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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to read Winnie Madikizela Mandela as an intellectual. Through this research I want to examine whether Madikizela Mandela emerges from an intellectual tradition influenced by the political and intellectual discourse that existed at the time within the country such as the ideology of the African National Congress (not to say that this was without external influence but I would argue that the ideology of the ANC evolved to fit the domestic politics of the day), the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Panther Party and Black Consciousness. Through trying to understand Madikizela Mandela's intellectual journey this thesis will explore the larger question of intellectual production. Lewis Gordon argues that it is often presumed that theory is north and experience is south.¹ As a result black people are often excluded from being possible intellectuals and shapers of intellectual discourse but are rather relegated to the categories of 'actors' rather than thinkers.

The point of departure of my research will be through Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's image as it provides a clue into the type of intellectual influences and ideologies that she subscribed to. This flows from Charles R. Garoian and Yvonne M. Gaudelius' "The Spectacle of Visual Culture" where they argue for images teaching us what to see and think.² Winnie Madikizela Mandela was a frequently photographed person and it is through these images that we witness an evolution in the way she presented herself which, as this research argues, is influenced by certain intellectual traditions that guide the black liberation struggle. In *What's My Name: Black Vernacular Intellectuals*, Grant Farred explores the role of clothing in the conveying of intellectualism influenced by a certain ideology. Therefore I argue that Winnie Madikizela's iconicity is more than conventional standards of beauty, or her link to her husband Nelson

¹ Garoian, C.R and Gaudelius, Y.M, "The Spectacle of Visual Culture", *Studies in Art Education*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (Summer, 2004), pp. 298-312.

² Ibid.

Mandela. It is rather a tool that she uses to convey an ideology and this complements that which she says when she chooses to speak.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all sources I have quoted or used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

_____ N. Valela _____

Ntombizikhona Valela

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It is through God's grace that I have been afforded the opportunity to produce this work of which I am proud.

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Chapter 1

Saying her name- Winnie as Black Vernacular Intellectual

“I am 22 million”- Winnie Mandela

Introduction

In the broader South African collective memory Winnie Madikizela Mandela is viewed as merely the wife of Nelson Mandela. Although she is recognized as having contributed to the anti-apartheid struggle she is acknowledged within the realm of “mother of the nation” which casts her in the shadow of her husband. Because of the age difference between her and Nelson Mandela as well as her striking beauty, Winnie is viewed with a voyeuristic gaze locked within “unthinking girlhood” and this age difference further perpetuates this fantasy of the South African collective gaze. As such her political involvement and thought revolves around Mandela’s convictions and ideology. She is reduced to a mouth piece for her husband. While she claims to be a representative of her husband and also states that part of her struggle was to always keep the Mandela name alive, South Africa’s collective memory does not allow for Winnie to have her own intellectual identity.

There is also the view that she is an instigator of violence particularly in the 1980s where she makes a call for the use of necklacing in order to deal with collaborators. She was also allegedly involved in the murder of Stompie Seipei. She has been allocated other negative traits such as being greedy and corrupt and this is further entrenched in the media coverage of her claims of ownership of the home in Qunu. She is therefore seen as a “fallen mother”.

While this research does not seek to absolve her or serve as apologist work, I discuss the double standard of this view in regards to how women are not as easily absolved by society of atrocities committed in moments of revolution (which may come with violence) unlike men. This double standard therefore does not recognise her intersectionality as wife, as woman, as human and as a revolutionary. Therefore this research explores how Winnie emerges as an intellectual independent of her husband and argues for her crafting her own intellectualism because for her to be seen at some point by the ANC as a threat speaks to her formulating her own ideas. This research seeks to also establish whether or not the violence that Winnie is alleged to have instigated is guided by an intellectual framework.

Grant Farred's *What's My Name? Black Vernacular Intellectuals*³ provides a framework and a guide to thinking and reimagining the definition of an intellectual by expanding the elitist view of what it means to be an intellectual. This flows from Antoni Gramsci's definition of the organic intellectual. Similar to organic intellectuals, vernacular intellectuals speak into the political climate and of the society in which they find themselves in a language that is in touch with the subaltern and they have the ability to articulate the marginalised lived experience of the community from which they emerge.

On the back of Farred's argument I explore the role of her occupation as medical social worker in her politics and intellectualism. In the first biography about her *Part of My Soul*⁴ as well as interviews she gives while under banishment and police surveillance, she speaks of apartheid as a sickness. Further, I explore the psychological impact of solitary confinement in moulding her politics and her intellectualism. Her banishment to Brandfort and the work she does in sensitizing and invigorating resistance against apartheid in Brandfort as well as the social work she does in starting a crèche for children for the benefit of working mothers

³ Farred, G. 2003. *What's My Name: Black Vernacular Intellectuals*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

⁴ Mandela, W. 1985. *Part of My Soul*. London: Penguin Books.

as well inspiring the community to grow their own food in their gardens not only speaks to Winnie having moulded her own political ideas but even further breaking away from the shadow of her husband.

Theoretical Framework

What's My Name? Black Vernacular Intellectuals explores the contributions of 4 black cultural icons: Muhammad Ali, CLR James, Stuart Lewis and Bob Marley. Through these 4 icons this book challenges the notion of the intellectual and who gets to claim space or be identified as one given that intellectual hubs are conventionally perceived as being situated in Europe and occupied by white men. Farred's work falls within the canon of what Lewis Gordon has termed 'shifting the geography of reason'.⁵

An intellectual's role is also often at the periphery of struggle rather than at the forefront of political struggle. The intellectual and the activist share a symbiotic relationship in which the intellectual creates a grammar of struggle based on the work of the activist on the ground. Therefore intellectual work is the outcome of political production on the ground and can also inform political production. However intellectuals are often met with suspicion because of their operating at a distance from popular struggle.

This is what sets the Black Vernacular Intellectual apart. The existence of this type of intellectual, similar to Gramsci's Organic Intellectual not only expands how we define the intellectual as and who gets to claim such space, but this type of intellectual enjoys the advantage of moving through centred and peripheral spaces. Farred makes a case for intellectual work existing within the activist space rather than these being in some ways

⁵ Gordon, L.R., "Disciplinary Decadence and the Decolonisation of Knowledge" *IAfrica Deveopment*, Volume 39, No. 1, 2014, pp. 81-92.

mutually exclusive. Intellectuals and activists do not operate on opposite ends but within popular struggle where all actors have the capacity for intellectual production.

This book begins with an exploration of boxer, Muhammad Ali's intellectual legacy. The very title of the book- "What's my name" is borrowed from the words used by Ali in a fight against Sonny Liston. This was the turning point personally for Muhammad Ali who had until this moment been known as Cassius Clay the Louisville Lip before his conversion to Islam. Farred argues that Ali's conversion from Christianity to Islam as symbolised by the name change from Cassius to Muhammad came at a significant moment in the history of the colonial world (territories that had been under settler rule in Asia, South America and Africa).

Ali's claiming and displaying his Islamic faith apart from western colonial Christianity (the name change being the most tangible and explicit of symbol of this conversion) served as a beacon for decolonising territories as the era of independence dawned across most of the world.

While Ali may have enjoyed access to elite spaces, this access was not transcendent. This was highlighted by his arrest and sentencing to prison after refusing the call to serve in the United States army during the Vietnam War years. This moment saw Ali placing himself as not only as an ally to struggle within the United States in the era of the Civil Rights of Movement but an ally to a global black struggle for decolonisation and liberation from white supremacy.

Through this book Grant Farred points out that intellectual production in colonial spaces requires creativity. The adjective "vernacular" provides us with clues of how oppressed peoples communicated to one another in conditions of censorship. The oppressed find ways in which to speak back to colonial conditions as well as work out terms of decolonisation and liberation outside of prescribed conventional methods. An aspect of black vernacular

intellectuality as seen through Ali is the sartorial aesthetic in line with the Black Panther Party's ethos- "Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud".

Farred contrasts Ali whose suits were tailored and shirts starched (also a characteristic of the aesthetic of the Nation of Islam) against George Foreman, one of Ali's sporting rivals who wore blue shirts symbolic of the working class. The white gaze would read Foreman as a humble boxing champion while Ali as an entitled and arrogant man. This gaze points to the typical nature of response to liberatory work. The nature and objective of colonial policing is to ensure that black people have no means of claiming their person, and self-styling as they please. The white collar versus the blue collar aesthetic as seen on Ali and Foreman speaks to this and is reinforced by Foreman's palatability to white boxing audiences. That Foreman is read as humble as a result of his sartorial aesthetic is simply because he looks unthreatening because he styles himself as a representative of where blacks belong in society- a position pre-allocated by a white supremacist society. On the other hand Ali's sartorial aesthetic makes him an enemy of whiteness on the basis that he has aesthetically deviated from his pre-allocated position. Foreman's unthreatening dress garners white support while Ali is read as an "uppity nigger" due to his disruption of the white gaze.⁶

Ali used the boxing arena as not only a platform to showcase the unmatched skill of his time but to articulate the national and global black struggle. And on the Black Panthers in relation to Ali, Farred further expands on another aspect arguing:

"...and the Black Panthers were described as 'full of revolutionary violence, seemingly out of place in affluent America'. As far as the Panthers were concerned their 'revolutionary violence' was the only adequate response to a white American 'affluence' dependent on the systematic oppression, exploitation, and cultural degradation of blacks. The anticolonial style struggle was 'out of place' only if one did not read the United States as an imperialist state, which the panthers clearly did. Within this

⁶ Farred *What's My Name* pp44

context of a localised postcolonial militancy, Ali was able to construct himself as a self-consciously radical, oppositional black American, a 1960s Negro who aligned himself with the process of decolonisation in the third world.”⁷

Farred describes Ali’s articulation as containing “poetic brashness that was publicly alluring, identifiably black, determinedly radical, and frequently echoed in locales beyond the ring and his native America”.⁸

Ali’s victories were more than accolades. He styled these wins as symbolic of the existence of blackness within a society both nationally and globally which refuses to recognise it. Farred cites Ali’s defeat of Paterson and his response to such a fight where Ali makes clear that this was more than a win but a clear message to white America that such a black exists with a name he has given to himself and a religion outside of what he has been socialised to accept. A similar assertion is seen in Black Consciousness philosophy, Black Theology. This is a Christianity that counters Western Christianity which justifies white domination. This is also seen in what is described in *The Hidden History of Reading Cultures in South Africa*⁹ in which it is argued black imams and mission educated black used Islam and Christianity to preach a politics of liberation and a theology that argues God recognises blacks as human beings unlike the colonial mission project. The Greatest (as he was affectionately known based on his assertion that he was The Greatest) positioned himself, therefore as an oppositional icon in opposition to the white gaze.

Ali’s refusal to be drafted in the army to fight for America and his subsequent arrest resulted in Ali situating himself, as Farred describes, as a cultural and ideological dissident. At the centre of Farred’s argument is Ali’s public life of refusal. His blackness could not allow him

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ *ibid*.

⁹ Dick, A.L. 2012. *The Hidden History of South Africa’s Book and Reading Cultures*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press pp 24-25.

to be aloof to black reality even though he had begun his ascension to sporting glory. This was due to constant exposure to anti-black racism. Even as one of boxing's legends in the making his blackness was a reminder that the threat of brutality. Ali therefore recognised that he could never simply be an athlete, but use sport as an entry point to bringing blackness, a transgressive unpalatable blackness to the centre. Farred writes:

“Ali could never construct himself as “only” a boxer because he has been sentenced for his presumed ideological transgressions- the athlete who had rejected the duties thrust upon him by a state he recognised as neo-imperialist and racist- Houston doubly inscribed him as the resistance of the vernacular impulse, the boxer who insisted on the proper speaking of his name, and the boxer who was punished because of what he had iterated by the speaking and the adoption of his name. In Houston, the name Muhammad Ali came fully into its ideological own: it enunciated it's uniquely political resonance and it inscribed the oppressed athlete as vernacular intellectual. While his moment of crisis did not visibly transform Ali, like Marley's did, it nevertheless signalled a major disruption- and interruption- of his self-conception: he had suffered privation at the hands of the state.”¹⁰

To be black is to be vernacular. It begins with claiming this side of the antithesis or ontology. The vernacular operates in the perpetual periphery.

A problematic reality remains that intellectual spaces continue to be an exclusive privilege of the west. That this can potentially change is neither here nor there rather the vernacular highlights life at the margins. The centre is of no particular importance when it comes to vernacular intellectual work but attention becomes shifted to the margins the moment the vernacular intellectual enters the centre not to assimilate to its culture but to resist it inducing the geographical shift of reason.

Ali through his dress, through the use of Ebonics in his speech, through his refusal to be drafted in a war against a people he identified as kin or the duel in Zaire (present-day

¹⁰ Farred, *What's My Name* pp 41.

Democratic Republic of Congo and former Belgian colony) was Ali explicitly and deliberately claiming his place in the African diaspora. He not only then shifts reason from the centre to the margin within American society but he becomes a diasporic vernacular intellectual. In addition to this, the chant, “Ali Bomaye!” meaning Ali, kill him (this is with reference to the Rumble in the Jungle fight between him and Foreman) that allows for Ali to place himself as a diasporic cultural icon. The African language and the black American descendant of slaves it seeks to affirm- the black American who refuses to pander to colonial policing- allows for the past and the present as embodied by blackness to meet in this moment where the African continent is breaking colonial chains and entering an era of independence.

In the case of Winnie Madikizela Mandela being read as black vernacular intellectual, Lynn Thomas’ paper, “The Modern Girl and Racial Respectability in 1930s South Africa” discusses the role ideology played in influencing dress choices among many black women. ¹¹Thomas further argues that these women faced heavy policing from black men citing the disdain men had for the wearing of make-up as they saw this as women attempting to “whiten” themselves thus reflecting a lack of pride for their blackness. This type of argument was influenced by the Pan-Africanist ideology of Marcus Garvey.

Winnie’s dress choices reflect to an extent the various political spaces that black people were navigating- spaces that were influenced by certain political and intellectual discourse of the struggle for black liberation. Historically in South African society dress was a marker of distinction among black people in the Eastern Cape between amagqobhoka who were the Christian converts and mission educated blacks and amaqaba who wore red ochre on their faces and continued to practice African spirituality and culture completely without Christian

¹¹ Thomas, L., “The Modern Girl and Racial Respectability in 1930s South Africa” *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (2006), pp. 461-490

influence. In *Winnie Mandela: A Life* Anné Mariè du Preez Bezdrob touches on this in the earlier pages of this biography where Christian Methodist beliefs had an influence on the way she presented herself through her dress. This is also emphasized through the image of Winnie's parents who are Mpondo royalty but converted to Christianity though they do not completely forsake their ethnic heritage. There are heavy undertones of respectability in the way that Winnie as a child growing up in Bizana is influenced by mission education and Christian beliefs and one of the ways through which this is articulated is through her style of dress. This articulation of respectability through dress is not unique to the South African context. In *Nation and its Fragments* Partha Chatterjee argues, in relation to the middle-class Bengali women, that Indian Nationalism adopted western perceptions of womanhood which would influence how women presented themselves in order to also make a class distinction according to the caste system.¹² Similar to the South African experience, education was used as a tool to impose particular criteria of femininity in line with a nationalism influenced by Empire.

Thomas' paper further engages the influence of both Garveyism and Pan-Africanism over black South Africans. Many black South Africans begin to adopt the ideology and vocabulary of these transnational movements to make sense of their own political oppression.¹³ Thomas's work is supported by the recent work by Dick's arguments in *The Hidden History*. Dick shows how the Caribbean and African American literature of the early 20th century made its way to South African shores through sailors passing through.¹⁴ As Richard Pithouse has argued port cities such as Durban became sites where these transnational ideas flourished. Both Dick and Pithouse argue that this literature and these

¹² Thomas, L., "The Modern Girl".

¹³ Dick, A.L. *The Hidden History of South Africa's Book and Reading Cultures*, 2012 Toronto: University of Toronto Press pp31.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

ideas were often influential over various struggles faced by black South Africans throughout the 20th century.¹⁵

The influence of Black Power ideology becomes visible in the way that Winnie presents herself in terms of her appearance. She evolved from a young girl influenced by 1930-1950s Christian respectability and beauty pageant fashion to a look that echoes ideas of Afrocentricity, black pride, black beauty and black theology. Although she maintains her steadfast Christian belief, this belief, like her politics evolved and became less about respectability and more about God the liberator. The role of the black church was fundamental in moulding Madikizela Mandela's intellectualism and spirituality. According to Winnie it provided her with the strength to survive extreme repression and kept her steadfast in resisting apartheid.¹⁶ Winnie's attention to her appearance, similarly to the way Ali presented himself, under a highly repressive regime was an important aspect of her resistance. While it is reduced to a thin reading of beauty politics as a result of an obsession with the fairy tale of how a young political prince (and also a Thembu royal, Nelson Mandela) wooed a *Drum Magazine* cover girl and real-life Mpondo princess, Winnie's presentation was an important message to the black masses that she would refuse to allow her spirit to be broken by the apartheid regime. We also must be cautious, however, when exploring the meaning of brokenness under a repressive regime as apartheid as it cannot be argued that no black person was unbroken in varying degrees by the state, however for the purpose of being a symbol of hope as well as her choosing deliberate silence in certain moments, her sartorial aesthetic would remain one of the most consistent means for communicating to black South Africans her commitment to resistance regardless of harassment by the state. Winnie's choice to keep the Mandela name alive becomes the reason Nelson is catapulted to international fame resulting in mobilisation for the call to bring

¹⁵ Mandela, W. *Part of My Soul* 1985 London: Penguin Books pp 103.

¹⁶ Mandela *Part of My Soul* pp34.

apartheid to an end. It is her visibility that allows this. Her sartorial aesthetic becomes one of the main tools for allowing her to take her place as one of the most important political and cultural icons of the world.

Farred then follows the chapter on Ali with the intellectual and cricketer, CLR James of Trinidad and Tobago. Farred reads James (who enjoys status as intellectual because of the written work he has produced) as an intellectual living life on the margins of oppressed communities. Cricket becomes the vehicle through which a communities struggle against colonial society is articulated.

Through James we see a vernacular intellectual who recognises certain limitations as a product of colonial culture. He is not able to fully articulate all terms of liberation based on the reality that there are certain lived experiences he may not know. His intention is not to be a vanguard of the Pan-African cause, but this does not mean he has no place in the collective struggle for black liberation. James and the black society he navigated is comparable to the South African experience and the mission-education project that saw the rise of a black intelligentsia among the wider poorer black classes. This chapter reflects the social class differences separating black folk. This chapter punctuates the colonialist project of creating face-value boundaries between the oppressed black people- education being the smoke mirror through which to achieve this. The reality is racial discrimination in the colonial setting rendered all blacks regardless of education nothing more than a second class citizen. This is seen in Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks*¹⁷ which documents Fanon's navigation of live in the mother country in which regardless of his accomplishments these were in no way transcendental. At the same time James recognised that while transcendence could never be achieved he still could not claim space at the front of a movement for decolonisation and liberation as he understood that those at the front would be the most disenfranchised of the

¹⁷ Fanon, F. 1952. *Black Skin White Masks*. Editions de Seuil: France.

colonised world. As such, James provided analysis from the boundary providing as an accurate a commentary as possible while being able to claim a space within the political pitch. James is the type of Black Vernacular intellectual who comes to Pan-Africanism from a point of trauma at the realisation that his skin will always be a barrier to full acceptance into British culture regardless of assimilation to British colonial culture. This can be said of the likes of Sol Plaatje and their quest for suffrage just as the Native Land Act was about to be promulgated in 1913 leaving all blacks dispossessed of land. Skin colour is at the centre of colonial domination and repression and who falls into which category regardless of the hue that may differentiate black people in the case of social or class difference in Trinidad- a façade to create a sense of division.

Following from this chapter, Farred engages the intellectual contributions of Stuart Hall who like James was from the Caribbean (Jamaica). Hall can be read as the Vernacular Intellectual who comes to black intellectuality and Pan-Africanist thought with the objective of looking to his history as a privileged black person from the Caribbean. There is a sense of loss and dispossession that the likes of Hall endure when entering the academy as “scholarship boys”.¹⁸

Access to education through the scholarship brings about the effects of distinction from the poor or less privileged community from which one emerges. The scholarship becomes the vehicle through which the poor but gifted student enters a world that fast-tracks their social status. However in Hall’s in the halls of intellectual ivory towers like Oxford where he pursued his studies there exists a culture of erasure of black lived realities and an insistence in not engaging such in a changing post the Second World War world in which the winds of decolonisation and independence were sweeping the global south.

¹⁸ Farred, *What’s My Name* 149.

Domestically, Britain is experiencing increased numbers in immigration as black and brown people from the Caribbean and Asia move to the metropolis from the decolonising territories. These are individuals who have permanently moved to the metropolis but remain at the periphery of British culture which further insists on maintaining a white identity. Britain is experiencing a post-colonial moment like its former territories but its post-colonial reality is rooted in the settling of citizens originating from its previous territories. Britain is to an extent creolising against its will and this is further evidenced by immigrant communities who, rather than assimilate to British culture, carry with them cultural idioms which they maintain in the metropolis. Hall, who emigrated from the Caribbean toward the end of his teenage years, is able to regain an identity that he had disconnected with as a result of years spent in England pursuing his studies at Oxford.

