

Cape Librarian

Kaapse
Bibliotekekaris



**Western Cape
Government**

Cultural Affairs and Sport

Volume 65 | Number 2 | March/April 2021

editorial

It is surreal, traumatic, bizarre and just a little disheartening to consider that it has been more than a year since the Coronavirus has struck; and the world — today almost completely a different place than it was back then — continues to live in lockdown fear.

The sheer magnitude of the revolution brought about in terms of how we work, socialise, worship and school our children — has been so emphatic that it is almost impossible to verbalise. There's also been the economic and human cost of the virus: if the statistics are to be believed, in South Africa alone there have been 52,000 Covid-related deaths.

In the face of such overwhelming adversity, and seemingly the absence of absolution any time soon, it is impossible not to harbour concerns about the future. While we yearn for a more normal tomorrow, how will that normality be defined?

For libraries, there is good news and bad news. Traditionally, they have remained unaffected by crises; and viewed as physical, emotional and intellectual safe spaces by the communities they serve. Today, at least some of that is in question as they are now subject to the demands of social distancing and cleansing of materials.

Over time, open access to information and materials has made libraries survive; and unlike other less fortunate businesses related to trade in technologically threatened media, have largely survived the digital transformation. However, a growing threat looms: if readers are drawn to the use of online services, what purpose does their physical counterpart serve?

Yet in South Africa, fortunately the need for free internet access, coupled to the high cost of data, has meant that the library has continued to be the default destination for information gatherers and job seekers alike. And that means, that for library-goers, the new normal is pretty much still the same as the old one. Apart from museums, what other time-honoured institution can also make that claim today?

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Online public access catalogue
wc.slms.gov.za/desktop/desktopwc

Indexed in | Geïndekseer in
LISA (Library and Information Science Abstracts)
Library, Literature and Information Science (EBSCOhost)

Reproduction and printing | Reproduksie en drukwerk
Capitol Press

© Library Service | © Biblioteekdiens
SA ISSN 0 008 5790

Editorial policy | Redaksionele beleid
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Die **Kaapse Biblioteekaris** is die huisblad van die Wes-Kaapse Biblioteekdiens en verskyn twee-maandeliks. Dit bevat artikels oor biblioteek- en inligtingwese, nuusberigte, resensies, aanwinst-lyste asook praktiese artikels. Die redaksie behou hom die reg voor om, indien nodig, bydraes te redigeer, te verkort of te herskryf. Die publikasie van artikels wat nie in opdrag geskryf is nie, kan egter nie gewaarborg word nie. Die menings van medewerkers is nie noodwendig dié van die Biblioteekdiens nie. Alle kopie vir 'n bepaalde uitgawe moet die redaksie twee maande vooruit bereik. Artikels, briewe en nuusberigte kan direk aan die redakteur gestuur word.

Braam

contents

boekwêreld

- 12 **Wanneer perdemis vye is. Of nie**
Francois Verster

the arts

- 16 **Paul Simon's *Graceland*:**
Those were the days my friends,
of miracle and wonder
Yunus Momoniat

reviews

- 22 **Book reviews | Boekresensies**
Compiled by book selectors

genre

- 30 **How to live with diabetes**
Compiled by Boniswa Notiki

workroom

- 34 **Email etiquette**
Ronel Mouton
- 38 **Learning about learning**
Leonard Fortuin

spotlight on central reference

- 42 **New on the shelves**
Compiled by Sandra Kingswell

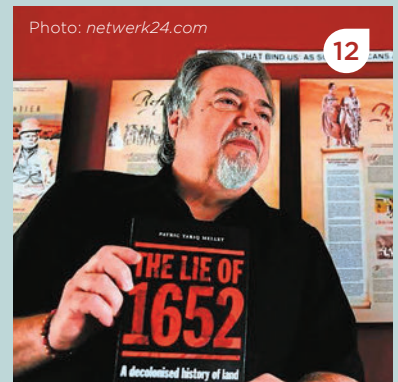
the last word

- 46 **What's the perfect length for a book?**
Sarah Shaffi

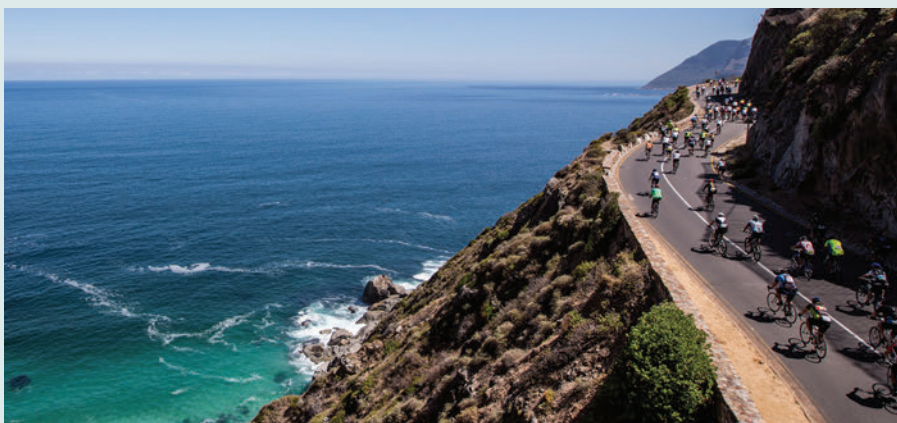
news

- 2 People
4 Libraries

in this issue



on the cover



Cyclists participating in the world-famous Cape Town Cycle Tour. The event has been cancelled for 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions on sporting events.

Karin Schermbrucker/capetowncycletour.com

people

So long, Sabrina

On 31 March we said goodbye to one of our much loved and much respected book selectors and colleagues. Sabrina Gosling's career of more than 30 years at Western Cape Library Service has come to an end. Prior to her working as a selector, between February and September 1987 she worked in Cataloguing. Thereafter she took up a position in Selection as there was a need for someone to read science fiction and fantasy. The rest, as they say, is history. Sabrina was a mentor to many and she will be remembered for the many things that she did at the Library Service. Her dedication to ensuring we have the best and most relevant collection for our communities was commendable and admirable. We could always count on her willingness and expertise to help us out of a pinch when quick decisions about special buys and spending savings were required. Sabrina, we wish you only the best in this next chapter of your life. May it bring you endless time to do the things you love! Wishing you a healthy, wealthy, long and happy retirement
Cecilia Sani, Director: Library Service

The day that Sabrina retires is the day that the Library Service loses a giant — a librarian who has dedicated herself to making our Library Service the best version of itself, despite the odds. Sabrina knows what a public library ought to be — a place where each and every one of us can find enough of the right books (whatever our interests, tastes or reading level) to satisfy our needs and stretch our imaginations. A place where we should always be able to easily find the information that we are looking for. A strong stock that is as wide as it is deep. And she has devoted her career to this. Sabrina is the fastest reader with the greatest book knowledge of any book selector I know. Catholic in her tastes, she read everything from westerns, to crime, to science fiction and chicklit. She compiled the annual list of literary awards for years and so always knew who won for what. And I suspect she



(Ltr): Pierre de Villiers, Barbara Todes, Sabrina Gosling, Jacqui McQueen and Johan Swiegelaar at the launch of promotional material for Public Library Week 1988

hardly ever slept, for she outread everyone in the Selection Section! Her experience as a cataloguer meant that she was very particular about the Selection Section's bibliographic records. She was largely responsible for the keyword access to our selection records. She was closely involved in the computerisation of our records, firstly to PALS and then to SLIMS. Sabrina shared her wide knowledge and expertise with her colleagues and one would very often find a newer member of staff in her corner office. Her impact on the stock of our libraries is massive — for decades she put together the special buys of reference material, was our go-to person on science fiction and fantasy and so much else. Kind, reliable, constant, unassuming, hard-working and above all a librarian who loves to read; we will not see the likes of Sabrina again.

Johanna de Beer, ex-Assistant Director: Book Selection

I only met Sabrina after I came to work at WCLS and subsequently discovered that I had filled the posts vacated by her on not one, but two, occasions: When she moved to WCLS Cataloguing, I took the post that she had vacated at UCT Medical Library. Then, when she transferred to Selection, I was the successful candidate who took over her post in the Cataloguing section. That was, however, the end of my 'job shadowing', as we have both stayed put in our respective sections for more than three decades now! All the cataloguers, past and present, would like to wish

Sabrina a very enjoyable and healthy retirement. The Library Service building is certainly going to be a much duller place without her here.

Estelle Jakobsen, Principal Librarian

Sabrina has been our go-to person for guidance and advice about anything and everything related to book selection and the reviewing of books throughout the years. Her knowledge and experience have been accumulated over so many years, that she can tell you the history of, or reason behind almost all procedures that we follow. Her knowledge of authors and book trends are astounding. She is the perfect example of how a book



Sabrina in 2010

reviewer should be, because of her genuine interest in books, her love for reading and her good sense of writing well. Sabrina reads widely — books, professional journals, magazines, newspapers, online resources — you name it, if it is of value or interest, Sab reads it. Sabrina is blessed with an inquisitive nature, so she never just does something because someone said she should. She really thinks about the why and what the possible outcomes will be. It is for this reason that she is such a valuable person to have on your team. Sabrina has worked in the Cataloguing Section at some stage, so she has been a very helpful source of information and guidance for the Selectors. We are especially going to miss her guidance with regards to adult English fiction, reference works, travel guides, literary awards and writing reviews and articles for the **Cape Librarian**. Sabrina's institutional knowledge is irreplaceable. I wish you a well-deserved and blessed retirement, dearest Sab. We will miss you dearly.

Stanley Jonck, Book Selector

Sabrina has made a significant impact with her wisdom about books, and to collection development within our department. I have only come to know her for a short period, but her insight is a shining example of the years of service and her tireless work ethic. She leaves with a wealth of knowledge, but it is certainly not the only thing we will miss; her quirky sense of

humour (saying things like 'oh poop' to errors) and her remarks of how hungry the recipe books made her will not be forgotten. She will definitely be remembered for all she has done for our selection department and being a helpful co-worker. We wish her a happy and well-deserved retirement.

Lieschen Kays, Book Selector

This is a sad day for the Western Cape Library Service with the retirement of a much respected and dedicated book selector. Never at a loss for words, strong-minded, sometimes even a bit daunting, Sabrina could always be relied on to deliver her best. Her motivation and support will always be treasured. Sabrina was always there for anyone in need of advice, even when faced with a pressing deadline for a project already long overdue. Her professional support and source of strength will be kindly remembered by all. She certainly instilled confidence in me and motivated me to persevere and face all obstacles with confidence and strength. Sabrina, you are always very much in my thoughts, and I wish you a heart-filled farewell and a wonderful retirement. You will be sorely missed!

Erich Buchhaus, ex-Book Selector

Whenever Sabrina walked into my office it was as if a sense of total calm descended upon me. That, despite the fact that normally we were on a deadline with the magazine, and I was desperately waiting for an article from

her — it actually didn't matter one bit — she would waltz in there, quietly, calmly with a 'Hi Griz, I just want to chat about the deadline for my article...' which had often already come and gone... And then, with that imperturbable look on her face and a quick movement of that wonderful head of hair, she would say, 'right, I will have it with you soon'. That dealt with the official matter at hand and we would then get talking — about all sorts of things that involved work but also discussions in general — I always marvelled at Sabrina's calm take on life and without exception I can in all honesty say, that whenever Sabrina left my office I was mentally in a better place. And in the process, I had learnt about something that I didn't know — a win-win situation. Regarding the articles — everything always turned out perfectly fine. I didn't stress — she didn't stress and I just knew that all would be well. Why? because, I knew that when her contribution landed on my desk, that it would be a superb article — well researched, well written with hardly ever any correction required — in fact, in all the years (from the year 1992 until I left), the only corrections ever required were very, very occasional typo errors. I couldn't wait to read them. Her genre topics were always so interesting and well researched and often led me to explore a topic I never would have otherwise. Her end-of-the year contributions for suggested holiday reads were particularly both informative and impressive. She is a major reason why my 'list of books to read before I die' has still such a long way to go — I am afraid I'm running out of time Sabrina. Sabrina's depth of knowledge, regardless of the topic (the annual literary awards come to mind) was, in one word, remarkable and constantly amazed me and I know that her leaving the Service will leave a crater of lost book and institutional knowledge that will not easily, if ever, be filled. The Library Service loses in Sabrina yet another icon. I wish you a wonderful continuous sedate life forward — which I am pretty sure you will have — as not much seems to really shake you as it does to so many of us mere mortals. Your book and general knowledge was and is inspirational and I was privileged to have you as a colleague and a friend.

Grizéll Azar-Luxton, ex-Editor: Cape Librarian



Sabrina with Rheina Epstein, formerly Deputy City Librarian: Cape Town City Libraries in 2011

libraries

World Read Aloud day celebrated

The City of Cape Town's libraries celebrated words, books and stories on World Read Aloud Day (WRAD) on 3 February 2021, when they joined a national initiative to read to three million children. Despite not being able to host the usual exciting events that libraries do on WRAD, libraries took up the challenge and pledged to read out loud either virtually or by going to crèches in the community to read stories following strict COVID-19 protocols. 'Reading is a fun way to learn about the world and broaden your horizon at a time when we cannot physically go wherever we please. Young children benefit immensely when they are read to and it boosts their literacy skills, helps them improve memory and concentration, and takes them places while they may be confined,' said the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Community Services and Health, Councillor Zahid Badroodien.

(City of Cape Town, [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/capetown), 01/02/2021)



Mbekweni Library



Harare Library



Fisantekraal Public Library



Crossroads Library



Pelican Park Library



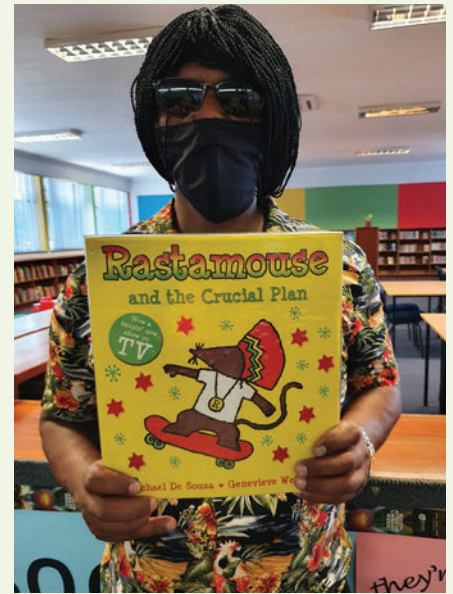
Goodwood Library



Blessing receiving her WRAD 2021 activity pack at Plumstead Library



A happy reader from Strand Library with her gift pack in celebration of WRAD 2021



Staff at Bellville South getting ready for WRAD 2021



Bonteheuwel Public Library



Ottery Public Library visited Cheltrin Rose Educare to read some stories to the little ones



Councillor Zahid Badroodien and LiBee, the Library Mascot, stopped by Sea Point Library



Lindokuhle Educare was treated to story time at Brown's Farm Library



Bellville Library held story times at Gaynor and Vredelust Educare

Swartland Libraries spread the word (and their wings) on World Read Aloud Day



Swartland Libraries, in partnership with Nali'Bali, celebrated World Read Aloud Day (WRAD) on 3 February 2021; together with the rest of the children in the country. Staff from various libraries shared the story *Kom ons vlieg!*, by Sihle Nontshokweni (and translated for WRAD into all of South Africa's official languages) with the region's children, who all joined in the make-belief world of piloting an aeroplane, together with Afrika, Josh, Neo, Bella and of course, Noodle the dog. The aeroplane's 'Flight make-believe' took off virtually from the Riebeeksriver, flew straight towards Darling Pre-Primêr and Darling North, before turning back to circle around Goue Vlokkies in Wesbank and Land van Kabouters in Malmesbury. The final touchdown took place at Chatsworth, where the young ones enjoyed themselves whilst flying their own colourful paper aeroplanes. A total of 184 children and 17 adults took part in this celebration of reading aloud.

Isabel Young, Chief Librarian: Swartland Libraries

Uniondale Library visit



The Western Cape Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, Anroux Marais, paid a visit to **Uniondale Library** during Library Week in March. With her is library assistant Sandra van Vught (left)

George Libraries receive poetry book donation



Senior Librarian Branch Libraries, James de Waal with Library Manager Rachel Williams and local poet Nkosinathi Menziwa at Conville Library in George

Local author Nkosinathi Menziwa has donated 20 copies of his book, **Lolan' izikweqe**, to George Libraries. His collection of poems was published in September 2020

during lockdown and is a product of the poet's personal experiences.

Rachel Williams, Manager: George Libraries

Suider-Strand Library reduced to ashes

Suider-Strand Library burnt down during the early hours of 27 February. The **Cape Librarian** extends its condolences to all affected staff, patrons and the community. - Ed.



Libraries share the love

February was LIASA Library Lovers Month. **PD Paultse Library's** produced some lovely displays to celebrate the month



Ocean View Library shared this message to their patrons on Facebook: 'Love and romance is the best medication on your "book trip" to nowhere... During the month of February... enjoy your love journey.'



Some lucky adult library users collected lovely goody- and activity packets at **Strand Library**, put together by the staff

Happy birthday!

Valhalla Park Library celebrated their 24th birthday in March. They posted the following excerpt from a **A tale of two cities** by Charles Dickens on Facebook: 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.'



(facebook.com, 05/03/2021)

Adriaanse Library celebrated 28 years of service delivery in their community on 3 March.



(facebook.com, 03/03/2021)

Oh boy! Do boys love reading? Yes, they do

This was discovered when the PSP, or Professional Services Programme, unit rolled out a Super Hero Reading toolkit to all of the City's public libraries.

The toolkit included a list of recommended books for boys, tips for parents to motivate the boy child to read, two 'pick me' wobblers, two A3-posters, a Reading Activity booklet as well as a Book Club Challenge booklet. Libraries had the option to only do a display or they could also implement a reading programme. Despite the challenge of a harder lockdown staff still managed to put up some amazing displays that caught the attention of our young reading Superheroes. Some libraries also managed to implement a Reading Programme and **Meadowridge Library** handed out an impressive total of 49 booklets to their patrons. Staff members said that they had fun creating their displays and patrons who managed to go to the library were immediately drawn to the eye-catching Superhero displays. Libraries' staff exhibited a host of reading material and genres that was sure to tickle the imaginations of the children. This is what our Superhero Book Guardians had to say about how they rolled out the initiative at their libraries:

Bellville Library

Bellville Library was very excited to participate in the Superhero reading programme. The staff of the children's section teamed up as 'The guardians of Bellville Library' and created an outer space/superhero video which we

posted on the library's Facebook page to create interest in the programme. A big display was also put up in the foyer inviting children to participate in our programme's theme, *Bellville Library superhero reader*. The children enjoyed putting their faces in the photo window in the display and have their parents take pictures of them. 20 children (11 boys and 9 girls) joined our reading programme. Each child received a 'Superhero Reads-membership card' (similar to a library card) and book challenge and activity booklets, in which they could write down what they have read. A WhatsApp group was created with parents to communicate updates on the children's reading progress and also offer help where and if it was needed. We started assessing each child's reading level and issued books according to their level of reading and challenged them with a more improved level as they continued with the programme.

