, and maintain economic resources” (2). They go on to inform us of pre-existing scholarship by Postmus,

Plummer and Stylianou (2016) that "suggest[s] that economic abuse involves behaviors that control, exploit, or sabotage an individual's economic resources including employment" (ibid. 2). From the above excerpt we are able to deduce that while Ntshebo, at the time of writing this series of letters is unemployed and has been subjected to non-elective housewifery, it has not always been so. It appears she has been a working woman before. This, we are able to surmise from the beginning of her statement, "Ha ke mmolella hore ke batla ho kgutlela mosebetsing…" – "When I tell him that I would like to go back to work…". She leaves her job assumedly on maternity leave, and perhaps increased risk with the steadily heightening apartheid violence. When she seeks to take up work again, however, following her most recent pregnancy, Aubuti Molemi objects to this, stating that it is too dangerous to be out and about in the midst of such great violence. Molemi's reasoning can be considered flawed and unreliable, as his reasons for objecting to Ntshebo working are inconsistent in nature. Had it been that Molemi was concerned about her safety out of sympathy or commiseration, the probability is that he would not have also made snide comments about her having passed working-age. Ntshebo relates to Mmasetjhaba how Molemi was greatly displeased the day she purchased snacks, intending to sell them to learners at the end of the school day,

> Ke ile ka leka ho reka dinthonyana mme ha bana ba sekolo ba kgefutsa ke tlohe mona ke yo rekisa keiting ya teng. Motho a se ke a ntja ka bohale hle. O re batho ba tla reng ha ba bona mohatsae a dutse keiting tsa dikolo a ntse a rekisa. O bua eka o na le diketekete tsa ditjhelete empa nna ha ke bone letho. Ke se ke bile ke tlohetse le mosebetsinyana oo wa ho rekisa (22).
>
> I bought a few things to start selling to school children during break – did this man not become incandescent with rage? He asked what people will say when they see his wife sitting at the school gate selling. He talks as though he has heaps and heaps of money saved up, but there is nothing of that sort from what I see. I even completely stopped selling at the school after that.

She asks Mmasetjhaba in a subsequent letter to send her *mekorotlo* and *dishweshwe* [3]because she would like to sell *mekorotlo* and to start sowing dresses and headwraps out of *dishweshwe* to sell. She goes on to write, "mme ha motho a ka rekirekisa a ka tshwana a qala kgwebonyana a ikemela ka maoto bakeng sa hore a lete tjhelete eo a e akgellwang seka ntja ha e fuwa" (27) – "perhaps if I can sell here and there, I can start a little business

[3] *Mokorotlo* (singular for '*mekorotlo'*) is a kind of straw hat that forms part of Sesotho traditional clothing for men, women and children. *Seshweshwe* (singular for '*dishweshwe'* and sometimes spelt *'seshoeshoe'*) is a traditional Sesotho cloth from which dresses, skirts and headwraps are sown.

and stand on my own two feet rather than wait for money to be thrown at me like a dog". She follows up her mention of having stopped selling snacks at their nearby school by informing Mmasetjhaba that the income she received from selling at the school helped her greatly, and that she no longer even has any underwear, and for this reason has resorted to wearing some of Aubuti Molemi's.

Mmasetjhaba sends her sister *mekorotlo* and *dishweshwe* and Ntshebo is able to get her small business started therefrom. She joins a women's organisation in the community and the members become particularly excited about her progress. One of these women takes Ntshebo to a fashion design college. It is not too clear whether it is this woman who funds Ntshebo or if Ntshebo funds herself using her profits from the *dishweshwe* that she sells, but she begins attending this college, soon learning how to design *dishweshwe*. This new college attendance does not happen outside of Aubuti Molemi's knowledge, and Molemi's response to Ntshebo's wanting to start attending college is one that is not at all surprising, considering the possessive and oppressive proclivities we have seen him exhibit up to this point. He mocks her, giving an incredibly sexist and ageist response.

> Ka lapeng mona ha ke bolela hore ke ya sekolong sa ho ithuta ho roka motho a se ke a nkenella hle. A re nka ithuta eng ke se ke le lemo tse fetang mashome a mararo. A re ke se ke fedile le molora empa ke iketsa ngwana ka ho nna ke etsa ntho tsa mantlwaneng. A hana le ho mpha ya ho palama (29).
>
> When I told *Aubuti* that I would soon start taking sewing lessons at a fashion college, did he not give me a mouthful? He asked me what I could possibly learn having long turned thirty. He went on to say that my zest and flavour have been depleted, yet here I am acting like a child playing house. He even refused to give me taxi fare.

We see, then, through Molemi's repeated possessive and emotionally abusive behaviour, through his unrelenting attempt to block her entrepreneurial efforts, that he seeks to keep her in a cycle of financial dependence to him.

To revisit Aronson and LeGuin, there is in fact no need for women to have *rooms of their own* – that is, financial security and freedom, along with other material conditions that are devoid of household distractions – in order to write. Ntshebo writes when she has abundant space and time as a result of Aubuti Molemi leaving her alone and attending to his own errands more than half the time. She writes when her space and time are compromised somewhat after she begins attending fashion college and designing and sowing *dishweshwe*. Ntshebo, therefore, lives out the truth that is not needing financial

security or other material conditions devoid of distractions in order to write. The elemental abstract instruments to her writing process, however, are space and time. Not uncompromised space, not a day devoid of domestic demands, but space and time. She also writes as an affective response.

How Ntshebo opens her introductory letter is illustrative of her beginning to write as an emotional response. I use the word 'emotional' here not in the basal form of the word used as a cop-out to evade responsibility when one mistreats a woman, accounting for women's rightful indignation by depicting them as overly emotional (see Gardiner, Metcalf, & Beebe-Center 1937), but rather as a conscious or unconscious evaluation/response to a "personal goal or important concern" (Shields et. al. 2017). That is to say, I use 'emotional' to refer to an ungendered, natural human response. She writes, "Ke ngola tjena ke diphateng, ha ke na le motho ya ntlhokomelang. Pelo ya ka e dutla madi ka moo ke sa kgoneng le ho hlalosa…" (1) – "I am in bed as I write this, with no one to even take care of me. My heart bleeds in a way that I cannot describe…". She writes again, "Taba tse ntshusumeletsang ho ngola ke ntho tse ntseng di etsahala mona lapeng, tseo ke bonang hantle hore di tla mpolaisa pelo" (19) – "What prods me to write are the things that have been happening here at home, the things that I see very well may cause my heart to fail". And again, "Hae mona ke bolawa ke bodutu le tlala" (21) – "Here at home, loneliness and physical hunger may very well become the death of me". There is a significant degree to which Ntshebo's letters are a kind of affective response to what happens in her homespace. In the initial excerpt mentioned in this segment, Ntshebo writes about the bleeding of her heart, implying an abstract pain. In the second, she mentions loneliness. These are additional reasons why Ntshebo writes.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how various literary devices are able to cultivate intimacy in a reader. By way of being an 'eavesdropper', the reader forms part of the epistolary conversation. The chapter has discussed how the epistolary form makes way for simulation with a literary character to take place as abstract spectator, that is to say, as reader. Ntshebo's palpable interest in the literary suggests that her subject matter, diction, tone and vocabulary are not chosen at random, but are employed to attempt cultivation of intimacy with the reader for the purposes of conscientizing them with regard to the

importance of the rise of the New Woman at the same time as that of a New South Africa. The chapter has also shown that isolation is imperative to the process of letter-writing. Moments of isolation form space and time for emotional self-examination, which help the writing character cultivate intimacy with their primary reader – the receiver of the letter – but also with the 'eavesdropper', that is, the secondary reader.

Chapter 2: Sadness, the place where courage begins – the possibilities of black female friendship

Introduction

Professor Roger Coulibaly's question to Suzanne Marie Ondrus continues to loom and to haunt me somewhat – what, indeed, do black women need to write? Having offered the answers of time, space and affective prompting in the first chapter, this chapter explores the possibilities that black female friendship offers; more specifically, the kinds of psychosocial support or care work the institution of female friendship serves as birth site for, along with the kinds of social and psychological labour that this institution does.

Anaïs Nin (1972) writes that "[e]ach friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born" (n.pag.), which is simply to say that we are a synthesis of our friendships, a coalescence of those with whom we spend the most time. The ways in which those closest to us view the world tend to influence our reception of life experiences. Roshni Ray, writing of the conceptions of friendship as well as women's friendship and feminism, joins a growing conversation (see Ahmed 2017; Aleman 2010) on the developmental abilities of female-female friendship; that is to say, the ability of women who are in friendship with each other to catalyse the process of cognitive development in each other. I extend Ray's sentiments further, arguing that women's friendship facilitates the development of emotional intelligence and enterprising proficiency in contexts where these may be lacking or actively discouraged, as in Ntshebo's case. This chapter argues that women in female friendships are able to deepen one another's emotional intelligence. It also explores the various kinds of psychosocial support that female friendship makes possible.

Psychosocial support and female solidarity

What we see in the earlier part of the novella is the existence of lightly tapped potential in Ntshebo. She shows great interest in displaying emotional intelligence as well as in

being an enterprising woman. When she begins to suspect Aubuti Lefosa, who she knows is a married man, of having an affair with her tenant Motshewa, she becomes conflicted. She is unsure whether or not to share her suspicions with Aubuti Lefosa's wife with whom she is good friends. She initially writes,

> Motshewa ke bona eka o na le setswallenyana le aubuti Lefosa. E se e le makgetlonyana ke bona ntho tse etsang hore ke be le pelaelo… ke tla bula mahlo ke shebisise, mme ha ke se ke kgotswe hore sena seo ke se belaelang ke nnete, ke tla o ngolla ke o tsebise (8-9).
>
> I think Motshewa is having an affair with Lefosa. It is a number of times now that I have seen things that have roused my suspicion… I will keep my eyes open and be vigilant, and when I am convinced that my suspicions are, in fact, correct, I will write and let you know.

