

**RECONCILIATION: A QUESTION MARK IN POST-
APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA. A READING OF ZAKES MDA ‘S
*WAYS OF DYING AND SHE PLAYS WITH THE DARKNESS.***

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Abstract

The paper entitled ‘Reconciliation: A Question Mark. Reading, Zakes Mda’s “ *Ways of Dying*” and “*She Plays With the Darkness*” attempts to examine South African society during apartheid regime and the post -apartheid South Africa period using the literary works of Zakes Mda to strike a balance between the apartheid era and post -apartheid era in south Africa. The state of reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa is a mirage. This is drawn from the fact that political power bereft of economic power rolls down to no power, This situation has exposed the post -apartheid South Africa to a state of stasis and groping. The structure which reduces human element in South Africa during the apartheid era to suppression, oppression and exploitation are still common in the present-day post- apartheid era. Hence the issue of reconciliation in South Africa to douse the effect and repercussions of the apartheid atrocities is viewed to be a vain glorious night mare. This is so because apartheid is removed as a name but still remains in action. Post-apartheid South Africa is still marked by massacre, joblessness, forced labour and human abuse in all ramifications of human endeavour and existence. Hence there is a question mark in the reconciliation status and statement in South African politics.

Keywords: Reconciliation; Question Mark; Post-apartheid South Africa.

Introduction

Literature has foundation in the society where it constructed. Society is an index of literature while literature is the product of society. South African literature is groomed with the South African society and events surrounding the society. The South African society is really a fertile ground for the emergence of South African literature. Literature is actually a reflection of man and events in the social environment where they are found and located. It has to do with the existence of man and events in the society and his cultural mores. South African literature thus cannot be moved away or separated from the South African society, events surrounding the society inclusive of the mores of the society.

This notion has not escaped the view of great scholars. Edgar and Jacobs have seen literature to be imaginative and to embrace “written (and also spoken) compositions designed to tell stories, dramatize situations, and reveal thought and emotion and also more importantly, to interest, entertain, stimulate, broaden and ennoble readers” (1). The dynamism of society with its people and events, makes the literary field move round society and events, the past and present. This praxis has made literature revolve round society and its elements, bringing in new ideas, concepts and theories. All this has influenced literary art. South African literature captures this panorama. South African literature is a monument because it is a document which preserves the events of the South Africans to generations yet unborn. The writer as the artist is the one person who makes this dream to become. The writer thus educates his people to “regain their lost dignity, identity, value and customs” (Achebe 44).

Even Ngugi is of the strong opinion that literature cuts across the class structure of the society touching on politics, religion, social events, cultural and ideological struggles in the society as “every writer is a writer in politics”(58). The issue of apartheid in South Africa is a good foundation for literature. According to Peter Nazarreth, “Apartheid affects every aspect of a person’s life like a virulent form of cancer, hence many South African writers and “colored” South African writers are concerned”(3) with fighting apartheid by demonstrating how

monstrous apartheid is and showing how it dehumanized everybody”(22). As a matter of fact, African literary and or artistic disposition is a reaction to and a record of the consequences of the Western capitalist colonialism on the traditional values and institutions of the African natives. This explains the avalanche of literature spanning the gamut of South African history.

Issues in South African Literature

South African literature is concerned with at least four issues in his work, to wit: South Africa before the advent of the colonial masters, South Africa at the advent of the West, South Africa during apartheid and her position at the post-apartheid and reconciliation period. It is important to note that at various periods of human development – the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial – literature has always been used as a means of reflection of events in society. In the pre-colonial era, it was purely orality, in the colonial period, literature was used to account for the experiences of the time and to protest and resist colonial oppression. The work of Peter Abrahams, *The Wild Conquest* (1932) was among the first novels depicting South African literary history in relation to advent of the colonial masters. *Mine boy* (1946) was actually his first novel which exposes the experiences of an African youth thrown into an alien and oppressive culture of a large South African industrial authority.

Within the period of settlement just before the Republic of South Africa, just very few literary works were found about this time – the 19th century. Most writings were done in the Afrikaans but at about the 19th, 20th century most Africans cut off from the oral tradition of the people and began to write using the English language as a medium of communication. In view of progressive tendencies, the middle decades of this period featured many Africans in many literary apprenticeship on the popular English newspapers and periodicals. It was around this time that the “Drum, “which was aimed at the native African reader in his poverty stricken but lively environment. However, this reading material did not last long as most of the writers went on self exile for political reasons. This was precisely effective around 1948, the period when

South African society became unbearable for the blacks because of the racial segregation, and oppressive government that emerged at the time.