Cristol Hannie and Marindie Maddison

Adriaanse Library

Our Superhero display had interest from the boys because the books on display were issued just after our display was finished. The display was a team effort with everyone giving advice on what the display needs and the specific wording it will need to make an impact. Unfortunately, we could not implement the reading programme as our library was very quiet during the holiday season and with COVID-19 it was a challenge. The material of the boy reading programme will be used for future reading programmes as the information shared is valuable to get boys to love books and reading.

Yvette du Preez

Valhalla Park

Regarding the 'boy reading initiative', the displays were splendidly executed by my colleagues. A number of six 'superhero readers' searched through the collection of books (graphic novels in specific) that were on display, they were excited to have it all in one location waiting to be taken out by a 'hero boy reader' participating in the reading programme. The displays attracted quite some attention with the brightly and bubbly illustrated



Guardians of Bellville Library



Valhalla Park Library

'superhero' poster as the centre piece that burst through the seclusion or loneliness of the COVID-19 undertones in the library.

Jerome Fortuin

Vredehoek

Vredehoek had the display with books and the signage that came with the pack. The display was eye-catching and many children, especially boys, stopped to look at the display. The displayed books were very popular and we had to top it up almost daily.

Pinelands

The books on display were extremely popular, especially for boys. Three children did the full programme and the age group it appealed to most was 8- to 10-year-olds.

'We must definitely continue with similar programmes and if it weren't for the pandemic more could have participated. I am sure that the material you provided will still be used in future programmes.'

Wilhelm Cronje

Ocean View Library

Two of the Ocean View Library angels, Lorenzo and Mickyle, will be part of our reading club. Lorenzo says he loves our hero books and also wants to be a hero in our community, by giving back to the boys and girls when he earns his own money. Mickyle says, he loves the good deeds that our heroes do in the books.

Fatima Kiel

Durbanville Library

We have received a lot of positive comments from the parents, boys and

staff. The parents were very impressed with the display especially for boys. They were also very pleased with the books selected by the children's librarian specifically for boys. Certain age groups were taken into account and the books were easily accessible with the display.

Charmaine Petersen

Retreat Library

I recruited nine boys, ages 9-14 who participated in the reading programme. I used the reading activity booklet that was provided. The boys thoroughly enjoyed the activity and were rewarded with a stationary pack for participating.

Leatitia Timmie

Table View Library

A display was set up, with books, bookmarks and booklets and children were encouraged to visit the display and take booklets. A total of ten booklets were taken by children.

Trevor Sikhosana

Claremont Library

We put up a display for the boy reading programme. There weren't many children in the library and it was mostly parents who visited the library. We eventually handed out six booklets to boy users. The children found the booklet interesting. However, parents felt that 2020 was a very stressful year and they didn't want to force their children to write reviews. Overall, there

was more interest shown by the girls than the boys.

Nuhaa Portland

Plumstead Library

We put up a display and it attracted a total number of four boys. Some of our challenges included:

- As we are not allowing patrons inside the library, we couldn't get enough boys.
- We referred to previous reading programmes' attendance registers and pulled some boys' names from there.
- The fact that the programme is aimed at boys between 8-2, ruled out a lot of our boys as they were older now.
- Children couldn't interact face to face with staff in charge with the programme due to the staff being vulnerable.

Despite the challenges there was some positive feedback and the reading toolkit was developed so that staff are able to implement the programmes throughout the year at their own discretion. In the meantime, the PSP unit is hard at work developing a Reading Toolkit for our little Reading Princesses that we hope to distribute at the end of the year. Watch this space.

Tracey Muir-Rix, Children's Coordinator Library and information Services: City of Cape Town



Curbside grab-and-go activity at Ottery Library

Creativity abounded at **Ottery Library** when they introduced a grab-and-go curbside library during the hard lockdown in 2020. Partnering with sister department Recreation and Parks, the library used posters and pamphlets to advertise the service.

Activity packs procured with Ward Allocations were distributed to young members of the library. This worked well for us as other children in the community also wanted to participate. Application forms were taken and handed in, with safety measures in place.

Every Thursday over a period of six weeks, participants would hand in one artwork (which was quarantined) before being given a snack pack, also procured with Ward Allocations as an incentive.

Compassion in Action, a home-based community organisation, assisted in handing out of pamphlets regarding the programme when dispensing medication in the community. They



also helped with the screening when children came to collect their packs.

Staff from Ottery Library and Sport and Recreation would pick one artwork which was posted on the library's Facebook page. The winner received a pack which was generously donated by Fadeela Williams from Kaleidoscope.



From the artwork that was judged and chosen over the period, the overall winner was given a snack pack, as well as a stationery pack and an extra Smartcape Session.

Patrick de Stadler, Senior Librarian:
Ottery Library

Happy birthday, LiBee



Bellville Library shared this Facebook message: 'Happy birthday to LiBee, our library mascot, and the rest of her swarm of bees! We are so proud of the



hard work you do in all our libraries. Always busy. (And thank you to Marlene Davids of **Pinelands Library** for your creation of our favourite bee)'



Valhalla Park Library celebrated the day with a lovely display; and it was all abuzz at **Pinelands Library** as they too celebrated LiBee's birthday.

How LiBee kept busy during the holidays



During the month of December LiBee went to **Central Library** and discovered the wonders of *Press Reader*. LiBee could not contain himself browsing through all the children's magazines available on the app. During his time there LiBee also met the Provincial Children's Commissioner, Christina Nomdo, who was appearing as a special guest for the Whimsical Wednesday Story Time. LiBee listened intently as the

Commissioner read a book called **A trolley full of rights** teaching the children about the importance of knowing their rights. LiBee was very excited to meet the Commissioner as she is a real life Superhero who fights for the rights of the children in the Western Cape.

When the President announced that the country would be moving back to Level 3 lockdown, LiBee decided that he would do his part

and rather stay safe by staying at home and not visit family and friends during the holiday break. But before going into self-isolation, he quickly buzzed off to **Lansdowne Library** and was absolutely enthralled by the amazing *Boys Love Reading* display that encourages boys to read. From graphic novels to humour and adventure, LiBee couldn't decide which books to take out. Luckily the friendly staff Zuraya Sassman and Ashraf Portland assisted in choosing some excellent books.

And so off LiBee trotted home armed with two bags full of books. LiBee couldn't wait to get home to curl up in his favourite nook and start his reading adventure. LiBee knows that books open up doors to amazing adventures and allows travel without leaving home. Like the display in the library, LiBee also wants to be a reading Superhero, because he is absolutely *#buzzedaboutreading*.

Tracey Muir-Rix, Children's Coordinator Library and information Services: City of Cape Town

Wynberg Library's quest to involve adults

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, public libraries have been very busy providing virtual story-time sessions and curbside activity packs for children to enjoy in the comfort of their own home. But something was still missing: adults were not being included. That is how the idea for the **Wynberg Library's Fitness Steppers (WLFS)** was born — a health and fitness initiative by the staff for adults. Each month a library item dealing with a specific exercise is chosen and three moves are selected, with background music selected from the library's extensive music selection. Staff members practice the moves, record it and post the video on the library's Facebook page and email a link to our relevant patron groups. The first WLFS session focused on Tai-chi and the video received positive feedback. Thus, Wynberg Library decided to continue with the initiative. In January hip hop moves were demonstrated, aimed at the whole family, as well as a Latin workout. Another initiative that

included adults was the Christmas Hunt in December 2020. A patron draws a clue and has to find a dummy cracker in the library and bring it to the circulation desk to win the actual cracker filled with goodies. With the Christmas Hunt we were able to introduce adults to different sections in the library and with the WLFS we were able to promote our exercise books, DVD stock and our music collection. We were also able to encourage our patrons to keep fit and healthy in a difficult time and walk with



The WLFS programme combines human movement themed to music chosen from the library's audio selection



The Christmas cracker hunt proved an explosive hit with inquisitive patrons

them on their journey to good health and fitness levels. Patrons were made aware of the WLFS on Facebook and have been following our other videos as well, showing the impact that these initiatives have in the lives of our adult patrons. Our staff have also really enjoyed interacting with patrons in this new way.

Kim Albertyn, Librarian: Wynberg Library

Wanneer perdemis vye is. Of nie

deur Francois Verster

Die omstredenheid rondom 'n onlangse publikasie het verskeie vrae aangaande 'n paar ou temas laat ontstaan. Wat weer eens onderstreep is, is dat historiese navorsingswerke, al word hulle soms as populêre geskiedeniswerke bestempel, hoë verwagtinge en vereistes stel — veral wat die navorsingsdeel betref.

Bogenoemde boek, geskryf deur Patric Mellet en getiteld **The lie of**

1652: a decolonised history of land stel sulke verwagtinge, hoewel dié verwagtinge nie dieselfde sal wees by alle lesers nie. Sekere lesers sal die titel as uitdagend vind, en skepties staan teenoor die onthulling wat dit impliseer — hierdie datum is welbekend en wek talle emosies by Suid-Afrikaners op. Vir die oorgrote meerderheid beteken dit die begin van kolonisasie en 'n pynlike botsing van kulture in hierdie smeltkroes wat as die Suid-Afrikaanse

nasie sou ontwikkel. Hulle mag die boek inspirerend vind, dog ook misleidend.

Ek gaan nie 'n resensie van **The lie of 1652** skryf nie: daar is reeds 'n halfdosyn in die koerante en in die kuberruim gepubliseer, maar eerder een van die vernaamste twispunte belig: die verskil tussen geskiedeniswerke teenoor historiese romans, oftewel feite versus fiksie.

Mellet se boek is 'n nuttige voorbeeld vir die tema van hierdie artikel, want dit word bemark as 'n geskiedeniswerk en daarom is geen fabulering daarin toelaatbaar nie. Die leser verwag diepgaande navorsing, sover moontlik primêre navorsing uit die brandkamers van argiefbewaarplekke, nie uitgesoekte dele uit ander skrywers se werke (sekondêre navorsing) nie. Dit is ononderhandelbaar dat stellings in so 'n boek gestaaf word met bewyse, sodat die skrywer se gevolgtrekkings met voetnote of endnote belig word, of dat sy/haar menings in die teks self met verwysings gepaard gaan.

In 'n fiksieboek, soos 'n historiese roman, verwag 'n mens geen stawende getuienisse nie. Jy besef dat die skrywer op verbeeldingsvlugte gaan en nie geloofwaardigheid beoog nie. 'n Fiksieskrywer kan natuurlik 'n storie





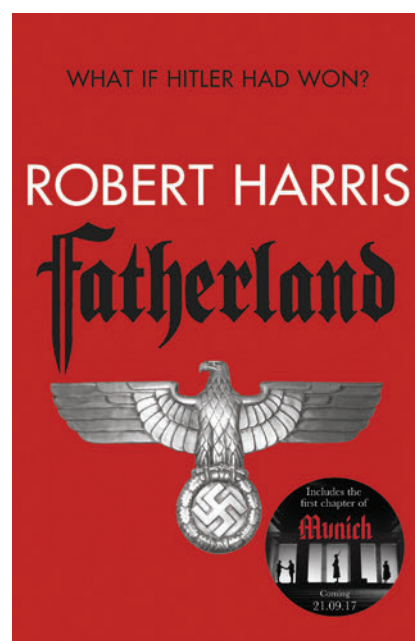
op werklike gebeurtenisse, plekke of persone baseer, maar die doel van die boek is nie om lesers van die waarheid te oortuig nie, maar eerder om hulle te vermaak. Die fiksieskrywer kan speletjies speel met die leser se verbeelding, en 'n standpunt inneem oor sekere lewenswaarhede, soos dat eerlikheid en liefde verkieslik bo slinksheid en haat is; of 'n tema soos verraad en die prys daarvan ondersoek deur die aksies en uitbeelding van karakters wat in die verhaal voorkom.

Historiese romans is gewild onder lesers omdat lesers dalk graag meer wil weet aangaande die omstandighede waarin 'n spesifieke historiese karakter geleef het. Die romanskrywer kan egter nie bekende feite verdraai, soos om van Tsjaka 'n operasanger te maak nie. Jan van Riebeeck kan ook kwalik in 'n fopdosser en kabaretliedheer verander word. Wanneer bekende persone, lewend of dood, se karakters

beswadder word, is die skrywer aan karaktermoord skuldig.

Indien die skrywer 'n historiese roman skryf waarin met die gedagte gespeel word dat hoe dinge sou wees indien die Chinese drie of vier eeue gelede hier 'n kolonie kom vestig het, of die Romeine nog veel vroeër, moet sodanige boek as 'n 'alternatiewe' historiese roman bemark word. Robert Harris se **The fatherland** (1992) is 'n bekende voorbeeld — die verbeelde storie van dit sou wees indien die Nazi's die Tweede Wêreldoorlog gewen het, en nie die Geallieerdes nie. Op die voorblad staan duidelik geskryf: *What if Hitler had won?*

Die skrywer en uitgewer moet ondubbelsinnig aandui dat so 'n boek fiksie is en radikaal van historiese gegewens afwyk. Die doel van die boek is nie om die leser te belieg nie, maar wel in te lig oor wat kon gewees het, en eintlik ook net een moontlike uitkoms,



maar nooit om die geskiedenis oor te skryf asof dit in werklikheid anders gebeur het; en alle ander weergawes van die geskiedenis onjuis is nie.

Uiteraard is die meeste lesers bewus van hoe die verlede daar uitsien en minstens op hoogte van die hooftrekke daarvan. Daar mag egter baie wees wat onkundig hieroor is en met 'n slap riem gevang kan word. Bedrieërs wat mense van hulle spaargeld besteele beweer dat jy mense maklik vang indien jy op hulle eie oneerlikheid inspeel en hulle gierigheid uitbuit. Vertel hulle net hoe hulle maklik en vinnig ryk kan word en hulle sal hulle spaargeld op die spel plaas — indien hulle wil glo wat die swendelaar kwytraak. Vertel mense dus wat hulle graag wil glo, soos dat die Kruger miljoene of El Dorado bestaan en dat hulle met 'n kleinerige belegginkie in die ontdekking daarvan miljoene wins kan maak.

Dieselfde geld vir storieboeke, of pseudo-geskiedeniswerke. Daar is niks verkeerd met oorwegend nie-akademiese taalgebruik, 'n vloeiende verteltempo en die fokus op kleurrike figure en opwindende gebeurtenisse nie. 'n Boek soos **The lie of 1652** plettervat bestaande opvattinge en kies 'n ongewone perspektief, wat geensins bevraagteken behoort te word nie — solank die omstrede stellings wat die skrywer maak van bewyse voorsien word. En met bewyse word onbesproke bronne bedoel. Wanneer die bronne aangedui word, soos in 'n bronnelys (óf toepaslikes na elke hoofstuk of alles saam agter in die boek), kan die kritici self gaan oplees om vas te stel of hulle met die skrywer saamstem. Dit is ook wat hulle van geskiedskrywers eis.

Bronnekritiek kom egter ook egter sprake: die bronne moet geloofwaardig wees — wanneer twee bronne teen mekaar opgewee word, sal 'n erkende historikus, soos Prof. Hermann Giliomee se bevindinge dáárom meer tel as dié van 'n joernalis of aktivis. Die boek se geloofwaardigheid sal dus daarby baat vind indien na elke beskikbare bron gekyk word en die mees betroubares gebruik word. 'n Ervare historikus kan vinnig sien hoeveel moeite die skrywer gedoen het deur slegs na sy bronnelys te kyk — historici wat jare lank in die betrokke studieveld gewerk het, sal opmerk wanneer die name van kenners op daardie gebied ontbreek. Indien

dit die geval sou wees, sal resensente dit noem en gevolglik sal die betroubaarheid van alle nuwe data of ontdekkings in die teks bevraagteken word. Wanneer 'n suiwer fiksiewerk as wolhaarstories voorkom, sal niemand 'n oog knip of 'n wenkbrou lig nie, maar geskiedeniswerke staan en val op grond van hulle bewyse.

Jy kan in 'n gewone historiese roman beweer dat Jan Smuts gereeld bo-op Tafelberg gesit en dink het aan die land se verlede, of aan politieke strategieë wat hy wil toepas, of aan die aaklighede van oorlog, wat ook al geloofwaardig sou wees teenoor wat ons van hom weet. As die skrywer egter beweer dat Smuts 'n vleuelklavier soontoe gedra het en beter as Liberace daarop kon speel, sal sulke beweringe as grappies afgelag word. Sou soortgelyke beweringe in 'n geskiedeniswerk voorkom, sal die skrywer met meer as net lagbuie te doen kry. Want daar bestaan nie net 'n deeglik-nagevorsde korpus oor Smuts se lewe nie, maar ook weet derduisende mense, nie net akademiese nie — te veel oor Smuts om nonsens vir soetkoek op te eet. Sou selfs ingeligte lede van die publiek dalk onseker wees van sommige beweringe, kan hulle bronne op die internet, biblioteke en argiefbewaarplekke raadpleeg, of met

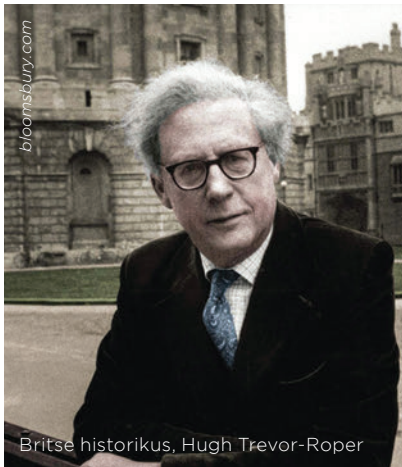
erkende spesialiste op daardie gebied daarvoor praat.

Geskiedeniswerke het 'n sekere status as rigtingwysers (hoewel na agter!) en skrywers daarvan het 'n plig om nie die mylpale en hoekstene moedswillig te verskuif nie. Die publiek het die reg om soveel van die verlede te weet as wat met redelike sekerheid (deurdat alle moontlike bewyse versamel en ontleed word) vasgestel kan word. Ek sê hier doelbewus 'kan' word, nie 'kon' word nie, want soms word nuwe bewysstukke ontdek wat bestaande oortuiginge bevestig of ontwortel. Wanneer bestaande oortuiginge as vals of onvolledig bewys kan word, soos deur 'n advokaat in 'n hof, moet die advokaat met nuwe getuienis vorendag kom en dié getuienis moet absoluut onomstootlik en onbesproke wees om oortuigend te kan wees. Selfs die grootste kritici en twyfelars se mening moet met die nuwe bewyse erken dat hulle voorheen verkeerd was.

