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Polar subjects, perilous stories: Intricacies of narrating authentic warriorhood in Madikizela-Mandela's testimonials

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Abstract

The centrality of corporeal and embodied militancy in South African women's political testimonials has scarcely been addressed in African testimonial criticism. Arguably, representations of women warriors have been overlooked because of the masculine nature of war discourse that imagines militancy as a masculine prerogative. Drawing on testimonial theories and criticisms on South African war narratives, this article examines representations of rhetorical militancy in testimonials of Nomzamo Winfreda Zanyiwe Madikizela Mandela. Specifically, it seeks to interrogate how the act of witnessing intersects with claims to truth, a key testimonial imperative, in view of the polarity of the subject under study, a factor that renders her testimonial claims to truth perilous. The aim of this article is to analyse how women politicians' witnessing of their personal struggles within domains otherwise constructed as domestic/private during and after war (in this case apartheid) serves as historical revisionist accounts of women's war-time experiences. Further, these testimonials are read as re-signifying women's everyday experiences under apartheid, as acts of (embodied) militancy. In other words, this debate examines how rhetorical militancy in the two testimonials demonstrates the narrator's warriorhood.

Keywords: metrics of authenticity, Madikizela Mandela, militancy, political warriorhood, testimonial

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Public Interest Statement

The paper illustrates how the employment of women-oriented modes of expression can be interpreted as counter discursive strategies to critique mis-representations of women in mainstream political discourses that are patriarchal and hegemonic in nature.

Introduction

This paper examines rhetorical claims to authentic militancy in testimonials of Nomzamo Winfreda Zanyiwe Madikizela Mandela (hereafter Madikizela-Mandela). Towards this end, it reads Madikizela- Mandela's[1] *Part of My Soul Went with Him* (1985) and *491 Days: Prisoner Number 1323/69* (2014 to examine how the notion of 'metrics of authenticity' (Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson 2012) discussed in detail below intersects with the writers' claims to a truthful narration of an authentic militancy under apartheid. The paper draws on critical debates on testimonials by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson and on critical debates on warriorhood by South African women scholars, for purposes of reading how these life narratives revise women's personal struggles within domains otherwise constructed as domestic/private in (pre/post-)war eras as political warfare. It also re-invents women's stories as acts of militancy. Due to her polarity in public discourses mainly because of her performance of a controversial womanhood in related to conceptions of proper womanhood, her witness accounts are considered to be perilous stories.

Nomzamo Winfreda Zanyiwe Madikizela Mandela (1936–2018) was an African National Council (ANC) Party activist and an ANC National Executive Committee member. She was the second of Nelson Mandela's three wives and briefly served as the First Lady of South Africa as current wife of the late former South African President Nelson Mandela until their divorce on March 19, 1996. In 2003, she forfeited her parliamentary seat after being found guilty of fraud. She was also the ANC Women's League chair. She is arguably one of the most controversial public women figures in the history of South Africa. She is an African National Council Party activist, and is currently an ANC National Executive Committee member. Married to the late Nelson Mandela in 1958, she was briefly the First Lady of South Africa after his release from prison and his election as the first president of democratic South Africa. They divorced on 19 March 1996 and she appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation commission for her association with the Mandela United Football Club, accused of gross violation of human rights. In 2003, she forfeited her parliamentary seat after being found guilty of fraud. She has since been active in politics and the books selected for discussion feature her recollections of her involvement in South African politics at the height of her political career, mostly during the anti-apartheid struggle, but she has been the topic of cultural productions in various forms (biography, films, documentaries). Seemingly, her private self is presumably known to her publics; she is a social/cultural enigma as she resists total knowability, such that her subject-hood emerges as elusive. What motivates this study of her testimonials is her apparent engagement with issues of 'warriorhood' discussed in the genre of South African women's political life writing, extrapolated below in the theoretical framework.

Theorizing African Women's Political Testimonials and Rhetorical Militancy

Although the selected life narratives are often analyzed as memoirs, they are read in the context of this paper as testimonials for reasons outlined as follows. Smith and Watson (2012, p. 590) have identified the key inductive potential in witness narratives or testimonials as; the capacity to convince its readers that both the story and 'survivor' are '"real"' and that 'the reading experience constitutes a cross-cultural encounter through which readers are positioned as ethical subjects within the global imaginary of human rights advocacy'. Consequently, the reader inadvertently holds the survivor responsible for observing the testimonial's authenticity and sub-consciously feels the need to police the survivor lest the sacred pact of truth be defiled. Readers have therefore become 'detectives of authenticity', thus, say Smith and Watson (2012, p. 590), rendering the

1 I use the hyphen surname (rather than Winnie Mandela or Winnie) throughout to avoid confusion with Nelson Mandela, but then you should say why the primary texts are referenced as Mandela in brackets

testimonial a highly 'vulnerable' genre that is a 'magnet for suspicious reading' (2012, p. 590).

Testimonials are narratives that 'chronicle conditions of opression, assemble experiential histories of psychic degradation assault, register the aftereffects of survival and mourning, and commemorate victims who cannot give testimony' (2012, p. 592). The testimonial includes different actors who are often 'positioned as victims, perpetrators, and, sometimes, beneficiaries' (2012:594). Discursively positioned as a first-person witness, the narrator 'speaks as a first-hand actor in and observer of disastrous, violent, and degrading conditions of existence', positioning him- or herself as in danger, 'emphasizing a harmed self and body while chronicling a narrow escape from greater danger and death' (2012, p. 593). The narrator occupies an existence of duality as a 'victim of human rights violation' but also as 'survivor' (2012, p. 593), a vulnerability that elicits 'empathetic identification' with the readers, creating a '*you-are-there sense of immediacy*' in the testimonial, which is the first metric of authenticity identified by Smith and Watson. However, the survivor/witness narrative is also vulnerable to criticism that arises from suspicious reading. Deferring to a 'discourse of rights' formed around social issues including but not limited to 'apartheid', the I-witness, makes reference to a 'recognized, violated identity that is compelling and shocking' such as the derogatory terms political detainee/prisoner, *kaffer*, etc., a grammar that comprises the second metric of authenticity discussed by Smith and Watson as '*[t]he invocation of rights discourse*' (2012, p. 593). The violators of the I-witness's human rights (people or institutions) are constructed as '"perpetrators"' (2012, p. 594). While rights abuses documented in witness narratives differ from one individual to another, some witness accounts share similarities of experiences and invocation of rights discourses such that common experiences give rise to a 'normative shape of a victim experience and the normative identity of the rights victim', in this case, as apartheid victims (2012, p. 594). These norms give rise to 'stereotypical characterizations' of 'typicalized experiences' that induce among the readers and narrators/writers a 'legible model of a particular violation', and Smith and Watson call this third metric of authenticity '*[t]he normative shape of victim experience and identity*' (2012, p. 594).

