



IZINDABA ZABABHALI : NEWS FOR AUTHORS

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The Vitality of Reading

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ANFASA

Dedicated to empowering authors

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CONTENTS

The Vitality of Reading

Keyan Tomaselli 1

Crisis in Education: Turmoil for the Book Sector

Kundayi Masanzu 2-3

National Book Week Successes and Challenges

Elitha van der Sandt 4-5

PhD Workshop: Making your thesis work for you

Diane Awerbuck 5

Memories of the City

Irikidzayi Manase 6

Memory

Monica Seeber 7

Getting back what you've given...

Lee-Ann Tong 8

All over Africa even the homeless and unemployed read newspapers: on the street corners, curbs, pavements, anywhere. In Kenya they rent them by the half hour. The ability to read is the ability to keep in touch with reality in our post-modern society. However, in university libraries in many African countries sometimes they have fewer books than do I in my office here in Durban. These folks hunger for materials to read and books to borrow, yet the supply can't be met either due to lack of funds, or lack of value placed on a wide range of reading materials by 'those in power'.

Yet, in South Africa, book reading is often associated with the chore of learning. Learning is associated with the receipt of a certificate. The certificate is associated with employment. What is lost in this chain of association, as is pointed out by the authors in this issue, is that books encode an immeasurable cultural and knowledge value, literacy is a direct contributor to gross national product in industrial and post-industrial societies, and reading is a nonnegotiable skill in the postmodern era.

This issue deals with a number of matters surrounding the book sector and the importance of literature. The Department of Basic Education's new curriculum which indirectly limits the production of text books is a pertinent issue which led to a consultative conference being arranged by the South African Book Development Council last month. The implications for this decision on learning, the viability of the South African publishing industry, and the implications on our GDP are discussed by Kundayi Masanzu on page 2. Elitha van der Sandt follows up on the successes and challenges of National Book Week 2011 on page 4, where she highlights the importance for children to develop a love of reading from a young age.

The *Mail & Guardian* Johannesburg Literary Festival 2011 had a strong focus on the importance of memories, especially in a country with such a rich and influential past, and the incomparable role of literature in their circulation. Irikidzayi Manase and Monica Seeber discuss the sessions on "Memories of the City" and "Memory as a Weapon" on pages 6 and 7, while Diane Awerbuck reviews a workshop which advised post-graduates on how to turn their PhD thesis into a book.



Crisis in education: turmoil for the book sector

Kundayi Masanzu

The South African Book Development Council (SABDC) arranged for a consultative conference during the National Book Week in September 2011 to look at ways of intervening in an unfolding crisis of a deliberate lowered demand for educational books. The predicament in question was initiated by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) rolling out a new curriculum for Grade R to 12 known as the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). This will see the implementation of a single national catalogue of eight core textbooks per subject per grade, from which schools can choose. This will result in the shrinking of the pool of educational books resulting in an unintended and drastic consequence on educational publishing in particular, and the book sector in general.

The SABDC chairperson, Jane Molony, asked how the book sector can go to government with a coherent voice for what we want, need, and how to deal with some of the policy decisions taken by the DBE that are impacting seriously and threatening the sector's survival.

Molony pointed out that government doesn't want to hear individual voices, instead, when it comes to a sector, they want to hear one voice. Thus it was important to seek common ground as a sector, collectively formulate a position and align that to the government's other bigger policies. She mentioned the lack of inclusion of the publishing and book sector in the Industrial Policy Action Plan 2 and the New Growth Path. Given government's commitment to "unblocking and dealing with any structural or policy problems that are causing individual companies or sectors to shrink and die, the book sector has every right to

approach government and say to them: as a sector we struggle with the unintended consequences."

Thereafter, publishing consultant Kate McCallum, spoke about how publishers contribute to the economy tangibly in creating revenue, tax and jobs. Unfortunately the contribution to the economy was less than 0.26% of the GDP. However, she emphasised that:

"the industry punches well above its weight in terms of its role in disseminating history, heritage, ideas, debate, culture, values, education, knowledge and information, and it contributes in a major way to literacy levels and therefore the economic levels of the society through providing the tools for literacy. And I think that link particularly is not fully understood. If you don't have a book industry, you are really talking about an illiterate society."

