

**An Analysis of the Representation of  
Winnie Madikizela-Mandela  
in Antjie Krog's Country of My Skull and  
Njabulo Ndebele's The Cry of Winnie Mandela**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that "An Analysis of the Representation of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela in Antjie Krog's Country of My Skull and Njabulo Ndebele's The Cry of Winnie Mandela," is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Janine van Rooyen

12 January 2007

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## **CONTENTS**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
ABSTRACT	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: NAMING	18
1.1 Naming and Identity	19
1.2 Winnie Madikizela-Mandela: forever linked with Nelson Mandela	30
1.3 In Nelson's Shadow	47
CHAPTER TWO: ICONIC IMAGES	58
2.1 Waiting Woman	62
2.2 The Gazed-at Woman	63
2.3 Public Image/Spectacular Image	72
2.4 Representative of "a Nation of Extremes!"	85
2.5 Powerful Woman	91
2.6 Quesalid	95
2.7 Mama Africa	96
CHAPTER THREE: IMAGES: FROM ARCHETYPES TO STEREOTYPES	103
3.1 The Mad Woman	104
3.2 Contaminated Woman	106
3.3 Abhorrent Mother	111
3.4 Sexual Predator	116
3.5 Trashy Tabloid	117
3.6 Gangster/Outsider	120
3.7 Warrior	127
CONCLUSION	134
BIBLIOGRAPHY	140

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“In ‘woman’ I see something that cannot be represented, something that is not said, something above nomenclatures and ideologies” (Julia Kristeva, 1981:137).

## **ABSTRACT**

Title: An Analysis of the Representation of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela in Antjie Krog's Country of My Skull and Njabulo Ndebele's The Cry of Winnie Mandela

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is arguably one of the most widely represented female figures in South Africa. The images presented of her are not static. Indeed, they are shot through with contradictions which include Mama Africa, Warrior, and Abhorrent Mother. The figure of Madikizela-Mandela is a nexus for different opinions and interpretations; she is a focal point for and of the divisions in South African consciousnesses. Therefore the depictions of this persona provide the reader with a means to analyse the discourses through which she is represented. Such an exploration might also provide South Africans with insight into some of the biases and beliefs generally held more than a decade after the advent of democracy. The South African texts Country of My Skull by Antjie Krog, and The Cry of Winnie Mandela by Njabulo Ndebele, extensively represent Madikizela-Mandela and (re-)mythologise her, and as such each provides interesting comparative material for a discussion of the ideological implications imbricated in each. These texts are also particularly appropriate to use in such a study because the writers, a white woman, and black man respectively, could not be further apart on the continuum of South African cultural identification. The politics of the representations of Madikizela-Mandela can thus be interpreted from opposing social extremes.

The Mandela name is a powerful signifier, and often constitutes much of Madikizela-Mandela's public identity. The power of naming is thus the focus of Chapter One of this dissertation. The romantic ideal of Nelson Mandela and Madikizela-Mandela's relationship constitutes a major focal point in Ndebele's work. On the other hand, Krog's text denigrates Madikizela-Mandela's refusal to toe the peaceful democratic line. As such, the needs of the public in relation to Madikizela-Mandela are illuminated through the impositions of the authors and characters in these texts.

Chapter Two examines the iconic images of Madikizela-Mandela: those well-known “pictures” that symbolise various states of existence for the public, for example Mama Africa and Waiting Woman. Many of the images discussed in this chapter are often uncritically perceived and advanced as positive by the public.

In Chapter Three a range of images that promote normative and even stereotypic associations of Madikizela-Mandela are examined. These images may all be labelled either archetype or stereotype. Many of these images are controversial and break the rules of social convention, such as Abhorrent Mother and Trashy Tabloid.

One may safely assume that these images in which she is represented are superficial, and tell nothing of Madikizela-Mandela herself. Indeed, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela once said, “I am the product of the masses of my country and the product of my enemy” (Du Preez-Bezdrob, 2003:273). As such, these images are interpreted as texts, and examined in order to explicate the ideological positions that inform them. Feminism, post-colonial theory, and discourse analysis will provide the frame of reference.

The goal of this study is not to come to a fixed conclusion about ‘who’ Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is. On the contrary, the goal is to destabilise the notion that there is something ‘true’ to be known about this public figure. Instead, what *can* be known is the political and social implications of the images in which she is represented, and what that may imply about the society which reproduces these images.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This dissertation examines the representations of the figure of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela in Antjie Krog's Country of My Skull (2002), and Njabulo Ndebele's The Cry of Winnie Mandela (2003). Madikizela-Mandela is a controversial public figure who has been subjected to multiple and often contradictory representations. The different meanings imposed upon Madikizela-Mandela in the texts of Krog and Ndebele will be interpreted to question and potentially destabilise the permanence of these meanings as theorist Judith Baxter argues that, "any text, by virtue of the range of readings to which it is subject, becomes the medium for struggle among different power interests to fix meaning permanently" (2003:24). In the widest possible sense then, the iconic Winnie has become a 'text' to be read and interpreted, and the aim of this project is to examine the complexities inherent in the images available through textual representations of Madikizela-Mandela.

These images of her are read with the knowledge that it is impossible to 'know' or show the 'real' Winnie Madikizela-Mandela through the media or literature. Instead, there are images that 'mean', and, as Madan Sarup has suggested, "the reader ... has to find causes and connections and, like the analyst, has to work back ... in order to recover meaning" (1992:161). These representations will thus be analysed in order to uncover the ideological interests inherent in specific images of Madikizela-Mandela. Such an examination emerges out of a literary-critical perspective that interrogates the ways in which narratives may be read as revealing just as much about the writers as the subject that the writer chooses to investigate. This is especially the case with the public figure under scrutiny in this dissertation.

In this regard, the socio-political positions of the writers representing Madikizela-Mandela are also complex. Some readers may think the representation of a woman by a man is problematic considering the history of women having been spoken for in patriarchal societies. Indeed, feminist theorist Cecily Lockett argues that "a man, no

matter how sympathetic and progressive his views, can never be in the same position as a woman who is a feminist critic: 'For a man the negotiation [between experience and feminism] is blocked, doubly contradictory: his experience is her oppression'" (Locket, 1996:8). However, readers of The Cry of Winnie Mandela may experience many of Ndebele's representations of Madikizela-Mandela as open-ended and non-judgemental. In comparison, Krog's position as a privileged white woman in relation to the subject may also be open to criticism. However, Constance S. Richards refers to an argument made by black feminist bell hooks, which suggests that:

our ability to empathize [sic] with the circumstances of others give us the vehicle to bridge whatever gaps exist between women of different nationalities, classes, and sexual identities, and also between different communities of women and men regardless of their location in the global economy. (Richards, 2000:24)

Some readers may think that Krog's feminist sensibilities might allow her a greater sympathy for the position of a black woman. Richards goes on to suggest that for "Trinh T. Minh-ha, the starting point is a stance that allows difference 'not opposed to sameness, nor synonymous with separateness,' to replace conflict." Indeed, "she suggests that 'difference' can be a 'tool of creativity to question multiple forms of repression'" (2000:24). On the other hand, readers may also find many of Krog's representations of Madikizela-Mandela conforming to stereotypic notions of black womanhood. Thus it may be argued that both Ndebele and Krog provide interesting perspectives in relation to race and gender in representing a public figure in their post-apartheid accounts of her life and times.

When comparing Country of My Skull and The Cry of Winnie Mandela it becomes apparent that the authors do impose their own desires and values onto the figure Madikizela-Mandela and this has implications for how she is represented in each text. At this point it is necessary to proclaim my own position as a white woman reading representations of a black woman by a black man and a white woman. I do not at any point assume that my interpretations are untainted by my own social and ideological



position, because, scholars “are neither above nor outside societies but integral agents within them” (George Bond and Angela Gilliam, 1994:2). However, I am convinced that interpretation is necessary for greater understanding of the numerous ideological and social positions inherent in both texts. In this regard, I turn to Elizabeth Abel’s Black Writing, White Reading. She asks, “whether there [is] any position from which a white middle-class feminist could say anything on the subject [of race] without sounding exactly” like a white middle-class feminist. She does suggest that any “interlocutory situation” would require “some acknowledgement of racial differences” (1993:833). My reading acknowledges the difficulty of negotiating political correctness in this regard and accommodates Abel’s cautionary advice. It is from this perspective that I intend to note both the gendered and racial implications of the textual representations of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. The definition of feminism as outlined by black feminist bell hooks in Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center is that feminism “is the struggle to end sexist oppression. Its aim is not to benefit solely any specific group of women, any particular race or class of women. It does not privilege women over men. It has the power to transform in a meaningful way all our lives” (2000:28). Feminism may thus be a positive and powerful tool used to examine Krog’s and Ndebele’s representation of Madikizela-Mandela. Just as bell hooks argues that feminism is the politics of ending sexist oppression, the aim of a study that reveals racism is also not to defend or attack any particular group but to reveal the ways in which racism continues to operate in representational practices. In addition, it is important to note that my position is anti-essentialist in that I consciously resist notions of ‘truth’ about Madikizela-Mandela, and that there is a certain identifiable ‘essence’ that is inherent or ‘natural’<sup>1</sup> to her and that one can define and measure.

A project such as this provides the opportunity to negotiate the politics that is a necessary element in representing such a controversial public South African figure.

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of ‘natural’ will be seen in this argument as those ideas which have been accepted by society as ‘inherent’ to certain people.

Madikizela-Mandela is at the forefront of South African politics and has, for at least a decade, been on the front pages of South African newspapers. In many cases, she has brought contentious issues to the fore. However, while she is revered by some she is also denigrated by others. It is precisely these paradoxical responses that make her such a fascinating and important subject for a research project on representation.

These paradoxes emerge in relation to who is representing whom and necessitates a brief discussion on the politics of representation. Representations “contain ideological and hegemonic properties that represent historical and sectional interests. In no way simple, they express a high degree of social and poetic complexity” (George C. Bond and Angela Gilliam, 1994:1). With a persona as complex and as controversial as Madikizela-Mandela’s the ideological implications become even more interesting. The representations that will be discussed in this dissertation include not only those that emerge in the literary texts written by Krog and Ndebele, but through these, also the images that Madikizela-Mandela herself has promoted in the media. Because she is such a high-profile figure, she has become “commodified.” Indeed, she has been turned into an “aesthetic” object. In Terry Eagleton’s words, she is “textured, packaged, fetishized” (Eagleton, 1992:152), which demonstrates the extent to which, when the very name of Madikizela-Mandela comes up, it elicits highly charged responses which are usually already racialised or gendered, or both. The figure Madikizela-Mandela may thus even be seen as a kind of ‘gauge’ of the ideological preoccupations of the constituencies that either berate or support her.

In order to effectively analyse the meanings of Madikizela-Mandela’s representation in these texts, discourse<sup>2</sup> analysis will form the backbone of this dissertation. Discourse “tends to cut across conventional fact/fiction distinctions,

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Discourse’ here refers to the “communicative practices and ‘ways of saying’ which express the interests of a particular social-historical group or institution... [and] discourses... as distinct and often competing forms of knowledge and power” (Pope, 1998:189).

encouraging us to treat all texts as in some sense factional<sup>[3]</sup>... and all hi/stories<sup>[4]</sup> as potentially related” (Rob Pope: 1998:189). This becomes important when relating to the factual/fictional genres in which these texts are written. If language is the gateway to social, personal and ideological values, then it makes sense to explore the ways in which language constructs reality and the ways in which meaning, through discourse analysis, emerges as ideological. Discussing the notion of discourse, Kevin Durrheim explains that discourse analysis “is a practice that aims to unhinge... ideological/power relations that are established in the manner in which ‘objects’ [and subjects] are systematically represented” (1997:33). Discourse analysis may thus be considered an effective technique to destabilise the ‘normalcy’ of many of the images represented here.

In addition to discourse, genre is also crucial in negotiating the representations of Madikizela-Mandela in Country of My Skull and The Cry of Winnie Mandela. Both narratives refuse the distinction between fact and fiction. It may be argued that Country of My Skull claims to offer a factual account of aspects of Madikizela-Mandela’s life. The Cry of Winnie Mandela may be read as Ndebele’s attempt to offer a fictional rescuing of the persona from media reportage that tends to sensationalise or minimise her ‘life’. Indeed, neither genre is totally factual or fictional. Whereas Krog offers her own personal response to the politics surrounding Madikizela-Mandela during her TRC hearing, Ndebele resists the categorical and definitive that emerges in Krog’s judgement of Madikizela-Mandela’s ‘culpability’. Cathy Caruth in Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History discusses the problem of representing ‘truth’ in relation to filmmaker Alain Resnais’s “refusal to make a documentary on Hiroshima,” saying that it “paradoxically implies that it is direct archival footage that cannot maintain the very specificity of the event” (1996:27). While Krog operates in the realm of documentary. Ndebele operates in realm of fiction, at least on the surface. However, in relation to this

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Factional’ refers to the blurring of fact and fiction, and is a deliberate pun on the other implied meaning, that is, prone to the divisive.

<sup>4</sup> Hi/story acknowledges the notion that history is story, and story is history, as narrators’ perspectives form a large part of ‘factual’ and fictional narratives.

distinction, an interesting effect emerges: the possibility of personal trauma being more appropriately negotiated in a fictional space that can develop and explore a personal response. A documentary, factual response leaves very little place to negotiate personal narratives, whereas Ndebele consciously and empathetically (re-)presents the personal narratives that are omitted from Krog's personal 'testimony' in respect of Madikizela-Mandela.

It may thus be argued that on some level, The Cry of Winnie Mandela operates as an intertextual response to Krog's representation of Madikizela-Mandela in that Ndebele offers a counter-narrative to the one widely read, both in South Africa and abroad, as offering the 'truth' about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in general, and about Madikizela-Mandela's culpability, in particular. The genre of Country of My Skull might be likened to what Constance S. Richards refers to as "fictionalized autobiography" (2000:92), as it is a personal account of her experiences at a public hearing. Krog uses the Truth and Reconciliation Hearing (TRC) as a factual backdrop against which her own battle with 'truth' and reconciliation is enacted. Her use of this genre affords a protective shield since she can claim that she is not representing facts. She says in an interview, "The idea of objectivity or neutrality is laughable - one can only be fair or give as many sides to a story as are available. ... The book was not to be a report of the TRC - it was my own journey through a process" (Melanie McFadyean, 2000:1). However, the fact that Krog has to *remind* readers that her book is not a "report," thus not entirely factual, hints at its failure to present itself as fictional. It is presented as a record of the proceedings, albeit with personal responses interspersed, thus suggesting that there is some 'truth' to the text. There is, as a result, the hierarchal difference between fact and fiction in considering Krog's text, as it is often read under the privileged guise of a more (even if not entirely) factual account, and one of the few 'documentaries' of the TRC. It is therefore a hugely influential work, with an international readership, and Krog's condemnation of Madikizela-Mandela is thus possibly the most widely received impression of this important political persona.

Krog's text on the TRC hearings focuses on human rights abuses as the TRC hearings were created to "pursue... restorative justice" (Krog, 290) in post-apartheid South Africa. Krog, a journalist, denies the possibility of so-called 'objectivity' in favour of her own personal version of 'truth'. However, she has been sharply criticised for not being "busy with the truth" (Krog, 170). She says, in anticipation of such criticism:

'I am busy with the truth... *my* truth. Of course, it's quilted together from hundreds of stories that we've experienced or heard about in the past two years. Seen from my perspective, shaped by my state of mind at the time and now also by the audience I'm telling the story to. In every story there is hearsay, there is a grouping together of things that didn't necessarily happen together, there are assumptions, there are exaggerations to bring home the enormities of situations, there is downplaying to confirm innocence. And all of this together makes up the whole country's truth. So also the lies.' (2002:170-1)

History as fact has been put under the microscope by poststructuralist and postcolonial thinkers and writers. In Olankunle George's work, Edward Said for instance is quoted as saying that the notion of history as 'true' is controversial because histories "are and always have been conditioned by the fact that its truths, like any truths delivered by language, are embodied in language" (Olakunle George, 2003:172). It is significant that he uses the words "fact" and "always," a sure sign that even while analysing and rethinking the notion of truth, the concept of things being 'true' is embedded in language itself. Krog as semi-fictional (or semi-factual) writer strongly posits the notion of subjective truth by creating this multi-generic text about South Africa's history. She also differentiates between the "factual truth," which is defined as "what happened," and the "moral truth, of 'who was responsible'" (Krog, 290). However, her text still claims to give at least *some* semblance of truth, which carries influential weight with readers because 'fact' or 'truth' is generally considered to be higher on the hierarchy than 'fiction' or 'stories'. This is one of the potential dangers of Krog's representation of Madikizela-Mandela: Krog's point of view may be considered more authoritative than one which overtly remythologises images of Madikizela-Mandela.

It is this notion of 'authoritative' interpretation that Ndebele writes against in The Cry of Winnie Mandela. His text does not claim to give any 'truth' as it sets itself up at the very beginning as "a work of fiction, which quotes from some non-fiction texts" (Ndebele, 2003: Note to reader). If there were a genre called 'biographical fiction', then this text would probably fit into that. Even on the TRC, Ndebele in his essay "Memory, Metaphor, and the triumph of Narrative," argues that "the resulting narratives may have less and less to do with facts themselves and with their recall than with the revelation of meaning through the imaginative combination of those facts." Furthermore, he suggests that "facts will be the building blocks of metaphor" (1998:21). Ndebele consciously adopts this strategy in his fictional text, in which there are constant references to fact. Newspaper-headlines and South African political and social history form the basis from which the fictional characters (with the inclusion of a fictional character called Winnie Mandela who represents the non-fictional Madikizela-Mandela) enact the mythologising of the 'waiting woman'. Ndebele's deliberate fictionalisation of Madikizela-Mandela may be considered as his self-reflexive recognition of the tendency of all narratives, including 'history', to be fictional. Judith Baxter discusses this fictionalising process, saying that:

With its focused interest in language, post-structuralism also attends specifically to the *fictionalising* process of any act of research, and the phenomenon that any act of research comprises a series of authorial choices and textual strategies. (Judith Baxter, 2003:6)

These "authorial choices and textual strategies" are evident in the representations of Madikizela-Mandela in the work of Ndebele and Krog, as both writers blur the boundaries between fact and fiction. Both writers, in their research, have selected and omitted details, and these selections and omissions will necessarily affect the representation that emerges in their textual practice.

In Country of My Skull Krog attempts to turn history/'fact' into story. She says in the Acknowledgements section of her text, "I have told many lies in this book about the truth. I have exploited many lives and many texts... I hope you will all understand"

(295). What the reader is requested to understand is that she has chosen to “cut and paste the upper layer [of the story], in order to get the second layer told, which is actually the story [she] wants to tell” (Krog, 170). In relation to her depiction of the “Winnie-hearing,” it may be argued that it is in fact Ndebele who more successfully ‘lies’ in order to find some truth. The Cry of Winnie Mandela overtly fictionalises the life of Madikizela-Mandela but weaves ‘facts’ into the fabric of the story. Krog, on the other hand, weaves personal responses into the factual account of the TRC hearings. Indeed, it may be argued that the telling of a story is necessary to establish and deal with the implications of the history of the ‘real’ figure Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. The story that is told can therefore aid in negotiating more critically the history behind the story.

Dirk Kloppe suggests that, “it is ... a matter of how what has happened has been construed” that has social impact, and not necessarily what “really happened” (2004:201). To this he adds that the concept of a ‘truthful’ image is necessarily impossible (Kloppe, *ibid.*:86). Therefore, instead of the image representing the ‘reality’ of Madikizela-Mandela, the reader of the image has to understand that it represents what that image is and is *becoming* in the *social consciousness*. For this reason the representations and images portrayed of Madikizela-Mandela expose those who present them, and those who see/read them.

Krog’s text moves from a seemingly objective representation of Madikizela-Mandela, to one where Madikizela-Mandela becomes a figure that is expected to embody the reconciliatory im-/possibilities in post-apartheid South Africa. She may be said to be invested with the guilt of the nation. Krog’s representations of Madikizela-Mandela remain frustrated by what seems to be her expectations of this figure. However, when Madikizela-Mandela does not fulfil these Krog readily condemns her. Krog’s responses emerge out of her own ambivalent position. On the one hand, Krog identifies with Madikizela-Mandela as a woman and as a traumatised victim of a violent past. On the other, she demands an instant moral concession from a rational and

privileged public figure. This constitutes the most controversial aspect of Krog's representation.

In comparison, Ndebele's "fictionalising" is highly self-conscious as the very obvious incorporation of a 'factual' figure into a 'fictional' text reveals the mythologising of figures that form part of society's reality and history. This kind of factual/fictional representation also calls into question the reliability of history from a post-colonial point of view. Traditionally, "the belief in historical and sociological objectivity" has obscured "interpretations." Indeed, "power and economic domination establish one rendering of history and culture as objective and ethically neutral and another as subjective and partisan" (Bond and Gilliam, 1994:2). That *history* is in effect *story* is foregrounded in these texts. The traditional chronology of "story-writing becomes history-writing," (Minh-ha, 1989:120) is inverted, while Krog uses history-writing to create a story through which to make history accessible. Ndebele uses history to inform his overtly fictional story. Traditionally "history quickly sets itself apart, consigning story to the realm of tale, legend, myth, fiction, literature. Then, since fictional and factual have come to a point where they mutually exclude each other, fiction, not infrequently, means lies, and fact, truth," as Trinh T. Minh-ha argues in Woman Native Other (1989:120).

Ndebele's text presents images which at first glance offer less biased pictures of Madikizela-Mandela, images that are "not... judgement" (Ndebele, 42). However, even his text which purports to give some kind of voice to this famous (infamous?) figure, at times becomes obfuscated by gender<sup>5</sup>-bias. Whereas Krog identifies with Madikizela-Mandela as a woman, her identification fails to negotiate the extent of the racialised trauma to which she has been subjected. Ndebele, conversely, identifies with Madikizela-Mandela as a black South African political figure but his identification at times fails to negotiate the patriarchal precepts of Womanhood that his representation perpetrates. While Ndebele attempts to expose the biases and stereotypes Madikizela-

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<sup>5</sup> "Gender is a process rather than a property of bodies, in which the 'conversation' between the body and the social is continually recreated." (Jane Arthurs and Jean Grimshaw, 1999:9)



Mandela is subjected to, his text also “produces” yet another image, in this case the gendered norms of womanhood, to be read as “reality” of Madikizela-Mandela (Amanda Kottler & Carol Long, 1997:45). This ambivalence may be read in relation to what Saul Tobias has identified as “the ethical dilemma” the writer faces in wanting to tell someone’s story, and simultaneously resist the “mastery of an authorial voice to impose apparent closure on what yet remains to be said” (1999:8).

It is a dilemma in both Krog’s and Ndebele’s work, as they both, to a lesser or greater extent, simultaneously resist and repeat particular and recognisable stereotypes in their representations of Madikizela-Mandela. Whereas the most ambivalent aspect of Krog’s representation is her desire to empathise with and condemn Madikizela-Mandela from her privileged, white liberal perspective, Ndebele simultaneously offers Madikizela-Mandela a voice and speaks for her. Indeed, Ndebele’s offering of a first-person narrative by the character Winnie Mandela gives the *illusion* that her story is being told. However, despite the implications of ‘speaking for’ or on behalf of Madikizela-Mandela, as will be shown in the following chapters, Ndebele emerges as far more successful in exposing the preconceptions in which Madikizela-Mandela is trapped, particularly in relation to his deployment of the concept of *ibandla*. This *ibandla* is a gathering of women for the purpose of supporting one another, and telling one another their stories. Audre Lorde has rightly identified the historical processes affecting colonised people that have resulted in downplaying the significance of solidarity among women in fighting sexist oppression. She argues that it is precisely because of the “continuous battle against racial erasure that Black women and Black men share,” that “some Black women still refuse to recognise that [they] are also oppressed as women, and that the sexual hostility against Black women is practiced not only by the white racist society, but implemented within ... Black communities as well. It is a disease striking the heart of Black nationhood, and silence will not make it disappear” (1990:284-5). The *ibandla* itself is therefore a significant concept, as it defies the silence and passivity that is

associated with waiting womanhood, and so introduces the theme of defying racial and gendered “erasure.”

The black female characters in The Cry of Winnie Mandela have the important function of exposing their *own* biases as well as those of the communities in which they find themselves through their discussions of the various images of Madikizela-Mandela. Through these dialogues they also enact the biases to which they are themselves as black women subjected. The images presented of Madikizela-Mandela reveal all of these complex issues because they “function as signals and markers in constituting boundaries between self and other, us and them, normal and abnormal,” and “images, regardless of whether they are true or false, are constitutive of social relations and realities”<sup>6</sup> (Jan Pieterse and Bhikhu Parekh, 1995:5). It is thus through the images of Madikizela-Mandela, and the narrations of the characters that represent the public, that Ndebele demonstrates the *implications* of the beliefs about Madikizela-Mandela. Ndebele’s conscious blending of fact and fiction exposes the processes through which fiction becomes fact in the public imaginary. Indeed, Nuttall and Coetzee argue that “Ndebele... wants in his work to insist on the need for a South African realist mode of fiction, and to this end he contrasts a metaphoric mode of writing with a mode that is grounded in ‘validated mass experience’” (Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee, 1998:3). The “realist mode” emerges with the use of the fictional character named after the ‘real’ Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. The meanings of the images used in Ndebele’s text then represent the experiences of the masses.

On the other hand, in her representation of Madikizela-Mandela, Antjie Krog blends fact and fiction with entirely different results. As has already been argued, hers is a response that hinges on her identification with Madikizela-Mandela as a woman. She asserts her ‘sameness’ in terms of sex, but has to relate to Madikizela-Mandela from the

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<sup>6</sup> This is referred to as the “imaginary of power”. “Gilbert Durand refers to the imaginary as ‘the “implicate order” through which all understanding necessarily passes’... The imaginary is viewed as crucial to the process of social representation and as the basis of social aesthetics.” “The imaginary is also a vector for political analysis.” (Pieterse and Parekh, 1995:5)

perspective of a white woman. For Krog, the “difference”<sup>7</sup> remains racial, whereas for Ndebele, it is gendered. It is noteworthy that the differences in the writers’ gender and racial locations influence their representations of Madikizela-Mandela. While Krog demands that Madikizela-Mandela seek forgiveness from the nation, Ndebele wants the nation to forgive Madikizela-Mandela.

Further, in Country of My Skull it is said that, “Winnie... stood for more. She is supposed to be one of us – someone with *principles*” (emphasis added, Krog, 261). This tendency to universalise without any acknowledgement with regard to the effects of the racial experiences of Krog and Madikizela-Mandela, thus simply seeing Madikizela-Mandela as “one of us,” is problematic. It ignores that “the differences of race between women and the implications of those differences present the most serious threat to the mobilization of women’s joint power” (Audre Lorde, 1990:283). In addition to the challenge by black feminist writers who have demonstrated that there is not a single homogenous female experience, it is also important to take cognisance of postcolonial responses to the effects of racial hierarchies. The texts under scrutiny in this dissertation may be read as postcolonial. Even Madikizela-Mandela’s actions may be interpreted in postcolonial terms, as “apartheid is simply one form of the division into compartments of the colonial world” (Fanon, 1963:40). Linda Hutcheon quotes Helen Tiffin, who has suggested that while postcolonial literature may be “inevitably implicated” in and “‘informed by the imperial vision’,” it still possesses a strong political motivation that is intrinsic to its oppositionality (Linda Hutcheon, 1995:130).

Both Ndebele’s and Krog’s texts are postcolonial as they are written from geographically postcolonial (previously colonised) spaces, and because their agendas are distinctly political. By positioning the black women of the *ibandla* in politically charged atmospheres, Ndebele foregrounds the significance of the political struggle for

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<sup>7</sup> “Jacques Derrida engaged with Heidegger’s discussion of how texts *show*, and developed it into a discussion of how writing generates meaning through a constant process of *differing* and *deferring* – what he called *différance*. In effect this challenges the conceptions of texts as having fixed centres of meaning.” (David Birch, 1989:7)

freedom. For example, in The Cry of Winnie Mandela, the character Mamello is waiting for her husband to return to her from prison where he was jailed for political reasons. The character Winnie Mandela is an iconic postcolonial figure in that she is arguably one of the most publicly political women in South Africa.

Using the context of the TRC hearings, Krog provides readers with a narrative that may be implicated in and informed by the “imperial vision” that Tiffin and Hutcheon identify as being a characteristic of postcolonial writing. This emerges in Krog’s ambivalence in responding to the politicised figure of Madikizela-Mandela. However, Krog’s project is distinctly oppositional in its exposure of the violence and trauma that apartheid generated, and reconciliatory in its attempt to suggest the cathartic effects of testimony, confession and forgiveness. Krog has suggested that it is precisely because “the first casualty of conflict is identity,” that “literature on reconciliation identifies the ‘turning away (of former adversaries) from each other’ as a crucial point in reconciliation – redefined identity makes a new kind of relationship possible” (Krog, 2002:292). Simon During considers the post-colonial “desire” to be “the desire of decolonized communities for an identity.” He argues that in “both literature and politics the post-colonial drive towards identity centres around language” (1995:125). In this regard it is interesting to note that neither Krog nor Ndebele are native English-speakers. However, both writers use English, a western, colonial language, rather than their African or adapted European languages, to represent this African woman. Ndebele’s text, through using a Western language, as well as many Western archetypes to ‘explain’ Madikizela-Mandela, attempts to depict some of the biases that would dictate her reception among a Western readership. Krog’s decision to publish in English may be related, in the sense that she might purposefully be targeting a wider western readership.

This dissertation will use the definition of post-colonialism which considers colonialism not as a condition that is ‘over’ or ‘past’, but rather as a condition that continues to inform social and political realities in South Africa. There are moments in the texts where the authors might be read as unconsciously perpetuating colonial

discourse. Krog, for example, seems to want apartheid/colonialism to be 'past', or 'over with', without critically engaging with the legacies of colonialism that linger in society and emerge in her discourse. It would appear that Krog is in need of an immediate solution, when this is in itself unsympathetic. She is also dictating the terms, whilst inhabiting a position of empowerment historically bestowed on her. As a post-apartheid text, Country of My Skull needs to be read in the light of Tina Sideris's recognition of the radical differences between black women's and white women's life experiences:

South African women emerge from apartheid with a subjective sense of womanhood that is constituted by differing experiences of gender, race and class relations. ... Under apartheid in South Africa there was not a single category 'women'. Race and class position women differently, informing particular social practices and material conditions and producing specific restrictions and rewards. (2002:49)

Krog's demand that Madikizela-Mandela apologise to the nation emerges out of a privileged and 'safe' middle-class experience of the world. It may be argued that such a demand for moral rectitude is the result of Krog's need to subscribe to a single and universal morality, in addition to a single universal womanhood.

In contrast to Krog's overt first-person point of view, Ndebele's text offers the perspectives of a number of black female characters; Marara, Mamello, Delisiwe, Mannete, and a character based on Madikizela-Mandela. Through this process of re-living the past, there is the suggestion that the past is indeed still 'with' Madikizela-Mandela. Ndebele's text thus demonstrates that colonialism/apartheid is not 'over with' when its effects are still felt in the present. The Cry of Winnie Mandela also offers an explicit 'fictionalising' of Madikizela-Mandela and therefore does not claim to offer a definition of the 'real' Madikizela-Mandela. That said, the implications of inventing a fictional character named Winnie Mandela while the 'real' Madikizela-Mandela exists cannot be ignored. In this manner, she is *re-mythologised*, rather than *de-mythologised*, which is not very different from Krog's representation of her. The fact that Madikizela-Mandela exists in 'real life' means readers will inevitably approach the novel with *their* prior knowledge from whatever source, informing their responses. Any interpretation will

be affected by an interpellation of the reader's values and ideas about this famous woman. Ndebele is crucially aware of this, and The Cry of Winnie Mandela celebrates Madikizela-Mandela's life, as opposed to Krog's text, which at times condemns her. Ndebele takes more cognisance of Madikizela-Mandela's double-oppression in a patriarchal post-colonial society, even though at times, as will be shown, he might be complicit in advancing patriarchal notions of identity.