Also, about this period came on board Olive Schreiner, whose liberal and powerful literary works thrilled the local consumers on both local and international affairs. His first novel on South African affairs, *The Story of An African Farm* (1883) was absolutely good and made a nice read to the audience and the readers. William Plomer was the first writer on race relations and his work was good material as a literary work in South African field of literature. His work *Turbott Wolfe* (1925) was a good historical foundation in South African literature. Also, Pauline Smith's stories in her work – *The Little Karos* (1925) dealt on a sympathetic temper with the affairs of the rural Africans. Laurens Van der Post dealt with seemingly interesting subjects bordering on vital social issues of the primitive and rural South African subjects. His work *In a Province* (1934) made expressions bordering on the coming- to - town theme. Many other writers who achieved great reputation with their works include; Alan Paton, Nadine Gordimer and Dan Jacobson amongst others. *Cry The Beloved Country* (1948) established Paton as a prominent and proficient writer. Paton was a most renowned voice of South Africa with his literary works. Gordimer's short stories also contributed immensely in the literary outfit of South Africa with this approach.

The colonial encounter was a fertile and suitable ground for literary writing across African countries where experiences were common. Revolt against colonial rules, resentment at racial discrimination and also the terrible bitterness left by memories of slave trade influenced African writers particularly the South African society. South African literary works of the 1950s, described as the "Sophia Town Renaissance came up within a time South African literary history was in severe distress. It came up within the time of the two political conjectures in South African history which gave birth to the South African literary expedition. This Renaissance came up within the "Defiance campaign of 1952 and the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 when it was forced into

exile. The writers in this period were; Can Themba; Lewis Nkosi, Ezekiel Mphahlele; Bloke William Modisane among others.

Ezekiel Mphahlele had an encounter with the Harlem Renaissance writers and this encounter mediated one of the most crucial events of the 1950 and 1960 in the African intellectual history. This forged and established national literature in South Africa and Nigeria in the modern times. Within this period of settlement in South Africa, many writers as represented in almost all the regions of Africa were interested in the affairs and history of the people. This time was known as the period of intellectual history and also gave birth to the African Marxism. This time featured writers like Franz Fanon and Amilkar Cubral within the context of African revolutions. Like every other literature, South African literary writings had emerged as a mirror of the events taking place in the political, social and moral tempers of the society. A. C. Jordan was then a popular and leading literary scholar in South Africa. He wrote articles praising the virtues of African literature in African languages and exposing the political and social events prevalent and common in the society at the time. Other writers who contributed in bringing South African literature into lime light include writers like Mazisi Kunene, James Matthews, Richard Rive and Alex La Guma. Protest literature began with the writings from the District Six Renaissance writers. These writers were pre-occupied with the making of a fundamental critique of apartheid in the short story form or in the poetic mode. Mathews was hostile to the emergence of the apartheid principles and used his literary dispositions to fight back at the politics of apartheid. His short stories "Azikwelwa" and "The park" in the anthology, *The Park and Other Stories* (1974) are classics of South African protest literature. In the late 1950s the South African short story form, particularly as it was then practiced by District Six Renaissance writers, was the literary form which grappled with South African history. Alex la Guma was remarkable in this protest literary outfit with his debut novel *A Walk in the Night*, (1962). This work brought to light the political consciousness in opposition to the apartheid regime. About the end of 1950s and the beginning of 1960s was the birth of the Staffrider literary school which

was con- apartheid as the school featured protest writers as Mongana Serote, Nat Nakasa, Matika Gwala, Njabulo Ndebele and Mzamana Mbulelo among others.

At the time the apartheid government attained its climax and full of crisis because of the avalanche of protest, basically around the 1980s and beyond, South African literary outfit became fashioned by the explosion of a black theatre in the English language, there was also a reinvention of a literary genre which had disappeared for about four decades. In addition to this, was the consolidation of a black publishing house known as Scottaville and finally the emergence of women novelist and short story writers. This period featured such writers as Lauretta Ngcobo, Miriam Tlali, and Gladys Thomas. The apartheid period actually witnessed a lot of literary works as a weapon to fight and resist the segregational political movement that was in operation. The emergence of the New Black theatre of the 1980s attempted to deal with the political crisis at the time in South Africa. This period witnessed a lot of literary output in all genres of literature. These works lamented and reacted against police brutality, forced labour, the historical illegality of the homeland system, the migrant labour system and the effects of racial discrimination.