Arguably, the I's that occupy the subject position in witness narratives are not always singular and restricted to one witness/narrator. The testimonial "I" is rather plural, as it often represents 'larger groups in order to tell stories of collective injury or suffering' (2012, p. 600). Thus, even in the absence of a "we", it speaks 'on behalf of, and at times through, multiple voices' suggesting a practice of 'collective I-witnessing' (2012, p. 600). I-witness 'rhetorical configurations' include but are not limited to 'the composite I, the coalitional I, the translated I, and the negotiable I' (2012, p. 600). The situatedness of each I affects each narrative's 'aura of authenticity' in a different way and a text's positionality in the politics of the hoax that shrouds witness narratives (2012, p. 600). Here, the concept Politics of the hoax, means that due to the representational/relational/collective nature of the narrating "I", the narrator (sub/un)consciously crafts a narrative that speaks for the self and other, fulfilling the fourth metric of authenticity, '*The affirmation of the duty to narrate a collective story*' (2012, p. 594). Although narrators differentially retell I-witness accounts of a community's collective experiences of violation, in this case apartheid, they draw on particular cultural practices and communal memories that ethically render the story as a communal property, perhaps explaining the collective nature of I-witness narrations. However, the recognition of a multi-cultural/globalised reading public creates the 'need to explain cultural contexts and political circumstances to readers' in such a way that 'the narrating "I" asserts and marks his or her locality and its difference from the locations of a pre-dominantly Western readership'. This positioning evolves from the desire to elicit empathy with materialistic motives in mind such as financial aid, political alliances, political asylum, but also to speak back to dominant cultures that define them as inferior to Western man (ibid 594). Some of the cultural markers include 'alternative and culturally specific forms of storytelling', for instance, incorporating African oral and 'storytelling' traditions

that mark the narrative as authentically "'local'" and slightly different from some readers' cultural repertoire (2012, p. 594).

This paper, then, examines how the testimonials of Ramphele and Madikizela-Mandela adopt different metrics of authenticity to embody their warriorhood through the discursive technique of rhetorical militancy. Warriorhood is discussed as a subjective experience that negotiates the normative testimonial subject-position of victimhood/survival created by apartheid. In their repositioning of black women within the history of the armed struggle against apartheid, the selected witnesses demonstrate their historical consciousness of the complexity of negotiating the precarious positions of what Meg Samuelson (2007, p. 834) terms the 'paradoxical' disfigurement of the woman's body in war discourse. The literary configuration of the female warrior is, therefore, a discursive unit through which the selected witnesses seem to represent their literal and ideological militancy in the "battle-field" of struggle against apartheid. Thus, the paper highlights both the literal act of warriorhood and war as a trope constituted through the metaphorical signification of textual contestatory acts as militancy. In reading South African women's political agency of warriorhood, the paper then draws on ideas of three South African scholars: Liz Gunner whose theoretical criticism hinges on orality, Meg Samuelson's criticism on South African women's wartime agency, and Lynda Gichanda Spencer's insights on representations of women's war encounters.

This analysis of political warriorhood is cognisant of the invocation of women's bodies in nationalist myths to further nationalist agendas but also as a subversive weapon. The debate hence echoes Grace Musila's (2007, p. 50) concession that the (woman's) body is an 'experiential site of both oppression and acts of resistance'. While Madikizela-Mandela may not necessarily have been a military cadre, her actions elsewhere in the chronotope of anti-apartheid or her representation of this struggle exhibit militancy. An engagement with the concept rhetorical militancy, however, presents an array of challenges.

Firstly, it concerns *Umkhonto weSizwe* discourses. *Umkonto weSizwe*, popularly known as MK, translated from Zulu and Xhosa as "Spear of the Nation", was the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC). Although the movement does not exist anymore, it is important to note that during apartheid, this organization was regarded as a criminal/terrorist organization. Therefore, people did not reveal membership because they were killed. While today people might declare membership to this organisation, it is still with caution, and there are ongoing debates about whether MK's actions were really crimes against humanity or freedom struggles as is the case with Frantz Fanon.

MK[2] was formed on 16th December 1961, partly in response to the Sharpeville Massacre of 21 March 1960 that involved police shootings of blacks in Sharpeville, a township in Gauteng, South Africa. As a militant movement MK led the armed struggle in South Africa and received widespread support from South Africans in exile and various African countries.[3] In South Africa, however, it largely remained a covert movement because it was associated with crimes against humanity (or terrorism) and very few people dared to declare their membership for fear of arrest and prosecution under Nationalist Party legislation. Madikizela-Mandela's testimonies (set during apartheid) grant insight into the compelled secrecy regarding MK. In her second testimonial, *491 Days: Prisoner Number 1323/69*, she mentions '[her] husband's military attire' that suggests Nelson Mandela's affiliation with the armed struggle (Madikizela-Mandela, 2014, p. 7), but she does not openly declare her own involvement. However, it should also be noted that not everyone who

2 For a detailed history of MK see Howard Barrell in *MK: ANC's Armed Struggle* (1990), and for more details on the cultural and political significance of the term MK, see SA History online: http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/umkhonto-wesizwe-mk.

3 http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/umkhonto-wesizwe-mk

took up arms and fought during apartheid was part of MK.