I disagree with Maake's framing here. Translated directly, the opening of this excerpt reads, "I suspect that Motshewa is having an affair with Lefosa". And while Motshewa is wrong on the front of being sexually involved with a man that she knows is married, it is not her that is having the affair. Because we are not told that Motshewa is married, we are able to presume that she is not, in which case it would, in fact, be Lefosa who is having the affair and who engages in infidelity. Nonetheless, this becomes Ntshebo's first account of the suspected affair (which we come to know as the novella progresses, is indeed taking place). In her subsequent letter to Mmasetjhaba, Ntshebo gives her sister a more detailed description of the events that have taken place in her yard, events that further fuel her suspicions that Motshewa and Lefosa are romantically involved. She writes that Aubuti Molemi is one of the leaders of their patrol group, and lets her know that often when Molemi and his patrol group are out, she hears their house gate opening. She, refrains, most times, for fear, presumably, of gunfire or the like being opened on her, from peering through the curtains to see who might be entering. One night, however, she boldly peeps through the curtains after hearing the gate open, and notices that it is Aubuti Lefosa who has just entered. She feels quite a great shock when Lefosa does not come to the door and knock. The greater shock she receives, however, is when Aubuti Lefosa comes back into the yard on a different occasion and heads straight for Motshewa's back room. She writes,

> Ka mora tsatsi leo ke boneng aubuti Lefosa a kena mona, ke sa bona le hore o felletse kae, ke ile ka dula ke hwayeha ke taba ena, empa ka tshaba ho botsa Molemi hore ho ntse ho etsahalang. Taba e ileng ya ntshosa ke hore o ile a boela a kgutla hape, mme ha ke lekodisisa, ka bona a ya ka mane ka ha Motshewa (11).

> After I saw Aubuti Lefosa come into our yard, and then not seeing where he disappeared to, this matter continued to gnaw at my spirit, but I was afraid to ask Molemi what was going on. What scared me even further was that, when Lefosa came back a different day, I carefully followed his steps and realised he had gone into Motshewa's room.

Ntshebo does not inform Mmasetjhaba about her suspicions out of the pleasure a gossip would derive from discussing the matters of those around them, but she writes her sister in order to request her advice. She writes Mmasetjhaba that she suspects Motshewa was brought into the yard by Molemi and Lefosa for the specific purpose of being Lefosa's mistress, and not because she is Lefosa's cousin who is need of dwelling place. She writes, "Ha ke tsebe hore na ke tla etsa jwang. Wena o bona hore ke etseng, ngwaneso ha taba di le tjena" (15) – "I do not know what I should do. What do you think would be best for me to do in this situation, dear sister?" And again, "Ke kopa keletso ya hao, nnake" (16) – "I ask for your advice, dear sister".

Ntshebo's request for advice is undertaken in June. Mmasetjhaba's response comes through a few months down the line, in October. At this point, Ntshebo has already been confronted and accused by Aubuti Lefosa's wife, Ausi Nnyadiseng, of having known about Lefosa's affair with Motshewa from the very beginning and being in on the plan to find her a place to stay as Lefosa's mistress. This, of course, is untrue, as Ntshebo did not know about the affair from the beginning and is in the middle of trying to establish a way forward when Ausi Nnyadiseng comes to know of her husband's affair. She writes,

> Lengolo la hao ke ile ka le fumana, le keletso tsa lona. Ke ne ke sa re ke itokisetsa ho buisana le Molemi ka taba ena ya Motshewa jwalo ka ha o nkeleditse, ke re ke tla mmolella le ka moo mohatsa Lefosa a ileng a ntlhapaola ka baka la hae… (33).
>
> I received your letter, along with its guidance. I had been preparing myself to speak with Aubuti Molemi about Motshewa's matter, just as you had advised me, preparing to tell him the way Lefosa's wife had sworn at me on her account…

Mmasetjhaba's advice finds Ntshebo unsure what to do next, and in need of some emotional intelligence, if you will, and Mmasetjhaba readily comes through for her, advising her to do what she had been considering in any case, granting her reassurance that it is, indeed, the better decision, contrasted with keeping quiet about the matter.

The term 'psychosocial', according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), highlights

> the interaction between the psychological sphere and the context, including social factors. The psychological dimension involves the adaptation or functioning of an individual based on his/her beliefs, thoughts and emotions. The context and social elements include interpersonal relationships; family and community bonds; daily activities such as work or education; the social and economic situation; opportunities for participation in the public sphere and decision-making capacity (20).

Action for the Rights of Children (ARC), too, write of the term 'psychosocial' as

> used to emphasise the close connection between psychological aspects of the human experience and the wider social experience. Psychological effects are those that affect different levels of functioning including cognitive (perception and memory as a basis for thoughts and learning), affective (emotions), and behavioural. Social effects concern relationships, family and community networks, cultural traditions and economic status, including life tasks such as school or work (9).

I laid out, in the first chapter, the sequence of Ntshebo and Mmasetjhaba's conversation regarding *dishweshwe*, how Ntshebo requests these from Mmasetjhaba who does in fact subsequently send them. Mmasetjhaba sends *dishweshwe* and *mekorotlo* the first time around, but makes her sending of *dishweshwe* a regular practice after Ntshebo lets her know of her plans to branch from selling *dishweshwe* in their original state into sewing dresses and jackets out of them. Ntshebo has, at this point, detailed to Mmasetjhaba Aubuti Molemi's objection to her entrepreneurial efforts. The consistent sending of *dishweshwe*, then, can readily be counted as psychosocial support on Mmasetjhaba's part. There is a kind of psychological abuse that Molemi inflicts on Ntshebo. But, counter to this, Mmasetjhaba's support helps neutralise Molemi's attempted psychological abuse, such that his deriding and all-round abusive words towards Ntshebo have no effect on Ntshebo, and she proceeds to pursue her entrepreneurial interests.

When Mmasetjhaba advises Ntshebo to first speak to Aubuti Molemi about Lefosa and Motshewa's affair, it is reassuring to Ntshebo that she has support in her sister about this matter. It is unfortunate that by the time Mmasetjhaba's letter arrives, Lefosa's wife, Ausi Nnyadiseng, has already found out about the affair and has assumed Ntshebo's complicity. We are, then, inclined to believe that if Mmasetjhaba is able to provide Ntshebo with guidance regarding whether or not to speak to Aubuti Molemi or whether or not to confront Motshewa, she will not mind offering her guidance on how to approach Ausi Nnyadiseng moving forward.

Mmasetjhaba's consistent supply of *dishweshwe* as well as her advice following different occasions, all count as displays of psychosocial support towards Ntshebo, and are

illustrative of the ways in which black female friendship holds possibility for different forms of psychosocial support. This is support that positively affects women's cognitive functioning, causing women to not internalise the identity-related falsehoods that men with whom they are romantically (or otherwise) involved seek to make them believe.

There is an element of survival in Ntshebo and Mmasetjhaba's friendship, particularly on Ntshebo's part. The phrase 'female solidarity' can be considered a descriptor of the two women's friendship, considering the two salient matters afore mentioned of Mmasetjhaba's counsel to Ntshebo regarding the affair Ntshebo has become privy to, as well as Mmasetjhaba's funding of Ntshebo's entrepreneurial efforts. I base my posit on the friendship's survival element on the outcome of physical sustenance that Mmasetjhaba's financial and psychological input yields in Ntshebo's life. Ntshebo is rendered able to purchase food to eat and be physically sustained due to her sister's financial contribution in her life. Her psyche also experiences increased support as a result of this sisterhood-cum-friendship. She grows confident in her abilities to be sustained sans the help of a man, and also grows when it comes to displaying emotional intelligence in her social circles. She practises a kind of feminism that Omofolabo Ajayi-Soyinka outlines in reference to Mariama Bâ's Ramatoulaye as one that "combines the quest for African identity with personal independence" (169). In Ntshebo's case, her 'quest for African identity' is typified by her desire to move out from under oppressive state rule. This desire is expressed, for one, in her writing to Mmasetjhaba,

> Lengolong la hao o ne o itse ke tlohe mona ke tlo dula le wena, ka re ntse re sa dutse hantle, empa hona jwale ka moo sethunya se llang ha bohloko ka teng, ke utlwa ke thothomela, hoja ka tloha kgale (3).
>
> In your letter you had written that I should leave this place to come and live with you, and I had responded that our living situation is still bearable. Although with how painfully gunshots resound now, I tend to find myself trembling, wishing I had left a long time ago.