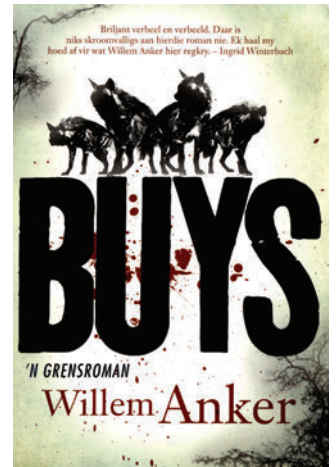
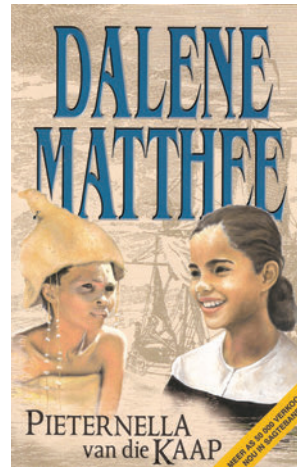
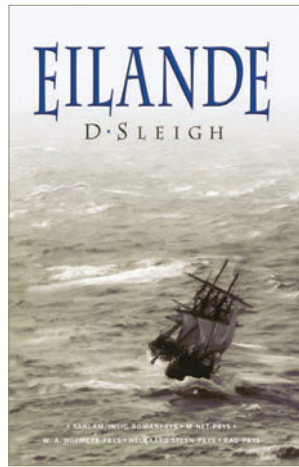
Sulke kritici sal uiteraard baie deeglik na nuwe getuienisse kyk, want hulle eie reputasies is op die spel. In 1983 het die Duitse tydskrif *Stern* 'n storie gepubliseer wat wêreldwye aandag geniet het — die sogenaamde nuut-ontdekte dagboeke van Adolf Hitler. Voordat *Stern* 'n groot bedrag geld



Gerd Heidemann, verslaggewer van die Duitse tydskrif *Stern*, met die sogenaamde Hitler-dagboeke in Hamburg op April 25, 1983. Heidemann is later skuldig bevind aan bedrog



Britse historikus, Hugh Trevor-Roper



aan die 'ontdekkers' daarvan sou betaal, wou hulle eers sekerheid oor die egtheid van die dokumente verkry. 'n Beroemde Britse historikus, Hugh Trevor-Roper, is gevra om die dokumente te ondersoek. Daar was 60 dagboeke en hy was van mening dat niemand 'soveel dagboeke sou vervals as net ses voldoende sou wees nie'. Sy bevinding was dat dit beslis Hitler se handskrif was en dat alles outentiek voorkom. Maar... hy was verkeerd!

Later het hy van mening verander, maar die koeël was reeds deur die kerk. Die arme man se reputasie is gevolglik erg geknou. Hierdie tipe vernedering is elke akademikus se grootste vrees en daarom veg hulle hand en tand daarteen — hulle sal niks aanvaar indien hulle dit nie eers versigtig omsingel, en met 'n vergrootglas, mikroskoop of teleskoop bekijk, besnuif en bevoel het nie! Niemand is seker so krities as 'n historikus teenoor 'n kollega wanneer hulle eer en dié van hulle vakgebied onder die soeklig kom nie. Dis hier waar die seuns van die manne, of die wolfhonde van die poedels geskei word; die herbevestiging van posisies op die rangorde is sodanig op die spel.

Maak 'n nie-historikus, byvoorbeeld, 'n stelling soos dat die hele geskiedenis-raamwerk van 'n tydperk soos die VOC-era aan die Kaap op 'n leuen gegrond is, en dat dosyne van die bekendste fundi oor daardie era of saamgelieg het of soos skape saamgeblêr het in die koor van die onderdrukkers, kan jy nie verwag dat hulle nie daardie vergrootglase sal uithaal nie. En waar gaan soek hulle

eerste? Soos genoem: by die boek se bronnelys. Om net te verklaar 'Ek het 'n bronnelys wat sus en suffel bladsye beslaan', beteken niks in die wêreld van die historikus nie. Enigiemand kan 1,000 bronne van die internet aftrek en agterin sy of haar boek plak. Wat bewys dit? En dis bewyse wat gesoek word. Klinkklare bewyse.

In my eie resensie van Mellet se boek (*The lie of 1652 gemeet aan ewewigtigheid, regverdigheid en objektiwiteit*, gepubliseer op Litnet, 25/02/2021) het ek die volgende insident gebruik om my ervaring van geloofwaardigheid en verwagtinge uit te beeld: 'Ek onthou hoe opgewonde ek was toe 'n vriend my in 1990 'n eksemplaar van **Indaba my children** (deur VC Mutwa, 1964) geleen het. Ek het begin lees oor die voorgeskiedenis waarvan ek in geen Europese geskiedenisboek iets kon kry nie. Wonderlik, wonderlik, het ek gedink. En toe ry 'n toordokter op 'n hiëna se rug — oor die bladsy, én oor al my verwagtinge. Ek het besef dat die outeur geen onderskeid tussen feite en mites maak nie en daarmee saam het ek geen rede gesien om verder te lees nie. Geskiedenis is geskiedenis: die res is mites, spekulasie, vermaak en selfs infame leuens.'

Met historiese romans soos **Eilande** (Dan Sleigh, 2002), **Pieterella van die Kaap** (Dalene Matthee, 2000) en **Buys, 'n grensroman** (Willem Anker, 2014) word duidelik gemaak dat hulle fiksiewerke is. Daar kan geen twyfel bestaan dat hoewel die hoofkarakters persone was wat werklik geleef het, die

skrywers nie gepoog het om lesers te flous nie. In sy resensie van Mellet se boek, *The lie of 1652* deur Patric Mellet: om die verlede te herverbeel (Litnet, 10/12/2020) het Desmond Painter beweer dat daar niks verkeerd is om die geskiedenis 'anders te maak' nie, maar om die verlede te verbeel, maak dit nie anders nie. Geen fiksie kan feite word omdat ons dit graag so wil hê nie. Nie in werklikheid nie, net in fiksiewerke — oftewel in ons verbeelding.

Daar bestaan ook 'n vertelvorm bekend as 'faksie' waardeur die skrywer 'n feitlike gebeurtenis, dalks selfs sy of haar memoir in 'n romanstyl vertel. Wikipedia beskryf dit as 'n nie-fiksie roman. 'n Skrywer kan, byvoorbeeld, die tragedie van die Titanic beskryf deur geensins van die bekende feite af te wyk nie, dog alles beskryf asof hy daar was. Feite word dus in romanstyl aangebied, nie om te verwar of te lieg nie, maar bloot om die gebeure op 'n meer interessante wyse aan te bied. Wanneer die skrywer egter sy eie interpretasie van feite as die onomstootlike waarheid bestempel, en selfs verbeelde dele aanlas, betree hy die terrein van fiksie. En dan is daar geen omkeerkans nie.

Op die keper beskou, is die grense tussen feite en fiksie soms vaag, maar ons weet tog almal seker wat die verskil tussen perdemis en vye is.

Dr Francois Verster is 'n historikus, argivaris en skrywer

Paul Simon's *Graceland*:

Those were the days my friends, of miracle and wonder

by Yunus Momoniat

When Paul Simon embarked on a project to draw inspiration from South African musicians, he set out on a perilous obstacle course that would stir fevered controversy. Here is an account of the politics of the making of the album and the cultural boycott that surrounded it.

Simon entered a political minefield: he transgressed the United Nations' call to boycott the apartheid regime, he angered the ANC and other liberation movements and dared to question the thinking behind their political tactics.

This was the project, begun 35 years ago in February, that resulted in the release of *Graceland*, the album that saved Simon's flagging career but also

brought world acclaim for music from South Africa

By no means ignorant of the horrors of apartheid, Simon appreciated the reasoning behind the cultural boycott, and had turned down invitations to perform at Sun City in what was then the Bophuthatswana 'independent homeland'. Other famous musicians took up the invitation and came to play to white South African audiences who would never otherwise see world-class acts because of the cultural boycott. Many of these were blacklisted, including Queen, Rod Stewart, the Beach Boys, Frank Sinatra, Elton John and, crucially, Linda Ronstadt.

Around the same time, Steven van Zandt, guitarist for Bruce Springsteen, founded Artists United Against

Apartheid, producing an album and single, both titled *Sun city*, to urge artists to support the cultural boycott. It featured Springsteen, Miles Davis, Bob Dylan, Herbie Hancock, Gil Scott-Heron, Ringo Starr, Run DMC, Lou Reed and Peter Gabriel among the 50 or so artists who took part. The single, released in December 1985, was moderately successful in the US but more popular elsewhere.

Emergence from the depths of despair

Before Simon began the *Graceland* project he was at an all-time low. His last album, *Hearts and bones*, was a commercial failure, the first time in



Rob Verhorst/Redferns/Getty

Paul Simon with fellow musicians from the *Graceland* tour at Ahoy in Rotterdam, Netherlands on 1 February 1987

his career that one of his records was ignored by the public and the only one not to go gold in terms of sales.

At 42, he felt he was unable to compete with Michael Jackson, Prince or Madonna, all the rage in the new MTV age. His marriage to actress Carrie Fisher had fallen apart after just a year, and he was deeply perturbed by his many negative experiences.

He spent much time sitting in his car, smoking joints for the first time in more than a decade, listening to music. He found himself listening to one tape in particular, *Gumboots: Accordion Jive Hits, Volume II*, a bootleg recording given to him by singer and songwriter Heidi Berg.

After making enquiries he got in touch with South African music

producer Hilton Rosenthal, who was linked to Juluka and Johnny Clegg.

The track Simon found haunting was by the Boyoyo Boys, *mbaqanga* veterans who had been making music since the early 1970s. The music did something to Simon, who underwent a slow emergence from his depression, the South African music drawing him into a happier frame of mind and giving him the motivation to do something musically new.

He joined with other musicians in January 1985 to record *We are the world*, a single to raise money for the famine-stricken people of Ethiopia, organised by Harry Belafonte and produced by Quincy Jones.

Simon approached Belafonte about his plan to travel to South Africa, and

he advised Simon to talk to the ANC about the cultural boycott.

According to Simon: 'There were people who said I shouldn't go. South Africa is a supercharged subject surrounded with a tremendous emotional velocity. I knew I would be criticised if I went, even though I wasn't going to record for the government of Pretoria or to perform for segregated audiences — in fact, I had turned down Sun City twice.

I was following my musical instincts in wanting to work with people whose music I greatly admired.

'Before going I consulted with Quincy Jones and Harry Belafonte, who has close ties with the South African musical community. They both encouraged me to make the trip.'



Penny Tweedie/Corbis via Getty Images

Paul Simon performs on stage during a promotional tour for *Graceland*, February 1987

But he didn't speak to the ANC and he didn't tell Belafonte when he made the decision to come to South Africa. He did, though, take this advice from Quincy Jones seriously: 'Just be sure everybody gets paid and that everybody likes you.'

Joburg, Soweto, a time of emergency

Simon arrived in Johannesburg with recording engineer Roy Halee and was shocked by the racial tensions in the country. This was in February 1985, about six months after the beginning of the Vaal Triangle uprising in September 1984, which would become the final wave of resistance that prompted the state of emergency in 1986, and which ultimately resulted in the demise of apartheid.

Before Simon left for Johannesburg, Rosenthal had contacted Kolo Lebona, a producer, to bring together the musicians Simon was interested in playing with.

Some of these musicians were eager to play with Simon, but not all of them. The Soul Brothers, supporters of the ANC, passed on the opportunity, having been advised by the ANC to reject Simon's overtures.

Simon spent a frantic two weeks in South Africa. He jammed with the musicians at a studio, recording hours and hours of music that would eventually be reconfigured into the

album. Unlike his previous work, where songs were constructed before he went into the studio, here he improvised, letting the musicians play and listening out for interesting ideas and snippets that could be turned into complete works. Unwittingly, he was laying himself open to the charge of cultural appropriation.

Some musicians addressed Simon as 'Sir', observing the norms of *baaskap*. And they were anxious to finish by 5pm so they could get back to the townships, in keeping with pass and curfew laws. But they soon relaxed into joyous music-making.

The Lesotho group Tau Ea Matsekha introduced Simon to Forere Motloheloa, who worked on the mines, and the accordion player provided the flourishes that would open the album.

Simon was impressed by the drumming of Vusi Khumalo, which reminded him of the groove on Elvis and Johnny Cash recordings. Bass virtuoso Bakithi Kumalo, who was working as a mechanic, hadn't heard of Simon when approached by Lebona, but he recognised *Mother and child reunion* when the producer sang the song to him. His bass lines would be a distinguishing feature of the album.

Chikapa 'Ray' Phiri played a progression that would become the basis of *You can call me Al*, the biggest hit from the album. The track *Graceland* began with a drum track from Khumalo, with Phiri putting a guitar lick to it that surprised Simon.

It had a minor chord in it, which South African music didn't generally use. When he asked Phiri about it, the guitarist said he'd been listening to Simon's records and frequently came across that type of sequence. Simon was pleased: it meant a coming together of two worlds both listening to each other.

Simon was soon introduced to Ladysmith Black Mambazo, the now renowned *isicathamiya* group founded in 1960. Its leader, Joseph Shabalala, was very quiet in the studio, even 'mysterious', according to Simon. Shabalala was shocked when Simon hugged him, while Simon was 'bewitched' by the Zulu choir's music, as the world would be later.

The Boyoyo Boys, veterans of the *mbaqanga* genre, were too nervous to perform at first, and the white engineers said it couldn't be done, but they were proved wrong.

General MD Shirinda and the Gaza Sisters contributed the Shangaan guitar and the hysterical, almost dissonant yet delightful female vocals to *I know what I know*, one of the quirkiest tracks on the album.

Eventually the core group consisted of Bakithi Kumalo, Ray Phiri and drummer Isaac Mtshali. Contributions were made by a string of musicians, including Barney Rachabane and Mike Makhalemele.

The album's reception — and awards

Simon says he named the album *Graceland* because it represents a process of healing: 'It seemed to be about finding something you could call a state of grace — the healing of a deep wound. And that's what was going on in South Africa. There was a deep wound, and then an attempt at a healing process.'

In New York he invited contemporary composer Philip Glass to listen to parts of *Graceland* and advise him. Glass recalled: 'I went over to his apartment with my wife, and he played a song, and, as he often does, he started singing the words over the music. I thought it was amazing. I said, 'Paul, this is a real breakthrough. It's going to be a masterpiece!'

In May 1986, before the album was released that August, Simon flew the

South African musicians to New York, first class, to appear on *Saturday Night Live*. They performed *Diamonds on the soles of her shoes*, and the audience was ecstatic. *SNL* producer Lorne Michaels enthused: 'It was the synthesis of two cultures... and the obvious affection they had for Paul, and that Paul had for them... It was the perfect moment.'

Warner Bros executives, who had written off Simon as a has-been, were bewildered when the album was played to them, although they sent out rumours that they went wild listening to the music. They must have been even more confused by the global public response to the album. It was a massive hit, remaining on the charts for 97 weeks. It won the Grammy for Best Album in 1987 and many other accolades. It sold about 16 million copies, and Simon regards it as the peak of his career.

The music is South African, the lyrics very New York, and *Graceland* was not planned as part of the album's theme, but Simon ended up making an album that was a hybrid of disparate elements. Indeed he struggled to create a unity out of the various themes, genres, styles and whatnot, a process that necessitated an interminable process of editing.

Even acclaimed Caribbean poet Derek Walcott, who Simon had met around that time, was impressed, saying: 'Mostly, songwriters try to be clever, and that's not the same as poetry.' According to Robert Hilburn, in his biography, **Paul Simon**: 'However, he [Walcott] felt that much of Simon's work contained the discipline, grace, and truthfulness of poetry, and he cited the opening lines of *Graceland* as evidence, describing them as "pure poetry, Whitmanesque".'

The *Graceland* Tour

Simon toured extensively in 1987 after releasing the album, meeting as much acclaim as hostility.

In early 1987 the UN had placed Simon on its list of those who had violated the cultural boycott. Before the tour began he was given a sort of idiot's guide to South African politics by Johnny Clegg. He held a press conference and read out a letter he had written to the ANC and the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid. But when the committee described the letter as an apology, Simon became defiant, and he was once again the object of criticism. But he was saved by Alan Boesak and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who weighed in on his side.

Simon roped in Hugh Masekela, who brought in Miriam Makeba, reinforcing the notion that this was not a project that would in any way exacerbate apartheid inequalities, and would instead bring the people of the world to a greater appreciation of the South African situation, and take the country's culture to a global audience.

There were protests outside many venues, with placards accusing him of stealing music from poor black musicians, typical of colonial extraction. In the US he was confronted by black activists who refused to acknowledge that he could work with the black South Africans as equals. At the Albert Hall in London, too, there were protesters.

The tour ended with a massive concert in Harare, Zimbabwe, where Makeba led a rendition of *Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika*. Thousands of South Africans had travelled to the country to attend the concert.

Yet more controversy

Musicians are always enmeshed in relationships that are productive but which also lend themselves to conflicts about intellectual property, with collaborators often claiming they were not given the credit due to them.

Simon's collaborations with South African musicians seems relatively free of such resentment, perhaps a rare example of a successful collaboration good for most of those involved.

Phiri appears to be the only musician who complained of being



Paul Simon in 1987 with the gold discs of *Graceland*

exploited. While Joseph Shabalala, General Shirinda, Forere Motloheola, Lulu Masilela and Jonhjon Mkhali of Boyoyo Boys are credited as co-composers of tracks on the album, Phiri is not, even though Simon admitted that *You can call me Al* was based on the guitarist's chord progression. So perhaps Phiri was not merely being resentful when he complained that he had not been credited as a writer. Nevertheless, he had this to say some time before making the accusation: 'We used Paul as much as Paul used us. There was no abuse. He came at the right time and he was what we needed to bring our music into the mainstream.'

Simon was accused of stealing the music of Los Lobos and also of Good Rockin' Dopsie and the Twisters, but he later opined that all musicians take from each other, in a process natural to music. Indeed, Simon himself had stolen the idea of a South African album from Heidi Berg, who had given

him that tape by the Boyoyo Boys, and she too accused him of stealing an idea which had been hers in the first place.

Linda Ronstadt's contribution to the song *Under African skies* was another cause for controversy. She had played Sun City in 1983, and her inclusion on the album was seen as a further snub to the anti-apartheid movement. Simon defended her, saying she had not been aware of the nature of South African politics when she toured the homeland. For this he was castigated by American critics. More seriously, he had offended the Azanian People's Organisation, which was much more militant than the ANC, and placed on their hit list. Strangely, it was Steve van Zandt who dissuaded the Azapo militants from 'neutralising' him.

It took Nelson Mandela to rehabilitate Simon in the eyes of some of the liberation movements. In 1992, the revered statesman invited Simon to perform in South Africa, with the backing of the ANC. Simon obliged

with a series of concerts, which were organised by promoter Attie van Wyk. But the Azapo militants were stewing at the move, and members of their youth wing tossed grenades into Van Wyk's offices, destroying the premises.

A reunion and anniversary

A well-researched documentary recorded the 25th anniversary of the album and Simon's return to South Africa in 2011 to reunite the musicians of *Graceland*. The documentary, *Under African skies*, was first aired in 2012. It charts the history of the project, its controversies and the reunion.

