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Ubuntu, an Imperative Fingerprint of Morality in African literature: A Case of Selected Works of J.J Thwala and O.K Matsepe

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ABSTRACT

The deep influences of *ubuntu*, a traditional African philosophy that emphasizes community and unity, are examined in this paper as a significant factor in the creation of the moral landscape in African literature. *Ubuntu*, which is sometimes translated as "I am because we are," demonstrates a communal ethic that emphasizes individual cooperation within a group. This study looked at how *ubuntu* is portrayed and examined in African literary works across a range of genres and eras. The analysis focused on how *ubuntu* serves as a moral compass, influencing characters' actions, relationships, and ethical decisions in African literature. Through a comprehensive examination of select literary works of J.J. Thwala and O.K. Matsepe, this paper elucidates how *ubuntu* shapes the moral dilemmas, conflicts, and resolutions depicted in the narratives. This paper serves as a critical analysis of the moral values found in African literature, making it a valuable tool for analyzing moral narratives and providing readers with a means of gaining a deeper understanding of the complex moral situations presented in these literary works. It is clear that *ubuntu* is an important moral legacy in African literature, as evidenced by the works of writers such as J. J. Thwala and O. K. Matsepe. Through their stories, these writers contribute to the preservation and development of *ubuntu* as a long-lasting and universal ethical paradigm in African literary tradition.

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INTRODUCTION

Ubuntu is an ethical and philosophical concept with deep African roots. It has shaped the formation of moral principles and the formation of human relationships.[1] "You know when *ubuntu* is there, and it is obvious when it is absent," (Archbishop Tutu). It has to do with knowing that one is a part of the web of life, and what it is to be fully human. Hailey views *ubuntu* as "the essence of being human, and that it is part of the gift that Africa will give the world."[2]

Ubuntu is a South African Nguni word that refers to its shared humanity, interdependence, and obligation to one another as a result of our strong bonds. *Ubuntu* is the awareness of our innate desire

[1] Thaddeus Metz, "Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights in South Africa," *African Human Rights Law Journal* 11, no. 2 (2011): 532.
[2] John Hailey, "Ubuntu: A Literature Review," *Document. London: Tutu Foundation*, 2008, 2..

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to respect and value one another as fellow humans and to act and work together for the greater good of the community at large.[3] *Ubuntu* is a philosophy of compassion, connection, and human flourishing.[4] The word "ubuntu" is sometimes translated to mean "humaneness towards others." It goes beyond individualism by emphasizing empathy, community and mutual respect.[5]

Over the years, *ubuntu* has been defined as human nature, humanity, humanness, manhood, goodness of nature, good moral disposition, virtue, the sense of common humanity, true humanity, deep respect for human nature, essential humanity, the kindly simple feeling for persons as a human being, manliness, liberality, a person's own human nature, generosity, human feeling, good disposition, good moral nature, and personhood.[6] *Ubuntu* is a powerful lens through which African writers explore morality, ethics and the complexities of human relationships.

Ubuntu as explored by J. J. Thwala. A renowned African author, J.J.Thwala seamlessly integrates Ubuntu into his narratives, creating protagonists like Mlungisi whose moral compass is driven by group values. His stories explore the struggles, triumphs, and conflicts that African royalty communities face. He shows how ubuntu/botho influences personal choices and group destiny. The moral fabric of African societies is maintained and promoted through J.J.

In this paper, the researchers explore the impact of *ubuntu* on African literature, focusing on the works of two prominent authors, J. J. Thwala, and O. K. Matsepe. Through their creative works, these authors have created stories that capture the essence of *ubuntu*, portraying it as an essential element in the formation of people and ethical frameworks.

Furthermore, it investigates the role of *ubuntu* in fostering a sense of identity, belonging, and shared responsibility among characters, contributing to a rich tapestry of moral discourse. This study aims to illustrate how African authors use *ubuntu* as a narrative tool to convey moral lessons and societal values. It draws connections between *ubuntu* and the broader socio-cultural context. Additionally, it examines the changing relationship between *ubuntu* and individual agency and examines instances where characters struggle with the tension between communal obligations and personal autonomy.