I read her desire to emigrate to Lesotho as reflective of the greater desire to find her way out of oppressive, imperial state rule and into the actualisation of an African identity untainted by imperial influence. Ntshebo's feminism is one that indeed combines the quest for African identity with personal independence. Mmasetjhaba, too, executes a feminism of her own kind, most palpable in her treatment of her sister. Ajayi-Soyinka goes on to describe Ramatoulaye's feminism as one that "supports self-fulfilment but not self-

centredness" (169), and I see the same category strongly resonating with Mmasetjhaba. By sending Ntshebo *dishweshwe* and *mekorotlo* for her to sell, Mmasetjhaba displays her support of Ntshebo's self-fulfilment. Mmasetjhaba is seemingly in a better and more comfortable position than her sister is at the beginning of their letterlogue, but this does not cause her to become self-centred; she exercises care towards her sister during the time, and makes efforts to materialise Ntshebo's entrepreneurial efforts and thereby to bring Ntshebo's self-actualisation to pass. Therefore while they do not necessarily exercise the same feminism, Ntshebo and Mmasetjhaba show the ways in which female friendships that employ feminisms that endorse personal independence and self-fulfilment, to use Ajayi-Soyinka's words, and are not rooted in self-centredness enable the cultivation of female self-actualisation.

Muzzled voicing

One thing we can credit Ntshebo for is her ease at voicing discomfort and indignation. Ntshebo leaves Molemi eventually – this after he, too, has an affair with Motshewa and after he has received another woman into the house as romantic partner. For the greater part of their time sharing a homespace, Ntshebo vocalises discontent that she experiences over occurrences in the household and in their marriage, generally. There are moments that call for a vocal response from Ntshebo, during which she offers no response except silence. Instances such as Molemi's absence preceding and during the birth of their last child; Molemi coming home with his clothes turned over after having left for work in the morning correctly dressed; and others. One is left wondering, at these points, why she offers silence as a response. Nonetheless, Ntshebo's silence does speak (see Motsemme 2004). When her sewing business begins to boom, Ntshebo finds herself able to purchase food for herself. She proceeds to do so, and one of those days, she cooks food and prepares pudding, enough for only one person. After she eats, she cleans up after herself, washing the used pots too. Upon his return home from work, Molemi is confused to find that there is no food cooking on the stove, and he asks why it is that there is no food ready for him. Ntshebo responds by letting him know that there is no food in the house. It is here that we see a side of Ntshebo that does not often show itself. Molemi angrily and hurriedly goes outside to the car. He returns holding his wallet, proceeds to open it, finds some money that he, then, throws on the table. He follows this antic up with the words, "…eo ke

tjhelete ya ho reka dijo, hosane ke fumane o phehile" (30) – "that is money to buy food. I should return tomorrow to find that you have cooked". Ntshebo ignores the money and tells herself that Molemi will find it in the exact same spot the following morning. And indeed, he does. He threatens to beat Ntshebo up when he finds the money where he left it, to which Ntshebo responds that if he dares to touch her, he will greatly regret it. Shocked at her response, he leaves, and does not come back home that day.

There are quite some silences in Ntshebo and Mmasetjhaba's 'letterlogue'. Ntshebo lays out the chain of events from the day Molemi comes back with his underpants and one sock turned over. She lets Mmasetjhaba know of the confused state she was in when she witnessed this, and the confused state she remains in, trying to piece together the events of that day. She goes on to write Mmasetjhaba that she is not sure whether or not to ask Molemi about this, and asks her sister what she would do if she were in a similar situation. She then writes,

> Ke tla o letsetsa posong ha o sa ngole, hobane ke a o tseba wena ha o utlwane le pene. Ha ke tsebe hore mme le ntate ba ne ba o isetsang sekolong, kapa ke wona mosebetsi wa booki o o tshwereng tjena (18).
>
> I will call you from the post office should you not write me, because I know that pen and paper are not exactly your thing. I wonder why mom and dad bothered putting you through school. Or should we blame your silence on your nursing job?

An additional instance of Mmasetjhaba's silence that Ntshebo highlights comes in the same letter in which she lets her sister know of Molemi's affair with Motshewa. Ntshebo's relationship with Motshewa blossoms very early on, very soon after Motshewa moves into their yard. Motshewa presents herself as good-hearted and compassionate, making sure to listen to Ntshebo's qualms and pains about staying with Molemi, and even bringing her delicious snacks that they share when Motshewa comes back from work. Ntshebo soon comes to realise, however, that Motshewa is by no means the angel she makes herself out to be. She realises this when she comes to the knowledge of Molemi's affair with her and when she subsequently approaches Motshewa to confront her, to which Motshewa proffers a response to the effect that she is not Ntshebo's husband's keeper, and that Ntshebo should not blame her if she is unable to ensure that her husband stays put at home. Before they have this fall out, however, Motshewa borrows a sum of money from Ntshebo that amounts to R1500. She moves out following the start of her conflicts with

Ntshebo, without returning the money she owes. When Ntshebo finds her new address and approaches her for her money, Motshewa asks Ntshebo what makes her think that her husband was sleeping with her for free. Their row results in court summons which Ntshebo receives after a few days, claiming that she showed up to Motshewa's house and insulted her. The summons also claim that Ntshebo burns her house down. Motshewa's house does, indeed, go down in flames but this is most likely a result of hostel-dweller protests. Ntshebo defends herself in court and counters Motshewa's case with a mention of the money that Motshewa owes her. Motshewa loses her case and is instructed to pay back the amount she owes Ntshebo. I mention this instance to read it through how Ntshebo chooses to close this letter. She closes the letter with the words, "Ke tla ngola hape, leha o sa ngole tjena" (42) – "I will write you again, even though you do not bother to write to me". Ntshebo's mention that she will write Mmasetjhaba again shows that she continues to have matters on her heart that need offloading. She is likely dissuaded from including all these matters in the same letter for fear of it being too long, but we are able to understand from her promise to write again, that there are additional matters of which she still wishes to relieve herself. She promises to write again even though Mmasetjhaba does not bother to write to her. These words, "leha o sa ngole tjena" – "even though you do not bother to write to me" – point us to the fact that there are silences in Ntshebo and Mmasetjhaba's 'letterlogue' where Ntshebo expects letter-responses. Ntshebo's inclusion of the phrase *though you do not write to me* can be read as a statement of frustration that her sister does not write to her as often as she receives Ntshebo's letters. I have titled this chapter "Sadness the place where courage begins", drawn from Danai Mupotsa's 2018 poem "my friends drink too much". She writes,

"my friends drink too much

like sadness is the place

where courage begins" (42).

I relate this excerpt to Ntshebo and the distasteful and unpleasant feelings she gets. Throughout the novella we see her experiencing heartbreak and frustration. We encounter Ntshebo's heartbreak from the very start of the series of letters to Mmasetjhaba. She opens her first letter, "Ke ngola tjena ke diphateng, ha ke na le motho

ya ntlhokomelang. Pelo ya ka e dutla madi ka moo ke sa kgoneng le ho hlalosa…" (1) – "I am in bed as I write this, with no one to even take care of me. My heart bleeds in a way that I cannot describe…". She writes this to describe her feelings regarding her recent child losses as well as Molemi's absence amid this. We see annoyance and hurt and even anger on Ntshebo's part as the novella progresses, all roused by the mélange that is Molemi's dishonesty, infidelity and larceny. We see Ntshebo getting frustrated by how her sister's responses trickle in rather than coming more promptly. All these feelings that Ntshebo experiences from Molemi's belittling and disparagement of her and her enterprising efforts can be said to be where Ntshebo's courage to start her own sewing business and to eventually leave Molemi, stems. Sadness and other low feelings form the place where Ntshebo's courage begins. Mmasetjhaba's listening becomes a kind of fortification for Ntshebo's growing courage; her guidance, too, assists its cultivation along.

Love, friendship and the self-reflective

I return to Jameson (1975) briefly here to explore his discussions on the romantic mode. In his "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre", Jameson points to Northrop Frye's account of romance as a mode, observing that, "[r]omance is for him a wish fulfilment or utopian fantasy which aims at the transfiguration of the world of everyday reality…" (138). The everyday reality that Ntshebo and Molemi find themselves in is one of racially charged socio-economic oppression. It makes great sense, then, in the case of Ntshebo for her to desire a remodelled world that, in spite of rife and rampant state violence, consists of a homespace that is warm, affectionate and companionable. Pamela Regis, too, expounds on Frye, observing in her *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* that "[f]or Frye, the essence of the romance is the "idealized world" it embodies in its texts" (20). Frye observes that a common trope that typifies texts that can be classified 'romantic' is the presence of an 'idealized world'. Using Frye's posited mode of romance, then, Ntshebo's sequence of life-events as seen in the novella can be read as hope deferred, the presence of this hope evident in her disappointment and hurt when Molemi turns out to be aloof and belittling all at once. I surmise that it may be that Ntshebo sought to create for herself a homespace that would form the antithesis of the state violence inflicted on black people, perhaps as a form of escape from this violence. Her disappointment and hurt arise from

the deferment of her wishes and "utopian fantasy" to have her marriage be a two-way affectionate exchange.

One is able to note in *Mangolo* what might constitute an inverted romantic narrative arc. While the typical romantic narrative arc is one of two people meeting, falling in love, being faced with a hindrance from being together, followed by them overcoming it to be together (see Regis 2007), the 'romantic' narrative arc we see in *Mangolo* is one of the hindrance or difficulty arising *after* the pair have successfully come together, the coming together in Ntshebo and Molemi's case taking the form of marriage. Ntshebo then, albeit not deliberately, it would appear, begins to replace her pursuit for affectionate exchanges in her marriage with her husband, with a pursuit of deepened friendship with her sister, Mmasetjhaba, as well as with herself.