The dissertation is divided into this Introduction, three chapters forming the body of this work, and a conclusion. Chapter One is entitled "Naming", and deals with the implications of the titles given to Madikizela-Mandela in the work of Krog and Ndebele. This chapter deals mostly with The Cry of Winnie Mandela. In the first part of the chapter the link between naming and identity is established. In the second half, the link between Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is interrogated and the importance of the name "Mandela" in relation to Madikizela-Mandela in these texts interrogated. Furthermore, it offers a feminist response to the politics of naming, because, as John Berger has suggested, to "be born a woman" is "to be born, within an allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men" (John Berger, 1977:46), and in The Cry of Winnie Mandela, 'Winnie' is constantly associated with Nelson Mandela.

In Chapter Two, the main focus will be the analysis of different images linked with the figure Madikizela-Mandela. Entitled "Iconic Images", this chapter deals with images that have historically defined women, including ones often uncritically perceived as positive by the general public, such as the mother -figure. Among the images examined are the waiting woman, the gazed-at woman, the spectacular image, public representative, powerful woman, Quesalid, and Mama Africa.

Chapter Three examines a series of controversial and ambiguous images of Madikizela-Mandela and is entitled "From Archetypes to Stereotypes." Many of these images may be considered either positive or negative, archetype or stereotype depending on the reader. Either way, the effect is similar: they reduce the 'person' to a

flat, one-dimensional caricature. Among the images discussed in this chapter are the madwoman, abhorrent mother, contaminated woman, sexual woman. As an ordering principle, I will, as far as possible, analyse Krog's text first in each chapter or subsection, as the analysis of the chapter "Mother Faces the Nation" in Country of My Skull is more limited in scope than Ndebele's The Cry of Winnie Mandela. In addition, as has already been suggested, Ndebele is to some extent writing back to Krog.

Ultimately, the focus of this dissertation is the paradox of Madikizela-Mandela. The profound ambiguities that emerge in representations of her are effectively summed up in the title of Ndebele's novel: The Cry of Winnie Mandela. Her "Cry" may be simultaneously interpreted as a shout or war-cry, and as weeping. The ambiguity that occurs in the title is apparent throughout the text. My project will examine the impossible contradictions that emerge in representations of this iconic South African figure, and suggest that something of the tragedy of South Africa's dividedness is invested in Madikizela-Mandela.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Naming**

The central text featured in this chapter is Njabulo Ndebele's The Cry of Winnie Mandela, because it is this text that most overtly focuses on naming as a powerful aspect of the politics of representation under scrutiny in this dissertation. In this regard, naming is related to the marital name 'Mandela' which is a central aspect of the Winnie persona. Krog's Country of My Skull is featured to a lesser extent, but her work is also analysed where it focuses on naming as it relates to the relationship between Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Under the sub-heading "Naming and Identity", I analyse the meanings of the names of the characters in these texts. Specific attention will be given to the implications of the names given to Madikizela-Mandela, as well as the ways in which these appellations affect representations of her. While it may be said that identity emerges through representation, identification remains strongly affiliated with the very public name 'Mandela'. For this reason it is necessary that the politics of Madikizela-Mandela's names are discussed in an analysis of her representation. Throughout the subsections of this chapter, Krog's text is analysed first, and constitutes the briefer engagement, and Ndebele's text is addressed last, as he deals with naming in more detail. Under subheading 1.1, "Naming and Identity", I will examine the implications of the names used in these texts, especially in relation to the public identity bestowed by a particular name. In this regard the link between Madikizela-Mandela with the name and identity of Nelson Mandela will also be scrutinised. In sub-section 1.2, I will discuss the more overt links with Nelson Mandela, as well as the idealisation representation of his romance with Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, and in sub-section 1.3 the difficulty of extricating Madikizela-Mandela from her link with her ex-husband will be explored.



### 1.1 Naming and Identity

“Winnie”<sup>8</sup> is the name that is most readily employed in the public sphere to identify Madikizela-Mandela. In Country of My Skull Krog highlights the fact that Madikizela-Mandela’s TRC hearing is not known by its “official title: A Human Rights Violation Hearing into the Activities of the Mandela United Football Club.” Instead, “it’s called ‘the Winnie hearing’” (Krog, 2002:243). While one may pragmatically claim that this title is merely too long to be used in media headlines and in conversation, the fact remains that the hearing is significant primarily in terms of the subject in question – Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. In the unofficial title of the hearing it is not the human rights violations of the Mandela United *Football Club* that is the focus; it is the link with Madikizela-Mandela. She is the significant title-holder, demonstrating her newsworthiness, as what is shown to be important is what *Madikizela-Mandela* did. Winnie is Madikizela-Mandela’s public identity, identifying her as familiar to the nation; but without affording her the reverence that, for example, Archbishop Desmond Tutu is afforded by calling him by his religious title *and* his surname (Krog, 258). It may be argued that it is precisely this familiarity that breeds contempt in the public sphere.

In Country of My Skull, Krog demonstrates the newsworthiness of the name Winnie. Discussing the TRC hearing of Madikizela-Mandela, Krog says it is the name “Winnie” that is enough to hit headlines the world over:

As a South African media event it is compared to the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990. The international news desks say: provided that Saddam Hussein isn’t bombed in the next few days, the Winnie hearing will be the biggest story on the globe this week. (Krog, 2002:243)

The “Winnie hearing” not only identifies the hearing in terms of Madikizela-Mandela, but primarily in terms of her first name. A comparison demonstrates the importance of the phrase: Consider ‘*The Winnie hearing*’, as opposed to ‘*A hearing*’. This indicates that

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<sup>8</sup> When referring specifically to the *name* “Winnie”, I will incorporate the use of inverted commas. However, when referring to the fictionalised Madikizela-Mandela of The Cry of Winnie Mandela, I will refer to the character as she is known in the text, as Winnie. When referring to the real woman, I will use the name Madikizela-Mandela.

the event is important because of the involvement of Madikizela-Mandela. According to Krog, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's newsworthiness compares to that of the man widely regarded as the greatest leader in South Africa's history, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's ex-husband, Nelson Mandela. But her newsworthiness does not end in South Africa, nor with what most would consider the heroic identification with the laudable figure of Nelson Mandela. Instead, her only 'competition' for receiving front page coverage of 'her' hearing internationally is the notorious Saddam Hussein. And then only if the news involving him is exceptionally negative – if he is “bombed.” It may be argued that there are only four contemporary female figures so readily identified by their first names only in a global media context. These are Diana, Princess of Wales; Madonna, Queen of Sleaze; Oprah, and Winnie, Mother of the Nation. In each case, these figures are elevated outside of a patronymic framework in order to stand for some essentialising notion of Womanhood. In the case of Winnie, as Madikizela-Mandela is casually named by newspaper reporters and the public, her identity consists of neither her father's, nor her ex-husband's surnames. However, this independent identity is simultaneously undermined by the association embedded in the manner in which she is formally addressed, her double-barrelled surname Madikizela-Mandela which identifies her as the wife of Nelson Mandela. She is at once an independent woman/person as identified by her name “Winnie,” albeit with connotations of colonialism and patriarchy (which will be discussed shortly), and never rid of the association with her ex-husband through the name ‘Winnie *Mandela*’. Madikizela-Mandela's identity is therefore an ambiguous amalgamation of connotations of independence and patriarchal control.

The name Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is portrayed as a powerful part of her public identity in Country of My Skull. Krog says that “the *name* of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela has come up at several hearings on human rights violations” (emphasis added, Krog, 2002: 245). It is not ‘the *acts* of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela’ that have “come up,” but her name. The name and the sanctity of the name are considered to be important.

Here it may be argued that interest in the hearings depends on the persona rather than the politics, or conversely that the politics is dependent on the persona.

In relation to her official public persona, Krog generally uses the name “Winnie Madikizela-Mandela.” In comparison it is interesting to note that Ndebele refers to her only as “Winnie Mandela,” when referring to her more formally (Ndebele, 88). Krog is respectful of a woman’s decision to name herself in opposition to the patriarchal identification of assuming her husbands’ surname only, and in doing so losing something of her former identity. Ndebele, however, does not portray her in the same way that she is attempting to portray herself. It may be argued that Krog’s feminist sensitivity allows for Madikizela-Mandela’s individuality, and that Ndebele may not have considered it necessary to present her in the way that she has chosen identify herself. Both texts are written after the divorce of Madikizela-Mandela and Nelson Mandela and the addition of “Madikizela-” to her name suggests at least an attempt to be considered apart from her ex-husband. As Molly Hite says, names “both identify and constitute identity. The act of giving up the name under which one has known and been known is in many respects an act of consenting to become someone else” (1989:39). The very name Madikizela-Mandela exemplifies this power of naming in constituting identity in that it includes her attempt to find an identification beyond that of her link with Nelson Mandela.

Although Madikizela-Mandela has made a public attempt to downplay her link with her ex-husband in renaming herself, she may still be read as relying on the sanctity of her marital name. The power of her marital name is a public concern because a name connotes certain sets of values assimilated by society, for example social position (such as one’s level of education that is implied in the title of ‘Doctor’). Discussing the values that are inherent in language, Bert Olivier says that to be able “to articulate one’s name in speech or *parole*<sup>9</sup>] means ... to draw on the (largely unconscious, assimilated) social value- and grammatical rule-system labelled *langue* by Saussure” (original italics,

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<sup>9</sup>*Parole* here indicating the Lacanian term for speech: the spoken or written word.

Olivier, 2005:4). The importance, then, of the name is that it denotes these assimilated values, rules, and associations. Madikizela-Mandela is aware of the importance of the public associations with her name as she demands a “public hearing to clear her name” (Krog, 2002:245). Here in a public arena, her honour depends on whether the public perceives her “name” to be clean or foul. Her social identity is depicted as all-important in her demand for her “name” to be cleared in public. Krog says that “she does not *want* amnesty from the Commission, she *needn’t* tell the truth” (emphasis added, 2002:245). The very phraseology, ‘wants’ versus ‘needs’, indicates Krog’s judgement that Madikizela-Mandela is beyond incrimination. This is reinforced when Krog says that she can “simply send her lawyers” (2002:245) to clear her name if she so chooses.

In addition to the appellation ‘Winnie Madikizela-Mandela’ used by Krog in Country of my Skull, she is called Winifred Nomzamo Zanyiwe Mandela (Ndebele, 39) by the characters in The Cry of Winnie Mandela. Madikizela-Mandela has forged her own name out of that of Nelson Mandela and her own patriarchal line, as separate but simultaneously linked to these lineages. Ndebele says even of his other characters that they “demand names” (Ndebele, 36). The demand for a name distinguishing her from another is also a demand for an identity of her own. It may be said that Madikizela-Mandela’s middle names provide a means for alternative identification, an individual identity. The implications of this multiplicity of identification are significant. Firstly, Winifred is a Western name imposed through colonisation, and is a reminder of the refusal of the coloniser to respect traditional naming. This Western name thus identifies Madikizela-Mandela within the colonial frame of imposition.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the meaning of her isiXhosa names, Nomzamo Zanyiwe, can roughly be translated as ‘mother of the struggle’.<sup>11</sup> These names, read from a biographical point of view, may be seen as telling her life-story as the public knows it, strongly identifying Madikizela-Mandela as a figure

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<sup>10</sup> Ironically, the colonial name Winifred means “friend” and “peace” (*The Reader’s Digest*, 1964:1311).

<sup>11</sup> “In the isiXhosa culture a married woman is given a new name by her in-laws in order to indicate her new status and... as a sign of respect” (Maqagi, 2005).

who refuses to be defeated during the struggle for liberation. The character Mamello<sup>12</sup> self-consciously discusses some implications of potential names she can use to address Madikizela-Mandela:

So, what a long way, Mummy, to get you not to misunderstand me. I cannot really say "Dear Comrade Winnie". We've not fought side-by-side. I cannot say "Dear Mrs Mandela". It sounds too formal, distant, and rather laughably affected. I cannot, like Aunt Deli, write, "Dear Nomzamo". Only older people resort to the little-used middle name when they are about to raise some very serious matters with you. So what's available to me is everyone's "Winnie". I resort to it not out of disrespect, but out of affection. (55)

Mamello is clearly uncomfortable in negotiating the alternative appellations, and attempts to rescue the name "Winnie" from the negative (contemptuous) public familiarity it breeds. The alternatives Mamello explores are each fraught with specific social and historic connotations. Whereas "Comrade" identifies Madikizela-Mandela only with the political struggle for freedom, "Mrs" identifies her only in relation to her ex-husband, and social conventions dictate that using her middle name might be construed as disrespectful. However, even this attempt to re-invest the name "Winnie" with affection and respect, is at least partially undermined when one considers the colonising practice which was the Christian re-naming of black South Africans. In addition, what she ends up with is "everyone's 'Winnie'"; the woman who is seen as the property of everyone.

Indeed, in The Cry of Winnie Mandela characters continually reveal the import of names in relation to identity. It is not only the name of Madikizela-Mandela that is significant. Mamello, the name of one of the waiting women of the *ibandla* in this text, means 'patience'. Delisiwe, the name of another of the waiting women of this *ibandla* has implications of courage. Hence the names of these characters suggest the courage to wait. Waiting, for black South African women, was a political reality, as women in this

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12 Mamello is one of the first women of the *ibandla* who discusses the life of Madikizela-Mandela, and eventually invites her to join them figuratively.

country spent years and decades waiting for fathers, brothers, husbands and lovers to come back from prison, education in other countries, or exile due to their political activities. It could never be certain that this waiting would come to an end. Courage was necessary not only to survive the loneliness of waiting itself, but to survive and look after one's family while waiting. Madikizela-Mandela is strongly identified as a waiting woman in this text, but her waiting does not come to a definitive end. Instead, her life is defined as an "*endless human search*" (emphasis added, Ndebele, 113).

In The Cry of Winnie Mandela names are also shown to be vitally important in relation to cultural and historical identity. Naming, in isiXhosa culture, is extremely important as it is not only seen as bestowing an identity upon a person but also reveals a great deal about the person and this person's family and history.<sup>13</sup> It is then interesting to note that in The Cry of Winnie Mandela, as in Krog's Country of My Skull, the identity of Madikizela-Mandela lies within her first name, she is consistently called "Winnie." This kind of familiarity indicates fame and even infamy, as has already been noted in relation to other iconic female figures. In The Cry of Winnie Mandela it is noted that Madikizela-Mandela assumes "the familiarity of a neighbour, the woman from the next street that [one is] likely to bump into at that *spaza* shop on the street corner" (Ndebele, 53). The familiarity here is a direct result of a political identification that is both gendered and raced, given that it is a black woman who makes this observation. And it is as a result of this identification that she becomes a 'household name', and a persona as familiar as a neighbour. That Madikizela-Mandela is known primarily by her English name has an additional set of ideological implications. It is ironic that "Mama Africa" – the mother of Africa – is known not in terms of her African identity, her second name Nomzamo, but rather, she is known as Winnie, the colonial/Western appellation. Furthermore one may suggest that, as she is situated in a post-colonial, post-apartheid

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<sup>13</sup> Information gleaned from discussions with Sisi Maqagi on the implications and meanings of names in The Cry of Winnie Mandela (2005).

country, she is still identified by those systems of oppression through her English name. It is a sad irony that Mama Africa is known world-wide by an imposed, colonial name.

In addition to the political implications of names, there are also the hidden ideological implications of naming, particularly in relation to the ways in which language functions to bring the subject into being:

The acquisition of a name results in a thoroughgoing transformation of the position of the subject. ... [W]e should bear in mind the significance of the bar which divides signifier from signified in the semiotic fraction: the pronoun, the first person, results in a division of the subject which drives the 'real subject' as it were underground, and leaves a 'representative' ... in its place. (Sarup, 1992:111)

With the acquisition of the name “Winnie,” Madikizela-Mandela is *represented* by this name. This name then becomes her public identity, and the ‘real’ Madikizela-Mandela is in that sense rendered unavailable and becomes masked by the public identity “Winnie.” For example when it is used in media headlines, it is immediately clear who “Winnie” is, as in the case of Wally Mbehle’s article in the Mail and Guardian: ‘ANC Chiefs can’t stop Winnie’ (November 28, 1997). If the name “Winnie” is an acquisition of Westernisation and consequently oppression, she remains representative of this oppression. This name therefore represents her identity in terms of its connection with processes of westernisation (during the apartheid years, Western medicine, religion, social customs, and even names, were seen as ‘better’ than African ones). In addition, the diminutive “Winnie” is feminine, but also distinctly child-like, and implies a ‘smaller’ and even more controllable identity than the adult one implied by Winifred. “Winnie” is however the name by which Madikizela-Mandela is known in households all over the country.

“Winnie,” with all its problematic connotations, thus remains her social identity. This is made evident when the fictional character Winnie Mandela is introduced only as “Winnie”: Mamello challenges her fellow characters in The Cry of Winnie Mandela to “talk about Winnie” (39). Everyone immediately knows who Mamello is referring to: “Winifred Nomzamo Zanyiwe Mandela” (39). The first-name familiarity of Madikizela-Mandela is striking. She is a figure to whom these women relate, who is familiar in their

lives. The references to Madikizela-Mandela that follow the introduction of the discussion on “Winnie” are, “Mother-of-the-Nation,” “*Leleidi*” (The Lady), and “Mummy” (39). In addition, the character Winnie Mandela is also greeted by Delisiwe with, “We welcome you, *Ntombi*” (Ndebele, 42). Ntombi, meaning ‘girl’, in this context reinforces the sense of familiarity and endearment.<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that “Winnie” spurs the characters on to a string of associated names. It may thus be argued that “Winnie” incorporates the needs of the public who identify with her. Her contemporaries need a leader, and a mother, a sister and a friend, all rolled into one. Ndebele is demonstrating the extent to which the needs of the public are projected onto her. In this way Madikizela-Mandela becomes a public representative: her name incorporates all the ways in which the public desire to identify with her. Since her name incorporates so many identities, whatever name and identity is given to her at any one time is *chosen* by the writer and the ‘public’ he/she represents. Because this constitutes a conscious choice, the name used to identify her says more about the writer’s responses or the public’s perceptions than it does about Madikizela-Mandela. Her name, coupled with all of the associations, cannot be examined without taking into cognisance the imposition of the ideological desires of whomever is representing her.

There is a fine line between the political and the personal. Because so many ideological desires have been imposed upon the figure, Ndebele’s text attempts to eradicate the boundary between the private and the public. The characters in The Cry of Winnie Mandela address the protagonist on a more personal level in their struggles to ‘know’ this public woman. They attempt to bridge the gap between the private and the public persona:

Winnie, *sana*, can you hear me? Are you able to build a bridge between the public clamour in your life and the intimate secrets deep inside of you? What we know, right now, about you is the hint of secrets without the sign of a bridge. What kind of bridge will yours be, that special salvation that so many other women have had? What’s yours, Nomzamo? Or, what will it be? (Ndebele, 52)

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<sup>14</sup> I am indebted to Sisi Maqagi for this observation.



Only when Madikizela-Mandela is seen as a woman with “secrets” and thus a life beyond that in the public eye, is she referred to as Nomzamo. This ‘other’ identity that the public does not know is invested in a name that is isiXhosa and not used so familiarly by the public.

Though Mamello, writing to Madikizela-Mandela, starts off with the familiar, “Dear Winnie,” (53) she almost immediately qualifies the familiarity implied in the following way:

My opening paragraph has really been an act of avoidance. I’m sounding so familiar, maybe appearing to you as rather ‘fly’<sup>15</sup>, as we say in the township. The truth is although I routinely call you Winnie like everyone, my having to address you directly in the salutation of a letter has suddenly made me reflect on the nature of my relationship to you. (Ndebele, 2003:53)

Mamello does not take her relationship with Madikizela-Mandela for granted. Instead of assuming a position of familiarity, she questions such an assumption. This constitutes one of the few self-conscious moments in representations of Madikizela-Mandela. In this sense, Ndebele challenges this assumed familiarity with Madikizela-Mandela, and rescues her from the disrespect of such assumptions of familiarity. Mamello’s questioning may lead the reader to contemplate a similar question. Mamello decides, “I can’t really address you this way, can I? You don’t know me, nor can I really say I know you” (53). The mirage of so-called knowledge of this public person is not at all the same as *knowing* Madikizela-Mandela. The distinction is clear: while everyone knows of “Winnie,” these characters do not *know* her.

Mamello highlights the disrespect associated with the assumption of familiarity when she says to Madikizela-Mandela:

I certainly know of you. Reading about you in newspapers, seeing you on television, hearing about you on the radio, reading books about you, wondering about you, thinking about you... You take your place in my mind with the familiarity of a neighbour, the

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<sup>15</sup> *Fly* meaning ‘forward’.

woman from the next street that I'm likely to bump into at that *spaza* shop on the street corner. ... Although your fame makes you so familiar, the matter of a salutation has brought to my attention the limitations of a public relationship. (53)

The same "fame" that makes her a "familiar" face to the public, necessarily limits Madikizela-Mandela's relationship with this public. After much consideration, Mamello relents, "I'm here looking at you, trying to address you. *Nkos'yam!* How do I address you?" (Ndebele, 54). In addition to suggesting the discomfort of an 'average' member of the public to communicate with a person of status, the question addresses the politics of familiarity. When addressing Madikizela-Mandela, Delisiwe looks at a newspaper clipping (Ndebele, 42) and again refers to Madikizela-Mandela as "*Ntombi*."<sup>16</sup> Delisiwe exchanges the tricky familiarity of "Winnie" for a less politicised familiarity in what may be read as a self-conscious attempt to find a personal way of communicating with this famous woman.

However, it becomes evident that the personal cannot always be separated from the public. Madikizela-Mandela's private life does become public when an angry letter she has written to a lover is published in newspapers all over the country. She is quoted in this letter as saying, "*before I'm through with you you are going to learn a bit of honesty and sincerity and know what betrayal of one's trust means to a woman!*" (original italics, Ndebele, 43). The letter is signed off, "*It's me*" (44). Madikizela-Mandela's aggressive tone ("before I'm through with you") would inevitably be interpreted in relation to the stereotype of the 'scorned woman'. She identifies herself as "a woman," and so as part of a collective. She is seen as reacting as *any* woman would. Her identity is not hidden with the vague, "It's me." Rather, her identity is revealed, and the "It's me" proves flimsy protection against the need of the nation to know all about the subsequently-not-so-private "affair" of Madikizela-Mandela. By including this insert from the media, Ndebele shows the extent to which the boundary between private and public has been transgressed by the needs of the public for sensationalism.

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<sup>16</sup> *Ntombi* is an endearing term, meaning 'Girl'.

Madikizela-Mandela is provided an opportunity, albeit a fictional one, to offer a response to this kind of public humiliation. In The Cry of Winnie Mandela, she says:

There is one thing I will not do. It is my only defence of the future: I will not be an instrument for validating the politics of reconciliation. For me, reconciliation demands my annihilation. No. *You*, all of you, have to reconcile not with me, but with the meaning of me. For my meaning is the endless human search for the right thing to do. I am your pleasure and your pain, your beauty and your ugliness. Your solution and your mistake. Your hell and your heaven. I am your squatter camp shack and your million rand mansion. I am all of you who maim and rape. I am all of you who give love and succour. I am your pride and shame. Your honour and your humiliation. (original italics, Ndebele, 113)

Ndebele's depiction of Madikizela-Mandela's response to sensationalism and speculation as it plays itself out in the media suggests the dualism and ambiguity of all that is expected of this very public persona. Through the use of binaries in her response, it becomes clear that the public and private cannot so easily be separated. Responding to the characters who represent a black female constituency, Winnie admits that she symbolises their beauty and ugliness, the "pleasure and pain" of those who represent and/or mis-represent her. Ndebele clearly illustrates the difficulty of representing Madikizela-Mandela outside of rigid categorisation that relies on 'either/or'. She ends by reinforcing her multiplicity and resisting binary logic, by saying: "It's me. Winnie. *Leleidi*. Mummy. Nomzamo" (114). Ndebele allows this figure the opportunity to empower herself by saying "I am," but at the same time points to the impossibility of accommodating all the conflicting expectations of her role. Though she may be addressing herself in this text to a specifically black female audience, there is the added implication that, through Ndebele's representation of her, she is addressing herself to all South Africans. In this sense, readers of The Cry of Winnie Mandela are asked to consider their own complicity in promoting the binaries that have perpetuated racial and gendered stereotypes. Her image incorporates aspects not only of being woman, or

being black, but of being *human* in South Africa, and responses to her and representations of her reinforce the dividedness of that humanity.

## 1.2 Winnie Madikizela-Mandela: forever linked with Nelson Mandela

It is ironic that despite the apparent attempt at differentiating herself from Nelson Mandela, Madikizela-Mandela and Nelson Mandela are forever linked in the public consciousness. In this section, I will discuss the idealisation of the romance between Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, and how she is never free of her associations with Nelson Mandela. Simone de Beauvoir, in The Second Sex, discusses how in Genesis, “Eve is depicted as made from what Bosseut called ‘a supernumerary’ bone of Adam. Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. ... ‘Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man.’” (1993:xliv) That a woman is regarded and defined in terms of a man is thus an age-old patriarchal notion that calls for critical attention.

In Country of My Skull it is made clear that Madikizela-Mandela is defined in terms of her relationship with her husband, when in “Picture Four” it is said that she:

was a tireless fighter, through trials and banishments she kept Mandela’s name on the map, and that gives her a great deal of credit on the political balance sheet. But it comes at a price: when you are this popular, this revered, you are expected to be like Caesar’s wife. (Krog, 2002:245)

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is often described in terms of images of warfare, such as “a tireless fighter.” The image of her as warrior-for-the-people is related positively, because she is seen as having fought for her husband. Simultaneously, she is expected to be not like Caesar, but “like Caesar’s wife,” secondary. She is expected to be an accessory to a leader, a wife of a leader, as opposed to being a leader in her own right. This

expectation of playing a *supportive* role strongly contrasts with the concept of the independent woman who is 'allowed' by society to be selfish and put her own needs first. However, the use of the words "*expected to be*" suggests that Krog is aware that this role of supporter is a social expectation, and not necessarily one that Madikizela-Mandela embraces.

In comparison, the relationship between Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Nelson Mandela becomes highly romanticised in The Cry of Winnie Mandela. In the following discussion I argue that there is evidence in the text to suggest that the characters may be at times reinforcing the idea that this woman needs a man, specifically her ex-husband, to be 'fulfilled'. However, this textual device used by Ndebele portrays the patriarchal conditions of Madikizela-Mandela's life. Through the discussions of Madikizela-Mandela and Nelson Mandela's relationship, Ndebele succeeds in portraying the compulsory heterosexual contract supported by society. I will attempt to illustrate the ways in which Ndebele's characters suggest that a woman is still seen as a man's accessory, and how this is destabilised by contrasting statements in the text. For example, that Nelson Mandela's freedom would be the end of Madikizela-Mandela's freedom (Ndebele, 109). Indeed, it would seem that Ndebele is staging the debate: he is illustrating that these characters are in a double-bind, that these women often find themselves in irreconcilable ideological positions. They are shown to be complicit in maintaining and simultaneously challenging the status quo.

Ndebele initially exposes this social reliance on the 'natural' patriarchal order of things when the links between the characters in the *ibandla* and the men in their lives are revealed: as has already been established, the women in this text have all been reduced to waiting women. The experiences of these waiting women form the backdrop to Madikizela-Mandela's fictionalised life, and their stories reflect aspects of Madikizela-Mandela's life. For example, the character Mamello associates the renewing of her own identity with the return of her husband, as when her husband "walked through that gate,

[she] would become Mamello again” (Ndebele, 21). Her identity is linked to her husband’s return to her home, which suggests that she has no life except in relation to her male partner. However, Mamello immediately contradicts this by admitting that women “are prisoners of the dream of romance. His release from prison was not to be [her] release from waiting” (Ndebele, 21). This ambiguous introduction into the lives of waiting women sets the tone for the reader’s analysis of Madikizela-Mandela’s wait for the return of her husband: Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Nelson Mandela are famously (and briefly) reunited when she fetches him and walks hand-in-hand with him through the prison-gates. The reunion of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Nelson Mandela may be read as a very romantic image, but the traditional heterosexual gendered roles are reversed when she plays an active role in their reunion by *fetching* him from prison, and with fist raised in the air, accompanying him on his ‘long walk to freedom’. This, very briefly, is the highly ambiguous background which has come to symbolise Madikizela-Mandela’s link with Nelson Mandela.

The public’s need for the fairy tale romance is revealed when Mamello overtly reinforces the link between Nelson Mandela and Madikizela-Mandela. She refers to Nelson Mandela as Madikizela-Mandela’s “lover,” “friend,” “mentor” and “father” (Ndebele, 58). This implies that Nelson Mandela not only had a romantic link with Madikizela-Mandela, but that he had a stake in ‘creating’ the public figure Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Mamello gives Nelson Mandela credit for having become an authority figure (“father”), confidante (“friend”) and teacher (“mentor”) in Madikizela-Mandela’s life, thus suggesting his profound impact on her ‘development’. He was, in this sense, *everything* to her. She is seen as a child-like figure and he as an authoritative father-figure. Mamello suggests that Nelson Mandela was active and Madikizela-Mandela passive, as he “came into [Winnie’s] life and set up a house around [her] on the pillars of love and authority. ... [Hers] was a house of pillars. It could be moved around and set up like a tent” (Ndebele, 58). The fact that it is set up “around”

her denotes that Madikizela-Mandela is passive in her domesticity. Her domesticity also has to be adapted to the kind of nomadic lifestyle of her politically active husband. That the house is built on “pillars of love and authority” is significant, in that the implication is that his “authority” and “love” create the domestic space. These are patriarchal and idealistic notions of domesticity, but they also imply that Madikizela-Mandela is not active in creating a domestic sphere for herself. The “pillars,” instead, are “set up” for her, and “around” her, in a prison-like manner. In Black Women, Writing and Identity, Carole Boyce Davies discusses the home and how, for women, “home and/or village ... are often sites of compulsory domesticity and the enforcement of specific gendered relations” (1994:65). This would explain why the “pillars” of domesticity have to be “set up” “around” Madikizela-Mandela, which suggests that domesticity was enforced upon her. However, this home is only a tent, not a structure that one lives in permanently, which, in turn, may imply that their domestic ‘bliss’ was not to last. Instead of the ideal that is alluded to earlier, her home is not a safe and predictable ‘haven’. Rather, her house was “a series of rendezvous; of cars appearing suddenly to pick [her] up here and drop [her] there; of gyms where [she] watched him exercise; of rallies and meetings where [she] watched him speak; of love nests; of a marriage proposal that was made with the certainty that there would be no hesitation on [her] part” (Ndebele, 58). Madikizela-Mandela ultimately remains passive in this description. She is portrayed by Mamello as a rather demure wifely figure, always “watching”<sup>17</sup> her husband, but her domesticity is shown to be different from the social ideal.