Secondly, although she bears close association with MK by virtue of being Nelson Mandela's wife and was closely associated with the African National Congress party (ANC) at the time, the writing of Madikizela-Mandela's first testimonial (Part of My Soul) at the height of censure in South Africa might have been compromised because her association with MK would have been dangerous. For example, in the preceding sections to her testimonial, *Part of My Soul Went with Him*, Anne Benjamin describes this text as 'unconventional' because apartheid made it impossible for Madikizela-Mandela to write and publish a book about her life. Thus, orally narrated by Winnie, the book was edited by Benjamin and adapted by Mary Benson. For this reason, the text is considered Madikizela-Mandela's 'oral' testimony. It combines other's people's oral testimonies on her,[4] letters, a personal account in prose, and historical facts. Further, during Nelson Mandela's imprisonment, Madikizela-Mandela was severally under house arrest and she narrates how her house was often ransacked without prior notice. Perhaps this is why Benjamin in the editorial note to this testimonial says that Madikizela-Mandela's story is not "about herself [...] but the struggle" (7). In the same text, Madikizela-Mandela says that Mandela was so involved in the nationalist struggle so that: "you just couldn't tear Nelson from the people, from the struggle. The nation came first. Everything else was second. [...]. I knew when I married him that I married the struggle, the liberation of my people" (39). Evidently, Madikizela-Mandela sees her role as working towards the liberation of her people. Despite the active participation of women in the anti-apartheid struggle, the armed struggle was considered masculine and black. The patriarchal nature of the nationalist discourse is evident in her declaration that:

> [l]ooking at our struggle in this country, the black woman has had to struggle a great deal, not only from a political angle. One has had to fight the male domination in a much more complex sense. We have the cultural clash where a black woman must emerge as a politician against the traditional background of a woman's place being at home! Of course most cultures are like that. But with us it's not only pronounced by law. We are permanent minors by law. So for a woman to emerge as an individual, as a politician in this context, is not very easy. (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, pp. 83-84)

However, she hints at her association with the armed struggle when she says in *Part of My Soul* that her exposure to German philosophies made her believe that '[her] own struggle [was] to be won by means of blood and iron' (Madikizela-Mandela 1985, p. 49). Her warriorhood as a MK member is therefore indeterminate.

Madikizela-Mandela's Witness-Survivor Positionality within Apartheid History and her Testimonials

Before embarking on an analysis of Madikizela-Mandela's performance of embodied militancy, it

4 Madikizela-Mandela's autobiography allows voices of others to emerge in the form of twelve oral testimonies by: Nomawethu Mbere, "a school friend" (51); Dr. Nthatho Motlana, a "young social worker" (52;115); an anonymous interviewee, "a colleague" (52); Adelaide Joseph, a close family friend of the Mandelas (61); Sally Motlana, "an old family friend" (72;116); Zindziswa and Zenani; her daughters (91); Rita Ndzanga, "a fellow prisoner" in Pretoria Central Prison (105); Dr. Nthatho Motlana, (a different contributor from the one mentioned above) "the family doctor and guardian of the children" (130); Zindzi, a recollection of her visit to her father in prison (136), and Zenani, memory of her visit with her husband and child to her father in prison (143), so that they speak for themselves as they speak for her.

is important to examine how her identity is portrayed in apartheid discourse, the historical archive and in post-apartheid media reportage. These platforms are sources that people constituting her testimonials' reading public draw on to exercise judgement over the authenticity of her I-witness account. In her two testimonials, Madikizela-Mandela narrates the circumstances of her life as it developed from her association with Nelson Mandela. This reconstruction is arguably necessary because her testimonials are interspersed with different other genres including letters, oral testimonies, and a series of historical facts.

Although at first Nelson Mandela advocated for peaceful resistance against apartheid, extenuating circumstances compelled and other activists to turn to militancy or violent revolutionary tactics like *Umkhonto We Sizwe*. Following his arrest in 1962 and imprisonment after the famous Rivonia Trial, Madikizela-Mandela was left, as Nelson Mandela's political widow, to continue participating in the fight against apartheid as a woman on her own – without the assistance of a husband. As Mandela's wife, she was closely linked to his political activities. Her intimate relationship with Mandela as well as her own ongoing activist participation in the struggle, made her doubly the target of the Nationalist Party's "witch hunt" and recurrently the victim of police brutality. She constantly feared for her children's safety and decided to send her two daughters (Zindziswa and Zenani) to Swaziland. Though they later returned to South Africa, she was later again forced to separate from her children during her periods of house arrest, imprisonment and detention that would shroud her occupation as an anti-apartheid activist as she clarifies in her testimonials. Having amassed her own political capital separate from Nelson Mandela's, she was elected the chair of the ANC Women's League in 1975 during a brief period between imprisonments.

Following the 1976 Soweto uprisings, Madikizela-Mandela was banned from living in Soweto and forcefully relocated to live under house arrest in Brandfort, a miserable, isolated little village in the then Orange Free State. While at Brandfort, she harnessed international figures like the US Senator Edward Kennedy who travelled to Brandfort in 1985 to see her. This arrest lasted for nine years, but she repeatedly defied oppression and the banning orders imposed on her and succeeded to return to Soweto spurred by the Sowetans in a plea to her to give momentum to the revolutionary struggle as an iconic figurehead, marking her one of the most emblematic warriors of the anti-apartheid struggle. When in the 1980s apartheid aggravated violence as a method to suppress black resistance, Madikizela-Mandela and her comrades retaliated with violence to curb violence. Malan (1995) observes that the culture of necklacing in South Africa has its roots in a 1986 speech by Madikizela-Mandela, which was reiterated before the TRC when she was called to testify, but this time as perpetrator. In this 80s speech, she said, 'with our boxes of matches and our necklaces we shall liberate this country' (Malan, 1986). Harrison (1985, p. 124) views this compulsion to use violent means to counter the violence of the apartheid regime as Madikizela-Mandela's resignation to the fact that violence was an integral part of her society, evident in her words.