A look inside *ubuntu*, a better comprehension of the ways in which African literature presents *ubuntu* as a moral code. The study will add to the body of knowledge on *ubuntu* by emphasizing how Thwala and Matsepe's works use moral and ethical narratives to further their own ends.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ubuntu, which is commonly summarized as "I am because we are," has long been a fundamental idea in African ethics and philosophy. It highlights how people are interconnected within a society and encourages virtues like empathy, respect for one another, and group responsibility. This review of the literature investigates how *ubuntu* is portrayed in African literature, concentrating on J.J. Thwala and O.K. Motsepe's writings, in particular, to see how they promote *ubuntu* as a moral code.

The Theoretical Framework of *Ubuntu*

Ubuntu is a complex idea with strong roots in African customs and beliefs. According to Ujomu, Desmond Tutu and Michael Eze, among other academics, have emphasized its importance in advancing societal harmony and human dignity.[7] *Ubuntu* emphasizes how people's humanity is inextricably linked to that of others, which promotes a feeling of community and purpose. Because of its philosophical foundation, *ubuntu* has become a popular theme in African literature, where it is frequently used as a prism to analyse moral and ethical quandaries.

[3] Barbara Nussbaum, "African Culture and Ubuntu," *Perspectives* 17, no. 1 (2003): 3.
[4] Collium Banda, "Ubuntu as Human Flourishing? An African Traditional Religious Analysis of Ubuntu and Its Challenge to Christian Anthropology," *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 5, no. 3 (2019): 208–28.
[5] Hailey, "Ubuntu: A Literature Review."
[6] C. B. Gade, *A Discourse on African Philosophy: A New Perspective on Ubuntu and Transitional Justice in South Africa* (Cape Town: Lexington Books, 2017).231
[7] Philip Ogo Ujomu, "Ubuntu'Ethical Perspective and the Global Order," *ΜΕΘΕΧΙS Journal of Research in Values and Spirituality* 2, no. 2 (2022): 76.

Ubuntu in African literature

Philosophical and moral questions have long been woven into the stories of African literature. The tenets of *Ubuntu* have been incorporated into the writings of authors such as Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Bessie Head, who have used them to examine postcolonial identities and subvert colonial narratives. These literary works frequently present *ubuntu* as a morally upright and cohesive community narrative that challenges individuality.

African literature has always been a rich tapestry of moral and philosophical dilemmas, whether in oral and written form. The fundamental idea of this tradition is Ubuntu, a Southern African philosophy best summed up with the words "I am because we are." Ubuntu contributes towards a shared moral discourse thereby bringing a cohesive society.[8] The emphasis on communality and the interdependence of community members is part of this culture. It acknowledges that every individual is a human being deserving of respect without conditions.[9] Ubuntu places a strong emphasis on social principles that go against Western notions of individuality, such as empathy, connectivity, and collective well-being. This idea permeates the African narrative profoundly since people, deeds, and outcomes are frequently shown under the prism of community and moral obligation rather than personal ambition.

Notable African writers like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Bessie Head, and Chinua Achebe are excellent instances of how *ubuntu* has been applied to examine and analyse social and political realities in their writings. In books like Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God, Chinua Achebe describes traditional African cultures in which group decision-making and shared ideals are essential to daily existence. Through these tales, Achebe criticizes the breakdown of these ideals under colonial control in addition to bringing attention to the moral dilemmas posed by the community's choices. His art frequently contrasts the peaceful, morally guided community with the upsetting effects of colonialism, showing how the deterioration of *ubuntu* can result in the collapse of society.[10]

Similar to this, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o uses the idea of *ubuntu* in his books to examine postcolonial identities and challenge colonialism, such as A Grain of Wheat and Petals of Blood. His characters frequently deal with moral conundrums that balance individual demands against group requirements, illustrating the conflict between colonialism's individualism and traditional African values. By presenting *ubuntu* as a counter-narrative to Western individualism and a framework for recreating African societies in a postcolonial setting.[11] Ngũgĩ's writing reclaims African narratives.