McCallum emphasised the need for good quality and diverse reading resources appropriate to a wide range of needs. These resources need to be plentiful for purposes of practice and fluency. Given the current low literacy levels in the country the educational system is not producing children who have the skills to enter into the job market. Therefore, what the industry needs is educational policies that encourage the buying of a wider range of good quality reading materials for schools.

Glen Masokoane from the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) affirmed the importance of the book sector when he spoke about the current government policy; the New Growth Path, which the DAC has translated into a project known as the Mzansi Golden Economy. Through the creation of this policy a commitment was made to begin to position and create value in the cultural and creative



Publishing consultant Kate McCallum speaks about the contribution of publishers to South Africa's GDP



industries, which the publishing industry is an important part. Masokoane urged the book sector to make sure that it uses this leverage by positioning and bringing these discussions taking place here to the attention of the minister for key strategic intervention.

The different stakeholders had an opportunity, thereafter, to address the council on their main concerns. The Publishers' Association of South Africa (PASA) mentioned that their main concern was that more than 80% of their members, 180 who are small medium enterprises all have a "foot in educational books" which sustains them and allows them to branch out and publish general trade books. Therefore if their involvement in educational books is taken away – which is currently the case – they will go under. The South African Booksellers' Association (SABA) pointed out that one of their main roles was helping schools because as booksellers they would carry a variety of material from different publishers and allow schools to choose from those. They also provide assistance with clarity to titles needed and issues such as ISBN numbers. But now there is a gap because the Education Department nationally is doing away with booksellers because they say the money that gets paid to booksellers can be used to buy books. However the booksellers have always delivered educational books for free.

ANFASA emphasised the relationship between an author and a publisher as crucial in producing good



SABDC chairperson, Jane Molony, at the consultative conference

material. Publishers often initiate projects; put together author panels; and they have contacts nationwide. So, if State publishing were to take over – as the current policy points towards – authors would be in a very difficult position in terms of who to approach with their idea; who do they relate to continuously in their writing, and so on. For the Alliance of Language and Media Practitioners (LAMP), their main concern was that they are a micro-enterprise that sells its services to the publishing industry by performing all of the tasks that make a book marketable, such as: designing, editing, translating, sourcing pictures, commissioning artwork, typesetting, proofreading, indexing and project managing. In light of this, the CAPS process hasn't given this body of experts enough time to do quality work because it was rushed. Therefore, education may lose a large body of experienced professionals who add value to the education system.

The discussions that took place afterwards revolved around creating a working group, comprised of book sector representatives, which will write out a set of ideas and solutions to discuss with the Minister of Arts and Culture. We, at ANFASA, will keep you updated on the outcomes of this dialogue between the book sector and the DAC. We hope that the playing field will be levelled out and this crisis averted as the outcomes will not only affect the publishing industry and the book sector, but the education of our young South Africans and future leaders.



The consultative conference was held during National Book Week in September 2011



National Book Week: Successes and Challenges

Elitha van der Sandt

The 2nd annual National Book Week, a project of the South African Book Development Council and the Department of Arts and Culture, was celebrated from 5 – 10 September 2011. With its call to action of “Buy a Book, Read a Book, Share a Book”, the project set out to promote the joy of reading among South Africans of all ages, but particularly the youth.

Schools, libraries and other venues across the country hosted various outreach and book donation programmes to highlight the fun of reading and increase the public’s access to books. The flagship event was hosted at Museum Africa in Newtown, Johannesburg, and presented an exciting programme of activities.

Businesses, SMMEs, libraries, CSI programmes and reading promotion initiatives exhibited their products and/or services at the Book Week Exhibition. Industry practitioners, as well as the public were able to meet some of South Africa’s top authors, and aspiring poets were given various platforms to showcase their work.

The Magic Tent, accommodating the Children’s Theatre, the Puppet Theatre, Storytelling Corner and Playground, provided exciting activities for children. Youth were encouraged to visit the Demo Library, and participate in different educational projects. School groups formed a core part of the attendance.