During a visit to Soweto in 1986, Madikizela-Mandela formed the Mandela United Football Club (MUFC) to offer young Sowetans entertainment,[5] but it is argued that a group of men loyal to her used this platform to offer her protection and subjugate betrayals from their midst. According to Duke (1997), the MUFC became Madikizela-Mandela's personality cult. Duke observes that in this period of anti-apartheid euphoria, mothers, fathers, and children saw the reign of the MUFC as one of terror because 'to be branded a "sellout" of the struggle was the kiss of death'. Due to the controversies around the kidnappings, beatings, and murders, said to have been perpetrated by the MUFC in the late 1980s, Madikizela-Mandela's fame began to dwindle. Thus when the

5 There is a large archive on the MUFC and the focus of this paper limits my engagement with it due to the intricacy and complexity of its history.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established,[6] the accusations against Madikizela-Mandela and the MUFC for atrocious acts committed, garnered (inter)national attention.[7] Amongst the violent acts for which Madikizela-Mandela appeared before the TRC was the case of the abduction and murder of fourteen-year-old Stompei Moeketsi in 1988, alleged to have been a police informant. Testimonies revealed that Moeketsi was abducted, along with three other youths but Stompei, was allegedly murdered at the Soweto border.[8] Notably, Madikizela-Mandela's framing as a social pariah has largely arisen from an analysis of her transcripts from the TRC hearings mainly by journalists and political analysts from within South Africa and beyond its borders. At the time of the alleged crime against Stompie, Madikizela-Mandela was already dissociated from the ANC's struggle by the ANC, a move O.R. Tambo explained as a necessity because they could not 'control her' (Meredith, 1999, p. 237). The controversial public image of Madikizela-Mandela is perhaps skillfully captured in Antje Krog's rendition of the TRC hearing in *Country of My Skull*. Here, Krog mentions seven portraits of Madikizela-Mandela that summarize how she is perceived by her publics, ranging from Incongruous woman, a legendary woman who seem to be everywhere yet nowhere; a politician, who manipulates situations to suit her; the beautiful icon, who inspires revolution without even uttering a word; the betrayer, a woman who despite her struggle to keep Mandela's image alive, she was harshly criticized for not waiting for her husband; the "dangerous and rowdy warlord", a woman who spreads her vengeance among those who cross swords with her; a pre- and post-feminist, a woman who represents different facets and challenges of South African womanhood; and the troublesome woman, an individual who cannot be contained by the ANC (Krog, 2002, p. 260). Since the TRC many

6 The TRC is a body fashioned after a court in South Africa at the official end of apartheid under the *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation* Act, No. 34 of 1995 'to enable South Africans to come to terms with their past on a morally accepted basis and to advance the cause of reconciliation' (Day 1, 1997). The court's jurisdiction was however limited to shedding light on past injustices thus lacked the mandate to sentence or avenge crimes committed. Nevertheless, political amnesty was granted to some individuals on the basis of the TRC findings.

7 The "Winnie and MUFC special hearing" was a fact-finding mission and even though some individuals could admit to wrong-doing, they would not be subjected to legal action. Since apartheid had aroused international interest, the TRC's proceedings attracted an international audience with a desire to understand the logic and workings of apartheid.

8 Although most of the MUFC were tried and received various sentences (Richardson was sentenced to death but later changed to life imprisonment), Madikizela-Mandela received what came to be regarded as a light sentence (a six-year sentence that was reduced upon appeal to a two-year suspended sentence and 15000 Rand fine). Meredith (1999, 255) observes that judge at the infamous trial described Madikizela-Mandela as 'a calm, composed, deliberate, and unblushing liar' which perhaps betrays the judge's frustration and inability to pierce through the MUFC's unwavering support for Madikizela-Mandela even at their own expense, a loyalty evident in Richardon's declaration that 'I love Mummy with all my heart. I would have done anything to please her' (Meredith, 242, p. 1999). However, during the 1997 TRC hearings, Richardson said, 'I killed Stompei under the instructions of Mummy. Mummy never killed anyone but used us to kill a lot of people. She did not even visit us in prison! She used us!' (Day 8, 1997). After giving her witness account, Madikizela-Mandela denied all allegations, claiming, they were a 'fabrication' (Day 9, 1997), prompting Bishop Desmond Tutu to coerce her into at least admitting that something went wrong and to offer her apologies. The final TRC finding was that Madikizela-Mandela 'failed to act responsibly in taking the necessary action required to avert [Stompei's] death' (TRC Final Report, 1998: 549).

portrayals of Madikizela-Mandela have seen the light in film, documentary and biography (such as Du Preez-Bezrob's biography), but the public image that dominates the media is or is not one of a warrior. This is the aspect thus paper seeks to expound on and to explore Madikizela-Mandela's construction of the self demands a turn to her own work.

Madikizela-Mandela's testimonials do not strictly adhere to the 'rhetorical configurations' of the I-witness narrative voices (Smith and Watson, 2012, p. 600). Her first narrative adopts the "composite I" voice, which according to Smith and Watson, is collectively "'manufacture[d]'" by multiple subjects. The multiple subjects who constitute Madikizela-Mandela's composite I are: herself as the primary witness, and secondary witnesses. Secondary witnesses are people who corroborate in telling Madikizela-Mandela's narrative of survival. They are: the editor Ann Benjamin, and the publisher, Mary Benson, who adapted the story and facilitated the writing and publishing of this testimonial while she was in prison or under detention/house arrest. Other secondary witnesses include: 'activist groups, marketers, and the persons, organizations, and forums who [...] solicited, facilitated, and circulated the act of witnessing' on Madikizela'Mandela's behalf (Smith and Watson, 2010:600). Together, these secondary witnesses make her story somehow non-conventional and substantially contribute to the believability of Madikizela-Mandela's testimonial's truth (ibid 600). Therefore, although *Part of My Soul Went with Him* focuses on a singular subject whose experiences are narrated by composite I's, it is 'collectively produced by numerous actors positioned across asymmetries of power' (ibid). However, the category secondary witnesses also refers to the audience targeted by the testimonial.