Bessie Head examines the intricacies of morality, community, and identity in African communities in her novels When Rain Clouds Gather and Maru.[12] Her stories frequently shed light on the difficulties faced by underprivileged people as they try to find purpose and belonging in their communities. Head emphasizes the value of empathy and group responsibility—two fundamental components of Ubuntu—by portraying characters whose interactions and interdependence define them.[13] Her stories cast doubt on the concept of the independent individual and offer a highly relational and interdependent picture of humanity instead.

In their stories, these authors employ *ubuntu* not just as a setting but also as a dynamic, forming force. They present it as a tenet that fosters moral rectitude, social cohesiveness, and a feeling of shared destiny. By doing this, they subvert colonial narratives that frequently place a premium on hierarchy, rivalry, and self-interest. Rather, they present a picture of society in which ethical and philosophical issues are discussed from the perspective of respect for one another and the well-being of the community.

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[8] Kelebogile T Resane, "Theology and Botho/Ubuntu in Dialogue towards South African Social Cohesion," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 78, no. 4 (2022).2.

[9] S. S. Nkosi, *Ubuntu and the South African Law of Contract with Particular Reference to the Common Law Contract of Employment* (London: Oxford Publishers, 2022).3.

[10] B. O. Anofuechi, *A Critical Assessment of Ubuntu as a Source for Moral Formation in Contemporary Africa* (London: Routledge, 2022).107.

[11] Sindiso Bhebhe and Mpho Ngoepe, "Ethno-Community Archiving: Selected Case Studies in Zimbabwe with Emphasis on Oral History," *African Identities* 21, no. 2 (2023): 306–23.

[12] G. L. Castrillón, " 'People Is People': African Personhood in the Works of Bessie Head" (University of the Witwatersrand, 2023).18.

[13] Bridget Mangwegape, "Exploring Caring as a Principle of Ubuntu in Setswana Drama Text," *Proceedings of ADVED*, 2019.119.

By portraying *ubuntu* as a narrative of a morally pure and harmonious community, these literary works criticize the individuality that is frequently exalted in Western thought and literature.[14] They reiterate the importance of community in forming identities, directing moral judgments, and fostering a more equitable and peaceful society. Achebe, Ngũgĩ, and head advocate for a worldview that sees humankind as inherently interrelated, with each individual's well-being bound to the well-being of the entire, through their writings, in addition to highlighting the philosophical diversity of African philosophy.

In Setswana, there is an expression that reflects this notion of social inclusion or social acceptance, namely, "Moeng goroga re je ka wena" (welcome dear guest, so that through you we may have plenty to eat - a rough translation). This expression reflects the African people's perspectives about visitors or guests, that a visitor or a guest is an important person who arrives at the space of a host; that they deserve more than the host or the host's family in terms of warmth, compassion, empathy and care.[15] Metz adds to this by arguing that ubuntu is a theory of right action. The right action is to treat visitors with dignity.[16]

Many scholarly investigations have explored the relationship between *ubuntu* and morality in African literature. For example, Ramose talks about how *ubuntu* offers a framework for comprehending social justice and African ethics.[17] In a similar vein, Gade investigates the ways that *ubuntu* influences African cultures' legal systems and moral philosophy.[18] These studies highlight how *ubuntu* permeates society and shapes moral discourses in literature and other media.

METHODOLOGY

Underpinned by the exploration of *ubuntu* as a fingerprint of morality in African literature, the article employed a qualitative research approach to enable a literary analysis of how *ubuntu* as a fingerprint of morality in African literature unfolds. A qualitative approach was, thus, employed to understand the rationale behind it. As De Vos puts it, the heart of qualitative research lies in the extraction of meaning from data.[19]

Out of Matsepe's novels and J. J. Thwala's literary work, *Megokgo ya Bjoko* and *Kwahlwa Emini* were purposively selected in this research due to their relevance to the topic under discussion. Though it is acknowledged that all of Matsepe's novels and J J Thwala's literary work, reflect *ubuntu* as a fingerprint of morality in Africa, a single novel from each of them was sampled because the nature of this study did not allow for discussion of all the literary works. Textual analysis was performed on data collected through the document review method.

The process of gathering and presenting data is outlined in the research methodology. "You can use research methodology to uncover the answers to your research questions." It is true that research cannot be conducted without methodology, as this remark illustrates.[20] The study focuses on how J.J. Thwala and O.K. Matsepe portray *ubuntu* as a moral code in their writing. The research design, data collection, and data analysis procedures to investigate the representation of *ubuntu* and its importance in African literature are outlined in the methodology.