Overall, National Book Week achieved major growth, with strengthened numbers in exhibitors, programme participants, group visits and general public attendance. The project also broadened its reach through satellite projects taking place as far afield as Western Cape. The programme provided a range of activities in English, Afrikaans, seTswana, seSotho and isiZulu, and books distributed to schools and libraries included these and other



A learner is inspired to read during South Africa's National Book Week.

South African languages.

A comprehensive training and development programme was presented, including the Authors’ Programme, Skills Development Workshops, Poetry Sessions and Industry Sessions, allowing seasoned and emerging talent to benefit from the programme. The Demo Library and Library for the Blind increased access to knowledge and development through a range of displays and interactive programming.

The success of the project was also evident through the diverse and solid support received from selected ambassadors. This, coupled with partnerships formed with national media, resulted in a strengthened marketing campaign and broader public awareness.

The project also succeeded in creating close to 100 direct job opportunities, and many more indirect opportunities for jobs and income generation.

While the programme seeks to meet a broad range of objectives, various challenges are presented in the roll-out and implementation of the project.

A long term challenge is the positioning of the project within the educational, developmental and commercial arenas, and ensuring that

4



stakeholder expectations are met. Provincial support is essential to growth and there is a strong focus on securing provincial partnerships for the future. Also significant for growth is support and buy-in from key industry players, and to create a framework that will guide them to support and contribute to the project.

Short-term challenges will be well managed with longer lead time, allowing for proper planning and implementation of projects including book donations, distribution of books, book sales, technology and general programming. Forming strategic partnerships with other industry initiatives has also been identified as a way to grow the project.

PhD Workshop: Making your thesis work for you

Diane Awerbuck

Perspective: it's the only thing you really need to produce the academic goods – and the only thing that will evade you until the very end, when it's too late to matter.

When you are thinking about, arguing, researching, writing, rewriting, rewriting and rewriting your doctorate, it's hard to know who your friends are. Absent or agenda-blinded supervisors, Kafkaesque institutions, and the construction site next door: all these frustrations combine to make the PhD years some of the most difficult ones of your life.

Achievement is an acquired taste. Once you have coughed up your academic furball (also known as your thesis) that allows you to run with the other professorial dogs, it's almost impossible to think of masticating the material again for other purposes: the articles, the conferences, the lectures that your new and panting peers will want you to devise. This is why a workshop such as the one given by Dr Helen Moffett is such a boon. It ought to be compulsory for all post-grad students.

The thing is, says Moffett, that a

doctorate is a repository. It is an archive of information that changes shape as and when different requirements are made of it. It is a mistake to think of it as a fixed and final work that can be left behind you like an embarrassing first-year essay about *The Madwoman in the Attic*. Get used to revising your efforts. "I know we first said we wanted Harvard, but we'd prefer Chicago-style now, could you do that?" Tick. "Could you just add a section on the implications of the Arab Spring?" Tick. "And that Part Three? Could you cut it by twenty thousand words and insert it in the Introduction instead?" Grin and bear it: such is the nature of 'The Academy'. You knocked on the door and it has opened: *creeeak!* You expected the Taj Mahal, with couches, and your colleagues bearing goblets of sherbet – but inside this room is just another desk with a laptop. On it you will be expected to hammer out what you really think. Enjoy – and don't even think of asking for a glass of water until you're done with the references.

As any grifter will tell you, sounding confident goes most of

the way towards convincing your audience of your position. Books are no different. Moffett's elucidation of the change in style and voice is particularly useful. Converting a doctorate into user-friendly form means not being afraid to speak simply. Your research is not undermined by clarity, and you are doing it no favours with your meekness.

Moffett's delivery was most refreshing. Her trademark verve, wit and passion – and her curious, often outrageous anecdotes about life in university departments as well as the equally chaotic freelance universe – can be summed up with 'Suck it up', as she tells us, more than once.

I'm already glad that I did. I just didn't expect to enjoy the taste.