Kalu Kalu Obasi and Ozoemena, John- Kennedy Azubuike see the apartheid regime as a very draconian system that reduced humanity to a worthless idiot in their study of Athol Fugard's works when they posit that "Athol Fugard in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island* (1973) portrays the conditions of the Blacks in apartheid South Africa at the apartheid regime, that the three basic necessities of man as a living being – shelter, clothing and food and security are being denied the blacks, the White colonists denied Africans of their rights as human beings. They are subjected to punishment of various types" (122-123). They further aver that " in *The Island* Fugard exposes the South African society in her attitude towards prisoners. Prisoners they say are maltreated"(emphasis mine), (123). The apartheid regime was a period of mayhem upon the Black majority by the minority Whites. But the Blacks devised their own subtle ways to resist and protect themselves from the onslaught,

preparing themselves for future freedom from the oppressive tendencies of the White. In “Echo of Poetry in South Africa’s Politics: Form and Resistance in Dennis Brutus’ “A Simple Lust’ and “Letters to Martha”, Kalu, Kalu Obasi states that Dennis Brutus uses the poetic form to lament the oppression, suppression and killings of the Blacks in South Africa. He says” In Letters to Martha, “... Brutus focuses on the evocation of the imprisoned life of most political prisoners in South Africa. This focus moves from the conviction of the prisoners to the acclimatization of the prisoners to the conditions of the prison...”(35). According to Kalu, Brutus uses the poetic devices such as metaphor, simile and personification.... to evocate and relate the experiences and devices of the writers to suppress black determination to be set free in all forms ...” (36). Kalu concludes in a determined evocation that “ South African society is not self-willed to this condition but out of frustration is subject of victimization, harassment in all facets of human existence. Though inhuman laws and suppressions are meted on them unjustly, they still have a consolidation and belief that South Africa shall be free...” (36).

Blacks in America also suffer the same racial segregation, oppression and subjugation meted against Blacks in South Africa. Emenyi Abang in the paper “ Vision Versus Illusion: A Symbol of Reality in Raph Elison’s *Invisible Man*” notes that “ In *Invisible Man*” there are façade of reality that are symbolically expressed by the narrator. It is evident in the novel that in the mindset of material prosperity in America the blacks suffer and die of poverty Also the condition of survival and existence in America represent exploitation ...” (19). She continues that “it is thus evident that America thrives in exploitative tendencies” (19).

Theatre groups were formed, aimed at echoing and publishing the evils engendered by the apartheid regime. One of such theatres was the *New Black Theatre* (1986) which both Soyinka and Amiri Baraka have written most eloquently. In a forward to the text, Soyinka notes:

The torture and death of Steve Biko, The massacre of Sharpeville and Soweto, international wars at

crossroads ignited and fueled by a diabolical regime, death and torture in hidden cellsthese are the images of reality that flood the mind by the mere fact of contemporary South Africa theatre (viii).

Amiri Baraka says that the theatre “makes us see more clearly, clarify and redefine The struggle’s intensification made it necessary to unveil the people themselves, their own voices and the tearful account of their personal tragedies(xiii – xvi).

Mukhuba, Theophilus in his essay reveals that “African protest novelists have also hinged their themes on exploitation, rough treatment in prison of African prisoners, and trade monopoly ”(10). Athol Fugard as has been mentioned above, was not comfortable with the state of the political terrain in South Africa. As has been mentioned in Kalu and Ozoemena above, Fugard’s *The Island*, mirrors the ills of unjust laws in South Africa. Fugard follows this ambition in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1968), *Statements After Arrest* (1972), *The Blood Knot* (1985) to his protest against apartheid regime in South Africa. All the plays describe the horrors of apartheid in South Africa from depiction of aspects of segregation in South Africa, such as the “Immorality Act”, racial classification, the various class and influx control laws among others. Kalu and Ozoemena have remarked that segregation has been action of oppressions subjugation of the Blacks, be it in America or any other places. Richard Wright in *Black Boy* (1970) *And Native Son* (1942) has presented what life was for the Blacks in America in the 1920” (124) while Oswald Mbuyieseni Mitshalli in *Nightfall in Soweto* (1988)” describes the plights of Blacks living in Soweto” (124). The Blacks who live there, work and commute to Johannesburg every day. Black Africans were forbidden to live in Johannesburg which is luxurious town in contrast to the want and deprivation in Soweto.