Research Design

The literary works of J.J. Thwala and O.K. Matsepe are examined in this study using a qualitative methodology and a framework for comparative analysis. According to Hignett and McDermott,

[14] G. Khondowe, " Investigating Conflict between the Individual and the Community in African Fiction" (University of Zambia, 2021).135.
[15] Mangwegape, "Exploring Caring as a Principle of Ubuntu in Setswana Drama Text."7.
[16] Thaddeus Metz, "Ubuntu as a Moral Theory: Reply to Four Critics," *South African Journal of Philosophy= Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif Vir Wysbegeerte* 26, no. 4 (2007): 369–87.
[17] Mogobe B Ramose, *African Philosophy Through Ubuntu*, ed. 2 (Mond Books, 1999).309.
[18] Gade, *A Discourse on African Philosophy: A New Perspective on Ubuntu and Transitional Justice in South Africa*.29.
[19] J. De Vos, "Investigating the Role of Translators in Cross-Language Qualitative Research in Psychology" (South Africa: University of South Africa, 2018).53.
[20] Mukateko Louisa Sithole, *The Organisational Culture of a Successful Limpopo Secondary School* (University of Johannesburg (South Africa), 2020).3.

qualitative researchers are curious about how people see and understand the world, as well as how they interpret and engage with various events.[21] Meaning interpretation is the focus of qualitative research.

Data collection

Selection of texts: J.J. Thwala and O.K. Matsepe wrote books that prominently display *ubuntu*-related themes. These books encapsulate the writers' views on morality and cultural norms by are important pieces recognized for delving into ethical issues and these books also explore moral principles and the idea of *ubuntu*.

Data Analysis

Textual analysis : Textual analysis of *ubuntu* as a fingerprint of morality in African literature in *Megokgo ya Bjoko* (1962) O.K. Matsepe and J.J Thwala *Kahlwa Emini*, like many other historic African authors, have written extensively about *ubuntu* as a fingerprint of morality in African literature in their novels. As previously stated, *ubuntu* has been prevalent in historical communities. O.K Matsepe and J.J Thwala, as historical writers from a traditional society, had no choice but to write about *ubuntu*. Their writings were informed, even influenced to some extent, by the society in which they lived. As a result, Matsepe and Thwala's philosophical works are influenced by African traditions.

Ubuntu has empathy, yes, there's empathy, there's trust, that is built into this process.[22] That is the moral obligation that sometimes is absent when undue emphasis is placed on individualism and the self, when it's "all about me," and everybody else comes second. Leilane, the character from O.K. Matsepe, beat his wife, Mohlatša, for vomiting when he was eating a still born meat.

> Leilane ga a ka a senya sebaka sa go mo thiba lehlatšo ka lepara.
> Leilane did not hesitate to stop him from vomiting with a stick

As if this is not enough, he also beats his father-in-law, Morara, when Morara was trying to bring reconciliation between this couple and Leilane remained adamant about his individualism.

> Leilane ge a gana, le tlae ga e ntshe. Morara o lekile go bolela setho ge a re nka be e le mathomo nka be go le kaone, morwa-rragwe e lego Motlema, o kwana le mantšu ao a kagišo a a tšwago go Morara, mantšu ao e lego gore ge nka be Leilane a sa ile nnete – mo gongwe o be a tla lefa ka pudi fela.[23]

Leilalane when he refuses something does so seriously. Morara tries to talk sense to Leilane being supported by by Leilane, Motlema, so that he can get a lighter punishment of paying one goat.

This tendency of "it is all about me" Leilane continue even the matter of beating his and father-in-law, has been taken to his king, King Lefehlo.