PhD workshop attendees listen attentively to Dr Moffett

5



Memories of the City

Irikidzayi Manase

The Memories of the City session, of the *Mail & Guardian* Johannesburg Literary Festival, held on 3 September 2011, had Prof Jonathan Hyslop from Wits University chairing renowned South African writers, Mbulelo Mzamane, Ufieda Ho, Denis Hirson and Chris van Wyk. These writers' latest texts are all set in Johannesburg, where they have either lived or are currently living. Hyslop's comments that Johannesburg is described by Gandhi as "a place where everything is unstable, everything is cosmopolitan and strangely those who live there come to love it" was apt and evident in the writers readings of their works, stories about their experiences and the memories about Johannesburg that they invoked.

The authors' readings took the audience through multiple journeys to the different lived and built spaces of the past and contemporary Johannesburg, highlighting memories they hold. Chris van Wyk, in his reading of the poem "In Detention", reminded the audience about the brutality of apartheid police interrogation and murder of anti-apartheid activists at John Vorster Square. Ufieda Ho's reading from her memoir *Paper Sons and Daughters* rekindled memories about the controlled travels around Johannesburg as typified in her family's visit to the Rand Easter Show in the 1980s. Denis Hirson, reading from *The Dancing and the Death on Lemon Street*, took the audience into the northern suburbs of his upbringing. While Mbulelo Mzamane narrated a story about his upbringing in the black townships in the '50s, which involved frenetic travel using the commuter trains from the pre-Soweto townships into and out of Johannesburg.

Each author, just as anyone who has experienced Johannesburg, had fascinating stories to tell. Ho's story about her upbringing opened up the memories of the city and the mythical and enchanting fahfee man and his lottery. For Mzamane, the inflection of the fahfee story in the memories of the Johannesburg took him to his childhood days of their entertaining chases of the China man's car. The memorable Johannesburg stories, as pointed by Hirson, varied depending on one's race, class and location; his insulated life in the white suburbs meant that they never talked about the other worlds of Johannesburg as in Ho's memoir.

Ho's memoir, as relayed by Hyslop, describes the city experiences from a deeply personal and family-oriented perspective of a Chinese migrant. The presence and role of the migrants from other parts of the country, the continent and the rest of the world was underscored in the panel

discussion of not only Ho's memoir, but in the writers' experiences as 'Joburgers' and their expert reference to texts set in Johannesburg such as Mpe Phaswane's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*.

Van Wyk's remarkable talk about his memoirs, especially *Shirley Goodness and Mercy*, was fascinating in its revelation of the coloured presence and experiences in the city. An enthralling aspect about this memoir relates to the way van Wyk recounted, as per Hyslop's request, indicative of his apt chairing, the way his grandmother and the coloured community, that he wrote about, enjoyed the story about the memoir more when it was transformed into a piece of theatre. This act facilitated, as noted by van Wyk, the accommodation and recognition of the presence of the memories and stories of the residents once labeled as the marginal and inferior other, in the imaginings and memories about Johannesburg.

The significance of the child's perspective in the depiction of the complex memories about Johannesburg was also underscored. Through the perspective of children we were taken to the early 1950s and 1960s Johannesburg black townships, by Mzamane; through van Wyk's coloured township experiences; and Ho's recollections of growing up in the Chinese section. As a result, the narrations creatively knit the various experiences in a past and separated Johannesburg in a manner that apartheid never imagined.

The session was rich in mapping the imaginings of the social, political and spatial memories about Johannesburg. It was made clear that there is more to read and remember about this city. What needs to be done, as evident in the writers' and the festival organisers' concerns, is to write our stories, and read more literary productions about Johannesburg, other cities and other experiences.

**I thank the NRF for providing the funds that enabled me to travel from the University of Venda and stay in Johannesburg during my attendance of the 2011 M&G Johannesburg Literary Festival.*



Left to Right: Ufieda Ho and Chris van Wyk read excerpts from their books at the Memories of the City session

6



Memory

Monica Seeber

The *Mail & Guardian* Literary Festival caught me unawares. I was battling to meet two deadlines and resolved not to go. But then I did, and am glad I did. The session on Memory is the Weapon touched on some raw nerves, and evoked sentiments and memories that are too easily forgotten.

Nic Dawes, editor of the *Mail & Guardian*, sat in conversation with three struggle veterans whose books had all been published recently. The books were, as Nic Dawes called them, three extraordinary stories.