In addition to Madikizela-Mandela’s passivity, the characters in The Cry of Winnie Mandela constantly impose various conditions of idealised heterosexual romance upon Madikizela-Mandela and Nelson Mandela. Their relationship is turned into fairytale, and what the public saw and wanted to see of their relationship was not necessarily ‘true’. This is demonstrated when Mamello asks Madikizela-Mandela whether she can talk

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<sup>17</sup>The concepts of watching or being watched is an interesting one in that here, watching denotes passivity as she is watching her husband’s *activities*. However, in Chapter Three we come to the experience of the Gaze also as inherently active.

about the relationship “beyond the mythical, the magical, and the mind-fermenting excitement?” (58-59). However, the public demands personal details with which to flesh out this public ‘fairytale’: Mamello asks the very personal question, whether they made “love that night?” (59). Then she realises her position in relation to Madikizela-Mandela and temporarily retracts her probing. She says, “Of course, I cannot ask such a question and expect you to answer it,” (59) only to continue, “But then, Mummy, I really can’t resist this” (59). Within the boundaries of the heterosexual romance, the mythic proportions of this relationship have already been created, causing the public to demand intimate details about their romance. It becomes obvious through the characters’ discussions with the fictional Madikizela-Mandela that the public expectations of this relationship are enormously high. The questions Mamello asks the fictional Madikizela-Mandela also reflect the ‘right’ of the public to know private information about her life, and may be linked to the familiarity of “Winnie” that also constitutes disrespect for her privacy. Madikizela-Mandela shares a racial and gendered social position with these characters, which may make these questions more politically acceptable as they are not in privileged positions in relation to her, but they also illustrate the double-bind in which women find themselves, as they are perpetuating the romanticisation of the heterosexual social contract.

The myths advanced about the Mandela relationship explain much about public perception and ideologies, as “[m]yths and texts do not exist as autonomous entities; they exist as part of a much larger, universal scheme of things” (David Birch, 1989:131). The reliance on myth and the expectations exhibited by the characters reflect the expectations of the larger public they represent. This is evident when Marara in The Cry of Winnie Mandela, describes “everyone’s dream” of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Nelson Mandela. She asks the fictional Madikizela-Mandela:

Why did you fail to live up to the dream of his return? It was everyone’s dream, so wonderfully captured in song by Hugh Masekela: ‘Bring back Nelson Mandela,’ he cried and conjured in our minds a picture of you and him free, walking hand-in-hand



down the street. A powerful image! Politics and romance coming together again just as they did when you were lovers and when you married. We wanted you in the streets of the township... Politics was a part of your romance. It had to be. (Ndebele, 66)

Madikizela-Mandela is a figure who has been written into a fairytale by the public, as everyone “conjured” the “picture” of her romance with Nelson Mandela. The “powerful image” conjured in the minds of the public suggests the superficiality of society’s knowledge of Madikizela-Mandela’s life, as well as indicating that public knowledge largely relies on visual images of this famous woman. There can be no ‘reality’ for her, as “everyone” wants “the picture” of the romantic “dream” that Madikizela-Mandela “failed to live up” to. Her relationship with Nelson Mandela is thus conjured into the most romantic image of all: that of a loving woman who passively waited for the return of her lover. The superficiality and celebrity-like status of Madikizela-Mandela is depicted when Marara says that she was “part of the glitz,” who “fired our imaginations, making everything in life possible.” With her, “the glamour or celebrity and the danger of politics came together in an elaborate foreplay of social energy” (Ndebele, 66). Madikizela-Mandela thus represents *possibility* for the public. Marara however admits the superficiality of this idea of ‘domestic bliss’, as she is “tortured” by her “compulsion to paint a picture of family bliss” in her home despite her “profound unhappiness in that home.” When “Winnie” asks why she has “become a slave of appearances” (66), it is obvious that it is the public “appearances” which the public wants of Madikizela-Mandela. Marara wants Madikizela-Mandela to *appear* happy in her domestic space, in the anticipation that there is then hope for her own domestic happiness. Madikizela-Mandela is entrapped in the social expectations and prescribe heterosexual fantasies of the public.

The Cry of Winnie Mandela further reveals the expectations and desires of the public when Marara says, “Winnie, there were so many who hoped that the sight of you and Nelson walking hand-in-hand down the street would represent the beginning of the

reconciliation of extremes; the end of dislocation” (68). Madikizela-Mandela and Nelson Mandela represent the ideal of domestic homeliness to the public; domestic happiness and security in an essentially uprooted and homeless society. Indeed, Marara says that she “continued to feel homeless and rootless” (Ndebele, 69) after realising that the political romance of Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela had faded. Madikizela-Mandela refuses this identification with “home and hearth,” and as will be examined later, instead ‘succumbs’ to “temptation.” Marara’s words also introduce a religious discourse that often occurs in relation to judgement of Madikizela-Mandela. Ndebele thus denies the image of happy home-maker in relation to her. The idealisation of the romantic relationship between Nelson Mandela and Madikizela-Mandela is shown to be superficial, as it was not romantic, but rather “a life of weaving and ducking” (Ndebele, 58). Thus the relationship was stressful, and far from the ideal of ‘domestic bliss’. The Cry of Winnie Mandela therefore illustrates this domestic marital ideal to be just that: a societal expectation.

In addition to exposing ‘romance’ as a social construct, Ndebele’s characters portray the consistent societal pressure upon Madikizela-Mandela to live up to these ideals. She is blamed for the collapse of her marital relationship, as is apparent when Marara asks why Winnie failed “to live up to the dream of Nelson’s return” (Ndebele, 69). The word “fail” is constantly used in the characters’ attempts to understand the ending of the romantic “dream” that society had for Madikizela-Mandela. Since Nelson Mandela is not accused in the text of ‘failing’ to live up to this ideal of public, the text reveals that it is the woman who is perceived to be responsible for the rehabilitation of the domestic ideal. There is however the suggestion that there had been no hope for their reconciliation, as even Madikizela-Mandela’s domestic space, her home, was burned to the ground “by vengeful school children” (Ndebele, 74). “All the Mandela family records were destroyed in that fire... Also destroyed was the slice of wedding cake that Winnie had been keeping for Nelson’s release. The symbol of her resilience, of her unchanging

courage and patience had gone up in smoke” (74). This symbolically pre-empts the disintegration of their relationship. Marara muses over possible reasons for the failed reconciliation. It is proposed that the ‘failure’ of Madikizela-Mandela’s relationship was because, “unlike” Marara, she is “unable to pretend,” and “unable to act out normalcy” (69). Madikizela-Mandela may thus be said to refuse the socially acceptable roles foisted on her. Marara says to her, “We saw you for a moment just outside Victor Verster prison, walking hand-in-hand, and in that instant we began to retrieve the sense of land and space. It didn’t last” (69). Madikizela-Mandela is accused of failing to “act” for her people, and this is similar to Krog’s judgement in Country of My Skull when she articulates her disappointment in this Mother-of-the-Nation for her alleged selfishness. Indeed, Krog finds Madikizela-Mandela’s behaviour “bizarre” (Krog, 250). The public thus judges this woman for not living up to their expectations of her.

Ndebele foregrounds these kind of judgements made by the public. Madikizela-Mandela is constantly blamed by the characters in The Cry of Winnie Mandela for her ‘failure’ to revive her romance with Nelson Mandela. It is believed that the revival of this relationship would restore the public morale. Marara asks Winnie why she and Nelson Mandela did not “find each other” so that they “could give permanence” to the “restoration” of the public (Ndebele, 70). Their relationship is thus not a “dream” for its own sake, but rather for the public’s sense of permanence and hope during the socio-politically tumultuous time of Nelson Mandela’s release. Ndebele’s text thus overtly portrays the impositions of the public’s needs on this couple. Even though it is suggested that they had to find *each other*, Madikizela-Mandela is the one accused of having failed her people. However even this so-called failure is imbued with social and political significance, as Marara tells Winnie that, through her inability to find Nelson, she was telling the public “to earn [their] freedom through the conscious embracing of uncertainty and contradiction” (71). Madikizela-Mandela refuses to be “an instrument for validating the politics of reconciliation” (Ndebele, 113), and refuses to act in a manner

which will mollify the public, politicians and journalists. Instead, she represents not the certainty and permanence that the public wants of her, but the *lack* of permanence and the distrust of certainty. This also suggests that she refuses to abide by the needs and norms of society.

Madikizela-Mandela is continuously accused by Mannete of failing to revive her relationship with Nelson Mandela, despite Marara's acknowledgement that she may have consciously chosen to refuse the socially expected norms of heterosexual romance. Mannete's position illustrates the public's refusal to acknowledge dissidence. Mannete says:

*MmeWinnie, you were not there to be asked questions about your door. You gave away your moment, girl. ... He waited for you in the bedroom every night, he says, but you never entered the bedroom while he was awake. How could you give up your moment like that? Not facing his questions? You gave away the opportunity to show him your world and for him to decide to live with it or not. You should have affirmed your world, girl, with all its green valleys and rolling deserts. (Ndebele, 84)*

Mannete romanticises the relationship between Madikizela-Mandela and Nelson Mandela. She judges Madikizela-Mandela for not giving Nelson Mandela an "opportunity" to come back into her life. Mannete does concede that Madikizela-Mandela had built a life for herself outside of- and beyond - her union with Nelson Mandela, but simultaneously sees it as an empowering "opportunity" to *allow* her returned husband back into the home, to "show him [her] world" (Ndebele, 84). This constitutes one of the ways in which women themselves are complicit in perpetuating the cycle of patriarchal control over women. The romantic ideal of this relationship takes priority over Madikizela-Mandela's independence. In the above quotation, Mannete also implies that Madikizela-Mandela was in some way silenced, that she did not, or could not tell Nelson Mandela her side of this story. Where oppressed people have historically been silenced, silence may also be considered to be a "restrictive defence," often a

result of oppression and even trauma<sup>18</sup> (Laurie Vickroy, 2002:49). She refuses “to tell it all” (Krog, 246) at the TRC hearings and this seems, contradictorily, to be an empowering silence. Ironically Madikizela-Mandela chooses this silence at the TRC hearings to empower herself and not to be in the position of confessor, but it is also this silence that enables Ndebele to speak on her behalf.

Other than subverting these heterosexual ideals in The Cry of Winnie Mandela, Madikizela-Mandela is portrayed as turning silent passivity and potential victimhood into an empowering stance. The character Winnie Mandela says the following in response to actively ending her waiting:

I waited with a flourish. Do you remember his return? There I was with him on every television screen in the world as he walked out of Victor Verster prison with a flourish. (Ndebele, 87)

Instead of waiting patiently at home like countless other South African women, she walks into prison, and, with a “flourish,” walks out with her husband. She is, however, still an *accessory*. ‘They’ are not seen on “every television screen in the world,” and *he* is not “with” *her*; instead, he is the main focus, and she is at his side. Ndebele offers a voice for Winnie on the subject of fetching Nelson Mandela from prison, a matter on which Madikizela-Mandela has been silent (84). Winnie says:

Thinking back now, I shouldn’t have walked out with him. I should have waited outside the prison gates for him to walk back into my waiting arms. I guess I was too wrapped up in the drama of the film of my life to have thought about such details. (Ndebele, 87)

Winnie criticises the ‘real’ Madikizela-Mandela, accusing her of being too ‘active’, and self-centred, implying that she has failed to play the socially acceptable roles laid out for black women in patriarchal society. In fetching the hero, she is not only active, but she enacts the politics of ‘taking’ freedom, rather than being a passive recipient. By fictionalising Madikizela-Mandela, Ndebele exposes once again the double bind in which

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<sup>18</sup> Cathy Caruth defines trauma as, “the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena.” (1996:91)

ideas of social propriety are imposed by women upon themselves. In referring to her life as a film, there is the added implication that Madikizela-Mandela's public actions are merely an act, rather than 'reality'. This is a complex moment of breaking the silence, and may be read as either an act of confession,<sup>19</sup> which gives power to the one being confessed to, or an empowering act, as one may regard Madikizela-Mandela's silence as "voicelessness," or as "a critical stance" (Richards, 2000:42).

Winnie elaborates on her decision to fetch "her man":

Those actions were part of a long war. The war ends when the heroine triumphantly walks into prison, the entire world watching, to fetch her man. Winnie does not wait. She goes and gets what she wants. And there she was, coming out of the prison with her prize: her Nelson. Holding hands. Waving. ... marshals clearing the crowds before Nelson and me. The entire world watching. The more I describe this, the more it feels just right. I went to fetch him. (Ndebele, 87-88)

Madikizela-Mandela is often described as a warrior,<sup>20</sup> and consequently active. After some deliberation, the Winnie character admits that she was 'right to fetch her Nelson'. She can claim Nelson Mandela as "her prize" through her actions in which the power of a traditional relationship is inverted. However, her credibility does suffer because of her confession, as the façade of determination becomes clouded with emotional doubt. This is an instance in which Ndebele illustrates the precariousness of the position of a strong, independent woman socialised into patriarchal norms and values. Indeed, it may be read as an attempt at positioning Madikizela-Mandela as a multifaceted, ordinary human being, who can be both determined and doubting. The portrayal of Madikizela-Mandela as multifaceted figure exceeds the boundaries of the mythical associations of her relationship with Nelson Mandela. It frees her from stereotypical and archetypal associations, as it demonstrates that she crosses the boundaries between housewife and political activist.

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<sup>19</sup> The notion of confession is a problematic one, as is discussed in sub-section "Representative of a Nation of Extremes." It implies an exchange of power from the confessor to the person being confessed to.

<sup>20</sup> Madikizela-Mandela as warrior is discussed in chapter three (under the sub-section "Warrior") of this dissertation.

The ambiguous responses to this highly publicised moment are further discussed when Winnie says that there is “the other way too”:

I, Winnie Mandela, waiting at the prison gates for my man to come out to me. In honour of our love, he should have come out to me, into my arms, because he left me out of choice and should have returned to me out of choice. As it was, I walked out with him as part of the drama of negotiation, with little opportunity for us to insert our interrupted intimacy into the public drama and so reaffirm our private lives. ... In a deeper sense, when I walked out of the prison gates with him, I continued to wait for him. (Ndebele, 88)

Here Winnie confesses that she has failed to honour the patriarchal ideal of feminine passivity associated with marital relationships, as she is too active. Their relationship becomes a “public drama,” played out for the public gaze, while the public that so desperately needs this couple to reconcile ironically cause the break in “intimacy.” This relationship has become public property, and Madikizela-Mandela’s ‘punishment’ for not waiting passively outside the prison gates for “her man” is a life of eternal waiting for her “prize.” The price to pay for being an active woman is *losing* her man and being condemned to a kind of passivity. She says, “Waiting! It empties out your life” (Ndebele, 88). It also insinuates that Madikizela-Mandela needs Nelson Mandela to be fulfilled. This is a highly romantic and very patriarchal idea, akin to Krog’s notion that Nelson Mandela and Madikizela-Mandela are “two sides of the same coin” (Krog, 244) in the eyes of the public, both of which reinforce the stereotypic notion that a woman is incomplete without a man. In both cases, the implication is clear: it is dangerous in a patriarchal society to be an independent woman, and there is a price to pay.

Ndebele goes beyond revealing the conditions of femininity and compulsory heterosexual relationships in society when he demonstrates the implications of these beliefs. Winnie says that she was “raging” against the

insidious workings of ideology...[that] attaches itself to the way you meet your daily personal needs, and transforms itself into a natural law. At that point, the origins of man-made law disappear forever. Recalling those origins can become an act of resistance punishable by death. (Ndebele, 89)

The Cry of Winnie Mandela critiques the values and norms of the compulsory heterosexual marital contract, perpetuated by society as 'natural'. It also illustrates that those who destabilise its 'naturalness' can expect to be punished. However, while Madikizela-Mandela's fictionalised voice enables her to present an alternative story, and she is afforded the opportunity to resist the stereotypes, her confession is immediately followed by the cry, "Oh Nelson!" This cry of longing, hopelessness, or need of Nelson Mandela reinforces her great need for the 'legitimate' man in her life. The cry is also repeated after she describes the raids that disrupted her domestic life with Nelson Mandela before he was imprisoned (Ndebele, 90). It may then be argued that the cry is one of longing for the idealised romance. However, their relationship is said to have been "sustained" in those last years more by "loyalty" than "love" (90), and the final blow was delivered by her independence, referred to as Madikizela-Mandela's "increasing sense of autonomy" (90). At the same time, her life is "empty" without her husband – implying once again that she alone is not enough to be fulfilled. It is clear that Ndebele is demonstrating the difficulties Madikizela-Mandela must face in his acknowledgement that her relationship with Nelson Mandela had been sustained by loyalty, and in his acknowledgement of her fiercely guarded independence.

Winnie says that her "journey begins" at the court "where Nelson and others were sentenced to life imprisonment" (Ndebele, 94). This indicates that her life went on without Nelson Mandela, reinforcing the sense of her independence. Winnie Mandela says she was like "Jackie Kennedy at her husband's funeral, standing with [her] two daughters to witness the decisive departure of [her] husband" (94-95). She is seen as an iconic widow, well known in the western world, and deliberately invoked by Ndebele to appeal to the sympathies of a readership that may have already condemned her all too readily as a result of media representations, including Krog's.



Ndebele's awareness of the influence of media representations is evident in the textual strategy he employs: the fictional Winnie conversing with the non-fictional Madikizela-Mandela. This strategy is effective in that readers are made aware of the fictionalisation of the life of this famous woman. The character Winnie Mandela says to Madikizela-Mandela:

You and the other women came [to court] every day to give support to your men; to strengthen the solidarity between your men and the oppressed who followed them. You and the other women were the glue to that solidarity. The masses looked at you and felt that their deprivation could never be as deep as yours. (Ndebele, 95)

This may be the reason why Madikizela-Mandela is and was so highly revered. She was pitied for her 'greater loss': the *indefinite* loss of her 'great' husband. In addition, the encounter demonstrates admiration for her "support" and strength. While a woman's role is traditionally seen as passive-supportive, this acknowledges the courage and strength that it took to support her husband and the courage that it gave the public. Her role as supportive wife is shown to be an important *political act*, as it gave courage to "the oppressed who followed" their leaders. The encounter also reminds readers that Madikizela-Mandela is and was always "looked at," and that in this instance her position as object of the public gaze was used to strengthen the public's political convictions.

Winnie also re-asserts the traditional view of this couple. She asserts that their "union" was fated by saying that it "seemed bound to happen" that "Nelson and ... Winnie would meet and be fatally bonded" (Ndebele, 95). She promotes the romanticised image of Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela by saying that he "*had to have*" her (emphasis added). This highlights the idea of a "fateful union" and the notion of possessing his female partner. Madikizela-Mandela is seen as "the very expression of urban possibility: intelligence, beauty, come-and-get-me aggression, desire, adulation, and self-assured allure" (95). In this description, Madikizela-Mandela's seeming inactivity is infused with agency. For example, although "come-and-get-me" implies passivity, it is coupled with the word "aggression," which denotes her complete

control over her sensuality. She is both active and passive. However, these “energies” of Madikizela-Mandela need to be *tamed*, as it is said that Nelson Mandela “embodied the strength, the courage, and the will, and later the nobility, to channel and give direction to all those energies” (Ndebele, 95). Nelson Mandela needs to “give direction” to her, and *lead* Madikizela-Mandela, in much the same way as one would expect an adult to lead a child. However, she is shown to embody in a powerful manner various feminine aspects that may traditionally be seen as passive: for example her “allure” is “self-assured,” and her sensuality is passive-aggressive (“come-and-get-me”). It portrays her as being aware of these characteristics, such as her beauty, which can either be empowering or used as a means with which to objectify her. One may argue that it is because of the awareness of her own potential power that she *should* be led by Nelson Mandela, in order to “manoeuvre [her] into ‘correct’ and ‘functional’ forms of thinking and acting,” (Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace, 1993:17). Powerful women are often seen as threatening to patriarchal systems. That Nelson Mandela *moulded* Madikizela-Mandela, suggests that she is at once his lover and child. The phrase “fatally bonded” is double-edged: it is “fate” that they are “bonded,” but it may also prove ‘fatal’ to Madikizela-Mandela’s independent ‘self’.

Indeed, Ndebele suggests that these restrictions upon Madikizela-Mandela are untenable and allows Winnie to be overtly conscious of her power in a patriarchal sphere of society. She says, “drivers, bodyguards, kidnappers, torturers, murderers, fugitives, arsonists, spies, lovers, comrades, slaves, opportunists, hangers-on. I dominated them all. I, queen of Brandfort” (Ndebele, 104). Her power over these men is obvious: no matter what rank or class, they were all “dominated” by her. It is also suggested that she occupied a higher position in the hierarchy. She comments that they wanted her “in secret,” but yearned “to display their trophy in public,” which indicates that these men wanted her as an *object* of beauty; the main prize. But she calls them “Opportunists. Dogs on heat. Men!” and adds, “I despised them. Except Nelson” (Ndebele, 104). While Ndebele allows Madikizela-Mandela to want the attention of men, to want to be a

powerful figure among them, to dominate this “despised” species, she is still depicted as needing the one man she is ‘allowed’ to ‘have’ in her lifetime; her husband. Thus, even powerful women, who do not fit into the traditional notions of femininity, often remain understood in terms of traditional patriarchal ideas of womanhood.

The Cry of Winnie Mandela suggests that Madikizela-Mandela is powerful beyond the restrictions of traditional notions of femininity, while relying precisely on this kind of femininity. This is evident in the alternative understanding of the failed relationship between Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela that the text offers. Winnie admits her relationship with Nelson Mandela was “lost” in favour of political loyalty. Her “visits to him in prison became more and more a political statement,” rather than “an intimate reconnection” (Ndebele, 108). The impression that she has had to choose between politics and her husband suggests that it may often be difficult for women who have been categorised as being career-driven to also fit into traditional roles. As politics supersedes her romantic love, her political involvements became more important than romance. This exposes the stereotype of women always ‘wanting’ romance to be a myth.

Instead of depicting Madikizela-Mandela as hankering after the fairy tale of domestic bliss, Ndebele describes her as fiercely independent. Winnie admits what could be perceived to be political blasphemy when she says about Nelson Mandela’s impending release from prison: “what ... would I have to depend on him for?” (109). Ndebele reveals that Madikizela-Mandela had in a sense been ‘released’ from her traditional domestic duties as wife as a result of Nelson Mandela’s imprisonment. His release would change her life, and it seemed “as if the heavy possibility of his return to lead the people to freedom, would be the end of [her] freedom” (Ndebele, 109). This reinforces the idea that Madikizela-Mandela was independent and did not need Nelson Mandela. It also correlates with the view of marriage as imprisoning for women, as his return equals the end of her freedom.

However, while depicting Madikizela-Mandela as an independent woman, Ndebele also demonstrates the social stigma attached to a woman's independence. Winnie has to "live with the impression" that she was "ungrateful, and unable to reconcile" with him. Indeed, she is seen by the public as "irretrievably lost to depravity" (110). As such, she desperately needs Nelson Mandela's "direction" to 'save' her, and her so-called "depravity" is associated with her *not wanting* Nelson Mandela's "direction." At the same time, however, she realises that she and Nelson Mandela "needed to rediscover together, affection and mellowness" (110). The responsibility to resurrect their marriage was thus not only hers, implying that domestic and romantic spaces are not exclusively the responsibility of women. Shortly hereafter, however, Winnie denounces her namesake for not being able to "reconcile" with Nelson Mandela, suggesting that this reconciliation *is* her responsibility.

Finally, Madikizela-Mandela's independence is shown not to be the only reason for the 'failed' reconciliation between Nelson Mandela and Madikizela-Mandela. Winnie declares that the "only thing that could have reconnected" them (111) was the memory of their wedding day, symbolised by the piece of wedding cake that she had saved for Nelson Mandela's return. The piece of cake was destroyed when children set fire to the Mandela home. The wedding cake is previously used (Ndebele, 74) to describe Madikizela-Mandela's "resilience," and provides not only a sentimental picture of Madikizela-Mandela, but also a stereotypically feminine one. She is shown to save the symbol of domestic bliss: that which is made in the domestic quarter of the kitchen, and is a part of the rituals of wedding ceremonies. Ironically, the one thing that is said to have been able to bring the beloved couple back to the public was destroyed by the public. This indicates that the publicity of their private life is at least partly responsible for its breakdown, as their domestic space was destroyed by the public. It may thus be argued that Ndebele fiercely resists the easy idealisation of the heterosexual marital romance. He demonstrates the double-bind of modern women trapped in patriarchal

circumstances. The text also demonstrates the reality of women as perpetuating this double-bind.

### 1.3 In Nelson's Shadow

The following discussion takes cognisance of Krog's positioning of Madikizela-Mandela in Country of My Skull in relation to Ndebele's response in The Cry of Winnie Mandela. In this subsection I aim to show how, through the various representations, Madikizela-Mandela's image is intricately linked to that of Nelson Mandela, to the point where she seems ever his dependant. Writing about the TRC hearings and the link between Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Dirk Kloppe says, "In the 1970s Madikizela-Mandela emerged as the spectral double of Nelson Mandela himself and used this space, supported by international media coverage, to voice the aspirations of the oppressed" (2004:201). Kloppe's opinion that Madikizela-Mandela was 'standing in' for Nelson Mandela may be interpreted with Pippa Norris's observation in mind. In her analysis in Women Leaders Worldwide, she confirms that:

women experience a process of dequalification when acting in what is perceived as a man's world of diplomacy and international security. This process consists of undermining or underestimating a woman leader's capabilities and experiences. (Norris, 1997:162)

Norris cites, among others, the case of Mrs Violetta Chamorro of Central America, who "[t]hroughout media coverage... seems to have been judged as a cipher to her husband, 'a name', rather than as an independent actor" (Norris, 1997:163), even though she served, for example, "in the pre-revolutionary government in exile," and ran an independent newspaper. This is startlingly similar to Madikizela-Mandela's case, as she was often perceived to have taken the space of Nelson Mandela while he was incarcerated, and it was said that she used his position and name as a platform for her own political aspirations.

This perceived usurpation of Nelson Mandela's political power constitutes an unexamined assumption in Country of My Skull. One of the first indications of the tendency in Country of My Skull to valorise the relationship between Nelson Mandela and Madikizela-Mandela emerges in Krog's selection of a song: "Winnie and Nelson – the world has parted you, but for us you are two sides of the same coin. You fulfil us" (2002:244). In addition, Krog quotes a protest placard that claims that, "Nelson Mandela" has become a "Saint" (2002:244). This puts the former quote in an interesting perspective. If Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is Nelson Mandela's opposite, her image balancing his, then she is the opposite of that saintly figure. *She* has become "the revolutionary" (Krog, 2002:244) that the public calls for. Krog says, however, that the public "can't have one without the other," implying that Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Nelson Mandela are forever associated with one another, and that their images are inextricably linked. Society's influence on Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's life is also apparent in the phrase, "*the world* has parted you" (emphasis added), while the need of society is revealed with "[y]ou fulfil us. We can't have one without the other" (Krog, 244). This demonstrates the value which society places on the role of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela – but explicitly and only in relation to Nelson Mandela. She is allowed conditional power; she is allowed to be *attached* to a man's power, by being married to him. A woman is therefore still not allowed to have her own power.

Even when discussing accusations of Murphy Morobe and Azhar Cachalia<sup>21</sup> that Madikizela-Mandela "created her own personal vigilante gang," the focus is put on the use of the name Mandela, as this "gang" is called the Nelson Mandela Football Club. It is deemed "inappropriate to use the revered Mandela name in this way" (Krog, 252). The accusation that Madikizela-Mandela has 'abused' the "revered" Mandela name implies that the 'saintly' Mandela name can be 'fouled' by Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. The "Mandela name" is thus seen as the 'property' of Nelson Mandela. Naming is historically

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<sup>21</sup> Two former UDF members.

controlled by patriarchal figures, in the same way that, in the Christian religion, Adam is said to have named the animals. Names are also historically the 'property' of men in that women have traditionally inherited the names of their fathers and husbands. The "use" (or abuse) of the "revered Mandela name" by Madikizela-Mandela is offensive because she has not acted in a socially acceptable manner, and as a woman does not have the 'right' to use this name. According to Jane Gallop in her discussion on the relationship between identity and naming in the context of heterosexual normativity, "identity in our culture" is ultimately "linked up with patriarchy" (1985:14). This accounts for the inability to extricate Madikizela-Mandela's identity from that of her ex-husband. In addition, it indicates that this woman cannot be seen as independent from her ex-husband due to prevailing gendered norms. She is not respected or thought of as a person in her own right, and her identity as a woman is forever linked with that of a man, rather than an array of other qualities that may 'define' her, instead, as an individual. She is, even though divorced from him, still defined by the man at whose side she is 'supposed' to be.

Krog in Country of my Skull pays lip-service to the powerful and independent side of Madikizela-Mandela in relating an incident in which Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's influence over Nelson Mandela is shown. Krog says that the "Crisis Committee tried to block... reports [of Seipei's abduction], because it was afraid they would harm the progress of negotiations with [Nelson] Mandela in jail" (Krog, 250). Madikizela-Mandela is again seen not as a political figure in her own right, but as interconnected with Nelson Mandela. However, there is a strong element of power that is associated with her, as it is feared that her actions may adversely influence his prospects of being released from jail. Her power is thus portrayed as negative, while still intricately linked to Nelson Mandela. Krog says:

All those people engaged in trying to resolve the conflict felt compromised by the fact that Winnie Mandela was a powerful political figure in her own right. And also the wife of one of the most revered leaders in the country. This fact even influences our ability to find the truth now... (Krog, 250)

Krog reinforces the point that Madikizela-Mandela's power comes not only from herself, but "also" from her link with her then-husband, Nelson Mandela. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is ultimately linked to Nelson Mandela – a "most revered leader" – by name and by history. The recording of this incident demonstrates the currency of the opinion that the truth is hindered by the fact that Madikizela-Mandela is powerful. However, she is seen to be powerful *because* she was the wife of Nelson Mandela, and not because she is powerful in her own right.

Her position as secondary to men is highlighted again in relation to Archbishop Desmond Tutu's statement to Madikizela-Mandela when confronting her at the TRC hearings: "*many* say you should have been where you ought to be. The First Lady of the country" (259). The role of "First Lady" is a supportive one, rather than one of active leadership. It is ultimately the role of someone who is not a leader but bears the leader's name. This concurs with Pumla Gqola's findings following Cheryl Walker, that:

the discourses used across the liberation movement cast Blackwomen in a supportive and nurturing mould, and rarely represented as active participants in the struggle to end apartheid. This was not accidental, but this trope of supportive woman was reified as the safest position for the re-emasculatation of Blackmen. (Pumla Gqola, 2004:49-50)

Madikizela-Mandela is shown to be a woman who, in many aspects, stands alone and acts out of her own free will. However, in both the Krog and Ndebele texts, she is often cast in a position *next to* someone powerful. In effect she is pictured as feeding off their power to make it her own. This constitutes a recognisable problem that women, so-called emancipated women, struggle with daily. Women are seldom seen as successful in their own right in public places. This is also a current public debate with regards to the ANC successor: Phumzile Mlabo-Ngcuka's "elevation to deputy president in June 2005 moved her into the highest office ever occupied by a woman in SA. It was widely hailed across the country, but drew inevitable criticism, especially from the supporters of the



man she replaced, Jacob Zuma” (Prakash Naidoo, 2006). In an egalitarian society, it should not draw criticism that a black woman is considered for the position of president, not just First Lady. Indeed, being “first” and being a “lady” mean very different things. Being a “lady” means a woman who is emotional but controlled, even quiet and unobtrusive: *feminine*. Very few of these (none except 'controlled') correlate with the expectations of a leader of a country. Indeed, much of what is said of Madikizela-Mandela is indicative of larger social questions. This controversial figure, by not abiding by the 'rules', exposes the ambiguities and problems black women, and in some cases women in general, continue to negotiate.