**Post-Apartheid South Africa and Post - Apartheid Literature:
Reading Zakes Mda's *Ways of Dying* and *She Plays with the
Darkness*.**

Post - apartheid South Africa implies South Africa after the abrogation of the apartheid regime. It is like post-colonial Africa which is the African society after the colonial era. Post-apartheid literature is literary writings which came up at the wake up of the post- apartheid era. The period after apartheid was disbanded in South Africa. The post-apartheid novel is given a politically committed back- ground in contemporary issues affecting South African politics, mores, ethics, economy and social contemporaneity. With the usual abolition of apartheid in 1990, the South African society entered a new phase, so also has the literature of the nation. South African post-apartheid literature comprises works written by South Africans authors, both blacks and whites, in the last decade of the country and beyond the end of apartheid. The literary era of the post- apartheid features writers like: Lauretta Ngcobo, (1990), Farrida Karodia, (2000), Sello Diukker, (2000) and Zakes Mda, (1994). Others include: Nobantu Rasebotsa, (2004) Verenia Keet, (2004), Phasewane Mpe,(2001) and many others. Each of these writers approaches the South African issues from a different perspective common in South African political and social issues.

Attwell, David and Harlow, Barbara, note that HIV and AIDS menace is addressed by Nobantu Rasebsa in her collection of poems *Nobody ever said AIDS: Poems and stories from South Africa* (2004), and *Coloured Hill* by Veronia Keet (2004) Xenophobia, fear of black against blacks rejections in South Africa which replaces apartheid racism is tackled by Mpe in the work, *We Have To Hill Brow* (2001), amongs many other writers with different and interesting topics about the post-apartheid in South Africa. Mda Zakes writes about South Africa after apartheid with a new consciousness and vision. He looks at social ills existing in the present new South Africa with a view of reconciling the actions and the manifestoes at the emergence of the new South Africa. He is concerned with the ecological as well as other social challenges raging on in post-apartheid South Africa. He uses his novels to expose the political

atrocities of the pre -1994 elections and pour out his mind in the bloodshed that was the result of the political skirmishes between ANC loyalty and the Inkata movement.

Mda Zakes in dissecting the South Africa, post-apartheid society examines and explains some of the issues that existed in South Africa during the apartheid era which are still prevalent in the post -apartheid. The existence of these issues begs the question of the status quo-ante in South Africa at this post -apartheid era. Using *Ways of Dying* (1995), a spectacular and common challenges which existed in the apartheid era and still looms large in the present post -apartheid is poverty. This is typified in the characters of Toloki and Noria. The two characters are presented as poor Blacks who have no descent homes. Noria lives in a shack of a house, Toloki is a poor fellow who becomes a town reveler visiting mourning houses to earn a living and sleeps among the mourners. The regularity and frequency of this action of his earns him the nick name “professional mourner” (9). Toloki has no home of his own. He lives by attending burial or funerals to be able to eat and sleeps by the corner of any home that accommodates other mourners, hence, he wanders from one burial house or home to another. He rarely bathes and was stinking. In short, he was like a mad man who rarely took a bathe of himself.

Noria is another character whose poverty is evident. She comes from the village as Toloki and both are united again, after about two years after leaving the village, in the burial of Noria’s son. Noria has no home but lives in the squatters area, the home of the homeless savages from the village.

Also coupled with poverty was the hunger that visited and remained with the people. Many still suffer and walk long distance in search of jobs which are not even available. “Toloki walked for long distance on gravel road” (60, WD) in search of “fortune and love” (60, WD). Even a man who offers him a coin for feeding turns out to be staying in a labour camp with other labourers. In his hunger Toloki “wolfed the fat cake the strangers bought for him and he suddenly felt cramps (61,WD).

Also, Noria, is homeless and in constant mourning. She is from the same village as Toloki and comes to meet her at the burial of her son. She is poor like every other person, with no relatives but a street committee to commiserate with her and consoles her at the son's funeral.

Apart from poverty, another challenge of the post -apartheid era is death. Death is common and rampant. The spate of death is so high that it attempts to be higher than the apartheid era. The author narrates that, "death and funerals continue to dug his way – the narrator, through out. Toloki notes that "Death lives with us every day. Indeed, our way of dying are our ways of living" (98).