Farred argues that it through the emergence of Cultural Studies- a discipline that Farred helped usher into the academy- as well as identity politics that Hall begins to take the work of Marx and Gramsci- particularly Gramsci's notions of the organic intellectual, and craft for himself a vernacular that responds to and articulates black lived reality in England in similar ways that Tariq Ali contributed to cultural politics for Asian people living in England.¹⁹

The birth of Cultural Studies- a response to the academy's silence regarding black life- is what Lewis Gordon describes in his paper "Disciplinary Decadence and the Decolonisation of Knowledge" in which he discusses the need for the shift of the geography of reason. Gordon argues Western learning and colonisation has resulted in the constructing of people of colour as "problem people".²⁰ Of the academy, Gordon writes:

"The subsequent unfolding story is familiar to most of us who study colonisation. Along with the expansion of Christian kingdoms into nation-states and their colonies, which resulted over the course of

¹⁹ Farred, *What's My Name* 155.

²⁰ Gordon, *Disciplinary Decadence* 84.

a few hundred years into European civilisation on a global scale, was also a series of epistemological developments that have literally produced new forms of life: new kinds of people came into being, while others disappeared, and whole groups of them occupy the age in an ambivalent and melancholic relationship by which they are indigenous to a world that, paradoxically, they do not belong to. These people have been aptly described by W.E.B. Du Bois as ‘problems’. They are a function of a world in which they are posited as illegitimate although they could exist nowhere else. I am speaking here primarily of blacks and Indians/Native Americans, and by blacks I also mean to include Australian Aboriginals and related groups in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean. Such people are treated by dominant organisations of knowledge, especially those falling under the human or social sciences, as problems instead of people who face problems. Their problem status is a function of the presupposed legitimacy of the systems that generate them. In effect, being perfect, the systems that produce their condition resist blame for any injustice or contradiction that may be avowed by such people. They become extraneous to those systems’ functions in spite of having already been generated by them. The contradictory nature of such assessments distorts the process of reasoning and the production of knowledge into doubled structures of disavowals and concealment, at times even with claims of transparency, and more problem people result. A consequence of such reflection is the proliferation of more kinds of problem people.”²¹

The role of the black vernacular intellectual as seen in Hall and James’ contributions is to dismantle this reading of black people as problems. The academy and the problem with intellectual spaces is its erasure of black lived experience.

Winnie like James enters politics with a background rooted in colonial education and respectability. Her grandfather Chief Mazingi had rejected African spiritual and traditional practices converting to Christianity and allowing his children to be mission educated after having encountered Methodist missionaries wishing to establish a mission station in the Bizana district where his Great Place was situated.²² Winnie would attend Methodist mission schools where she would to an extent be assimilated to Victorian culture although her father

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Meer, F. 1988. *Higher than Hope: Mandela*. Durban: Art Printers 118

and paternal grandmother made a point of educating her about the effects of colonialism on black people in the form of land dispossession and genocide.

Following her matriculation from Shawbury High School, Winnie would become a 'scholarship girl' to the Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Work in which she would train as the first black medical social worker. There are similarities that can be made with the migration movements of Caribbean and South Asian folk who emigrated to the metropolis from the colonies and the migration of black people from the homelands and rural villages to the urban centres like Johannesburg and Cape Town. Winnie is clearly no exception. Like Hall would never return to the home from which she came however a difference between Winnie and Hall is she maintains links with the Eastern Cape. Migration and settlement to the townships in the urban centres results in the formation of a black vernacular reflective of the varied backgrounds from which these individuals emerged. This is especially evident in Johannesburg where Winnie currently lives. Winnie's work as social worker would expose her to the extent of the effects of apartheid. This would lay the foundation for the kind of black vernacular intellectual that she would become.

It is her social work experience that would not only enable her to encourage vegetable gardening at Brandfort where she had been banished in 1978 along with the founding of crèche as previously stated. Winnie is has impeccable political and intellectual skill arguably surpassing her counterparts both within and outside the ANC as she is able to adapt to the political idioms of resistance from the era of the Defiance Campaign to the 1980s when resistance to repression had reached its peak. Her relevance in the 1970s and 1980s is further punctuated by her youthfulness given that she entered politics at a relatively much younger age than Nelson, her former husband and the men and woman who would become her political peers by virtue of her link to her husband. While Winnie is viewed as an enigmatic figure and to an extent a fiercely private individual she (through her visibility while keeping

the Mandela name alive) strategically allows herself to be accessible in service to her people without giving too much away. This allows her voice to have greater resonance with young people and disenfranchised black population as a whole.

In the final chapter Farred reads Marley's body musical work as speaking to the black condition not only in Jamaica where Marley is born and raised, but it also articulates the political and intellectual work of black people across the world with increased resonance on the African continent.

Marley's music articulates the experiences of young blacks navigating brutality in the form of police violence and capitalism. Through Marley, Farred highlights the role of the song in the African liberation movement as well the post-colonial movement. His music works as both rallying cry for the decolonising masses to take their place at freedom's table and as warning against falling into a capitalist trap perpetuating the structural violence of colonialism. Marley invites his audience to imagine with him what true decolonisation would mean for black and oppressed masses. This is especially articulated in the song War. This song sends a message of the work that is yet to be done that a shift in power between the Empire and the liberation movement is not complete until colonial structures that perpetuate colonial and repressive culture is dismantled. Marley can therefore be read as a vernacular intellectual interested in the labour of dismantling the institutional cultures that remain long after colonial names of countries are erased as in the case of "Zimbabwe".²³

Farred invites us to view Marley's music as text beyond composition and musical structure. Farred has taken this music seriously and contextualised the emergence of Reggae music reclaiming and highlighting its political past from its gentrified and depoliticised presents. He positions Marley as Third World icon- a title that Marley himself would have embraced

²³ Farred, *What's My Name* 262.

because of the decolonisation project which he championed through his music. Marley's music takes seriously a Pan-African heritage of the Caribbean through citations of the likes of Marcus Garvey. The use of Jamaican Patois is not just simply the use of language but also a centering of a marginalised communities vocabulary on to the global stage. Marley, like Ali (and like the likes of Linton Kwesi Johnson and Fela Kuti) shift the geography of political and intellectual vocabulary through the employ of Rastafarian idioms and spirituality in addition to and beyond language.

While Hall is a diasporic intellectual who whose diasporic work focusses specifically on immigrants who have permanently settled in the metropolis, Marley like James champions a Pan-Africanism that looks to the past so to allow for setting terms of black unity towards liberation. Unlike Hall it is not a return to the past. Race for Marley, as Farred argues is something that marks his life and musical career. The past and present have converged in the case of Marley and these influence the objective of his text which is to invite black people to work out a truly decolonised reality. It involves all blacks in the diaspora in the hopes of a return to a promised land (Zion) as inspired by Marley's religious beliefs and a heritage of Pan-Africanism inspired by Garvey.

While Winnie was not an artist, she would become the inspiration to protest music released in the anti-apartheid era. One of the most famous songs bearing her name is written by Yvonne Chaka Chaka with the chorus "I'm winning, winning my dear love". This chorus when sung without much enunciation sounds like "I'm Winnie/Winnie Mandela". This is the objective of the song- to be a chant of Winnie's name. This song was released in 1987 in which laws of censorship were in effect. This meant artists had to be creative in the ways they incorporated political messages against the repressive regime. Carlene Davis's "Winnie Mandela" narrates the Winnie's fight against apartheid not only the fight for her husband's freedom but the collective freedom of all South Africans. The lines "We'll be joining you as a warrior/we'll

be there/just you meet us at the border” reflect the worlds backing of Winnie and black South Africans. Further it is evidence of Winnie’s keeping the Mandela name alive beyond South Africa’s borders. Davis’ musical tribute to the struggle icon is not only a message of solidarity but is also a Pan-African rallying cry for the dismantling of apartheid.

Winnie’s political project of keeping the Mandela name alive not only inspires music written in her honour, but politically charged music in honour of Nelson Mandela and other political icons begins to sweep the airwaves. Brenda Fassie’s “Jail to Jail” is one such example. This up-tempo pop single describes the Nelson’s incarceration and the fact that Brenda’s generation had not even been born when he had been sentenced to life in prison. That young people like Fassie are able to produce musical texts narrating South Africa’s political conditions is for the most part due to Winnie’s strategy of visibility and political activism. Winnie would encourage the work of artists as she understood they would reach spaces activists on the ground were unable to reach. International tours and concerts organised in solidarity with the liberation struggle would serve as platforms of expressing outrage at the apartheid state as well as open opportunity for the mobilising of support in the form of sanctions and boycotts in order to put pressure on the state to end its repression and free political prisoners.

Farred’s work is useful in making sense of what black intellectual work looks like in decolonising spaces. Farred provides clues to how one can seriously reflect on how we ought to construct black intellectuals based on the existing historical archive. In the case of Ali and Marley who would not be conventionally identified as intellectuals and theorists because of their occupations as sportsman and entertainer, Farred invites thought on the creative ways black people organise on political lines and work out creative ways of rallying the masses towards black liberation. In the case of Hall and James who were writers that can be identified as intellectuals we see that they use their writing and the interviews they gave for

the purpose of engaging their work to bring to shift our gaze from the centre (Europe) to the margins where black people have and continue to intellectually work out a political framework toward liberation.

A gap that is noticeable, however, in Farred not engaging black women as vernacular intellectuals. While this work provides the framework through which I will be engaging Winnie Mandela, its loud silence regarding black women's intellectual contributions speaks to a culture of erasure concerning black women's intellectual contributions.

Through this work, Farred like Gramsci stretches our concepts of who qualifies as intellectual. The exploration of Muhammad Ali as intellectual by using his speeches in response to boycotting Vietnam and his decision to fight in Zaire speak to a heritage black intellectual thought that exists outside of conventional intellectual spaces such as the academy. The podium at a press conference and the boxing served as spaces for the archiving of Ali's intellectual contribution. Ali's sartorial aesthetic provided made an intellectual and political statement in response to views of the black body as was the case of Ali in suits which had him received as an entitled "arrogant nigger" according to white spectators versus Foreman in blue shirts symbolising which was unthreatening and disruptive to the white gaze. Farred's has read Marley as text rather than merely entertainment citing reggae as a genre that signifies a political turning point in Jamaica and the decolonising world. Farred has taken seriously the role of the song as a theoretical framework for the cause of liberation. Yet Farred has not engaged what the likes of Nina Simone may mean for black vernacular intellectual production. HE has not engaged the erasure of the women Marley worked with, such as his wife Rita in the creative process of the music that would provide the soundtrack for what true African unity may look like for both Africans on the continent and in the diaspora. Farred does not engage the meaning of Toni Morrison's texts in centering black life and marginalizing the white gaze as a result of the shift she makes in her literary work.

Perhaps it may be a high expectation to have women represented in this case for the existence of the black vernacular. However it has left a gaping hole in the history of black political work particularly when a case is made for a collective liberatory politics.

However at the same time, Farred provides us with an open door to further expand the canon of black intellectual work and this research looks at Winnie Mandela as a prime example of black vernacular intellectual contributions of women.

Method

My interest in Winnie Madikizela Mandela's intellectual contribution was inspired by a male-centric intellectual canon in which women's intellectual contributions are all but ignored. The lack of engagement with Winnie's intellectual legacy meant there would be limited sources from which to sift as there is much that deals with her iconicity. What is also striking is following Nelson Mandela's death on 5 December 2013 was the reinvigoration of the label "Mother of the Nation" where messages of condolences poured in for Winnie, particularly on social media platforms even though Nelson was now married to Graça Machel. Graça is the widow of Mozambican President Samora Machel whose assassination (to which the apartheid government is linked) remains unsolved. Both women endure a similar existence of not having their intellectual contributions explored. This is even more so for Winnie whose intellectuality remains largely undermined. However I made use of the archive in the form of newspaper articles found at the Wits Historical Archives as well as recorded interviews available on YouTube as a result of organisations such as the Associated Foreign Press storing footage of these on this social media platform. There currently exist two major biographies written of Winnie that I have had access to: Bezdrop's *A life* and *Part of My Soul* which is an anthology of interviews Winnie has given. I also had the opportunity of meeting Winnie and having an introductory conversation with her. However due to a busy schedule

due to the local government elections in which she was a campaigner for the ANC as well as plans for her 80th birthday, and concerns over her health I was unable to conduct a detailed interview beyond what I was able to have with her which I have included in this research. It is my hope that in completion of my PhD I will be able to have the meeting that we are in the process of finalising for 2017.

Chapter Outline

Following from the above chapter detailing the theoretical framework I have followed for this research, is the second chapter reviewing the texts that engage Winnie's role and life in the anti-apartheid movement. I engage feminist texts as part of an attempt at tracing the Winnie's intellectual genealogies for the purpose of rebutting claims that Winnie is a protégé of Nelson Mandela's as is implied in his memoirs *The Long Walk to Freedom*. Here I explore the perception of the Mother of the Nation and its limitedness in allowing us to holistically engage with nuances of Winnie's intellectual legacy. The third chapter reviews Njabulo Ndebele's *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*. I have chosen to review this work outside of the literature review chapter as I am interested in exploring the role fiction plays in the recentering of women's intellectual contributions. Fiction is often used as a tool of political expression and I examine whether or not Ndebele's *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* offers a useful intervention regarding the unexplored intellectualism of Winnie Mandela. The fourth chapter engages the implications of Winnie being reduced to a wife. The fifth and final chapter contains a transcribed conversation with Winnie Mandela.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

“I quite enjoy the fact that I will always prick their consciences”- Winnie Mandela

Introduction

To date there is very little that has been written on Winnie Mandela’s intellectual contributions. It remains unclear why this is the case however I suspect it is due to a refusal to engage as controversial a political figure as her. The mainstream and the archive do not appear to know what to do with a woman who is considered a fallen hero especially when such a hero is linked to the murder of child.

There are two schools of thought related to Winnie’s political legacy which is signified by an article penned by Siphokazi Magadla and Vashna Jagarnath in response to Verashni Pillay’s “The 5 times Winnie failed us”: “Lady Macbeth” or “Mother of the Nation”.²⁴ A similar title- From ‘Mother of the Nation’ to ‘Lady Macbeth’: Winnie Mandela and Perceptions of Female Violence in South Africa, 1985–91”- by Emily Bridger²⁵ explores these perceptions. The expectation that Winnie ought to fall in either one of these neat categories reflects poorly on our engagement with the complexities of South Africa’s painful past. I am interested in Winnie’s statement “I am 22 million” as quoted in *Part of My Soul*. Here we are offered a clue into how we ought to engage Winnie’s contribution. This icon became a symbol of South African society’s fractured state as a result of apartheid. She offered herself as a mouthpiece of the revolution not merely Nelson’s messenger as she has often been misrecognised to have been.

²⁴ Jagarnath, V. and Magadla, S. 2014. ‘Lady Macbeth or Mother of the Nation’. In The Con, available online at: <https://www.theconmag.com/lady-macbeth-or-the-mother-of-the-nation>

²⁵ Bridger, E., “From Mother of the Nation to Lady Macbeth: Winnie Mandela and Perceptions of Female Violence in South Africa, 1985-91” *Gender & History*, Vol.27 No.2 August 2015, pp. 446–464.

In addition to this, patriarchy and the masculinisation of anti-apartheid nationalism has led to the ignoring of women's intellectual contributions. Biographical writing positions men as heroic figures embodying the political and intellectual. The women who are visible in the nationalist narrative are those in close proximity to the men who are read as the main protagonists of the liberation movement- namely the wives. Winnie's legacy falls prey to this reductive reading.

Black womanhood, feminism and the intellectual genealogy of Winnie Mandela

bell hooks's *Ain't I A Woman Black Women and Feminism*²⁶ explores the devaluation of black women from slavery to the feminist movement of the 20th Century. It discusses the use of sexual policing especially through rape and sexual violence of women as a tool of subordination from the moment black women were kidnapped and from the African continent to be sold as slaves in America to the moment they are forced labour on the plantations of the South. hooks further points out that rape and sexual violence (through harassment and the constant threatening to be raped) is perpetuated beyond the moment of the abolition of slavery. Rape and the devaluation of black womanhood through the policing of women's bodies contribute to the misrecognition of black women through shame stereotypes that continues to permeate modern American society.

hooks further argues that such shame stereotypes such as the "Jezebel" sexual deviant stereotype inform the disregard of black women's subjection to violence against their person and perpetuates the notion of black women being "unrapeable". hooks therefore makes the claim that rape as an institutionalised crime in America results in black women in particular being unable to secure justice. One therefore cannot historicise such institutionalisation by locking it into the moment of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade period. Pumla Dineo Gqola in

²⁶ hooks, b. 1981. *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. Boston: South End Press.

her book *Rape: A South African Nightmare*²⁷ discusses the use of rape as a mechanism of colonial expansion. Both scholars point out that in the case of black women rape is used as a tool that creates within the black woman a sense of docility and submission to the colonial project. In the slave era- whether in the Cape or the South- the use of rape as a tool of colonial advancement became a cruel reminder of the reality of black women's vulnerability heinous violence and such a reality continues to follow black women as a result of rape culture that creates the ludicrous notion that black women cannot be raped.

Such a notion points to the racializing of sexual violence and the failures of white feminism on top of white women's collusion with Victorian colonial respectability which upheld the virtue of white women resulting in the law recognising that only white women were vulnerable to the threat of rape- but more specifically, rape by black men.

On the other hand black women who were labelled as sexual deviants were not recognised as vulnerable to such a heinous crime because of the legacy of the black female body as the cite for the breeding of slaves to serve the white supremacist project but also as the cite to inflict whatever punishments deemed appropriate by the slave master. Beyond the abolition of slavery hooks points out that black women would be subjected to sexual advances and harassment by white male employers and on some occasions with the help of white women.

While hooks discusses the threat of violence that loomed over every slave both male and female from the ships to the plantation, the point of the discussion of the devaluation of black womanhood more specifically is the under researched and very often erased discussion of sexual violence and the institutionalisation of rape resulting in open season against the black female body and the dignity of black women as a whole. Such institutionalisation had implications for black men as it created the notion of the what was termed in South Africa

²⁷ Gqola, P.D., *Rape: A South African Nightmare*, 2015, Jacana Books: Johannesburg

during the apartheid years (though used holistically in the apartheid era to describe the threat of politically conscious black people and the threat of black communist rule) as *die swaart gevaar*- the black danger- resulting in black men being viewed as potential rapists of white women in addition to being inherently violent in general.

Political and social movements against this racist propaganda perpetuated by the state led to the mobilisation around the liberation of the black man from this racist profile while leaving the dual effects of racism and sexism on black women out of the liberation equation. To date black women continue to navigate a world that sees them as not vulnerable to sexual violence and a world that is uninterested in mobilising in the interest of black women's social, political and economic concerns. Melissa Harris-Perry's *Sister Citizen: Black Women and Shame Stereotypes* in America follows on from hooks' work here by exploring the questions of misrecognition based on the Hegelian theory of recognition.²⁸ Harris-Perry argues that stereotypes that shame black women or stereotypes that place women in a particular category thus preventing opportunities for the exploration of the nuances of black women's lived experiences. This results in debilitating stereotypes that do not allow for a real engagement with the humanity of black women. hooks not only explores anti-black woman propaganda from the slave to the contemporary era with patriarchy being the mechanism in order to uphold a hierarchy along racial and gender lines, but this work explores the collusion between white men and women with black men in upholding shame stereotypes against black women. Fatima Meer's *Higher than Hope* cites Winnie's recollection of an incident of harassment involving a deputy principal at Shawbury High School where she matriculated. Winnie recalls:

“In my final year at Shawbury, my school work suffered. I had always done well, never falling below fifth position in my class, but that year my report placed me thirteenth and my father, for the first time

²⁸ Meer, *Higher than Hope*

reprimanded me...I felt ashamed, but I could not tell him my problem. How could I discuss such a matter with him? The real trouble was that I had matured too quickly. I looked older than my years. Still a girl, my body had grown into womanhood, so much so that I was often mistaken for a teacher when we went out to play netball. Worst of all, the assistant principal was making passes at me...The assistant principal taught us three subjects, and after those notes I could not learn from him, and I could tell neither my father nor our housemistress Mrs Mtshali. She was such a stern woman, much like my grandmother. She regularly inspected us girls. I, as a prefect, had to help her strip them, and if she found anything wrong with one she would make her lie naked on the floor and beat her with a whip. It was a shameful thing to happen to a girl. If I told Mrs Mtshali about the notes she would say I had provoked the sin in the assistant principal's heart and she would make an object lesson of me, beating me naked on the floor, and for that to happen to me, a prefect! What a disgrace that would be! So I kept silent..."²⁹

This recollection of harassment by one of the teaching staff at Shawbury is in line with hooks' discussion of the devaluation of black womanhood. Black women are firstly never seen as children. The above recollection further shows how society fails young black girls whose bodies 'betray' their 'girlhood'. This is distinct from infantilisation as this refers to the refusal to recognise the agency of adult women socially, politically and economically. The above statement reveals and confirms the sexualisation of black girls and women from the moment they are born resulting in women imposing on them a sense of shame when faced with a sexually objectifying male gaze.