It features an encounter between Simon and Dali Tambo, one of the founders of Artists Against Apartheid, the two conversing about their views of what had happened. Simon sets out his case, followed by Tambo, and the pair argue back and forth about the issues. The reasoning behind the



Paul Simon with Ladysmith Black Mambazo in *Under African skies*, a documentary about his 1986 album, *Graceland*



Jim Dyson/Getty Images

Paul Simon performs the album *Graceland* live during the third day of Hard Rock Calling at Hyde Park on 15 July 2012 in London, England

cultural boycott, as set out by Tambo, was this: artists who came to South Africa were lending legitimacy to the regime, and exceptions could not be made to the boycott call, as this would have become an invitation to apply to the ANC to break the boycott. Simon argues that there was a distinction to be made between those playing with South African artists and those performing in segregated venues.

When Simon pointed to the manner in which the musicians had benefited from the project, Tambo averred that the ambitions of a few musicians could not be deemed more important than the fate of an entire nation.

But they arrived at a kind of peace deal, and at the end of their talk they embraced, and Simon could finally rest easy about all the issues that had simmered for so many years.

Aftermath

Phiri went on to play on Simon's next project, *Rhythm of the Saints*, and had been a successful musician even before his *Graceland* stint, leading one of South Africa's leading bands, Stimela. His life was marred by various car accidents, in one of which his wife died. He died in July 2017 at the age of 70, after being awarded the Order of Ikhamanga in Silver for his services to music and the arts. Despite his remark that there had been 'bad blood' between him and Simon, he concluded that if it had been different, 'maybe I wouldn't have been able to handle all that wealth. I sleep at night, I have my sanity and I enjoy living. The big rock 'n' roll machine did not munch me'.

Shabalala considered Simon as a brother, and their collaboration led to

Ladysmith Black Mambazo achieving immense acclaim throughout the world. The group went on to win five Grammy Awards, later working with George Clinton and Michael Jackson, among others. He died in February 2020 at the age of 79.

Some of the original band have since passed away — Mtshali in August 2019 and Makhalemele in 2000 — but Rachabane is still blowing his horn.

In February 2018, Simon announced that he would retire from live performances after a final set of concerts in the US and Europe.

This article was first published on dailymaverick.co.za on 8 March 2021.



Book reviews Boekresensies

compiled by book selectors

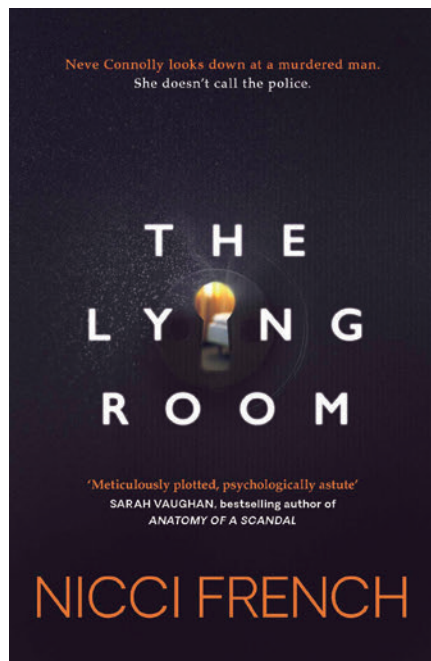
ADULT FICTION VOLWASSE VERHALENDE LEKTUUR

FRENCH, Nicci

The lying room. - Simon & Schuster, 2020.
'Over the past eight years, Nicci Gerrard and Sean French, the husband-and-wife writing team that makes up Nicci French, moved away from standalone psychological thrillers to follow the adventures

of psychotherapist Frieda Klein in a series of titles. **The lying room** is a return to their roots, and, oh boy, is it a good one. Neve is a publisher, a mother of three, a wife — a good woman who, lost in the morass of work, children and duties, has embarked on an affair with a colleague. When she turns up at his flat one morning to find his dead body lying there, she is presented

with a string of choices that leaves her increasingly in danger. "Her secret was like a monstrous thing, growing bloated in the dark." With its terrifying premise — how easy it is for an ordinary woman to find herself suddenly faced with evil — **The lying room** isn't merely a return to the form of Nicci French's earlier chillers — it's even better.'
(*theguardian.com*, Alison Flood)



Sebastian ter Burg

Sean French and Nicci Gerrard



KAPP, Sophia

Kanaän. - LAPA, 2020.

Kanaän is 'n historiese roman oor 'n eenvoudige, hardwerkende Afrikaner-boer uit die Vrystaat wat verlief raak op 'n beeldskone, gesofistikeerde, Johannesburgse stads vrou uit 'n skatryk Engelse familie. Hulle leefwêreld verskil hemelsbreed, maar toe alles wat sy gedink het standvastig is in haar lewe heeltemal in duie stort op 'n aaklige dag in 1944, kom hy tot haar redding en sy aanvaar die aanbod om vir 'n jaar sy vrou te wees op die plaas Kanaän. Catherine reken dit sal haar tyd gee om net weer rigting te kry, maar sy het nie voorsien om lief te word vir Chrisjan nie. Dit is egter 'n baie moeilike pad wat vir die twee voorlê. Anschen Conradie beskryf haar leeservaring van **Kanaän** as volg: '**Kanaän** is 'n historiese roman wat teen die einde van die Tweede Wêreldoorlog in Suid-Afrika (hoofsaaklik op 'n plaas in die Vrystaat) afspeel. Vooroordele en diskriminasie is belangrike temas; die onaanvaarbaarheid van "anders" wees sentraal daartoe. **Kanaän** is nogal 'n lywige boek (bykans 500 bladsye) maar dit lees maklik en vinnig, vloeit lekker, stel die leser bekend aan karakters wat gou in jou hart kruip, die dialoog is pittig en oortuigend en die omgewingsbeskrywings besonder realisties (ek het my verbeel ek voél die Vrystaatse winter). Mense se onvermoë

om te kommunikeer veroorsaak heelwat konflik en misverstande en was soms — veral tussen die hoofkarakters — vir my 'n bron van frustrasie, maar 'n paar onverwagte kinkels het verhoed dat sulke situasies in cliché's verval. Op die ou end het ek die boek toegemaak en gedink: dit was nou lekker! Lesers wat Irma Joubert geniet, kan **Kanaän** gerus ook aanskaf.' (goodreads.com, Anschen Conradie)

KOCH, Emily

If I die before I wake. - Vintage, 2019.

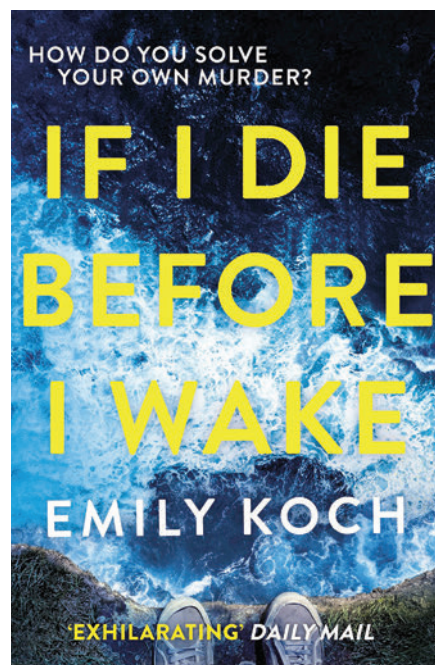
'A character (nearly always a man) with locked-in syndrome paralysed and speechless but with a fully functional brain has appeared in numerous crime novels (including one of mine) in the years since medics gave a name to the phenomenon. But it is a difficult feat to produce a whole book written from the viewpoint of a sufferer. Alex, the narrator of this clever, competent first novel, was a skilled rock climber until he suffered a serious accident. Now he lies in a hospital bed, unable to make a single muscle move to show his family and doctors that he can hear and understand everything. His girlfriend has stayed loyal, but even she must soon move on. Then Alex begins to understand what happened to him. Did he fall or was he pushed? I do not know (and probably nobody really

can) whether Alex's well-imagined state is plausible in real life, but his predicament makes for a good story.' (literaryreview.co.uk, Jessica Mann)

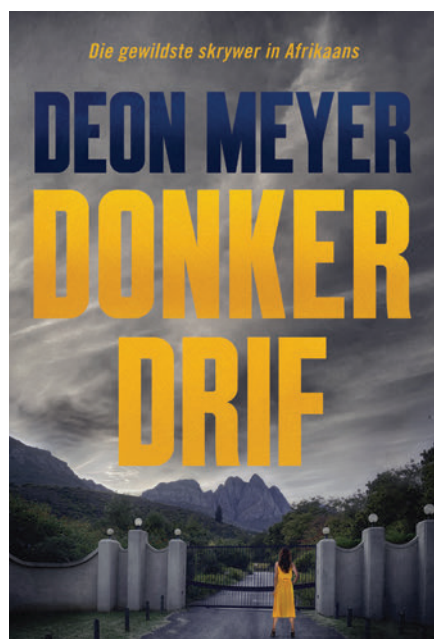
MEYER, Deon

Donkerdrif. - Human & Rousseau, 2020.

'Deon Meyer hét dit. Hy kan 'n pakkende speur-/misdaadverhaal skryf wat jou meesleur. So is dit gesteld met die jongste roman. Met die *usual suspects*: Bennie Griessel en Vaughn Cupido, en ander bekende randfigure. Die verhaallyne — soos in spanningsverhale — wissel vinnig van een toneel na 'n volgende. En uiteindelik hou dit alles verband met gierigheid, een van die doodsondes. Dit is duidelik dat die skrywer Steinhoff en Markus Jooste as vertrekpunt gebruik om die verhaal van *nouveau riche* en inkommers op Stellenbosch naatloos te vertel. Boonstra is duidelik op Markus Jooste gebaseer, ofskoon die skrywer beweer alles is verbeeldingsake. Hierdie ontkeningsklousule is egter nie waterdig nie. Die beskrywings van Boonstra is *vraisemblance*-materiaal. Herkenbare plekke waar Boonstra se vrou woon word wel verplaas, maar die leser wat hierdie eindelose sage in die media volg, weet presies wat hier gebeur. Boonstra is die baas van Schneider-König ('n uifers ironiese naam). 'n Man wat intimideer met vuige



stories oor ander wat hy misbruik soos dit hom pas. Tussen kenbaar en herkenbaar woed die verhaal voort. Met arme Bennie Griessel wat dissiplinêr verhoor word weens insubordinasie. En verplaas word. 'n Paar maande lank platsak. En 'n sakevrou, ene Sandra Steenberg — 33, en aantreklik én in diep skuld — word ingesluk in 'n verkooptransaksie met Boonstra se landgoed Donkerdrif. Boonstra se wettige vrou is onaansienlik en wraakgierig. Sy ruk 'n "kuberhaas" uit die hoed en ontmoet Sandra in die Decameron, die bekende Stellenbosse restaurant waar vele van die rykes en gesienes van hierdie dorp uithang. Die leser weet alles gaan nie goed afloop vir Sandra Steenberg nie. Boonop is haar man, Josef, 'n kenner van Ivan Vladislavic. 'n Mens verwag dat hy gaan vuil speel. En 'n jong student wat "wegraak" en deel is van kuberongerymdhede. Nog 'n spanningslyn wat die leser laat asemophou saam met sy moeder. Op die koop toe word die bedrog van die polisie ook ontmasker. Wie presies is verantwoordelik vir Milo April se dood? So alles is *local* en lekker. Ons dagblaaie onthul daagliks skandelerie bedrog en onheil. En Deon Meyer as flinke storieverteller put uit hierdie diep put van ongeregterig- en ongerymdhede. Die roman begin met 'n tipiese woeste aanslag: 'n geweldige polisiejaagtog en skietery. Met 'n baba wat net-net betyds



gered word en 'n jong kind wat alles aanskou. Dit eindig sonder *closure*... 'n Lyk in 'n vrieskas. Hier breek die outeur die konvensie van die speurverhaal deur die slot oop te hou vir bespiegeling. (En dalk vir 'n opvolgroman?) Meyer verwys met voetnote na vorige tekste soos **Ikarus** (2015) en **Prooi** (2018) wat 'n ander speurtog tot gevolg het vir die literator. Ook dit maak alles komplekser. Meyer se resep is: deeglike navorsing, die skep van spanning, afwagting, vinnige dialoog. Met 'n skeut humor. Werklike mense — kyk wie speel kitaar! — genderwaarnemings en kritiek op 'n samelewing wat al hoe meer plofbaar en gierig geraak het, maak hiervan 'n eerste klas spanningsroman. Die verskillende verhaallyne word saamgesnoer en afgewissel bykans soos in 'n opera. Daar is *cliffhangers* en hierdie leser het die roman een nag tot drie uur uitgelees. Jy wil weet hoe alles gaan eindig... Dis 'n roman soos die film **LA Confidential** waar die verrotting van binne af gebeur... Dis onnodig om Meyer te resenseer. Sy romans verkoop en hy het 'n getroue aanhang by nie-literêre lesers en letterkundiges. Hy laat alles so maklik lyk, maar soos by Agatha Christie steek hy sy navorsing weg agter 'n storie wat vorentoe beweeg. Tereg is hy alreeds nommer een in die boekwinkels.' (joanhambidge.blogspot.com, Joan Hambidge)

PHAMOTSE, Jackie

Bare III: ego. - Phamotse & Company Pty Ltd, 2020.

'Tortured to the bone, Treasure Mohapi steps into a world that many haven't seen in Sandton; the new way of life filled with millionaires and quick cash scams doesn't come cheap. The young model seems too naïve for Sandton and her bloodsucking master stops at nothing to prove his power. Treasure finds herself face to face with the devil who controls ministers, doctors and policemen. A secret society like no other in the history of Africa comes alive once again. As she is drawn into supremacy, the chains of material slavery keep following Treasure and her best friend Lintle Kente. After years of sexual entertainment and high flying, can their master let them go? With the increasing number of dead bodies, drugs and cults, will this love affair prove to be a way of life for many? The wives of the rich and

famous have deep, dark roots too. This bloodcurdling trilogy comes to an end in **Ego**; after blows and life-changing tragedies that led Treasure into the Devil's den, she finally sees the light. This story of agony hope and resilience will not only open your mind but will pave a way for generations to come.' (goodreads.com)



ROBERTS, Kuli

Siren. - BlackBird, 2019.

'TV and media personality Kuli Roberts's debut novel, **Siren**, dishes out grime and dirt of the entertainment industry using fictional characters to tell a tale of the things she has seen or heard, and the realities of existing in South Africa's entertainment industry. With over 21 years of industry experience under her belt, Roberts's decision of not following the norm of most celebrities by releasing a memoir was informed by her need to tell a good story in a more holistic approach that is more than just telling her story. This includes the sharing of crucial life lessons, with the right amount of entertainment and shock value that aims to persuade the reader to reflect and find inner strength. The book follows a young girl, born from an affair between her mother and her boss, right in the heart of apartheid — in the mid-70s and the story goes on all the way into 2018. Zinhle's tale talks about

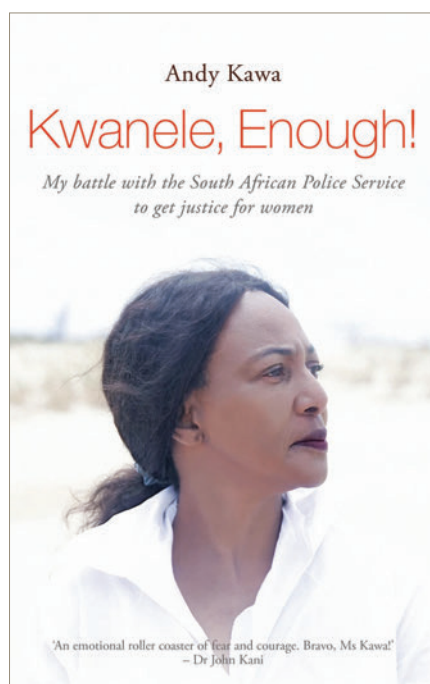


growing up and wanting to pursue a life in the entertainment industry, but also that life isn't easy. Through the character's rags-to-riches recollection, Kuli delves into explicit topics such as sex, drugs, betrayal, dodgy managers and pimp parties dubbed as Yellow bone parties, while also anchored by strong values such as the importance of knowing oneself, a lesson that emerges strongly throughout the book. It is nothing short of tabloid scandals, said Roberts.' (*jol.co.za*, Amanda Maliba)

ADULT NON-FICTION VOLWASSE VAKLEKTUUR

KAWA, Andy **Kwanele, enough: my battle with the South African police service to get justice for women.**- Tafelberg, 2020.

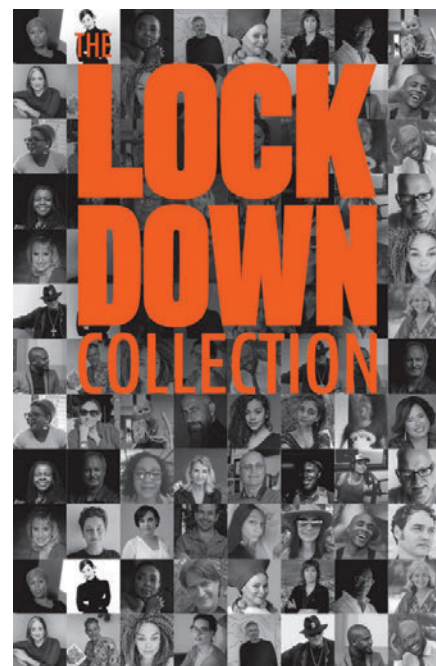
'Accomplished businesswoman Andy Kawa's life was changed irrevocably when, on a summer's day in 2010, she took a stroll on the popular Kings Beach in Port Elizabeth. Abducted in broad daylight, she was dragged into nearby dunes, and gang raped. Her attackers were never caught. Kawa successfully sued the police for failing to properly investigate the attack.



Justice Sarah Sephton found police officers were grossly negligent with regard to her case. The police appealed — and won. Yet Kawa would not give up her fight for justice. She has begun her appeal to the Constitutional Court. This is her story.' (*timeslive.co.za*)

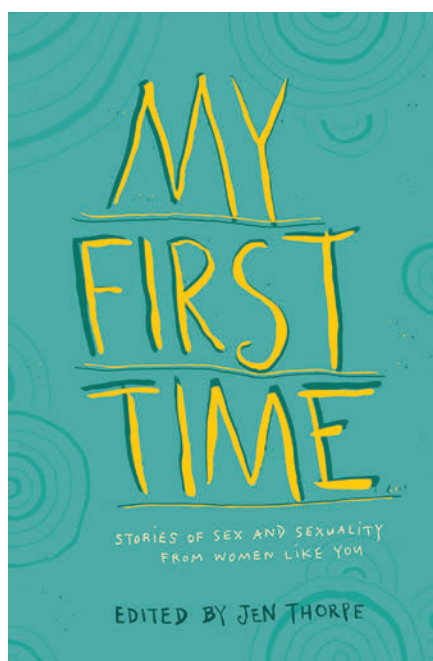
The lockdown collection/edited by Melinda Ferguson.- Melinda Ferguson, 2020.