A prominent pursuit or actualisation of nationalism that arose following the first democratic elections in 1994 was that of the 'Rainbow Nation'. This term was coined and introduced by the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu and quickly gained popularity, featuring in the titles of business and community endeavours and on items of everyday use such as cutlery and crockery; key-rings etc. (see Møller et. al. 1999). Møller, Dickow and Harris find that an outpouring of national pride exemplified the general atmosphere of first-time voters leading up to the first democratic elections. They write that "[w]hen the new government of national unity came into power, it appealed to citizens' sense of common purpose to forge a unified nation" (1). This is to say that the first democratic government's coming into power was immediately met with a national collective who had already cultivated a sense of kinship and solidarity within and among themselves as pertains to the advancing of a democratic South Africa. The solidarity brewing process was helped along by the presence of a collective cross-racial joy among citizens. Møller and her colleagues explore an aspect of what I term 'classed joy', finding that under apartheid, white people generally experienced satisfaction and contentedness, while the majority of disenfranchised blacks experienced somewhat of a paucity in happiness. However, "[i]n the aftermath of the first democratic elections, levels of happiness and life satisfaction of formerly disenfranchised South Africans peaked, completely eliminating the happiness deficit of blacks" (Møller et. al. 1999: 2). We see, then, that the time leading up to the first democratic elections was a time of joyful anticipation for the average black South African. In *Mangolo*, however, we see another inversion of sorts to the post-apartheid black-joy

template. There is a delight Ntshebo experiences around the time leading up to the 1994 elections, but unlike the majority of the nation's black population at the time, Ntshebo takes delight not so much in the nationalistic citizen joy as she does in the little pockets of joy that begin to more greatly constitute her personal life.

Møller et. al. write of government-endorsed 'rainbow' phrasing as successfully serving the purpose of creating a "greater sense of subjective well-being" among black South Africans (1). In the case of Ntshebo, however, she develops and is able to cultivate a deepened sense of being a largely self-sufficient subject by way of more deeply exploring the reciprocal nature of friendship, as well as by becoming an enterprising woman who is also a self-paying tenant at her place of residence. Uri D. Leibowitz's (2008) definition of friendship, which I revisit briefly here, is that it is a relationship between two people in which each party highly esteems and cherishes the other and succeeds at communicating this fact to the other. Leibowitz goes on to posit that,

> [t]he extent to which we value something can be influenced by our awareness of the value others attribute to it [and this] suggests that recognizing that others value our own lives may impact on our sense of self-worth. This, in turn, enables us to link friendship and happiness (101).

And further, still, that "[b]ecause each friend values the other, each friend's awareness that the other values her will have a pronounced impact on each friends' [sic] own self-valuation" (101). Mmasetjhaba's willingness to send Ntshebo *dishoeshoe* for Ntshebo to sell for her own upkeep; her seemingly congenial and welcoming response to Ntshebo's desire to visit her in Lesotho (as we see in the below excerpt) are ways that Mmasetjhaba ascribes value to her sister.

> Ke a kgolwa hore ke se ke tla kgona ho tla le tjhakela, hobane ha ho sa hlokahala hore ke emele koloi e ntseng e ntshepisa hore e tla ntlisa moo, kapa ke emele hore ke fumane tumello ya ho tjhaka. Ha e le ena Keresemese, ke tla e ja le lona ha ho potang (45).
>
> I believe that I should now be able to come and visit you all, seeing as though there no longer is a need for me to wait on a car's empty promises to drive me to Lesotho, or a need for me to ask permission before I leave to visit you. As for this coming Christmas, I will spend it with you without any doubt.

Her first mention of visiting Mmasetjhaba on Christmas is in her letter dated 29 July 1991 – the letter that immediately precedes her letter of thanksgiving for *dishoeshoe* that her sister sends her. While the text is structured in such a way that we do not have any of

Mmasetjhaba's responses to refer to, Ntshebo's thanksgiving informs us that the *dishoeshoe* she requested have made their way to her. This favourable response, in turn, along with Ntshebo's continued promises that she will visit during Christmas time, such as we see in letters dated 27 September 1991 and 9 September 1992 – show us that Mmasetjhaba has not rejected but has rather readily welcomed Ntshebo's suggestion to visit her. These are acts of compassion and of affection. Mmasetjhaba applies her time, effort and money to acquire *dishoeshoe* for Ntshebo. She remains willing, still, to spend more time, effort and money on her when she comes by to visit. The undertaking of acts of love along with further commitment to further acts of love are illustrative of what it means to value a person. By way of witnessing her sister valuing her, Ntshebo is aided through the process of beginning to value herself. To read Ntshebo through Leibowitz, the extent to which Ntshebo is able to value herself is influenced by her awareness of the value her sister attributes to her. This enhances Ntshebo's commitment to her friendship with Mmasetjhaba and enhances the level of joy she receives from the friendship.

Storytelling and humour

Storytelling is arguably the device Maake makes the most use of in *Mangolo*. In addition to letting her know of the events that take place in her personal life, Ntshebo tells Mmasetjhaba of the events that unfold in her surroundings, like what she hears/experiences in the taxi, the corner shop and the like. I point out in this portion of this chapter, the healing power of storytelling. While this may be a great oversimplification, the novella can be said to be made up of stories that Ntshebo shares with Mmasetjhaba, and that these stories can be divided into two categories, the immediate and the remote. What I term the immediate would be the occurrences that affect her directly, as well as those that have to do with her immediate family. What I term the remote are occurrences from which she is far removed, and that may affect her, although not directly. There are other categories under which Ntshebo's stories can be classified, such as those that are humorous and those that are not; or those that she shares before and those she shares after she leaves Molemi and starts off on her own, but the immediate and the remote are the ones of which I will make use in this chapter. Ntshebo writes Mmasetjhaba about Molemi's general absence, whether he is out patrolling or out

on his personal endeavours; she writes Mmasetjhaba regarding her encounters with Motshewa; she writes her about Molemi's general disdain of her enterprising efforts as well as his theft of her money; she also writes of the varied conditions in which Molemi returns when he comes back from his rounds. In addition to these and others like these, however, Ntshebo shares stories that have to do with the neighbourhood and apartheid violence as it unfolds in Thokoza. In her second letter to Mmasetjhaba, she writes of the fear of having the lights on. She also mentions that their fear of having their movement being picked up is so great that she has resorted to going on her knees when moving around the house at night. On an occasion back from town, Ntshebo hears a woman tell the story that she and four other women were abducted by five men who turned out to be hostel-dwellers. These men take them back to their hostel where they keep them as sex slaves. Ntshebo hears her narrate this story first-hand as the woman escapes three weeks later. These two stories and others like them that detail physical violence and emotional turmoil that typified the apartheid regime serve as catharsis for Ntshebo, but also as a kind of pedagogical tool wherewith Ntshebo is able to teach Mmasetjhaba about the apartheid regime. I imagine these are among the stories that move Mmasetjhaba to give her sister marriage and entrepreneurial advice. While we are not told that Mmasetjhaba mentions it, it may be that Mmasetjhaba gives Ntshebo business advice with the hope that once she begins to generate enough income to sustain herself, she will move from Thokoza to an area that poses less danger on her life. The Native Life Movement advocates for intimate and personal storytelling on the basis that, "when you empathise with somebody, oxytocin is released" (6). They write that,

> [o]nce oxytocin has been released and you've formed a connection to a character or person, if that character encounters any sort of trouble, you'll release cortisol in response to the stress you feel over their situation. These two hormones together, oxytocin and cortisol, both being released throughout the course of an impactful story, are powerful. They can move a listener to action (6).

Ntshebo's sharing of the psychological, emotional and financial violence she experiences in the homespace, along with the varied kinds of violence encountered by others she knows or that she meets in her day to day, stir up Mmasetjhaba's empathy and move her to guide Ntshebo along a path of self-realisation. So invested is Mmasetjhaba in assisting her sister that she helps her with tangible resources that will serve as catalyst for Ntshebo's self-realisation. Seren Friskie surmises that,

> [t]he concept of narrative identity theorizes that individuals form an identity by integrating their life experience into an internalised, evolving story of the self that provides them with a sense of unity and purpose in life (Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003). This life narrative incorporates one's reconstructed past, perceived present, and imagined future (20).

Ntshebo narrates her stories in the past tense, as these are things that have already taken place at the time of her writing of the letters. There is an objective reality in which Ntshebo finds herself, which is that of being in a marriage in which her finances, emotions and overall psyche are abused. She is aware of all this, and yet sees the many ways in which her objective reality is able to form a kind of birthing ground for the future she imagines for herself, a future that involves the freedom to cultivate intimacies with herself from which she is able to draw the power to be a self-sustaining woman.

Ntshebo shares stories that are humorous too. Ntshebo's letter dated 1 June is a great display of her humorous side. The first funny story she shares starts off particularly painfully, but Ntshebo chooses to process it by magnifying the humour in it. She narrates the story of a day she saw elderly men and women being beaten with *sjamboks*[4] at a residents' meeting. The presumed agenda of the meeting is the violence that is so rampant in Thokoza. When they get to the meeting, however, they find people's personal agendas being discussed, in particular the agendas of those self-elected to be part of the street committee. The purpose of the meeting was to call to order adulterous married people. The dishonourable thing about the way this meeting was held, was that these grown married men and women were made to lay on the floor while being thrashed with *sjamboks* by men young enough to be their children. A second matter on this anti-adultery agenda was a man who had beaten up his wife. The woman approaches the 'court' to report her husband's misdemeanour. The committee, then, questions the man regarding his reason for beating his woman, to which the man answers *o mo tima dikobo*. Translated directly, the phrase "tima dikobo" would be to "withhold blankets". To the unfamiliar ear, this phrase sounds as though it means the wife refuses to share blankets with her husband, when in fact, the man uses the phrase to make reference to his wife's refusal to have sex with him. The presiding committee member asks the man how much he earns. After the man answers him, he gives the ruling that the man should buy himself blankets at the end of the week and stop assaulting his wife for blankets that he can simply buy

[4] *Sjambok* (Afrikaans) is an item that resembles a whip in appearance and is often used by farm owners to tame game.

himself. The residents fall beside themselves with laughter at this. Following Morreall's analysis of laughter and humour, Mordechai Gordon writes of humour that it

> refers to 'that quality of action, speech or writing, which excites amusement' (OED) and often results in laughter. Our sense of humor is that capacity that enables us to identify ironical, cynical, sarcastic, witty, ludicrous and generally funny expressions, comments or actions (167).