As hooks has argued, white supremacist patriarchy has allowed for male bonding between white and black men in the devaluing of black women as seen by this incident. Further, Winnie's fear of disclosing this to Mrs Mtshali reveals the disturbing reality of respectability politics which results in certain women being the gatekeepers of patriarchy and violent masculinity when they apportion blame and shame to women and girls who have fallen victim to sexual harassment instead of calling out the men who perpetrate such violence.

²⁹ Meer *Mandela* pp 140

hooks further calls out white middle class feminism for its role in the erasure of black women in the discourse on women's political, social and economic equality. Because the women's movement from the era of the suffragettes to the 1950s did not include black women, hooks argues that feminism had been disingenuous in claiming to champion women's rights because of its non-inclusion of black women. This is why the title is important as it borrows from the former black slave turned abolitionist Sojourner Truth whose speech bearing the same name questioned and called out the racist and sexist collusion of between white men and white women, and black men in the refusal to include black women as stakeholders in the forming of an equal and just society following the abolition of slavery. hooks points out a very important and disturbing reality of the women's movement which continues to be a sore point in present-day feminist spaces and this subsequently becomes identified by feminist scholar and lawyer, Kimberlé Krenshaw which is the lack of intersectionality.

Feminism in the 1950s organised purely on the lived experiences of white women seeking equal status with white men. Feminists then would call for the right to assume the same jobs arguing that women were just as capable to hold high-powered positions across various spheres of society. While this claim is valid, feminism did not make room for black women. White feminists did not take issue with the fact that black women as a result of structural inequality could never achieve upward mobility, and such a possibility would have been an inconvenience to white women as black women would be needed as labourers in the home now that women would enter the labour force. Though black women's domestic labour was already deployed regardless of whether or not white madams worked or were housewives, the wave of feminist activism for equal opportunity emphasised the need for the black woman to be the 'help' or what both hooks and Harris-Perry have termed as 'mammies'. Black women who did participate in the Women's Movement would often do the labour, were the foot-

soldiers of the movement and were thus useful for the purpose of ‘beefing up’ numbers but did not enjoy the benefits of what the Women’s Movement achieved.

While the above provides the perspective of the feminist movement in the United States, certain threads can be made for the purpose of understanding the history of the Women’s Movement and the conversations had currently. The 1956 Women’s March to the Union Buildings is one such point of departure in the exploration of the role women have not only played in the anti-apartheid struggle but it allows us to explore the dynamics of the feminist movement in South Africa. Nomboniso Gasa’s paper “Feminisms, Motherisms, Patriarchies, and Women’s Voices”³⁰ explores the history of the women’s movement during the Defiance Campaign further arguing that women have had a long history of mass mobilisation against the repressive laws of the Nationalist State which, as Thozama April argues, goes as far back as the era of the Bantu Women’s League (in which Charlotte Maxeke was a leader) which marched against the issuing of passes to black women in 1913.³¹

Gasa provides a rich history of an organisation with precision that women had. She explores the unity across colour and creed as well as women’s acute awareness of the need to dismantle all oppressive structures from the state to cultural practices which perpetuated the marginalisation of women.³² However there appears to be too flawless and romantic an image painted of the women’s movement which organised along the umbrella movement FSAW which was part of the Congress Alliance which mobilised the African, Coloured and Indian masses in the era of the Defiance Campaign. While it cannot be disputed that FSAW was a multiracial organisation, it cannot be argued for certain that the movement was intersectional. While many anti-apartheid activists such as the likes of Winnie Madikizela

³⁰ Gasa, N. “Feminisms, Motherisms, Patriarchies and Women’s Voices in the 1950s”.

³¹ April, T. 2012. *Theorising Women: The Intellectual Contributions of Charlotte Maxeke to the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Western Cape.

³² Gasa, *Women’s Voices in the 1950s*.

Mandela, Albie Sachs, Mamphela Ramphele and Desmond Tutu agree that apartheid was a social disease affecting not only black South Africans but white South Africans as well, the reality that we are to contend with is that apartheid had mostly beneficial effects for white people.

The march of 1956 which was in opposition to the extending of pass laws to black women would become a contentious issue for white women as many black women worked in urban areas as domestic workers. Influx control in the form of the carrying of passes would affect existing working arrangement between black maids and their white madams. There appears to be a romanticising of this FSAW moment on one end as much as there is the singling out of this march (particularly in the mainstream) as the only form of organising that black women did during the apartheid years thus creating the notion that women only contributed once and to an extent by some kind of fluke to the liberation struggle.

The act of singling out one moment of women's involvement in the anti-apartheid movement upholds the patriarchal nature prevalent in historiography on one hand and on the other hand the act of romanticising the multi-racial make-up of the women's march to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 results in the avoidance of the nuances and complexities of the nature of racism and structural exclusion. It is therefore dangerous and simplistic to argue for a women's movement under the banner of FSAW that was completely united calling for the dismantling of all oppressive structures. White women relied on black women's domestic labour. Pass laws would have an adverse effect on black women being able to effectively carry out their duties to the white households where they were employed and as a consequence white women would have their managing of their homes disrupted by the pass regulations being extended to black women.

hooks discusses this in her explanation of the “mammy” shame stereotype- what South African society could identify as the “Mavis” figure- the maid who is “a part of the family”- the women who virtually raise white children and run white households while their white madams lived as managers of the home or pursued careers now that women were afforded the opportunity to enter the workforce. “Mavis” or “Sheila” (which resulted in the naming of Thursday as Sheila’s Day because of women committed to participating in the Thursday church services) were names given to black women working as domestic workers by their madams who did not know or had no interest in learning their employees’ real names. It must be emphasised as scholars like Gasa have that this moment was crucial to the anti-apartheid movement as a whole and the Defiance Campaign in particular.

As Gasa shows, this moment provides us with clues relating to the tradition of women’s organising throughout the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid movements. But it is understandable why such romantic recollections of the Women’s March of 1956 in particular exists as it serves the interest of the 1994 so-called miracle of South Africa’s transition from apartheid to democracy.

South Africa’s democratic dispensation relies on all citizens mobilising under the notion of unity in diversity and the philosophy of the Rainbow Nation. That there were women representing various cultures, creeds, and colours who staged one of the watershed moments of the anti-apartheid movement speaks to the possibility of the feasibility of the Rainbow Nation. The dangers of romanticising this moment result in a narrow engagement with the objective of apartheid as a structurally racist set up that permeated various aspects of South African society therefore to look purely at legislation and to argue that the women’s movement in South Africa was simply a call to abolish unjust laws, give back land to black people and abolish sexism within certain cultural practices creates a false notion of complete ally-ship between black and white women and the interest of white women in dismantling

even the privileges (particularly those seemingly subtle privileges) enjoyed by white women at the expense of black women.

It is these very privileges that perpetuate the erasure of black women's intellectual contribution to the anti-apartheid movement.

Shireen Hassim's contribution to the Jacana Pocket Book series in the form of a 'biography' of the ANC Women's League discusses the formation of FSAW and the Women's March of 1956. Here Hassim discusses the insecurities of the male leadership of the ANC regarding FSAW's autonomy citing Helen Joseph following the ANC leadership's lack of support for the confrontation with authorities during the Defiance Campaign particularly the question of 'no bail, no fines': "we were disappointed and a little angry at first, but we were part of the whole liberation struggle. There was no room for any rebellious spirit on our part and there was none."³³ This gives the impression that the Federation pandered to patriarchal sensibilities in the name of "discipline" rather than commit to radical politics even a politics that would result in women experiencing the full extent of the apartheid state's retaliation. When women are saying 'no bail, no fines' this implies an appreciation of the risks of political activism. The decision to not commit to what women have decided on in satisfaction of the concerns of the male leaders of the Congress Alliance speaks to an undermining of women particularly ordinary black women's intellectual consciousness particularly those women involved in grassroots politics, black women who are most exposed to structural exclusion under apartheid. Joseph continues, "Bail and fines were paid and the women returned to their homes". This speaks to the role that women were expected to play- merely mothers without political consciousness. Discipline was used as a tool of silencing and intellectual marginalisation so that patriarchal conceptions of the role of women were kept in

³³ Hassim, S. 2014. *The ANC Women's League*. Johannesburg: Jacana pp30.

place, particularly in the case of black women. Women, especially black women were wives of the movement, wives of African intellectuals and nationalists.

As Hassim points out, the ANC as an organisation follows a hetero-patriarchal design of the home and the family. When making sense of the position of women like Winnie and seeking to contextualise her being read as undisciplined and often unwilling to fall in line with the mandates as set out by leadership, the norms of Xhosa household allow for a useful imagery. In this context the organisation is like the length and breadth of the yard in which the men have liberty and authorisation to move and enter any space on the yard. The most important area of the yard is *inkundla* which is the front part of the house, and is where *ubuhlanti* (the kraal) is situated. The departed- the guardians of the family- rest here and it is the space reserved exclusively for men. This is where the patriarchs communicate with the guardians. Married women are forbidden entry into *ebuhlanti* and cannot walk in front of *inkundla* lest they bring the wrath of the ancestors upon the home for such an offense. This is because women are considered custodians of witchcraft. *Ukuceza* is therefore the only way wives enter the house- this is the act of entering from the back so as to avoid *inkundla*. In the yard, the wives will meet either *exabeni* or *eziko*. Men have access to *iziko* and *ixaba*. There is no part of the home and the yard where they are forbidden entry.

The above illustration allows for better understanding and context for the nature of political organisation along patriarchal lines which the ANC deploys. The Male leadership of the movement have access to every section of the movement. The final decision regarding how the movement conducts itself rests with the male leadership. Although the Women's Section like the Youth League have rights of meeting and discussing issues pertaining to them, they still have to appeal to the Male leadership of the ANC for resolutions to take effect. That there does not exist a "Men's Section" in the ANC reflects the unlimited access that Male leadership enjoy across all branches of the organisation, while the women having

their own Section implies limitation. This amplifies Winnie being perceived as a deviant particularly in the 1980s at the height of resistance and extreme violence in townships.

However Zine Magubane interprets the male leadership's disagreement with the women's "No bail, no fines" as not necessarily patriarchal. While Magubane does not absolve the ANC men of their patriarchy she does argue that the disagreement was related to strategy than in policing women's radicalism during the Defiance Campaign. While 20 000 was a significantly large number, it was a drop in the ocean compared to the 12.5 million black South Africans that the women's movement sought to mobilise. Magubane further argues that the ANC and FSAW needed to further refine tactics of defiance given the Afrikaner Nationalist government's onslaught against the anti-apartheid movement.³⁴ Magubane therefore cautions against being too quick to call certain decisions anti-feminist when the ANCWL and FSAW were movements not isolated to the broader project of liberation for all black people. It would have therefore been un-strategic to call for equality with black men when the black man was himself not recognised as a human being under apartheid.³⁵

However the images of women who marched to the Union Buildings have been reduced to the idea that these were women belonging to a male head of a heteronormative home set up without, as Magubane writes, thinking through the nuanced ways that women's roles as mothers was were creatively deployed by the women's movement to mean more than the traditional watered down concepts of what it means to be a nurturer. This speaks to the patriarchal outlook that would fester as the struggle against apartheid progressed. Motherhood could not embody militancy even though such images of women carrying guns in their arms and babies on their back would be used to recruit women to armed wings of

³⁴ Magubane, Z., "Attitudes towards feminism among women in the ANC, 1950-1991: A theoretical re-interpretation" *Road to Democracy* vol 4, 2004 pp 1003-1004.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

liberation movements like Umkhonto we Sizwe and Poqo. Black women, in particular, would have to subscribe to a watered-down predetermined concept of radicalism so as not to disturb the racist and sexist definitions of liberator-intellectual. It is what allows for Ruth First to be identified as an intellectual while Winnie Madikizela Mandela to be read as the wife of a liberator. This allows for the likes of Steve Biko and First to be comfortably read as intellectuals while black women remain at the margins of intellectual work. This is not to argue that the likes of Biko and First have no right to be intellectuals. They are. Their texts have contributed usefully to the anti-apartheid movement. The point that I am making in this regard is our conception of what makes an intellectual and who gets to be identified as one are still marginal to black women anti-apartheid intellectuals. They do not make room for intellectual production outside of written texts. This is disappointing as there appears that Historiography ignores the reality of censorship which does not allow certain individuals the room to produce written work.

There is a need to expand our definition of the intellectual. There is also a need to make room for different forms and platforms for intellectual production. Farred assists us in his exploration of cultural icons from Ali, who used press conferences and the boxing ring to draw attention to black lived reality, to Marley whose musical texts promoted Pan-African unity across the diaspora. This is in addition to traditional intellectuals in the form of CLR James and Stuart Hall. Therefore similarly if we recognise Biko and First as intellectuals by virtue of their writing there is a need to expand our definition to include the likes of Winnie Madikizela Mandela whose speeches at funerals and discussions in her home with journalists concerning the state of the nation under apartheid contained ideas and reflections on what a decolonised South Africa looks like and how black people would obtain decolonisation. This is important because Winnie's statements would have great impact and repercussions for the liberation movement within South Africa. These ideas would lead to even her alienation by

leadership in exile as well as within South Africa (primarily through the UDM) from the movement.

While Hassim provides a useful historiography of the Women's League identifying the patriarchal make-up of the ANC through this book, the work remains quite hollow in fleshing out theories of feminism in the South African context during the apartheid years in which, as Gasca identifies, is also incorporated theories of motherism. Zine Magubane's paper, "Attitudes towards feminism among women in the ANC: A theoretical re-interpretation" exposes this Hassim's flawed critiques. Magubane argues feminism and motherism in the context of African women were to an extent intertwined. African women used motherhood as a tool for mobilising women to join the struggle for liberation, interpreting a characteristic such as nurture as militancy for the protection of all children of the community.³⁶ Bridger co-signs Magubane with reference to Winnie who when taking the platform at funerals and rallies called on mothers to "protect, support or avenge their children"³⁷ Citing hooks, Magubane points out that feminism does not have a neat and cast-in-stone definition. It is because of this that we ought to appreciate the ways feminism is interpreted by women from various geographical spaces to fit the unique social, political and economic spaces they navigate.

While it is true that feminist terms were not used, women do however deploy feminist and motherist tools which to an extent disrupt the modus operandi of the ANC even though women faced being accused of ill-discipline. Hassim commits the same error in her paper on the ANC in exile titled "Nationalism, feminism and autonomy: The ANC in exile and the question of women"³⁸ While Hassim correctly points out women's efforts of bringing to the

³⁶ Magubane, Z., "Attitudes towards feminism" pp1011.

³⁷ Bridger, "From Lady Macbeth" pp447.

³⁸ Hassim, S., 2004, "Nationalism, feminism and autonomy: The ANC in exile and the question of women", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30:3, 433-456,

fore feminist questions within ANC structures from the NEC to Umkhonto we Sizwe, as well as critiquing and out-rightly rejecting white feminist rhetoric at international conferences, what lacks in this analysis is a rigorous engagement with the dynamics between the exiled ANC and the women's movement within South Africa during this period. Apart from the Malibongwe Conference of 1990 in which ANC women in South Africa and exile came together to discuss women's issues, there is not any citation of previous instances reflected in the work which point to connections being made between the movements domestically and abroad. Hassim ignores the emergence of the Federation of Black Women domestically in December 1975 and how this may or may not have had a significant impact on the Women's Section in exile. It is at the inaugural meeting of the FBW in Durban that Winnie would move for the restoration of the family- that politically imprisoned fathers and husbands be released so that they may return to their families and continue a normal family life. This reflects, as Magubane posits, the importance of motherist consciousness in the women's movement regarding family as the bedrock of African society, and women were prepared to wage a struggle that rallied around the challenging of the dislocated family as a result of political incarceration as well as migrant labour.

Hassim further ignores the emergence of Black Consciousness which signified a turning point in the anti-apartheid struggle. It is not enough to simply speak of a '1976 Generation'³⁹ without offering an ideological and political context that results in there being a 1976 Generation in the first place. There is the possibility that MK recruits entering camps following the watershed moment of June 16, 1976 would have been influenced by the Black Consciousness. How would this intersection have affected feminist tools ANC women were using in challenging the patriarchal structure of the movement? Winnie Mandela was an MK recruit and explicitly identified as a member of MK even though such a wing of the ANC

³⁹ Hassim, pp 439

mainly operated in exile. It is therefore questionable to read MK purely as a section of the ANC in exile. Hassim describes Tambo as champion of women's rights even though he was not necessarily feminist yet he was among those who strongly critiqued Winnie's ideas relating to the use of violence at the height of apartheid resistance in South Africa. This is the same Tambo who called for South Africa to be made ungovernable. While necklacing had fatal effects for South Africa's black communities- this being heightened with what has been read as Winnie's endorsing of this tactic- we do not see a Tambo among other leaders of the ANC who attempt to make sense of the context of such an 'endorsement' in the first place. Rather what we see is a shock-horror response in the form of immediate distancing from such a statement. It speaks to the lack of nuance afforded the identity of motherhood. Hassim refers to the role of the Women's Section regarding the establishing of crèches for women MK but she does not begin to engage with the role of motherism of which militarised motherhood is apart. There is the sense that there are those who are babysitting children of MK combatants. Motherhood was not separate from revolutionary work. Winnie serves as one of the prime examples of women whose feminism was meshed with motherism.

Mass mobilisation which was a tool for black women is yet to be taken seriously as an intellectual and theoretical tool, rather such labour is seen as the carrying out of instructions given by the senior leadership (black or white given the multi-racial nature of the anti-apartheid movement and predominantly male) or white women (which results in the recognition of First and Helen Joseph as intellectuals while the likes of Lillian Ngoyi being seen as incapable of intellectual production as was implied by the officer interrogating Winnie during the 491 days that she was in solitary confinement). As April argues,

“It is against this minimalist view of women in the liberation movement that [black] women's liberation of the everyday get displaced by 'the bigger national questions. However, [black] women's theorisations of the everyday do not always respond to the needs of the senior leadership, but constitute

a sphere of robust intellectual activity based on their reactions to an array of issues including the struggle against various forms of injustice.”⁴⁰

That being said this research is not advocating for the replacing of white women intellectuals with black intellectuals nor making claims that white women being acknowledged as intellectuals under based on racial bias renders their intellectual contributions null and void, rather it is important that a shift in the ‘geography of reason’ (as Lewis Gordon argues) take place so that current notions of who gets to be acknowledged as intellectual is expanded to include black women who have clearly made such contributions as is evident in their political work.

Pumla Gqola in her paper “Ufanele uqavile: black women, feminisms and postcoloniality in Africa”⁴¹ writes about the need for decolonising theory for the purpose of recognising black women’s contributions both at the theoretical and activist level stating, “Postcolonial theory offers the tools to carve out solutions for a series of dilemmas I have not been alone in encountering.”⁴² While Gqola refers specifically to the literary space- the reality of the marginalising of black women in this realm- this argument can be translated to the intellectual realm that has marginalised African women from claiming space at the centre. Shifting the geography (or even the biology) of reason allows for an “anti-racist [and anti-sexist] feminism which needs to centre black women in the operation of its spaces as in the development of its theories.”⁴³ Winnie as intellectual, as black vernacular intellectual provides us an opportunity of implementing the shift. It allows us to used postcolonial

⁴⁰ April, T. 2012. *Theorising Women: The Intellectual Contributions of Charlotte Maxeke to the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Western Cape. Pp. 40

⁴¹ Gqola, P.D., “Ufanele uqavile: Blackwomen, feminisms and postcoloniality in Africa”, *Agenda: Empowering women for gender equity*, Vol. 16 No. 50 (2001), pp. 11-22

⁴² Gqola *Ufanele* pp15.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

feminist tools to expand the historiography of intellectual work extending this to African women. As Gqola puts it:

“While the postcolonial feminist womanist project is undeniably concerned with subverting colonial patriarchal systems of logic, its focus is on opening the terrain of Black women’s representation and theorisation to new signification. These spaces within which Black women with a feminist consciousness congregate are about breaking new ground, making new meanings and redefining the terms of our participation in all discourse.”⁴⁴

An additional fundamental problem with nationalist liberation history is the ignoring of the influence women intellectuals have on each other and the intra-exchange of intellectual tools that is alive in feminist movements. Because the ANC is structured in a patriarchal fashion, there is the notion that women’s consciousness is moulded by senior leadership. While Nelson writes of having conscientised Winnie, thus implying that she was to an extent his protégé Winnie in *Part of My Soul* recalls, “I was politically influenced by his friends I spent more time with- by tremendous women like Lilian Ngoyi whom I greatly admired. She made me in the sense that I idolised her...she taught me a great deal.”⁴⁵ This not only casts a light on the intellectual exchanges black women made with each other but exposes the ignoring of this fact by even the prominent male figures even those who shared intimate relationships with women of the movement. Black women are blatantly denied a seat at the intellectual table regardless of the reality that they were constantly thinking through and working out terms of liberation in interesting ways. Long before intersectionality (as introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw) becomes a definer of feminism women of the anti-apartheid movement are rigorously grappling with this concept and incorporating it as part of liberation praxis. Yet this is blatantly denied even by the anti-apartheid movement’s most famous face and this is deeply worrying because of Nelson being branded as the father of a non-racial, non-sexist

⁴⁴ Mandela *Part of My Soul* 80

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

new South Africa. In an interview with Felicia Mabuza-Suttle Winnie's final remarks are: "I think South Africa like other revolutionary movements has a tendency of consuming its heroes. I haven't seen the accolades we have been seeing today about a simple little girl who left the country for whatever reasons at the time who is now welcomed, this Charlize. I would have loved to see that happening for a Helen Joseph, a Lilian Ngoyi; a Florence Matomela. Some of them are unknown by this generation- the Florence Sotinda's the Florence Mophosho's- women who gave up their lives for the struggle." Winnie here is pointing to the erasure of women, black women in particular, in the anti-apartheid movement narrative. These are not only simply women who, in the literal sense, gave up their lives nor are they women who carried out instructions disseminated in a top-down fashion from the ANC senior leadership as a show of blind loyalty. These were women with ideas, whose point of departure in participating in the movement was a sense of political and intellectual conviction derived from the lived realities they navigated. These would be the women that would embrace Winnie when she entered the ANC ranks.