The many deaths, poverty and poor social conditions of the Blacks as depicted in the novel point to the fact that in this post -apartheid era and its historical night mare, dying is a way of life and this points to a society that was regressed; a society where the law is indiscriminately violated or completely absent. The political situation in the South Africa of this present day has taken a form of a night mare where violence exudes everywhere and everything. Children are instrument of death. *Ways of Dying* chronicles the atrocities committed at the new era. Death by violence, rape, burning of human beings with tyre is common. Young ones are exposed to violence at a tender age. The author notes:

At this age Vutha was already a victim in the struggle "an expert" at dancing the freedom dance, and at chanting the names of leaders who must be revered, and of the sell – outs who must be destroyed (179).

Toloki affirms this situation of numerus deaths when he says; "there are funerals every day, because if the bereaved were to wait until the weekend to bury their dead, then the mortuary would overflow (136). The writer makes its evident that there is violence emerging from everywhere, from migrant groups to even within the line of their pedigree. Women are raped and their head chopped off thereafter. Gangsters are everywhere harassing and assaulting residents. Frustration was rife and the:

Government was refusing to give people houses, instead they were saying that people who had qualifying papers had to move to a new township that was more than fifty miles away from the city... most people did not even have the necessary qualifying papers. Their presence was said to be illegal and the government was bent on sending them back to the place it had demarcated as their homeland (121).

The transition period heralding the post-apartheid era is reminiscent of the apartheid period when violence was the order of the day. Mda direct his consciousness to this time to remind South Africa of the path they are treading into the new democracy. The period is the period of constant bloodshed, death, joblessness, homeless citizens and suffering. Toloki reveals this as noted above. During apartheid, funerals were conducted on the weekends. The implication being that at this transition to democracy, death toll is higher. This is a question to the reconciliation jingles in the post- apartheid era. The situation in the post-apartheid South Africa is uncertain and makes concerned individuals to doubt about the reality of the end of apartheid that many concerned individuals both within and outside South Africa are critical of this situation. The feeling of an unrealized goal after the struggles to end apartheid is disheartening, particularly considering the attitude of the Blacks in control of power in the post-apartheid South Africa.

Dennis Brutus in an interview with Nwahunnya says:

I have no regrets for engaging in the struggle, I am very pleased that we succeeded in overcoming apartheid. My regret is that those who have succeeded, who have replaced the apartheid regime have been guilty of policy similar to the policy of apartheid regime. They have protected a small elite of millionaires...blacks millionaires now living under very secure conditions...barbed

wires...armed guards.... But the mass of the people are still living in shanties, in the ghettos and shanties and shacks ...What we have is not what we hoped to achieve. (Nwahunnaya, 35).

In line with this view, it is evident that the transition makes it possible for apartheid to masquerade as a democratic post -apartheid South Africa. This is basically on the premise that post-apartheid South Africa registers much overlapping tendencies at the apartheid era. In establishing the socio -economic conditions of the Blacks in the post-apartheid era the novelist emphasizes the fact that political emancipation has not been complemented by social and economic liberation. As is it, even though Blacks have secured some form of political independence, the conditions of life confronting them are typical of economic exploitation and impoverishment rather than economic and social equality. Kunnie notes that:

Since capitalism is the new form through which apartheid operated, the white originally still controls the new source of power and influence for it was the means to keep blacks at the level of basic subsistence (56).

It is certain, therefore, that if the evident gap between the wealthy and the lower classes continue to grow wider and the rich Whites and their surrogate Black elites become richer while the Blacks masses grow poorer, then there is no normalcy in the black democracy of South Africa. Hence, the issue of reconciliation lacks the merit of mention.

In *She Plays With The Darkness* Mda also shows the twinship relationship between the post-apartheid South Africa and the apartheid South Africa by pointing out some of the structures of apartheid present in this nascent post-apartheid South Africa. The text opens with a warning that “Don’t be fooled by the sunshine in their faces. They are a sad people inside tormented by the knowledge that one day the great mist will rise and suffocate them all to death...” (1). It expresses the harrowing experiences and the conditions of the Blacks in South Africa.