This narrated encounter by Ntshebo acts as a piece of writing that excites amusement; a pleasant break between the melancholy and pain of apartheid as she relays them to Mmasetjhaba. Gordon goes on to state that, "[h]umor enables us to get beyond the tense moments that we experience in our friendships and other close relationships and move to a more comfortable place" (169). While Ntshebo's tensions are not nearly so much with Mmasetjhaba as they are with Molemi and others in close proximity to her, Mmasetjhaba catalyses Ntshebo's process of moving past the psychological, emotional and financial violence she experiences in her personal life, as well as the trauma that comes with fearing for your life in apartheid South Africa.

Ntshebo goes on to share the story of the day Aubuti Molemi comes back with his underwear and one sock turned over. He returns from his rounds of patrolling, or so Ntshebo thinks, and he prepares to go to bed. As he is changing, however, Ntshebo notices that his underwear and one sock are turned inside-out, which they were not when he left for work that morning. She bursts out laughing at this realisation. Gordon points out that

> friends can enlighten each other about many things such as new knowledge that they were not aware of, implicit feelings that may not be adequately understood, and values that they are committed to. Thus, our friends often help us to arrive at new insights about ourselves, the world around us and the various connections between the two (172).

Mmasetjhaba takes a few months to respond to this letter, and when she does, she makes no direct mention of the kangaroo court incident, nor does she make mention of Molemi's minor wardrobe malfunction. Her silence takes the form of delayed letter-responses and unaddressed matters when the letter-responses do come. As she approaches the close of the letter, Ntshebo asks for her sister's advice yet again, this time regarding whether or not she should confront Molemi about the state of his clothes when he gets home from his rounds. But it is from these silences that Ntshebo is compelled to formulate answers to her questions. From Mmsetjhaba's silences, Ntshebo is exposed to new insights about

herself, insights about her ability to stand up to Molemi, and to confront and, thereafter, walk away from situations in which she is unappreciated and belittled.

Conclusion

This chapter has expounded on the findings of the first chapter, further exploring what it is that African women need to write. In addition to time, space and affective prompting as explored in the first chapter, female solidarity by way of psychosocial support can be counted as an additional need for black women writers. Storytelling and humour are explored in this chapter for their therapeutic and healing properties, while courage is shown as going almost hand-in-hand with sadness, being birthed by sadness and bringing about black female self-actualisation.

Chapter 3: Nation-state and domestic parallels of capitalist disillusion and love

Introduction

In his 1986 essay, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism", Frederic Jameson argues that narratives from the third world always function as national allegories. While this statement is problematic for its deficit in accuracy, I find it necessary to explore how it is that Jameson was able to make a longstanding case for the presence of allegory in third world narratives (the proof of its longstanding nature being in the multiple contemporary references to his 1986 perspectives). Using Jameson as springboard, this chapter explores the parallels that exist between the national and the domestic spheres in *Mangolo*.

Marcus Fabius Quintilianus – often referred to simply as 'Quintillian' – proffered the take that "[a]llegory… either presents one thing in words and another in meaning, or else something absolutely opposed to the meaning of the words" (cited in Butler 2012: 327). For his part, Northrop Frye writes that "[w]e have [allegory] when the events of a narrative obviously and continuously refer to another simultaneous structure of events or ideas, whether historical events, moral or philosophical ideas, or natural phenomena" (cited in Herman 1995: 11). Simply put, allegory is speaking in alternate terms. So, to say that third world narratives contain national allegories is simply to say that postcolonial texts use the narrative of the individual to tell the larger narrative of the nation. We see this in texts by African Literature's 'godfather', Achebe. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe uses the imagery of swarming locusts, likening the arrival of white missionaries in Nigeria to these. Nicholas Brown (2011) suggests that in *Arrow of God*, Achebe writes Ezeulu's extravagance and hubris in order to show the integration – or, to use his word *subsummation* – of an African society into a capitalist sphere. Chimamanda Adichie is another prolific writer who includes allegory as a narrative device in her works of fiction. Her 2003 debut novel *Purple Hibiscus* explores Nigeria under the dictatorship of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha. However, she undertakes this exploration through

paralleling state violence with violence in the homespace. Elsewhere, Hugh Webb writes about allegory as,

> a narrative in which the details of the presented world possess plurisignificance. They are ordered not only to make sense in themselves but also to signifiy [sic] a correlated, second order of events or concepts (66).

In the first-generation African fiction example that is *Things Fall Apart*, we see great rejoicing among the people of Umuofia when they witness the arrival of swarms of locusts. The reason for this rejoicing is the expectation and anticipation of enjoyment from these locusts. This is a valid and understandable anticipation, considering they are a great delicacy in Umuofia. The people of the village, however, experience ruined crops as a result of these locusts, bringing their joy to an anticlimax as these locusts end up bringing defect and loss rather than replenishment. But, as mentioned, these locusts – in addition to being a part of the plot in themselves – can also be read as symbolically representing the white missionaries who land in Umuofia. Achebe forms an allegory in and through the sub-character of the locusts, an allegory of the white missionaries arriving in their swarms and ravaging Nigeria and its culture and traditions. Similarly, Nhlanhla Maake includes instances in *Mangolo* that perhaps are not all deliberate allegories, but I make the connections between these allegories and their more expansive meaning and possible intent in this chapter, by reading the novel as telling a double story of the private, domestic narrative and the public, collective narrative of the nation.

National discontent and deferred hope

The greatest parallel Maake forms in the novella (which I task myself with breaking down in this chapter) is the disillusionment and discontent following a great desire that goes unfulfilled; a hope deferred, if you will. South Africans' great excitement for the then impending abolition of apartheid aligns with the collective joy that often if not always typifies the success and imminent success of movements that overturn oppressive regimes. This excitement and joy, along with the disillusionment that followed the entering into power of the first post-apartheid government – is similar, though at a smaller scale, to the disillusionment that Ntshebo experiences when she enters marriage.

As expounded on previously, Ntshebo's disappointment that Molemi is not present at 'key' points in their marriage is evident of hope and anticipation of his presence. Maake advances the plot surrounding domestic disillusion and violence, and I propose that herewith Maake parallels these two kinds of disappointment in *Mangolo*. Put differently, the novel offers a double-narrative of deferred domestic bliss after marriage in Molemi and Ntshebo's love story, as mirroring the disillusionment about the end of apartheid, in the national narrative when violence breaks out within the community of Thokoza, undermining the anticipated peace and freedom.

Throughout the novella, Ntshebo reflects a deep desire for self-actualisation. Maake makes a very lucid delineation of this desire. Ntshebo enters marriage with certain expectations, as any sensible person would. What is not shared with the reader, however, is whether or not she and Molemi partake in discussions prior to them getting married, that detail what each desires, requires and expects from the marriage. Nonetheless, it is clear that in addition to expecting Molemi to be present at what I consider key points in their marriage, Ntshebo expects to enjoy a level of freedom that allows her to pursue some financial independence. One might argue that it is Molemi's financial abuse that prompts Ntshebo to develop a personal stream of income, but I argue that Ntshebo would pursue financial independence regardless of Molemi's financial abuse, as her venture to begin selling snacks to school children precedes any complaint from Molemi about providing food for the household. In her exploration of labour markets in apartheid, Martine Mariotti finds that the great disparity between the White and the Black people employed in high skill-level jobs was particularly great under the apartheid regime. The reason for this disjuncture and its persistence was Bantu education, a system of "segregation in the education system where Africans were held at educational levels that insured [sic] they would never compete with better-educated Whites" (1101). Lundy Bancroft details some of his experiences as a consultant on domestic and child abuse, and observes that,

> Your abusive partner wants to deny your experience. He wants to pluck your view of reality out of your head and replace it with his. When someone has invaded your identity in this way enough times, you naturally start to lose your balance. But you can find your way back to center. An abuser creates a host of misconceptions to get his partner to doubt herself and to make it possible for him to lead her down dead-end path (108).

I mention all this to try and map the thought-process behind Molemi's financial abuse of Ntshebo. It goes without saying that abusers do so because they crave power, as Bancroft

eloquently shows. Molemi can undoubtedly be counted among the abusive partners that Bancroft describes, for his attempts to curtail Ntshebo's efforts to become financially independent by stealing the money her clients owe her, amongst other things. He also attempts to make her doubt herself by asking her what she can learn now that she is above the age of thirty. About economic/financial exploitation, Johnson et al. write,

> Economic exploitation occurs when someone intentionally destroys or depletes a survivor's financial resources or credit [5]. Economic exploitation encompasses behaviors like stealing from an intimate partner, gambling of joint money, opening credit lines without a survivor's permission, or refusing to pay bills with the intent to ruin a survivor's credit [6–9]. Economic control involves preventing survivors from having knowledge or access to bank accounts, credit cards, and other shared assets. It can also include denying a survivor access to food, clothing, or medications and tracking a survivor's use of money (2).