**From Country Girl to Fallen Revolutionary- a review of Anne Marie Du Preez Bezdrob
*Winnie Mandela: A Life***

This is the unauthorised biography of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. It is important that this is discussed as it is the premise from which we must proceed if we are to assess the archiving of this struggle icon. It is unsurprising that such work (among others published before it) would exist as Winnie's life remains the most visible in South Africa's historical public sphere. This is largely due to her marriage to Nelson Mandela. Rather it is her commitment to the African National Congress and the political ideals represented within this organisation that result in her scrutiny and surveillance by the state further resulting in her being thrust in the spotlight through media reports about her activity.

Media reporting on Winnie in the early years of the ANC's exile and the jailing of its leadership works in two ways: one form of reporting is that which is in solidarity with the anti-apartheid movement and in support of the call to free Mandela; while the other is geared towards tarnishing her image. As the apartheid state begins to lose its grip on international sympathy (Western support in particular) as the Cold War began to wane leaving the regime without any excuse to maintain its policies of repression against blacks in the country and in exile perceptions and reporting on Winnie begin to take on a negative light. She faces much negative critique in the 1980s as protests begin a violent nature never before seen in the country's history of resistance.

Due to conscriptions to the townships as well as activist movements being infiltrated by informers of the state for the purpose of containing *die swart gevaar* communities within this space (particularly in response to this infiltration) resorted to killing such informers (called *impimpi* (spies) through a method called necklacing whereby a tire would be placed on the neck of the said informant with gasoline being doused over it and the informant on whom the tire has been placed and set alight burning the *impimpi* (spy) alive. Due to scrutiny and surveillance (as she would be followed and filmed wherever she appeared publicly), Winnie is known as one of the first to have advocated for this form of response in her most controversial words: "with our necklaces we will liberate this country".

While many if not all of us may concede that such a statement is controversial, and likely deserving of critique it is important that context is provided in order for us to fully understand not only the weight of this statement but also its timeliness.

Frantz Fanon's description of the colonial city best provides us with a useful diagnosis that would lead to the kind of surge of violence that would haunt townships in the 1980s. In the

first chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon⁴⁶ provides us with a geopolitical description of the colonial city- an ontological city in which two different types of experiences are lived. There is the side of the city that is scenic, spacious and conducive to human dignity and this is the side in which the settler resides.

The other side is characterised by violence- the stench of death and fear subdue it. This is the side in which the colonised reside. The dividing line between these sides of the city, Fanon writes, is state security. The police and the military are the arm of the state (in the colony) which keeps watch over the city ensuring that neither side overlap. State security ensures more especially that the colonised are kept firmly within their place. Violence therefore becomes the mechanism through which the state can ensure that overlaps never occur.

The picture painted in this chapter provides an understanding of any community in any part of the world that exist under a repressive colonial system. Apartheid is no exception. If anything apartheid is a prime and complete image of a society divided into compartments. The boundary lines of these compartments are kept in place by the police and the military ensuring that those living in designated compartments never belong anywhere else outside of the parts in which they have been slotted. A politics of belonging is therefore also at the centre of maintaining colonial society as Fanon writes further. Fanon also warns in this chapter after having provided a diagnosis for this neurotic society in which the settler aims to thrive (at the expense of the colonised whose lived experience is one they would not willingly allow as evidenced by the hyper-securitization of the colonial city) of the inevitable violence that follows as a consequence of this abnormal setup. Fanon writes that it is likely that true decolonisation can only be reached through violence. It is virtually impossible to achieve

⁴⁶ Fanon, F. 1959. *The Wretched of The Earth*. Editions de Seuil: France.

freedom through a “friendly understanding”.⁴⁷ Therefore in making sense of Winnie’s most controversial words our point of departure must be from the understanding of what characterises the colonial city- the apartheid city- a city of compartments, and most importantly a city of hierarchies in which white people are at the top and black people are at the bottom.

The compartment in which Winnie has lived all her life as an anti-apartheid activist is that which has been characterised by hyper-securitization and by the time she utters these words it is also characterised by hyper-militarisation. Not only is this securitization visible in the form of white uniformed men and women but in the infiltration of *iimpimpi* within activist communities, men and women who look like the oppressed creating a culture of mistrust. The infiltration of *iimpimpi* resulted in the unsafety of many comrades within the struggle. Activists would suddenly be arrested or disappear never to return to their communities. This kind of infiltration results in increased paranoia within activist communities. I define the community in which the oppressed resides as the activist community as the anti-apartheid struggle had become a collective struggle rather than a cause in which a particular organisation regardless of whether it enjoyed majority support had become a vanguard.

By the 1980s it was clear that the anti-apartheid movement was a collective struggle both locally and globally. This collective struggle therefore was vulnerable to infiltration that was both so subtle in that there were state agents that looked like the oppressed and very explicit in that it was evident through the disappearances and deaths of prominent leaders. Under such conditions it is impossible for the notion of “innocent until proven guilty” or due process to be carried out. When an activist community is infiltrated in this way, the objective of this community would be to respond to the breach of its organisation in ways that attempt to immediately stop the spread of such infiltration. Rumour therefore becomes another

⁴⁷ Fanon, pp10

mechanism through which the state through infiltration can continue its objective of crippling activist communities and with the state having control of the media through laws of censorship (which forms part of the hyper-securitization of the state) it curates and presents a view of activist communities being under a scourge of black on black violence as endorsed by prominent leaders of which Winnie was one.

Winnie's political life and parts of her personal life is lived in full view of the world due to the hyper-securitization of the state. Therefore most of what is found in the archive is largely a curated life, a life curated by a repressive state. At the same time we are able to see a life of refusal and complete agency as she continues to live in defiance to the state. Therefore our approach to Bezdrob must be from a point of understanding that the narrative contained here is one that is largely a gathering of an image curated under a state of hyper-securitization. The fact that this biography is unauthorised in that it is not written with the permission of its subject is a matter that needs to be taken seriously. A life remains the only biography written about Winnie spanning her life from apartheid to the democratic era.

Prior to *491 Days*⁴⁸ which is a collection of Winnie's letters and recorded interrogations while she was in solitary confinement *A life* was the only biography published after 1994 that is viewed as a complete documentation of Winnie's life from her formative years growing up in Bizana, to her short career as a social worker till she became involved in the anti-apartheid struggle under the African National Congress to her marriage to and divorce from Nelson Mandela after the attainment of democracy in 1994. It is a biography that seeks to understand the Winnie's complex life who is viewed as an enigmatic individual in as much as she was controversial living a life in "full view" of the world as a result of her defiance. She at times carried a demeanour of a silent wife, or can be referred to (as Mamphela Ramphela puts it) a politically widowed woman after her husband was sentenced to life on Robben Island.

⁴⁸ Madikizela-Mandela, W. 2013. *491 Days*. Johannesburg: Picador Africa.

This book was written at a time when Winnie was viewed as a fallen icon. It is unlike prior biographies such as that which is written by Emma Gilbey (published in 1994) or Fatima Meer's biography *Higher than Hope* in which a significant portion is dedicated to the role played by Winnie in the anti-apartheid liberation up to the time of its publishing in 1987. Bezdrob references both texts including *Part of My Soul* which is edited by Anne Benjamin. By the time the book is written Winnie was somewhat living in obscurity. The intention of the book as reflected in its writing helps us make sense of the complexity of the former wife of Mandela. My interest in Bezdrob's text is also as a result of the fact that this book becomes the guiding framework for the film *Winnie Mandela* which stars Jennifer Hudson. It is as a result of the life that Bezdrob's work spans that I view this book (of all the biographies written to date of the ANC stalwart) as the most important work to examine. Bezdrob does not appear to write from a point of bias rather she seeks to use the existing archive to present as fair an image as possible so that the reader is able to make their final judgment. The sixteenth chapter of *A life* titled "With our boxes of matches..." reveals Bezdrob's attempt to achieve this. Prior to the book's publication public opinion towards Winnie was riddled with criticism due to not only this infamous statement which appeared to endorse violence but also the death of the 14-year-old activist Stompie Seipei. This chapter signifies a turning point between the Winnie of the era of the height of ANC mobilising black South Africans during the Defiance Campaign in the 1950s, to the banning of the ANC in the 1960s and in particular the 491 days spent in solitary confinement between 1969 and 1970, and the subsequent banishment to Brandfort, Free State; and the release of Mandela in 1990.

The objective of the chapter is to provide context to what leads to what many would call Winnie's downfall. Bezdrob cites PTSD as the context we ought to consider when making sense of what would lead to the decisions Winnie makes including her most controversial statement of supporting the use of necklacing as a means to achieve liberation. This context

serves to also humanise Winnie in that it shows the extent to which struggle icons like her and black people collectively suffered under the apartheid regime. This context further consigns Fanon's and CLR James's work exploring life in slave or colonial systems. For example in *The Black Jacobins* James discusses the violence of slaves in rebellion against slave masters during Haitian Revolution. James argues further that not even this violence could equal that of the suffering meted out by French and Spanish colonisers.⁴⁹ But at the centre of this work is the reality of generational trauma over time as a result of repressive systems. Fanon's writing on the colonial city as a place where the stench of death is constant under the crouching shadow of violence further highlights this reality.

This chapter should then do the work of exposing that violence meted out by the oppressed or violence that appears to be endorsed by anti-colonial subjects in moments of revolution are an effect caused by a set-up that is inherently violent. This status quo is therefore what needs to be questioned prior to the critiquing of subjects that have suffered under violence.

Returning to the title "With our boxes of matches..." we see that Bezdrob has only used a portion of the statement, this portion being that which has made Winnie the subject of heavy criticism. While Bezdrob speaks on PTSD and its causes, she does not adequately discuss the call to violence as a response to an already violent system in which peaceful mechanisms by anti-apartheid activists would be met with peaceful responses by the state.

Bezdrob does not appear to be interested in bringing attention to Winnie's pointing out that the state's use of a language of violence leaves resisters of repression with virtually one choice- responding with violence. Colonial states, as Fanon's diagnosis also points out, means a dialogue of violence between the state and revolutionary forces is inevitable. Winnie points this out through her public statement. Another fundamental error in Bezdrob's work is

⁴⁹ James, C.L.R., 1963, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, New York: Random House.

reducing Winnie through this chapter to mere victim of circumstance without adequately addressing the critiques against her as a ‘child-murderer’.

To simply say that Winnie is a victim of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder- a point we ought not to dismiss- denies Winnie’s agency as a revolutionary who is acutely and intellectually aware of how apartheid and colonial violence works to repress the oppressed. The anti-apartheid struggle forms part of global black struggle with thinkers and revolutionaries from across the planet inspiring and exchanging modes of struggle and thought forming a canon of black liberatory thought across time and space.

This chapter regardless of the gaps one might notice in the arguments presented nonetheless puts forward a catch 22 of sorts when addressing Winnie as revolutionary and victim. How do we empathise with a human being who has suffered so greatly at the hands of a repressive state without absolving her of the violence she allegedly endorsed which in turn led to the death of a child activist among others? This research cannot answer this question but would rather look at the ways Winnie’s image has been used to police how she navigates intellectual revolutionary work as an activist as well as make sense of what it means for women like Winnie to claim space as intellectual revolutionaries- particularly women who are black and women who are mothers.

Biographical and autobiographical writing in the context of South Africa’s liberation history remains a largely masculinist space as it remains the case that male figures who played a role in struggle will be presented (or in the case of autobiographical writing will style themselves) as messianic or heroic figures.

The heroic protagonist in biographical or autographical writings embodies characteristics associated with masculinity resulting in the justifications of violence in its various forms: patriarchal violence, or physical force in the context of war. The male protagonist of a

biographical work will largely be absolved from incitements of violence as violence itself is gendered particularly who gets to rally for it. This can be seen in the ANC leadership's decision to embark on an armed struggle similar to a number of liberation movements across the continent.

Where the male protagonist is not making a call to arms, there is patriarchal violence in the form of the Messianic figure undertaking the task of politicising the masses that happen to be unaware of their plight under a repressive state, or perhaps the male protagonist is the supporting husband of a woman activist who supports his wife's involvement in the liberation movement so long as she does not rupture the patriarchal format of the leadership structures of the movement. In the case of Winnie and Nelson, there is the cog in the machine that is in the form of the Mother and Father of the Nation labels. Winnie assumes the role of Mother as a result of the man she has married, the most famous political prisoner, Nelson Mandela. Fatima Meer in *Higher than Hope* one of the many biographies about Nelson quotes the following words by Winnie:

“In the little time I spent with him, I discovered only too soon how quickly I would lose my identity because of his overpowering personality- you just fizzled into being his appendage, with no name and no individuality except Mandela's: Mandela's wife, Mandela's child, Mandela's niece. Thriving in his glory was the simplest cocoon to shield in from the glaring public, or to boost your extinct ego. I vowed that none of this would apply to me.”⁵⁰

This statement reveals a reality that entailed being slotted albeit unwillingly into a pre-determined role that did not allow for Winnie's agency to self-style or claim space as a revolutionary and intellectual. The ANC as an organisation contains a rich history of intellectual work and contributions to the liberation struggle since its founding in 1912 however this was largely enjoyed by the ANC leadership space that was mainly constituted of

⁵⁰ Meer *Mandela* 118.

men and this was to be the case within the multi-racial Congress Alliance where those conventionally considered the intelligentsia were males with white women such as the likes of Ruth First and Helen Joseph being the exception.

Women like Winnie would be relegated to the roles of wife and mother and the concept of discipline would be used as a way of policing women's attempts at fully defining the terms of mobilisation and response to state repression as evidenced by the ANC leadership's lack of support for the women's 'no bail, no fines' campaign in the FSAW years.

It is unclear what the intention of *A life* is, perhaps this is what has informed its protagonist's suspicions toward it. I had the opportunity of meeting Winnie as part of this research and in our discussion about the written work that exist in the public sphere about her life she mentioned that she had never heard of the author neither was there any contact with her regarding the writing of the book in terms of getting a primary account of her lived experience under apartheid. While the biography is a vastly cited work the trap that this book has fallen into is relying purely on external sources based on the subject's hypervisibility due to her deliberate decision to expose herself in the name of keeping the Mandela name alive and in effect the ANC name alive in the years of its leadership's incarceration, banning and exile. However such hypervisibility is not without complexity.

While there exists an archive of footage in which Winnie discusses her life under banishment and gives details of the 18 months in solitary confinement, there are also the deliberate silences that accompany her public life, such silence as Nomboniso Gasa describes was a strategic tool activists used in the interrogation room as a way of subverting power dynamics in the context where security police used torture as a tactic to extract information from political prisoners. While it appears that the interrogator contains power and control in the interrogation through instilling fear by asserting their monopoly of violence over the prisoner,

silence is the one weapon that the prisoner has in their arsenal to taunt the interrogator in their quest to get information on a political organisation's activities.

Silence ensures that regardless of the force used against the prisoner, the security police would be barred from accessing the morsels of information they need to bring the liberation movement to its knees. Gasa argues for prisoners to triumphantly utter "Nothing" when asked upon their release by those on the outside what they told the security police reveals much as "nothing" could be information that is neither here nor there, "non-evidence" uttered when detainees wished to be relieved of the torture endured.⁵¹ In Winnie's case there is the silence used as resistance in the interrogation room during the 491 days of solitary confinement and there is the silence that she wielded as a weapon of resistance against a state-sponsored media. This is the same silence that we see during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's proceedings. While Winnie does eventually speak acknowledging that things went horribly wrong, what we can also deduce from this moment is her refusal to offer to the Commission the admission of guilt that it had desired, particularly since it was to an extent a society's performance of confession and forgiveness as an act of good faith to the world beyond that South Africa was unlike its warring neighbours that failed at the postcolonial project following independence. Silence as 'self-censorship' became an intellectual tool of resistance against the racist Afrikaner Nationalist state and it would be a tactic deployed even against the will of the ANC leadership at the height of anti-apartheid resistance in the 1980s. I am referring to the refusal to respond to criticism against her statements relating to necklacing. There is no response beyond arguing that she was taken out of context for her words. She does not give the ANC what it truly wants- a revoking of her statement and her eventual towing of the line.

⁵¹ Gasa, N. "Feminisms, Motherisms, Patriarchies and Women's Voices in the 1950s"

A number of African states such as Nigeria (The Biafran War), Democratic Republic of Congo (after the ousting of Mobutu sese Seko who rose to power following the assassination of Patrice Lumumba), Angola (the MPLA and UNITA tug of war for power) plunged into civil war or faced decline following decolonisation. While the question of whether or not South Africa underwent decolonisation from the moment Nelson Mandela ascended power as the country's first democratically elected president is debatable there was the unspoken pressure that the new dispensation faced of proving to the world that it would avoid "decline"- decline in this scenario being the racist assumption that black governments were incapable to rise to the occasion of running state institutions and governing over citizens without plunging into war- now that the white settler government was no longer at the helm.

A life in theory should explore the complexities of Winnie's lived experience. Winnie's public life provides us with clues to how she navigated and averted the dangers of being relegated to Nelson's shadow. Winnie's sartorial aesthetic also provides us with clues related to her intellectual evolution. Bezdrob having the archive at her disposal should seek to offer a different perspective to the way in which readers would think of Winnie's contribution to the liberation struggle. Of course this would not be easy to achieve because of the controversies that marked much of her political involvement from the 1980s through to the democratic era. However even the societal gaze should be an opportunity to engage how who's controversies are deemed acceptable so that issues of potential sexism and racism can be opened for discussion. Winnie and Nelson as a couple offer us a wide opening into asking these questions.

The biography begins with a brief genealogy. Winnie, a Madikizela of the Ngutyana clan is a descendent of a people who migrated from present-day Kwa-Zulu Natal in the advent of the Mfecane dispossession wars. AmaNgutyana would, following a treaty with Faku (King of AmaMpondo), settle among the Mpondo in the Bizana district.

Bezdrob then documents Winnie's early life growing up as somewhat of an unwanted daughter as she was among many girls born to Nomathamsanqa and Kokani Madikizela who had been awaiting the arrival of a son when it turned out that 26 September 1936 would bring about the birth of yet another daughter among the 5 that had already been born. While Nomathamsanqa and Kokani had loved their children it was the birth of a lastborn son that was of cultural importance hence the disappointment at the arrival of yet another girl child who would bear the name Nomzamo Zanyiwe Winnifred Madikizela. Nomzamo and Zanyiwe both denote the meaning, "trial" while Winnifred is German for "friend of peace". These names would prove prophetic as while the parents may have meant that they had tried to live up to a cultural expectation of bearing a young son in addition to the eldest, Winnie would endure trials as a result of her decision to be active in the anti-apartheid movement.

The prophecy contained in the Xhosa names has been largely explored while the name Winnifred has been defined and not explored. Some might read the name as ironic in the face of Winnie being read as a child murderer because of her alleged involvement in the disappearance and deaths of young activists Stompie Seipei and Lolo Sono. However there perhaps is an opportunity to explore what peace looks like for a South Africa that was in the process of decolonising, a South Africa that was engaged in revolutionary struggle. What might being a friend of peace mean and what might be the demands of being such a friend entail under a regime that was violent by design against the majority population?

Bezdrob follows from early childhood years with Madikizela's relocation to Johannesburg where she would study at the Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Work then proceed to work at Baragwanath Hospital as the first black medical social worker to her meeting and marrying Nelson Mandela. This section of the biography is of particular interest to me as it does not take seriously or seek to make sense in interesting ways Winnie's political consciousness and

her political transformation from a mission educated young woman to an ANC African Nationalist political intellectual.

When exploring the biographical writings about political male figures of the liberation movement, the move from rural to urban and the political consciousness that follows from this moment is written in a way that punctuates a racist event becoming a “trans-figurative moment” in the male political activist-intellectual’s life. While Bezdrob notes Winnie’s father as one of the people who influenced her politically, Winnie’s independent political evolution is minimised rather than engaged rigorously. Bezdrob had before her the task of writing about a political figure mostly seen as the wife of a political figure.

Revisionist history has placed Winnie in the wings of political theatre in comparison to Nelson Mandela and where she has entered the stage she is read as a wet-behind-the-ears young wife thrust into the spotlight as a result of her husband’s valiant decision to lay his life on the line for the liberation of the country. Winnie is among other women whose political narratives are minimised as a result of a masculinist reading of African nationalism and anti-apartheid liberation. Bezdrob spends the chapters leading to Winnie’s marriage describing her work as black medical social worker without expanding on how this profession would inform Winnie’s politics. Winnie’s causes would entail dealing with so-called bread and butter issues exposing her to the structural inequalities solidified by the Afrikaner nationalist government through apartheid legislation.