Presented in fifteen short chapters, the book presents in the first chapter “The Dancer”. This reveals communal life led by the Black South Africans during the apartheid regime. They dance in the mist, kicking the mud with their ark. They sing of their sorrows and the young ladies whose husbands are working in faraway world in mines, join the young girls. By this they remember their plights at the apartheid era which shows no evidence of being put away from them soon. In their song they lament “If I were ruling and were in command, I would instruct that all the mines be closed. Be closed for all these haughty boys. They bother the girls with love proposals” (1).

The novel epitomizes the existence of the Lowland and the Mountainside which is apartheid South Africa and the post-apartheid South Africa. The impact of colonialism is used in this novel to show the existence of racial discrimination in the new post-apartheid era of South Africa. This is shown in the relationship of the villagers that had never seen a car in their lives, which could only be accessed on horseback”(6) and the statement that” every Wednesday the flame came to Ha Samene from the capital city Maseru in the Lowland” (6). During the apartheid era, the Blacks lived in the ghetto and suburbs and were mostly labourers for the Whites. They spent most of their lives in the mines while the whites live in bungalows and rode in cars and aeroplane. The situations were not changed to complement the assessment of reconciliation in this post -apartheid South Africa. The inhabitants of Ha Samane have a romantic relationship with nature, particularly such creatures as snake. The fortune of the snakes represents the debasing experiences of the Blacks as captured in this novel. The situations give a true picture of apartheid South Africa and the transition to post-apartheid era. It is noted that in the novel that:

Radisene switch on the radio on the head bed.
Against the background of martial music Radio
Losetho blared out the news: There had been a
coup.... The government had fallen. Sixteen years
after the national party had refused to hand over
power to the rightful winners of the election,

Leabia's government had been overthrown by his own soldiers...(79).

Military upheavals are always associated with mayhem, violence, massacre and abuse of human rights. The novel relates this as a representation of the transition to post-apartheid South Africa. The novelist uses the coup to point at the change of leadership with its attendant horrors. It reveals that post-apartheid South Africa should not be a replica of the past or a change of the instrument of torture and oppression. Also, the novel represents history and tradition of the traditional society of South Africa. In this bid the novelist presents the real situation contrasting it with the tools of colonization. The novel uses the ritual process to hint on the severity associated with the African tradition as experienced by the people of the Cave. They experienced no hardship and oppression but lived in peace and harmony among themselves, The narrator notes:

Dikosha was filled with love for the people of the Cave and wished that she could spend all her days with them. She loved the peace that reigned among them. No voice was ever raised in anger, and they did not seem to know any form of violence directed at other human beings. Men did not deem themselves to be more important than women. There seem to be an equality among them that did not exist in the world of Ha Samane (52-53).

The novelist in this reflects the present state of violence and the severity which exist in traditional African society of Ha Samane to emphasize that in the apartheid era, violence was the order of the day.

Its replication in this new dispensation will be tantamount to no reconciliation. This paper also shows disparaging tendencies of post-apartheid democracy, highlighting the continuities and discrepancies inherent in the Black rule. Drawing from the novel, the episode indicates the extent to which the people have lost faith in the new democracy. Also, consciousness is focused on the hypocrisy of the Christian

religion, which robs Dikosha of the opportunity of appropriating Western education on the basis of sex. This agony highlights the issues of race and the colour line, hence interrogating the validity of the Christian religion as a civilizing tool for the Africans and South Africa in particular. On this note, it could be said that the democratic rule of the blacks should be viewed as unrealistic and abnormal mission.

Again, patriarchal power and its corrupt tendencies are presented in the novel as featuring prominently in the new South Africa. This patriarchy is what robs Dikashsa of her desire to acquire Western education in Ha-Samane. This approach is shown to be destructive to social human relationship. The wanton abuse of patriarchy by father – of -the daughters served as a prime example of both the complex inability of the people in Ha Samane to bring about change through its abundant rituals and its strength to rob Dikosha of her future. The increased level of violence in post-apartheid South Africa cast doubt of any reconciliation and political independence. This is evident in the fact that;” ... the roly-Poly police district commander was the centre of attraction”(25) and the police force was no longer a peaceful force that everyone takes advantage of (25)” and the government has ordered them to shoot to kill anyone who tried to go against the emergency regulation”(25). The novel also portrays domestic violence by pointing out the assault of Tampololo on her husband. She beats him up every time at the slightest provocation. The narrator notes:

Tampololo leapt at Trooper Motsohi and throttles him with both hands. She threw him on the floor sat on him, and raised fists on his face. The regulars pleaded from a distance, please Tampolol don't do this to your husband (26).