'A host of South Africa's favorite writers and thinkers have come together during the current coronavirus crisis to write about their experiences of lockdown. The book showcases a list of South Africa's most celebrated writers including Sisonke Msimang, Fred Khumalo, Ben Trovato and Haji Mohammed Dawjee. Also among the collective are Lindiwe Hani (**Being Chris Hani's daughter**) and former TV presenter Tracy Going (**Brutal legacy**).' (*capetalk.co.za*)



My first time: stories of sex and sexuality from women like you/edited by Jen Thorpe.- Modjaji Books, 2012.

A collection of stories by a Cape Town-based feminist writer and Southern African women who share their personal stories about their first sexual experiences. 'This is a collection of honest, powerful, and brave accounts. Some joyful, others funny and some heart-breaking, but all of them important for women, and hopefully men, to read.' The collection includes stories such as: *my first orgasm, my first experiences of sexual assault, the first time I knew I was raped, my first HIV test, my first pap smear, my first time I had to deal with rape, the first*



time I had an abortion, my first abusive relationship and more stories. This is an important read for women to know that they are not alone in their experiences.

APM

ZWANE, Rita and MORRIS, Isabella
Conquering the poverty of the mind: maZwane's story.- Tracey McDonald, 2019.

'This inspirational book chronicles the journey of entrepreneur Rita Zwane who left home as a teenage mother after matriculating from high school. She left her family in Umlazi, Kwa-Zulu Natal to seek greener pastures in Johannesburg. From odd jobs to selling food in a shipping container that would subsequently translate into Tembisa's



most successful restaurant, Busy Corner Imbizo Shisanyama. She breaks down the struggles she had to overcome with her faith as a Christian and cultured Zulu woman. The idea of having a traditional Zulu cuisine at her disposal, anytime, inspired the menu that is now a part of Busy Corner Imbizo Shisanyama. This book is definitely a must-read for any township dweller who is curious about penetrating the economy of these often-neglected informal settlements.' (gautengnewspaper.co.za)

YOUNG ADULT FICTION
JONG VOLWASSE VERHALENDE
LEKTUUR

RESTREPO, Bettina

Illegal.- Katherine Tegen, 2019.

'Nora's beloved Papa has been working illegally on a construction site in Texas and sending money back home. But when the letters and money stop coming, Nora and Mama leave family behind and set out to find him. After being smuggled across the border in a stifling, packed mango truck, they struggle to survive with false papers in Houston, where they find no work. No Papa. No nothing. With depth and detail, Restrepo tells the story of contemporary illegals.



Never sentimental, this debut novel is clear about the characters' harsh daily struggle for shelter, food and community, as Nora fights off violence, including an attempted gang rape; makes friends (who also need help); and questions her faith in God. Her insistent dream is to go to school, and she also longs for shoes that fit and pierced ears for her *quinceañera* celebration... At times, the prose veers into docu-novel territory, but the unsparing language keeps the tension mounting as well as the heartbreak: *Nothing but their broken dreams hung in the air, and they stank.* The teen's immediate first-person narrative will hook readers with its gritty specifics, honest anger and sorrow, and the small acts of kindness that occur throughout the harrowing journey.'

(booklistonline.com, Hazel Rochman)

JUVENILE FICTION
JEUGLEKTUUR

DIECKMANN, Sandra

Waiting for wolf.- Hodder & Stoughton, 2019.

'A tear-jerking tale of two friends, Fox and Wolf, and what happens when Wolf turns into starlight and disappears. Unable to accept loss, Fox searches everywhere until she realises that Wolf is never coming back, but that

she has their shared memories still to treasure. From her illuminated heavens to Fox's slumped, despondent posture, Dieckmann fills her illustrations with deep emotion in this beautiful book.' (theguardian.com)



FAROOK, Nizrana

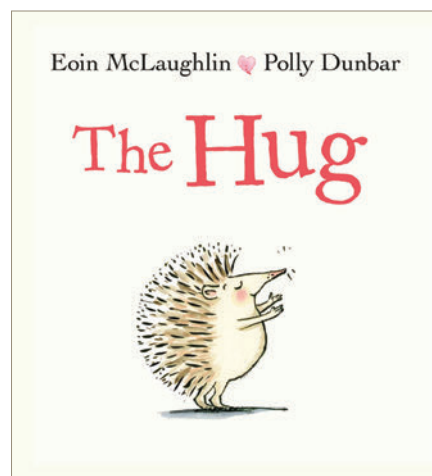
The girl who stole an elephant. - Nosy Crow, 2020.

The girl who stole an elephant, Farook's first novel, is about a girl who is a thief and only steals to help the poor. This emotional story of crime and royalty is a perfect read since we can relate as poverty is a major issue in real life as well.

'A robbery leads to a jungle adventure



set against a backdrop of political upheaval. Chaya, about 12 years old and daughter of the village headman, spends her free time stealing from the rich people in the King's City in order to help villagers who have fallen on hard times. When a boy in her village desperately needs medical care, Chaya pulls off her biggest caper yet: stealing jewels from the queen. Unfortunately her escape is not so clean leaving her best friend, Neel, who supports his family through carpentry, standing accused of the theft and sentenced to death. Chaya sets about making things right, leading to further complications. Ultimately, the two friends escape to the jungle, accompanied by Nour, the curious and slightly naïve daughter of a merchant, and Ananda, the king's elephant. Things go from bad to worse as the children trek through the island's jungle, learning to face their fears and rely on each other, with the threat of the king's verdict always looming. Chaya continues to make mistakes, never quite learning to think before acting. Though the pacing is somewhat uneven, the lush descriptions of the dense, beautiful jungle and a South Asian-inspired kingdom that evokes Sri Lanka shine through. The elephant, in particular, is a delight. All characters are South Asian; in this Buddhist country, Nour is Muslim. A lush wilderness adventure story.' (kirkusreviews.com)



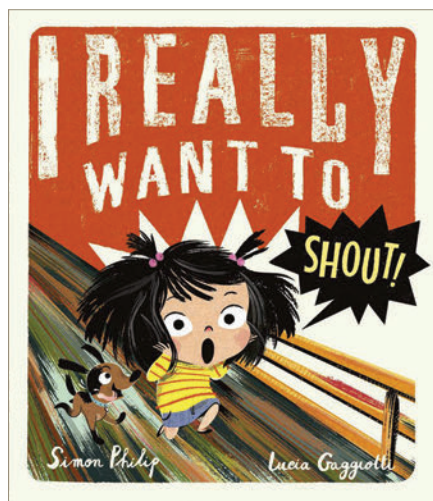
MCLAUGHLIN, Eoin

The hug/illustrated by Polly Dunbar. - Faber & Faber, 2019.

'Open this double-sided book one way and meet sad and very cute Tortoise, whose polite request for a restorative hug is met with equally polite but clearly cooked-up excuses from other animals ("Unfortunately, I'm digging a very important hole," says Rabbit, who isn't). "It's your shell," Owl explains. "It's just so very hard. But don't worry, there's someone for everyone." Flip the book over, and it's the same trajectory for sad and adorable Hedgehog, whose quills are the deal-breaker. Tortoise and Hedgehog retreat from



the world into tight little spheres of shell and prickles, respectively, until they notice each other. In a vertically oriented spread that serves as a visual centre between the two versions, they embrace without any qualms at all, "as happy as two someone's can be." Debut author McLaughlin doesn't break new ground in this story of two lonely animals finding comfort and friendship, but he and Dunbar (**A lion is a lion**) bring a good measure of wit to the story. Dunbar's animal portraits, drawn along a single, cream-coloured plane with minimal background detailing, are funny and astute, suggesting that animals can be every bit as awkward and endearing as humans. Ages 3-up.' (*publishersweekly.com*)



PHILIP, Simon

I really want to shout!/illustrated by Lucia Gaggiotti.- Templar Books, 2020. A picture book about emotions which is part of *I really want to...* series. We all get angry once in a while, but it can be hard to know what to do when you feel this way. The little girl in the story explores different ways to manage her anger, in a laugh-out-loud joy to read aloud book with rhyming phrases and illustrations that capture a lot of feelings. But it's also so much more than that as it really speaks to developing emotional literacy in children and has gentle (and hilarious) lessons about managing that trickiest of emotions — anger. This also works well as a standalone picture book and would be perfect reading for schools and families to help children open up about their emotions and make connections to their own feelings. **BHN**

THEUNISSEN, Karen (umbhali), GIBBONS, Charles (imizobo), GUZULA, Xolisa (inguqulelo) **Ndinesikhumba esiNtsundu neenwele ezimajikojiko.**- Jacana, 2020.

Olu ncwadi lwemifanekiso lumalunga nengxubakaxaka yobuni abantwana abaninzi abazibona bekuyo xa bekhangeleka benomahluko kumanye amalungu osapho. Umntu ngamnye unenkangeleko eyohlukileyo kolu sapho, utata mde kwaye umnyama, umama uneenwele ezimbala umdaka namehlo aluhlaza, abantwana baneenwele ezolukileyo, ze abanye babe neenwele ezijikojiko. Abanye abantu xa bedlula kumalungu olu sapho



babajonga ngendlela enemibuzo. Ngethamsanqa omnye wosapho uye wafunda ngemvelaphi yakhe nangokuba kutheni ekhangeleka enomahluko, watsho wanesibindi sokuthetha ngokuziqhenya ngobuni bakhe. Le ncwadi inika abantwana ibali elinomahluko malunga nembali engabaliswa yoMzantsi Afrika, echaza ngendlela amalungu osapho axubeneyo ngokobuhlanga athi achaphazele ngayo inkangeleko yangaphandle yomntwana kodwa abe eseyiyo inxalenye yosapho olunye. (This is also available in English and Afrikaans). **NNG**

STEVENS, Bethan

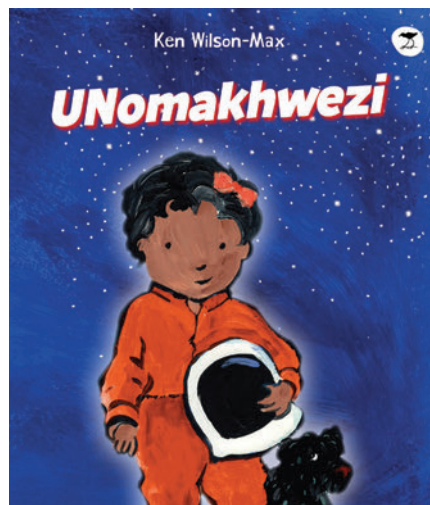
The grumpy fairies.- Frances Lincoln Childrens Books, 2020. A picture book about a bunch of 'foot-stompy, frowny, bottom-lip-sticky-outy'



fairies — and one very hungry goblin with a taste for small grumpy things. It will appeal to children as it has hidden messages of how much better it is to be cheerful and helpful but will also have your child giggling at the comical faces of the grumpy fairies. The illustrations are big and clear with focus on the expressions of all the characters, enabling small children to engage with this book. **BHN**



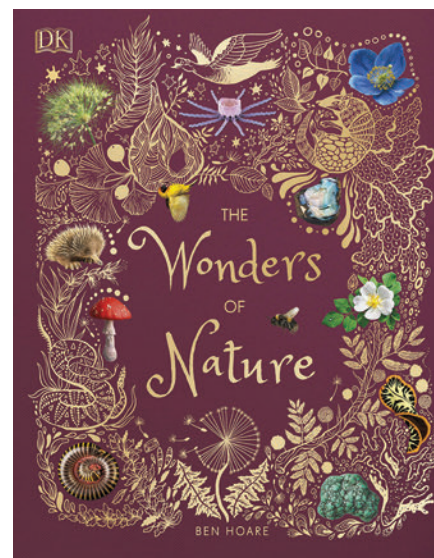
WILSON-MAX, Ken (umbhali), GUZULA, Xolisa (inguqulelo)
UNomakhwezi.- Jacana Media, 2020.
 UNomakhwezi, yintombazanana encinane ethanda iinkwenkwezi nendalo yonke esemajukujukuni nenqwenela ukuba nguSomajukujuku ngenye imini. Utata wakhe uhlala edlala naye ngokuthi amane emjuwuzisa ngapha nangapha ekwamjikelezisa kuba esithi ufuna aqhele ukujikeleza umhlaba ngesiphekepheke sakhe. UNomakhwezi ufunda ngokulingisa imingeni ejongana noSomajukujuku xa ekwiphulo eliya emajukujukuni, ukutya ngombhobho, ukwenza imifuniselo, ukuphila nokulala kwindawo ephantse yangabinawo umbizane. UNomakhwezi uyakwazi ukuzenza zonke. Kule ncoko yabo bothuswe kukufika kwexesha lokuya kulanda umama wakhe kwisikhululo seziphekepheke. Eli bali lifundisa ngotyelelo lwasemajukujukuni. Ekupheleni kwebali, umbhali ukrobisa umfundi kwabanye ooSomajukujuku basetyhini bakwamanye amazwe. (This is also available in English and Afrikaans). **NNG**



JUVENILE FICTION JEUGLEKTUUR

HOARE, Ben
The wonders of nature/illustrated by Angela Rizza and Daniel Long.- Dorling Kindersley, 2019.
 'This book is a treat from its gold-embossed cover and gilded pages to the stunning photographs detailing each wonder it contains. It's an edifying celebration of earthly objects and life, divided into four broad categories: "Rocks and Minerals", "Microscopic Life", "Plants" and "Animals." In a departure from DK's usual glossy, magazine-like layouts, this book is simple and spacious. Topical two-page spreads, printed on heavy matte paper, offer readers a full-page, magnified photo; a concise paragraph or two of interesting information; and an artistic rendering of the object, plant,

or animal being discussed. "Rocks and Minerals" presents the Mohs scale of hardness, followed by a sampling of minerals, gemstones, rocks, and fossils. "Microscopic Life" zooms in on minuscule life-forms, from diatoms to water bears. Artistic photography captures the unexpected beauty of plants like the corpse flower and a vibrant pink tumbleweed. The "Animals" section presents simple invertebrates through complex mammals. This is a wonderful choice for browsers and those curious about nature. A concluding visual guide also serves as an index for the book's many wonders.' (booklistonline.com, Julia Smith)

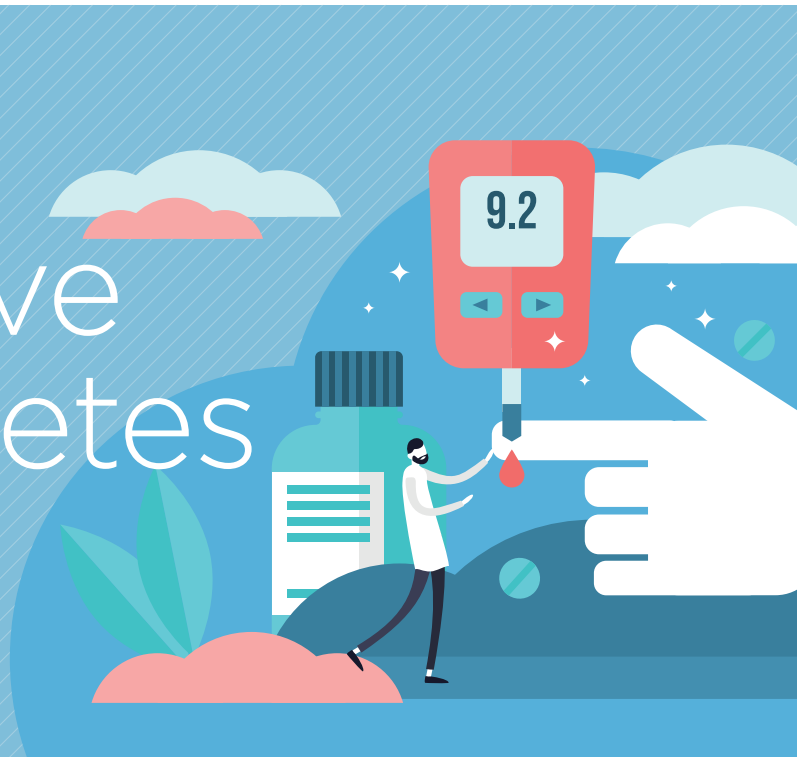


Note: At the time of going to press some of these titles were still on order.

APM Ayanda Majola
BHN Boniswa Notiki
NNG Nomonde Ngqoba

How to live with diabetes

compiled by Boniswa Notiki



Diabetes is a group of metabolic disorders characterised by high blood sugar. According to the World Health Organisation, between 2000 and 2016, there was a five per cent increase in premature mortality from diabetes. By 2014, there were 422 million diabetes sufferers in the world; and is more prevalent in low- to middle-income countries.

The disease can cause blindness, kidney failure and heart attacks. Yet it can be treated and its consequences delayed with a healthy diet, exercise, medication and regular screening.

The following books provide insights to living with diabetes and caring for diabetes sufferers from a selection of local and international authors.

GOVENDER, Manogran
Diabetes defeated: re-engineering life 4T2.

- Reach Publishers, 2014.

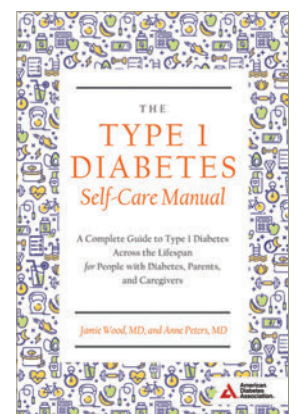
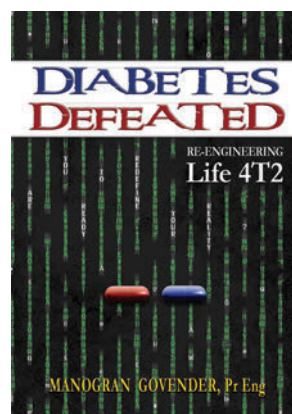
The author, a South African civil engineer, claims that type 2 diabetes is reversible. After his father and mother-in-law both succumbed to diabetes as well as him suffering from it, he was determined to find a cure. This is his personal journey in reversing diabetes.

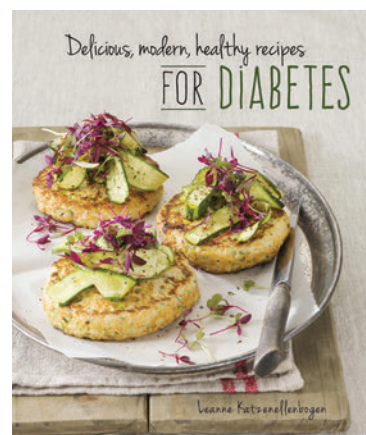
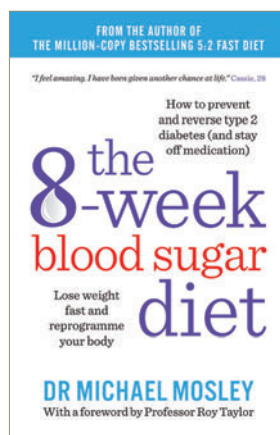
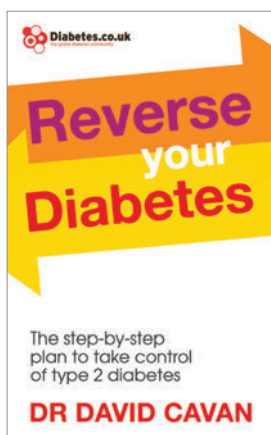
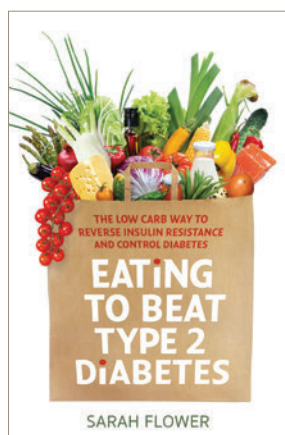
A highly readable and inspirational effort. **NNG**

VAN DER MERWE, Arien
Hanteer diabetes en verwante gesondheidskwessies/ Managing diabetes and related health challenges.