In comparison to Krog's, Ndebele's response is more sympathetic to the difficulty of Madikizela-Mandela of extricating her identity from that of Nelson Mandela. In The Cry of Winnie Mandela, Ndebele quotes Nelson Mandela's autobiography: “Winnie seemed to do better without [his] tutelage than with it” (96). Though he says this in relation to her driving lessons, it may be argued that it has wider implications in its interrogation of Mandela's own patriarchal control over his wife. He acknowledges his ex-wife's struggle when he says that “others often saw her as ‘Mandela's wife’.” In addition, he acknowledges that it was “undoubtedly difficult for her to form her own identity” in his “shadow.” His suggestion that he did his best to “let her bloom in her own right,” constitutes his recognition of his power over her (96). Although it might be construed that Nelson Mandela is guilty of patronising her, as he did his “best to *let* her bloom” (emphasis added), it does indicate that he is aware of the politics prohibiting her from blooming. The driving lesson incident also demonstrates the competition between husband and wife, as the character Winnie states at first, “you won, Winnie,” but later adds, “But then, he ultimately wins” (Ndebele, 96). There is thus no sense of victory for her: the man will always win over the woman in a society dictated by patriarchal prescriptions and norms.

The sense that she is secondary to the man in her life is reinforced when it is said that after Nelson Mandela's imprisonment, she "stood in for him" (60). Her "rhetoric" had the "grammar of defiance and of the unarticulated fear of the consequences of [her] solitude" (60). Mamello says to her: "The antidote to your suffering was the feeling that you were admired and feared, and your increasing sense of and pleasure in your power. In time, your fear of consequences also evaporated" (60). Ndebele shows the public belief to be that Madikizela-Mandela's actions stem from this glamorous romantic love affair with Nelson Mandela. Mamello implies that Madikizela-Mandela only acquires political power "for" and "because of" the legitimate man in her life. Foregrounding this image of doing everything 'for love', Mamello says of Madikizela-Mandela, "You held on to your husband by absorbing his political image into yourself" (60). The issue here is that, if Madikizela-Mandela 'absorbed' Mandela's "political image," she also 'absorbed' 'his' power. It is thus again suggested that this powerful woman has a *man's* power, which raises questions about whether it is deemed acceptable for a woman to have her own power in a patriarchal society. This makes Madikizela-Mandela considerably less powerful than a man as this power remains Nelson Mandela's, and is not considered to be her own. She would consequently be considered to be less threatening to the status quo of a patriarchal society in which men are generally deemed to be more powerful than women.

The difficulty faced by Madikizela-Mandela in relation to marital inequalities is reinforced in The Cry of Winnie Mandela when Winnie says, "I'm... reminded of the power of things unseen: like my husband, in his absence. Not seen, but there. Making me do things. Working inside of me. Taking control" (85). Ndebele shows that even in Nelson Mandela's absence he is perceived as having "control" over her. Such a reading of Mandela's power over her refuses an alternative reading of Madikizela-Mandela having autonomy and her own agency. It is another instance where Ndebele exposes the double-bind in which women in patriarchal society find themselves, as simultaneously wanting independence and relying on men. Indeed, Ndebele seems acutely aware of the

double-bind that the public find themselves in. In Rediscovery of the Ordinary he argues that, “[i]n our attempts to call for freedom, we may, at the same time, be unconsciously prescribing our own containment” (1991:77). Ndebele is clearly aware of the ideological dilemmas that have accounted for prior representations of Madikizela-Mandela.

The character Winnie Mandela wants to be acknowledged as an autonomous individual. In the debate staged between the ‘real’ and the fictional Madikizela-Mandela persona, the fictional says to the ‘real’ character, “You’ve always wanted to get out of [Nelson’s shadow] into the light, into your own light” (97). Ironically, when Nelson Mandela was imprisoned, Madikizela-Mandela could start forging that space for herself more easily, as “he could not cast” such an overpowering “shadow” over her from afar (Ndebele, 97). It is nonetheless still evident that she is always seen as his ‘protégé’, in a sense his understudy, and never as good as the master. It is when Nelson Mandela has gone to prison that Madikizela-Mandela’s “face began to lose its easy zestfulness. It became taut with a self-conscious purposefulness. Even its beauty began to show menace” (97). It is at the time of becoming independent that she is said to lose some of her beauty: that aspect of her femininity that had been so highly valued by society and is mentioned throughout the representations of Madikizela-Mandela by both Ndebele and Krog. Her independence menaces patriarchal society, which still attempts to define her as ‘wife’, secondary to her husband.

In addition to her existence being reduced to her status as wife, Ndebele’s Winnie suggests that, “[w]ithout a husband, [her] love had only one field of play; politics” (112). Once again, the idea of being in the political world *for* or *because of* Nelson Mandela is reiterated. It is insinuated that Madikizela-Mandela needs a new playing field in order to have a link with her husband *because* she loves him so much, partially discrediting her political agenda. Indeed, discussing some men’s perceptions of women, Molly Hite says that a “good woman is one who needs a man emotionally” (1989:24), which accounts for the fact that an independent woman, such as Madikizela-Mandela as

she is portrayed in The Cry of Winnie Mandela, will generally be marginalised by a society that will construe her as 'suspicious' for not needing a man. In this passage, it is made clear that Madikizela-Mandela's actions are interpreted in terms of the romantic heterosexual expectations of the public.

This perpetual social connection between this public woman and her ex-husband is one of the most discussed aspects of her life. Her inability to extricate her identity from that of her 'man' is however shown as not being an isolated problem. The character Winnie Mandela reveals that Madikizela-Mandela is in the same position that "hundreds of thousands of other women" are in. Winnie identifies herself with the waiting masses admitting the passivity that is inherent in "a South African woman's life" when she talks about:

Departures. Waitings. Returns. ... Three pillars of a South African woman's life. I too saw my Nelson go. Then I waited for him. Then he returned. Yes. This is the story of hundreds of thousands of other women. Of course, my Nelson departed in a flourish. (Ndebele, 87)

In this passage, Ndebele displays Madikizela-Mandela's public currency: that her position and social struggles reflect those of black women in South Africa. However, it is also claimed that she is more powerful than other waiting women, as Winnie says; "*I was the law of the struggle. I was the definition of heroism in waiting. I would lead the people to the promised land. ...In my hand I wielded the spear of the one brand name: Mandela*" (original italics, 104). While Winnie admits that her part in the struggle was enormous, there is also the claim that her husband's name was her weapon. This depicts the social power of the name of her then-husband: it becomes a "brand" in itself, implying its public value. She is not entirely passive, however, and is portrayed as a warrior. Winnie repeats the word "I" which is reminiscent of the attempted self-affirming "Ich, Ich, Ich, Ich"<sup>22</sup> of Sylvia Plath's poem "Daddy" (Ferguson, Salter, Stallworthy,

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<sup>22</sup> The "Ich, Ich, Ich, Ich" (l.27) in "Daddy" is used in reference to the speaker's voicelessness and her oppression by the father figure in the poem. Her attempt at self-affirmation lies with this adaptation of the German "I".

1970:1732). She thus positions herself as subject, not object, and affirms herself and her individuality by repeating and emphasising the personal pronoun “I.”

Ndebele’s exploration of the constant comparisons between Nelson and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is continued in his depiction of Winnie saying:

Your husband trained himself to live without you and retained his transcendent dignity. Prison protected him and transformed him into a saint. He had no women flaunting themselves before him. You had countless suitors: men willing to risk life in the abyss between fame and perfidy. ...you transformed the game of chance into an attribute of power. (Ndebele, 44 – 45)

The comparison, in this instance, is made in her favour. For Nelson Mandela, prison served as a convent. On the other hand, Madikizela-Mandela was constantly put in sexual “temptation.” Traditional sexual roles are thus reversed. Whereas sexuality has often been considered to be exclusively a man’s domain in patriarchal society, women have often been seen as “the sex” (De Beauvoir, 1993:xliv); as sexual objects, and not as sexual beings. Here, she is openly shown to use her sexual power over men. Ndebele shows that ‘illicit’ sex is ‘tempting’ for a woman, in other words, that she is a sexual being. In fact, he depicts Madikizela-Mandela as a human being, put in difficult situations. At this point, he normalises her sexuality, as she is not depicted as threatening. This is important, because the fear of women’s uncontrolled sexuality is the main rationale for patriarchal control over women. Men “compel women to comply” to the “hold” that they have over women:

because they need to re-establish or preserve control over wealth and resources and, above all, over women’s productive and reproductive labour. This control is the crux of the struggle over women’s claims to equality and autonomy. (Meintjies, Pillay and Tushen, 2002:13)

Aside from normalising women’s sexuality, the above depiction of Madikizela-Mandela also interrogates the credibility of the comparison between the ‘saintly’ Nelson Mandela and his ‘evil’ then-wife Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, as they were not in situations that could be productively compared anyway.

The role of the media and public opinion cannot be underestimated when considering the relationship between Nelson Mandela and Madikizela-Mandela. Speaking of having to endure what Madikizela-Mandela called “the gutter press” who would make things sound “so suggestive” (75), and these articles finding their “way under the door of [Nelson Mandela’s] cell in prison,” Marara says, “Shame.” This very ambiguous South-Africanism not only denotes ‘*ag shame*’, feeling sorry for Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Nelson Mandela; but also “the shame” of Madikizela-Mandela being accused of these “suggestive” stories and Nelson Mandela’s shame at his wife’s alleged involvement in these ‘sordid’ stories. The concept of shame has historical importance, as Jane Arthurs explains. She notes that, at “the end of the nineteenth century... the ‘civilizing process’ which attached shame to bodily indecorum was firmly in place” (1999:138). According to Arthurs:

[W]omen are regarded as the moral guardians of society whose behaviour must set the standard for men, acting as a kind of generalized super ego for the unruly ID of the masculine psyche. ... In transgressing these codes of femininity, the unruly woman demands the right to the satisfaction of her own bodily desires; she eats in excess and has unbridled sexual appetites. She demands attention by making a spectacle of herself, talking loudly, dressing flamboyantly and taking up space with her size and loose, energetic movements. (Jane Arthurs, 1999:141-142)

By “transgressing” the ‘rules’ of patriarchal society, Madikizela-Mandela then becomes a “spectacle”.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to highlighting Madikizela-Mandela’s struggle to be seen as an individual in relation to her famous (ex-)husband, The Cry of Winnie Mandela also emphasises that she is constantly linked to men in general. She is often portrayed as being either parented or ‘owned’ by someone. For example when Winnie says, “I was magnificent...! I, the child of Major Theunis Swanepoel.” Furthermore, she confesses to disliking “letting down the archbishop” “whose fatherhood and mentorship” she could accept “more than Nelson’s” (Ndebele, 111). Here she is depicted as agonised about

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<sup>23</sup> The concept of the spectacular is discussed under the subheading 2.3.

her “denials” and refers to Archbishop Tutu as a father figure. In addition, she is perceived as mentored, and in this manner she remains either in the position of child or of object, discounting her power and individuality. However, militating against the implied child-passivity of these images, are those that depict her as “Queen of Brandfort, and terror of Soweto, who mastered to perfection the art of technical denial, was intelligent, articulate, calm and easy, combative, reflective, arrogant, and beautiful” (111). Such contradictions are always at the heart of representations of Madikizela-Mandela.

By constantly linking Winnie Madikizela-Mandela with the men in her life, but most constantly and overtly with Nelson Mandela, the characters of The Cry of Winnie Mandela demonstrate how Madikizela-Mandela is contained in, and constrained by, her constant link with Nelson Mandela. The perpetual link with Nelson Mandela is the crux of the problem of naming. In the introduction to Jean Baudrillard's collection of essays under the title For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign, Max Horkheimer argues that “the once supposedly autonomous subject [is] emptied of any content,” becoming “a mere name with nothing to denominate” (1981:7). Thus, the subject, Madikizela-Mandela, is defined so much in terms of the name Mandela that eventually the link is virtually ingrained, and what remains in the minds of the public, is the name “Winnie Mandela.”

## Chapter Two

### Iconic Images

In this chapter the angle shifts from naming to images in relation to the representation of Madikizela-Mandela in Country of My Skull and The Cry of Winnie Mandela. Once again the primary focus is Ndebele's representations while Krog's provides the intertextual backdrop against which Ndebele writes. In order to understand how the imagery evoking Madikizela-Mandela works, this chapter will incorporate a brief discussion on the ways in which the physical image is related to the notion of the spectacle.<sup>24</sup> This will be followed by an analysis of the various images presented of Madikizela-Mandela. The focus of this chapter is the iconic<sup>25</sup> potential of the images, particularly those that have become either ingrained in social consciousness as natural (such as Mother), or those that depict modes that women have been historically typecast in.

John Berger explains why it is vital to analyse images, commenting on the fact that there is, according to him, an "always-present gap between words and seeing":

Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak. But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled. (John Berger, 1977:7)

Berger surmises that images form knowledge to a large degree. This is also the case in the representations of Madikizela-Mandela, as in general, this public persona is received largely through visual or pictorial representation, either in photographs or on film, or with the emphasis on physical descriptions in textual representations. These descriptions

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<sup>24</sup> The Oxford Thesaurus defines *spectacle* as a "show, display, sight, performance" (Lawrence Urdang, 1991:457). Ndebele's definition of the *spectacular* is that it is above all "exterior" and "demonstrative" (Ndebele, 1991:46). This notion is discussed in sub-section 2.3.

<sup>25</sup> The dictionary definition of *iconic* is "acting as a sign of symbol," while "icon" is defined as "a famous person or thing that people... see as a symbol of a particular idea or way of life" (Sally Wehmeier, 2000:592) Madikizela-Mandela may be said to be represented in numerous iconic images, as the images of her symbolise various 'modes' of being.



thus function in a similar manner as photographs: they purport to offer a sense of 'truth' (Stiegler, 150,152). The photographic images, as well as the descriptions of Madikizela-Mandela are 'real' insofar as they have a real effect on the spectator, but are nonetheless representations of her at a certain point in history. Photographs have always claimed to portray a 'truth', but they are no more truthful than any other kind of representation, as they are taken from a specific point of view and in a certain historical context. Similarly, images of Madikizela-Mandela are presented from a particular perspective, and socio-political context. They can therefore be analysed in order to gauge the perspectives and contexts out of which they emerge.

Perhaps for this reason, the importance of the image has been the focus of academics and writers alike. André Brink's understanding of the dictionary definition of the image is a useful point of departure in discussing Madikizela-Mandela:

According to the OED, 'image', etymologically linked to the activity of 'imitating', may designate such a variety of notions as copy, likeness, statue, phantom, conception, thought, idea, similitude, semblance, appearance, or shadow – a range so wide as to be practically meaningless. (André Brink, 1998:31)

Brink goes on to argue that images cannot be defined so simply. Instead, he focuses on *interpretation* to give meaning to images:

We may move closer to a manageable concept if the 'image' we are concerned with is regarded as the outcome of the intervention of the imagination, that is, the shaping of an image, not by the sense but in the mind. (André Brink, 1998:31)

Brink thus points to the interpretational desire which is brought to bear in representation. My reading is thus postmodern in that the only 'realities' about these images of Madikizela-Mandela are subjective realities that are constructed and imposed by the authors and readers. Dirk Kloppe discusses the constructedness of the image of Madikizela-Mandela during the TRC hearings and says that due to "Madikizela-Mandela's high media profile over a long period of time, it is unavoidable that she has

been constructed in terms of popular images” (Dirk Kloppe, 2004:204). The use of the plural *images* implies that Madikizela-Mandela’s image consistently becomes *uncontainable*. For example, the image of her as powerful woman flows into the image of her as warrior. Conversely, the image of her as Mama Africa becomes tainted with the image of her as Abhorrent Mother. These images often work in terms of binaries and frequently flow into contradictory images, such as angel and whore, saint and witch. As a result, the representation of Madikizela-Mandela becomes increasingly mythical,<sup>26</sup> leaving more space for public interpretation and less space for the consideration of the ‘real’. The only ‘truths’ that they reveal are the subjective opinions and interpretations of the authors and public. Brink’s notion of the constructedness of the image is relevant in examining Madikizela-Mandela, as each image of her suggests another way of ‘seeing’ her. She is depicted visually so often that she becomes lost in multiple representations and authenticity recedes. She thus becomes *increasingly* mythical and the images presented of her should not be read without taking into account Barthes’ understanding of the mythological. He says, with “regard to myth ... the new mythology – can no longer ... separate so easily the signifier from the signified, the ideological from the phraseological” (Barthes, 1986:66). This suggests that images of Madikizela-Mandela may tell more of those who (re-)present them than of Madikizela-Mandela herself.

In addition, what is seen by the public as “real” is then unrecognisable beyond the “visible manifestation” thereof, and so, through the various images discussed in this chapter, this woman becomes a copy of herself. Discussing the notion of simulacra, or a copy of a copy, Jean Baudrillard argues that “[t]he distinction between object and representation, thing and idea are no longer valid. ... A simulation is different from a fiction or lie in that it ... presents an absence as a presence, the imaginary as real, absorbing the real within itself” (Jean Baudrillard, 1988:5,6). The “real” is thus absorbed and hidden by the image, and so becomes unrecognisable to those who interpret and

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<sup>26</sup> “Myth, like our dreaming, uses the symbolic language of *Image* and *Metaphor*... to reveal its truths” (Donna Wilshire, 1989:96). Readers can thus interpret the images of Madikizela-Mandela in order to ascertain ideological meanings informing them.

watch Madikizela-Mandela. The only so-called reality that exists in this context, is that which is mediated to the reader and society, insofar as it mimics public ideas of 'reality' to such an extent that the image *exceeds* the 'real'. The image is thus taken to *be* real.

The mythical images or multiple representations are often to be found in presentations of Madikizela-Mandela as a physical presence, either described in words or depicted photographically. The physical descriptions of her can be analysed for their socio-political implications as a "woman's body is always mediated by language; the human body is a text, a sign, not just a piece of fleshy matter" (Arleen Dallery 1989:54). Dallery goes on to warn that the "structures of language and other signifying practices that code woman's body are... oppressive" (1989:54). It is these "oppressive" codes present in the descriptions of Madikizela-Mandela that form a large part of the following discussion.

As a public figure paradoxically both the Waiting Woman and the Warrior, she is also both the Mother of the Nation and the Abhorrent Mother. Bond and Gilliam in their debate on representation and power argue that:

[a] world of meaning is constructed through images, or icons, that are the products of particular historical circumstances.... Manifestations of a particular type of essentialism, they reduce complex and intricate historical and social diversities to a few prominent cultural images. The images become the basis for collusion, cultural screens through which the world is ordered, interpreted and understood. (1994:16)

The importance of analysing the image of Madikizela-Mandela is in gauging and understanding the power-relations inherent in these images, and the reductionist aspect of images in the service of certain cultural norms and values. These images therefore have political and social impact. In the following subsections I will analyse the ways in which Madikizela-Mandela is represented as Waiting Woman, Gazed-at woman, Spectacle, Representative of a Nation, Powerful woman, Quesalid, and Mama Africa.

## 2.1 Waiting Woman

The lonely, single and stoic waiting woman is a powerful and age-old image of womanhood. The Cry of Winnie Mandela “tells the stories of four unknown women, and that of South Africa’s most famous woman, who waited” (Ndebele, 2003:1). In this manner, Madikizela-Mandela is defined on the first page of the text as a waiting woman. Not only that, but according to this text the “most famous” (Ndebele, 39) waiting woman in South Africa. Madikizela-Mandela is depicted as more important than the other waiting women because she “waited in public while [they] waited in the privacy of [their] homes, suffering in the silence of [their] bedrooms” (Ndebele, 39). Madikizela-Mandela becomes the visible sign for the invisible waiting women in South Africa – a waiting woman whose visibility may make their invisibility slightly easier to bear.

While Madikizela-Mandela is said to be “no exception” by being ‘just another’ waiting woman, Mamello contradictorily says that she is “the *ultimate public symbol* of women-in-waiting” (emphasis added). It is because Madikizela-Madikizela was so *publicly* “like everyone,” that she was “not like everyone” (Ndebele, 61). She is highly visible, a waiting woman who represents the invisible waiting women in the public. This hyper-visibility is an extreme expression of her representation as waiting woman. The image is thus taken to *be* real. In this sense, she is “not like” the other waiting women, but is simultaneously reduced and enhanced into a representative of waiting women.

At the beginning of Ndebele's text, Madikizela-Mandela is compared to the archetypal Penelope (Ndebele, 4), who represents the definitive waiting woman.<sup>27</sup> Ndebele remarks on the “unfair” “judgement” on Penelope, and, by overtly linking Madikizela-Mandela with this figure, comments on the “unfair” judgements imposed on her. Penelope, like ‘Winnie’, is the public “embodiment” (Ndebele, 4) of waiting womanhood. The difference between Madikizela-Mandela and the other waiting women is her

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<sup>27</sup> Penelope waited for nineteen years for her husband to return. She is “the ultimate symbol of a wife ‘so loyal and so true’.” Penelope was accused of being “fickle” after the public wrongly thought she had married someone else after waiting eighteen years for her husband (Ndebele, 2).

public visibility, and that she also represents other iconic concepts, such as the ultimate gazed-at woman.

## 2.2 The Gazed-at Woman

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is a highly public figure who is represented in “pictures.” She is always seen and/or gazed at. Because there is a common conception in society that what is seen is “real,” these physical descriptions and photographs reinforce the myth that the images presented of her are “real.” However, as Derrida and Stiegler discuss in *Spectrographies* (2002:123), these physical descriptions and images are only real insofar as they are “real” *images* on photographic paper. Like Brink, Stiegler focuses on the context in which the image is presented and interpreted. He says:

*The image in general* does not exist. What is called the mental image and what I shall call the image-object (which is always inscribed in a *history*, and in a *technical* history) are two faces of a single phenomenon. They can no more be separated than the signified and the signifier which defined, in the past, the two faces of the linguistic sign. (2002:147)

The physical images of Madikizela-Mandela are thus ideologically infused and must be critically interpreted. “The haunting footage of her sensual, liberated beauty” is picturesquely “set off against the dusty, desolate, corrugated-iron township of Brandfort” (Krog, 2002:244). Her physical beauty is described as “haunting,” implying a metaphysical presence, and even a sense of the powerful or unknown. However, Madikizela-Mandela is constantly defined in terms of the body. Susan Bordo explains that the signification of the body is not innocent. Instead, the body “is a powerful symbolic form, a surface on which the central rules, hierarchies, and even metaphysical commitments of a culture are inscribed and thus reinforced through the concrete language of the body” (Susan R. Bordo, 1989:13). Krog’s “pictures” of Madikizela-Mandela are infused with Krog’s own ideological and interpretational desire in the sense

that she deliberately foregrounds Madikizela-Mandela's "sensual, liberated beauty" against the background of township squalor. Madikizela-Mandela's physical image is what is stable and can be 'known' to the public. Her body can be seen as a text inscribed with meaning, which "is best understood in terms of ... the play between the known and the unknown, presence and absence, the stable and unstable" (David Birch, 1989:8). The body, that which is *seen*, takes the form of the "known," the "presence," and the "stable." Her physical image is thus focused on as it is seen as portraying some form of 'truth' of Madikizela-Mandela. The photographic image becomes a ghostly "presence" of Madikizela-Mandela, and forms a large part of her public identity; how she is "known." For the public, seeing equals 'knowing', and 'knowing' equals 'truth'. And in this instance, beauty, it would seem, equals truth.

An additional meaning inscribed in Krog's "pictures" of Madikizela-Mandela emerges: she is depicted as always quite alone, "[w]hen she stands, she always stands triumphantly alone. When she sits, she sits alone and the air is filled with conspiracy and fear" (2002:244). The beauty of this spectacular icon is thus not innocent. Instead of simply being a means with which to objectify her, her beauty is linked to her independence, which is in turn linked to the words "conspiracy and fear." It may be argued that it is precisely this woman's iconic independence that promotes discomfort, as an independent woman is traditionally perceived in both Western and African patriarchal societies as dangerous. This sense of danger is then exaggerated by the figure of Madikizela-Mandela, as she could easily be typecast as a beautiful 'trophy' at a man's side. Even while she is always so "triumphantly alone," a victory over the stereotype that a woman is incomplete without a man, she is constantly linked to male figures by those who have written about her. She lives – indeed, thrives ("triumphant") – in the sphere of ultimates. For example, it is said that "she *a/ways* stands triumphantly alone" (emphasis added). Her alone-ness (and not 'loneliness') is described as if

victorious, which also links with her image as warrior. She is also seen as powerful *because* of this triumphant alone-ness.

It is at least partially the fact that Madikizela-Mandela is constantly watched, photographed and described in the media that accounts for multiple and contradictory meanings imposed on her. Laura Mulvey theorises on the “traditional exhibitionist role” of women, whereby “women are simultaneously looked at and displayed” (1989:19), which makes of them a spectacle. Madikizela-Mandela is constantly looked-at, which portrays her as passive because “pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female” (19). However, Krog describes watching Madikizela-Mandela’s “grand entrance” (246) at the TRC hearing. She is thus not passive, and her stature is described as royal, strong, and tall, attributes that are deemed masculine. Indeed, she “towers” (246), a word that also denotes physical strength. One may examine this remark in relation to the constant references to Madikizela-Mandela’s beauty. It has been said that an “air of robustness and strength is very prejudicial to beauty. An appearance of *delicacy*, and even fragility, is essential to it” (Lola Young, 1999:73). In this instance, Madikizela-Mandela’s strength and height may be seen as transgressive in relation to the ideal passive beauty that she is often described as exuding when she was younger. Madikizela-Mandela’s beauty does not adhere to traditional notions associated with female beauty, such as passivity and weakness, and yet she remains an object of desire. There is also another theory to be taken into account in this moment. Charlotte Bauer says in “The Feminisation of Torture”:

Women capable of great cruelty are prone to be written off as gender misfits, unless we are very attractive or defending our honour or our family. If we’re beautiful (Eva Perron, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela) we are eroticised and accorded Lady Macbeth glamour status to dilute the disgust society may feel about our actions. (2004:11)

Madikizela-Mandela is indeed afforded “Lady Macbeth glamour status.” Not only is she depicted as strong *and* attractive, but her beauty is associated with danger. Her actions

are thus not condoned by society, but still Madikizela-Mandela remains a central figure in society, if only in that she is constantly in the gaze of the media and public.

Krog is not alone in her focus on Madikizela-Mandela's physicality. In The Cry of Winnie Mandela, the narrator refers to "that special look" (7) of Madikizela-Mandela: one of the most famous pictures of her is one where she is seen gazing over the landscape at Brandfort. In this picture, she is depicted as beautiful, young - and as images inevitably are - silent. However, it is what comes next that strikes the reader as curious:

That gaze! It is the gaze of an eye that penetrates with a tough, enduring softness. It is the look of generosity, born of persistence. One moment it flickers with desperation when the earthquake inside churns the desire for deep connectedness. At that point it displays vulnerability. Then it gives way to a look of indifference. But it is an indifference that connects you to it. It even inspires awe. It partakes of the essence of beauty. It is not in those brown eyes only. It is the easy creases on the forehead, the self-assured reserve, the permanent doek, the pursed lips: they all make up that gaze that captures the condition of life through time measured in states of waiting. That gaze is the enduring, eternal solidity of being. It is a condition of beauty that balances doom with triumph. The look of coming and going. (7)

Crucially, the Gaze here is subverted and reversed. Madikizela-Mandela is not only *looked at*, but in turn looks back at the onlooker, who observes a full range of contradictory and fluctuating expressions in her eyes. She is active in that she is also *looking*, or looking back. Ironically, while it is something which makes her active, it becomes another mode in which she is seen by the public: another *look*/image to be defined by. This description of Madikizela-Mandela's "gaze" implies that one can 'read' her emotional state 'through her eyes'; akin to the cliché that describes the eyes as 'the windows to the soul'. It thus purports to reveal some 'truth' about Madikizela-Mandela's 'inner self'. Ndebele's description maintains that her "gaze" is a "condition of beauty," but also describes the ambiguous and extreme conditions of Madikizela-Mandela's existence: one of either "doom" or "triumph," "coming" or "going." The description of her beauty promises again some kind of 'essence', while her gaze is seen as 'defining' in



that it is a “condition,” an essential, of beauty. It also identifies Madikizela-Mandela with the age-old archetype of woman as connected to the earth, as “the earthquake inside [her] churns.” However, her gaze is also one of ‘looking back’, and so her “penetrating” look is active. This is empowering because, “when a woman looks back she asserts her ‘existence’ as a subject, her place outside the position of object to which the male gaze relegates her and by which it defines her as ‘woman’” (Beth Newman, 1990:453). Therefore, whilst the gazed-at woman is passive and disempowered by the gaze of others, she is empowered by returning the gaze.

Ndebele however romanticises this much-publicised look, describing the “enduring, eternal solidity of being” in Madikizela-Mandela’s physical “gaze.” Her existence, her “being,” is then equated with her physicality. In the life of this woman, to be seen is to be; and to be is to be seen. This is a position that women are daily subjected to, although generally on a smaller scale. John Berger explains that, “[a]ccording to usage and conventions which are at last being questioned but have by no means been overcome... [a] woman... is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself.” “[*M*en act and women appear” (original italics). Madikizela-Mandela’s “gaze” may also be considered in terms of Berger’s notion that women “watch themselves being looked at. ... Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight” (John Berger, 1977:45-7). The character Delisiwe discusses Madikizela-Mandela’s “look” as being specific. She calls it:

that distant yet all-knowing look. The look of having lived years. The look of indictment and forgiveness. The look of being there. The look of the gazing sphinx. The look that tells of timelessness, not as a philosophical abstraction, but as a permanent quality of experiencing life among others. It is the look of unending learning. The look of the humbling of human beings by experience. You can see this look in the faces of all the women of this land who have triumphed against waiting, pain, and loss. (51)

Again, Madikizela-Mandela is seen by the public as an example of a certain state of womanhood, as the last sentence points out. In this moment the expression of her

womanhood is related to her gaze. The wisdom, experience, and the mythical associated with Madikizela-Mandela are all intricately linked to the fact that she is one of those “women of this land who have triumphed against waiting, pain, and loss.” All these states of existence are apparently expressed by her gaze. In this manner she is again objectified in terms of her gaze, which is also related to the ambiguity of the images presented of her as public victim and conqueror all at once.

In addition to this ambiguity, Madikizela-Mandela’s gaze is also referred to when Mamello talks about “[t]hat stare of years of endurance, indicting, and loving and protective all at once” (Ndebele, 23). This gaze defines Madikizela-Mandela, because it is not referred to as *a*, any, stare, but as “[t]hat stare” (emphasis added). The Cry of Winnie Mandela demonstrates how the media’s gaze constantly imposes meaning and judgments upon Madikizela-Mandela, silencing her as it focuses on how she looks, rather than what she says. Meaning is gleaned from her objectification: her ‘look’ is imbued with meaning, although her “stare” is active in the sense that it is “indicting, and loving.”