> O ile ge a tloga gae a bolela phatlalatša gore go tloga tšatši leo ga a sa bušwa ke ditlaela tše di ahlolago sepitša, a bolela le gore yo a ratago a ka no ya botša kgošana yeo ya seota gore yena o ile go mo rapela dira tša Nthumule tšeo di tlilego go mo ntsha makoko.[24]
>
> *When he left the village he spoke openly that he was no longer called by foolish Kings that judge with favouritism and that people could go and tell that foolish king that he is going to invite the soldiers of King Nthumule to come and teach him a lesson.*

The lack of *ubuntu* makes everybody else, including Leilane's best friend Maphuthe who saved him from being killed, come second to Leilane. This is demonstrated by this statement,

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[21] Sue Hignett and Hilary McDermott, "Qualitative Methodology," *Evaluation of Human Work*, 2015, 119–38.
[22] Mark Mathabane, *The Lessons of Ubuntu: How an African Philosophy Can Inspire Racial Healing in America* (Simon and Schuster, 2018).
[23] O. K. Matsepe, *Megokgo Ya Bjoko* (Pretoria : J. L. van Schaik, 1968).20.
[24] Matsepe, *Megokgo Ya Bjoko*.29.

Gatee fela Leilane o ile a kgoromeletša Maphuthe ka mola legageng, ya be e sa le a re gatee, mmawee![25]

Within the blink of an eye, Leilane pushed Maphuthe into the cave and Maphuthe screamed once.

But Maphuthe, Leilane's friend recused Leilane for the second time, thereby showing *ubuntu* which has empathy and *ubuntu* as a catalyst for moral reflection.

Ke ge re eya go go hwetša o ušitšwe ke tlala ka kua nokeng moo o bego o ile go nwa.[26]

That is when we found you next to the river collapsed trying to drink water.

This second assistance from Maphuthe to Leilane brings *ubuntu*, a moral regeneration in Leilane, and destroys in him "all about me" syndrome. Then Leilane started to live in peace with his antagonists – Maphuthe, King Lefehlo, and King Nthumule.

Naga e robetše bja matlogadibešong, mme ke mo go botse bjang mme go ratega bjang ge bana ba motho ba dutše gammogo mme ba ratana etšwe pele ba be ba melelane meno a ka godimo?[27]

There is peace now, It's encouraging to see rival groups getting along again after a conflict.

This assertion also indicates that *ubuntu* is about uniting and reaching a consensus on issues that impact the community and encourages a community-centric mindset and restorative justice. [28]

PREENTATION OF FINDINGS

Ubuntu is an African-inspired ideology that places a strong emphasis on compassion, community well-being, and interconnectivity. This study examines the thematic and narrative relevance of *ubuntu* as a central component of moral discourse in African literature, concentrating on the writings of J.J. Thwala and O.K. Matsepe.

Ubuntu as the cultural and moral foundation: Often translated as "humanity towards others," *ubuntu* influences African literature's ethical framework. It represents a collective mindset in which people are obligated to look out for one another and are interdependent. Thwala and Matsepe examine moral quandaries and interpersonal dynamics in African societies by incorporating *ubuntu* into their stories.

J.J. Thwala's study of *Ubuntu*

J. J. Thwala is one of the noteworthy writers in South Africa. He published a lot of books on Siswati language linguistics, morphology, phonology, phonetics, and lexicography and Siswati literature such as short stories, drama, poetry, novels, folklore as a whole, research article journals, et cetera. Characters that embody community values are used in [certain works] by Thwala to illustrate *ubuntu*.

In order to resolve conflicts, protagonists frequently put the good of the group ahead of their own interests, acting with empathy and decency toward one another. Thwala's stories emphasize the importance of *ubuntu* in helping characters make moral decisions and maintain societal cohesiveness, which advances our knowledge of African moral philosophy.

His writings mostly focus on education and the promotion of *ubuntu* (buntfu). The protagonist may have a difficult upbringing at first, but in the end, s/he overcomes all obstacles and succeeds. A young guy who was haunted by his deceased father in a dream is the subject of one of his novels,

[25] Matsepe, *Megokgo Ya Bjoko*. 93.
[26] Matsepe, *Megokgo Ya Bjoko*. 104.
[27] Matsepe, *Megokgo Ya Bjoko*. 114.
[28] Cornelius Ewuoso and Susan Hall, "Core Aspects of Ubuntu: A Systematic Review," *South African Journal of Bioethics and Law* 12, no. 2 (2019): 93–103.