These issues provide some of the talking points that constitute the Women’s Charter. Social work deals with the ‘everyday’ political concerns that have been brought on by state-sanctioned structural violence. Poverty in the townships of Johannesburg as Ellen Kuzwayo describes in her autobiography *Call Me A Woman* have their root cause in colonialism and

apartheid. Therefore this period in which Winnie is fashioning a space for herself as social worker is not an insignificant waiting period for the bigger role as wife to Nelson.

Bezdrob begins each chapter by providing context that forms a social and political backdrop to Winnie's personal narrative. The lack of engagement with and ignoring of women's political organising in the years leading to Winnie's ascension to the political stage as a thinker and actor as well as in her own right exposes the misogynist booby-trap that this book and its author has fallen into. What appears to be the motif of Winnie's years as told to us by Bezdrob is the image of the 'young unspoiled child' (to quote her directly).

A chapter titled "Country girl" reinforces images of a politically ignorant girl and perpetuate the marginalising of the rural landscape from the urban in relation to political organising. The book ignores political manoeuvrings of the Mpondo through its King, Faku and the general history of political and guerrilla resistance to colonial expansion unfolding in the Cape. Furthermore, there is a history as found in Govan Mbeki's *The Peasants' Revolt*⁵² which illustrates a vibrant political landscape alive in the rural spaces of the country. The realm of politics is not confined to the urban space as this book appears to imply.

According to Bezdrob, Winnie encounters the ANC while in Joburg yet in Meer's biography of Mandela recalls:

"After Emfundisweni it was Shawbury High, run by the Methodists. I prepared for my matric there. It was an eventful year. I became politicised there. Our teachers, Fort Hare graduates, were members of the Non-European Unity Movement and I was influenced by them. But I also read about the ANC in Zonk magazine."⁵³

There therefore does not appear to be an interest in exploring Winnie's intellectual and political genealogy. This is the lot of women's depoliticised narratives in the mainstream,

⁵³ Meer, *Mandela* pp120

particularly women married to prominent political figures from Nelson Mandela (in the case of Winnie) to Steve Biko (Nonstikelelo Biko).

Another motif evident in the formative years as told by Bezdrob is the notion of a once happier and joyful Winnie. Bezdrob thus implies from the early chapters of this work that Winnie's hard life as a 'political widow' - a concept Mamphela Ramphele writes on - are characterised by pain, trauma and anger as a result of the apartheid regime's targeting her, her family, friends and acquaintances. Images of Winnie particularly those following the disappearances of the likes of Stompie, the murder of Dr Asvat and the corruption allegations within the ANC as well as during her tenure as Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture reflect a Winnie whose features have hardened, whose eyes reflect bitterness. This is against the image of a Nelson Mandela who had despite being incarcerated for 27 years emerged a heroic and importantly a forgiving struggle icon with no trace of bitterness in him for what he had endured. Bezdrob's reflections of a Winnie that once smiled with ease, whose demeanour was characterised by joy give the impression that the cause of liberation particularly being thrust in the spotlight for loving a freedom fighter became too much a burden for the young wife.

While the hardships Winnie would endure resulted in trauma and anger at the racist Afrikaner Nationalist regime, Bezdrob does not appear to provide us with talking points that would have us engage the meaning of black joy under apartheid. There is the assumption that pain for Winnie was a consequence of undertaking to keep the Mandela name alive once her husband and the ANC leadership was sentenced to life imprisonment. Bezdrob does not offer an analysis of joy as resistance in the face of a reality of structural violence that has been pervasive since the founding of South Africa.

The iconic Sophiatown era characterised by the writings of the likes of Can Themba; the literary works of the likes of Todd Matshikiza and the fusion of Jazz and Marabi that characterise Sophiatown Swing reflected in the music of the likes of Dolly Rathebe and Miriam Makeba as well as the fashion spreads found in Drum Magazine all exist against the backdrop of an onslaught against black people in the form of cheap labour, curfews, influx control and extreme poverty in the townships of Soweto.

Bezdrob has ignored what these moments of glamour and seeming joy mean politically when taking into consideration the reality that concerning the black South African, the personal and political converge on the site that is the black skin. Black skin carries the burden of trauma. The temporality of Winnie's transition from joy to pain as reflected in this work not only ignore the realities of black life but do not take seriously Winnie's use of joy as a weapon of resistance. An article by Joseph Lelyveld for the New York Times titled "South African Woman 'Banned' but Unbowed" describes a Winnie whose laughter reflects a staunch defiance against the Nationalist government's attempts at breaking her spirit writing, "And yet she was able to laugh richly, the way a woman might laugh over an extravagant compliment, at the implied tribute in her ban."⁵⁴

The Mother We Desire: comparisons with Albertina Sisulu

As I have stated above, *A life* falls into the trap of a masculinist narrative embedded in the anti-apartheid movement in which women are relegated to the background of the struggle of liberation. This is as a result of the failure to read women as actors independent of the men they are privately affiliated with as well as a misrecognising of the strategic and creative ways that women like Winnie use their proximity to prominent male struggle figures to draw attention to what would otherwise be marginalised political concerns or to give content to the

⁵⁴ Lelyveld, J., "South African Woman 'Banned' but Unbowed" *New York Times*, 1982.

meaning of liberation. The anti-apartheid movement like similar movements across the African continent and the developing world could easily have been lost in rhetoric and catch-phrases. Women's entry into the political realm and their acute awareness of the everyday realities of marginalisation provide content to phrases such as "iAfrika Mayibuye" (Africa for Africans or Africa must be returned to Africans- a call to decolonise) or "Amandla Ngawethu" (Power is ours/People's power).

However a reading of women's roles remains locked in the overall heroic masculinist narrative that continues to fail in exploring in depth how women define the terms of liberation while navigating movements that define their organisational structures according to a patriarchal framework. Prominent male figures would be seen as Fathers of the Nation to be born out of the current struggle while their wives were by default dubbed Mothers of the Nation. In "A life of refusal: Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and violence in South Africa" Shireen Hassim describes the effects the making of political motherhood within the patriarchal and heteronormative framework of the ANC as thus:

"'Nelson and Winnie' thus became a political trope, the recurring image of the stable centre in a political vortex. They represented the naturalised and idealized modern heterosexual patriarchal family, and their public roles were enacted without regard to the inconvenient facts of their relationship. Their separation by incarceration became a metaphor for the separation through forced migration of many families in South Africa. Winnie Mandela's role in the public sphere was defined for her: she was to be the helpmate of a political leader. She was to be the Mother of the Nation, supporter of men and wise counsel to youth, the keeper of the home from which her husband had been so unjustly banished (like millions of other South African men), to be both brave and vulnerable at the same time. She symbolized the epitome of African womanhood under apartheid. It was a role that Winnie initially accepted, perhaps not entirely aware of the full ramifications that would follow."⁵⁵

The making of the Mother of the Nation, a complementary brand to the central Father of the Nation figure was what women could not evade and therefore had to adopt creatively in order

⁵⁵ Hassim, S. "A Life of Refusal Winnie Madikizela Mandela". Unpublished paper. Wits University. Pp 1-16. Pp4.

to advance the political ideas of the broader anti-apartheid movement. In the case of the incarcerated male leadership, political ideas would have likely drifted into an abyss of irrelevance had it not been for the women (the wives married to male leaders of the organisation) who would keep the fire of liberation alive through mutating ideas to fit the social settings of the decades that follow the political lull that struck from the early 1960s following the banning of the ANC and PAC respectively. It is therefore problematic for Hassim to paint a picture of Winnie as locked in a pre-determined role rather than expand on the ways that Winnie creatively defined the brand of Mother of the Nation. In this regard Bridger writes:

“Winnie Mandela employed the discourse of militant motherhood in ways that were novel in the South African case. First, she promoted a more assertive and less traditional role for women in her defiance of gender norms and male authority, subsequently redefining her relationship with men through politics and showing other women they could do the same. Second, she not only talked about militancy but also physically embodied it in her actions and relationships with township youth. For this, she was greatly admired by many Soweto residents, particularly politicised women and militant youth, and remains revered as the ‘mother of the nation’ to many involved in the struggle today.”⁵⁶

At the same time the manufactured motherhood such as the Mother of the Nation does not expose the realities of widowhood (as denoted by Ramphela) and “singlehood” as Winnie alludes when she states to have been “the most unmarried married woman”.

Winnie’s making of motherhood provides an opening (albeit a small one due to her link to Nelson Mandela through marriage regardless of the fact that she did not have an opportunity to enjoy married life with him) the untold contributions of unmarried women to the anti-apartheid movement. This overlooking of women of various lived realities (both married and unmarried) is reflected in Njabulo Ndebele’s *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* as it is not only a

⁵⁶ Bridger “From Lady Macbeth” pp 447

misrecognition of Winnie's role in the struggle but it also superimposes the narrative of women whose lives revolve around waiting aimlessly for the return of a man who is performing meaningful labour as the novel relies on the presumption that real political or economic labour is that which is performed by men.

This prescriptive form of motherhood further becomes the basis upon which Winnie's actions as anti-apartheid revolutionary is judged. This form of motherhood does not accommodate the possibility of a political figure such as Winnie to be read as more than a nurturer. It makes no room for possible flaws nor does it provide us with adequate talking points for conversations on the effects of apartheid trauma on those who would be positioned as god-like figures of the struggle. This form of motherhood is also used as a tool of not only policing women's agency within the liberation movement but it is used as a tool of comparison between what is deemed a "good mother" versus a "failed mother". This is where comparisons between Winnie and Albertina Sisulu come in.

Elinor Sisulu's *Albertina and Walter Sisulu: In Our Lifetime*⁵⁷ provides an account of the anti-apartheid movement within the heteronormative framework as described by Hassim. The biography describes how love weaves together the lives of two political figures that would influence the course of South Africa's liberation history. There is the impression that Walter and Albertina exist do not independently of each other. At the same time this does not mean that they did not forge political identities independent of the fact that they were a married couple.

The book explores the notion of the Mother of the Nation in which Albertina and Winnie are compared. However this form of Motherhood is contained within the structure of the European family- the nuclear family in particular-in which women are seen as simply the

⁵⁷ Sisulu, E. 2002. *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In Our Lifetime*. Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers.

supporting figures of the family- auxiliaries to the male head. As a result, there is no engagement with the meaning of motherhood and ‘the matriarch’ to African communities in which the matriarch is a decision maker with great influence over the affairs of the home and the family at large. These vary from economic matter to even those of history. Winnie has also cited her grandmother as an influence regarding her political consciousness.⁵⁸ What we see here is the matriarch in the form of uMakhulu as the keeper of historical knowledge in the black South African household and thus an influencer regarding political consciousness. Scholars and writers such as the likes of Ifi Amadiume, Oréyonké Oyewumi and Buchi Emecheta engage with the meaning of African matriarchy (this varies as African communities are not homogenous as there are different nations from the Igbo to AmaMpondo) in their work. Sisulu misses this opportunity.

Albertina like Winnie would be regarded as Mother of the Nation especially in the 1980s when she became an influential member of the United Democratic Front (UDF) an umbrella body under which political and community organisation and trade unions banded together calling for the end of apartheid particularly at the moment when global solidarity with black South Africans intensified. Sisulu writes:

“She [Albertina] was not the only one. Winnie Mandela was also bestowed this mantle by an admiring press and adoring public and adoring public. Her banishment to Brandfort elevated her to legendary status and her bravery and tenacity were undisputed. Like Albertina, she was an icon of both strength and courage who endured terrible suffering and torment at the hands of the apartheid state. But there the resemblance ended. Winnie eschewed Albertina’s approach of painstaking organisation building and teamwork in favour of dramatic acts of individual defiance. While consistency and reliability were hallmarks of Albertina’s leadership, Winnie was given to bouts of unpredictability that confounded those around her. Her paradoxical nature was reflected in the diametrical responses of those who know her. To some she was a kind, loving, generous and loyal friend, while to others she was the devil incarnate. There is no doubt that Winnie was a valuable asset to the liberation movement. She

⁵⁸ Madikizela-Mandela, W. 2013. *491 Days*. Johannesburg: Picador Africa pp259.

was a hugely attractive figure whose breath-taking beauty was matched by a powerful charisma and sharp mind. Her feisty impulsive personality appealed to a downtrodden people and even her severest critics could not help but admire her chutzpah. With Winnie around there could never be a moment of boredom. One journalist described her as one of the most extraordinary women in history, comparable only to Helen of Troy and Cleopatra. In a literary sense she is certainly a fascinating character, and the contrast between her and Albertina brings to mind the flamboyant, dramatic Carmen and the dutiful, virtuous Michaela in Bizet's famous opera...Albertina believed that it was the duty of leaders of the liberation movement to curb the violent tendencies of its youthful constituency, not encourage them. Winnie on the other hand, was the consummate populist who generally told the audience what they wanted to hear."⁵⁹

Within this comparison described by Sisulu are contained loaded statements about Winnie. This also reinforces the consequence of prescribed motherhood- a burden that does not allow room for robust engagement with women political figures. While Sisulu recognises the role women played in the liberation movement particularly women's commitment to eradicating all forms of injustice across all spheres of society, the grave error she commits here is a lack of engaging the limits of this "mantle of motherhood" that society bestows on this generation of women she has cited such as the likes of Ellen Kuzwayo and Frances Baard. Winnie provides us with this opening however Sisulu bypasses it by falling into the ontological trap in which Albertina shines bright as a flawless saint against (to quote Sisulu directly) the so-called "devil incarnate" that is Winnie.

This reading is just as damaging for Albertina as it is for Winnie and women revolutionary intellectuals who had contributed to the fight against apartheid. Motherhood as prescribed by nationalist ideology results in the taking on of a persona that is at times burdensome for the women on which it is bestowed. Motherhood in this case has no life of its own. It exists as a result of notions of political Fatherhood which privileges male political figures as definers of resistance ideologies. Women are simply slotted into the narrative as auxiliaries and

⁵⁹ Sisulu, E. 2002. Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In Our Lifetime. Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers.

mouthpieces of the male figures who in the context of anti-apartheid resistance are god-like figures and this divinity is reinforced by the hyper-censorship of anything related to resistance to the apartheid state.

Images of Nelson Mandela were banned from circulation in the public sphere. Mandela took on a mythical, almost god-like figure particularly for the younger generations born after the banning of political organisations from the 1960s to 1990 when the ban was lifted by the last apartheid racist regime administration under FW de Klerk. While Winnie would craft her own political identity and emerge as an influential symbol and voice of resistance, such an emergence would come at the cost of being labelled a deviant as a result of having not simply functioned as a prop to the more important male figure. This is the limits of (as Sisulu has defined it) the mantle of motherhood. It is defined by an external gaze. It does not allow for those bestowed this title to define the terms of motherhood within struggle and if they should do so it is at the risk of being viewed as divergent. Winnie's legacy stands as a prime example of this consequence.

This manufactured motherhood further makes no room for how one navigates a life of surveillance, banning, banishment, arrests and harassment as well as the effects of torture. This form of motherhood is performance in fulfilment of a role that scaffolds the more flexible image of political fatherhood. Nelson Mandela would emerge after 1990 as the face of transition from apartheid to democracy ushering in an era of national unity through reconciliation. Nelson retains all semblance of humanity as Father of the Nation. His rage is seen as legitimate as he was a man separated from his family, denied the right to a normal family life. It is accepted that he could have emerged an angry and bitter man ready to call for the spilling of blood for the grave injustices sanctioned by the white supremacist apartheid state against black and brown South Africans.

Fatherhood allows Nelson to make the state regardless of the possibility that he may have been out of touch with the realities of life under the apartheid regime from the 60s through to the 90s. Nelson (along with the majority of key ANC leaders) had spent the greater portion of his political career isolated on Robben Island and as such were out of touch with the turning tide that would bring about the end of apartheid.

While incarceration was in itself a violation of dignity it brought with it a shielding from some of the most explicit dangers and crimes against humanity that the National Party meted against black people (Steve Biko, Victoria and Griffiths Mxenge being the casualties of such crimes among many others, some of whom remain unaccounted for). Winnie would not be exempted from falling victim as a result of her contribution to the anti-apartheid movement to these repressive tactics and crimes. Yet it would be Nelson and the male leadership of the ANC returning from incarceration or exile whose potential for rage would be deemed legitimate. However, and as the above quoted excerpt from Sisulu's *In Our Lifetime* Motherhood in this context has no room for emotion. Where there is emotion it is reduced to infantilisation. Winnie is read here as erratic and unthinking driven by youthful abandon left unmonitored and uncontrolled now that her much senior husband had been sentenced to life in prison. Sisulu chooses to ignore Winnie's intellectual and political capabilities and as such does not offer a compelling critique that recognises her as an independent thinker and actor outside of her husband.

The above reading of Winnie creates the impression of an ill-disciplined novice. This is also reflected in Sisulu's recounting of Winnie's arrest on 12 May 1969 under the Suppression of Communism Act which would result in 491 days spent in solitary confinement. According to *491 Days* Winnie was arrested the night she had loaned Trotsky's biography. The inclusion of this detail offers a glimpse into Winnie's ideological leanings as well as that of the community of activists she was a part of. This is reinforced by Archie L Dick's *The Hidden*

History of South Africa's Book and Reading Cultures in which it is documented that Claude Lightfoot's *Black Power and Liberation: A Communist View* was among the books found during Winnie's arrest on this same date.⁶⁰ Dick's exploration of South Africa's reading cultures provides us with an understanding the various ideological and intellectual exchanges taking place across the country during the liberation struggle in this case as well as across the diaspora within various epochs of our history dating from slavery in the Cape. Dick's book shed's a light on the often underestimated intellectual climate of black and brown folk and how reading and writing cultures would shape South Africa's political resistance landscapes across various points in time.⁶¹ That Lightfoot's is among the books found in Winnie's possession reflects the diasporic and pan-African intellectual exchanges taking place between resistance movements of the 1960s.

The first image I encountered when I entered Winnie's home to conduct an introductory interview with her is a collage of the black radical thinker, Malcom X. This shows the influence Black Power thinkers and Civil Rights Movement activists have had in the shaping of Winnie's thought. Yet Winnie's arrest as Sisulu recounts creates the impression that this was a consequence of (as Sisulu describes it) "reckless schemes". Regarding this particular event, Albertina is the embodiment of patience and caution while Winnie showcases reckless abandon. The consequence of such a reading eclipses the extent of state sanctioned securitisation and harassment. This comparison that Sisulu presents us with is as much unhelpful as it is problematic. It panders to the dangerous tendency of imposing respectability politics and is part of the problem of how Winnie's legacy is engaged particularly the parts that are the most damning of her political history.

⁶⁰ Dick, *Hidden History* pp125

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

In an article published on the Mail and Guardian written by Verashni Pillay is a list of the “Five Times Winnie Mandela Let Us Down”.⁶² This article was written in the wake of Winnie’s petition to have the Mandela home in Qunu outside of Mthatha transferred to her name citing custom as the basis on which she would claim a right to the home there. This was further based on the challenge to the legitimacy of the divorce between her and Nelson Mandela in 1996. Such a claim was made as a result of Winnie being excluded from the Nelson Mandela’s death on 5 December 2015.

The objective of Pillay’s article is to point out that this is among the many times that Winnie has made a spectacle of herself and thus tainted the brand “Mother of the Nation” with Pillay ending her article with the stating if Winnie is the mother we have, we are therefore better off as orphans. This article has among its top 5 ‘Madikizela misdemeanours’ the death of young activist Stompie Seipei (which is the most controversial of events associated with the struggle icon), corruption allegations and the failure to fulfil parliamentary duties in the years that Madikizela Mandela was appointed as Member of Parliament.

This article follows a typical rise and fall trajectory that has marked much of Winnie’s life in the post-1994 democratic dispensation. This article has been of interest to me as it seeks to appeal to the “shock-horror” sensibilities of those who may either be on the fence when it comes to Winnie’s legacy or to those who hold the view that she is a symbol of evil. This engagement like much texts and research exploring the icon does not engage what Madikizela-Mandela represents or what her legacy may mean to South Africa’s past and present. Winnie has said that she is both the product of the masses of her country and the product of her enemy- the apartheid regime. Such a statement invites us to think through the political and ideological symbol that her legacy may represent. Such a statement like that of

⁶² Pillay, V. 2014. ‘The Five Times Winnie Mandela Let Us Down’. In The Mail and Guardian, available online at: <https://www.mg.co.za/the-five-times-winnie-mandel-let-us-down>

seemingly endorsing the use of the infamous necklacing method of killing alleged collaborators offers an opportunity of engaging societal pain as a result of state-sanctioned violence as well as resistance against it.

Winnie has been on both spectrums as detainee of the state and a key leader of the liberation movement as both an activist and recruiter of MK militia. However Pillay's reading of Madikizela-Mandela seeks to explain away any engagement with the struggle icon's legacy. This is against the meaning attached to struggle iconicity in South Africa in which Nelson Mandela has been the epitome. Nelson Mandela represents a political activist that has undergone a transformation from militant and somewhat violent political enemy of the state (his statement explaining the resort to the ANC resorting to armed struggle after the Sharpeville Massacre stands as a prime example) to the mediator between white South Africa and black people in not only the aftermath of the assassination of the much-loved political icon, MK commissar and leader within SACP ranks Chris Hanu but the face of peaceful transition from apartheid repression to reconciliatory democracy.