Ndebele further exposes the general belief that what the public sees is *true*, or that what is seen of Madikizela-Mandela can be interpreted to give meaning, and Mamello addresses Winnie, saying:

Your years are not in your look. Your look does not have that definitive humility... Your years are in your laugh. That laugh can mock. It can be sensuous, alluring, spellweaving. It can be bewitchingly cold and mean. It can say: ‘How can you ask such a silly question?’ while continuing to invite you to ask. It can say: ‘Who do you think you are?’ (59)

Her physical gaze does not reveal every ‘truth’ about Madikizela-Mandela, given that her “years are *not* in her look” (emphasis added). It is her laugh that now reveals something of Madikizela-Mandela. The meanings given to her laugh further silence her voice, as there is a stark contrast between rational speech and the irrational laugh. Molly Hite in The Other Side of the Story says that one should note the difference between “utterances” (1989:28) and speaking rationally; and indeed Madikizela-Mandela’s laugh

creates another void that can be filled with the impositions of meaning, and it is only when telling her story rationally that she is a central character in The Cry of Winnie Mandela. Through her laugh overt links are made with her physicality and her sensuality; her allure and bewitchment. However, the laugh is only focused on for a short while, and she returns again to gazing at Madikizela-Mandela:

Whatever message your laugh sends forth, you remain ever so beautiful. Mercifully beautiful. Terrifyingly beautiful. Your beauty! It can spell serenity and terror all at once. Yes, I've often thought: Winnie Mandela, you need a mark on your forehead: your own Scarlet Letter. "BMB": "Beware of My Beauty." Signed: Winnie (Winifred) Nomzamo Zanyiwe Mandela. (59)

"Whatever message" is given through her laugh, she remains a woman who is *seen*, and objectified through her physical appearance. Ironically, Madikizela-Mandela becomes a woman whose "beauty," a means with which to further objectify her, is a source of power. Indeed, she is not defined in terms of a kind of beauty that is passive. Instead, her beauty becomes active, making her merciful, terrifying, serene and terrific "all at once." Her beauty then also reinforces her multifaceted-ness. However, just as her beauty is empowering, it also leaves its mark; her own "Scarlet Letter," referring to her inability or refusal to act within the boundaries of society's rules.

Madikizela-Mandela is subjected not only to the careful scrutiny of her 'look' and her laugh, both of which are overly interpreted, she is also studied by the characters, who need her to mean something very specific socially. She becomes the one who is invested with their hopes and they see something of themselves in her:

[L]et's spot her just being silly or desperate for love. Let's see her in pain and tears. Let's watch her terrified and vulnerable, and whimpering for support. Let's see and hear her do and say all the things we have seen and heard about ourselves in our *ibandla*. (Ndebele, 41)

In this instance, Mamello is looking at Madikizela-Mandela, the public icon, as a fully fledged human being with multiple possibilities. With Madikizela-Mandela "the private is

political” (Minh-ha, 1989:37), and judgement of Madikizela-Mandela becomes the judgement of all the women she represents. However, the acknowledgement of her multifaceted image is limiting as it only occurs within the boundaries of what these women can “spot” Madikizela-Mandela doing, and what they are able to understand within the contexts of their own histories. The women of this *ibandla* can, in turn, also be read as representative of a majority constituency of South Africa by being working class black women. Due to their race and sex, their perceptions and stories represent different scenarios of a basic sameness of circumstances of disempowerment and oppression. Their reactions represent how some people see Madikizela-Mandela. It remains however that their descriptions reinforce the sense that she is perpetually gazed at. Four observations (“spot,” “see,” “watch,” “see”) in terms of the gaze, versus two of hearing her story (“listen,” “hear”), imply a strong sense of objectifying her rather than listening to her voice. This objectification of Madikizela-Mandela can be interpreted in terms of Pumla Gqola’s definition: “To objectify is, after all, to de-humanise and render fully knowable. It allows created images, stereotypes created about the marginalised, here heterogeneous Blackwomen subjects, to function as short hand.” In her theorisation, Pumla Gqola, following Michelle Cliff, also refers to how the objectified person is “denied speech; denied self-definition, self-realization; and overall this, denied selfhood – which is after all the point of objectification” (Pumla Gqola, 2004:60). The problem of Madikizela-Mandela’s representation is exaggerated because she is a black woman, and therefore a member of a group that has historically been stereotyped and marginalised. The members of the *ibandla* ask for her story though, to a large extent, they do not listen but watch and define her, exposing their own needs rather than allowing her self-definition. This emphasises the double-bind these women find themselves in, as they perpetuate the cycle of stereotyping and “rendering fully knowable” this over-interpreted individual.

The image of Madikizela-Mandela “gazing” also becomes a way of identifying her as part of the collective in The Cry of Winnie Mandela. The meaning given to

Madikizela-Mandela's gaze is noteworthy, as is the resulting companionship that Delisiwe sees in the far-off figure of Madikizela-Mandela. An example of this is when she says, "Winnie, *ntombi*, I have read all these states of being in your letter. Have you ever been fully aware of them? Tell me, *sana*,<sup>28</sup> have you ever been in such a situation? ... Tell us, Winnie, have you?" (Ndebele, 52). What is clear from this excerpt is that Delisiwe's feeling of kinship with Madikizela-Mandela exists because Madikizela-Mandela is such a public figure. These women identify with this public woman because she seems familiar and similar to them. She becomes one who the women of South Africa revere, and they appropriate her as someone far more intimately known than 'merely' a public image. Her fame ensures the familiarity of her face in the private sphere. The inclination of the characters to watch Madikizela-Mandela as a means of seeing themselves, is something that often recurs in Ndebele's text and may be explained through Otto Fenichel's theory that "one looks at an object in order *to share in* its experience" (original italics, 2003: 330). The characters, in similar situations as Madikizela-Mandela, look to her in order to make sense of their own lives. They do not look at her innocently; they also in this sense attempt to experience and learn *through* her. The meanings ascribed to her "look," such as "unending learning," may be attempts of the public to make sense of their own lives.

While the meanings ascribed to Madikizela-Mandela's "look" mirror the needs of the public, the characters in The Cry of Winnie Mandela also understand her "look" to reveal or hide *truth*. Mamello says that she "was never fooled" by Madikizela-Mandela's "brazen display of courage. Yet [she] became that look" (Ndebele, 42). Becoming that look implies that the "look," literally, suits Madikizela-Mandela. It can also mean that she *became* courageous, or that she became the physical representation of the courageous woman. This "brazen display of courage," however, "defined" her according to Mamello. Mamello says to Madikizela-Mandela that she "became courage" "without necessarily being courageous" (Ndebele, 42). For the public, Madikizela-Mandela's *truth* is what is

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<sup>28</sup> *Sana* means 'baby'.

seen by the public. This is similar to Susan Sontag's theory in *The Image-World* that reality "has always been interpreted through reports given by images" (2003:80). The images of Madikizela-Mandela, in effect, become reality.

### 2.3 Public Image/Spectacular image

It may be argued that Madikizela-Mandela becomes a 'spectacular' image in Country of My Skull and The Cry of Winnie Mandela. In this section, it is necessary to introduce the topic at hand with a brief theoretical exploration of what constitutes the spectacle. Ndebele (1991:37) in *The Rediscovery of the Ordinary*, says that, "[e]verything in South Africa has been mind-bogglingly spectacular." Here he speaks about the "complete exteriority of everything" (43), which can also be related to the exteriority of the images of Madikizela-Mandela. He suggests that this phenomenon of the "spectacular" in politics, art, literature and drama is like "everything in South Africa... political" (44). The "everything" may be extended to 'everyone'. The image and the concept of spectacle are so closely linked in this context, that it necessitates a more thorough understanding of this culture of the spectacular. It is summarised by Ndebele as follows:

The spectacular documents: it indicts implicitly; it is demonstrative, preferring exteriority to interiority; it keeps the larger issues of society in our minds, obliterating the details; it provokes identification through recognition and feeling rather than through observation and analytical thought; it calls for emotion rather than conviction; it establishes a vast sense of presence without offering intimate knowledge; it confirms without necessarily offering a challenge. (1991:46)

The sense of concreteness that the spectacular gives to the social issues of society can be related to the physical images of Madikizela-Mandela and the meanings imposed upon these images. The emotional trigger that she is, as well as the sense of 'knowing' her without knowing her, also make the images of Madikizela-Mandela spectacular. One of the successes of this spectacle is that she "confirms" *many* things by simultaneously

representing various images and values, although in that she proposes a “challenge” as she is deconstructed by being constructed in the next image almost simultaneously. The spectacle also strongly relates to being gazed at, as it may also be defined as a public show, or demonstration “obliterating the details.”

In Country of My Skull Krog documents the spectacular images of Madikizela-Mandela by saying that there is “a vast gallery of perceptions about Winnie Madikizela-Mandela” (Krog, 2002:244). Krog introduces a number of ‘stills’, or ‘pictures’ of Madikizela-Mandela. She lists pictures one to seven, each of which establishes another point of view of this public woman. In the first “picture,” Madikizela-Mandela is described as follows:

Picture One: In Parliament she is a backbencher. She seldom speaks. Outside Parliament, at the wrought-iron gates, a hawker sells keyrings bearing the image of her face. Incongruous: the woman and the legend that feed off each other. (Krog, 2002:244)

The disparity between the seen and unseen Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, “the legend” and “the woman” is what Krog identifies as an incongruity. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela’s image is just that: an image. The “exteriority” takes precedence over the “interiority.” Madikizela-Mandela is also identified as “the woman,” not ‘person’: locating her identity in her gender. Her commercial value is exposed as she is presented as an object, a face that can be bought. Her power also lies *outside* of Parliament, with ‘the people’, the hawkers, rather than in the arena of organised politics. The ‘reality’, her life, is said to “feed” as much off her much-publicised image as her image feeds off her life. The images presented of Madikizela-Mandela are thus doubly powerful. Not only are they projected as truth, but they also influence that which society cannot see: “the woman” *behind* “the legend.” This also relates to the concept of simulacra, as the image becomes *real* in that it is real to the public and therefore influences reality, as well as reinforcing the “exteriority” of Madikizela-Mandela.

The next picture in Country of My Skull presents a different angle on Madikizela-Mandela's public facades, by depicted her as manipulating ("playing") politician. She is also portrayed as a symbol of the "mythology of what it was to be African" in Picture Two:

As a politician... she plays to different constituencies in very different ways.... At home she appeals to groups who feel that the system somehow doesn't work for them. On American television she plays to the black diaspora – she is the mother figure, the regal symbol of solidarity with the homeland, the long-lost mythology of what it was to be African... (Krog, 244)

Krog's suggestion that Madikizela-Mandela "plays to different constituencies" implies that she is a manipulative woman and is herself outside the system. This means that she is ironically in a powerful position because she is supported by a constituency that is marginalised. The theory of bell hooks is helpful to understand Madikizela-Mandela's representation as inside-outsider. She is powerful within the margin, since bell hooks argues that, "marginality" is "much more than a site of deprivation. ...it is also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance" (bell hooks, 1990:341). It may be argued that Madikizela-Mandela is disempowered and marginal because she is a black woman, but that she is also part of the centre and powerful because of her visibility and political position. Indeed, it is as the representative of the marginalised that Madikizela-Mandela becomes powerful, and her power offers "the possibility of radical perspectives from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds" (bell hooks, 1990:341). The various public images and power offer alternatives to the traditional hierarchy of white Western patriarchy, where white men rule. At the same time, Madikizela-Mandela embodies the image of "long-lost" tradition and honour: what Krog calls "what it was to be African," to the public. She symbolises not only the African pride of South Africans, but the African pride also of African-Americans. She is thus not only important on a national level, but also on an international level as one that publicly defines for many what it means to be African, which makes hers an even more spectacular public image.



In addition to the spectacular power and potential subversiveness of this figure, Country of My Skull also focuses on the potency of this spectacle in the media. A strong indication of the force of the spectacle of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is the media frenzy that is revealed when Krog quotes John Allen:<sup>29</sup> “all the journalists familiar with the [Amnesty] process are up... in Jo’burg” (Krog, 255-256). The acknowledgement that “all the journalists” who can document the hearings are at “the Winnie hearing” implies that this hearing is very important to the public and media. Madikizela-Mandela is thus perceived as exceedingly newsworthy, and “for something to become a media event it must successfully articulate... the concerns of both public and media” (Storey, 1998:180). The relationship between the public and the media is a complex one, particularly in South Africa where the media has largely been driven by the interests of a white middle class minority. It is noteworthy that the media has relished the documentation of those times when Madikizela-Mandela can be negatively represented. The power of the spectacular Madikizela-Mandela is reiterated when Allen says that the other amnesty applications take a back seat in the minds of the journalists in comparison to the “Winnie hearing” (Krog, 256). The media director of the Commission highlights the import of the “Winnie hearing” in comparison to other amnesty hearings. Ironically, the ‘hearing’ is often focused on in terms of a visual encounter; how, for example, Madikizela-Mandela is dressed, and how many bodyguards she has. Madikizela-Mandela is also a spectacle in that she is someone who the public can always watch – and are even in some ways entertained by.

Country of My Skull emphasises the media-focus on Madikizela-Mandela without necessarily questioning it, thereby enforcing the sense of the spectacular. The Cry of Winnie Mandela, on the other hand, often reveals the implications of the roles that Madikizela-Mandela is portrayed as playing in the public. The character Winnie Mandela declares, “I’m no stranger to the mask of posture, I have often worn it in the past until it mastered me. Until I became it” (91). Ndebele suggests that Madikizela-Mandela is a

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<sup>29</sup> “The Truth Commission’s media director and for years Tutu’s right hand man” (Krog, 152).

living example of a perpetual public performance. As a woman exemplifying public performance, the performance must also be examined in relation to gender. In terms of gendered performances:

[the] idea of the performative expresses both the cultural arbitrariness or 'performed' nature of gender identity and also its deep inculcation in that every performance serves to reinscribe it upon the body. (Lois McNay, 1999:177)

On one level then, the performative is something that confirms traditional beliefs. The public persona and the spectacle as performance are interlinked as they both "reinscribe" the identity being performed upon the body performing it. However, Ndebele says that it "mastered" Madikizela-Mandela: she has consequently lost control over her public façade, and the performance, the personified mask, controls her instead of the other way around. It is evident that the media has contributed to the creation of Madikizela-Mandela's public image, and that she has not always been able to control these mediated images, especially given the fact that "the media do not simply report or circulate the news, they produce it" (Storey, 1998:180). Ndebele may also be suggesting that, as generally is the case with gender-performance, Madikizela-Mandela's performance re-inscribes itself as *real*. The performative does, however, also have revolutionary potential, as:

performativity is not merely about routine or the reiteration of practices within one individual's life. ... Rather...performativity is primarily about citationality, that is that it is 'through the invocation of convention' ... that 'acts' derive their binding power. Performativity is about the 'reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer' .... Viewing identity as performative, then, means that identities are constructed by the 'very "expressions" that are said to be their results'. (Butler, 1990:45, In Anne-Marie Fortier, 1999:43)

The performative, by simultaneously re-inscribing and denying itself, becomes powerful as it exposes the norms and values that limit the performer. But performance and identity are intricately related, according to Fortier, as the performance also constructs identity as opposed to identity constructing the performance. In Madikizela-Mandela's

case, her identity and public façades are similarly related, and, as Krog has suggested, “the woman and the legend ... feed off each other” (2002:244). While her identity can never be known by the public other than through the public façade, the spectacular images advanced of her reinforce their ‘naturalness’ through their reiteration.

However, Winnie says, “I am not a politician. I am what politics made me” (112). She sees herself *created* by politics. This indicates that her public performance in the arena of politics has formed her identity. The character further concedes, “...what politics made me has become a part of me, a part of what I am” (112). Her persona is not only created by politics, but it is part of the ‘essence’<sup>30</sup> of her image. Also, politics has not made her “who” she is, but “what” - a less personal/human denominator – she is. The ‘making’ of Madikizela-Mandela through politics can also allude to the more general notion of the constructedness of identity. It may be said that the personal is always political, and identity is an amalgamation of internal and external forces. Indeed, “the formation and reformation of identity is a continuous process, accomplished through actions and words rather than through some fundamental essence of character” (Judith Baxter, 2003:26). Butler’s theory is useful in considering representations of Madikizela-Mandela. The public understands her public image or performance to be an indication of who the *real* Madikizela-Mandela is. Madikizela-Mandela is thus the ultimate public figure and spectacle.

This public political performance also ensures that, instead of being silent and invisible as a black woman would have historically been, she is vocal and in the public eye constantly:

Only Winnie was history in the making. There was no stability for her, only the inexorable unfolding of events; the constant tempting of experience. The flight of Winnie’s life promised no foreknown destinations. It was an ongoing public conversation, perhaps too public to be understood. (40)

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<sup>30</sup> “Essence” in this context being defined as “[t]hat which constitutes the being of a thing”, or the “intrinsic nature” (Teresa de Lauretis, 1990:327).

Madikizela-Mandela is active and vital. She is the embodiment of “history in the making.” This implies both her activeness socio-politically, and her importance to society. Significantly, Madikizela-Mandela's “life” is “an ongoing public conversation, perhaps too public to be understood.” This foregrounds the “ongoing” communication between the persona and the public, the constructedness of this 'communication', as well as the possibility of this image being 'misunderstood' or appropriated. Madikizela-Mandela is a public persona that is always seen, but cannot be said to be in any way understood or known.

When Mamello asks whether it is “possible to have a private, intimate conversation about her,” and whether it is even “possible to have an intimate conversation about such a public person” (Ndebele, 40), she is drawing attention to the spectacular, as the public Madikizela-Mandela has “a vast sense of presence” without there being any “intimate knowledge” (Ndebele, 1991:46) of this public woman. Madikizela-Mandela is such a public figure that the notion of privacy in relation to her is incomprehensible to Mamello. Throughout The Cry of Winnie Mandela Ndebele demonstrates the difficulty of having “an intimate conversation” with her. This is especially evident in the very fact that the characters he invents have a public literary conversation comparing the intimacies of their lives with the very public private life of Madikizela-Mandela.

While Madikizela-Mandela's prominent place in the media spotlight makes her a familiar figure to the public without revealing any *truths*, The Cry of Winnie Mandela illustrates the ways in which the public scrutinises Madikizela-Mandela's very public private life. Mamello says to her fellow-characters, “I want us to try and stop the train of Winnie's life and ponder it” (Ndebele, 40). Seeing Madikizela-Mandela's life as a “train” implies that it is a fast-moving machine on a one-way track, something mechanical of speed and strength, rather than human or personal. It also implies a fixed destination. The other waiting women apparently want to be 'carried' by this train-like life, as it is seen to be theirs too. Mamello looks at Madikizela-Mandela's life as 'public property'. She

sees Madikizela-Mandela's "departures," "waitings," "returns," as hers and her fellow characters'. She is seen as someone who mirrors some of the circumstances of the lives of these women, as Mamello says that:

I'm just looking for a way we can look at ourselves. A way to prevent us from becoming women who meet and cry. Or if we do meet and cry, that we do so out of choice. (40)

Because she is public property, Madikizela-Mandela is perceived as someone to look up to as an example, someone who is able to "prevent" the group from "becoming women who meet and cry." She is so public a character that society is able to glean strength from what is seen as her strength. Madikizela-Mandela comes to represent strength and endurance. She also represents "choice," and as a result also control over their lives.

Madikizela-Mandela has needed to be aware of how the public perceives her. As a public persona whose private life is turned into a public spectacle, her power is/was "subject" to the whims of the public. Marara<sup>31</sup> recalls that in the past, Winnie was "very much respectful of, and subject to public opinion" (75). This sentence is written in the past tense, which means that Madikizela-Mandela has lost that respect for "public opinion." It also means that her power now stretches beyond the fickle opinion of the public.

The discussion staged in The Cry of Winnie Mandela with this private figure is both personal and very public. It is personal because the conversation with Winnie is continued on first-name basis and these characters speculate about Madikizela-Mandela's life by asking her personal questions (41). The conversation is unusual in that these characters desire to have a personal conversation with a public figure who cannot be known in a personal capacity, because she is such a public woman; she is "too public to be understood." However, these women can "speculate" with Madikizela-Mandela about her life in a very personal way *because* she is represented in the published text. Madikizela-Mandela has become such a personal friend to the other women in the text

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<sup>31</sup> Another of the characters in the *ibandla* who discuss Madikizela-Mandela's life.

that they “invite Winnie into [their] membership,” making her “the fifth woman-in-waiting” in the group (41). The blurring of traditional boundaries between the private and the public is an overt indication of the ambiguous position of Madikizela-Mandela.

Contradictory images are constantly imposed and projected by a divided society that needs Madikizela-Mandela to represent their needs and values. Her public persona is so prominent that Mamello desperately “wants” to see some reality behind the façade. Such a desire must necessarily remain unfulfilled, given that each time she is represented, she becomes what others want her to be rather than reflecting any ‘reality’ about her or her life. Mamello says of Madikizela-Mandela, “Not for [her], it seems, the trauma of mental and ethical agonies.” A moral judgement such as this ensures that Madikizela-Mandela remains unredeemed and irredeemable. Indeed, it reinforces the depthlessness inherent in the figure. Mamello’s statement culminates with “Oh, I do so want to love you” (65). This reinforces the impression that Madikizela-Mandela has become a figure onto whom society’s needs and wants are imprinted.

The character Winnie Mandela calls herself a “creation” when she says, “I too, Winifred Nomzamo Zanyiwe Mandela, will be a character in my own story, certain in the knowledge that I myself could never be entirely my own creation, even less yours” (92). Ndebele demonstrates the precariousness of Madikizela-Mandela’s position in the public eye and of his position as writer and creator of the fictional Madikizela-Mandela. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela has been ‘created’ already in the minds of the public and in the media. The implication is that Madikizela-Mandela is always a character in a story, whether it is history (‘fact’) or story (‘fiction’). In this moment, there is at least an opportunity for “Madikizela-Mandela’s” voice to be heard, even if that voice *is* re-presented. This also means that there will never be an unmediated space for her to inhabit because she remains trapped in textual representation, a mere ‘character’; *written* and passive. Ndebele consciously demonstrates the ways in which she has become a hybrid of her own and others’ ideas about her. In this text, the character Winnie Mandela

represents Madikizela-Mandela, the public woman. She says, “I, Winnie Mandela, holding on to my precious space of anonymity, will speak to my namesake” (92). However, her anonymity is lost through her dialogue with her “namesake.” Her “precious” anonymity is sacrificed in favour of public empathy.

In addition to the passivity which is implied in being written into conflicting social scripts, Madikizela-Mandela is also portrayed as the victim of circumstance, with no control over her own fate, as is borne out in the pronouncement that she has been “thrown headlong into the arms of history” (Ndebele, 57). This implies not only her lack of control and thus lack of power over this public turn of her life, but that she was unprepared for it. History is also personified in such a manner that it sounds similar to passively being held “in the arms” of a man. She may also in this passage be seen as representative of the South African women who have lost control over their lives during the apartheid years.

This passivity and lack of control is counteracted by Ndebele in his attempt to rescue her from the moralising media responses to her life. He does so by presenting a semi-fictional character who is given a story and a voice, and she responds to those who have judged and condemned her. In giving her an opportunity to ‘reason’ and articulate her side of the story, she is put into a powerful position: that of telling her own story. The contradiction that is always at the heart of representations of Madikizela-Mandela, however, in this instance, emerges when one considers that she is nonetheless *represented* as telling her story. The character Winnie Mandela reflects:

All I do, they think, is wait for the next flood, so I can splash through the streets of a flooded squatter camp in my Mercedes Benz, journalists trailing after me, to hear me deliver a message of comfort to distraught residents; or arrive late at a political rally in a huge stadium, where I interrupt the speech of a famous politician, as the masses roar to welcome me. ... ‘The woman with nine lives,’ the journalists always write afterwards. ‘How many lives does she have to take before she’s finally lying flat on her stomach?’ they speculate. (Ndebele, 86)

The spectacle of Madikizela-Mandela is seen as too newsworthy to resist. Here it is clear that Ndebele is drawing on the most publicly known media reports of Madikizela-Mandela. When she says, "All I do, they think..." there is the subtle implication that that she does more than that, but the public only knows what the "journalists trailing after" her portray. Such public scrutiny, in a media-saturated world, tests the boundaries between truth and fiction. Indeed, Storey discusses phenomena of the "hyperreal world of the postmodern," and says that "there is no longer a clear distinction between a 'real' event and its media representation" (1998:180). One may amend the quote to include not only media, but any kind of representation of her. She is also linked to the wildest of domesticated animals, the cat. The analogy hinges on the resilience of both beings. In Western societies the cat is also seen as a witch's familiar; a link with the world of witchcraft. Her popularity and resilience are seen by the journalists as beyond comprehension. The mystery surrounding Madikizela-Mandela is heightened by the fact that she is "too conscious of being a public figure" to "unburden" herself with the so-called 'truth' about her personal life. Ndebele suggests that Madikizela-Mandela protects herself by remaining a mere superficial public image, rather than a 'real' human being. She "may give up the one lever of control a public figure has over her life: silence or deliberate ambiguity against all provocation and the inducement to reveal," and her identity will be torn at by the media (Ndebele, 91). As such, she has to remain in "control" of her public image. This, after Ndebele's characters suggest that her public image controls, or has "mastered" *her* (Ndebele, 91). However, she rules the home, and is also "queen of the highways of life" (94), and thus has power outside of the home. She is also said to have the mind of "a born advertising strategist" (93), indicating that she knows how to promote herself; how to use her status as 'object' to its potential, again indicating control over her image.

The character Winnie Mandela discusses her silence as a means of keeping control over her public image:



Public figure mystique partly results from the wild play of public interpretations. The privacy of the public figure lies precisely there: in the clamour of public truths about her. But between those truths and the public figure is a redeeming silence. Her anonymity is hidden in that precious, most delicate site of public ignorance, proclaiming itself as knowledge. Do you really want me to give up that precious space? I've held on to it when all kinds of people wanted me to confirm their truths about me. All manner of people wanting me to be their creation. (91)

It is not only in The Cry of Winnie Mandela that Madikizela-Mandela becomes a character in a story. Outside of the pages of this text, she could be read as a character created by the public, for the public, "wanting [her] to confirm [their] truths about [her]." This would explain the extreme ways in which she has been represented as she confirms the nation's 'truths', rather than her own. While it may be argued that Ndebele's own intervention in 'creating' Winnie Mandela simply perpetuates the myth, it must also be acknowledged that he has done so consciously and sympathetically, whereas the public (as represented by the characters in the text) are generally not conscious of their own impositions when judging her. However, the "redeeming silence" of "anonymity" is sacrificed in favour of a "redeeming" confession. The confessional mode is not an innocent project. As Foucault has suggested, "one confesses to a real or imaginary partner who represents not just the other party of the dialogue 'but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile.'" (In Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace, 1993:80). The act of confession itself implies that power is being handed over to the one confessed to, making the confessor vulnerable to the person who hears the confession. If one understands Madikizela-Mandela's silence as a means of keeping control over her private life, or as an act of defiance against a public who clamours for information about her, then vocalising her story may be considered a violation of her right to remain silent, and amounts to not much more than putting words in her mouth.

In addition to this, Madikizela-Mandela has been "led towards something [she] mastered: the language of theatrical gesture" (Ndebele, 109). Not only does being "led"

suggest passivity as opposed to leadership, but once again points to performing an elaborate act. Her communication (language) is that of “theatrical gesture,” and the public would be the audience. Madikizela-Mandela is playing her part on the public and political stages of the world. The ‘excess’ of her performance is revealed in the observation that she was “*too much* for the luckless Afrikaners of Brandfort” (emphasis added, Ndebele, 60). Her actions are always regarded as representative of something more, as they “had solidified into a code of behaviour meant to evoke the assured adulation of the oppressed and the frustrations of the oppressor. There was no action of [hers] without public meaning” (60). Madikizela-Mandela’s actions will thus always evoke contradictory responses. Everything she does will be judged both positively and negatively simultaneously.

Ironically the character Mamello reasserts her own right to privacy, “I want to reclaim my right to be without my pain having to turn me into an example of woman as victim” (28). Is this not however what has happened to the figure of Madikizela-Mandela? While claiming that it is a ‘natural’ right to *not* be turned into an “example of woman,” Ndebele’s characters perceive Madikizela-Mandela just so: as an example. Her public life provides the benchmark against which the others can measure their own experiences of pain and waiting, torture and brutality, and how successfully they have survived such an existence. While in one sense Ndebele gives a ‘voice’ to Madikizela-Mandela, I believe that he does not succeed entirely in this, as Madikizela-Mandela remains, ultimately, an objectified woman. Whilst offering her a ‘voice’, Ndebele not only speaks for her, but also does not entirely escape repeating the objectification and re-representation to which she has been subjected in the media. In all representation, including a sympathetic one such as Ndebele’s, there remains the problem of the social script defining the subject. In the case of Ndebele’s representation, the public persona has been empathetically personalised and humanised, but the writer has not managed to counter the more insidious essentialising of Womanhood. Even “Cixous and Irigaray reject any

definition of woman, any representation or categorization of woman... 'For, it is no more than a question of my making woman the *subject* or *object* of a theory than it is of subsuming the feminine under some *generic* term, such as "woman"' (Irigaray, 1977:156)" (original italics, Dallery, 1989:63). Any definition of Madikizela-Mandela can be seen as imposing just one more "*generic*" identity on her.

#### 2.4 Representative of "a nation of extremes!"

In Country of My Skull, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's link to various iconic images is introduced in "Picture Six," where she is figured as both "pre- and post-feminist" and where it is stated that it is "through her that we instinctively understand" MaNthatsi<sup>32</sup>, Nongqawuse<sup>33</sup>, and Helen of Troy<sup>34</sup> (Krog, 2002:245). African and Western archetypes alike are used to attempt to describe the power that Madikizela-Mandela wields. Drawing on such diverse icons reinforces the ambiguity inherent in representations of her. As a public persona she is not containable in any single image, and in the use of these various cultural links, Krog is clearly celebrating the potential for multiplicity and multiculturalism that Madikizela-Mandela's fame might generate.

Krog discusses Madikizela-Mandela's representation of the masses in relation to her so-called false concession that things "went horribly wrong" (259) and that, "for that [she is] sorry." Krog believes that:

Winnie is the monarch of the people for whom the new system does not work. She symbolizes their collective honour. She personifies their aspirations and their right to status. She has to cling to that honour. If she admits to wrongdoing, she dishonours them all. (Krog, 260)

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<sup>32</sup> MaNthatsi was a "South African warrior queen" who became "the leader of the Tlokwa (a southern Sotho group)" (2006, <http://search.eb.com/women/timeline?tocId=9404138&section=249214>).

<sup>33</sup> Nongqawuse was "the Xhosa prophetess whose prophecies led to a millennialist movement that culminated in the Xhosa cattle-killing crisis of 1856–1857" (2006, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nongqawuse>).

<sup>34</sup> Helen of Troy is a mythological figure whose "abduction by Paris brought about the Trojan war" (2006, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen>).

The implication for Krog of Madikizela-Mandela being a public 'representative' is that, when Madikizela-Mandela acts, she is responsible for the collective, not just herself. The 'collective' here is the majority of disempowered and largely working class black South Africans, and the words "their"/"them" are not inclusive terms. It thus makes sense that Krog so desperately wants Madikizela-Mandela to forgive white people for the horrors of apartheid, and to confess and be "sorry" for her own violent past. The confession is important as it would imply a 'new' start, without the burden of the past, but with the proviso that whatever is confessed is not supposed to happen again. This also signals a collective move to forgive and implies a peaceful future on the part of the black people that Madikizela-Mandela represents for Krog. It also underpins why the responses towards Madikizela-Mandela are so extreme, as her actions are often seen as representative of a large part of the population.

In Ndebele's text, even the female characters of the *ibandla* are representative of a certain socio-political sphere of society: a major constituency of South Africans (black women) watching and judging Madikizela-Mandela. Ndebele creates a scenario where the conditions in which these waiting women live are set out for the reader. When Ndebele remarks, "And so does society determine the fate of women," (3) he adds that, "in this case ... society is that human entity created by men with the compliance of women." The reader is alerted to the patriarchal circumstances which, though they empower men, are perpetuated by women. These are the conditions of these characters whose lives come to represent women in society.