Tibopho Telutsandvo.[29] It was his father's desire for him to get married and start a family. This book's theme culminates in the idea that children need a village to raise **them.** Mlungisi was called to order by his mother LaNdlove, his best friend Mdvodza, his uncle, and the traditional healer on numerous occasions.

Although it was not their place, the other characters did intervene because of *Ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* is a humble philosophy that forbids anyone from standing by and doing nothing while things go wrong. In the book, *ubuntu* is depicted in the following ways:

...kuwe nendvuku yakhe esandleniiwele phansi kwalentfombi, anikine inhloko ayitsatse. Nayi indvuku yakho bhuti ngiyabonga.[30]

When his stick dropped just in front of her, the girl shook her head. Your stick is here, brother. Thank you.

Buntu unabo mnaketfu, uyati kuwe indvuku yami wangicobongela yona ngabona kutsi cha usaphila lomuntfu.[31]

You possess the spirit of Ubuntu, my sister. You know my stick fell, you pick it up.

Mhlolisise lomuntfu wakho natane uneliseke ngembi kwekuba ukhulume naye telutsandvo.[32]

Learn more about her and spend some time getting to know her before you discuss marriage.

Mine Mlungisi bengitsi bukisisa kahle ngalentfombatane bese uyayikhulumisa-ke.[33]

Mlungisi, I was saying, look into her first before you make a proposal.

Uma kukhona lofuna sikukhulume Mlungisi lokumayelana nelutsandvo, lindza kute ngikhumule indzilo.[34]

Wait till unvailing if you want us to talk about love, Mlungisi.

Noma ngabe inkinga yakho ingakananingeke ikwente kutsi ufune kuganwa ngumfelokati. Bayamfuna futsi ekhakhakhe. Uma utisondzeta kuLomusa utawungena enkingeni ndvodza.[35]

Your difficulty cannot, no matter how big, cause you to fall in love with a widow.Her in-laws desire her. If you start dating her, you'll find yourself in hot water.

Umuntfu akalahlwa asaphila

When a person is still living, you cannot discard them.

Umfundisi wetfula inkhulumo watsi:
Emhlabeni kwenteka lokuhle, kwenteke lokubi.
Emhlabeni kwenteka lokujabulisako nalokujabisako.

[29] J. J. Thwala, *Tibopho Telutsandvo* (Pretoria: Vivlia Publishers, 2015).
[30] Thwala, *Tibopho Telutsandvo*. 2.
[31] Thwala, *Tibopho Telutsandvo*.2.
[32] Thwala, *Tibopho Telutsandvo*. 2.
[33] Thwala, *Tibopho Telutsandvo*.2.
[34] Thwala, *Tibopho Telutsandvo*. 6.
[35] Thwala, *Tibopho Telutsandvo*. 7.

Konkhe siye sikwamukele kutsi kuyintsandvo yemdali.[36]

The priest's sermon went like this:
Bad things and good things happen in life.
Happy and depressing things occur.
All things eventually come to pass because that is God's will.

J.J. Thwala opposed cruelty and disregard for cultural norms. He dissuaded young individuals from rejecting family values. *Tibopho Telutsandvo*, "bonded by love," forbids contempt for the old and the deceased in his book, acknowledging the African way of life. It is forbidden for a young guy to fall in love with or marry a widow due to cultural differences. A widow can only be married by a widower.

In Emaswati's life, this noble novel is highly regarded and valued. It is a thoroughly researched literary work that uses *Ubuntu* throughout. The novel delves into the protagonists' familial rivalries in great detail. The novel still has a long shelf life in literature and has endured for many years. This book is well-known not only in academic circles but also in radio, movies, and local communities. The poetic Zulu proverb "umuntu umuntu ngabantu" captures the essence of these inter-generational, human, societal, and spiritual interactions. The precise meaning of this phrase is that one becomes a person through other individuals, including the mutually affirming "I become and I only through you" and "I am because we are".[37] The motif in his literature is mostly educational.

O.K. Matsepe's study of *Ubuntu*

Another prominent African writer, O. K. Matsepe, has made a significant contribution to the *ubuntu* discourse. Matsepe's literary works, which portray individuals struggling with moral choices and moral issues within their communities, reflect the values of *ubuntu*. His stories serve as a mirror, showing the intricate relationship between personal decisions and the well-being of the community.