I examine Madikizela-Mandela's militancy in relation to physical and ideological warriorhood. Specifically, I interrogate her engagement with the land question and its appropriation into anti-apartheid ideologies and her (implied) identification with MK warriorhood. In other words, my discussion of warriorhood pertaining to Madikizela-Mandela's two testimonials explores how she figuratively curves her militancy and responds to her portrayal in South African public discourses of the anti-apartheid struggle. The writer locates herself in the paradoxical position of victim and subject, possibly to indicate the oscillation of her selfhoods between her embodiment as a nationalist symbol and her individual political agency. Her second testimonial seems to echo, in my opinion, Ekeh's (1975, p. 92) observation that the civic public is amoral while the primordial public is governed by moralistic ideologies and philosophies. I consider the apartheid government as comprising the civic public, and the anti-apartheid movement before independence here as the primordial public. The amoral nature of the civic public is captured by Madikizela-Mandela's conceptualisation of the struggle as a 'match' in which '[t]he referee [the Nationalist Government] wants [her] side to lose, and he goes out of his way to break [her] side. No rules and regulations have to be observed by his side whilst [her] boxers are forced at gunpoint to observe rules and regulations' (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, pp. 9-10). Here, the tensions between the two publics become nuanced especially by her identification of the state as the masculine symbol of the colonial Empire and herself as a symbol of the black continent. Ann McClintock refers to the racial and sexual undertones that pervade such a discourse the *political* order of empire (4, emphasis in original). This language of militancy is extended to her journal entries where individual "soldiers" are identified by numeric codes like 'No 7' as opposed to being identified by their real names so that in case the journals are confiscated, her secrets remain intact (Madikizela-Mandela, 2004, p. 18).

The I-witness voice in *Part of My Soul Went with Him* is composite as it combines oral testimonies[9],

9 Madikizela-Mandela's testimonial allows voices of others to emerge in the form of twelve oral testimonies by: Nomawethu Mbere, "a school friend" (51); Dr. Nthatho Motlana, a "young social worker" (52;115); an anonymous interviewee, "a colleague" (52); Adelaide

a personal testimony orally narrated to the editor Benjamin who is its ghost writer and adapted by Mary Benson, what Smith and Watson (2012, p. 591) term as an 'as-told-to testimonial account', letters, factual historical (legal) records and a historical overview of South Africa under apartheid written by the editor. Her personal witness narration shifts between the singular 'I' and plural pronoun 'We' in an attempt voice her own and other black workers' struggles for survival. By moving from 'I' to 'we', her narrative assumes the testimonio genre, which embodies communal struggles. Testimonios are, traditionally, nationalist or political in outlook, orientation and construction and they largely focus on women's struggles during revolutions (Huber, 643).[10] Madikizela-mandela represents her personal experiences as similar to those of a larger community of black South Africans marginalised by apartheid.

Although 'the narrating "I" in her first testimonial 'occupies, and is assigned, the subject position of a victim' who needs rescuing (Smith and Watson, 2012:600), the witness is not confined to the victim template of witness narratives, but speaks back to the "perpetrators" in ways that challenge her portrayal as a victim. As I will show later, she also deliberately assumes the victim subject-position to gain political capital and advance her political womanhood, thus she identifies with yet rejects her subaltern identification. The composite I is said to render testimonials highly vulnerable to suspicion and, according to Smith and Watson, is 'denounced in this digital age as a performance of false witnessing' (2012, p. 601). However, Madikizela-Mandela cleverly situates her subjectivities between the boundaries of composite I and coalitional I. This narrative strategy allows several voices belonging to the narrator, editor, and others to affirm Madikizela-Mandela's duty to narrate a collective story of the South African anti-apartheid struggle. The composite I also allows Madikizela-Mandela's multiple selves to concurrently narrate her experience. For example, her warrior voice compliments the voice of "the mother of the nation": an identity assigned to her in the paratextual foreword to frame black south Africans as victims of apartheid. While the composite I affirms Madikizela-Mandela's duty/right to narrate the collective story, it lacks the "you-are-there sense of immediacy" that would make her testimonial extremely vulnerable to suspicious reading. This is possibly a deliberate strategy used by the editor to protect Madikizela-Mandela's account from being subjected to suspicious reading. Nevertheless, the narrative does not trivialise the suffering of the people under apartheid. To accentuate the atrocities subjected upon black South Africans, the testimonial adopts a strong rights discourse that provokes empathy in the reader as far as the fate of the black community is concerned. While avoiding normalising Madikizela-Mandela as a stereotypical victim subject, the composite I also creates the impression of a self-less subject who is witnessing primarily for her community before herself.

What I find interesting is how Madikizela-Mandela's representations seem to convey an anti-apartheid discourse as a manifestation of the dualism of female militancy. This multi-facetedness is evident in the following statement: 'I am a living symbol for whatever is happening in the country. I am a living symbol of the white man's fear' (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 27). Here she seems to see herself as both a public myth and a powerful individual. In her conceptualisation of her public selfhood, she does not seek to envision herself beyond the public essence of her being. This strategy is perhaps deliberate and might explain why Madikizela-Mandela is possibly one of the

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Joseph, a close family friend of the Mandelas (61); Sally Motlana, "an old family friend" (72;116); Zindziswa and Zenani; her daughters (91); Rita Ndzanga, "a fellow prisoner" in Pretoria Central Prison (105); Dr. Nthatho Motlana, (a different contributor from the one mentioned above) "the family doctor and guardian of the children" (130); Zindzi, a recollection of her visit to her father in prison (136), and Zenani, memory of her visit with her husband and child to her father in prison (143), so that they speak for themselves as they speak for her.

10 This genre found prominence in Latina critical tradition, especially as a methodology for conducting research on communities with racial disparities.

most elusive subjects because while she initially crafts her citizenship by associating her belonging to the anti-apartheid movement, she does not resist her incorporation into a nationalist myth as a mother of the nation, an imaginary that transforms her into a 'governed' body with seemingly no agency. It appears that it is from this liminal position that she negotiates all the nuances of her multiple subjectivities. Madikizela-Mandela's experiences here render McClintock's (1995, p. 352) claims true, that '[a]ll nationalisms are gendered, […] invented and […] dangerous' in the sense that they expose certain bodies, especially women's, to discursive violence, it is possible that the former deliberately avoids portraying herself as a stable subject in self-preservation. In my view, Madikizela-Mandela denounces testimonials' valorisation of victimhood and the normative portrayal of its subjects as strictly subaltern. She is conscious of the moral guidelines that govern the primordial public of the anti-apartheid struggle especially the need to sustain the mystery of black nationalists.