- Human & Rousseau, 2015.

This book by a South African medical





doctor about managing diabetes is available in both English and Afrikaans. In an interview with *Litnet*, the author explained that she insisted on adding the 'and related health challenges'-suffix to the title, because diabetes (high blood sugar) seldom occurs in isolation and is always accompanied by high blood pressure, increased waist circumference (insulin resistance), high triglycerides, harmful LDL-cholesterol and non-harmful low HDL. She explains what diabetes is, its symptoms, the different types, what causes diabetes, from physiology to emotions and what pre-diabetes and insulin resistance are. She also elaborates on the link between diabetes and metabolic syndrome, the connection between diabetes, heart disease, Alzheimer's and depression; and which medications may be prescribed. Dr Van der Merwe also explains the mind-body connection and gives advice on food supplements and herbal remedies. **BHN**

WOOD, Jamie and PETERS, Anne L
The type 1 diabetes self-care manual: a complete guide to type 1 diabetes across the lifespan for people with diabetes, parents, and caregivers.

- American Diabetes Association, 2018.
 This book offers practical, evidence-based and common sense help and will help sufferers and carers understand the effects of type 1 diabetes, not just when diagnosed, but throughout their lifespan. The authors, two of the most respected and sought-after endocrinologists, provide an easy-to-follow narrative on all aspects of the disease. **APM**

FLOWER, Sarah
Eating to beat type 2 diabetes: the low carb way to reverse insulin resistance and control diabetes.

- Robinson, 2018.
 'This book by a qualified nutritionist offers a key message for those who either have or are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes: avoid processed grains, sugars and other foods; and opt instead for a balanced diet containing proper ingredients that are rich in natural fats and good-quality protein. There are also tips on how to make the essential dietary changes to fight type 2 diabetes and the science behind them; provides a comprehensive "go-to" list of good and bad foods; providing practical, easy-to-follow and utterly delicious family recipes which prove that changing your lifestyle and eating habits doesn't have to mean missing out on foods you love.'
(Publisher's description)

CAVAN, David
Reverse your diabetes: the step-by-step plan to take control of type 2 diabetes.

- London: Vermilion, 2014.
 'Dr David Cavan is Director of Policy and Programmes at the International Diabetes Federation. The relaxed dialogue of his book about type 2 Diabetes just bounces through the complex pathology and treatment of diabetes, and it does so in a way that all patients can and will understand with ease. It keeps the reader engaged throughout and is certainly a book that healthcare professionals could recommend to patients who have been recently diagnosed with type 2

Diabetes. For patients who have had the condition for longer it does provide a balanced and reassuring perspective for managing and optimising treatment and lifestyle changes. The clarity of his discussions on a wide range of topics is based on his 17 years as a consultant physician at Bournemouth Diabetes and Endocrine Centre and may also prove instructive to healthcare professionals. For patients and their carers, the slow logical progression of the book ensures a comfortable journey.' *(glycosmedia.com)*

MOSLEY, Michael
The 8-week blood sugar diet: lose weight fast and reprogramme your body.

- Short Books, 2015.
 Mosley is a medical doctor who was a TV presenter on health issues for the BBC for many years. He is also the author of **Fast diet**. In this book, he provides research findings and case studies to support his diet in which one can lose weight rapidly and lower one's blood sugar drastically, even reversing common type 2 diabetes, the latter of which poses a serious health risk. Advocating a diet of 800 calories per day for 8 weeks, this book includes recipes and a diet plan. I am sure that there will be people who will find this useful. **JDB**

KATZENELLENBOGEN, Leanne
Delicious, modern, healthy recipes for diabetes.

- Stuik Lifestyle, 2017.
 The author is a registered dietician who specialises in working with insulin resistant and diabetic patients. The book

contains delicious, modern, healthy recipes for diabetes, with interesting recipes using ingredients available on South African grocery store shelves. It provides an overview of various recipes and doesn't join the carb free revolution, although it does offer both low carb and low-fat options in recipes. Every recipe lists the kilojoules, proteins, carbohydrates, fat and glycaemic index and glycaemic load of recipes for one portion. This is a useful book with lots of pictures and every home with people at risk of or living with diabetes will benefit from it. **BHN**

DE BEER, Vickie and MEGAW, Katherine
The low carb solution for diabetics: 100% gluten free, sugar free, delicious recipes.- Quivertree Publications, 2015.
 This is a low carb cookbook for diabetics written by South African professional chefs. Vickie de Beer shares the story of her son who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes and how her family supported him by following a low-GI diet. By writing this book, she wants to share that information with other people who find themselves in a similar situation. It is divided into three parts: part emotive journey, part cookbook and part medical reference. Vickie's meals are simple to shop for and packed with all the essential nutrients growing bodies and minds need for optimal health. Grouped seasonally and covering all days of the week, from Monday through Sunday, it offers a wide array of choices for every meal of the day. **BHN**

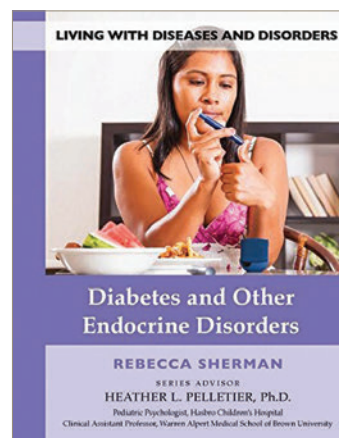
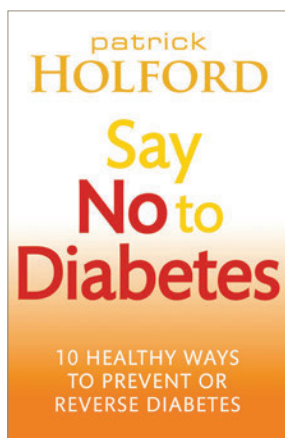
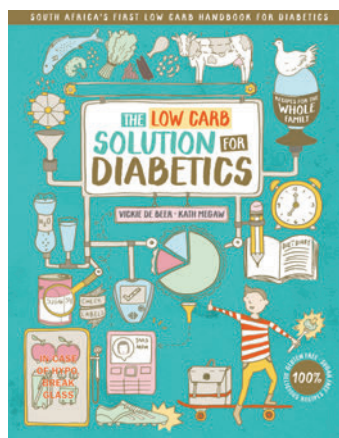
HOLFORD, Patrick
Say no to diabetes: 10 healthy ways to prevent or reverse diabetes.
 - Piatkus, 2011.
 'In **Say no to diabetes**, nutrition expert Patrick Holford presents a complete action plan for sufferers of Diabetes type 1, Diabetes type 2 and the forerunner of Diabetes 2, Metabolic Syndrome, with motivating case histories and supported by the latest scientific findings. He advises on the causes of the current diabetes problem, explains the ten secrets for preventing and reversing diabetes and Metabolic Syndrome, and provides an anti-diabetes diet, a daily supplement programme, and advice on how to undo the damage caused by diabetes and diabetes drugs...'
(Publisher's description)

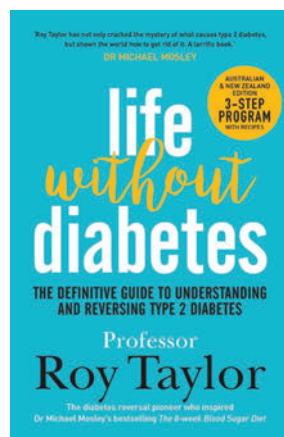
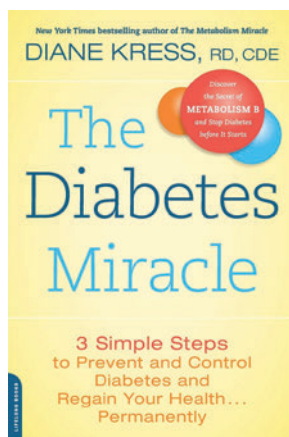
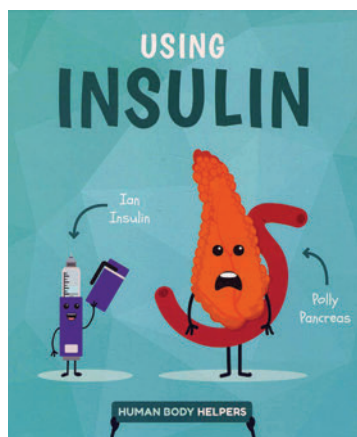
LATEGAN, Hilda A
South African cookbook for diabetes: delicious and healthy for all/ Suid-Afrikaanse kookboek vir diabetes: smaaklik en gesond vir almal.- Tafelberg, 2015.
 This book by a South African medical doctor about managing diabetes is available in both English and Afrikaans. It contains basic information on diabetes and healthy eating and is primarily a good basic recipe book with lots of practical and everyday recipes for dishes from breakfast dishes to salads, lunch ideas, main courses, baked goods and desserts. The dishes are all suitable for diabetics and those who want to follow a Low GI diet. There are colour photos of each dish. Each recipe accompanied is

by nutritional analysis of one portion as well as information on how long it should be frozen for; as well as menu ideas. I think that this book will be very helpful and in fact, I would give it to anyone who has been recently diagnosed and wants to cook tasty meals for the whole family. **JDB**

SHERMAN, Rebecca
Diabetes and other endocrine disorders.- Mason Crest, 2018.
 'When people think of diabetes, they often think of older people. But rates of diabetes in children and young adults are on the rise. This book explains the specifics of what diabetes does to the body, while also walking the reader through a typical day for a diabetes patient. It provides tips for keeping up with the disease in terms of diet and exercise, encouraging kids to live a normal, happy and healthy life. Diseases and disorders transform the experience of childhood, forcing kids to confront adult concerns that we wish they could avoid...'
(Publisher's description)

DUHIG, Holly
Understanding juvenile diabetes.
 - BookLife Publishing, 2018.
 'Diabetes is a very common disease that can affect both children and adults. In 2015, there were about 1.25 million children and adults with type 1 diabetes in the United States. This accessible book introduces readers to how type 1 diabetes affects the body, explores its symptoms, and explains how to treat it. Full-colour photographs





and fact boxes illustrate key points. This informative book will be valuable to readers learning to deal with type 1 diabetes, or who have loved ones with diabetes.' (*booksinprint.com*)

KRESS, Diane

The diabetes miracle: 3 simple steps to prevent and control diabetes and regain your health — permanently.

- Da Capo, 2013.

'My favorite part of Diane Kress's book,

The diabetes miracle, is that it does not claim to cure or reverse type 2 diabetes. In fact, if it did claim such to be an actual miracle cure, I wouldn't have spent any energy on reviewing it. Instead, this book is an awesome tool, almost like your own nutrition coach, actually, to help you live well with type 2 diabetes, understand the complications of uncontrolled diabetes, lose weight healthfully and keep it off, prevent or stall the progression of pre-diabetes to type 2, learn how to lower your cholesterol and blood pressure,

and of course, help you develop a positive mindset for living with such an immense and sometimes overwhelming disease.' (*diabetesdaily.com*)

BRUNDLE, Harriet

Using insulin. - King's Lynn BookLife, 2019.

Human body helpers is a new juvenile non-fiction series written in a picture-book format about the 'different devices people sometimes use to help them see, hear, move around, and do other important tasks'. They are 24-page, illustrated library-bound hardback books. This book 'explains the steps from what the pancreas is to living with diabetes with Ian Insulin and Polly Pancreas'. **SCG**

TAYLOR, Roy

Life without diabetes: the definitive guide to understanding and reversing type 2 diabetes. - Short Books, 2020.

Based on new research, this is a guide to reversing, or putting into

remission, type 2 diabetes. This makes interesting reading. Written by Newcastle University expert Professor Roy Taylor, the book... explains how for centuries type 2 diabetes was regarded as an incurable, lifelong condition. Even worse, it seemed to be inevitably progressive — but no longer is this the case. In 2006, he finally found the missing piece of the jigsaw which explained that it was actually a reversible condition. With his team of researchers at Newcastle University, Professor Taylor launched a series of studies leading to a remarkable, multi-million-pound trial, which in 2019 confirmed that simple advice about diet could bring about lasting remission. In this book, Professor Taylor brings all the knowledge and experience of four decades of treating people with diabetes. He explains exactly what is happening in the body as type 2 diabetes develops and shows how you can live a full and healthy life beyond it. **SCG**

APM Ayanda Majola
BHN Boniswa Notiki
JDB Johanna de Beer
NNG Nomonde Ngqoba
SCG Sabrina Gosling

Boniswa Notiki is a book selector at the Western Cape Library Service



Email etiquette

by Ronel Mouton

Emails are seen as a formal communication and is one of the most used means of official communication. Unfortunately most people, especially professionals, do not always practice good etiquette.

Research shows making errors seriously impacts how people see you. In one study, participants who read an email with grammatical errors thought the writer was less conscientious, intelligent and trustworthy than those who read the same email without errors. In a separate experiment, people who applied for funding were less likely to be funded and received less favourable terms when their loan requests had spelling mistakes.

This shouldn't be too surprising. If you read an email riddled with typos, you probably think one of two things:

- The sender doesn't know basic spelling and grammar
- The sender didn't care enough about this message to review it before sending.

Neither bodes well for your relationship. So, to avoid prospects coming to these conclusions about you, here are a few email etiquette tips every professional (especially client-facing ones) should know and follow.

Essential rules to follow

1. Keep your tone professional

Include all the relevant information, being friendly and formal. For example:

Dear Joe

It was great to discuss the training collaboration with you over the telephone earlier. I hope it cools down a little bit in the Karoo.

You should have received a calendar invite from me for the planning meeting we agreed upon for Tuesday, 7 April at 14h00. You will also find an agenda with points for discussion attached below.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards
Mercy

2. Use a clear and direct subject line

Always include a subject line that is descriptive enough so that people know what the content is about, because people decide whether to open an email on the subject line. Managers receive many emails and for reference sake and to follow-up it helps

a lot if proper subject lines are used, for example 'Library hours amendment'.

- If you have many emails with the same content, try to differentiate by using numbers, dates et cetera. It may be difficult or time consuming to find that one email you want to forward amongst all the emails with the same subject line
- Do not leave the subject line empty
- Do not use a subject line like 'Hello!'

3. Practice good grammar

One will possibly make some mistakes, but try to correct obvious mistakes.

Know the difference between: there/they're/their; its/it's; effect/affect; your/you're; too/two/to; loose/lose; I/me/myself; and send/sent.

Grammarly at [grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com) is a handy tool to assist with grammar and style writing.

4. Do not use emojis in official emails

Research reveals including emojis in work emails is bad for your reputation. They make you look less competent (and they don't have any effect on how friendly you seem). In formal business emails, a smiley is not a smile.

5. Use a professional email address

You should use the company's official



email address as far as possible to ensure that the receiver can see who you represent. Your email address should convey your real name so that people can clearly see who you are. Do not use nicknames or your private playful naming in private emails, for example 'babygirl@gmail.com'.

6. Use proper punctuation

End sentences with the proper punctuation mark. If you do not end sentences properly, it looks like you did not complete the thought.

7. Do not always 'Reply to all'

Most people do not want to see the responses to an email that was sent to 50 people and that was actually intended as notification broadcast. Only 'Reply to all' on the email list if you think that everyone really needs to see your response.

8. Use professional salutations

Do not use colloquial expressions like 'Hey guys', 'Hi folks', et cetera. *Hey* is a very informal salutation and generally it should not be used in the workplace;

Yo is not acceptable either. Rather use *Hi* or *Hello*, *Good morning*, *Good afternoon*, *Good day*, et cetera. Use the full name of a person except if you know that they prefer the shortened form of their name, for example Michael instead of Mike.

- *Yo*: too informal
- *Hey!*: too intimate and eager
- *[Name]!*: too off-putting
- *To whom it may concern*: too impersonal
- *Dear sir or madam*: too stiff
- *Hi friend*: too creepy
- *Gentlemen*: too old-fashioned
- *All*: too cold.

9. Include a 'signature'

Provide your reader with information about you. Generally, this would state your full name, title, the company name, and your contact information, including a phone number. You also can add a little publicity concerning yourself, but don't go overboard with any sayings or artwork. Use the same font, type size, and colour as the rest of the email. It has happened many times

that I wanted to contact the author of the email telephonically, but there was no other available information than a short ending like 'Regards, Jack'. Follow the branding instructions of your municipality or organisation if it is provided, for example:

Ronel Mouton
The Happy Librarian: The Great Library
Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport
St John Street, George, 6715
Office: 044 8141 481
Cell: 082 5626 471
Fax: 086 669 1455
Email: Ronel.Mouton@westerncape.gov.za
Website: www.westerncape.gov.za



10. The right sign-off

'Regards' or 'Kind regards' is a good greeting at the end of an email in English. In Afrikaans it would be in order just to say 'Groete' and 'Ozithobileyo' in isiXhosa.

11. Use capital letters where needed

When you are texting an email on your cell phone and even on the computer, make sure that capital letters are used at the start of sentences and with the use of proper nouns like names.

For example, Pets are welcome at The Coffee Bar coffee shop.

12. Use exclamation marks sparingly

If you choose to use an exclamation mark, use only one to convey excitement. People sometimes get carried away and put several exclamation marks at the end of their sentences. The result can appear too emotional or immature, so use exclamation marks sparingly in writing. In general, exclamation marks aren't considered very professional. So, leave them for your happy hour text messages to friends.

Wrong: 'Thanks again for a productive conversation yesterday! I talked to Finance and we're good to go! Can't wait to work together!!!!'

13. Reply to emails

Respond as soon as possible to emails when you are the addressee, even if it is to say that it will receive attention or that you took note. Reply to emails even when it was accidentally sent to you especially if the sender is expecting a reply. Let a sender who sent an email wrongly to you know, so

that they can resend the email to the correct person. If input is requested, but nothing can be added, then respond indicating that. For example, 'No amendments to recommend' or 'No new information available yet'.

14. Proofread every message

Do not rely on spell-checkers, but read and reread your email, preferably aloud before it is sent. For some people your email is the first encounter they have with you and it leaves a certain impression. One supervisor intended to write 'Sorry for the inconvenience', but he relied on his spell-check and ended up writing 'Sorry for the incontinence'.