This political "bildungsroman" which fits the narrative of the post-apartheid miracle which has in itself become the marker of brand South Africa as well as a marker perpetuating South African exceptionalism on the back of Sub-Saharan states that have failed to maintain a peaceful post-colonial state of affairs has succeeded in upholding the shame allotted Winnie as a result of the violence that she was alleged to have been linked to in the 1980s. The label "Mother of the Nation" has further been used to entrench this shame as a result of what Ramphela has argued are societal expectations that women are compelled to uphold. Motherhood is the antithesis of Fatherhood in that it is read as a supportive, peaceful and nurturing against the disciplinary, authoritarian nature attributed to the father. Within political fatherhood is the room for radicalism to be violent in the name of militancy and

radicalism while the mother can serve as the keeper of societal morality but not necessarily a definer of such morality.

Political motherhood does not allow the woman burdened with such a label to define for her what mothering may look like in a dispensation of mild to extreme repression. She is expected to silently and stoically accept this “honour”. Similar to political widowhood, political motherhood is a performance for the purpose of gratifying the societal gaze. As a result of her link to the Mandela United Football Club players (who also served as Winnie’s bodyguards) which orchestrated the disappearances and murders of Stompie Seipei and Lolo Sono among others as well as the murder of Dr Asvat, Winnie has been viewed as a fallen mother. How can a mother be involved in the killing of a young boy, Stompie?

While such alleged involvement contaminates Winnie’s contribution to the struggle, the respectability politics which moulds the public’s concept of motherhood does not allow for a holistic reading of the human beings upon whom such mantles are bestowed. It does not allow for us to think through with rigour what motherhood might mean in moments of virtual civil war and hyper mistrust set on by a state that has infiltrated liberation movements. The TRC itself fails to engage this with regards to Winnie in particular as it cannot think past the public definition of motherhood. It does not allow for honest and difficult conversations in which it can be admitted that South Africa was engaged in a bloody battle for freedom under a state that misrecognised persons with black bodies, meaning black children were not seen as such by the state therefore a culture of human rights violations against children trickled down from the state to society allowing for the murders of teenagers like Stompie. And the grave contradiction lies in South African society insisting that Winnie be accountable as a mother- a motherhood she has been denied the right to define for herself. Sisulu has ignored Winnie’s involvement in MK as well as Winnie’s identifying as a member and recruiter of MK.

This illuminates a marked difference between these two political icons' political motherhood.

While Albertina's motherhood is one of grassroots and broad-based organising for the purpose of unifying all stakeholders across various sectors from religious groups to trade unions to political organisations, Winnie's is a militant motherhood and ought to be engaged from such a point of view. It is a militant motherhood in response to a violent state.

Emphasis on Winnie's physical appearance further re-inscribes the 'beauty queen without politics' trope and as Moses Kotane expressed, "Such intimidating and seductive beauty does no go with a revolutionary".⁶³ This statement shows recognition of Winnie as potential revolutionary but it also illuminates the patriarchal notions of where women should belong in revolution particularly the women married to male political figures.

The description of Nelson's physical features- his height, his sartorial aesthetic and his athleticism- against Winnie's labelling as young beauty queen creates the impression of a political prince (coincidentally both individuals are of royal descent) who sweeps the young maiden off her feet. The politics of beauty also feeds into the "Jezebel trope" that would be as a crouching shadow over Winnie's political life particularly when news breaks of her relationship with Dali Mpofu.

Chapter 3

Fiction as biography and an intervention to the limited exploration of Women's intellectual contributions

⁶³ Meer, *Mandela* pp118

Introduction

Fiction has been an important part of this research particularly in exploring the intellectual legacy of Winnie Mandela as well as the intellectual contributions women make in the politicising and theorization of the personal. Fiction has exposed major gaps in the archiving of women's intellectual contributions.

Women's intellectual contributions continue to be ignored. This is due to the very obvious masculinist approach to nationalist history. African Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Black Consciousness history is largely masculine and patriarchal regardless of the interventions women have made in these various ideologies. The intellectual labour of the likes of Nomvo Booi, (Pan-African Congress), Josie Mpama and Eppainette Mbeki (Communist Party) and Miriam Tlali (Black Consciousness) remains at the margins compared to their male counterparts. Fiction therefore offers us an entry into the interventions of women and to an extent are the foremost of biographical writings of black women. Because there remains a gap in intellectual historiography regarding black women's intellectual contributions, fiction provides us with women's narratives drawn from lived realities. Fiction thus gives us clues to the contributions women have made intellectually. We see this in the works of authors from Tlali, to Buchi Emecheta, to Toni Morrison.

While fiction offers us the advantage of the suspension of disbelief in order that we may fill in gaps missing in the lives of the real-life characters whose silence or enigmatic public personas create vacuums regarding certain significant historical events based on our need to obtain answers for the purpose of holding such figures accountable, there is the other advantage of women seeing themselves in the fictional work as a result of the very real political talking points that fiction, particularly black conscious or black centric fiction is

founded on. In this case the fictional becomes both personal and political. Fiction is what enables Njabulo Ndebele to write a novel based on Winnie Mandela in which the struggle stalwart is the embodiment of various types of women.

The lives of the women in *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* echo (according to Ndebele) the life and anguish of the most visible woman revolutionary of South Africa's anti-apartheid movement. This novel is empowered by the voice of the icon who centred the double-struggle black women faced as both perpetual juniors of the state as defined by apartheid's discriminatory laws as well as hierarchy as informed by custom in which women did not enjoy much autonomy over their person. In *Part of My Soul Went With Him* Winnie explains:

Looking at our struggle in this country, the black woman has had to struggle a great deal, not only from a political angle. One has had to fight the male domination in a much more complex sense. We have the cultural clash where a black woman must emerge as a politician against the traditional background of a woman's place being at home! Of course most cultures are like that. But with us it's not only pronounced by law. We are permanent minors by law. So for a woman to emerge as an individual, as a politician in this context, is not very easy.⁶⁴

Winnie's deliberate centering of women as political activists and thinkers as equally affected by the effects of apartheid personally and politically as men were allows for women to see themselves in her lived reality. Better still, Winnie's visibility and her not self-styling as vanguard of the liberation movement allows for her to transfer a black feminist vernacular vocabulary to the mainstream albeit there being an attempt to overlook this deliberate agenda.

As with the arguments presented in Grant Farred's *What's My Name?* The black vernacular intellectual shines a light on otherwise marginalised lived realities. The black vernacular intellectual by being visible points us towards the direction of the invisible political and intellectual work done by the group from which this very intellectual emerges. This it is easy

⁶⁴ Mandela, *Part of My Soul* pp 83-84

to identify with this type of intellectual. Our wrestling with the complexities and nuances of this particular individual provides us with a moment of reflecting on the broader intellectual landscape from which they emerge. Fiction is the most useful at guiding us towards this moment particularly the body of work black women writers have produced. The lack of non-fictional work on black women's intellectual contributions exposes a disdain for acknowledging intellectual excellence in women as it disturbs the masculinist nationalist narrative that scaffolds South Africa's current political narrative.

Where fiction has failed to fully engage with women's complex relationship with the liberation movement- a complexity that ignored out of a refusal to recognise women's lives and thought as a mirror for the society from which they emerge- is as a result of an agenda that seeks not to challenge the heroic masculinity-centric narratives that uphold South Africa's (in particular) current dispensation of which its first black statesman is at the centre. This failure may be attributed particularly in South Africa's case with an obsession to paint an uncomplicated picture of the liberation struggle narrative. Where complications arise there is either the ignoring of such through the erasure of women's narratives or the picking and choosing of certain aspects of a woman protagonists experiences for the sake of avoiding arriving to an ugly truth about the "final package" that was to be of the anti-apartheid movement.

It is unclear whether this is reflective of a fear in confronting a complex past or simply a non-interest in complicating what is both a sexist archive as well as a state of force-feeding the "Rainbowist" narrative of the democratic era as part of making the claim that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission did sufficient enquiry into the pain of the apartheid past. Although such a past continues to haunt South Africa's present in the tangible structural inequalities that black women not only gave voice to but placed as the foundation of their intellectual and political labour.

A Confessional: Njabulo Ndebele's *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*⁶⁵

This novel explores the histories and lives of black women within and beyond South Africa who have had to wait. It examines the effects of migrant labour, political exile and the incarceration of political activists on the men who fall under these categories through the lens of their wives who would wait for their return. It also explores the lives of women who wait for the return of unfaithful men. In this case it engages the scourge of HIV/AIDS and its effect on marriages. Ndebele uses the novel as a tool for making sense of South Africa's recent history. The *Cry of Winnie Mandela* begins with stating that to wait is not a new phenomenon neither is it a phenomenon particular to African women through the mythological legend of the Greek figure Penelope, the wife of Odysseus who waited for the return of her husband and who dealt with the advances of suitors who sought to replace a man who spent 19 years away on a voyage across the seas.

Through the legend of Penelope Ndebele intends to draw a comparative analysis with South Africa's most famous woman who waited- Winnie Mandela. Like Penelope, her wait has been riddled with rumoured advances from suitors and a confirmed affair with Dali Mporo. While Penelope succeeded to remain faithful to her husband, it seems here that Winnie (like another woman who waited in this story) is the Penelope who failed. The *ibandla* (Nguni for congregation) gather and each share their testimonies. That Ndebele has chosen to use this term is for the purpose of allowing us to imagine this space as safe and conducive for testimony and confession.

This novel is of interest to me because the subject after which it is named is one that is very silent regardless of her exposure to media scrutiny. Winnie Mandela's persona is the most consumed of all struggle stalwarts, surpassing even that of her former husband. Yet there

⁶⁵ Ndebele, N. 2003. *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*. Johannesburg: David Phillip Publishers.

exist large and loud silences due to what appears to be her protecting of her privacy as well as seemingly a deliberate silence against public opinion. Her history as an anti-apartheid struggle icon and activist has been archived as one of ascent and descent from glory. In between is a deliberate campaign by the apartheid state to discredit her during Nelson's incarceration on Robben Island alongside most of the African National Congress's leadership, and while the ANC is banned from open political activity within the country after the Pan-African Congress-organised Sharpeville protest which resulted in the Sharpeville Massacre that sent shockwaves across the globe.

In addition to state-sanctioned smear campaigns is the threat her persona posed to the patriarchal set up of the ANC as well as its stiff insistence on the following of certain hierarchical structures of accountability. This accountability is demanded of the people (of which Winnie formed a part) in conditions that were un conducive to conventional ways of organising had the political climate been normal. ANC leadership was either in exile or in prison. Most activity was underground as a result of banning orders. This means normal forms of organising and who gets to do the political and intellectual labour cannot continue undisturbed as a result of this political disturbance that is the banning order, and the arrest or exile of key political figures.

Frantz Fanon alludes to this in *A Dying Colonialism*⁶⁶ where he traces the political trends of the Algerian liberation movement. Women take on militant roles under a state of armed struggle. The veil becomes a political tool of resistance because it is through its religious symbolism that allows for women to be unsuspected carriers of bombs that are planted in the French settler quarters of Algerian cities. Because there is an understanding that achieving liberation requires collective participation yet the conditions are such that how a liberation movement would structure itself in conditions where its organisation is not deemed illegal by

⁶⁶ Fanon, F. 1959. *A Dying Colonialism*. New York: Grove Press.

the state resulting in banning, arrests or killings of activists; new ways of organising as well as who gets to disseminate what instructions or carry out certain orders, or speak in the public sphere must change. This is why we see women participating in the liberation movement in the ways that they did when they either would not have had conditions not escalated to the extent that such a collective way of organising, resisting and acting was required.

Similarly, Winnie is acutely aware that she has an advantage as the wife of a highly visible political activist. Not only was Nelson highly visible to the rest of the world, but he had enough local support from black South Africans, and the ANC in its entirety enjoyed majority black support. This means that not only would it have not worked in the apartheid state's favour to insist on a death sentence, but it would not have been strategic to assassinate Winnie. Therefore, Winnie shields herself from death by using her visibility as a Mandela to continue her political activities, to prevent Nelson's name as well as the ANC organisation from drifting into an abyss of irrelevance especially in the years that follow the banning of both it and the Pan-African Congress after Sharpeville. Furthermore being a Mandela allows her to use this name as a platform to bring attention to lived realities of black people under apartheid.

This understanding of black life under an apartheid state is also due to her training as a social worker. Her experience as social worker at Baragwanath Hospital, Soweto exposed her to the extent of the lack of basic services that black people received under an apartheid state. This showed that apartheid was more than simply a question of distinction based on race. The notion of separate development went further than a face-value state of living apart between black and white people.

At the very heart of apartheid is the ensuring that hierarchies along race remain in place with white South Africans enjoying exclusive social, political and economic benefits at the

expense of black South Africans who were relegated to second-class citizens as reflected through socio-economic effects visible in the people that Winnie not only assisted but the very parts of society she would navigate as a black woman second-class citizen. Her involvement in the ANC would be inspired by her training and her belief in the ideas of the organisation which sought to bring to an end an era of repression against blacks.

Winnie's silence has become notable in the era of democracy. This silence is as a result of what is deemed as the fall from grace as a result of the affair with Dali Mpofu and the death of Stompie Seipei.

Winnie has in some ways gone down in history as the Mother who let the Nation down, who was not steadfast in her fidelity to the Father of the Nation. Since 1994 it appears that her voice has been missing, and this is emphasised by the era of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in which this moment bred an expectation that key figures of the liberation movement, both revolutionaries and oppressors would give a full confession of their sins or their triumphs depending on which side of history they fell on by the time the death knell of apartheid was rung.

While Winnie spoke before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, hers was received as a forced acknowledgement that "things went horribly wrong" rather than a confession that she had committed heinous crimes for which she was sorry. Winnie never quite accounts for much or claims victories and losses for herself. It does not appear that Winnie takes up much space after the fall of apartheid, she does not seem to own the controversies that are linked to her persona. These emerge in the public sphere as exposed truths- particularly her affair with Mpofu- while others remain in the shadows of rumour.

One could argue Ndebele's novel therefore provides us with the opportunity to fill in these gaps- that Ndebele invites us to momentarily suspend our disbelief and imagine with these

characters what Winnie would say to us if she were to speak as candidly as possible outside of having to be summoned as a result of pressure from media reporting. *Ibandla* enables candidness. Each woman who has waited speaks their truth and recounts events from their perspective against the blueprint that is Winnie's life of waiting. It is after all these accounts that Winnie speaks as openly as possible. It is the account that we imagine Winnie would speak, according to Ndebele. Or, it can be argued that we are invited to witness Ndebele's imagining of Winnie's 'side of the story'.

The danger of a narrative characterised by Waiting:

Ndebele has made dangerous claims about legacy of Winnie Mandela. While Winnie and the other four women speak and it is their voices and truth that the audience bear witness to, what remains problematic is the centering of the men for whom they waited. While it may be the case that the lives of these women may have been paused because of the husbands who left for various reasons, this pause cannot be said to be the experience of Winnie Mandela.

While Nelson was serving a life sentence on Robben Island Winnie has expressed that she has undoubtedly been the most unmarried married woman, and at some point when her husband returns would like to lead a normal married and family life, the claim put forward by Ndebele that Winnie's life has been marked by waiting for the return of a man does Winnie's political contribution much disservice.

Though normality was interrupted in the apartheid years, it would be reductive to claim that Winnie's life was paused, that she somehow entered a marriage to one of the most prominent political leaders blind to the reality that life would be abnormal. Like Bezdrob Ndebele attaches a sense of childlike naivety to Winnie- that she stubbornly insisted on the notion that she would lead an undisturbed married life with Nelson when he was among key political figures of the time identified as a threat to the status quo.

This erases Winnie's agency and acute awareness of the life she was about to lead as well as her independent political thought in the years that the ANC had been banned and exiled. This narrative creates the impression that Winnie, prior to the years she met and married Nelson, had no political consciousness of her own or that she came to a political consciousness independent of her husband. It re-inscribes the notion that by keeping the Mandela name alive, Winnie was as April aptly critiques nationalist narration merely a "political prop without political consequence."

The use of vernacular phrases throughout the book serves as markers of a particular space. It is not clear that Ndebele succeeds in making this narrative believable, not only because of the possibility that readers may begin engaging this work from a point of bias given how controversial Winnie Mandela has become.

The use of vernacular phrases throughout the book serves the purpose of creating familiarity between the five women giving testimony. However the very idea that Winnie would even speak and to an extent explain herself seems unbelievable.

Silence, speech and selective critique: Winnie's words and the theorizing of the everyday under apartheid.

This novel does not seem to engage with the meaning of silence in the context of Winnie Mandela- that silence is in and of itself a weapon of resistance. Winnie enters the anti-apartheid political space independent of her husband as a silent resistor. The 491 days spent in solitary confinement- that such confinement lasts this long- is as a result of her refusal to give up any information that would compromise the anti-apartheid cause. Perhaps the novel would be believable had it dealt with the subject of silence rather than waiting.

As much as Winnie is a visible activist due to state surveillance and due to her involvement in the struggle as part of the ANC, the Black Parents Association and the Federation of Black Women prior to being banished to Brandfort following the Soweto Uprising of 1976 her strategic silence is worth noting. This silence is audible in the TRC hearings. Her most famous phrase “Things went horribly wrong and for that I am sorry” during the hearings is interpreted as a refusal to concede guilt and offer a sincere remorseful apology. It is rarely seen as a talking point to her maintaining a resolute silence against sitting in the same room as those who defended the apartheid state through murder, intimidation, surveillance, and torture resulting in most of these perpetrators- killers of Bantu Steve Biko, Ruth First, The Cradock Four and Victoria and Griffiths Mxenge among others.

Perhaps her silence and this apology reinforcing a refusal to speak with any further detail about events leading to Stompie and Lolo Sono’s disappearances speaks to the inadequacies of the TRC in offering a platform for activists and leaders of the anti-apartheid movement to have candid reflections of the actions informed by certain political ideologies that led to things going wrong outside of the oppressor’s gaze. To equate the wrongs committed by black activists and foot-soldiers of the anti-apartheid movement with the crimes against humanity of the apartheid government regardless of the similarities in the way people disappeared or were tortured and murdered- particularly those individuals deemed to be *iimpimpi* or *askari* by black communities was an un-strategic way of getting to the truth of what unfolded during these years leading to the democratic dispensation.

The text appears to support the objective of the TRC and the type of transition that followed the release of Nelson Mandela where one of the women, Marara, states:

In the choice we had between negotiation and revolutionary violence we opted for feelings and intellect. We committed ourselves to posing questions and researching them for solutions. We opted for the uncertainties of experiencing one another. In this new universe, we may come to terms with the

disturbing truth that both friends and enemies of yesterday may no longer be taken for granted. The heroes of the revolution may suddenly reveal distressing flaws, while the devils of repression may become disturbingly lovable....through the [TRC}, we sought to understand the particular nature of our state and how the fluid boundaries between state-induced behaviour and personal volition so distorted the sense of both personal and public morality...[it] was not about truth, but about the revelation of deliberately hidden facts so this revelation might lead to new interpretations of our emergent social realities and new knowledge in the public domain.”⁶⁷

This loaded statement implies that intellect began when less violent methods were abandoned for negotiating the treaty that brought about democracy in 1994. This inference is problematic as it does not seek to make a case for intellectual labour that occurred in the most violent years of South Africa’s history. One could go a step further and make the claim that South Africa’s existence is founded on violence, that violence upheld apartheid society, that apartheid is violent on both ideological and physical fronts.

Winnie’s most controversial statement that is viewed as setting off high incidences of violence such as deaths through the infamous method of necklacing speaks to an ideological understanding of the violent nature of the apartheid state. While critique against such violent responses to repression may be warranted given that deaths of alleged informers were based largely on rumour than solid evidence of collusion between alleged informants and security police, what is often left out is Winnie’s preceding words: “We shall use the same language the Boers are using against us. They know only one language- the language of the Caspers [which is a weapons company- Casper and Mills]”. Winnie could also be referring to the military vehicles, Casspirs which were seen transporting SADF conscripts to the townships in the 1980s at the height of anti-apartheid resistance.

⁶⁷ Ndebele *The Cry* 105

Critique of Winnie Mandela based on this controversial statement appears to conveniently overlook the inherent violence of the apartheid state. This statement is not read against a social, political and economic system that is anti-black by design and ensures its sturdiness through brute force. Winnie through this statement (and as reinforced by April's doctoral research) theorizes the everyday lived reality of black people under apartheid.

It is the analysis laid bare in Fanon's diagnosis of the colonial city. Selective critique is a disservice against a society attempting to grapple with the nuances of its past. Winnie Mandela has stated that she is both a product of the masses of South Africa and a product of the apartheid state. Her legacy (wherein her humanity is at the centre) is a monument of South Africa's complicated and messy past and present.