To add to this portrayal of the circumstances of the characters of the *ibandla* and Madikizela-Mandela, Ndebele also narrates the opinion of "the Italian diplomat Beldesar Castiglione":

*For since women are very imperfect creatures, and of little or no worth compared with men, and since of themselves they were not able to do any worthy thing, it was necessary, through shame and fear of infamy, to put a curb on them which would give them some good quality. And it was chastity that seemed more needful for them than any other quality, in order for us to be certain of our offspring; hence, it was necessary to use our wits, art, and all*

*possible ways, to make women chaste, and, as it were, allow them in all other things to be of little worth and to do constantly the opposite of what they should.* (Ndebele, 4, original italics)

At the beginning of his text, Ndebele places women in social positions determined by men. Through this discussion of the socio-political conditions of life of women generally, the reader can begin to understand the conditions under which Madikizela-Mandela and the other “waiting women” in the text have to live. Ndebele adds, “In her untenable position, she becomes a thing-person without agency: a damning condition of depersonalisation” (4). Madikizela-Mandela, as a woman existing in a social space ruled by men, is described as “a thing-person,” which implies something only half human. This may also be the reason why the waiting women look to Madikizela-Mandela as an example of strength: she is in similar circumstances as they are although she is a black woman who has amassed an enormous amount of power.

In The Cry of Winnie Mandela, Madikizela-Mandela, who represents courage and freedom to a nation 'waiting' for freedom, also represents scandalous “shame.” Delisiwe says that newspapers “thought it their duty to expose” Madikizela-Mandela, ‘shaming’ her (Ndebele, 46). Delisiwe however does not see the newspapers as ‘doing a duty towards the public’, but links this public kind of gossip and “violation.” “Freedom of speech that comes at you this way often lashes at you, violating you the way Cortez or Gonzalo Pizarro decimated millions of people in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen” (Ndebele, 47). A non-physical 'body', the public persona, is seen as affected in an extremely violent and disrespectful manner through constant public exposure of 'intimate' details in Madikizela-Mandela's life. Ironically, Freedom of Speech takes away Madikizela-Mandela's freedom of privacy. She has become public 'property', and as a result her individual rights have fallen away to satisfy the public's lust for information. The freedom that has come with the New South Africa that Madikizela-Mandela has fought for is the same freedom that violates her rights, something Delisiwe calls “the product of a culture of self-indulgent excess, celebrating expressiveness

without discipline” (Ndebele, 47). The same Freedom of Speech that has apparently been used to target Madikizela-Mandela is not necessarily innocent, as Delisiwe suggests by linking it with the meta-narrative of religion that has also been used for violent purposes. Audre Lorde’s theory about the targets of violence may explain why Madikizela-Mandela is such a consistent target for the violation of her rights. She states that, “[e]xacerbated by racism and the pressures of powerlessness, violence against Black women and children often becomes a standard within our communities” (Lorde, 1990:285). This “standard” extends to the non-physical violence of the media. The terms, “expose,” “violate,” and “shame” have negative connotations of sexual abuse, and so Freedom of Speech becomes the agent of violence which has the capacity to shame this woman in the public eye. The violation is akin to rape metaphorically speaking.

Delisiwe discusses how women become devalued and objectified through sex (Ndebele, 49). The violation/violence that Madikizela-Mandela is subjected to is doubled: by the objectification she endures for being a sexual woman and by the gossip spread about her sexual activities. In both these instances, Madikizela-Mandela is objectified, by the men in her life, and by the public; ending up ‘fucked’ (Ndebele, 46). Her sexuality transforms her into another objectified woman in the public eye and ensures that she will not escape the inevitable labels surrounding women who are considered promiscuous. She becomes the slut figure, the whore, thereby diminishing the ‘respect’ and thus power she has in the public arena.

Ndebele rightly identifies one of the most ambivalent aspects of Madikizela-Mandela public persona: that she has become “the most dramatic, most visible manifestation of the culture of political posture that may have had its use at a particular point in time, but which now bedevils our ability to recognise the real needs of a new society” (Ndebele, 62). What he is suggesting is that she has become something of an anachronism, misplaced and representing a politics that is all but defunct. In this way she becomes trapped in a fixed role, associated with unchanging attitudes. Such fixity of associations is extended in other ways:

...only Winnie was meant to be spoken about. Only she was the subject of daily conversation. She could not escape the drama of public attention. She invited it. Her presence was active and pervasive. Her energy didn't seep through our walls; it broke through them; broke them down like a bulldozer. Only with Winnie was tomorrow unpredictable. The sun could rise sublime and go down in unspeakable horror. It could be the other way round. (Ndebele, 40)

Her power lay in the public force of her persona, being representative of the multitudes and through her "active and pervasive" presence. According to Trinh T. Minh-ha, the notion of a woman representing a wider group of women is not strange at all. Indeed, "[e]very woman is the woman of all women'," (Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1989:37). In this case, Madikizela-Mandela becomes the woman who is representative of "all women" in similar situations to hers. To be Everywoman is just as prescriptive as to be cast as a slut or whore.

This responsibility, however, is similar to a prison sentence, as she "*could not escape* the drama of public attention" (emphasis added). While she is accepting of the so-called invitation to this "drama," the imprisoning "drama of public attention" also enables Madikizela-Mandela to become an active force in society. Hers is not a subtle persona either; instead, it 'breaks' through walls like "a bulldozer." She is not predictable, nor is she stable. But she is ultimately active, particularly in relation to being linked to the solar system. Madikizela-Mandela is linked with the sun, as if metaphorically controlling it. Symbolically, the moon represents female power, while the sun represents the masculine sphere. The reversal of these tropes is appropriate because she is active in the masculine social sphere of politics and the related symbolic associations of rationality and the 'light of reason'.

It may be argued that is precisely *because* she is representative of our "nation of extremes!" that the various peoples in the South African public love and hate Madikizela-Mandela so much. The extremes associated with her emerge finally in the question, "which way will the balance ultimately go between creativity and destruction?"

(Ndebele, 71). The contradictory responses of the different spheres of the public towards Madikizela-Mandela only serve to reinforce the power she wields. This would also explain why she is so closely watched. As representative of such a large part of the South African population, the public may see her as exemplifying our country's future, which may be seen as lying either in "creativity or destruction."

One may conclude that the figure of Madikizela-Mandela is one that not only denies, but resists the imposition of the socially acceptable concept of 'wholeness',<sup>35</sup> as set out by Lacan, where people are taught to think of themselves as 'unified' human beings as opposed to multidimensional. If this is the case, then the constant inability to contain her image in any one 'category' may be logically seen as a major reason for the extremely ambivalent responses to her. She is the ultimate Lacanian 'other'. If an image does not conform to what is accepted as 'good', in this case symbolising wholeness and unity of self, then it will necessarily be judged in relation to the binary logic of 'good'/'evil'. The good/bad image that is Madikizela-Mandela's says very little about Madikizela-Mandela. Instead, it reveals her public image as an 'other' than that which society demands. This is why she is constantly judged. She is the ultimate 'other', refusing to abide by any constituency's preconceptions.

When offering Madikizela-Mandela her arms, a gesture indicating empathy, Marara says, "I'm waiting... for you to save me with the open drama of your life" (Ndebele, 76). A 'happily-ever-after' ending in a life as publicly dramatic as Madikizela-Mandela's would give hope to those whose lives are privately dramatic. But Madikizela-Mandela's "legendary defiance" remains and Marara must necessarily continue to wait to be saved by her.

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<sup>35</sup> "With the mirror phase Lacan began to work with a concept of the human subject who does not have his own unity in himself, but with a subject who finds his unity only in the other, through the image in the mirror. This gives us the matrix of a fundamental dependency on the other, a relationship defined not in terms of language but in terms of image" (Madan Sarup, 1992:36).



## 2.5 Powerful Woman

The powerful woman is an image that abounds in history, often also with negative connotations in patriarchal societies, such as in the case of Medusa,<sup>36</sup> whose seemingly phallic power destroyed men. In Country of my Skull, Krog discusses Madikizela-Mandela's power in Picture Three, where "[m]uch of Winnie's power is non-verbal. She doesn't need to shout 'Amandla!' She just has to raise her fist" (2002:244). We again deal with the kind of familiarity that Krog applies throughout her text with the casual use of Madikizela-Mandela's first name. She continually refers to "Winnie's power." This power is paradoxically linked to "Winnie's" first name *familiarity*. The first sentence does not question why or whether Madikizela-Mandela has power – rather, it *describes* some of her power. Sheila Meintjies wonders:

How are we to understand her unique power and position? The conventional explanation is that she has become an icon of black feminine suffering and a symbol for strength and courage. She was also a hugely romantic figure; beautiful and cruelly separated from her husband, Nelson Mandela. Hers was the great political love story and tragedy of our time. Divorce has simply enhanced the image of her tragic life. In South Africa, her symbolic appeal is reinforced by her consistency in providing moral support at funerals and trials. She also reflects popular sentiments in her political rhetoric. (Sheila Meintjies, 1998)

Madikizela-Mandela's power is beyond words, which may explain the difficulty many who represent her have in coherently understanding her power. Her power may be related to the spectacular in the sense that it emerges more readily in what is *seen* of Madikizela-Mandela. She does not need to raise her voice, her physical power is potent enough, as she simply has to raise her fist and all know the meaning and react.

Her power is not necessarily seen as positive, as Krog shows in her comparison between Madikizela-Mandela and the ANC:

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<sup>36</sup> There are various versions of why Medusa's power was so extremely abhorrent and 'dangerous' to society. Her snake-like hair is said by some to be dreadlocks, indicating that she was an African woman, while others see her hair as phallic symbols. Ultimately, it is her gaze that turns men into stone – the act of a woman looking back is thus portrayed as dangerous.

Picture Seven: Winnie's dilemma is essentially also that of the ANC. Like the ANC she has accumulated an enormous amount of political credit. Like the ANC, she is asking us to treat her differently. But the world is not here to admire a defiant, unrepentant black woman; the world has come to watch us burn a witch. (Krog, 2002: 245)

The association of Madikizela-Mandela with a political party as powerful as the ANC gives an indication of her own political value. Words such as “defiant” and “unrepentant” demonstrate her refusal to toe the party line, but much of her power is linked to politics; she is constantly associated with the ANC. While she might place herself outside this system, she still has to answer to it. Though she cannot avoid being “*part of the whole*,” she remains “*outside the main body*” (bell hooks, 1990:341), because she is marginalised by the ANC and “the world” that “has come to watch [them] burn a witch.” The implication is that her power is not only dependent on herself but also on “the world” generally and the ANC specifically. Her weakness is that she cannot control the ‘masters’, even though she can refuse to obey the masters. The limits of her power are indicated in the words, “Winnie’s dilemma.” By calling Madikizela-Mandela a “witch,” Krog admits to the extraordinary power that Madikizela-Mandela has, as well as the almost superstitious fear society has of this powerful figure. The traditional link between powerful woman and threatening woman is also made very clear with regard to the negative connotations of the word “witch.”

In Krog’s text, the media is shown to be overtly aware of the roles that Madikizela-Mandela plays, as well as the power of those roles. When Krog recalls a discussion of Madikizela-Mandela’s trial, a journalist is quoted as saying, “If she’s clever she’ll come, and just sit and listen,” because, “[b]y the end of it we’ll all feel so sorry for her, she’ll be okay” (2002: 246). This indicates that her passivity would be seen as positive. According to another journalist, her public acceptance of guilt, or even public repentance, would increase her ‘political credit’. This is, however, a role that Madikizela-Mandela resists. These journalists believe that playing a more subdued, passive public

role (a more 'feminine' role) will influence people to such an extent that they might take pity on her. They also believe that Madikizela-Mandela's power is of such a nature that she can use the negative publicity to push herself to the top of the political ladder. She is also seen as holder of many secrets and even in that, Madikizela-Mandela holds power.

Krog quotes parts of Madikizela-Mandela's speech at the TRC-hearing. In the following quote she is portrayed as being very aware of her power, as she says:

'...You are not suggesting, for God's sake, that I would be responsible for the actions of those youths... I couldn't be held responsible for that.' ... 'I am not playing around and I will *not* allow you to talk to me like that.' ... 'I have given you my answer, if you don't like it, it's too bad.' ... 'I was, am, and will always be the head of the household. ...I delegate nothing to anyone.' ... 'I am an ordinary human being – they did things to me that is not acceptable. While many sat comfortably in their houses, we fought a just war.' (original italics, Krog, 257)

Madikizela-Mandela uses emotional language, and is portrayed as being particularly irrational, as one might expect at a trial. Her refusal to act as socially expected may be interpreted as an assertion of her power. Her words imply that she does not *need* to answer her interrogators and furthermore that the very questions posed do not merit responses from her. Her aggression, a 'masculine' attribute, is shown to escalate throughout her speech. At first she is defensive, but becomes openly antagonistic when she says, "I have given you my answer, if you don't like it, it's too bad." She is openly asserting her power, saying, 'you don't *need* to like it.' Her authority is asserted as, she "will *not* allow" anyone to speak to her in a manner that she sees as unfit. She is not afraid of using the personal pronoun "I", reinforcing herself as subject, not object. She also emphasises her role as matriarch when she says, "I was, am and will always be the head of the household" (Krog, 257). Her absolute power is expressed in quasi-religious terms, recalling the eternal power of Christ, who 'is now and ever shall be' the redeemer. The irony is that her self-proclaimed power is limited to the domestic space, her

“household.” However, it must be acknowledged that she manages quite tenaciously to bring some of that power into the courtroom in her defiant refusal to co-operate.

The characters in The Cry of Winnie Mandela also discuss Madikizela-Mandela's power. Mamello questions the link between current South African culture and the powerful public persona Madikizela-Mandela, as “this culture”:

is characterised by a formulaic superficiality. You [Madikizela-Mandela] personify extreme political perception unmediated by nuance... This view retains your intelligence, your sensitivity, the effect of your beauty, your connectedness to power, but also shows the limits beyond which these attributes could not go. (62)

Mamello identifies the paradox inherent in Madikizela-Mandela's power, which is characterised as being simultaneously perceptive and lacking nuance, both superficial and sensitive. Furthermore, it is a power that has its limits because it is not so much her power, but her “connectedness to power,” implying her reliance on others (or outside sources) for power. Her own power, located in specific “attributes” is also described as having “limits.” In this passage the implication is that she is “extreme,” but still “characterised” by “superficiality,” and her power lies externally, with her beauty and her name.

Madikizela-Mandela's power is also discussed by Mamello for its “Quesalid factor.”<sup>37</sup> Not only did Madikizela-Mandela become answerable only to herself (62), but:

[t]he exercise of power meant wielding it at the expense of others. ... You [Madikizela-Mandela] were seen as acting like one with the power to declare someone a sellout and have a life snuffed out, or to absolve him and let him continue to breathe. (Ndebele, 62)

She is accused of acting as if divine, but she is still seen as only “acting” as if she has power. Ironically, this ‘act’, in these characters’ eyes at least, gives her power over whether people live or die. Thus, while she only ‘acts’, and so neither Madikizela-

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<sup>37</sup> “[A] remarkable shaman of the Kwakuit Indians. But, according to the writer Joel Kovel, he became a shaman in the process of trying to discredit shamanism as he did not ‘believe in the power of the shamans of his tribe. In his desire to expose them, he began frequenting their meetings until one day he was invited to join the group. And so Quesalid began a four-year apprenticeship, during which he convinced himself by direct learning that the sorcerer's power was based on trickery and illusion, and the suggestibility of the patient...’ ‘His skills had become known and his services were in demand. Unable to transcend his own contradictions, he came to believe in them, or at least to rearrange his disbelief” (Ndebele, 56).

Mandela, nor her actions, are 'real' in the traditional sense, her actions have real consequences.

## 2.6 Quesalid

In The Cry of Winnie Mandela, Delisiwe asks, "Is it possible that you became, at some point in your life, some kind of Quesalid?" (Ndebele, 57). Later in the text, the character Winnie Mandela answers:

Maybe I *am* Quesalid, after all, the shaman who saw through trickery and deception but found himself trapped in it, living and thriving from it, perfecting the mental agility to work human perceptions to his advantage. How could he possibly *truth himself* out of business? How could I? (original italics, Ndebele, 112)

Equated with the historic figure Quesalid, Madikizela-Mandela is seen as a woman who is *knowingly* part of a political life that has "trapped" her. Her public life is seen as "business," and "truth" becomes a verb, functioning similarly to its binary opposite, the word 'lie'. The manipulative power over public "perceptions" that Quesalid/Madikizela-Mandela have, is also apparent. There is thus the potential for manipulation, and the public might never know anything of the "*truth*" about her.

There is also the implication of the manipulation of Madikizela-Mandela's life, when Mamello says to her; "The appropriateness of the analogy [of Quesalid], ...would depend on the recreation of your life, with all its twists and turns" (Ndebele, 57). The questions that emerge are: How has Madikizela-Mandela's life been *recreated*? And by whom? This may refer to the implication that Madikizela-Mandela has recreated her life in terms of a public masquerade. Delisiwe asks whether Madikizela-Mandela had "an idea what was in store" when she, "fell in love with this famous, handsome boxer and politician, Nelson?" Her story is thus seen as fairytale-like. She becomes the beautiful young woman who fell in love with Prince Charming, a character in her public tale. The

recreation of Madikizela-Mandela's "life" includes both the creation of her as a celebrity, and as character in this text. The word "recreation" indicates that what is known about her life can be seen as simulacra, a copy for which no original exists (Storey, 1998:177).

## 2.7 Mama Africa

Chapter Twenty of Antjie Krog's Country of My Skull is entitled "Mother Faces the Nation" (Krog, 2002:243). As this is the second last chapter in Krog's text dealing with the Truth and Reconciliation hearings, Krog treats Madikizela-Mandela's hearing as a culminating moment in her own understanding of what 'Reconciliation' means during this tumultuous time in South African history. No other chapter in this work focuses so overtly and intensely on a single person. It is entirely dedicated to Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's trial during the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Hearings.<sup>38</sup> The TRC was a path breaking attempt to "reconcile" the peoples in South Africa in providing a public forum through which the undiscovered truths about apartheid atrocities could be revealed, and the nation healed. By focusing on her in this manner, and through the title of the chapter, Krog places Madikizela-Mandela as Mother of this Nation and positions her as a very high-profile persona in the movement towards the reconciliation of the South African nation. Mothering is one of the most powerful attributes of womanhood, and people from all over the world would immediately anticipate all the positive and 'natural' energies of nurturing and protection associated with the mother figure. Women in Mozambique, for example, identify "mothering as a fundamental source of resilience" (Tina Sideris, 2002:50). It is thus seen to be an active manner of combating oppression. There are, however, inevitably various contradictory perspectives on the role of Madikizela-Mandela as mother.

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<sup>38</sup> Although, in A Country Unmasked (2000), a text also dealing with the TRC hearings, Alex Boraine too lends an entire chapter to discussing Madikizela-Mandela.

Being called 'Mama Africa', or 'Mother of the Nation' identifies her as the ultimate matriarch: the mother of millions. However, she is also a mother who has to "face" these children, or explain herself to her children. Facing someone has connotations of bravery, as in 'facing up to' something or someone, looking them in the eye. This also has implications in terms of the power relationship between mother and child. In both traditional Western and African cultures parents are often expected to be in positions of power in relation to their children, and one should also note that mothers are very often placed in hierarchical positions alongside their children, and even beneath them if the children are male. This mother is notably "facing" these children, needing to explain herself to them because, in direct opposition to what the traditional self-effacing mother should do, she has put her own interest before theirs.

If Madikizela-Mandela, however, is known as "mother" according to Krog, it also means that the associations of motherhood have to be examined. Motherhood is not only an archetype but often used as a stereotype of womanhood, an example of the view of women's biology as their inevitable destiny. Black women in particular have been subjected to this stereotype, as Pumla Gqola explains:

[W]ith the exception of a handful of stories and poems, representations of Blackwomen were trapped in two stereotypes: the long-suffering, stoic mother who supports her son and/or husband in activism against apartheid; and the hyper-sexualised female character in short stories who is inscribed with gendered violence for her refusal (or failure) to conform to the previous mould of regulated sexuality. (Pumla Gqola, 2004:48)

Krog, a white woman, calls Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, a black woman, "Mama Africa." By doing so, Western and African ideas (including archetypal and stereotypic ideas) of motherhood are imposed on Madikizela-Mandela. She is consequently expected to be nurturing, life-giving, and always lower in the social hierarchy than the men who surround her. Stereotypes of motherhood have in common the regulation of the sexuality of these mothers, by attempting to position them and maintain them in ostensible 'natural' and essential categories. For example, the mother who is seen as

'living' for her children is defined solely in relation to her offspring, thus minimising her own (sexual and other) needs. In exploring the stereotypical images of black women as either mothers or sexually promiscuous, bell hooks says that black women often attempted to "shift the focus of attention away from sexuality by emphasizing their commitment to motherhood" (1981:52). Madikizela-Mandela, portrayed once again as inhabiting traditionally irreconcilable positions, defies the binary logic that defines women as *either* mothers *or* as sexually transgressive.<sup>39</sup> The image of mother, however, does not *only* imply that her sexuality is "regulated," focused on her biological destiny as life-bearer, and therefore non-threatening. Quite the contrary, motherhood also serves as proof of a woman's sexuality and the power of that sexuality, as she is life-giver through her sexuality. There is also a historic sense of threat to patriarchy associated with motherhood. Ann Kaplan in Arleen Dallery has speculated that:

'the extremity of patriarchal control of female sexuality may be a reaction to helplessness in the face of the threat Motherhood represents. The threat and fear of her pleasure; her sex organ, her closeness to Nature, her as the source of origin...' (1989:57)

Dallery additionally suggests that, "Despite the purification and idealization of motherhood by religion and patriarchal culture, pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing are dimensions of woman's erotic embodiment" (1989:57). Kaplan and Dallery demonstrate the necessity of patriarchal control over mothers' bodies. A mother's sexuality, if not regulated, implies a male's complete loss over the patriarchal name and property. In essence, then, women's control over their own sexuality implies a loss of patriarchal control over the most precious commodity: human life. Motherhood represents the power and the threat of mothers as bearers of human life.

The "Mama Africa" title bestowed on Madikizela-Mandela must also be read in relation to the role black women were required to play in the struggle against apartheid, which was one of passively supporting active black males, preferably from the safety of the home. The Black Review defined the role of women by stating that:

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<sup>39</sup> Discussed in sub-section 3.1.4.



1. Black women are basically responsible for the survival and maintenance of their families and largely the socialisation of youth for the transmission of the black cultural heritage. 2. The need to present a united front and redirect the status of motherhood towards the fulfilment of the black people's social, cultural, economic and political aspirations. (Rambally, 1975-76:143)

As “Mama Africa” Madikizela-Mandela is required to look after the “aspirations” of a community that encompasses much of the nation. As such her responsibilities are extreme, and it is no wonder she failed to live up to such excessive expectations. A woman’s role in this situation, as it was in America during the African-Americans’ struggle for freedom from white domination, was one of double oppression. The power of this transgression is thus amplified because of the expectations of this figure. Even the title of this chapter identifies Madikizela-Mandela as active by “facing the nation.” The stereotyped role of mother as domestic nurturer is thwarted by a mother who has to move out of the domestic space to face the people. The image is larger-than-life, as she becomes a continental mother, mother of millions of forgotten, oppressed black South Africans. Krog’s selection of the “Mama Africa” image as the title for this chapter has interesting implications. Firstly it suggests that Krog herself is critical of the myth, but recognises its currency, especially in relation to the ‘healing’ and ‘nurturing’ role of the TRC. Secondly, it calls attention to the centrality of black women in mothering the divided nation of South Africa. That white children of South Africa have been mothered by black women, often their underpaid ‘nannies’, has reinforced the stereotype that black women are ‘natural’ mothers; that black women should find it ‘natural’ to take care of others’ needs. Laurie Vickroy discusses the concept of motherhood, saying that “[i]nstitutions can appropriate nurturing functions, both biological and emotional, as in slavery or cultural privileging of motherhood over political involvement” (2002:37). Type-casting Madikizela-Mandela as the mother of the nation is thus politically very sensitive and uncomfortable, particularly because the implied condemnation is that she has failed her children and must now face them, and any retribution that follows. The Mama Africa

ideal is then a complex and contradictory one. Though authority is implied, a mother is expected to adhere to the rules of society, acting as caretaker of her children's needs.

Madikizela-Mandela, Mama Africa, is said to have a "mandate" (Krog, 246) from her followers, her 'children', to kill. Krog depicts the women who support Madikizela-Mandela as powerless in the class hierarchy. Her constituency is made up of those who live in a fiercely different world than the one inhabited by Madikizela-Mandela. Whereas they are "old and wrinkled and poor" (246), she is seen as youthful, beautiful, and wealthy. She is seen as assassin of the people for the people. This image contradictorily forms part of her image as the Mama Africa, nurturer to millions, as she is seen as killing *for* her children. Her role as Mama Africa is thus extremely ambiguous.

This Mama Africa is to be feared. The words "scared" and "fear" (Krog, 246,247) are constantly associated with Madikizela-Mandela. People in her community are said to not only have "loved and trusted Winnie as the Mother of the Community" (246), but have also come to fear her. Madikizela-Mandela is called "ungrateful," which connotes that she sees it as her 'right' to have certain sacrifices made for her, and is called "dehumanizing," and "aggressive" (247). These adjectives are in direct opposition to the ideal of feminine passivity and mothering. Krog's project is clearly to show that Madikizela-Mandela is far from motherly, and the title of the chapter becomes increasingly ironic, even macabre, as the evidence mounts.

Ndebele's characters are somewhat more sympathetic to Mama Africa in The Cry of Winnie Mandela. Mannete believes that Madikizela-Mandela shares the fate of "all women," in that she must also suffer "that pressure of pressures on women: the pressure to respond." She then, however, applies the same pressure, as she asks Madikizela-Mandela to respond to *her*. Even a sympathetic member of the community is shown to make demands on Madikizela-Mandela. She says, "Mme Winnie. Mother-of-the-Nation. Leleidi. Leleidi Laka, my one and only ... will you listen to me?" (Ndebele, 78). While Mannete is sympathetic to the pressure brought to bear on Madikizela-

Mandela, her own interrogation and demands ensure that there is no option available to the Mother of the Nation, but to subject herself to the collective will of her children.

Whereas Mannete demands that she listen, Delisiwe is more gentle and aware of Madikizela-Mandela's vulnerability. She tells her: "I wanted to... warn you of pitfalls that lay unseen in the way. But maybe you are a child of pitfalls" (Ndebele, 43). But while she may momentarily recognise that mothers are children too, she admits, "I soon put aside any ridiculous thought that I could ever take care of you ... you became much older than I in experience," (43). The contrast between Madikizela-Mandela's Mama Africa image and that of her childlike vulnerability is stark and apparently unresolved for Delisiwe. It becomes yet another ambiguous response towards Madikizela-Mandela. One may however argue that Delisiwe is realistic in her linking of the Mother of the Nation to a child; hierarchically, the positions of both children and mothers are lower than those of men.

As an explanation of how she became Mama Africa, Madikizela-Mandela's childhood is discussed, which creates the illusion of 'knowing' Madikizela-Mandela. This is a narrative strategy to create in the reader the feeling that they have a more intimate understanding of Madikizela-Mandela, thereby creating sympathy. She is said to have "kept the company of boys" when she was young, "playing their games, fighting with sticks, pummelling a face with fists, tearing the face of a sibling with a vicious weapon of [her] own invention" (Ndebele, 57). These unseemly and unfeminine games make her "tough and carefree." However, the 'tomboy' must mature, and she must mature into a 'normal' woman. Thus Delisiwe tells Madikizela-Mandela that she has heard that she "softened when [her] mother died" and that she grew close to her father when she "took on the responsibility in helping to raise [her] younger siblings." Delisiwe says that Madikizela-Mandela not only took care of her "younger siblings," but that she "loved them and disciplined them" (57). This suggests that Madikizela-Mandela's 'natural' tendencies were what would be described as tomboyish, and that her development into a motherly figure, ironically while she was herself still a child, is one of social necessity. It also

implies that all female children are not 'naturally' feminine or motherly, but *become* mother-figures through iteration and out of expectation. This is important in light of the definition of the expectations of black women to be mothers to the community, as the *development* into a mother-figure can be seen as necessary rather than 'natural'.

In Delisiwe's description of how Madikizela-Mandela became a mother-figure, there is a repetition of phrases that question the notion of 'knowing' the 'real' story of this woman; phrases such as "we are told," "it is said," and "appears to" (57), imply a superficial knowledge of the history of Madikizela-Mandela. Madikizela-Mandela's story reads like fiction, which it also becomes in The Cry of Winnie Mandela; something between what might have happened and what is "said" to have happened.

Indeed, stories about Mama Africa's often apparently contradictory actions abound. An instance where this extremely ambiguous role is questioned is when Mamello tells the fictional Madikizela-Mandela:

You seemed to love the children in your care, the more you terrorised them into your care. You declared that you loved and cared for them far more than their parents were capable of. Mother of the Nation! (Ndebele, 62)

While Mama Africa is taking care of everybody, she is also creating situations which cause others to *need* care. The declaration that she has the 'capacity' to care for children more deeply than their own parents, not only posits her as the ultimate figure of motherhood, of love and care, but also as someone who might be seen as audacious. Madikizela-Mandela is constantly represented in spheres of glaring ultimates: here, ultimate love and nurturing versus ultimate terror. The exclamation "Mother of the Nation!" may be read as portraying shock at this declaration, or simply as reinforcing that she is indeed "Mother of the Nation." Madikizela-Mandela does seem to "live in iconic images" (Krog, 2002:244), indicating the superficiality of her public images (Krog, 2002:244). In fact, Madikizela-Mandela's image, as we will see in the next chapter, is defined most often by its lack of definition.

### **Chapter Three:**

#### **Images: From Archetypes to Stereotypes**

In many instances the images of Madikizela-Mandela fall into the categories of archetypes and/or stereotypes. Archetypes are generally idealised prototypes which promote identification, whereas stereotypes are derogatory and diminishing formulas promoting preconceptions, but because both tend to categorise and essentialise, it is a fine line that separates these two 'types'. According to Pumla Gqola, archetypal or stereotypic images become a means to ascertain what is selected by the dominant to represent "social reality" (2004:51). The images selected in this chapter "highlight 'the narrow spectrum of reality that [the dominant groups in society] select or choose to perceive and/or what their culture 'selects' for [society] to 'see'" (Anzaldua in Pumla Gqola, 2004:51). The very act of defining subjects within these narrow categories reduces people to 'types', resulting in the severe diminishing of their individuality or even revolutionary potential. Jan Berting says that stereotypes "are collective representations that pertain to 'out-groups' and individuals as representatives of these out-groups" (1995:161). Archetypes are defined as either a "character, an action, or situation that seems to represent common patterns of human life." "These images have particular emotional resonance and power," such as "the caring mother figure," or "women in lamentation" (Dr. L. Kip Wheeler, 2006:1).

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is a persona whose media and political profile is so ambiguous as to guarantee the vacillation between archetype and stereotype. For example, the Mama Africa image imposed on Madikizela-Mandela becomes entwined with the image of the Murderous Mother in The Cry of Winnie Mandela. An analysis of the representations of Madikizela-Mandela may be considered a tool which enables academics and the public to understand the society that reproduces these well-known images. This argument is supported by Jan Berting's claim that images "provide a good

vantage point for analysing... perspectives on social reality” (Jan Berting, 1995:161,160). Winnie Madikizela-Mandela’s highly visual and mediated image may be considered to be a nexus of these social perspectives and are all the more important as Mike Featherstone in “Localism, Globalism and Cultural Identity” explains that “images that are constructed through television and the cinema are a necessary part in the process of the formation of a nation, especially in their capacity to bridge the public and the private” (2005:348). An analysis of these images also allows readers to gauge the messages to, and perspectives of, the South African nation. In the following subsections, the representation of Madikizela-Mandela as Mad-woman, Contaminated Woman, Abhorrent Mother, Sexual Predator, Trashy Tabloid, Gangster/Outsider, and Warrior will be examined. These images all present ‘types’ that are so generally recognisable and accepted that they inhibit questioning.