15. Add the email addresses last

You do not want to send an email accidentally before you have finished writing and proofing the message. Even when you are replying to a message, it's a good idea to delete the recipient's address and insert it only when you are sure the message is ready to be sent.

16. Double-check the selected recipients

Pay careful attention when typing the names of recipients in the 'To' line. It can sometimes be embarrassing if

certain people repeatedly receive email by mistake and important information can be lost on the wrong person.

17. Keep fonts classic

Emails should be easy to read. It is best to use 10- or 12-point type and an easy-to-read font such as Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman or Century Gothic. The font colour should be black. Don't bold or italicise more than one word (or string of words) in a single email. And if you're copying and pasting text, make sure you highlight it and clear the formatting. If you don't, the snippet will appear differently than the rest of your email.

18. Check your tone

To avoid misunderstandings, read your message out loud before hitting send. If it sounds harsh to you, it will sound harsh to the reader. For best results, avoid using strong, negative words ('failure', 'wrong', 'neglected'), and always say 'please' and 'thank you'. Like in any business writing, it is best to stay away from emotional words and too many adjectives. Stick to facts.

Examples: Very, really, extremely, highly, grave, serious, deeply.

If the content of an email is sensitive and can be easily misinterpreted, it

would be a good idea to communicate via telephone.

19. Nothing is confidential

A basic guideline is to assume that others will see what you write, so do not write anything you wouldn't want everyone to see. Remember that an email is dangerously easy to forward, and it's better to be safe than sorry.

20. Do not write in ALL CAPS

To WRITE IN CAPITAL LETTERS is seen as shouting at someone. So, whether you WhatsApp or email, keep the letters normal sized. If you know what you want to say, let your words show how you feel and leave the Caps Lock button alone. One obvious exception would be if you're using acronyms, for example, ASAP (as soon as possible), TBD (to be determined), et cetera.

21. Call out attachments

Indicate somewhere in your email you've included an attachment, so your recipient expects it and looks for it. A simple 'I've attached a document/spreadsheet' will do the trick. And make sure you're reattaching files when you add someone to an email chain, or they won't be able to see them. (An alternative? Simply forward them the thread.)

22. Fill out the email fields properly

To: This field is simple. Add the email address of the person you're trying to contact.

Cc: If you'd like to include someone else on the message Cc them. You're essentially saying, 'Hey, read this, but don't feel obligated to respond. Cc-ing someone is necessary when there's relevant information in the email or you're connecting them with the actual recipient. Cc comes from the words *carbon copy*.

Bcc: Bcc-ing also copies your contact to the email, but no one besides them will see they received it. In other words, if you send an email to Michael Scott and Bcc Jim Halpert, Michael won't know Jim got it as well. Bcc comes from the words *Blind carbon copy*.

23. Use Bcc appropriately

To hide email addresses. Bcc can be used to protect someone's email from being exposed to others. For example,



if you're emailing a group of people about an upcoming event, you may opt to Bcc all emails so you're not exposing emails without permission. Bcc can let someone see a message without actually including them on all the threads to follow.

24. Think before forwarding

There are a few key pointers to keep in mind for proper email forwarding etiquette:

- Some emails are not intended to be forwarded. If a contact is sending you private or sensitive information, use caution before forwarding it along
- Keep communication lines and confidentiality in mind. Ask permission to share information if you are not sure if it is appropriate
- When forwarding a long email thread, a common courtesy is to summarise what's being discussed below so the recipient knows exactly what you want from them. There's nothing worse than getting forwarded a 50-chain thread with a note that just says, 'see below'.

But email threads can sometimes contain valuable information about contacts, timelines and lack thereof, so it can come in very handy at times.

25. Set out-of-office replies

If you're going to be unavailable for an extended period of time, an automated 'out-of-office' reply with a reference to who can assist should it be urgent can let whomever is contacting you know that you won't be able to respond to their message until the date you'll be in the office again. Some do's and don'ts for replies:

- DO: Include how long you'll be unavailable
- DON'T: Create a response for one day
- DO: Include another person to contact for more urgent matters
- DON'T: Include a colleague to contact without letting that colleague know they're your reference
- DO: State clearly in your subject line so people can easily identify the automated response
- DON'T: Include more detail than needed, such as the exact location of your vacation.

26. Make use of paragraphs

Paragraphs help to make reading emails easier and assist with the setting out and structuring of the communication of ideas. See the difference between an email with paragraphs and one without.

Here is an example without paragraphs, making reading more difficult:

Hi Patrick We are planning a training event and would like you to present the workshop on Reader Guidance that was held in Hermanus last month. The date of the training is set for 20 August and will last for 2 hours from 10h00 to 12h00 in the Stellenbosch Library hall. We will handle all the organisation and supply the catering and venue for 40 people. Please let me know by the end of the week if you can assist us. Regards Ronel

Here is the same message, using paragraphs:

Hi Patrick

We are planning a training event and would like you to present the workshop on Reader Guidance that was held in Hermanus last month.

The date of the training is set for 20 August and will last for 2 hours from 10h00 to 12h00 in the Stellenbosch Library hall. We will handle all the organisation and supply the catering and venue for 40 people.

Please let me know by the end of the week if you can assist us.

Regards
Ronel

27. Numbering of paragraphs

Use numbers to indicate paragraphs in some cases to make it easy for people to respond to certain ideas by referring to the number of the bullet. These days emails are used as the memo, a letter, a notice or any other written communication purpose and it may be necessary to structure the email to convey the information in a sensible, understandable and well-structured communication format. For example:

Hi

As discussed in our staff meeting, we need new blinds to be installed in all our spaces because:

1. Some windows have curtains and some not, which does not make a good impression.
2. The existing curtains are very old and hang unevenly.
3. Blinds are needed for security purposes.
4. Block-out blinds are needed where regular presentations with a projector are made to make viewing clear.

I hope this clarifies the need for blinds in our offices.

Regards
Jack

28. Keep it short and sweet

When it comes to your work emails, the shorter the better. Keeping your emails concise and to the point means not only less time spent crafting your email, but also a timely response from the person you emailed. Trust us, no one wants to read a novel in their inbox. The exception is if you must give more information.

29. Attachments

Not all recipients can receive large attachments via email. A good alternative would be to send a link to a large file that is stored in cloud storage like Google Drive, One Drive, Dropbox, et cetera.

References

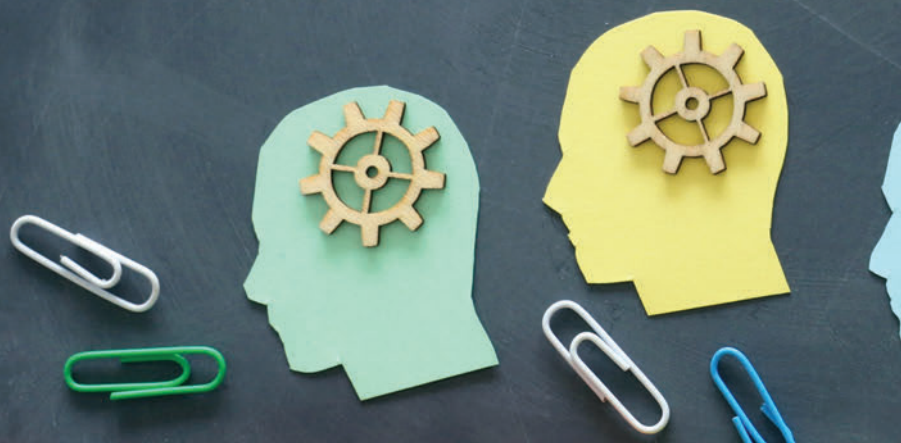
www.inc.com/business-insider/email-etiquette-rules.html
blog.hubspot.com/sales/email-etiquette-tips-rules
in.bgu.ac.il/en/pages/news/smiley_emojis.aspx
www.topresume.com/career-advice/best-practices-email-etiquette-work

Ronel Mouton is Deputy Director: Regional Organisation at the Western Cape Library Service



Learning about learning

by Leonard Fortuin



The life cycle of civilisations, when plotted as a bell curve, shows that its rising curve represents substantial learning and knowledge accumulation activities; whilst the declining curve suggests complacency and moral decay.

The good news is that a similar decline in the life-cycle of individuals, communities and organisations can be slowed down by an adherence to lifelong learning practises.

In Standard Four (Grade Six) I was introduced to an embroidered motto in Afrikaans, displayed prominently above the blackboard. It said: 'Learn as if you are going to live forever but live as if you are going to die tomorrow.' This motto had, and still has, a substantial impact on my life journey.

Learning is a hard-wired mental process during which one acquires additional skills, knowledge, abilities as well as a new awareness of oneself

and one's surroundings. Learning happens when data and information is processed and transformed into knowledge which in turn changes behavioural patterns. The acquisition process (learning style) can occur visually (through reading, observation), cognitively (via speaking, active listening) or kinaesthetically (by doing). Whilst research has shown that visual learning is the most common, the most effective learning occurs when all three learning styles are used in combination.

Examples of learning behaviours

- Reading books, magazines, articles
- Attending industry talks and seminars
- Attendance of online courses and degrees
- Watching videos and listening to podcasts

- Undertaking challenging assignments and roles
- Asking for help whenever something is unclear
- Observing others who are more experienced in a particular area
- Learning by the time-tested method of trial and error
- Practicing, applying and assessing the new skills
- Tracking one's own progress over time through self-analysis
- Requesting and responding to feedback.

We know that successful learning took place when, over a sustained period, some or all of the following occurs (which serves as criteria for assessing learning effectiveness):

- Changes in behaviour
- Purposeful activities
- Increased interaction



- Problem solving
- Information acquisition.

Most of the above behaviours are clearly visible in baby and toddler behaviour, as they have an intense and unwavering focus on learning, growth and development. Learning should be a continuous process during our entire lifetime.

Unfortunately, for many there is a tendency, that, as we grow up, learning slows down.

Obstacles to learning

- Complacency with the status quo
- Being locked into one particular worldview
- Resting on pre-attained laurels
- Perception that formal accredited learning opportunities are the only way to learn at work.

Complacency results in a no-need-to-change condition, while being locked into one particular world view acts as an impenetrable barrier for new insights. Academic qualifications are like cars: once obtained, they start to depreciate. A degree must be seen differently, as a mere gateway to further opportunities.

Benefits of learning

The benefits of learning are substantial, both on a personal and professional level. It enhances our ability to interact with individuals in different social, racial and cultural strata, improve our self-confidence (knowledge and competence is power), and enhances employability (making the person more marketable and displaying a broader life perspective). The benefits of learning mirror that of active listening.

For the organisation, investing in current staff is more cost-effective than hiring new people. Properly executed, employees know they are valued and their retention is virtually guaranteed. Furthermore, motivated, empowered, skilled and knowledgeable staff contribute to the organisation through increased productivity, adaptiveness, relevance and innovation; especially in the fast-paced, rapid-change society we live in.

Learning settings

There are many types of settings where learning can take place. The first is the formal/academic environment. Examples of these are courses, seminars and workshops; which are externally initiated. In informal/social learning settings learning is initiated and controlled by the individual, and



as such tends to be more effective. Informal learning environments are more diversified; and range from everyday casual interaction to interaction during formal learning settings. The availability and accessibility of the electronic domain is slowly becoming the dominant learning setting.

What are continuous learning and learning organisations?

Continuous learning refers to the process where people at work are provided with the opportunity to make learning an integral part of their work. It focuses on the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge and abilities primarily to make them more proficient at doing their jobs.

Learning organisations are particularly adept at integrating learning into their organisational culture.

What is lifelong learning?

Lifelong learning, as opposed to continuous learning, is voluntary and initiated internally by the individual itself (who is blessed with a curious mind). For these individuals learning is a way of life and is fully committed to developing themselves personally and professionally. For them, learning is a pleasurable and richly rewarding exercise.

Successful learning organisations attract employees committed to lifelong learning, as they appreciate and make full use of the learning opportunities provided.

On becoming a learning organisation

The first step in this transformation process is to convince employees that participation in the continuous learning programme benefits them as well as the organisation. Employee buy-in is of critical importance, which lessens the tendency of learning attendance being merely a means of escaping the office routine.

1. Identification of learning needs

The continuous learning programme must speak to the needs of the

organisation; and of employees.

A learning needs analysis will invariably show that the requirements of the employee and those of the organisation reflect a mutual need. It will also reveal skills gaps. Such analysis can be done quickly and effectively by making use of existing organisational communication channels.

2. Developing learning content

Once the learning needs are identified, relevant content can be developed. Content refers to learning opportunities directed at developing specific skill or knowledge sets. Content should be regularly reviewed and adapted to changing circumstances.

It must be accessible to everyone in the organisation and detail what is available, when, and where, and who it is directed at.

3. Identify learning facilitators

Presentation, facilitation and delivery of learning opportunities are critical, as inappropriate delivery may lack the desired impact. A cursory scan of literature shows that effective learning facilitators (which include teachers) possess the following attributes:

- Social intelligence
- Superior communication skills
- Flexibility
- Acute observation skills
- Unwavering positivity
- Authenticity
- Lack of bias
- Energetic personalities
- Appreciation of structure.

There is nothing more demoralising than being in an environment where one is forced to attend a learning opportunity when the learning facilitator is not equipped to facilitate learning. It is an area that needs serious transversal attention.

4. Learning assessment

This, in essence, refers to the process whereby an organisation assesses whether its learning interventions have been successful or not; as well as eliciting the reasons why, which will determine changes in both content and presentation. A simple mechanism of assessment is to

request feedback from attendees to provide feedback.

5. Discussion

Content and its presentation should take cognisance of an appreciation of different learning styles, especially in a multi-cultural environment. Within the multicultural context, a one-style-fits-all approach is especially detrimental to effective learning. Content and its presentation should be flexible, available when and where required and continuous (not once-off).

Organisational leadership must be seen to be publicly committed to learning and allocate the required resources (expertise, time, space and funds) towards learning activities. Organisations should ideally find a way of rewarding successfully demonstrated learning implementation behaviours.

It is further advised that we constantly seek out new activities and experiences to keep our neural pathways open and active. Completing crossword puzzles, listening to music (especially classical) and physical exercises are popular choices in this regard.

Conclusion

People want to learn. It is in our nature. It's what brought us to an apex position in this world. It is therefore not surprising that Albert Einstein said that intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease at death. This is equally true of the emotional, psychological and spiritual domains.

Growth and development can only occur through the acquisition, absorption and processing of data and information, resulting in the application of knowledge and wisdom.

Learning is therefore a major gateway towards achieving life and career fulfilment.

Leonard Fortuin is the assistant director of the Metropole Region at the Western Cape Library Service



New on the shelves

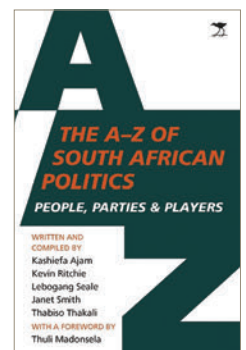
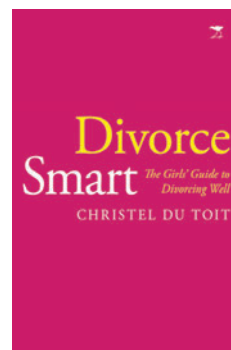
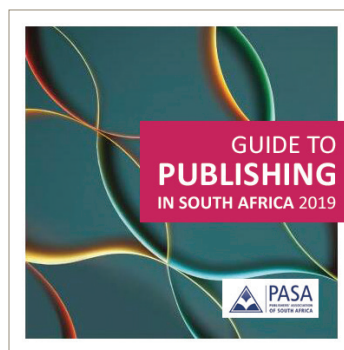
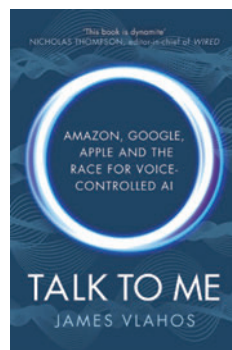
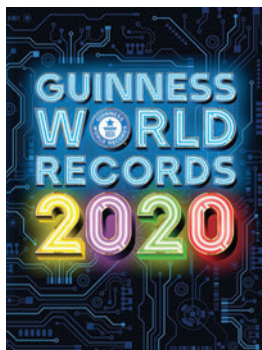
compiled by Sandra Kingswell

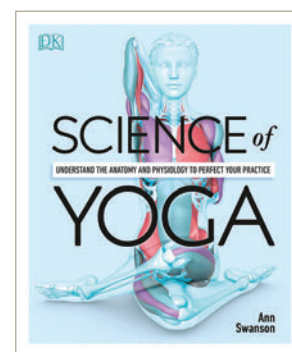
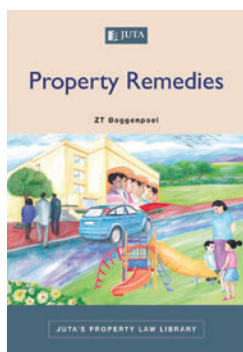
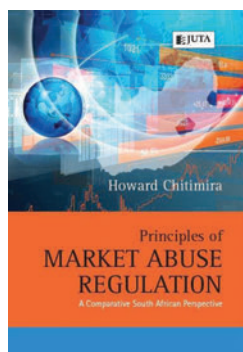
While 2020 was a quiet year for acquisitions at Central Reference, a number of new titles have nonetheless subsequently been received.

One in three marriages ends in divorce. Going through a divorce is the second-most stressful event in human life, and women are hard hit in terms of financial vulnerability. **Divorce smart: the girl's guide to divorcing well** by Christel Du Toit will guide you step-by-step through a divorce.

It equips women with the necessary tools to help beat the emotional and, most importantly, the financial stress before, during and after the divorce. It is written by an expert who has helped thousands of women recover their lives and their emotional stability through simple effective financial planning and advice. Readers are empowered to navigate the sometimes frightening legal paperwork and as well as be better equipped to deal with the issues of child support and financial vulnerability that most women will

face during and after divorce. The book offers clear, concise information on matters of maintenance, property, medical aid, pension funds and investments. The book has cleverly been divided into three sections: before the divorce, during the divorce and after the divorce. It aims to ensure that women are empowered to secure their home, keep as much wealth as possible and provide for their children's needs well beyond the end of the marriage. This is the type of book that gives courage, educates and brings





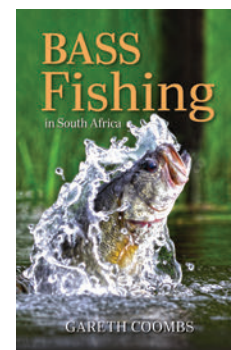
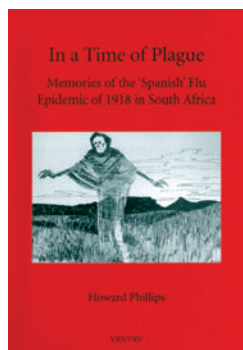
hope to many women that they can still dream post their divorce.