Molemi can be read as not wanting Ntshebo to experience upward economic mobility for fear that she may become financially independent, and thus no longer reliant on him for her physical sustenance and beyond his control; also for fear that she may rise above him in economic standing. There is a parallel, then, that we see between the character of Molemi and the apartheid government through their implementation of Bantu education. Mariotti's conclusion that the purpose of the Bantu education system was to ensure that Black South Africans receive an education that is ranks below that received by White South Africans can be considered a form of abuse. The apartheid government desired that Black people be rendered unable to live independently of a White Afrikaner elite and through Bantu education ensured that Black South Africans would not be able to acquire a job ranked above or in line with that of a White South African in value. We almost see a parallel, then, in *Mangolo* between the apartheid government and Molemi. There are varied kinds of abuses that take place at a domestic level as well as at the state level, and it may be that Maake uses domestic violence an allegorical mirror to tell the larger story of state violence, which takes place in the educational system and at the ground level of gun violence and the like.

The birth of a 'new' South Africa

A second parallel that appears in *Mangolo* is that of Ntshebo's reemergence as a self-sustaining woman and the birth of a 'new' South Africa. The concept of the 'New Woman'

was coined in 1894, during a debate between the late pro-feminist writer Sarah Grand and late anti-feminist Ouida (Maria Louise Ramé). It was further popularised by Henry James who used it to describe independent career women in Europe as well as the United States (see Bordin 1993). Writing of women characters in Bram Stoker's 1987 novel, *Dracula*, Emily Carmichael (2014) observes the following,

> While Lucy represents the augmented importance of women's sexuality and its implications, Mina embodies all other aspects of the New Woman, retaining a job and a sense of practicality evident throughout the novel (5).

From Bordin and Carmichael, one can conclude that the New Woman would be one who is sexually autonomous, independent and educated or well-read. Ntshebo is not sexual with anybody who is not her husband. We are, in fact, not told of any sexual intimacy she engages in with her husband besides the allusion to it by way of her narration of her two pregnancies at the opening of the novella. Ntshebo's miscarriages, too, can be read as paralleling the birth of a New South Africa that does not really come to pass; the kind of "ruined time and post-revolutionary allegory" posited by Timothy Wright (198). Nonetheless, Ntshebo is educated – this we learn from her knowledge of different publishing houses, knowledge that even causes her to have a preferred publishing house, as we see in her request for Mmasetjhaba to send her certain books. Ntshebo takes measures to eventually become financially independent, though her husband will not let her. Lindsey Rosa writes of the 'New Woman' that her emergence would be as a figure that "challenged social norms as she stepped outside the domestic sphere and into the traditionally masculine public sphere" (Rosa 1). The 'New Woman' emerged as one who had as one of her core objectives the "bring[ing] about [of] social change that garners her significance in the past as well as the present (1). Rosa finds that the origination of the 'New Woman' meant that "educational and employment prospects for women improved," and "marriage and motherhood were no longer the inevitable path toward financial security (2). When Ntshebo begins to generate income by way of selling *dishoeshoe* and *mekorotlo*, she begins to tread the path of self-sustainability, and is able to live independently of any financial assistance from Molemi. She eventually moves out of her matrimonial home and moves into a backroom that she begins to rent. Her purchasing of her own food and household appliances before she leaves; her moving out into a new place of residence – all of these efforts contribute to Ntshebo's creation of 'a room of her own'. To further return to Virginia Woolf's analogy, Ntshebo begins to find herself with

money and a room of her own. While Ntshebo proves able to write with and without a room of her own, there is an independence and self-sufficiency that begin to typify Ntshebo's everyday life, independence and self-sufficiency which, according to Carmichael's and Rosa's conclusions constitute the 'New Woman'. She steps into the *traditionally masculinist public sphere* – to borrow Rosa's phrasing – by way of forming part of the black working class. She acquires a very literal room of her own and this room can be said to form the pinnacle of her blossoming into a 'New Woman' as we see it in the text.

In his *Conscripts of Modernity,* David Scott reads C.L.R. James' study of *The Black Jacobins* as granting the individual happenings of the revolution "the shape of an allegory of emancipationist redemption that embodies in a compelling way the great longing for black and anticolonial revolution" (57). Timothy Wright in his essay titled "Ruined time and post-revolutionary allegory in Nthikeng Mohlele's *Small Things*" expounds on Scott's findings and explications, relating them to post-apartheid South Africa. There is a kind of economic stagnancy that I observe has befallen post-apartheid South Africa, which is undoubtedly a great contributor to South Africans' collective disillusionment concerning post-apartheid South Africa. Nthikeng Mohlele grapples with this stagnation and neocolonialism and their resulting disillusionment in his novel, *Small Things*, which explores – in a post-1994 South African context – the very allegory of emancipation Scott discusses. Wright correctly observes, then, that there is a relationship to history that "is not simply one of being 'post'", but rather, to use Michele Magwood's phrasing, one of being "exiled from history" (quoted in Wright 2019). While South Africa is no Grenada, post-apartheid South Africa fits almost squarely into Scott's posited 'ruined time', a time that "bears the imprints," to use Wright's words, "of a future that did not come to pass" (199). Around the time of the year's elections, the 1994 presidency began to make promises to groups racially oppressed under the apartheid regime, promises relating to a greater quality of life. The Reconstruction and Development Programme can be said to have become the most prominent vehicle through which South African governments began to bring these promises to fruition. And while the plan's name might make one think that it is a sole programme, it is in fact a miscellany of programmes, among which are job creation, nutrition, social security and general social welfare, which, of course, includes housing. To a certain extent, *Mangolo* foreshadows a post-apartheid future, and a sense in which the text is somewhat prescient or divinatory. The housing aspect of the

RDP can be said to have reached its peak in 1999. The BBC records that "there was a dramatic growth in construction in the early years of ANC rule," (Reality Check team, 2019) where the programme yielded a great growth in construction between the years 1994 and 1999. Its 1999 peak was one of almost 240 000 houses built, while the number of housing units per annum between 1999 and 2018 has fluctuated between 90 000 and 170 000, the former figure being the most recent of the two. In addition to this decline in the construction of housing units, we have had Limpopo residents report RDP houses as "fall[ing] apart within three years" (Ledwaba). Regarding public hearings on the Housing Consumer Protection Bill held in Phalaborwa, Limpopo, Ledwaba writes, "Residents say the government-issued homes are of extremely low quality and come apart at the seams within the first three years". He goes on to write that "[a]t all three hearings, homeowners complained about construction defects, from leaking roofs to floor tiling that posed a risk to occupants" (ibid). I offer the vantage point that the Reconstruction and Development Programme has failed, as, at its inception, its intent was, amongst other things, to have delivered one million homes in the five years following the ANC's coming into power in 1994. Instead, they delivered only about 705 000 in those five years. Furthermore, "[t]he South African government estimates a current national shortfall of 2.1 million homes – for about 12.5 million homes. And it has a target of 2030 to fill that gap" (Reality Check team, 2019). The BBC goes on to report that as at 2019, the delivery rate had been 136 000 homes per year, and it is awfully clear that at this rate, only 1.5 million of the 2.1 million needed would be available by the targeted 2030. One easily sees, then, the ways in which and the considerable degrees to which the Reconstruction and Development Programme has failed; more significantly, how the promised post-apartheid emancipation has not come to fruition for groups racially oppressed under the apartheid regime. South Africa's unemployment rate stood at 29.81% in 2022 – a considerable increase from 1991's 21.19% (Macrotrends 2023), and a lucid display of the RDP's failure in this aspect as well, as youth unemployment has followed upward trends as opposed to downhill trends. And while these examples I have mentioned are not exhaustive, they help us see the 'ruined time' posited by Wright – a time that "bears the imprints of a future that did not come to pass" (199). In the case of Ntshebo, the future that does not come to pass is that of a husband who supports her efforts to catalyse her upward economic mobility and who is present in the home, present during pregnancies and is an all-round protector, especially considering the violent and oppressive social climate in South Africa

at the time. It is in this sense, then, that I consider Maake's text prescient and allegorical in its nature, as it forms parallels between limbo in the domestic space and limbo in the apartheid as well as post-apartheid black person's socio-economic life.

Internal displacement and female social capital

Internal displacement, also often referred to as 'forced removal ', was an integral part of the apartheid regime. South African industrialisation in the first half of the 20th century meant an increase in demand for labourers in cities, which led to the inception and growth of African urban settlements (Wilson and Ramphele 1989; Abel 2015). In response to increased urbanisation, upward economic mobility as well as the formation of firm political structure among the black population, the apartheid government engendered a system of ten ethnically different homelands as a means of dividing the black population by way of promoting tribalist dogmas and loyalties (Abel 2015). An estimate of about 3.5 million black South Africans were forcefully relocated between 1960 and 1980 (ibid, 2015). The majority of black people were displaced to relocation camps in the homelands which were greatly overcrowded and economically destitute. Abel observes that resettlements yielded two primary results: the one – conflict over scarce land and resources, and the other – solidarity among the displaced people founded on the desire and intent to overthrow the regime as a whole. This legal homeland system – also referred to as the system of Bantustans – was fundamental in cultivating a tribalist outlook and attitude among the black apartheid population. Mager and Mulaudzi (2011) observe that the Bantu Self-Government Act (1959) and Bantu Homeland Constitution Act (1971) brought about political separation of Bantustans: residents took on the citizenship of their respective homelands "and were thus regarded as foreigners in South Africa" (Abel 6). The premise by which this internal displacement was justified was the claim that Bantustan policies would encourage self-actualisation among the inhabitants of the different homelands, when in reality the policies succeeded at establishing separation and political weakness (see Platzky and Walker 1985).