In one of her journal entries, dated May 28, when her interrogator asks Madikizela-Mandela (2004, p. 33) if she feels she is 'chosen' by God to lead, she tells him: 'I deeply resent the indirect insult on my national pride and my husband's'. Although Mandela's name is not mentioned the by interrogator, her conceptualisation of him as part of her soul implicates him in her personal experiences. However, when Mandela ascends into leadership after independence, he is unable to accept that part of Winnie's political role might have actually exceeded his control, thus he distances himself from her. According to Spencer (2014, p. 22), the male soldier in the struggle discourse represents an 'unambiguous' masculinity 'whose heroic sacrifices during the war entitle him to the citizenship of the nation' after war. Contrarily, women militants are often dislocated from the public sphere and re-located within the domestic sphere or a deviant public image that curbs their militancy. By highlighting these polarities in her testimonial, Madikizela-Mandela foregrounds the gender biases in discursive practices of warriorhood. These nuances emerge in her testimonial as two conflicting aspects of her selfhood – the warrior and the nurturer.

Madikizela-Mandela exhibits a militant stance towards her confinement within the domestic sphere. In Part of My Soul Went with Him, she demonstrates a rebellious attitude towards attempts by the Nationalist government to tame her militancy. Her warriorhood is illustrated in Figure 1 (below) in this article, appearing as image 2 in her first testimonial. In this photograph, Madikizela-Mandela is standing behind a fence while under house arrest in Brandfort. Although it is unclear who took the photograph, her appearance within a secluded space cordoned off by a fence suggests an attempt by the Nationalist Government to reinstate Madikizela-Mandela's womanhood to a state of 'normalcy' within the domestic sphere (Samuelson, 2007, p. 852). This form of imprisonment and its framing in public media shows one way through which the Nationalist government re-gendered the society by re-inventing public discourse to re-capture the conventional imaginary of (black) women (prisoners) as 'domestic subjects' (Samuelson, 2007, p. 841). Although her location suggests confinement, she resists succumbing to this victimisation in this photograph by adopting a body language of militancy. Her posture is of defiance, and her arms are crossed as if protecting herself from public scrutiny. Further, she is deliberately looking away from the camera, as if withholding a piece of herself from outside gaze. Her angry gaze instead challenges the desire to police her militancy, thus, I view her portraiture in this photograph as a performance of a militancy.

Figure 1: Winnie Mandela banished to Brandfort, 1977[11]

Madikizela-Mandela challenges attempts to re-define her femininity within a male, and patriarchal understanding of who a woman should be and how she should act in her testimonials through storytelling. She recalls what detective Swanepoel told her during her interrogation while in prison before being sent to Brandfort: '[y]ou know, people think Nelson Mandela is a great man, they think he is in prison because he wanted to sacrifice for his people. If I had a wife like you, I would do exactly what Nelson has done and go and seek protection in prison' (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985:101). The words invoked by Madikizela-Mandela in this particular anecdote perfectly capture her defiance. Together, this rebellious attitude and the illustration of Madikizela-Mandela's defiance in the image above, collaborate in re-figuring her character as a very strong woman who Swanepoel derogatorily describes as hard-headed.

By citing Swanepoel's response, Madikizela-Mandela does not claim victimhood, she enforces her warrior qualities. Swanepoel's comment, ignorant as it might seem of African traditions, unifies all men as ejective of women who resist subjugation. In this recollection, she imagines her political womanhood as not only agential, but also a war against various forms of women's oppression. Therefore, the first image appearing in her first testimonial, though not captured in this paper, in which she features with a raised right fist as a sign of empowerment at Hector Peterson's funeral, 'the first victim of the Soweto riots' in 1976 (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985:113),[12] seems like as a visual technique included to contests her marginalisation in (anti) apartheid discourses. That posture – with the raised fist was and still is accompanied by the cry "*Amandla*" – freedom and unification. It was a sign used by the resistance, but one that became irrevocably associated with Madikizela-Mandela. This image conveys the notion that she is a communal warrior taking part in agitating for the rights of black children exposed to violence by the police at the 1976 Soweto Uprising. Gunner, who notes the gender shifts in the 'trope of the warrior' in South Africa, aptly suggests that South African political discourse before Mandela's release was 'dynamic' but following South Africa's independence the warrior image has receded to represent male nationalists and expresses hope for a de-gendered approach to this image especially in orature (1999, p. 28). Madikizela-Mandela strategically evokes orality in her testimonials not only for purposes of cultural affinity with Xhosa culture, but also to claim the duty to narrate a communal story of the Xhosa's struggles under apartheid.

11 This photo, which also appears in Madikizela-Mandela's testimonial, has been obtained from: http://www.masnews.co.za/_borders/imagesCA103ZO2.jpg and is the property of Getty images.

12 The gesture for raising up the fist in demonstration of power is often accompanied by the utterance "*Amandla!*" which is a Zulu and Xhosa term that means power. This posture of the raised fist was and still is accompanied by the cry "Amandla" – freedom and unification. The sign used by the and during the resistance movement, but has became irrevocably associated with Madikizela-Mandela

Although Madikizela-Mandela laments about the silencing of women in historical accounts, she also effects a certain historical narrative that also silences women militants from its imaginary. She claims the duty to narrate the Xhosa people's collective encounters with apartheid in *Part of My Soul Went with Him* by deferring to the Xhosa oral archive to ethno-document their experiences through appropriating culturally-specific oral traditions. She then intones that discourses of the (anti)apartheid ideologies lie in political myths that though derived from black and white South Africans' folklore, are biased in their foregrounding of men's militancy. For example, her account of the "nine Xhosa wars" is actually a history of the Eastern frontier wars, originally called *Kaffir* wars,[13] as told to her by her father. She recalls how:

> [H]e [her father] taught us about the nine Xhosa wars. Of course we had textbooks, naturally written by white men, and they had *their* interpretation, why there were nine "Kaffir" wars. Then he would put the textbooks aside and say: "Now, this is what the book says, but the truth is: these white people stole the land from our grandfathers. The clashes between white and black were originally the result of cattle thefts. The whites took the cattle and the blacks would go to fetch them back." That's how he taught us history. (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, pp. 47-48, emphasis in original).