Waiting as misrecognition:

Ndebele writing this book implies the intention to make sense of the icon that many would like to ignore. However he fails in seriously and rigorously engaging with this subject because he has committed the error of reducing Winnie to no more than a wife who waited. He is no different to Colin Bundy who described Winnie as the beauty queen without politics. To even begin the novel with the epic of Odysseus and Penelope is to commit further epistemic violence against Winnie's legacy. Ndebele has deliberately ignored the political labour Winnie did in the years of Mandela's imprisonment. This anecdote also does harm to Nelson. Odysseus and Nelson Mandela are not absent in the lives of their families for the same reasons. Apartheid tore families apart and the Mandela family suffered the same fate under the apartheid regime.

If Ndebele seeks to highlight the pain of waiting that many African women suffered as a result of political or economic exile, it would have been ideal for Ndebele to engage suffering

on both ends rather than operate on the premise of the abandoned woman- abandoned for a career abroad, or political exile, or prison.

In the case of Nelson and Winnie Mandela, according to Nelson recalls in his memoirs *The Long Walk to Freedom*⁶⁸ Winnie's father Kokani advising his newly married daughter that she would be marrying the struggle and merely the man. Within this statement is the recognition that Winnie is committing to a political project beyond just a personal commitment to her spouse.

That the view of the waiting woman has endured as long as it has is as a result of a refusal to see women's political and intellectual agency. In the case of Winnie Mandela there is the added refusal to engage holistically with her political and ideological flaws as a woman revolutionary not only because of a refusal to see her (and women like her) as such but because of the burden of the politics of motherhood. Mothers are held to a standard that does not allow for error and Winnie's image is of no exception.

Through Mannete's testimony in which she expresses a wish that upon her husband's return he would see that the home has changed, that life after his departure and return is no longer the same and that this is as a result of Mannete's labour and her economic independence Ndebele provides a useful glimpse in the economic roles women played in the years of the anti-apartheid struggle.⁶⁹ It is also through Delisiwe who would send money to her student husband overseas that we also see the role women play as breadwinners and supporters of their husbands.⁷⁰ However Ndebele does not engage Winnie's economic support of Nelson who when he and Tambo could no longer work at their firm because of their increasing dedication to political activity which prevented them from earning an income as lawyers, it

⁶⁸ Mandela, N. 1994. *Long Walk to Freedom*. Great Britain: Little, Brown and Company. Pp 201.

⁶⁹ Ndebele *The Cry* 30

⁷⁰ Ndebele *The Cry* 85

was Winnie who was the breadwinner within her household. In the famous Vilakazi Street home is a plaque that reads the previous owner of the house had been Evelyn Mase (Nelson's first wife) who was a nurse by profession as the government provided housing for its employees. The house is therefore a living symbol of the erasure of the economic and political role the home plays in sustaining the anti-apartheid struggle.

However women's roles remain misrecognised and reduced to merely wifely duties undertaken by women playing auxiliary roles to their husbands. Ndebele therefore fails to adequately engage women's economic labour under apartheid- labour that allows for the sustainability of households particularly when their husbands lost work as a result of political commitments. Women's political contribution involves the sustainability of the home and is not a matter of selecting one while foregoing the other. Although Winnie would end up banned from working thus affecting how she would sustain her home and provide for her children her profession enabled her with starting feeding schemes and founding a crèche that allowed for mothers of small children to continue earning an income while entrusting the care of their children to the crèche. These are the contributions that Winnie made in Brandfort in the years that she was banished there.

The novel's missed opportunity can be weighed against Toni Morrison's *Beloved*.⁷¹ This work by Morrison thinks through the meaning of motherhood for black women under slavery. It makes sense of dispossession and survival and how black women navigate existing in an anti-black state of affairs. It is based on true accounts of Margret Garner who killed her children so that they would not have to endure slavery, with this trial attracting the attention of both newspapers and Abolitionists. While it can be conceded that this woman had committed such a crime against her own children Morrison's objective is to humanise this subject and seek to make sense of the choices black women under slavery made in defiance to

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slavery. Morrison is not a Sethe (the fictional character based on Garner) apologist; *Beloved* does not provide a selective account of black lived experience under slavery. The true story of Margret Garner forms a foundation for Morrison to imagine who Garner was outside of the infanticide that brought attention to her.⁷² Through Sethe Morrison brings to light the extent of human debilitation endured by black people under slavery. Women produced slaves rather than had children. They were denied the right to raise families as the woman's body was reduced to a conveyer belt passing babies out that would be sold off as slaves to plantations across the American South. This resulted in the dispossession of families. Rape was the tool used to perpetuate the production of slaves. Under these conditions sex and sexual agency does not exist for black women. Motherhood is not a human experience enjoyed by black women slaves as they are primary producers of slaves and upholders of a slave economy. This book further engages what intimacy might mean for black people under slavery when sex is used as a tool of factory production of slaves and thus dispossessing families. Morrison begins this novel with the departure of Sethe's sons who eventually run away from 124 (leaving Sethe, Baby Suggs and Denver- the women of the household) as a result of the house being haunted by the ghost of the child murdered by their mother.⁷³ This is the child that would be reincarnated as *Beloved*. This departure speaks to both a failure to make sense of a past that continues to haunt their present and a refusal to engage all parts of who Sethe is perhaps as a result of a refusal to weigh her actions, as heinous as they were against an even greater unjust system in the form of slavery.

Morrison beautifully opens up a conversation about what the actions of slaves which would be considered criminal such as infanticide may mean in conditions that are by nature violent and what violence does to a person's humanity as a result of systemic trauma set on by slavery. This departure is important as it signifies misrecognition endured by black women

⁷² Morrison, T. 1987. *Beloved*. Great Britain: Chato and Windus pp 8.

⁷³ Morrison, *Beloved* pp15

who are expected to uphold a standard of motherhood in which is inherent characteristics of being a nurturer without engaging conditions that do not allow for such an expectation to be fulfilled. Sethe's sons leave to never return to 124 and it appears the women know not to hope for any return.⁷⁴ Their lives continue. They navigate living with this ghost which they have accepted to be intimately a part of them until she returns to live in human form among them until such a time that she permanently leaves following an acceptance that she is a part of a history they cannot tip-toe around. Rather than the story of Penelope which appears to be as a result of laziness on Ndebele's part, *Beloved* provides us with talking points in making sense of a part of a painful South Africa's history in which Winnie played a prominent role. *Beloved* narrates a story of a woman unapologetic of her actions. Margret Garner was not going to apologise to the legislators of slavery for killing her children so that they would be free.

This book does not absolve Garner or Sethe's actions rather it humanises them and centres their motherhood as part of their work as liberators and women who refused at all costs to continue a cycle of slavery due to a conviction to the idea of freedom.

Conclusion:

While Ndebele succeeds in not providing somewhat of an unbiased narrative, his point of departure is problematic as it centres Mandela rather than takes seriously Winnie's contribution and her political evolution outside of her marriage, particularly when one considers the reality that she had enjoyed married life as a result of Nelson's imprisonment. It places emphasis on fidelity rather than engage fully with what it meant to be a woman revolutionary and the decisions women revolutionaries made for the sake of liberation. Winnie has said on record that if her own mother had been on the side of the apartheid state-

⁷⁴ Morisson *Beloved* pp24

an enemy of the oppressed- while she was on the side of the masses and both she and her mother had weapons at their disposal in defence of the sides they were on, in defence of the ideals of freedom she would not have hesitated to pull aim her weapon at her mother and pull the trigger. Winnie was not an auxiliary to a struggle icon or merely a foot soldier carrying out instructions from the ANC in Lusaka. She alongside black masses in South Africa carried out actions as informed by an understanding of their lived reality. Engagement with Winnie's legacy must begin from an understanding of this holistic role as intellectual and political activist regardless of one's agreement or disagreement with her actions.

Chapter 4

Nelson's wife

Introduction

What has been established when exploring the life and times of Winnie Mandela is the notion that her political story begins and ends with Nelson Mandela. There is no serious engagement with her political consciousness prior to her marriage to the struggle icon neither is there a taking seriously of her own thoughts and voice in the years of her husband's incarceration. Where there have been attempts at engaging Winnie as an African nationalist, a feminist and in the case of this research an intellectual, this has been met with hostility, with the death of teenage activist Stompie Seipei- a death to which Winnie has allegedly been linked- being

used as a tool to silence such engagement. Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* is a prime example of the erasure of Winnie Mandela's political and intellectual evolution.

There remains a continued refusal to make sense of Winnie's politics and her political trajectory. This trajectory has been reflected in her sartorial aesthetic yet this has been reduced to fashion iconicity rather than taking seriously what each 'fashion' item represents. Drawing from the example of the Black Panthers, afros and dashikis were a representation of a proudly black political look and a support of a pan- African cause. Black Panther politics was not only particular in that it dealt with the internal happenings of the lived realities of black communities in the United States of America but it also looked to the decolonial moment taking place in Africa and the rise of the African intellectual presidents such as the likes of Kwame Nkrumah as well as the anti-apartheid struggle taking place in South Africa of which Winnie Mandela was a key actor.

Winnie donning her traditional attire to court during the Rivonia Trial in resistance against colonial respectability reflects an intellectual aware of the effects of colonialism and apartheid in the demonising of African aesthetics. Her visibility allows her to center that which is considered a colonial problem. This is not merely a reflection of her status as wife of a Thembu prince. Traditional attire perceived as a symbol of the "native problem"- reflection of a people that refuse to be made subject to colonial rule. Winnie donning *umbhaco* in the high courts of the land reflects this resistance against Victorian respectability Furthermore this attire was Winnie's way of discussing the double oppression that women endure in the form of apartheid brutality as well as the patriarchy embedded in African traditions.

The Double-edged sword of oppression

Women under apartheid navigated exclusionary spaces in the urban and the rural. Taking marriage as an example, Bezdrob writes of a Winnie who was promised to a young chief back in her rural home while she was working as a social worker. While arranged marriages were common in African customs, that she faced the likelihood of not having to choose for herself who she would marry is a reflection of the silencing of women within African traditions. The notion of the woman having to be seen and not heard is a marker of African custom and this reflected in this particular Xhosa aesthetic that Winnie went for in the early days of the Rivonia Trial. Winnie therefore punctuates the notion of the visible yet invisible black woman. The Xhosa dress of wives- the long *ijarmani* (German print) skirt, the small rug or cloth tied around the waist and the fleece headgear distinguish her as a married woman.

The immediate implication of such dress is silence in the name of modesty and respectability within the traditional and customary context. The woman never makes eye-contact as a sign of respect and modesty even at the possible expense of the woman speaking up against certain micro-aggressions that uphold patriarchy and violent masculinity. As a young girl Winnie had also witnessed the arranged marriages that women in Bizana were subjected to in observance of custom. Practices such as *ukuthwala* stood as an example of the policing of women's rights to choose a partner if they so wished and the expectations women had to fulfil as wives as sanctioned by tradition were within a patriarchal framework.

This is a reality that Winnie Mandela continues to contend with. It is a reality that researchers of her intellectual contribution have to contend with when attempting to explore her political evolution as there continues to be perpetual misrecognition of this struggle icons holistic contribution to the anti-apartheid liberation movement.

In an interview with Malou von Sivers⁷⁵ the opening questions centre Nelson Mandela and Winnie's romantic relationship with South Africa's first black democratically elected president. The interview begins with Winnie stating her resentment toward the reference "Mandela's wife" over and above her individuality yet what follows from these opening remarks about the wrongness of the erasure of women's voices is an insistence by the interviewer, von Sivers, for Winnie to reflect on how she and Nelson met. Though obliging, Winnie continues to make clear that this is not what defines her entry into politics.

This is also emphasised by her stating that this is not a memory she enjoys recalling. Perhaps this points to a failure by those engaging Winnie's story and story's similar to hers what survival and quality of life means for black people in states of extreme brutality, that love and the ability to exist even conditions such as those scaffolded by the apartheid regime are to an extent acts of resistance. Winnie like all blacks of that particular time continue to live vibrant lives while navigating a society that as increasingly becoming marginal. Her style provides us with clues of such resistance. Winnie would insist on looking her best in tailored three-piece suits that were on trend in the late 50s and 60s as a sign of refusal to show any signs of broken morale as a result of the apartheid state's assault on black people through bans, arrests and torture. Fashion was not merely an expression of individual style in the case of a highly visible Winnie Mandela; it served as message to black people that Winnie was maintaining her resolve against a state that continuously harassed her and her relatives. This is crucial in a society of hyper-securitization and censoring. Communities would have to work out different forms of speech in order to communicate messages to one another. Sartorialism would become one of the tools of communication deployed by Winnie in years characterised by harassment and banning orders.

Sophiatown as the hub of women's intellectual production

⁷⁵ Mandela, *Part of My Soul* pp 60

Prior to forced removals coming to effect in the mid-fifties Sophiatown, District 6 and the iconic Drum Magazine (among other media publications) were symbols of vibrant black and brown life in South Africa under an evolving white-supremacist Afrikaner Nationalist state. The emergence of musical icons such as Miriam Makeba, Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim), Hugh Masekela, Dolly Rathebe and Dorothy Masuka; writers such as Can Themba and photographers documenting the lives of everyday people like Peter Magubane and Alf Kumalo reflect a community that articulated resistance in varied ways other than conventional protest.

Winnie gracing the cover of the iconic Drum Magazine is not a reflection of a beauty queen without politics. Such a reductive statement misunderstands the culture of township life and the nuanced realities of the people living and navigating such spaces. It is at jazz clubs and in between the covers of such a magazine like Drum that black folk crafted a political consciousness that would give rise to increased mobilisation against the apartheid regime as the years went on. Winnie reflects (as she is cited by Meer in the book *Higher than Hope*) that it would be in Zonk Magazine while attending school at Shawbury High that she would first learn of the ANC. It erases the cultural and political vibrancy of the township space.

It is a reflection of the colonial hang-ups related to white feminism and the white lefts relation to beauty and it delinking art and culture with the political and intellectual project embedded within the anti-apartheid struggle.

Winnie's appropriation of beauty and fashion and using this as a mouthpiece while strategically being verbally silent in the years of Nelson's trials reflects a serious engagement with the role of the sartorial in translating personal politics.

Winnie represents a brand of the black woman described in the song *Hamba Nontsokolo* performed by Sophiatown Jazz great Dorothy Masuka. This song speaks of migrant labour

particularly the labour migration of black women in the urban areas, Goli (Johannesburg) and Kapa (Cape Town). This upbeat Swing arrangement speaks of economic changes that cause the migration of women to the city centres not only as domestic workers but also those like Winnie who would come to Johannesburg on to study social work at the Jan Hofmeyer School of social work. This is to an extent co-signs Farred's reading of "Scholarship Boys" like Stuart Hall who travelled from the colonies to the Metropolis on scholarships to the elite institutions of the Empire. It is apt that the protagonist of Masuka's song would be named Nontsokolo- a name which translated to English means "struggle".

Nontsokolo, the young woman headed to the big city is forced into such a decision having been born into a society that has predetermined her destiny as one of struggle as a result of the structural barriers set on by colonialism and apartheid. At the same time the upbeat arrangement as signified by the syncopated rhythms that are a signature of Sophiatown Swing- a combination of Jazz and Marabi- and the F-sharp major key tells of certain hopes carried by the black women moving from their rural homes to the vibrant urban cities. Masuka's onomatopoeic vocal inflections sung in high register an octave above the key that begins and resolves the song are invoke in the listener sounds of the train that would transport these women as they journeyed to the economic centres.

This would be the same journey that Winnie herself would journey as she began her new life of social work and part-time modelling in the golden age of Drum Magazine and the jazz club scene of Sophiatown prior to forced removals.

What Nontsokolo does not yet know while en route to Goli or Kapa is that she would be meet face-to-face with the harsh realities of segregation and the harsh living conditions that many black people who have migrated to the city are faced with as they navigate urban society. Whether Nontsokolo is a domestic worker or a social worker, state-sanctioned structural

poverty will always crouch over her. Such realities are described in Ellen Kuzwayo's *Call Me Woman* where she writes:

“...the majority of black women for too long have been discriminated against as women and as blacks. This state of affairs has created for them untold hardships. They have been challenged to the point where they have developed in some areas ingenious defence mechanisms and a very subtle sensitivity in handling some of the hideous and humiliating situations to which they have been subjected in their daily living in the foreign town life. This has been interpreted as dishonesty in some quarters.”⁷⁶

Kuzwayo goes on to describe ways black women survive the township space particularly those women who do not get absorbed in the essential services sector, particularly domestic work. These women, through beer brewing or the selling of fruit and vegetables find ways of making a living to sustain their living as well as send money back to the rural homes from which they come.

The above argument by Kuzwayo describes the ways in which Winnie would survive living in the Brandfort where she was banished in 1977. It is at this moment that Winnie makes use of her training as medical social worker to uplift the black community of this part of the country which endured high rates of poverty.

Through encouraging the planting of vegetable gardens and founding a crèche that enabled mothers to entrust their children to Winnie's care (Winnie was now unable to find employment as a result of the bans and arrests that marked much of her activist life) while they went to their places of employment. Through such programs, Winnie does the work of sustaining the household incomes of many women.

This work is deeply political as it is intellectual as it is informed by the recognition of the importance of literal bread and butter issues that are at the centre of dismantling the apartheid

⁷⁶ Kuzwayo, *Call Me A Woman* pp 35

system- what April refers to as ‘theorising the everyday’. Winnie appreciated the reality and objective of apartheid as a political philosophy: this project of segregation was economic. Nat Nakasa’s pieces “Johannesburg, Johannesburg” and “Criminals without Crime” punctuate the reality of the criminalisation of black people under the apartheid regime through enforcing the carrying of passes as well as the restrictions on influx by black people to urban spaces.

Masuka echoes the views expressed in Nakasa’s work when singing *kulomhlaba siyahlupeka abamnyama baselusizini* loosely translated as blacks are living oppressed on this land. What must therefore be understood when examining Winnie’s formative years particularly the years where she has recently moved to Johannesburg from Bizana is the reality of black life that confront her. Her political consciousness in this moment has largely been dismissed because of a level of privilege that she enjoyed as a result of the opportunity to study as a social worker thus navigating a social world that is starkly different to that of the migrant labourer working on the mines or in the kitchens of homes in the elite suburbs of the city and the realities that these men and women occupying menial jobs would live under even though all black people in the township would enjoy the social spaces of the jazz clubs and shebeens.

Winnie’s entry into the metropolis from the rural village where she had spent most of her life till this point can be compared with that of Stuart Hall’s landing on British soil as a scholarship to Oxford. As Farred points out, Hall and others like him enter politics not from a lack of political awareness as a result of a level of privilege that they may have endured due to social status or even the opportunity to study towards professions that would result in a more comfortable existence compared with working class blacks working blue collar jobs.

Winnie had grown up aware of the effects of colonialism on black people including her family. Winnie recalls in the epilogue of *491 Days* that her grandmother was dispossessed of

the land on which her store had been built.⁷⁷ Therefore what is evident in the writing about Winnie's years prior to her courtship and marriage to Nelson is the sense that Winnie is aloof to the realities of blackness under the apartheid state.

Winnie is not the only person close to Nelson who is misrecognised in this way. Evelyn Mase, Nelson Mase's first wife is viewed as a woman preoccupied with her religious faith unconcerned with the struggle. Nelson recalls in *Long Walk to Freedom* that Evelyn had hoped that his involvement in politics was nothing more than youthful abandon than anything remotely serious, that she had further hoped that Nelson would move the family to the Transkei where he would be a tribal councillor of Sabata.⁷⁸ This creates the notion that Evelyn in a sense was unaffected by the realities of black life that her intentions were to live a comfortable life as the wife of a Thembu royal since Nelson was of royal lineage. Yet it is Fatima Meer's, *Higher Than Hope* that we read that Evelyn was not just only a nursing sister but was a member of a nursing union that mobilised support for higher wages for black nurses.⁷⁹ Meer here points to a political consciousness that Mase had however this aspect of her life has been erased even by her former husband who in effect did the same of his second wife, Winnie, when he claims that her was politicising Winnie in the months of her courtship. This further speaks to the general erasure of women in the anti-apartheid cause with the FEDSAW organised 1956 march of 9 August being the exception.

This protest is in itself read as an anomaly rather than as part of a thread of the various ways in which women have participated in the ant-colonial and anti-apartheid protest from the women's march of 1913 whose leaders were the likes of Charlotte Maxeke.

⁷⁷ Madikizela-Mandela, W. 2013. 491 Days. Johannesburg: Picador Africa.

⁷⁸ Meer *Mandela* pp 35

⁷⁹ Meer *Mandela* pp 24

Dorothy Masuka's music is among the work of particular interest to me therefore because of it shedding light through song the women's lived experiences under apartheid in the 1950s in the Sophiatown era. Songs like Naledi about a train going to the township after which the song is named tell of the transport system carrying workers back to their homes just before the curfew bell is heard- a reminder of the criminalisation of black people in a segregated society.

Masuka's is not music that describes a way of life to an outsider looking in rather it echoes words spoken by the people living the reality of whom she sings. Sophiatown swing as a combination of jive, jazz and marabi rooted in folk music specific to the various cultures within South Africa and abroad reveals a history of South Africa's migration and is an aural monument to the country's hybridity. Masuka's greatest 1950s hits is a reflection of this: she goes from isiXhosa to seSotho to isiZulu representing the dominant demographic of black people who had migrated to urban centres from their rural homes. She incorporates township slang in her lyricism, which was a marker of the creolisation of black people across cultures resulting in the formation of a specific urban vernacular.