In *Mangolo*, we witness Ntshebo leaving Molemi to go and find a place of her own so as to be self-sufficient and live independently of Molemi's income. She gets the unction to visit

Molemi's residence months after moving out, and upon visiting, she meets a woman holding a feather duster and blaring music loudly on the radio. She proceeds to ask the woman "hore monna wa ka o ile kae, le hore ke yena mang" (52); that is, "where my husband is and who *she* is". They proceed to have at each other with words:

> Bakeng sa hore a nkarabe motho a mpotsa hore ke mang ya mmotsang hore ke yena mang, le nna ka mmotsa hore ke yena mang eo ereng ha ke mmotsa hore ke yena mang a mpotse hore ke mang. Le yena a araba ka wona mokgwa oo, karabo tsa rona di ntse di ya di lelefala, ho fihlela a hakwa ke leleme, a mpolella hore ke mo tswele ka ntlo, ke ha hae. Ka mmolella hore ke ha ka, mme ha ho letho ka tlung ka mona leo e leng la hae (52).
>
> Instead of her answering me, she asked who I am to ask her who she is, and I went on to ask her who she is to ask me who it is that is asking her who she is. She answered in the same manner, our answers becoming longer and more convoluted, until eventually her tongue tripped and she told me to get out of her house. I told her that the house is in fact mine, and that there is nothing in the house that belongs to her.

The woman (who Ntshebo later perceives to be a girl young enough to be her daughter) goes on to call Ntshebo a whore who left her husband to run after men; while Ntshebo in her narration to Mmasetjhaba mentions that her observation is the girl is likely to have left school, responding to the allure of the little money Molemi had. One may venture the conclusion that the young girl saw an opportunity for upward economic mobility in her relationship with Molemi, particularly in her cohabitation with him. There is a similarity, then, in the girl's venture at economic advancement and the attempt of the apartheid government at bringing about the same. The apartheid government established displacement within the black population so as to curtail the firm establishment of the black population's socio-economic structure, in order to ensure their own political supremacy and monetary affluence; indeed, white South African feared that the black population's growing urbanisation would threaten white political stability (Abel 2015).

Molemi's new woman moves into a fully furnished house she did not pay for, whose furnishings she did not contribute any money to acquire, and proceeds to brazenly tell Molemi's legal wife to leave – that that house is her own. Even though Ntshebo has already left that house to acquire a place of her own, it remains her matrimonial home, as it is the house she and Molemi share by way of marriage. In addition to calling her a whore, Ntshebo narrates that the young girl continues to hurl insults at her, instructing her to leave. The girl's behaviour can be regarded as a forced removal to some degree. Ntshebo

leaves her and Molemi's house against her will, in order to quiet down the situation, into which violence eventually enters and in which neighbours too eventually get physically involved. The young girl's moving into a house that is her own, and verbally claiming Molemi as her husband when there is no evidence that his marriage to Ntshebo has been annulled; her instructing Ntshebo to leave her own home – these deeds all bear resemblance to the National Party's *modus operandi*. Forced removals were undertaken by white people to secure their own financial stability. By including the young girl who chases Ntshebo out of her own house, Maake points us to apartheid forced removals in which inhabitants forcefully take land, proceeding to displace those whom they find there for their own financial gain.

Social capital can be defined as "a set of beliefs and values that facilitate cooperation among the members of a community" (Guiso, et. al 2008). I form a brief assessment here pertaining to the role that community plays in forming social capital. Following the young girl's cursing of Ntshebo, Ntshebo's (past) neighbours come out of their houses. Realising that the girl is swearing at Ntshebo, one of the neighbours grabs the girl by her dress, going on to headbutt her on the nose such that blood spurts. This is then followed by multiple knocks of her head against the wall.

Abel explores what he refers to as the long-term effects of living in community formed by way of social capital. He investigates the relationships between individuals from the same ethnic group and who belong to the same former homeland. This investigation yields that "those living close to former resettlement sites have generally higher levels of social capital. They are more trusting towards relatives, neighbors, and have much higher levels of generalized trust" (2).

I work backwards from Abel's findings to form an assessment of Ntshebo's relationship with her neighbours. In addition to homelands, apartheid yielded the establishing of townships. In contrast to the homelands which were strategically sectioned out to be far from South Africa's urban areas, townships were established on cities' peripheries (Eidelberg 1997). Townships, much like the homelands, tended to have a dominant *lingua franca*. In the case of Katlehong, this was and in the present day continues to be Sesotho. Abel surmises that the "higher levels of generalized trust" that are found among individuals from the same former homeland are a result of sharing ethnicity, but also of experiencing and persevering through economic and social hardships together. When

Mmamosesi – the neighbour who intercepts Ntshebo's and the young girl's altercation – stands in defence of Ntshebo the way she does, her act of defence is reflective of the sense of empathy, loyalty and dependability that living together in homelands and townships tended to cultivate; that is, the general trust brought about as a result of hardship experienced alongside each other. By crafting Ntshebo's former neighbours as individuals who come to her defence with speed and without hesitation, Maake alludes to the great level of social capital generated within homelands and townships under the apartheid regime.

In addition to exchanging her desire for affectionate exchanges in marriage with a pursuit of deepened friendship with her sister Mmasetjhaba, Ntshebo begins to pursue self-actualisation and self-sustenance more deeply. Almost as if catalysed by Mmasetjhaba's repeated ascribing of value to her, Ntshebo makes the decision to leave Molemi, this after having begun her business of being a seamstress and selling *dishoeshoe* and *mekorotlo* to her community. Mmapula Brenda Sekatane writes of how,

> [p]ost-apartheid South Africa inherited a business environment based on an economic system characterized by deprivation, political instability, adversarial labor relations, cheap migrant labor, and massive income and wealth disparities. The world of work was also characterized by an appalling systematic discrimination against Blacks, women, and people with disabilities (97).

This, now, meant that the 1994 post-apartheid government would introduce programmes as well as a system of law that would grant the black South African woman a measure of vocational and economic favour hitherto denied her. These programmes and laws would include appropriate financial assistance, education and mentoring programmes as well as the initiation and development of networking structures. The introduction and development of these programmes aided the process of women, especially black women, becoming thriving entrepreneurs. Tidings P. Ndhlovu and Anita Spring (2009) discuss the failures of the Black Economic Empowerment programme (also often termed the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment programme). They find that the BEE programme, as at the year 2009, did not differ significantly from that which typified the apartheid era in its racial, gender and class distribution of business opportunities. A slight difference was seen in the distribution of these opportunities in business opportunities following the programme's transition to its Broad-Based nature, although it, too was not without its

shortcomings, particularly as pertains to equitable distribution with regard to gender. This produced a need for additional measures that would target black female unemployment directly, along with black female entrepreneurial ventures. The 2005 Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGI-SA) was initiated by former Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for this very purpose, and had as part of its mandate the facilitation of women-led BEE deals; compilation of a black women business directory; maximising sector-charter benefits for women; identifying government procurement areas able to be reserved for women as well as introducing a national procurement training course for women (Mears 2006). Provision of funds for women entrepreneurs – the result of a collaboration between the DTI, Eskom, Umsobomvu and the Women's Development Bank – was mandated soon after the initiative's inception[5] (O'Malley archive: 2006). The trends of female employment in South Africa are in themselves telling of the success of these initiatives, as the female share of South Africa's broad labour force was counted at 44.8%. By 2005 there was a 4% increase at 48.8% (Van der Westhuizen et. al. 2006). As it stands, however, the female unemployment rate in South Africa is 35.7%[6], showing us the lucid failure of these programmes to date.

Ntshebo's business ventures form a kind of parallel with the post-apartheid woman's desire to become a self-sufficient woman – the 'New Woman' referenced in previous chapters. She begins to depend on her own income for sustenance and goes on to hire a literal room of her own. These are ways in which Ntshebo exchanges her desire for affectionate exchanges in her marriage with learning to more deeply love and value herself.

Conclusion

[5] See https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/site/q/03lv02409/04lv02410/05lv02415/06lv02416.htm

[6] See https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=16533#:~:text=Unemployment%20numbers%20for%20women%20remain,point%20year%2Don%2Dyear.

This chapter has mapped out the state and domestic parallels in *Mangolo a Nnake*, beginning with disillusion and discontent both on the part of the body politic as well as Ntshebo in Maake's text. Ntshebo's discontent is due to her marriage turning out to be devoid of affection and care and, therefore, antonymic to that for which she initially hopes. I read Ntshebo's disappointment and hurt as allegorical of the larger disappointment of the post-apartheid nation as a result of neocolonialism. The chapter has also explored the parallel of Ntshebo as 'New Woman' who grows in her desire for and execution of self-actualisation, and the birth of a 'New' South Africa. I discuss the ways in which post-apartheid South Africa experiences progressive stuntedness in growth – Timothy Wright's posited "ruined time" taking place in real time. I explore under this trope of a 'New South Africa' and the trope of friendship and self-value the complex relationship with happiness black South Africans experience post-apartheid.