It is important to note that these wars took place while South Africa was still a British colony, so the naming comes from colonial times, but perpetuated in apartheid racist discourse. The history she recalls here is her father's revised rendition of the frontier wars fought in the region now known as the Eastern Province, predominantly amaXhosa territory. The cultural syncretism achieved by merging Western educational methods with indigenous oral education systems is a strategy employed by her father, a teacher of History and Music, who turned the classroom into a performance space where various oral traditions, that informed his people's identity, were passed down to the children contrary to the dictates of Bantu education. By renaming the wars Xhosa as opposed to *Kaffir*, she is revising the history of the Frontier Wars, re-imagining the Xhosas as key participants in these wars. This bias towards the Xhosas, despite other black people's roles in these wars, might be because she says she learnt this history from her father, who taught them this history to equip them for the life outside the homelands and the future where racial prejudices were nuanced. Thus, she says:

> I became aware at an early age that the whites felt superior to us. […]; you tell yourself: "If they failed in those nine Xhosa wars, I am one of them and I will start from where those Xhosas left off and get my land back" [...]. Every tribal child felt that way. That was the result of my father's lessons in the classroom. There is an anger that wakes up in you when you are a child and it builds up and determines the political consciousness of the black *man*. (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 48, Emphasis added).

It is this anger that fuelled the freedom struggle as well as created a basis for the ideology behind

13 Here, the word Kaffir signifies a victim identity constructed by the "perpetrators" of apartheid, the Nationalist government. The origin of the word Kaffir (or kaffer) is Arabic, and it denotes one who is not a believer (of Islam). The term was however re-contextualised as a derogative and racist term in apartheid and appropriated by the Nationalist discourse to normalise the portrayal of black South Africans as uncivilised. Her invocation of this term in this case, therefore, signifies a rights discourse couched in race politics.

the anti-apartheid struggle that the Mandelas advocated for. While her father's historical rendition highlights the intersectionality of South African identities with race that encumbers the identity crisis then and today, it is lacking in its acknowledgement of women as citizens and participants.

For example, her father's version of pre-apartheid history shows a prevalence of male historical figures such as 'Piet Retief', 'Shaka', 'Dingaan', and 'Mandela' as the key figures who dominate South African political folklore. However, in this historical reminiscence, women like Nandi, the mother of Shaka the Zulu warrior are silenced. These male figures are so dominant that even Madikizela-Mandela's declaration of a hope for a future, hybridised South African society cannot escape this masculinity. This patrilineal influence emerges in Madikizela-Mandela's declaration that 'when a descendant of Piet Retief – a Piet in Brandfort – and a descendant of Shaka and Dingaan – a Mandela – start to get to know and like each other and to think that their future can only be a common one, maybe this is a sign of hope', yet she makes no mention of women in this context (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 43). Nevertheless, she redeems herself when she uses her testimonial to subvert the silencing of women within the narrative of the (anti)apartheid armed struggle. Through embracing her image as a female militant, she is re-inventing herself and other women (and men) as militants. However, while Madikizela-Mandela acknowledges few women historical figures such as Helen Suzman, Helen Joseph, Barbara Waite, and Adele de Waal, there still remains a great chasm of historical women personalities. By facilitating the voicing of these women's struggles, she debunks the portrayal of the militant struggle as a black(-male)-only affair. For instance, she says that the De Waals suffered for associating with her. She regards the De Waal family as 'very brave' for their continued support of her, especially since '[a]s a result of our friendship, Adele was ostracised by the white community' (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 42) and her daughter Sonia fell ill due to the harsh treatment from the community (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, pp. 42-43). The punishment of Adele by her society reflects her society's control over female individuality/autonomy as a way of enforcing discipline over them (291). The desire to punish female militants can best be understood as an exhibition of the portrayal of the materiality of the female militant's body in nationalist discourse on the liberation struggle as bodies that do not 'matter in the same way' (Butler, 1993, p. 4) as male militants. Butler's suggestion that male militants' bodies are valorised over women's bodies is evident in South Africa's (anti)apartheid discourses that enable male bodies, silencing women's imaginary as militants, and the possible stories of abuse of female MK combatants by their male comrades, which is not often discussed. Therefore, Madikizela-Mandela (and the women's) self-positioning as militant(s) is a strategy to voice white and black men's and women's militant agency in the struggle. Her awareness of the culture of silencing of gender in public discourses foreshadows that the future South African society, with its united rainbow nation myth, may have no room for women, as was the case back then.

Despite the influence of her father's patriarchal worldview on her young consciousness, Madikizela-Mandela is able to recognise even as a child the gender biases in her society, thus she begins to inculcate a militancy against misogyny. For instance, she notes that her mother's desire for a son to succeed her husband as chief made her 'crazy for a boy' to such an extent that Madikizela-Mandela, the fourth child, felt as if she was unimportant. This sense of rejection influenced her decision to 'prove to her [mother] that a girl is as much of value to a parent as a boy' (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 47). It is at this age that her desire to lead is borne, which she sets out to fulfil in the future. Further, her persistent attempts to resist patriarchal norms and frame her own identity makes her the proverbial woman warrior. As she matured, her militancy too became more pronounced and while at school, she notices that her father was regarded as less of a man amongst the white male teachers. She notes: 'I could see how shabby my father looked in comparison to the white teachers. That hurts your pride when you are a child' (48). Writing in

retrospect, she envisions herself as fulfilling this promise she made to herself as a young woman. She becomes the "Mother of the Nation", however problematic such a concept is, and a political activist in her own right. She therefore portrays her militancy through her various encounters with the Nationalist government in the anti-apartheid struggle as an activist, prisoner, and detainee.