### 3.1 The ‘Mad’ Woman

The “madwoman” may have begun as an archetype that ensured patriarchal control over women and their bodies, as in the case of hysteria<sup>40</sup> that reduces women to maddened wombs, but in the Twenty-first Century such type-casting can only be read as a stereotype, as a result of feminist critique throughout the twentieth century. In Country of My Skull, Madikizela-Mandela is paralleled to Lady Macbeth, whose “vaulting ambition... capacity for ruthless conspiracy, abuse of devotion, the smell of blood that will not leave her hands” lead “to dementia” (Krog, 245). Krog relates to Madikizela-Mandela through this Western archetype, and the allusion creates distrust of Madikizela-Mandela’s mental health. It is noteworthy that it is Lady Macbeth’s socially unacceptable behaviour that leads to her “dementia.” Her behaviour makes her unsaveable. Consequently, the plot demands that she dies offstage. Both these women are

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<sup>40</sup> Hysteria was labelled an “unrecognized [sic] organic illness.” (Elaine Showalter, 1998:4).

expected to move to the margins of society. By linking her with such a well-known Western figure, Krog may be interpreted as making Madikizela-Mandela 'accessible' to Western (white) readers or even to herself. In this passage, Madikizela-Mandela's so-called madness is depicted to be an acceptable reason to marginalise her.

Female 'madness' is often related to power. In the case of Madikizela-Mandela, her power is depicted as uncontrolled and potentially self-destructive. It is said that the system either "feared" her, or let her alone, believing that she "would bring destruction" upon herself (Ndebele, 63). She is also called insane by Mamello (Ndebele, 65) and she is portrayed as power-hungry, and destructive. The extenuating circumstance suggested is that she "had never recovered from Major Theunis Swanepoel, who so brutalised [her] that [she] may have lost all sense of distinction between perception and reality" (Ndebele, 63). Some may consider this a sympathetic view, since Ndebele takes cognisance of the fact that Madikizela-Mandela may have been psychologically affected by the trauma and victimisation endured during apartheid. It may however also be argued that defining and labelling her as mad is a means of marginalising her. Shoshana Felman (1975) in "Women and Madness: The Critical Phallacy" explains that "the social role assigned to the woman," is "that of *serving* an image, authoritative and central, of a man: a woman is first and foremost a daughter/a mother/a wife." Felman quotes Phyllis Chesler, saying that, "[w]hat we consider 'madness'... is either the acting out of the devalued female role or the total or partial rejection of one's sex-role stereotype" (1975:7-8). Madikizela-Mandela's so-called madness may be directly related to her behaviour and her power that are deemed 'unacceptable' for women in a patriarchal society. Indeed, women with power outside the domestic sphere are often seen as 'bad' and witch-like. bell hooks discusses the notion of women's madness in Resisting Representations (1994):

In our culture, women of all races and classes who step out on the edge, courageously resisting conventional norms for female

behaviour, are almost always portrayed as crazy, out of control, mad. ... Representations of 'mad' women excite even as they comfort. Set apart, captured in a circus of raging representations, women's serious cultural rebellion is mocked, belittled, trivialized [sic]. It is frustrating, maddening even, to live in a culture where female creativity and genius are almost always portrayed as inherently flawed, dangerous, problematic. (bell hooks, 1994:207)

From this discussion one may conclude that Madikizela-Mandela's so-called insanity is another means of reducing her power in a society that generally treats the insane by ostracising them, institutionalising them, and correcting their behaviour through experimentation and medication. However, one cannot discount the significance of 'madness' in relation to Fanon's theories of the colonised, as discussed in the chapter "Colonial War and Mental Disorders" in The Wretched of the Earth (1963). Here Fanon explores the impact of physical and mental violence of oppression in colonised worlds. He states that colonised and ex-colonised peoples often have "colonized" personalities, which are created through the "violent bringing together" of the colonised [wo-]man and "the colonial system" (1963:200). In accordance with Fanon's theory, it may be argued that Madikizela-Mandela has assimilated aspects of her oppressor, in this case, Swanepoel. Her perceived madness may thus be attributed to the trauma of the violence that she had to endure during the apartheid years.

### 3.2 Contaminated Woman

Country of My Skull depicts Madikizela-Mandela as being radically changed and thus 'contaminated' by apartheid. When Krog quotes the Methodist bishop, Peter Storey, it is to highlight Madikizela-Mandela's actions as being driven by "the ruthless abuse of power," which resembles "the abuses of apartheid itself" (247) far too closely. This accusation implies that she is not only a common thug, but that she has betrayed the people who were relying on her. For Mama Africa, this betrayal means that she has abused her role as nurturer. Dirk Kloppe argues that the Winnie hearing "confounded



the roles of victim and perpetrator, destabilising the TRC's narrative oppositions," due to Madikizela-Mandela's "controversial role" (1994:205) during the anti-apartheid struggle. While Madikizela-Mandela is portrayed as both perpetrator and victim, the focus of the hearing is on her role as perpetrator. She is judged in Country of My Skull with the words of former UDF<sup>41</sup> leader Azhar Cachalia, who claims, "[w]e were fighting against the brutalisation of our youth in jails. And now this happens in the Mandela house" (Krog, 253). This suggests that her actions mirror those of the people who committed apartheid atrocities. However, the violence that she has perpetrated must be read in light of Fanon's theories concerning the trauma of violence. It may be argued that she imposes the violence that she endured on people who are in less powerful positions than herself, in order to increase her own sense of power in the face of her helplessness during apartheid (Fanon, 1963:42). Indeed, there is a lot of theory on violence, and "ample evidence of women perpetrating violence" in situations of war and oppression (Tina Sideris, 2002:50). In her criticism, bell hooks suggests that:

violence is inextricably linked to all acts of violence in this society that occur between the powerful and the powerless, the dominant and the dominated. ...it is the Western philosophical notion of hierarchical rule and coercive authority that is the root cause of violence against women, of adult violence against children, of all violence between those who dominate and those who are dominated. It is this belief system that is the foundation on which... ideologies of group oppression are based; they can be eliminated only when this foundation is eliminated. (hooks, 2000:118)

Madikizela-Mandela's violence may, while not condoned in any way, be contextualised as a symptom of the violence and incarceration that she endured during apartheid. Violence may be considered to be "a cleansing force" for individuals in that it creates a sense of fearlessness and "restores" "self-respect" for the oppressed (Fanon, 1963:74). Violence can thus also be an active means for oppressed individuals through which they attempt to counteract the fear and loss of self-respect that colonisation brings. However,

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<sup>41</sup> United Democratic Front

this violence continues the “cycle of violence” in the private and public spheres of society (2000:122).

Therefore, even though this violence can potentially be *explained* with post-colonial theory, it remains controversial. As Dirk Kloppe has observed:

The hearing reveals the uncanny resemblance between the ethos of the liberation struggle as practiced by the Football Club and the ethos of the apartheid regime as practiced, for example, by the Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB), a notorious hit squad housed at Vlakplaas. (Kloppe, 2004:205)

Here Madikizela-Mandela is judged to be perpetuating a cycle of violence against those she should be protecting. There may be little worse in the eyes of a nation which needed leaders to trust, to fight against a regime of terror, than discovering that one's own leaders bear alarming resemblances to that regime. Krog's reading of Madikizela-Mandela's actions concurs with Kloppe's viewpoint when she declares that:

The primary cancer will always be and has always been Apartheid. But secondary infections have touched many of Apartheid's opponents and eroded their knowledge of good and evil. And one of the tragedies of life is it's possible to become that which we hate most. (Krog, 248)

The link with apartheid and the implications of disease and ‘contamination’ are strong in the use of the words “cancer” and “infections.” The use of metaphors such as this have the effect of associating Madikizela-Mandela with disease and suggest that she is both ‘contaminated’ and ‘contaminating’. She has come into contact with the apartheid regime, and its ideological structures ‘contaminated’ her. She is thus not the ‘pure’ Mama Africa she ‘should’ be. She has acted in a manner that Krog does not approve of, and now goes against social norms. Therefore, she is seen as ideologically scarred by the “primary cancer” that is apartheid.

The repeated reference to the ‘infectious’ nature of apartheid may be understood in terms of the impact that trauma may have had on Madikizela-Mandela's life.

Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub discuss trauma and agree that a traumatic event often continues to “elude the subject who lives in its grip and unwittingly undergoes its ceaseless repetitions and re-enactments” (1991:69). This is especially appropriate in reading Krog’s statement that the “price for negotiations was the embrace of violation and abuse – a moral ambiguity that suited the Afrikaner bureaucracy perfectly in its last decaying years” (Krog, 257). Not only is it implied that Madikizela-Mandela has been corrupted by the apartheid system, but that she works ‘for’ it, albeit unintentionally. With this perspective in mind, it is suggested that she must have “thought” she was “running” the police, but that they were manipulating her. She was thus either controlled and ‘tricked’, and consequently either incompetent and naïve; or a greedy, scheming woman, who consciously decided to abuse trust for her own gain. Both readings reinforce the accusatory stance taken toward Madikizela-Mandela. The impression of Madikizela-Mandela as violent is reinforced when Krog uses words such as “aggressive” in connection with Madikizela-Mandela, and exposes rumours of her heavy drinking and drug abuse. This ‘aggression’ is a part of Madikizela-Mandela’s “behaviour” that “changed so much during the last part of the 1980’s,” according to Krog (247). One may again use Fanon’s theories on trauma and colonially-induced violence in order to interpret Madikizela-Mandela’s actions. Fanon says that the “same violence” which has “ruled over the ordering of the colonial world... will be claimed and taken over” (1963:31) by the colonised. In this context, Madikizela-Mandela’s violence is simply a lesson well learned from apartheid regime. Thus the ‘infection’ of apartheid can be related back to Fanon’s theory that violence is perpetrated by colonised people as a means for short-term power (Fanon 1963:74). Madikizela-Mandela’s violence is thus a logical outcome of a violent apartheid society, and Krog’s accusation that Madikizela-Mandela lacks a sense of *morality* is judgement that can only have emerged out of Krog’s privileged and insular social position.

Indeed, in Country of My Skull, Madikizela-Mandela’s violence is described as worse than apartheid-violence. Krog is of the opinion that, “[b]eyond its normal horror,

Stompie's death wasn't merely a political tragedy. It has done things to people... we need not only to be liberated in this country, but we need to become human" (Krog, 248). In the connection made between 'normality' and "horror," there is the suggestion that "horror" was an every-day occurrence or emotion in apartheid South Africa. Madikizela-Mandela has taken this "horror" to its extreme, as she has gone "beyond" even the most extreme measures of violence or horror. Freedom has come at a price – a violent price – and Madikizela-Mandela is described as abusing her power as political figure by bringing violence into a more personal sphere. The phrase "We need to become human," suggests that she has also 'lost' her sense of 'humanity' during her struggles, but once again this fails to recognise or empathise with the sustained effects of warfare and violence on its victims. The taoist Monk Deng Ming Dao said about war:

If you go personally to war, if you cross that line yourself, you sacrifice ideals for survival and the fury of killing that alters you forever. That is why no one rushes to be a soldier. ... The stakes are not merely one's life, but one's very humanity. (Carol Becker, 1999:4)

Madikizela-Mandela's response to the horrors in which she lived during the apartheid era is thus not something which makes her in-human. In fact, it may be said that it is her very human-ness that would cause such a continued re-enactment of violence. It may be argued that in Country of My Skull Krog does not take enough cognisance of the reach and depth of trauma, and as a result the trauma becomes another means of crucifying Madikizela-Mandela. While the "we" of "we need to become liberated" is inclusive, the focus of the trial, the alleged perpetrator, remains Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Krog says that "[n]obody talks about human rights, accountability... collective guilt, moral choices" (Krog, 287). The implication of the collective imperatives suggests that Krog's liberal vision of humanity, or even her version of *morality*, is inadequate in understanding the repercussions of violence.

### 3.3 Abhorrent Mother

Madikizela-Mandela is accused of being an detached and abusive Mama Africa as a result of her contamination by apartheid. In Country of My Skull, Krog portrays her disillusionment with Madikizela-Mandela when she recalls how an American journalist tells her that she is not arriving at the TRC hearing for her South African 'children', but that Madikizela-Mandela is "arriving for the Afro-American audience." In addition, she has "already given more than ten hours of interview time" to the Afro-American audience. "Her constituency is," according to the American journalist, not in South Africa, but "out there" in America (Krog, 246). Krog is stupefied, recalling how Madikizela-Mandela has "ignored several requests for a radio interview," questioning her loyalty to South Africans, her 'children'. Krog questions her lack of interest "in talking to those she claims as her constituency – the poor who cannot read, who don't own television sets" (Krog, 246). It is noteworthy that Madikizela-Mandela refuses radio interviews which may well have something to do with the fact that she is so often defined in terms of the gaze of others. Her power seems to lie in her physical presence. It is likely that Madikizela-Mandela is simply responding to how she is usually received: in front of the camera, as a highly visible spectacle. Her preference for giving televised interviews also insinuates something of a performance, a 'show'. The interrogatory questions in Country of My Skull suggest that Krog understands it to be Madikizela-Mandela's 'responsibility' to nurture South Africans, and that she is shirking this responsibility. In asking why Madikizela-Mandela refuses to talk to those she "claims as her constituency," the implication is also that Madikizela-Mandela ignores her children by ignoring requests for radio interviews, as these people who form her constituency (mostly the poor) only have access to the radio. This reneging of her 'duties' as mother, especially in light of the perceived necessity of motherhood in the community, is clearly a highly charged and extremely negative perception of Madikizela-Mandela.

The negation of the archetypal image of Mama Africa is persistent in Country of My Skull. Madikizela-Mandela's importance as Mother-of-the-Nation is evident when Xoliswa Falati, called a "one-time friend" of Madikizela-Mandela, claims that she had gone to prison for Madikizela-Mandela (Krog, 247). The obvious implication is that Mama Africa is considered to be more important and more powerful than Falati's freedom. However, Falati declares that Madikizela-Mandela "reduces a person to nothing," and "regards herself as a demigod... a superbeing," (247) suggesting narcissism on Madikizela-Mandela's part, while the expectation of a Mama Africa is that of self-sacrifice. Also, by adding that Madikizela-Mandela regards *herself* as a "demigod," Falati insinuates that she does not regard Madikizela-Mandela as such a 'superbeing'. Falati's condemnation of Madikizela-Mandela is unflinching. She says, "my hands are not dripping with the blood of African children," (247), thus insinuating that Madikizela-Mandela's hands *are* bloodied, but more significantly, that the Mother's hands are covered with the blood of her own children. By using Falati's words, Krog suggests that people have been misguided by Madikizela-Mandela's image as Mother of the Nation. Krog quotes Phumlile Dlamini, saying that the community "loved Winnie and trusted Winnie as Mother of the Community" (Krog, 248), but that "after all that," Dlamini changed her mind (Krog, 247). In this manner, Krog reiterates that the Mama Africa image is fraudulent.

The image of abhorrent mother evolves into an image of murderous mother. There is much negative speculation with regards to Madikizela-Mandela's management of 'her' football club, the Mandela United Football Club. Country of My Skull questions whether she took the youths into her home to protect them, as the image of mother prescribes, or to advocate her own power through a "reign of terror" (Krog, 2002:248). Jerry Richardson, the coach of the Football Club, testifies that Madikizela-Mandela "was sitting watching" football club members torture Stompie Seipei (248). Madikizela-Mandela is depicted as 'overseer' of this so-called "reign of terror," and is called "Mommy" in this context. She is described as active in her passivity, "sitting watching"

over the torture, suggesting again the power of the gaze; a mother teaching the children in her care to torture. Thus the abhorrent mother-figure murders while she nurtures.

Dirk Kloppe's reading of the murderous mother as head of the Football Club 'family' is significant. He argues that:

[t]he semantics of football merge oddly with the semantics of the tribal family, a conjunction evident in the name Mandela United Football Club. The Football Club is given a family name, but the name has an ambiguous reference. In the absence of the father, the traditional family head, the mother assumes the name and stands in for the absent male. She is mother of the nation, the phallic mother. (Kloppe, 2004:205)

Mama Africa is described by Kloppe as being in the powerful position as mother-father of the household. This double-position implies double the responsibility and power: she becomes not only nurturer/mother, but protector/father. Kloppe's reference to the role of the "phallic mother" Madikizela-Mandela, alludes to the power she is given as a direct result of the *absence* of the father. Her power is phallic as it is at least partially seen as a male's position and power which she has 'inherited'. Madikizela-Mandela is considered to be the protector of the politically vulnerable, suggesting an enormous amount of responsibility towards the community.

Though Kloppe's gendered reading of Madikizela-Mandela's phallic power is accurate, there may be the added implication that Mother of Africa's methods of physical punishment resemble those of the forces of apartheid. This may be seen as the most overtly 'wicked' image of Madikizela-Mandela that could be produced. Laurie Vickroy explores the link between colonisation, the trauma thereof, and motherhood:

A powerful context for examining the traumatic consequences of living in colonized situations is domestic space and the relations between mothers and children therein. If, as Homi Bhabha suggests, postcolonial domestic space can be a place of historical invasion – where home and world meet, conflict, and become confused (e.g., mother/child relations can be emblematic of public/private rifts...) – analysis of the dynamics within such spaces can provide a useful pathway to understanding the key role colonized families play in contemporary trauma narratives. (2002:37)

While Madikizela-Mandela is judged as being a 'wicked' mother; the "Mommy" who oversees the "reign of terror" of her extended family, one may argue that her own trauma turns into violence towards the children in her home. There is no adequate investigation into or sympathy for the trauma that may have developed from her victimised past in Country of My Skull. However, while it is vital that one must take cognisance of the history of colonisation that impacted her life, one must also be wary of creating an image which disempowers Madikizela-Mandela through portraying her as a passive victim who only acts in response to the violations she has endured.

The killing of Stompie Seipei is depicted in Krog's work as the culmination of the portrayal of Madikizela-Mandela as 'wicked mother'. She becomes the murderous mother of her African children. While the Stompie Seipei case is a real one, not to be reduced to just another 'text', it is important to analyse the responses of Krog and Ndebele to Madikizela-Mandela's involvement. Krog says that "the death of Stompie becomes the symbol of what went wrong in the Mandela household in 1989" (247). This suggests that Krog equates this ideal of the 'successful', 'good' woman, to her success in her household. This notion is apparent in her poem, "ma will be late." Here, Krog discusses coming home to a sleeping family after a day at the TRC hearings. She implies that after a hard day's work as a journalist at arguably the most important and hard-hitting hearings in the history of South Africa, she still resumes her traditional role in the home. She ends the poem with the words, "I die into woman" (l.21) (Krog, 2000:45), exposing the inevitability and the pain of resuming her own domestic role of womanhood and that she *sacrifices* herself when she returns home. In light of the necessity of black mother figures to be "responsible for the survival and maintenance of their families and largely the socialisation of youth for the transmission of the black cultural heritage" (Rambally, 1975-76:143), Madikizela-Mandela's apparent refusal to "die" into her prescribed role is portrayed to be 'proof' of her abhorrent motherhood. Ironically, despite Krog's reputation as feminist writer, during the TRC hearings she apparently prefers a



humanist frame of reference: one that may enable “some kind of beginning” (Krog, 260) for equality and forgiveness for the abuses suffered during apartheid. She says of the TRC:

For a few years the TRC took us beyond race. With great care it focused on those who took a stand for human rights and those who didn't. ...[t]he difference between people lies in their ability to exercise moral choices under difficult circumstances and uphold human rights for all people. The difference between the past and the present does not lie in colour but in choice as well. (Krog, 285)

Krog deems “moral” behaviour to be a “choice.” This is clearly not always the case. It over-simplifies and universalises the contexts in which moral behaviour is constructed and entrenched, allowing her too readily to judge those who do not make the “choice” to be “moral... under difficult circumstances.”

Krog's condemnation of Madikizela-Mandela does not end there. While Seipei took on ‘adult’ responsibility through his political activism, he is first and foremost depicted as a murdered *child* (Krog, 247). Krog's difficulty in accepting that this child, under the wing of the Mother of the Nation, was brutally tortured and murdered, may arguably be an effect of Krog's ‘white guilt’ and her subsequent need for the new “beginning” she talks of at the end of Chapter Twenty. The killing of a black child by a black mother may be considered to be doubly horrendous: black-on-black violence, as well as mother-on-child violence. This may be read as symptoms of the ingrained nature of violence in South Africa, signalling the apparently never-ending cycle of the apartheid legacy. This would mean that there can be no epiphany that would signal the “new beginning” for South Africans, or for Krog. She implies that the “horror” (Krog, 248) of the murder may even be considered to be worsened by the lack of “dignity” (Krog, vii) afforded to Seipei. Her critical views as journalist are impaired by her emotional and moral need for a so-called dignified ‘New’ South Africa.

### 3.4 Sexual Predator

Madikizela-Mandela's violence is also related to her sexuality. She is seen as sexually predatory; mention of her violent possessiveness over "one of [her] lovers," (Krog, 246) affirms her aggression and also insinuates that she has had numerous lovers. This is followed by a description of how far Madikizela-Mandela would allegedly take her jealousy over her lover: to violent assault. Her sexuality is thus linked with her physical aggression. In terms of the Mama Africa image imposed on her, the portrayal of her aggressively female sexuality may be seen as 'transgressive'. Kadiatu Kanneh in her essay "Feminism and the Colonial Body" says that:

a major issue in Western feminism... involves the representation, discussion and manipulation of Third World Women. Here, the debate moves to a different kind of acculturation of the body, where what is literally inscribed in the flesh, and, by implication, in the sexual freedom and expression of African women, is placed as a difficult agenda for Black and White women. (Kadiatu Kanneh, 1995:347)

This issue of "sexual freedom" is indeed a "difficult one" in Country of My Skull. Krog negatively suggests that Madikizela-Mandela has/had a multitude of lovers, adding "another of" as prefix to the words "Winnie's lovers" (246). This in itself might not be considered significant, until one questions the constant focus on Madikizela-Mandela's sexuality. Anneeka Marshall suggests that "the sexualized nature of racist ideology is intimately connected with issues of power, dominance and status" (1996:13). Marshall discusses how the "image of the sexually aggressive woman has from the sixteenth century contributed to the institutionalization of efforts to control" women (1996:6). The sexually aggressive image is one that also extends social control over Madikizela-Mandela because it defines her as 'whore' and therefore 'bad' woman. Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace add to this hypothesis of control over women's behaviour by saying that sex "and sexual practices assumed crucial importance as a political issue in a society concerned with the management and direction of life-processes" (1993:77). One can

then read the constant focus on Madikizela-Mandela's sexuality as an attempt to locate her within the socially prescribed binary sphere of 'unacceptable' female behaviour. Madikizela-Mandela's sexuality is interpreted as an aberration which must be "regulated" in society.

The idea that Madikizela-Mandela's sexuality needs to be controlled dominates Country of My Skull's Picture Five, where "Winnie is" described as "trashy tabloid. She lusts after men and they after her" (Krog, 2002:245). Winnie is seen as overtly and actively sexual as she is not only passively lusted after, but "lusts after men." J Brooks Bouson in a collection of essays under the title Quiet As It's Kept (2000) discusses "the racist construction of the sexually promiscuous 'bad' black girl, ... a shaming stereotype that Patricia Morton aptly describes as one of the 'disfigured images' of black womanhood" (2000:47-48). This image thus reinforces a racist stereotype. It may also be argued that the uncontrolled sexuality of a woman is one of the biggest fears of patriarchal societies. In both African and Western patriarchal societies, different measures have historically and traditionally been taken to ensure the 'safety' of the patriarch's bloodline, for example the concept of women's 'unclean' bodies, or of women's so-called 'virtuous' virginity. Krog reinforces racist patriarchal notions of black women by portraying Madikizela-Mandela's sexuality as excessive and in need of regulation. However, Madikizela-Mandela cannot simply be typecast as "sexually promiscuous," as she is also seen in images that contradict this image, as in the case of the Mama Africa or Warrior images.

### 3.5 Trashy Tabloid

Madikizela-Mandela's sexuality is not the only negative image connected to her perceived excess. She is also accused of being an excessive consumer in a country where the majority of the population are poor. Indeed, she is said to buy diamonds and

*“drips with them on occasion”* (emphasis added, Krog, 245). The implied accusation is that Winnie Madikizela-Mandela embraces a capitalist/consumerist culture while her main supporters are impoverished. Her image is one of affluence in a society that is not only highly aware of class but also divided by it. However, while her position as upper-class black woman does divide her from this constituency, it also ensures her support from the working-class. Her wealth becomes a means of visibility: a way for a black woman to aspire towards a position in mainstream capitalist society. According to Laura Mulvey’s theory of feminine visibility and invisibility, there is a “feminine mask” of “visibility” that is constituted of, for example, the ‘right’ clothes (Mulvey, 1989:55). Women, especially black women, who are not able to attain the prescribed social mask are invisible to society. It is not difficult to understand that Madikizela-Mandela is also admired for being able to attain this social mask. While she fulfils the requirements of this mask of visibility, the women supporting her are “old and wrinkled and poor” (Krog, 246). In a society that ‘sees’ in terms of class, gender and race, Madikizela-Mandela is an important figure as a visible representative of these “invisible” women. However, in Country of My Skull Madikizela-Mandela’s affluence is simply and negatively contrasted with the poverty of her constituency, and implies that she consciously and selfishly inhabits an economically powerful position while these women suffer. Her propensity for buying luxurious items is seen as equally “trashy” and excessive (Krog, 245) as her “trashy” sexuality. The word “trashy” itself has connotations of lower social class values and a lack of decorum. Consequently, that which elevates Madikizela-Mandela above the level of invisible impoverished black woman is used to disqualify her as a respected member of society. It would seem that Madikizela-Mandela is never completely accepted by the western capitalist world, even if she does subscribe to and attain socially prescribed status.

In addition to this, Country of My Skull suggests that Madikizela-Mandela falsely portrays a conservative front at the TRC Hearings. According to Krog, it seems “incomprehensible that this woman in the prim, light-blue suit and three strings of pearls,

with her bevy of beautiful daughters and well-dressed bodyguards, is embroiled in so many unsavoury stories” (246). The description of Madikizela-Mandela’s dress as conservative contrasts with the words “embroiled in... unsavoury stories.” Indeed, Madikizela-Mandela is depicted as scandalous. What is seen of her and what is said about her are irreconcilable for Krog. Even the well-dressed bodyguards are mentioned, with her pearls, in a list of status-symbols, and so serve to reinforce her social status. Her bodyguards, who can be seen as necessary for her safety, contribute to her image as a queenly figure with her ‘entourage’. Country of My Skull thus reinforces the sense that there lurks drama and danger behind Madikizela-Mandela’s conservative mask. In a society where social hierarchy is determined by class, the ‘trashy’ image disempowers Madikizela-Mandela.

This process of disqualification from the (white) middle class social sphere is even more evident in Country of My Skull. Madikizela-Mandela is constantly judged, and the Mandela Crisis Committee gives “damning reports” (Krog, 248) of her actions. She is therefore put at the mercy of the authors of these reports and is in a considerably less powerful position than the Committee, as these reports have the *power* to ‘damn’ her. The biblical implications of “damning” are also thought-provoking as it refers, in the Judeo-Christian religious discourse, to a never-ending hell for the ‘un-saved’. This reference to Madikizela-Mandela’s damnation also conveys the religious notion of repentance as a prerequisite to salvation; in this case a public ‘salvation’ which she may have if she acts in a socially and politically ‘correct’ manner. Thus she occupies a space from which she is irredeemable; a political and social damnation. The religious rhetoric exposes not only the power of the Nelson Mandela Committee, but also suggests that Madikizela-Mandela must either act according to the rules of the powerful figures and ideologies in society, or will be considered an outcast.

While Madikizela-Mandela is pushed to the margins of society, the creation of a crisis committee that specifically deals with Madikizela-Mandela is proof that she creates social crisis. She is depicted as an unpredictable and high profile personality

who is in need of some form of 'control'. It is ironic that Madikizela-Mandela is treated like a child, considering that she is called Mama Africa. Her position is ambiguous, and may be seen to be that of most women in patriarchal society: in a hierarchical space beneath men, alongside children, and even at times beneath children. By depicting her as someone who needs to be controlled or supervised, it becomes acceptable to reduce her status in society, and her position is easily reduced to that of a child.

Madikizela-Mandela's 'unacceptable' behaviour extends to her behaviour at the highly revered TRC hearings. In Country of My Skull, Krog finds her behaviour increasingly insolent. Madikizela-Mandela is depicted as bully-ish and mocking (247). Krog's account of her mockery gives the impression that Madikizela-Mandela is in a powerful position in comparison to those attempting to expose her. This seems to be especially distressing to Krog due to the importance that she attaches to the TRC hearings. The value with which she endows this process can even be described as reverence. In a later chapter in Country of My Skull, Krog says that, by "forcing a country to redefine itself through the testimonies of victims and perpetrators, the TRC has made a new relationship possible" (2002:292). Madikizela-Mandela threatens this 'redefinition' by refusing the discourse of reconciliation. Instead, she acts in a manner that is unacceptable and threatens the possibility of a peaceful democratic post-apartheid society.

### 3.6 Gangster/Outsider

While Madikizela-Mandela is represented as threatening to white middle class values with her 'lower-class' or 'trashy' actions, she is also seen as a threat to society in general. The ambiguities surrounding Madikizela-Mandela culminate in the image of the gangster: that dangerous threat on the margins of society. Her suburban domestic space is converted into a powerhouse of gangsterism. Krog calls it:

The house of the liberation movement's most revered political lineage and the house of lowly informers. The house where destabilized youngsters were both protected and killed. The house of famous, regal personalities and the house of a particular kind of gangster personality – brutal, insecure, inclined to pathological lying. (Krog, 250)

The marginal but powerful Madikizela-Mandela rules from her suburban home, and in doing so, she subverts traditional associations of domesticity. The contrast in social class between “revered” and “regal,” and “lowly” and “gangster” amplifies the ambiguity attributed to Madikizela-Mandela, and suggests that she simultaneously inhabits very high and very low social positions. Her association with gangsterism also suggests that she has a power that is beyond sanctioned social structures. Country of My Skull questions whether the public can trust her sense of morality, but what is ‘moral’ is largely defined by Krog. Her “personality,” who she is *innately*, is seen as socially questionable, and she has a “*particular* kind of gangster personality – brutal, insecure, inclined to pathological lying” (emphasis added). It is then these so-called inclinations that define Madikizela-Mandela, and she is seen as by ‘nature’, at fault. The word “pathological” suggests that she is clinically and psychologically unstable. She is thus not only a gangster, but mad, which seems even more sinister. Krog’s diagnosis becomes increasingly damning:

The point of resemblance between the mores of a street-corner society and those of a political aristocracy is this: both are contemptuous of legality. The political aristocracy claim the right to honour by tradition, which makes them the leaders of society and therefore ‘a law unto themselves’. Street-corner society also claims to be a law unto itself, not because it is above the law but because it is outside it. (Krog, 251)

By casting Madikizela-Mandela as part of both the “street-corner society” and “political aristocracy,” Krog reinforces the sense that she is a powerful outsider. The ambiguity of her image is reinforced, and in this instance it suggests a seemingly problematic placement “outside” the law and outside of accepted norms of white liberal society. This paragraph indicates that Madikizela-Mandela is not limited to the “law” of society, but

that she is an insider/outsider who can also lay claim to power which lies outside the boundaries of formal or institutionalised arenas of society.