In a similar vein, O.K. Matsepe investigates *ubuntu* via ties to his family and community in [certain works]. His characters struggle with difficult moral decisions, but *ubuntu's* values of compassion and solidarity provide them with direction and atonement. *Ubuntu* is still relevant today as a moral compass for negotiating moral dilemmas in African nations, as demonstrated by Matsepe's representation.

DISCUSSION

Comprehending *Ubuntu* in African Literature

Ubuntu, which originates from civilizations in Southern Africa, encompasses principles like compassion, deference to others, and a feeling of shared accountability. *Ubuntu's* relevance to practical moral guidance that transcends orthodoxy is portrayed in literature through the actions, relationships, and moral dilemmas of characters.[38]

Thwala, who is well-known for his works like the novel *Tibopho Telutsandvo*, uses the relationships between his characters to depict *ubuntu*. For example, protagonist Mlungisi exemplifies *ubuntu* by putting the good wishes and expectations of his parents before his personal wish list and resolving disputes via discussion and understanding as opposed to the use of force. Thwala's literary work highlights the importance of *ubuntu* in promoting personal integrity and communal cohesiveness, portraying it as a timeless moral requirement.

In a similar vein, O.K. Matsepe examines *ubuntu* via complex familial and communal relations in *Megokgo ya Bjoko*. His characters like Leilane and U*buntu* values. African readers can relate to Matsepe's representation since it mirrors real-life situations that are influenced by the *Ubuntu* moral code.

[36] Thwala, *Tibopho Telutsandvo*.111.
[37] Steve Edwards and Jabulani Thwala, "African Spirituality and Its Implications for Health, Community Development, and Education," *Religion and Spirituality*, 2010, 215.
[38] J. B. Van Niekerk, " Ubuntu and Moral Value" (Wits University. , 2013).

Ubuntu as a catalyst for moral reflection

In Thwala and Matsepe's writings, *ubuntu* serves as a catalyst for moral reflection and societal critique in addition to serving as a cultural marker. These authors encourage readers to think about the moral effects of their acts on other people and the community at large by providing examples of how *ubuntu* is applied in real-world situations. The focus of this thematic investigation is *ubuntu's* global message of moral responsibility and interrelated humanity, which enhances African literary discourse.

This ideology frequently acts as a moral compass in African literature, directing people and forming stories. This conversation examines the ways in which authors such as J.J. Thwala and O.K. Matsepe use *ubuntu* in their writing, emphasizing the importance of this concept in moral discourse.

Ubuntu is a concept that has its roots in African culture and places a strong emphasis on interconnectivity, compassion, and communal peace. Indeed, trust and empathy are ingrained in the *Ubuntu* process.[39] *Ubuntu*, as a catalyst for moral discourse, if it is lacking causes conflict which can be depicted through Galtung's conflict triangle. The conflict triangle is a straightforward yet effective tool that illustrates conflict as the result of the interaction of three components: Behavior, attitude, and contradiction.[40] The term contradiction describes the fundamental inconsistency or difference between the characters' demands, interests, or ideals that gave rise to the conflict. But once the contradictions are resolved by restoring *ubuntu* the conflict is resolved.

Thwala and Matsepe both use *Ubuntu* to express their cultural identity as well as to encourage moral introspection and societal criticism. These writers encourage readers to think more deeply about African morality by presenting *ubuntu's* applicability in real-world situations and encouraging them to think about how their acts affect other people and the community as a whole.

Ubuntu's continued relevance as a moral pillar is demonstrated by its appearance in African literature, as demonstrated by the works of J.J. Thwala and O.K. Matsepe. By means of their stories, these writers transform ubuntu from a cultural relic into a governing concept, contributing significant perspectives on ethics, identity, and community to African literary debate. Think about the African "ubuntu" ideology, which holds that your interactions with other people influence how you perceive yourself. It's a lifestyle that starts with the idea that "I am" only because "we are."[41] *Ubuntu*, with its universal message of humanity's inter-connectedness is, therefore, a crucial moral imprint in African literature, influencing stories that have an international resonance.