Mda, in this work depicts a situation of political impasse between the apartheid supremacist hegemony and the emergence of Black majority rule. The contradictions experienced by the people are used to underscore his views of racial coexistence and national unity incumbent upon a redefinition of social and political forces. Development is only

experienced by those who live in township areas while the Lowland villages had no good roads. This is a replica of the apartheid in Johannesburg and rural areas occupied by the majority Blacks. As Radisene breaks curfew regulations, he is addressed with police violence, even with an officer who is quite an acquaintance to him. The narrator notes that, "Radisene was seething with anger. He had weals all over his body"(31). Mda also portrays political wrangling among rival political parties. Hlong, a member of Congress Party has his residence attacked by the peace corps, a group of National Party members who have been provided with arms by the government and instructed and authorized to attack members of the "Congress party"(49), and neighbours attacked neighbour in the same environment.

Social decay pervades, everywhere that people have lost sense of value. This decay does not give Matlakala the sense of shock when she is informed of the death of her husband. She had assumed him dead long ago since she had not seen him or heard from him for many years since he went to the mine. She claims, "To me, that man died many years ago"(64). There is high handedness, corruption and Kleptomania. Human beings as such have become "Vultures"(64) who now feed on corpses like Radisene. Unemployment is the cause of this social malaise. The political status of African countries is never allowed pure independence by the West who monitors affairs and gain control of whatever happens in these Africa countries by establishing diplomatic ties. This way, they control economic power and invariably control political powers too. This practice is called neo- colonialism. This transforms into neo- apartheid. The novel is used to express the sense of betrayal in the post-apartheid South Africa and to question the peace and reconciliation exercise in the new nation.

Dikosha and Radisene, the twins are used to explore the social, political and economic dichotomies that exist between the past and present South Africa. The post-apartheid regime is a mark of development which is a condition of natives seizing power from their colonial masters. This process, as noted by Fanon, "... is always a violent phenomenon" (17), and he states that at whatever level and what name given to it,"

decolonization is quite simple, the replacement of a certain species of men by another species of men”(27). In the post-apartheid society of South Africa, Mda uses the Ha Samane community to portray some inconsistencies existing in the society. This is evident in the lack of identity which exists in the binaries of the past and present. Black South Africans lack identity as is evident in Athol Fugard’s *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972). Blacks were faceless human beings and could be anybody. In this new era, Mda shows in *She Plays with the Darkness* in the characters of Dikosha and Radisene the continuity of the lack of identity and oppressive tendencies. The parents of Dikosha and Radisene are Father- of -the Daughters and Mother- of-the twins respectively. The name given to a character or an individual is a mark of identity and makes the individuals stand out among others. Mother -of- twins or Father -of -the Daughters could be anybody in society. In Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, (1958) for instance, Okonkwo stands out as the father of Nwoye and Ezinma. Ekwefi stands out as the mother of Ezinma. Name is an important aspect of human knowledge and creates a sense of identity among people in a given society.

Mda uses his characters in the two novels used for this work to show the disparities that exist in the post-apartheid South Africa which were also common in the apartheid era. Through his presentation and rendition of violence and counter violence, betrayal and counter betrayal he brings the incongruities of the present and marries it with those of the past and new South Africa.

Conclusion

In the novels studied, *Ways of Dying and She Plays with the Darkness* Mda uses characters, situations, circumstances to establish the fact that the issue of “Reconciliation in the post -apartheid South Africa is a far fetched issue. In *Ways of Dying*, the characters of Noria and Toloki are exemplary that Black South Africans are still finding it difficult to live their lives as citizens of their beloved country. The availability of bad roads, no transport mechanism and the incessant deaths resulting from violence speaks volumes of the state of the state of stasis. Blacks in

South Africans still live in squatter camps with no assurance of permanence and are still found in poor health conditions without government attention. These are indications that little or nothing has changed in the present South Africa than it was in the apartheid era.

The fact that post-apartheid South Africa has achieved political power but denied economic power makes the notion of reconciliation impossible because the old structures of apartheid are still available in the present post-apartheid era. This notion makes it believable and in a conclusive temper to say that there is not reconciliation and harmony in the present state of South Africa as no government can function without wielding economic powers and influence. The state of South Africa remains what it was during apartheid. It is just a change of political baton and not political will and power.

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