In the first chapter of her first testimonial, "My Little Siberia", she begins her narration by recalling events leading to her banishment in Brandfort, Orange Free State. This attempt by the Nationalist Government to curtail her activism by uprooting her from Soweto, where her political mythology strengthened black people's resistance efforts despite Mandela's imprisonment, however, made her even more resilient. She is intuitive in her observation that 'I am of no importance to them [the Nationalist government] as an individual. What I stand for is what they want to banish. I couldn't think of a greater honour' (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 26). Here, her self-aggrandising attitude is nuanced and it reflects her revolutionary public image that challenges the Nationalist government's attempts to curb her political agency. Instead, she becomes even more determined to help the black women in the Orange Free State to enjoy the privileges that white women have been privy to for a long time. According to her, 'Bantu' women were required to purchase goods through tiny windows designated for them in supermarkets, but when they saw her go inside to buy, they began exploring the interior of the supermarket (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 27).[14] Knowing that she was a mystery, no one dared to interfere with her; rather, white women who were shopping would walk out until she left. Since she knew black women would have been chased out in her absence, she says that 'I would deliberately take an hour to get whatever I needed – [even] if it was only a piece of soap – and I enjoyed seeing these women waiting outside' (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 27). By interfering in everyday women's experiences, Madikizela-Mandela is re-inventing warriorhood to suit he own context. In Brandfort, her symbolic militancy becomes a physical one when she says that '[l]ittle children started spontaneously giving the Black Power sign [that is the raised fist sign], that is how they greeted us when the police were gone' (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 26).

Another way in which Madikizela-Mandela performs her militancy is to dress in traditional garb, which can be viewed as a non-verbal performance of her resistance to apartheid. The traditional Xhosa dress she wears appearing in the photo on the cover of her first testimonial and which she also wore in court during Mandela's 1962 trial are a form of resistance against Western cultural imperialism.[15] Speaking about her choice to demonstrate resistance against apartheid through dress codes, Madikizela-Mandela says that:

> I was banned from wearing my traditional dress [see figure 5 and 6 below] – we women all pitched up in our traditional dresses, it inspired people, it evoked militancy – but I was only allowed in court on condition that I never wore traditional dress. [...]. So I started wearing the traditional colours of the ANC. [...]. During a court case in 1977 for instance, when I was being cross-examined, the prosecutor said, "Mrs Mandela, can you tell this court why you have come dressed in the colours of the banned African National Congress?" (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 87).

14 Here, the invocation of the word Bantu highlights a deconstructionist element in the sense that while this term was considered politically correct during the 1980s, it was later rejected by resistance groups.

15 See figure 12 in chapter seven, "We Couldn't Stop Our Children", in *Part of My Soul Went with Him*. This photo is however not displayed as one of the images in this paper.

As she exemplifies in the extract above, the Nationalist regime expected her to dress in less-intimidating clothing to render her a commoner and to disabuse her of the power that her military regalia bequeathed her. Traditional outfits remove her from this category of women in need of protection, she becomes the protector. Image 11 in chapter seven of *Part of My Soul Went with Him* demonstrates this challenge to social control. In this image, the upper part of her body is framed in a simple attire complimented with traditional Xhosa ornaments and captioned as: 'Winnie in traditional dress in Brandfort, 1978' (image above). She also appears in a traditional attire in image 12 of the same first testimonial (also not displayed in this paper) with the caption: 'Winnie in front of Palace of Justice, 1962 at Mandela's trial' (np). Despite the fact that Mandela was found guilty and imprisoned after this trial, Madikizela-Mandela sustained his legacy in his absence as his political widow, therefore reinforcing her militancy. She writes:

> Many people here [in Brandfort] had never heard of the African National Congress. They had never heard of Nelson Mandela. Here now is a living symbol of what they have been kept away from, of what they kept being warned against […]. They have reached a stage now where they realize they no longer have any place for me in the country – they [Nationalist government] honestly don't know what to do with me. (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 28)

Madikizela-Mandela's insistence on traditional African wear illustrates her contestation of the Nationalist government's attempts to deprive her of the power that such clothing afforded her and as a rebellious act against their efforts to relegate her to the domestic space wearing ordinary Western clothing.

All these acts of militancy that Madikizela-Mandela narrates in her testimonials show her desire to define herself as a militant, and her name is a referential point of this identity. It portrays her as a warrior against the anti-apartheid struggle and in the war against patriarchy. She says that 'My African name "Nomzamo" means in Xhosa "trial" – those who in their life will go through many trials' (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 50). She adds that her father named her Winifred, which she later changed to "Winnie", as a reminder of the resilience of the Germans to attain industrialisation and not succumb to defeat (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 49). This militancy is still evident in her current behaviour as it was evident in the TRC proceedings from which Madikizela-Mandela emerged as a perpetrator of violence. This transition of Madikizela-Mandela's (Madikizela-Mandela, 1985, p. 20) images in public discourses from one of the 'great heroes' of apartheid, as she is described by Bishop Manas Buthelezi in a paratextual element in her testimonial, to a perpetrator of injustice against her people as emergent in the narrative of the Stompei murder, shows that she remains an enigma in the history of South Africa's (post)apartheid eras and in cultural frameworks. Thus, in the post-apartheid epoch, and following her divorce, she is represented in the media as a disgrace to the democratic movement of the ANC government. Due to her repetitive flouting of social conventions, she remains the most controversial political woman figure in the anti-apartheid narrative. It then seems that patriarchy's need to retain the status quo in the public domain results in the configuration of female militants as "wayward" or "transgressive".

Conclusion

Madikizela-Mandela's testimonials negotiate the five metrics of authenticity suggested by Smith and Watson to investigate how she portrays her own and community's identities as victims (or perpetrators) and survivors or apartheid within the discursive unit of political warriorhood. The paper argues that the stories documented in the selected testimonials are an enactment and

contestation of Madikizela-Mandela's "political warriorhood". These testimonials are spaces that converge historical meanings of militancy, such as MK's activities, and the writers' performance of their resistance to apartheid dramatise ideological militancy. In addressing societal perceptions of women in war and afterwards, the accounts reflect patriarchal biases to women's existence in the public sphere and the 'battle-field'. I have illustrated how moments in narrations render their stories vulnerable to suspicious reading, but also how her privileged position in her society challenges the normative depiction of testimonial subjects as predominantly subaltern, and implicitly agency-less. Understood via methodologies proposed by testimonial debates, I demonstrated new ways of reading testimonies by African women.

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