It is clear that *ubuntu* is an important moral legacy in African literature, as evidenced by the works of writers such as J. J. Thwala and O. K. Matsepe. Through their stories, these writers contribute to the preservation and development of *ubuntu* as a long-lasting and universal ethical paradigm in African literary tradition.

The way that J.J. Thwala and O.K. Matsepe explore *ubuntu* as a moral framework in their writings demonstrates the philosophy's significant influence on African literature and society. *Ubuntu's* tenets of community, empathy, compassion, reconciliation, and cultural continuity are eloquently illustrated by both writers, underscoring the organization's critical role in promoting moral behavior and societal cohesiveness.

Through their personal stories, Thwala and Matsepe underscore the significance of mutual respect and group responsibility by showing how intimately linked individual well-being is to the welfare of the community. *Ubuntu* is flexible in addressing a range of ethical and social challenges, as evidenced by Thwala's emphasis on moral integrity and community solidarity and Matsepe's emphasis on reconciliation and cultural identity.

These results imply that *ubuntu* is a living ideology with substantial modern significance, as well as a historical and cultural artifact. Ubuntu has an infinite number of meanings. As the name implies, it began with the Bantu people of Africa as a fundamental component of ontology and cosmology. Through the integration of *ubuntu* into academic programs, encouragement of more investigation, and backing for cultural conservation endeavors, we can enhance our comprehension of African ethical principles and their relevance in contemporary settings. Encouraging modern authors

[39] Mathabane, *The Lessons of Ubuntu: How an African Philosophy Can Inspire Racial Healing in America*.4.
[40] Giorgio Gallo, "Conflict Theory, Complexity and Systems Approach," *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* 30, no. 2 (2013): 156.
[41] M. Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me* (New York City: Church Publishing Inc, 2009).

and media producers to include *ubuntu* in their works can also assist in addressing contemporary social issues by using traditional African wisdom as a lens.

Moreover, integrating *ubuntu* values into community development initiatives and dispute-resolution processes can improve social cohesion and group accountability. Campaigns for public awareness and educational materials can help people comprehend Ubuntu, which will help to build a culture that values moral integrity and interconnection.

Implications for African literature and beyond

Thwala and Matsepe's use of *ubuntu* in their works highlights the concept's ongoing importance as a moral and cultural pillar of African literature. It dispels myths and advances a sophisticated comprehension of African societies by presenting moral principles derived from *ubuntu*. Furthermore, *ubuntu's* appeal cuts across national borders, providing insights into universal concepts of compassion, unity, and moral conduct that strike a chord with viewers everywhere.

The stories of J.J. Thwala and O.K. Matsepe serve as essential examples of *ubuntu's* moral significance in African literature. Their creations demonstrate *ubuntu's* significant impact on African countries' ethical discourse, cultural identity, and communal ideals. Thwala and Matsepe enhance African literary traditions and advance a more profound comprehension of moral philosophy that cuts across cultural divides by incorporating *ubuntu* into their narratives.

The literary works of J.J. Thwala and O.K. Matsepe demonstrate the significance of *ubuntu* in forming moral tales and cultural identities in African literature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The examination of *ubuntu* in the writings of O.K. Matsepe and J.J. Thwala highlights the moral framework's importance in African literature. It is advised to incorporate *ubuntu* into curricula in order to improve students' comprehension of African moral systems; to promote more extensive and multidisciplinary study; and to plan community events and literary festivals as means of cultural preservation. Further recommendations for fostering a deeper understanding of African moral values, ethical development, and social cohesion include encouraging the incorporation of *ubuntu* into modern narratives and media, applying its principles in social development initiatives like conflict resolution and community projects, and starting public awareness campaigns.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the examination of *ubuntu* in J.J. Thwala and O.K. Matsepe's writings emphasizes the significance of this moral compass in African culture. A more compassionate, equitable, and unified society can be achieved via embracing and advancing *ubuntu*, which reflects the ageless wisdom found in African literary traditions.

LIMITATIONS

The study's scope is restricted to a few works by J.J. Thwala and O.K. Matsepe, which may not include all of *ubuntu's* expressions in South Africa and the whole of African literature. Subjective biases may be introduced by the interpretive character of qualitative analysis.

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