The images of Madikizela-Mandela as gangster and nurturer collide in the testimony of a former Football Club member. He says that “Winnie is a brave woman. She is capable of everything and Zinzi takes after her mother.” He repeats that Madikizela-Mandela “is capable of everything” (251). This repetition implies sinister abilities, and suggests that she is not only ‘able’ to do “everything,” but that there are no boundaries to what she would do. Further, there is the claim that she has nurtured her daughter Zinzi into having the same ‘capabilities’. In Laurie Vickroy’s discussion on trauma and motherhood, she confirms that “mothers, deprived of their own identities, become agents of culture, ideology, and personal history, and subsequently pass these interests on to their daughters” (2002:40). It is thus not a far-fetched notion that mother and daughter have similar abilities, but in Country of My Skull this takes on a menacing tone. Her daughter inherits the unlimited capabilities of the matriarchal gangster, with little reflection in the text on the violence that Madikizela-Mandela endured during apartheid.

Madikizela-Mandela is depicted as a powerful outsider with little or no need of social vindication. It is said that all “attempts to secure Winnie Madikizela-Mandela’s cooperation had failed – not even Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo could win her over” (Krog, 253). Not only is she judged to be unco-operative, she is uncontrollable and does not listen to respected leaders. Not even the most powerful figures in the ANC could convince Madikizela-Mandela to do their bidding. She seems entirely self-motivated: the opposite of the Mama Africa-image.

Her leadership also extends beyond the centralised or normative structures of society. Krog describes how, outside the courtroom, on “the pavement,” “a man is selling little white plates with faces on them: Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Joe Slovo and Winnie Mandela – all in the same row.” Krog shows her discomfort with this by



concluding: "I cannot live in a space where the face of Nelson Mandela or Joe Slovo is interchangeable with that of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela" (Krog, 258). This constitutes one of Krog's most unsympathetic and wholly judgemental moments. Though she is entitled to this opinion, it emerges out of her sentimental need for truth and reconciliation which forecloses on any attempt to acknowledge the significance of Madikizela-Mandela outside of the 'disgrace' that the trial engenders. Instead, Krog condemns Madikizela-Mandela, while she extols the virtues of mainstream leaders who do not so obviously carry the scars of apartheid. One may argue that Madikizela-Mandela has inherited the violence of apartheid, and has not 'forgiven and forgotten'. She thus serves as a constant reminder of the guilt white South Africans carry for their part in the burdens imposed by apartheid on black South Africans. Krog's explicit rejection of her as a hero of the struggle is insensitive, as it implies Krog's presumption that *her* liberal white middleclass values are correct: Krog "cannot" during the TRC hearings accept that Madikizela-Mandela's face is next to other ANC stalwarts. Instead, she portrays Madikizela-Mandela as a leader of the "street-corner society" (251). In Country of My Skull, Madikizela-Mandela is judged to be unworthy of being honoured as one of the South African nation's political heroes, and by implication Krog's ideological position of privilege is revealed. In fact, Krog reports glumly that she has "never been this depressed at a Truth Commission hearing. It's like reporting on a third-rate movie – this miasma of scandal, arrogance, ambition, lies and unbridled gangsterism" (258). While Krog seems to hate the drama accruing around the "Winnie Hearing," she is herself watching and describing it as a spectacle. Her reading of it as a "third-rate movie" implies a sense of 'show', and of badly acting out certain predictable roles for an undiscerning audience. Such sweeping judgements ought to be left to the film critics. They seem ill-placed in a book expressly about the difficulties of truth and reconciliation.

To confirm Madikizela-Mandela's reputation as an outsider, Krog compares her with Albertina Sisulu. Krog states that after Sisulu's testimony "someone sees

Madikizela-Mandela trying to embrace Albertina Sisulu, who rebuffs her with: 'Hayi, suka wena.' ['Go away!']" (255). According to Krog, Sisulu refuses contact with her because "she has become part of a gallery of lives that Winnie Mandela has, if not destroyed, then profoundly changed" (Krog, 255). Sisulu represents the 'good' woman, the Angel in the House, as having never "put a foot wrong" (254). Madikizela-Mandela's image as 'evil' woman is intensified by the accusation that she has destroyed or at least "profoundly changed" the respected Sisulu's life. Sisulu is thus set up as an innocent who has been victimised by the 'evil' Madikizela-Mandela. Sisulu's refusal to be touched by Madikizela-Mandela also relates to the accusation of her contamination by apartheid. Sisulu is regarded with sympathy by Krog, while Madikizela-Mandela's image as 'bad' woman is emphasised. Madikizela-Mandela is seen as having deviant moral standards, as "these were issues of principle" (Krog, 253). Madikizela-Mandela is judged through the comparison and apparent victimisation of Sisulu, in the binary of good and evil, as irredeemably evil.

Krog regurgitates a "specific line of argument," strongly contrasting Madikizela-Mandela to Albertina Sisulu. In this regard, Madikizela-Mandela and Sisulu become opposing figures in binary terms dictating archetypal views of women. Krog says:

During the struggle, when comrades criticized Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's outrageous behaviour, a specific line of argument always surfaced: 'Look at Albertina Sisulu. She's been harassed just as much. She has suffered just as much. Yet she's never put a foot wrong.' (Krog, 254)

Krog becomes complicit in perpetuating this comparison by reiterating the argument in her text. Through this comparison with the Angel in the House, Sisulu, Madikizela-Mandela is explicitly cast as the opposite. Sisulu is seen as a "respected veteran" (254) of the struggle, and ultimately deserving of her respect and status. However, she also is not portrayed as *wanting* status, as she keeps a low profile. This clearly has classic patriarchal appeal. She fits the traditional respectable role, while supporting the anti-apartheid struggle. Sisulu is an appealing figure because she supports her man, and

stands loyally and *unobtrusively* by his side, as a 'proper woman' should. Madikizela-Mandela's "outrageous behaviour" is strongly contrasted with the description of the high expectations and trust of Sisulu, of whom, "[N]o matter what she says, she will surely be believed," as "she has never put a foot wrong" (Krog, 254). This contrast is apparent when Krog complains that the "Winnie Hearing" and the testimony given, dissipates into "lies, evasions, intimidation and fear" (254). Krog sees the trial, as it stands in its ideal form, as a vehicle for justice and in this case truth and forgiveness. When Madikizela-Mandela takes to the stand, the proceedings begin to die, "suffocating" in negatives. It may be argued that Krog cannot negotiate the underlying reasons for Madikizela-Mandela's fierce silences and evasions, except to condemn her as a common criminal. The passive words "evasions" and "lies" also stand in contrast to the aggressive terms "intimidation and fear." Madikizela-Mandela is seen as inhabiting a position that hinders the Commission's access to 'truth' and the subsequent forgiveness. The Truth Commission was established to enable people to tell their stories and hopefully 'forgive and be forgiven', in effect it was established to create the platform from which the 'New' South Africa could be launched. If Madikizela-Mandela refuses to tell her truth, she may be seen as inhibiting the process of forgiving and of being forgiven. Indeed, she says she "fought a just war," which implies she did nothing 'wrong'. Consequently, Madikizela-Mandela represents the inability to escape the past of apartheid/colonialism. Zine Magubane in an essay entitled "Could the 'post' in Post-Apartheid be the 'post' in Post-Colonial? Language, Ideology, and Class Struggle," says that adding the prefix 'post' to post-colonialism or post-apartheid does not mean that it is "past." Indeed, the "idea that colonialism and its destructive legacy are somehow 'over' or 'post'" ignores the current effects of colonialism (2003:138). Madikizela-Mandela refuses to treat the TRC hearings as a means of making the "post" in post-apartheid denote "'over' with." For Krog as a white South African, this means that she is not forgiven for her complicity in apartheid, and as a result cannot shed her burden, her 'white guilt' over apartheid, at Madikizela-Mandela's feet. One might also consider that Madikizela-Mandela does not

trust the Truth Commission, the structures put in place by government. Dirk Kloppe says that Madikizela-Mandela *refuses* the discourse of the Commission, thereby clinging “to an imaginary characterised by the conflation of the tribal and the revolutionary.” “She remains, to the last, a defiant figure of resistance” (2004:207,8). Her resistance to “the discourse of the Commission” may then be the result of the ‘post’ in post-apartheid not “so much mean[ing] ‘going after’ as it does ‘going beyond’” (Magubane, 2003:139). Madikizela-Mandela then resists the concepts of ‘truth’ and the ‘forgiveness’ of apartheid-horrors. As a black woman she has endured and thus inherited the legacy of apartheid that cannot simply be forgiven and forgotten.

In comparison to Country of My Skull, The Cry of Winnie Mandela does have more sympathy with Madikizela-Mandela, but at times it also focuses on the negative images of Madikizela-Mandela. In The Cry of Winnie Mandela, Mamello says to the character Winnie:

So much ugliness was ascribed to you: kidnapping children; gruesome beatings and torture of children; disappearances and deaths; assassinations; defamations and denunciations; intimidation and terror. All ennobled in your mind by one justification: the “country that you love”, the “millions of my people”, all in the name of your husband. (Ndebele, 62)

While Mamello is not directly accusing Madikizela-Mandela (“ascribed to” implies that this is what she has heard, not necessarily believes), she does think that the violence was “ennobled” in Madikizela-Mandela mind. Mamello considers that that which causes Madikizela-Mandela to beat, torture, and terrorise, to be inside her head. Ndebele’s text is more ambiguous in its portrayal of Madikizela-Mandela, as it tends not to judge as much as Krog does in Country of My Skull. Words such as “ascribed to you” create the sense that there is no proof of Madikizela-Mandela’s guilt. However, the general consensus is that she is guilty, and the use of the word “ennobled” suggests that Madikizela-Mandela’s actions were justified in her mind.

### 3.7 Warrior

As an outsider and a leader, the images ascribed to Madikizela-Mandela include the archetype of warrior. There is the suggestion in both texts that Madikizela-Mandela at times embodies the image of a warrior. Sheila Meintjes discusses women's roles during war in "War and Post-War Shifts in Gender Relations." She says that the image of the woman warrior is a classic one that exists "in the classical myth of the Amazons, in the ancient aristocratic women fighters of Britain's warrior Queen Boadicea and in the pre-colonial female regiments of Dahomey, West Africa" (2002:63). In Country of My Skull Krog entertains the warrior woman image of Madikizela-Mandela in noting that that she:

eliminates dispensable subjects – she's a dangerous and rowdy warlord strutting among the glum democrats. She refuses to become part of parochial pleasantness. She refuses to serve the masters. She refuses to make the world a safe place for democracy. (Krog, 245)

Madikizela-Mandela's power is not a subtle one. By saying that she simply *eliminates* subjects who are "dispensable" to her, Krog portrays her as a fearless warrior on the warpath. The word "eliminate," so cold and clinical, expresses an inhuman ruthlessness. She is a "rowdy warlord," violent and boisterous; not the patriarchal stereotype of silent woman. She *makes* war, and *leads* her troops. Other than being a leader, a warlord also has a vast amount of power over people. "Strutting" gives the impression that she is performing in front of the, contrastingly, "glum democrats." It is said that she "refuses" to be a part of the superficial "pleasantness," to "serve" anyone, and to "make the world safe for democracy." Even her refusal to act as socially expected seems indicative of the power she has amassed as warrior. Indeed, the expectations of Madikizela-Mandela are similar to those of the mysterious rebel-woman, Dulcie, in Wicomb's David's Story (2000), who is "expected to conform to conservative ideas about femininity at the same time that she is recognised as a revolutionary" (Pumla Gqola, 2004:52). Madikizela-Mandela is portrayed as the fighter for the marginalised, but is expected to conform to

social dictates by becoming passive and submissive to her “masters” (Krog, 245). These expectations are however subverted by Madikizela-Mandela’s “rowdy and boisterous” behaviour as warrior.

In Country of My Skull, Madikizela-Mandela is also equated to the ultimate matriarch and warlord in African mythology, MaNthatisi, among whose enemies:

rumours circulated that she was a grotesque giantess with one eye in the middle of her forehead, who suckled her warriors before battle and sent swarms of bees before them. In contrast to this horrible image, among her own followers she was known affectionately as Mosadinyana – the Little Woman. (Krog, 245)

There is a link between Madikizela-Mandela and MaNthatisi in relation to the duplicity inherent in their images: that of a strong warrior, and that of a nurturer. The mythological greatness of the image of MaNthatisi is also ambiguous; the supernatural element of controlling nature is seen as not only powerful but horribly so. MaNthatisi is called “a legend,” and “great female warrior,” “the formidable chief and general of the Batlokoa during the early 1800’s,” by Max du Preez (2004:203). However, in Country of My Skull Madikizela-Mandela’s power is portrayed ambiguously.

The perception of Madikizela-Mandela at war, or as warrior, is further reinforced with the mention of the ANC’s “victory” in getting her to release two youths she had allegedly kept at her house (Krog, 248). This “victory,” however, is only achieved after Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, arguably two of the most powerful figures in the ANC, apply “pressure” on Madikizela-Mandela to release the youths. The necessity of “pressure” from these two political figures implies that she is indeed a powerful woman. That her then-husband Nelson Mandela is called to put “pressure” on her to do the ANC’s bidding, is indicative of the patriarchal control exerted over her. Madikizela-Mandela’s power extends to being a leader referred to in military terms, for example when Krog calls Xoliswa Falati Madikizela-Mandela’s “second-in-command” (250).

Military terms are also used when Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is accused of scarring Football Club Members by carving letters and words into their skins, as it “is said that Mandela herself oversaw this operation” (Krog, 252). Speculation about the powerful figure Madikizela-Mandela is common, but facts about “operations” such as this are not available, creating suspicion about the extent of this military-style control over her followers. This ‘speculation’, as opposed to facts, is not very different from the ways in which military operations are often covertly performed, without the knowledge of the public.

Madikizela-Mandela is quoted as reinforcing her status as powerful military leader, while calling herself “an ordinary human being” (Krog, 257). She is said to use the justifying phrase, “while many sat comfortably in their houses, we fought a just war.” While her role as warrior comes through strongly, she reminds the audience that she suffered as any “ordinary” person would. This statement indicates that she gave up her comfort to do what was deemed necessary while others did not, and that this is what elevates her above the ordinary. It may also suggest that those who were sitting “comfortably” in their houses ‘owe’ her something. At this point the tenor of Krog’s discourse is one of disillusionment. These words certainly seem to be an admission by Madikizela-Mandela that she was actively engaged in what she saw as a “just war.” It does not, however, satisfy Krog.

In comparison to the negativity that Country of My Skull exudes in relation to the portrayal of Madikizela-Mandela as warrior, The Cry of Winnie Mandela presents a slightly more neutral view of the warrior-like Madikizela-Mandela. The character Mamello says of her:

Your final victory was... at the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Archbishop Tutu pleaded with you to take responsibility for the wrongs you are alleged to have committed and to say you are sorry. Under his pressure, you expressed regret. But... [i]t sounded like a minor concession to the moral authority of the man of God who stood before you: ‘If that’s really what you want me to say, what you really want to hear from me, OK...’ (Ndebele, 63)

Like Krog, Ndebele focuses on this moment of the TRC hearings as a crisis-point for Madikizela-Mandela's supporters. She is portrayed as victorious, but ambiguously so. Mamello says Madikizela-Mandela's words "sounded like a minor concession," as opposed to taking responsibility or repenting for the allegations against her. The discourse of war is used in this passage to relay the ambiguity associated with Madikizela-Mandela's "concession" to the TRC. She is portrayed as an unflinching warrior who did 'what had to be done' in her own eyes, refusing to apologise or reconcile with her enemies and even for Desmond Tutu, who is called a "man of God," and with whom she is said to have had a close personal relationship.

Mamello continues to discuss this 'victory' of Madikizela-Mandela, but adds to this the conflation between the image and reality of Madikizela-Mandela. She says to her:

You won, Mummy. I think you did. But then again, no, it was not you that won. Rather, what won was what you had become. ... It was the victory of image and posture, which had become fused into a compelling reality of their own. (Ndebele, 63)

Mamello proposes that the victory belonged to Madikizela-Mandela's *image*, rather than to *her*. The passage also implies a 'true' self before the public image of warrior emerged. In other words, what she "had become" was only a façade, and that is who stood victorious on that day. Baudrillard's theories on reality and simulation may help in understanding this kind of discrepancy between the public image of Madikizela-Mandela and what some may call her 'self'. Denouncing the concept of a verifiable objective reality, Baudrillard refers to its opposite, what he calls the *unreal*. He says that unreality is "the *real's hallucinatory resemblance to itself*," because reality itself "founders in hyperrealism,<sup>42</sup> the meticulous reduplication of the real" (original emphasis,

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<sup>42</sup> "Baudrillard calls simulation 'the generation by models of a real without originals or reality: a hyperreal. Hyperrealism is the characteristic mode of postmodernity. In the realm of the hyperreal, the distinction between simulation and the 'real' implodes; the 'real' and the imaginary continually collapse into each other.



1988:145,144). Mamello's questioning of Madikizela-Mandela's victory as one of the 'real' or 'image' is thus a valid one, because "there is no longer a clear distinction between a 'real' event and its media representation" (Storey, 1998:180). John Storey elaborates on Baudrillard's theory, saying that "[a] simulacrum is an identical copy without an original" (1998:177), which is especially valid in this case, where the public has access to Madikizela-Mandela's words at the TRC hearing *only* through the media. This is relayed as 'truth' and judged by the public and Ndebele's character Mamello; and so the re-representation of the moment creates the suspicion of its so-called reality. I am suggesting that the so-called 'real' moment has been re-presented to such an extent that it is unknowable.

Mamello underpins this ambiguous sense of victory by saying that "technical proficiency only established technical victories and technical innocence" (Ndebele, 63). While proclaimed "innocent," Madikizela-Mandela is still very much presumed guilty in The Cry Of Winnie Mandela; her "victory arouses moral suspicion," as she "explained it all away without convincing anyone" (Ndebele, 63). This means that "the cloud of moral doubt will hang over [her] without end" (63). One may argue that her "wars" become "relentless and unending" (65), as her victories were not 'real', and the battle thus continues. But while Madikizela-Mandela is depicted as mighty, her power is portrayed as negative, and is also driven by "fear" of her (Ndebele, 45).

In The Cry of Winnie Mandela, even the character Winnie Mandela reinforces her image as revolutionary and war hero, and the ways in which this image increased her power. She says, "I, Winnie, was the carrier and instrument of revolution" (102). By referring to herself as "*the* carrier" (emphasis added), the vehicle of revolution, she does not define herself as "a," one of many, but rather as *the* person responsible for revolution. However, she not only carries, but also *becomes* the "instrument of revolution": in effect doubly-powerful. She says that Brandfort was her "first real taste of

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The result is that reality and simulation are experienced as without difference... Simulation can often be experienced as more real than the real itself." (Storey, 1998:178)

power; something close to absolute power. It came from [her] sense of having the ability to change things in a place that had no notion of change” (Ndebele, 102). Reinforcing the sense of her power, Winnie says she was the “queen” that could “rage” against everything, that she “defied all civil and social laws,” and caused general “consternation” in Brandfort. She calls herself a “formidable presence,” and it is as if her realisation of her power causes her to act even more powerfully, which in turn causes her to become even more powerful. “I did indulge in the pleasure of being feared,” she says (Ndebele, 102, 103). Winnie “gloried” in the “presence” that she established for herself in Brandfort, so reinforcing the sense of her awareness of how she was perceived by the public. The warrior-image is thus shown to be a fiction which creates reality; a moment of simulacra. She “radiated unnerving strangeness, power, and energy” (103). Ndebele sees Madikizela-Mandela as “black, beautiful, famous,” and also “absolutely intimidating.” This warrior is powerful enough to have “brought change” into the township and town of Brandfort.

In addition to exposing how this image of the warrior adds to Madikizela-Mandela’s power, the character Winnie Mandela mimics the famous line from Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, a novel portraying warfare in Africa, saying, “Mees Winnie – she dead” (Ndebele, 112). The allusion to a text exposing the psychological responses to the colonisation and violence that broke open Africa is interesting in this context. One may surmise that the ‘real’ Madikizela-Mandela has been metaphorically killed by the warfare and colonisation/apartheid through which she has lived. It also implies that she has been irrevocably ‘changed’, as she has been accused of, by the violence of the apartheid era. Alternatively, the reference to her ‘death’ may be exposing the lack of knowledge of the ‘real’ Madikizela-Mandela. She has become simulacra – an image for which there is no ‘real’. Her representation then inhabits the space of the ‘real’ for the public. As Storey says, representation “does not stand at one remove from reality, to conceal or distort, it *is* reality” (original italics, 1998:181). Through this allusion to

Conrad's novel, the portrayal of Madikizela-Mandela as warrior is made complex, as it enforces her link with warfare while simultaneously hinting at the trauma of the colonisation that has led to this warrior-image. The denial that she is alive may be understood as accentuating that she is merely a character in The Cry of Winnie Mandela. The discomfort here may be that 'reality' and representation are necessarily at odds, but that the latter can create the former – while neither can be unproblematically claimed as superior or as 'truth'.

## CONCLUSION

Madikizela-Mandela “is” – to use the definitive – *many* things, as in the case of many of the varied descriptions of her, all somehow contained under one heading in Krog’s Picture Five (Krog, 245). The words ‘might be’, or ‘maybe’ are seldom or never used in association with this figure. Both Krog and Ndebele portray Madikizela-Mandela as a highly ambiguous figure. Country of My Skull purports to offer a more truthful and factual account of Madikizela-Mandela, even if that truth is Krog’s “own” (170-1), as she claims. The Cry of Winnie Mandela, on the other hand, consciously and purposefully uses fiction to find a deeper ‘truth’, and in that way attempts to rescue Madikizela-Mandela from the kind of condemnation that earlier media representations, including Krog’s, promote.

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela resists comfortable positioning. She is represented in contradictory and often extreme ways. This may even be seen as a symptom of the attempts to define and ‘classify’ her. Nomavenda Mathiane, in Beyond the Headlines, is right to conclude that, “in South Africa things often tend to be a little sharper than in a lot of other places. Here, orthodoxies do not merely prevail; they have us pinned to the ground” (1990:vii). The prevailing attitudes of the public may thus be seen as significantly contributing to the definitions imposed on Madikizela-Mandela. Krog exposes some of the conventional ways of seeing her when she asks:

Why is it that a woman, a black woman from a long-isolated country, creates such an unprecedented media frenzy? Is it because Winnie Madikizela-Mandela answers to the archetype: Black and Beautiful? Or because she answers to the stereotype: Black and Evil? (2002:244)

These questions epitomise the ambivalences and ambiguities that emerge in representations of her. This, ironically, does not detract from the public’s need to define

her unequivocally and emphatically. She is depicted as either exquisitely beautiful, or as beastly and dauntingly evil. These extremes exemplify the representations of the paradoxical Madikizela-Mandela.

Indeed, these paradoxes are so great that “Media experts say she’s like a chameleon, moving across boundaries in quite an extraordinary way” (Krog, 2002:244). That she is analysed by “experts,” and compared with a “chameleon” turns her into a curious object for critical investigation. It is precisely this tendency to categorise, classify and label that I have consciously avoided in this study. I have not analysed the ‘real’ Madikizela-Mandela, but rather shown how she is represented, and why such representations can only ever be inadequate and distorted.

I have shown that Antjie Krog simultaneously judges Madikizela-Mandela and wants her to lead the public into democracy. She suggests that “the killer and the tyrant” has been “for the first time contained in the same frame as the rest of us! Isn’t that some kind of beginning?” (Krog, 260). Krog, as a white liberal woman in South Africa, *needs* a new “beginning” (Krog, 260), one in which she would be forgiven for being an albeit unwilling benefactor of apartheid. But if Madikizela-Mandela will not concede to seeking forgiveness and repentance, it implies that there will be no new beginning – especially as she still remains the voice for multitudes of people who may also not have ‘forgiven and forgotten’. Indeed, Krog says that:

Reconciliation is a cycle whose initial step is redefining the self. ... The essence of South African reconciliation, however, has more to do with conciliatory behaviour and instinctive survival through negotiation, than with Judaeo-Christian processes. (Krog, 2002: 292)

Krog deems “conciliatory,” peaceful, behaviour to be the way to reconciliation. Madikizela-Mandela’s behaviour may be considered less than conciliatory, as she still to a large extent embodies the ideologies and actions of the struggle against apartheid.

In addition to these critiques, the paradox of Madikizela-Mandela in Country of My Skull and The Cry of Winnie Mandela does not necessarily mean that the texts fail

entirely in their attempts to move away from stereotypic representations of her. As David Birch argues:

Language is of course one of the major means of oppression... but a difficulty arises in the creation of 'new worlds from words' – Barbara Godard asks 'How can one be an object, be constructed by a ruling discourse and still constitute an opposition to it, be outside enough to mark an alternative? If outside, how can one be heard at all?' .... The answer, for her as for Lucy Irigaray ... lies in writers who 'redraw the circle for us...' (1989:19)

I would hesitate to conclude that Krog's representation of Madikizela-Mandela manages to "redraw the circle." There is no doubt that Country of My Skull offers a significant contribution to a global understanding of the trauma that the hearings revealed, and the text does succeed in exposing issues that the public are still dealing with. It is only this chapter on "The Winnie Hearing" that is markedly unsympathetic in its demand that Madikizela-Mandela asks the nation for forgiveness, and in its condemnation of her for not doing so. The Cry of Winnie Mandela is clearly more successful in "redraw[ing] the circle." Ndebele's personalised story invites its readership to forgive and understand Madikizela-Mandela, rather than judge and condemn her. He does so by negotiating the archetypal and stereotypic images of her *and* in addition to this he offers alternative readings of her life and times.

Though both writers acknowledge the ambivalence inherent in images of Madikizela-Mandela, Ndebele more readily allows for a multiplicity of being. This is neatly expressed by Mamello in The Cry of Winnie Mandela when she says to Madikizela-Mandela, "There are two last wishes I have in my life, in equal measure: to be close to you, and to be far away from you" (Ndebele, 59). Madikizela-Mandela is seen as simultaneously alluring and repellent, "in equal measure." Mamello says to an imaginary Madikizela-Mandela, "I wish I could believe your voice.... There seems so much about you that rises to significance only to descend into banality" (Ndebele, 61). This constitutes one of the very few instances in which Madikizela-Mandela's *voice* rather than her physical image is invoked, and it draws attention to that fact that her

'story' remains untold. The constant questioning she is subjected to by the other characters leaves the reader with the sense that Madikizela-Mandela has not been accepted unconditionally by them. However, at the end of the novel she is embraced by all the members of the *ibandla*. Mamello's statement may also be interpreted as confirming that there is no 'real' Madikizela-Mandela to listen to or see; no 'true' or "significant" part except what each author writes into the silence. Furthermore, it becomes evident in both texts that it is the public's insatiable need to 'know' the 'real' Madikizela-Mandela that accounts for the stereotypes and hype surrounding her.

From a feminist perspective, the most extreme paradox with regard to images of Madikizela-Mandela, must be Mama Africa versus the Abhorrent Mother. These images confirm the necessity of observing what Trihn-T Minh-ha calls, "a feminist practice," that "can only be negative... so that we may say 'that's not it' and 'that's still not it'" (1989:103). Neither the Abhorrent Mother nor Mama Africa is accurate, and neither is fair. Likewise, Krog's headings, Pictures One to Seven, exhibit an attempt to constrict the 'reality' of Madikizela-Mandela to numerical lists that "picture" her. These pictures reduce her to one-dimensionality even as they contradict each other, sometimes within the same frame. For example in Picture Five, she is portrayed as both fearsome warrior and "trashy tabloid" (Krog, 245).

Krog has been sharply criticised for her representation of Madikizela-Mandela. Pumla Gqola discusses how:

Krog's 'impeccable credentials', to borrow Wicomb's (1999) formulation, do not equip her with a desire to represent Blackwomen in a nuanced fashion. Her representations... of Winnie Mandela...as threatening and despicable... demonstrate the extent to which Krog is unprepared for Blackwomen she can cast in neither 'safe' long suffering mould, nor as dismissable because 'sexually promiscuous'. (2004:56)

This is a "crisis of representation in Krog's text," (2004:57) for "as long as Blackwomen subjectivities are unengaged with beyond the stereotypical representations ... white

femininities and all masculinities need not get deconstructed” (Gqola, 2004:65). Gqola is right to identify Krog’s propensity to advance stereotypes of black women, as I have demonstrated in my own reading of Krog’s liberal white need for reconciliation.

Ultimately, all that can be known of Madikizela-Mandela is a) that she is South Africa’s most well known black woman, and b) that the images available are shot through with multiple contradictions. Carole Boyce Davies, in Black Women, Writing and Identity argues that if “the category of woman is one of performance of gender, then the category Black woman... exists as multiple performances of gender and race and sexuality based on the particular cultural, historical, geopolitical, class communities in which Black women exist” (1994:8-9). This theory underpins the difficulty of knowing anything except the performance. It also allows for recognition of the differences that exist between women of different classes, cultures, and races. Furthermore, it calls for a self-conscious and critical engagement with the representations of Madikizela-Mandela.

It may be said that it is precisely this lack of self-consciousness that affects the representations of Madikizela-Mandela, which is why alternative understandings of images portrayed of this black woman are vitally important. Gqola confirms this in her identification of the “tropes which affect Blackwomen characters’ paradoxical hypervisibility.” It is this “paradoxical hypervisibility” that she considers to be the major representational problem in “Krog’s coverage of the TRC’s proceedings” (Pumla Gqola, 2004:65).

I have therefore paid particular attention to Krog’s representation of Madikizela-Mandela in Country of My Skull, because, as a white woman, she has unconsciously perpetuated the stereotypes that emerge in representations of “Blackwomen.” Comparatively, even though he at times also presents the reader with idealised and romanticised images of Madikizela-Mandela in The Cry of Winnie Mandela, Ndebele more readily interrogates the tropes of black women. Though both writers are expressly attempting to *de-mythologise* Madikizela-Mandela, each is also involved in the process



of *re-mythologising* her. Whereas Krog requires Madikizela-Mandela to repent, Ndebele requires the reader to re-think such demands. Indeed, Laurie Vickroy's assessment of the value in narrativisation is particularly relevant in assessing Ndebele's achievement in The Cry of Winnie Mandela. She notes that "[s]killful and authentic storytelling enables readers to access older modes of contemplation not present in mass media, and if done well" can make the "past more accessible to readers" (2002:170). The Cry of Winnie Mandela manages to make the figure of Madikizela-Mandela more accessible to a general readership, while also revealing the preconceptions that all readers bring to the reading of any text that treats the subject of South Africa's most famous woman.

Like the representation of the "model and singer Grace Jones," the "strength of her image... is that it swings constantly from the near grotesque... to the great African beauty. You are constantly looking at her and wondering if she's beautiful or grotesque, or both and how can she be the one if she is the other" (Lola Young, 1999:82). The representations of Madikizela-Mandela also vacillate between the Beauty and the Beast. The advancement of archetypal and stereotypic images define Madikizela-Mandela too narrowly, and it is those narrow definitions that she consistently eludes. Whether we want her to be a hero or a villain, images and representations of Madikizela-Mandela in Country of My Skull and The Cry of Winnie Mandela reveal much more about the divided nature of South African society, and about those who represent her, than about Winnie Madikizela-Mandela herself.

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