The likes of Winnie Mandela would adjust to this cultural reality as a result of the vastness of the cultural and linguistic diversity that black folk from across the continent would contribute to urban life in Johannesburg. Continuing with the Nontsokolo example, such a song would resonate with Evelyn Mase, travelling from rural Transkei to Johannesburg by train as a young woman is similar to the experience of her father's journey to the mines- the same mines that would be the reason he would develop an illness related to his occupation and this being the cause of the Mase family losing a breadwinner.

The music of this era narrates experiences that are not only personal but deeply political. This era and its artists would become the forerunner of especially the 1970s and 1980s in which

would emerge the likes of Yvonne Chaka Chaka and Brenda Fassie who would (regardless of state censorship) write music honouring struggle leaders. Winnie Mandela's name would be chanted on choruses reminding the world of the icon's contribution to the fight against apartheid.

This moment was therefore more than a golden age of jazz, jive and black glamour in the midst of the Defiance Campaign in which there is the presumption that women in particular are simply pinup girls or the aloof wives and girlfriends of political figures apart from the 20 000 strong women's march to the Union Buildings.

However there remains a reading of the likes of Winnie Mandela, particularly in Winnie's earlier years gracing the cover of Drum as simply the glamorous country girl turned medical social worker. The women's march in public memory has to a great extent been reduced to an anomaly in which women at only this moment were awakened to the realities of influx control.

Music sung by women artists such as the likes of Dorothy Masuka can be read as texts that narrate realities that women lived as well as the rallying cries that women made for solidarity with jailed political leaders.

Similarly, Winnie takes on this role of rallying support for her incarcerated husband and the leadership of the ANC after the Rivonia Trial. This role is read problematically as it is reduced to merely a wifely duty taken on by a woman left in desolation as a result of the state arresting her husband. Winnie is therefore not seen as a political activist in her own right making interventions in the public sphere relating to anti-apartheid resistance until such a time that she begins to make statements that disturb the image of Nelson Mandela who would emerge as the face of the beginnings of the peaceful negotiations that bring about the democratic dispensation.

This misrecognition is hence responsible for the type of the revisionist reading that is reflected in Njabulo Ndebele's *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* in which she is reduced to a wife in waiting. This type of reading is ironically and disappointingly reflected in Nelson Mandela's own autobiographical work in which he reads Winnie as a wife in mourning following his incarceration on Robben Island. However such a reading provides us an entry into Mamphela Ramphele's exploration of political widowhood in which the image of a wife in mourning has more to do with the gratification of a societal expectation of women than with the woman suffering loss. Ramphele makes the case that:

“The term "political widowhood" reflects the appropriation of certain women's bodies as part of the symbolic armor mobilized by political movements in the contest for moral space following the fall of heroes in the struggle for power. The claims political formations make or fail to make on the dead, and consequently on their widows, have significantly influenced the trajectories of women's lives in South Africa. But the symbolism of political widows extends beyond those whose partners/spouses have died in a struggle. It also includes many women who lived as "widows" during the long periods of their spouses' imprisonment. The inclusion of this second category of political widow is deliberate and intended to show the complexities of the processes of negotiation of the personal and political by women who were drawn by choice or force of circumstance into the struggle for liberation in South Africa. Political widow hood is a particularly ambiguous status. It is both an acknowledgement and a denial of women as social and political actors in their own right. An understanding of the impact of the processes of negotiation of gender relations in a body politic that vacillates between accepting and not accepting women as co-determinants of history is important in the unfolding reality of South Africa.”⁸⁰

It is therefore more to the satisfaction of Winnie's detractors that she performs silence in ways that were undisruptive to patriarchal expectations embedded in South African society. While there are clear silences that can be seen in Winnie's resistance against apartheid this is

⁸⁰ Ramphele, M., "Political Widowhood in South Africa: The Embodiment of Ambiguity" *Daedalus*, Vol. 125, No. 1, *Social Suffering* (Winter, 1996), pp. 99-117. Pp 100

not recognised as a political strategy rather because of her affiliation to Nelson there is the idea that she is simply being the dutiful wife.

It is during the height of anti-apartheid resistance and the heightened violence in the township that Winnie is viewed as a deviant although this analysis has in varied ways followed her throughout her contribution to the anti-apartheid struggle particularly during the 491 days spent in solitary confinement in which she is branded as a sexual deviant because of her beauty with interrogators claiming that she could go as far as seducing a pope.⁸¹

This image of sexual deviant is revisited in the biography about Mandela in which Winnie's relationship with Dali Mporu is documented in a way that slut-shames her and presents Winnie as an antithesis to the noble and pure image that is the Nelson Mandela of the post-apartheid era particularly because such a body of work is written as a reflective work on the triumph of the rainbow nation and further scaffolds the idea of the miracle of South Africa's democracy perpetuating South African exceptionalism. The Nelson Mandela of the transition from apartheid to democracy is the face of this exceptionalism perpetuated by Rainbow Nation apologists.

Therefore Winnie as a type of Lady Macbeth is required to further purify Mandela's image. *The Long Walk To Freedom* further fails Winnie's legacy as it in some ways reflects an image of an infantilised Winnie thrust into politics- her only crime being the love of a struggle icon-in-the-making- resulting in her falling down a spiral of political misdemeanours as evidenced by a political immaturity.

Winnie's youth is barely engaged as an advantage in the rallying of support from young people. Her sartorial evolution is barely engaged as a reflection of the political ideologies that

⁸¹ Madikizela-Mandela *491 Days* pp 70

influence her political outlook as well as an explicit symbol of resistance against apartheid and a refusal to look demoralised by the apartheid state.

Political widowhood creates a sense of intimacy that is to an extent largely misleading especially when examining the branding of Nelson and Winnie as “Father and Mother of the Nation”. When examining Mandela history within the broader anti-apartheid struggle, the title of “Father” becomes the canvas on which to define Winnie as “Mother” rather than take seriously the politics and ideology of motherhood. Motherhood as an antithesis or supplementary brand to fatherhood is not engaged with the intention of identifying complexities and nuances that define its realities.

Conclusion

It remains unfortunate that women’s visibility in the political arena is based on their proximity to a prominent male figure. This reflects an insistence on refusing to recognise women’s intellectual interventions and their contributions to the defining of the terms of liberation. It further locks them in a status of perpetual juniors. The other reality is men had access to the conventional means of intellectual production. This access was greater than that of women and was reinforced by an acceptance (as prescribed by our patriarchal society) of men at the table of intellectual engagement. While black men may have been excluded from western intellectual spaces, they did the same to black women in the alternative spaces created for black intellectual hubs. While there is evidence of women who made important contributions, women such as the likes of Charlotte Maxeke, there is the stubborn refusal to read this work as part of a canon of black intellectual thought. Where women have not put pen to paper but have used other platforms, be it through dress, or addressing a gathering there appears to exist an insistence in maintaining orthodox ways of intellectual production. This does not take into account the realities of censorship under apartheid in which writing

would be an easy target for the suppression of anti-apartheid mobilisation. If we are to construct the anti-apartheid intellectual we therefore need to deconstruct current conceptions of the intellectual. Winnie provides us with this opportunity.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Introductory Conversation with Mama Winnie Madikizela Mandela

“For black girls who’ve considered rage when the rainbow isn’t enough”

Background

I met Winnie Mandela on 11 August 2016 in the wake of the local government elections. Securing this meeting was not an easy feat as this was not only during the period in which the

60th anniversary of the 1956 Women's march was being commemorated. 2016 is the year Winnie celebrated her 80th birthday. In addition to this is the blow to the ANC caused by the loss of three major metros, Nelson Mandela and City of Johannesburg and the City of Tshwane. This would mean a busy schedule for Winnie as a member of the ANC who remains an influential public figure of the ANC regardless of the factions that may exist in the organisation as is expressed in Hassim's *ANC Women's League*, Sisulu's *In Our Lifetime* as well as various archived news reports.

This chapter does not contain as extensive a dialogue into Winnie's legacy as told by her due to her busy schedule and us having not succeeded in finalising a follow up meeting, however this offers us a glimpse into this legacy. We discussed the outcomes of the election and the current political climate. In this discussion, Winnie offers a candid view on certain perceptions, mainly the argument that Nelson Mandela may have sold out. This question is one I considered important to ask as Winnie is the one intellectual who experienced the full extent of apartheid harassment: Winnie has been incarcerated, banned, placed under house arrest, tortured, and placed in solitary confinement. There is no prominent freedom fighter both living and dead who has experienced every tactic of the Security Branch other than Winnie. This is exactly why her statement "I am 22 million" is a true testament of the intellectual that she is. Not only is she a product of the apartheid state whose ghost haunts post-1994 South Africa in the form of structural inequality as well as the institutional culture of the South African Police which laid the foundations for the massacre of Lonmin mineworkers in Marikana, she is a product of the black masses whose cause she served. She therefore is just as affected by the decision made by the ANC regarding laws of reform upon the attainment of freedom.

Interview

Winnie Mandela: The TRC was the continuation of that propaganda which was called Stratcomm- Strategic Communications- yamabhulu. Within it you tell 70% truth and you tell 30% lies. And human beings being human beings you read the 70%; once you get to the 30% you forget everything you've read about the 70%. That is the theory of matchboxes and Stompie and all that. There is nothing like that. Stompie was killed by them. I never made the statement I was going to burn people *ngamatayara*. We were fighting. *Nathi* we said the most dreadful things about them but we didn't have the facilities they have: get the special branch- the police- to write books to set up the TRC under the pretext that they wanted the truth. The TRC was set up for totally different things. I don't really care. I usually say that one day I'll also be introduced to the Stratcomm Winnie. Andimazi lo bathetha ngaye. Ndazi uNomzamo Madikizela.

We gave our people dummy...dummy freedom to suck. I warned the leadership at the time that if we go on as we are doing, we are over negotiating we are bending over backward, so backward that we are touching our backs, you are going to see in 20 years' time the people will be back in the streets and the people will be handing the same memorandum to us, because you said if the ANC does to you what the apartheid government did to us you must do to the ANC what you did to the apartheid government. It was not a statement from a rocket scientist. It was shear, shear logic. When we didn't deliver to the masses, hear they are burning 24 schools, you can go to hell with these schools, they don't even have toilets, they sewerage system is zero. That's what happens with human beings. We made promises in 94 which we are battling to implement to this day. Government does pass good policies but uh when it comes to delivery we have failed the masses of the country. I don't know what surprises anyone about the fact that we've done badly at the polls this time around. This is a

reflection of the state that is disintegrating. Whether you like it or not that is the truth. It's not a mystery. It's the truth.

Makhulu, do you believe the thesis that uMadiba sold out?

Winnie Mandela: Utheni?

That he sold out?

Winnie Mandela: Well, not really. He alone knew whether or not he did that deliberately or it was the effects of being in prison for too many years. You go to prison in the 60s, you come and you are faced with a society in the 1990s and you have been away from life for 27 years. Do you really think it was true that a human being can spend 27 years in prison and come out and say I am not bitter? Because that is what Tata said. He said he was not bitter. And it was a statement he had to make in order to have this peace. This peace that became, he became so neurotic about because that was the condition that was given by the leadership. You go out there and you preach peace.

Ke ngoku xa uphuma on Robben Island with uTata, what's going through your mind?

Winnie Mandela: Of course we were overjoyed. We believed that the release of the leadership would bring an end to our suffering because the leadership was incarcerated because of us in the fight for freedom.

So it's during the CODESA moment that disagreements start to come up?

Winnie Mandela: Uh, slowly the uh doubts started seeping in- are we really doing the correct thing, uh negotiating with these people from this war with these people they, the leadership was never physically violated by *amabhulu*. They didn't know how to fight them physically, theoretically, ja: you have all those ideas in your head- I do this and that and that

to fight these people in theory. We were the ones who were the cannon fodder. The people who fought in this country, the youth of the land- not that they didn't fight before- the youth of 1976 revolt turned the tide of history. The Tsietsi's of the day; the Mashinini's of the day are the ones who managed to turn the tide when there was a lull. All organisations were banned. The only voice at the time that was emerging was Steve Biko's voice and *nakhona* it was Black Consciousness, 'I'm black and I'm proud'; I must walk tall?

What were your thoughts on Black Consciousness?

Winnie Mandela: I totally agree with it and those two ideologies meshed together would've attained us the freedom we all fought for. It was such a tragedy that Steve was killed. That is why they killed even people like Chris Hani because you had to remove that quality of leadership- real nationalists who believed in the liberation of this country because we deserved to be free and not because we had to go cap in hand to De Klerk and PW Botha. They didn't give us the freedom we have because there was any change of heart. We defeated them! We fought! We fought and the battles that were made by the youth of 1976 which were carried on by Umkhonto we Sizwe were such that the Boers succumbed. They succumbed to the pressure of the struggle inside and the struggle made outside through the requests we made to various countries for assistance. We had to ask them to help us apply sanctions.

You see we became too comfortable. We took the people for granted and that is why we didn't bother to criss-cross the country. We took the country for granted. They thought that the Mandela Syndrome would be there forever and there's no such thing in history. You can quote Mandela a million times but if you don't deliver services, there's no way that you are going to govern the country when people can burn 24 schools *zababantwana* babo, and that type of madness at that higher level students attempt to burn a library... really, really like they were trying to do *eWits*. The acts of desperation like that to try and get rid of the current

leadership...and you'll just have to bear with us and wait for 2 years because it would be disastrous to even remove him now. It would not be good for the country. It would not be good for the rand. Uh we are trembling. The rand is so weak, and if we do anything to weaken it further we would be declared a junk status and the Fees Must Fall call, you can forget about it and other issues because we would be unable to meet with any demand. As it is we are one notch above credit worthiness, and if we are declared credit unworthy and we have junk status I don't know if you have heard about Greece, Argentina countries like that that are junk status- life is unbearable. So we have to do everything in our power to try and maintain the status quo and raise the value of the Rand so that even you people are able to get the demands that you want. It is too late to get rid of Jacob. It makes no difference. *Iyasihlaza nje ngoba bayasihleka eAfrika*. We've messed up. But of course I won't tell you when I go to Luthuli House [laughs].

Makhulu what does the flag mean to you? The ANC flag. Ndiyibona ixhonyiwe outside your house and it's also hear on your veranda given lento uyithethayo.

Winnie Mandela: I will die a member of the ANC. Yeah. It's my legacy. It's all I know. I know nothing about anything else other than this African National Congress. When in fact you talk about the African National Congress, the whites used to be quite shocked because they bring me all kinds of information about my colleagues and they especially when there was that transition from *amabhulu* to us, and they gave me damaging information about the leadership in exile and they thought I'd be so angry I would use this information to cleanse the organisation and the one little thing they forgot was sanitising the organisation like that would be sanitizing me. To destroy the ANC, you would be destroying me. I am the African National Congress. Every revolution has its problems. We are no different. *Amabhulu* were worse than us in terms of corruption; *bona ke* they were protecting each other. *Thina* we don't. The mistake we made- we didn't know- we gave the president unbelievable powers.

The president appoints the cabinet; he appoints the deputy ministers; he appoints the premiers of provinces; he appoints mayors of metros and he appoints the Director Generals- the DDGs. Literally everybody in the ministry is appointed by one man and one man alone. What do you think you will do if you had that power? Would you care? Hmm? Would you care? Really? *Ukuthi ubani uzakucinga ntoni*. I mean to fire a Premier from the Eastern Cape and you've got 8 other Premiers, would you care? You have too much power! That's the mistake we made. And it's not that they don't have brains but the economic situation in the country is so bad that we have translated the movement into our pockets. Men who were solid leaders of the ANC, if you raise the issues I have raised with you now will scratch their heads and look away from you and tell you that there's nothing we can do. Just like the outcome of the national executive meeting of this weekend, they are not going to fire JZ; but the results of the country are because of weak leadership and the things the president has done. So you cannot blame for being incapacitated, emasculated in the sense that *abakwazi ungabamadoda* because they are emasculated. We have to go cap in hand to the president and get their salaries. I don't have to. *Ndihlala apha eSoweto; andinandaba zalonto*. The only time *ndilala edolophini* is when I am in hospital. That's the difference between us. It's not that I'm the only one who thinks that. All of them. All of them, and that's what happens when you have a corrupt state. It is not yet uhuru. That's the sad part. We don't want you to take over the quagmire- *udaka esiluxovileyo thina*- we don't want you to do that. We would like to sort out South Africa so that when you take over you don't make the same mistakes we made.

Conclusion: Towards defining an intellectual

Winnie's activism spanned the era of the Defiance Campaign to Black Consciousness and the era of the United Democratic Front. In an interview with Jon Qwelane of *The Star*⁸² Winnie asserts, "Power belongs to the people, the country belongs to the natives of this land. Those with black skin, black hands- they will determine how that power is shared, and not the other way round." What can be ascertained from this statement is a belief in Pan-African ideals that black people ought to be at the forefront of determining the terms of decolonisation. Winnie touches on this in the above conversation. The TRC was not an adequate platform for addressing South Africa's painful past beyond looking at high profile cases such as those of Steve Biko, the Cradock 4 and Ruth First. While truth and reconciliation was an important aspect of nation building at that time, it did not bring about the desired vision of a South Africa in which all black people, primarily, could experience tangible effects of democracy.

On whether Nelson Mandela was a sell-out as is currently asserted given the slow pace in real change for black people, Winnie argues that Nelson became "so neurotic" about Rainbow Nation politics. Here she points to a definite change in the statement's stance but refuses to support the claims that he sold out. I wish to return to the interview between her and Qwelane. On Mandela's vision for a future South Africa, Winnie responded: "His vision of a future South Africa is the same as it has always been it is the same as it was on June 12 1964 when he and his colleagues were sentenced to life imprisonment. His colleagues' vision is the same. They believe in a democratic South Africa in which the wealth of the country will be shared equally by its people, they believe in the same freedoms for all the people of the country, and they believe in a total democracy free of racism and oppression."⁸³

In our conversation Winnie reflects on having warned the ANC leadership that should there be no real change for the most marginalised of our society, the very disgruntlements the

⁸² Qwelane, J., "Sanctions- the only peaceful way to save many lives" *The Star* 3 April 1986.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

organisation is dealing with currently would be seen. The rise of EFF as an alternative to the liberation movement as a result of the scourge of corruption and a seeming disregard for the poor would see the ANC being unseated from power within 20 years. This became a reality with the local government elections. The failure of the ANC to adequately address the needs of black South Africans as expressed by Winnie echoes Gordon's arguments relating to whether or not we ought to look to liberation movements as organisations to take newly decolonised countries forward. While Winnie believes in the ANC as a vanguard of a free South Africa, the old guard in the form of the ANC leadership as it stands ought to step back so that a younger, fresher voice in the form of young people can take the country forwards towards a truly decolonised South Africa. This is indicative of Winnie's political strategy during the 1970s and 1980s era in which she took seriously the voice of the young activists such as the likes of Tsietsi Mashinini. Winnie has often stated that it was her youthfulness in comparison to her husband and many of the most visible ANC activists that has played a role in attracting the youth to the ANC. Winnie claims space as a black vernacular intellectual who would not only give voice to young people's struggles in the 1970s and 1980s she would deploy existing feminist tools particular to black South African women's experiences.

While her legacy has largely been tarnished by her affiliation with the Mandela Football Club (youths taken in by Winnie who would be responsible for the death of Stompie Seipei and the disappearance of the likes of Lolo Sono) as well as the controversial statements regarding necklacing. What these moments reveal is the need for a rigorous engagement with the legacy of violence with this moment. As I have stated, it is not enough to read Winnie's ideas on violence as purely a case of her having been suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. South Africa like other former colonies across the world is founded on violence. Apartheid South Africa was maintained by violence at the epistemological and the physical level. Therefore the inevitability of a violent response by activists to the state cannot be read as the

ultimate crime as we see with how the Winnie's legacy is engaged. Her ideas relating to violence also cannot be read as merely an endorsement of a certain tactic of dealing with the enemy (the state and its collaborators) but it should be read as an analysis of the DNA of South African society. This is evidence of intellectual production. If we are to shift the geography of reason relating to this realm of intellectual production it is important to not simply define the intellectual as those who produced written work. Farred draws this out with his reading of Muhammad Ali by arguing Ali would use the ring, his sartorial aesthetic and press conferences as pop culture influencer and intellectual. In the same way, Winnie's speeches at rallies and mass funerals would be platforms for the dissemination of her ideas. Interviews with journalists both during the anti-apartheid struggle and in the post-1994 era would be spaces in which she would share her ideas. It is just unfortunate on the part of the mainstream that these are not engaged seriously as intellectual production. This is because of a refusal to think through how we ought to imagine an intellectual in the era of censorship during apartheid. It was a luxury to produce written work. In the context of Black Consciousness, Biko had on his side the apartheid government's misrecognition of what this movement was about. Biko was not endorsing separate development as the repressive state would soon realise. This misunderstanding became the loophole that would allow for Biko's ideas to be disseminated in first instance.

As for Winnie and other thinkers who did not write, women thinkers in particular, we see and creative ways of getting ideas across. These ideas would have an impact for the liberation struggle and they would inform the political terrain of the time.

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