Conclusion

This study set out to offer a reading of Nhlanhla P. Maake's 1999 novella, *Mangolo a Nnake*, an epistolary novella that explores apartheid South Africa as it unfolded in Thokoza, Katlehong from 1991 to 1993. As were all areas in apartheid South Africa, Thokoza was riddled with police violence at the time, resulting in mass loss of lives at the hands of the state. In addition to bringing about mass deaths, this violence also yielded deep-set trauma for those who were first-hand witnesses thereof. It is this trauma and all-round emotional unsettlement that causes Ntshebo – our protagonist – to begin writing letters to her Lesotho-based sister, Mmasetjhaba, who indeed responds to the letters her sister writes her. The two then engage in their own special 'letterlogue' in this way. This thesis explored black female interiority under the apartheid regime, and how being under the regime as a black woman was able to serve as springboard to black female self-actualisation. It also explored the possibilities of black female friendship under conditions such as those of the regime as well as geographical distance. This research has explored what African women need to write; the necessity of isolation in epistolarity; muzzled voices in romantic heterosexual relationships; the capacity for sadness to birth courage as well as psychosocial support in female friendship, and how all these work together for the cultivation of female self-actualisation in the midst of domestic and state oppression.

While Maake is the novella's author, he skilfully crafts a protagonist who is a writing character herself. By constructing Ntshebo as a writing character who exercises and displays her interest in the literary by way of carefully chosen subject matter, diction, tone and vocabulary – as well as preferred printing presses – Maake ensures the employment of emotive language, attempting the cultivation of intimacy with the reader. He additionally tacitly reveals that Ntshebo lives her life somewhat against the apartheid-template grain, by living in pursuit of knowledge and self-sufficiency. Therefore, what we have seen in the analysis of *Mangolo* is that Ntshebo lives a life of deliberate and coincidental resistance against the regime. We are shown through Ntshebo that various literary devices are able to cultivate intimacy in a reader. We have also learned from this analysis is resistance against the regime in the form of gradual proliferation of the 'New Woman'.

Financial abuse and self-actualisation

The typifying traits of the Victorian era – in particular, the infantilising and general maltreatment of women – trickle down years after the era's official end in 1901 and resurface in the apartheid era in 1948 down to the close of the 20th century and beyond. The regime's continued firm hold onto Victorian ways of thinking and living resulted in a general delay to the process of self-actualisation, particularly among black South African women. This is with specific regard to their socio-economic standing. While society did provide room for working class women during the Victorian era, women were very constricted within their social classes; furthermore in the work place. This study has illustrated practical financial abuse on the part of black South African men under the regime towards their black female romantic counterparts. Molemi makes multiple attempts to compromise Ntshebo's streams of income, from attempting to discourage her by asking her what she could possibly learn now that she has gone past the age of thirty, to stealing her record book and visiting the clients who have made use of her sewing services on credit, in order to forcefully get these clients to cough up the remaining money they owe so he is able to abscond with the money – these and more are practical forms of economic/financial abuse as it plays out in *Mangolo*.

"What do women need to write?"

This explication on financial abuse came about as substantiation for a question that I ask in this thesis – what is it that black women need in order to write? I formed an assessment of the age-old yet ever-valuable contributions of the late Virgina Woolf and read *Mangolo* through Ann Aronson and Ursula LeGuin who are in conversation with Woolf. Rather than to follow through with Woolf's findings that put it forward that a woman needs "money and a room of her own" in order to write, I surmised that While Woolf writes of a "room" – "the symbol of financial security, time and individual freedom," according to Atoussa S. – I proffer that the surpassing need is space, the space and the time to write. Space and time can be said to be inextricably bound. Encyclopaedia Britannica defines space as "a boundless, three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction". LibreTexts define time as "change, or the interval over which

change occurs". Therefore, this analysis formed the conclusion that events and change require space, and that these cannot occur outside of time, causing space and time to find definition through each other. Ntshebo begins this series of letters with the words, "Ke ngola tjena ke diphateng, he ke na le motho ya ntlhokomelang. Pelo ya ka e dutla madi ka moo ke sa kgoneng le ho hlalosa…" (1) – "I am in bed as I write this, with no one to even take care of me. My heart bleeds in a way that I cannot describe…". I also concluded, then that the three primary things *Mangolo* crafts women as needing in order to write are space, time and affective prompting.

Self-fulfilment, not self-centredness

Female solidarity and psychosocial support in *Mangolo* are additional explorations made in this thesis. While Molemi makes derogatory and all-round abusive commentary towards Ntshebo, her sister Mmasetjhaba proves ever-ready to counter Molemi's psychological and emotional abuse with written encouragement as well as financial support. Molemi sabotages Ntshebo's attempts at generating an income, while Mmasetjhaba displays a feminism that Omofolabo Ajayi-Soyinka describes as "support[ing] self-fulfilment but not self-centredness". She supplies the first *dishoeshoe* and *mekorotlo* that Ntshebo sells, and can therefore be counted as supplying Ntshebo's start-up capital. I concluded that there is a way in which this financial support works to counter Molemi's psychological abuse. Mmasetjhaba is in a financial position to help her sister, and this signals self-fulfilment, to a degree. She shows that she is not self-centred by her willingness to assist Ntshebo to further self-actualise. By sending her sister the resources she needs for her business, Mmasetjhaba's deeds do speak. They are illustrative of her faith and confidence in her sister to become a proprietor in her own right and thereby serve as psychological support. Without words, she gives Ntshebo the reassurance that she is capable to bring about her own independence.

Ntshebo finds herself caught in a moral crisis when she gains awareness of Lefosa's affair with Motshewa. She is unsure what to do as Lefosa is Molemi's friend and Motshewa is primarily her tenant. She writes Mmasetjhaba, asking her if she should approach her husband asking him if he is aware of the affair, or if she should be silent regarding the matter for fear of interfering where she does not belong and subsequently receiving a

tongue-lashing, or worse, from her husband. Mmasetjhaba reverts with guidance, and this in turn can be counted as social support on Mmasetjhaba's part. She is concerned with Ntshebo's financial wellbeing, but also with her right-standing in her social circles.

Post-apartheid disillusionment and humour as therapy

This thesis has also looked at the aspect of storytelling and humour as therapy in female friendships. Ntshebo recounts a time Molemi returned home with his underwear and socks turned over, seemingly completely unaware that he had returned home in this state. His return looking this way only confirms that which Ntshebo had been suspecting for a while, yet she finds humour in the occurrence, laughing as it happens, and incorporating humour even as she relates it to Mmasetjhaba.

This thesis has also gone on to explore post-apartheid disillusionment as seen or alluded to in *Mangolo*. Ntshebo enters marriage with the expectation that her husband's presence will be a palpable and delightful one. This does not happen as he is absent at key points in their marriage, such as her miscarriages and the like. When he is present, however, one could say that his presence is a toxic one, as whenever he is at home he expresses dissatisfaction of some kind with Ntshebo and is abusive in his expression. I have put Ntshebo and Molemi's marriage forward as an allegory of post-apartheid South Africa and the disillusionment that so riddles its citizens. South Africans' joyful anticipation for the then forthcoming abolition of apartheid can be compared to the collective joy often expressed during movements that overturn oppressive regimes. This joyful anticipation and disillusionment that followed the entering into power of the first post-apartheid government can be compared – though at a lesser scale – to the disillusionment Ntshebo experiences when she marries Molemi.

I concluded in this thesis that Molemi's opposition to Ntshebo's attempts at upward economic mobility can be considered an allegory of post-apartheid programmes such as the Black Economic Empowerment programme and the Reconstruction and Development Programme, in that these programmes were introduced as bearing the great probability of black economic advancement, and yet produced menial results over the timeline in which prodigious improvement was promised.

‘Ruined time’ and hope deferred

I have also related Ntshebo and Molemi’s marriage to the ‘ruined time’ mentioned by Timothy Wright in his essay, “Ruined time and post-revolutionary allegory in Nthikeng Mohlele’s *Small Things*”. ‘Ruined time’ according to Wright is a time that is mourned, not because it does not come to pass necessarily, but due to its bearing of the imprints of what was promised, rather than the realised promise in its entirety.

An allegory of internal displacement can also be found in *Mangolo*. Ntshebo is driven away from her own matrimonial home by one of Molemi’s love interests, a girl who Ntshebo narrates to Mmasetjhaba looks young enough to be her and Molemi’s daughter. Ntshebo relates that the girl looks young enough to be in school, and the likelihood, indeed, is that the young girl abandoned school drawn by the allure of what little assets she saw Molemi in possession of, and decided to cohabit with him. This turn of events bears similarity to the apartheid forced removals in that the apartheid government put the homeland system in place following increased urbanisation and industrialisation among the black population under the regime. Homelands were meant to maintain white econo-political supremacy in South Africa due to the black population proving a threat to white economic and political standing. Molemi’s young mistress seems to chase Ntshebo away because she sees Ntshebo as a threat to her financial standing, insomuch that she refers to the house – Ntshebo and Molemi’s house – as her own. She is aware that should Ntshebo be present in the home, her own place in Molemi’s life, and more importantly her own financial standing, is compromised.

Mangolo a Nnake is a skilfully, intricately written novella, exploring state violence under the apartheid regime, alluding to post-apartheid neocolonialism, and filled with instances of storgic – that is, familial – love. And this thesis has explored the ways in which and degrees to which these tropes are interwoven.

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