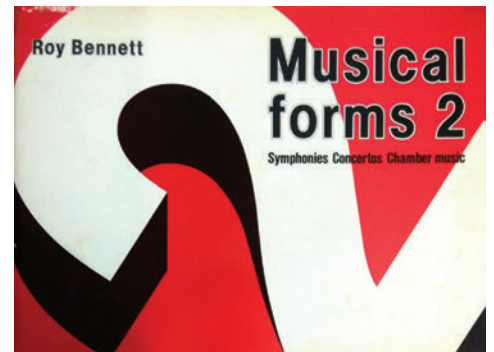
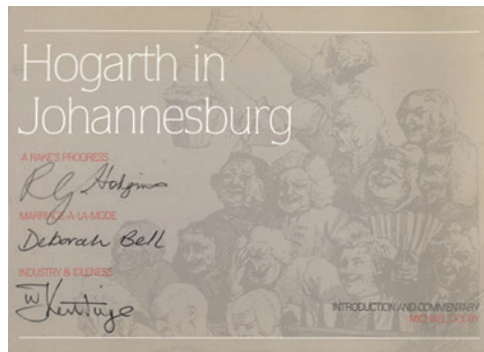
Fishing is not always as simple as casting a line or throwing a net into the water. Some fish are wily, and know how to avoid the hooks, lures or bait that have been set out for them. Knowing how a fish might behave in specific weather conditions, or at certain times of the year, improves the angler's chance of making a catch. Gareth Coombs has experienced the frustration and the pleasure of trying to catch this predatory sportfish.

Bass fishing in South Africa is his response to years of patiently studying currents, wind, air temperature and the underwater landscape, in order to understand the behaviour, sensory capabilities and nesting habits of largemouth black bass. His approach will delight bass fisherman and freshwater anglers who are facing the challenge of catching largemouth black bass. The book contains colour photographs, an index and a list of references and books for further reading.

Creating an eco-friendly home & workplace by Paul Hymers provides clear and concise advice on things that you can easily do to reduce your negative impact on the planet and create a healthier place to live and work. With simple changes to one's property, you can contribute to reduce carbon emissions and save money on fuel bills at the same time. The author, an experienced building engineer, offers guidance on everything from small adjustments to major projects that will make homes and workspaces more self-sufficient, conserve energy and prevent pollution. It includes tips for earth-friendly options for better light, power, heat, shelter, air, waste and water, as well as everything you need to know about using alternative energy, choosing materials from sustainable and ethical sources and cutting down on waste. With the emphasis on the three R's of reduce, re-use and recycle, this book is an indispensable guide for those who want to realise their goals for a greener and more sustainable home and workplace.

Elephants are among the most intelligent mammals on earth and pre-date us by millions of years. They have watched humans grow from meter-high Australopithecines to rulers of the planet. Yet, in Africa, an elephant is killed every 15 minutes. This book, **The last elephants** compiled by Don Pinnoch and Colin Bell, with comprehensive information, hard facts and figures, and with emotional appeal, presents a powerful message — true to its title these could be the last elephants and could see their final demise in less than three decades. The authors, in this handsomely illustrated book, have gathered together experts from all over Africa. Their essays present a convincing case to do everything possible to halt the carnage of elephants in the face of greedy and ruthless dealers and consumers. This book has been written by game rangers, guides, scientists, activists, academics and poets across Africa as a plea and a call to action to save the wild elephants before it's





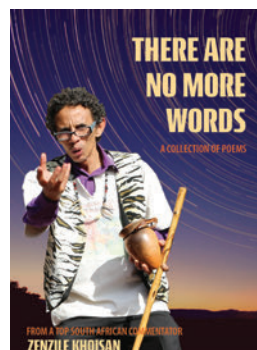
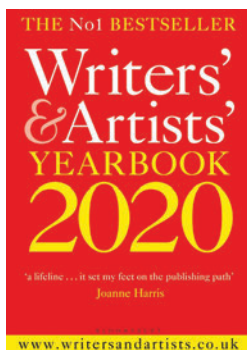
Edited by Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela,
Friederike Bubenzer and Marietjie Oelofsen



Marina Albertyn



Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela



too late. It also contains the images of many of the continent's top wildlife photographers. Readers will be taught how to create a safe haven and will have the link explained between big trees, big elephants and big thinking. Each chapter is introduced by a map highlighting the country featured in the chapter. Hopefully this book will create greater awareness of the devastating loss of elephant lives in Africa and stem the tide of poaching and hunting.

'We admire elephants in part because they demonstrate what we consider the finest human traits: empathy, self-awareness and social intelligence. But the way we treat them puts on display the very worst of human behavior.' (Graydon Carter)

General

R 001 GUI Guinness world records, 2020.
006.248392 VLA Vlahos, James. Talk to me: Amazon, Google, Apple and the race for voice-controlled AI.
R 070.5025 Guide to publishing in South Africa, 2019.

Social sciences

306.89 DUT Du Toit, Christel. Divorce smart: the girl's guide to divorcing well.
R 320.968 A-Z Ajam, Kashiefa. The A-Z of South African politics: people, parties and players.
346.09 CHI Chitimira, Howard. Principles of market abuse

regulation: a comparative of South African perspective.

346.6804 BOG Boggendoel, ZT. Property remedies.
392.3096 MND Mndende, Nokuzola. The home as a sacred place.

Science

Q 599.61 LAS Pinnock, Don. The Last elephants.

Technology

613.7046 SWA Swanson, Ann. Science of yoga: understand the anatomy and physiology to perfect your practice.
614.518 PHI Phillips, Howard. In a time of plague: memories of the 'Spanish' Flu Epidemic of 1918 in South Africa.
690.837 HYM Hymers, Paul. Creating an eco-friendly home and workplace.

Arts and recreation

700.904 ACT Pather, Jay. Acts of transgression: contemporary live art in South Africa.
709.68712 MIC Michaelis School of Fine Art (University of Cape Town). Michaelis School of Fine Art: graduate exhibition 2018.
759.968 BRE Breytenbach, Breyten. The 81 ways of letting go a late self.
Q 769.968 HOG Godby, Michael. Hogarth in Johannesburg.
785 BEN Bennett, Roy. Musical forms 2.
799.1758 COO Coombs, Gareth. Bass fishing in South Africa.

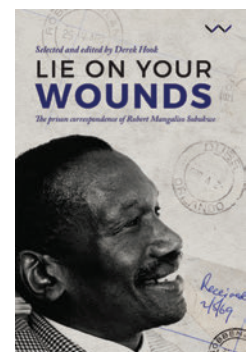
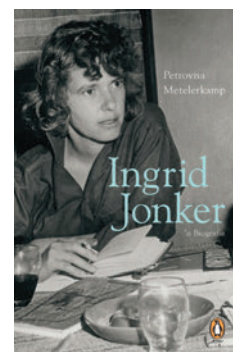
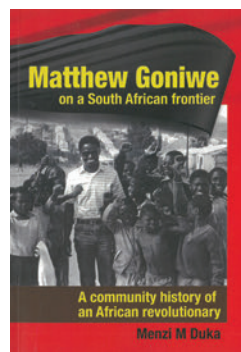
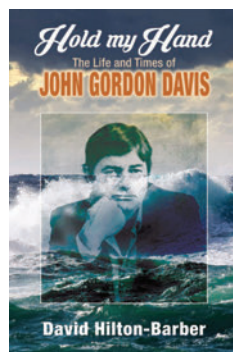
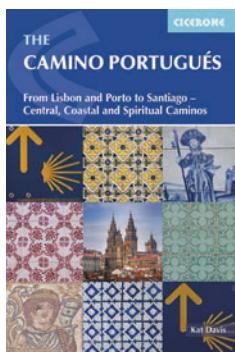
Literature

R 808.0202 WRI Writers' & artists' yearbook, 2020: essential guide to the media and publishing industries.
821.92 KHO Khoisan, Zenzile. There are no more words: selected poems.
839.3625 FOU Fourie, Pieter. Gert Garries: 'n baaisiekel-blues.
839.3626 ALB Albertyn, Marina. Melk & vleis; Bloed & bodem.

Geography/History/Travel/Biography

R 910.3 CLA The CIA world factbook, 2018-2019.
914.69 DAV Davis, Kat. The Camino Portugues: from Lisbon and Porto to Santiago — central, coastal and spiritual Caminos.
920 DAV Hilton-Barber, David. Hold my hand: the life and times of John Gordon Davis.
920 GON Duka, Menzi M. Matthew Goniwe on a South African frontier: a community history of an African revolutionary.
920 JON Metelerkamp, Petrovna. Ingrid Jonker: 'n biografie.
920 SOB Sobukwe, Robert Mangaliso. Lie on your wounds: the prison correspondence of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe.
968.06 THE Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla. These are the things that sit with us: voices from Bonteheuwel, Langa and Worcester.

Sandra Kingswell is the senior library assistant at Central Reference



What's the perfect length for a book?

by Sarah Shaffi

How long is too long when it comes to a book? If you're an avid reader, you might protest there's no such thing, but if we're honest we all have an 'ideal' book length in mind.

As a professional reader and as someone who reads a lot for pleasure, I love a fiction book that comes in at around 300 to 350 pages. And discussions with friends and colleagues — both big readers and not — show that bracket comes up a lot.

That's not to say I don't read longer or shorter books or that I automatically dislike books that don't match my 'ideal' book length. But it does mean that I, like many other readers, am obsessed with commenting on a book's size. You know how it goes: 'I've got this book on my to be read pile but it's 800 pages so I don't know when I'll find the time.' Or perhaps: 'You need to read this book, the characters are great and guess what? It's only 220 pages.'

But where did this obsession with book length — particularly when it comes to long novels — come from? And is there really such a thing as an ideal length for a book?

Finding the 'sweet spot'

On first exploration, the answer to the latter question seems to be 'yes'. Ask Google 'how long should a book be' and the most popular search results nearly all say there's a maximum of 100,000 words, with minimums varying from 60,000 to 90,000. Those figures (dependent on font and font size of course) give us that oft-cited length of 300 to 350 pages.

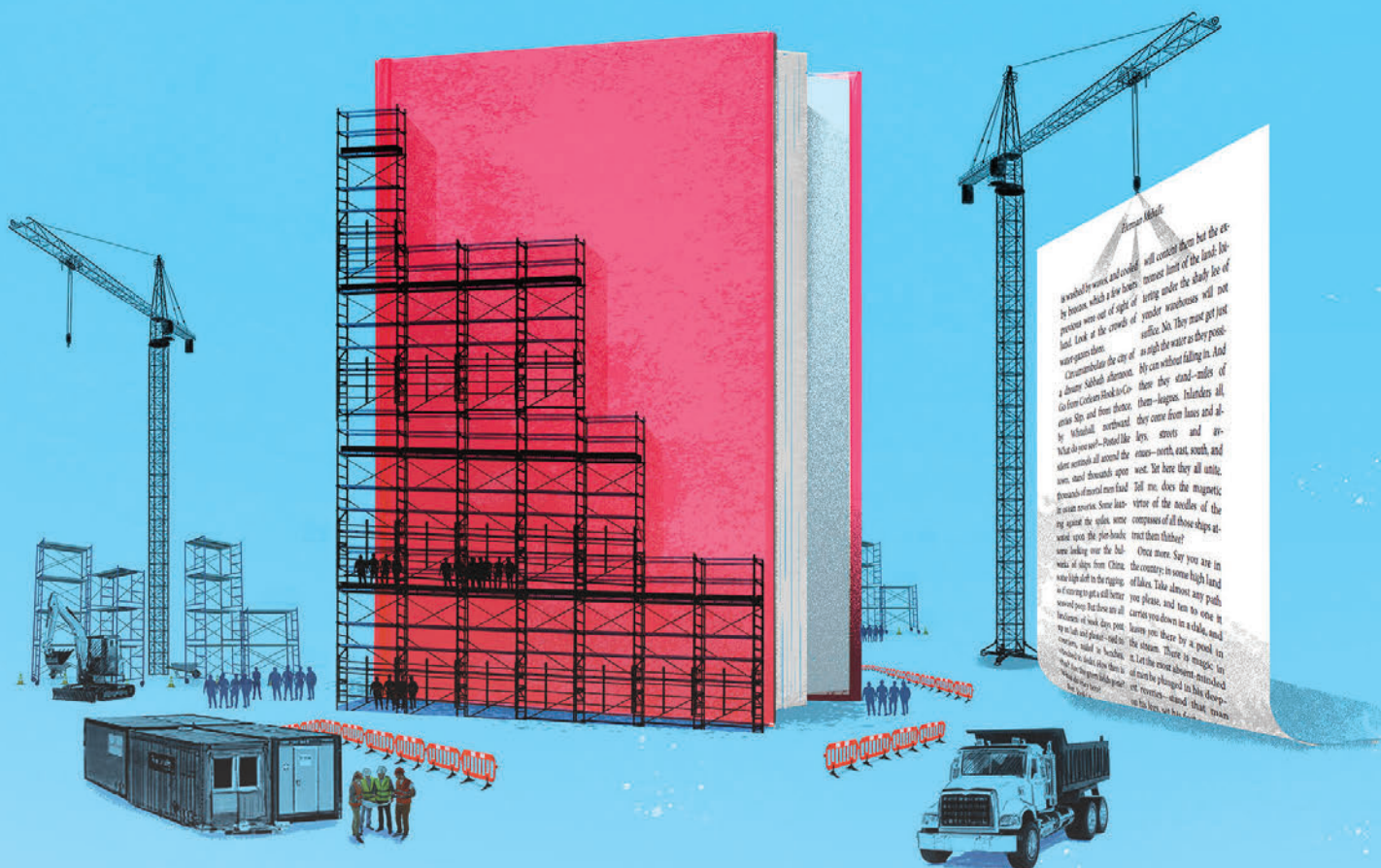
Literary agent Juliet Mushens of Mushens Entertainment says that 80,000 to 100,000 words is often given as the standard for adult novels, and much of what authors are trying to do can be done within that word count.

'I do think one of the reasons we get hung up on this word count is because it's almost where there's a sweet spot, in terms of giving us enough world building, but also making sure that the pace doesn't slow at any point,' says Mushens.

'So in a crime novel, you can kind of pull all the twists and turns, the suspense, the kind of red herrings, together in around 90,000 words. In 150,000 words, on the other hand, it often could read like, "Okay, well, we've got so many subplots or you know, I've kind of forgotten about this red herring, because 50,000 words happened without them being featured".'

The emergence of leisure reading

Thinking and talking about the length of a book isn't a new thing; in the early days of printing there were some



Ryan MacEachern/Penguin

very big books, such as collection of sermons, says Helen Smith, professor at the University of York. Moving into the 18th century, the novel became popular among the middle class.

'One of the stories that's been told about [that period] is that there was an emergence of leisure reading as a really self-conscious and increasingly middle class pursuit,' says Smith. 'So there's a sense, with big long [novels] like Henry Fielding, that these are people who conspicuously have the time to read, have the ability to just not be working, not be doing all those things that make it hard sometimes to embrace a long book.'

Smith's colleague Dr Alexandra Kingston-Reese says that our reactions to long novels now are precisely because we might not have the time to embrace them the way our 18th century counterparts had.

'For myself, it does come down to time,' she says. 'I suppose the long

novels that we're talking about are kind of quite complex, quite literary long novels. It isn't necessarily the kind of novel that ticks along in terms of plot. It's the kind of novel that tends to spend a lot of time on description, it tends to spend a lot of time on interiorisation.

'And so it does require a different kind of attention from us and when we're time poor, actually sitting down and really concentrating for long periods of time in order to get into something like that can be really challenging.'

'Reading fulfils many needs, but generally I think it should be pleasurable and entertaining,' says author Sarra Manning, who is also the literary editor at *Red Magazine*. 'I really can understand why big books can put off certain types of readers. I'm a really quick reader and love reading, but it is a bit of a leap of faith if it's a writer that you haven't heard of or it's been

up for some literary prizes and it's 700 pages. It's a big commitment. People shouldn't be put off by big books, but I can understand why they would be.'

'People shouldn't be put off by big books, but I can understand why they would be'

Big books may require a bigger time commitment, but if the pacing is spot on a book flies by regardless of size.

'Marian Keyes' last book was 650 pages, and when I get a Jilly Cooper in, I know that's going to be big, but they're so readable that I don't get tense and think "oh, my gosh, this is gonna take me ages", because they're quick reads,' Manning says.

'It's that thing of readability. You can have a Jilly Cooper book and you'll read it quickly and enjoy it, but then



you can have a 200-page book that's quite a challenging read, it can feel longer and it can take you more time because you've got to read it in a very different way.'

Narratives grand in scale

But it's not just in commercial or literary fiction where we find big books; fantasy and science fiction are full of novels that pass the 500-page mark. And I'm not the only one that admits to being far more forgiving of a 900-page fantasy novel than I am of a 900-page literary novel.

'You can go longer in fantasy, I think because there's more world building expected there's a bit more leeway given,' says Mushens. 'In contemporary fiction you don't have to have the same word count dedicated to world building and it's not so epic in breadth.'

'In fantasy it's normally like "the fate of the empire!", so you almost are allowed those extra words'

'But in fantasy it's normally like "the fate of the empire!" or a huge massive quest, so you almost are allowed those extra words.'

'So in **Game of Thrones**, you've got to introduce us to all the intricacies,

the history, the backdrop, how magic works, where the dragons come from, kind of all of this stuff. But also it's so epic in scope that it's literally "the fate of kingdoms, but also the fate of the world", that I think it feels bigger, which means that the plot needs to have more space.'

It's not just the expectation of world building that prepares us for a bigger book when it comes to certain genres, it's also the way we refer to them.

'In genres like science fiction, fantasy and historical fiction, people are prepared for big narratives,' says author and academic JA Mensah.

'Terms like "historical saga" and "space opera" prepare readers for narratives that are grand in scale.'

Mensah says that length can be a good thing when it comes to characters you follow 'along a vast story arc, often over multiple books'.

'There is something very satisfying about following a character and discovering in book two or three something about them which illuminates everything that has come before,' she says.

'I'm thinking of NK Jemisin's *Broken Earth* series and an extended metaphor she uses concerning unconscious bias within minority communities; the conceit only becomes clear towards the end of the second book. I don't want to give any spoilers away, but when I first read it, it absolutely floored me. I don't know if it could have had the same impact if I hadn't already

followed certain characters over so many pages.'

Just a fiction?

But, after all the discussion, does finding out a book is huge really put us off reading it? Although there is a 'standard' length for adult fiction books, statistics show that we're definitely buying books that are both far longer and far shorter than that 300- to 350-page length many of us have in mind.

Of the 1,000 bestselling books in 2019, according to Nielsen, there were 348 adult fiction books. The largest of these was 5,264 pages — thankfully it wasn't a single book, but a box set of all seven novels from George RR Martin's *A song of ice and fire* series. Just 29 of the 348 books came in between 301 and 350 pages; 92 were between 351 and 400 pages. And a whopping 202 were over 401 pages.

We might like talking about book length, but the numbers don't lie: we're clearly buying and reading very long books. As Mensah says: 'We consume books, regardless of their size, because they captivate us and compel us to read on. The idea of the "perfect length" itself is a work of fiction.'

This article was first published by penguin.co.uk on 23 September 2020



| parting shot



Preparation Section, 1965

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