Rica Hodgson, calling herself a mere "foot soldier" in her book *Foot Soldier for Freedom: A life in South Africa's liberation movement*, said that she was driven to write because few ordinary women had told their stories of their parts in the struggle for freedom. Ronnie



Rica Hodgson discusses her book *Foot Soldier for Freedom* during the Memory as a Weapon session at the *Mail & Guardian* Literary Festival, 2011

Kasrils, whose recent book *The Unlikely Agent* had been about his wife Eleanor, took up this point, saying that he thought Eleanor's role had been, in a way, symbolic of women's contribution to the struggle and he went on to say that although quite a lot of personal struggle memoirs has been released there was still room for more. Everyone - and young people in particular - should constantly be reminded of the struggle and the sacrifices. And it was not about history.

It was about people's lives.

Hugh Lewin, whose *Stones Against the Mirror* is a searingly honest recount of a personal journey towards acceptance of betrayal, spoke of reconciliation, a word which, he said, had become debased, associated with "a sort of happy-clappy feeling" whereas it is in reality much messier than that. His book, he said, was about the search for understanding, and the letting go of bitterness. This comment led Rica to dwell on love, and that Hugh's pain and bitterness were especially poignant because of the love he and his betrayer (his best friend) had had for each other. "I do not think anyone would have gone through what people went through if there was no love behind it. Love for your country, love for freedom & for everybody..." she said.

Ronnie was reminded by this of how the ANC heroes OR Tambo and Chris Hani had encouraged couples to be together no matter how difficult and dangerous this might be, and that political involvement did not mean the denial of personal relationships. "So the love factor is really there, in a struggle, although at the barricades, you forget it..." But Ronnie was at pains to stress that his mention of love was not romanticised: "We are not in any way saying that the struggle was not brutal or very serious or that we all loved one another and we were happy all the time. But what I mean is, even during the fight and the chaos that was around us, the ANC believed in love because first and foremost the reason why we were involved in the struggle is because we shared common love for the country and the people."

To round up the discussion, Nic asked the three authors how they responded to questions about why they had joined in the struggle against apartheid in the first place. All of them, after all, were white and middle class. Ronnie spoke for all three when he spoke of a higher calling, a driving need to give to all South Africans the same freedom that they enjoyed.



Getting back what you've given...

Copyright (K)wiki* by Lee-Ann Tong

In a past (K)wiki we chatted about the differences between assignments of copyright and licences. One difference is that assignments must be in writing, whereas certain licences may be granted orally.

In the non-fiction publishing arena, especially where there are multiple authors involved, it is common for publishers to request an assignment of the copyright from each of the authors. The written assignment to the publisher can be incorporated as a term in the main publishing contract or could be the subject of a separate written agreement. In either case, in order for it to be valid, there must be a mutual intention by the author and the publisher that an assignment should occur. Once the copyright has been assigned from the author to the publisher, the publisher is the new legal owner. The author has no rights to assign or licence the copyright to another party.



In some cases, an author may want to reclaim the copyright that has been assigned. This may be because the publisher has decided that the work will no longer be printed and the author has found a new publisher who is willing to invest in another print run. The only way to “reclaim” copyright that has been assigned is to enter into another assignment agreement in terms of which the copyright is assigned back! Some publishing contracts

contain “reversionary rights” clauses that do exactly this. The clause will usually state that upon a future happening (for example, the publisher deciding not to continue printing), or perhaps even after a set time period (for example, after five years), the copyright will revert to the author. This is really just another assignment agreement. It is also possible to enter into a separate written agreement to have the copyright assigned back from the publisher. When assigning copyright, it is important to make sure that you will not want the copyright back in future – if you do want it back, make sure that you have a valid reversionary clause in place or a separate contract that covers all the possibilities.

**Note: this article is intended for information purposes only and is not to be construed as legal advice. If you need legal advice, contact the ANFASA office or an attorney.*

IZINDABA ZABABHALI, the ANFASA newsletter carries items of interest to the members, but it also depends on the members to make it a lively and stimulating publication. Members are encouraged to send their contributions, whether serious or humorous, contemplative or controversial.

The editors reserve the right to shorten contributions, if necessary.

Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the editors or of ANFASA