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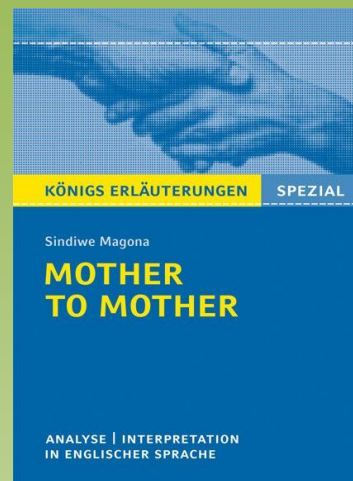
Unterrichtsmaterialien in digitaler und in gedruckter Form

Auszug aus:

Sindiwe Magona: Mother to Mother

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1. AT A GLANCE – THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS

This study guide to Sindiwe Magona's novel *Mother to Mother* is designed to provide an easy-to-use overview of the structure, context, themes and characters of the novel. Here is a quick rundown of the most important points.

Part 2 takes a brief look at **Sindiwe Magona and her career**.

- ⇒ p. 9 → Magona was **born in 1943** in the village of Gungululu in South Africa. She has written a multi-volume autobiography, novels, short stories, poetry and biographies.
- ⇒ p. 11 → *Mother to Mother* is a semi-autobiographical fictionalised account of the **murder of a white american girl** (Amy Biehl) and describes the era and aftermath of apartheid in South Africa.

Part 3 offers analyses and interpretations of the novel.

Mother to Mother – Origins and sources:

- ⇒ p. 31 The novel is set in places where Magona lived and during a time when she was also living there. It draws heavily on her own life and experience, and looks at the lives of Xhosa people in the townships of South Africa.

Summaries:

- ⇒ p. 37 The narrator is a mother of three called Mandisa. Her eldest son Mxolisi has been involved with a group of student protesters in the township of Guguletu, near Cape Town. In August 1993 he gets caught up in a mob which assaults and kills a white girl in a car.
The novel is in the form of Mandisa's address directly to the dead girl's mother. She tells the story of her life and how she had

Mxolisi when she was just 15. Her story covers her childhood in the slums of Blouville, the government-ordered forced resettlement of the people from there to the township of Guguletu near Cape Town, where families and communities were torn apart, and her struggles to raise her children. Throughout her life she and her children have been witness to and victims of racist oppression and brutality from the police. She moves back and forth in time as she tells her story, explaining how things happened the way they did.

Structure:

The novel is about the origins of events and their consequences, so it moves back and forth in time to illustrate how Mxolisi came to be the troubled, disobedient and violent young man he is in 1993. It also includes descriptions of specific episodes in South African history, as well as stories from Xhosa history and the origins of the hatred and racism in the country. ⇨ p. 55

Characters:

Mandisa and her son Mxolisi are central to everything that happens and everything the novel is about.

Mandisa

⇨ p. 63

- the narrator, mother of three children
- she became accidentally pregnant when she was 14

Mxolisi

⇨ p. 66

- Mandisa's eldest son, who kills the white girl

Lunga and Siziwe

⇨ p. 71

- Mandisa's second son and her daughter

⇒ p. 72

China, Lungile & Dwadwa

→ Mandisa's three husbands and the fathers of her children

⇒ p. 74

Mandisa's extended family (Mama, Tata, Khaya, et al.)

⇒ p. 77

Other characters like China's family, Mandisa's friends and neighbours or the white girl and her mother**Themes:**

⇒ p. 84

The themes we will look at in this study guide are issues of identity and inequality: violence and oppression; communities, families and traditions; and grief, guilt, hope and despair. There is a larger theme behind all of these which organises the structure of the narrative, and that is an investigation of the past.

Style and language:

⇒ p. 114

The style of the novel moves between a clear and direct address (from "me" to "you") and a richer, poetic style. The language is an interesting combination of unusual English diction and structures and a mixture of the various languages people of Mandisa's status would speak – English, Afrikaans and Xhosa.

Interpretations:

⇒ p. 119

Mother to Mother can be interpreted and read as both an informative, semi-autobiographical fictionalised account of the killing of Amy Biehl and as a look at bigger historical issues and symbolism.

2.1 Biography

2. SINDIWE MAGONA: LIFE & WORKS

2.1 Biography

YEAR	PLACE	EVENT	AGE
1943	Gungululu (village in what is now called the Eastern Cape, formerly Transkei), South Africa	27 August: Sindiwe Magona is born, eldest of eight children	
1962	Gugulethu	She works for years as a junior school teacher.	19
1966	Gugulethu	Already the mother of two children, Magona is now pregnant with a third when her husband leaves the family.	23
1981	Gugulethu	Completes a graduate degree (her third academic degree) from Columbia University (USA) via post.	38
1980s–2000s	New York, USA	Magona moves with her family to New York to work at the United Nations.	Late 30s–60
1993	New York	Awarded an Honorary Degree in Humane Letters by Hartwick College in Oneonta (New York State, USA).	50
Up to 1994	New York	Works for the UN, presenting anti-apartheid radio programmes.	51
1990	Cape Town, South Africa	Publication of the first part of her autobiography <i>To My Children's Children</i> .	47
1998	Cape Town	<i>Mother to Mother</i> was published.	55
2003	New York/Cape Town	Magona has been working for the UN's Public Information Department before retiring in 2003 and moving back to South Africa.	60



Sindiwe Magona (*1943)
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AGENCY

2.1 Biography

YEAR	PLACE	EVENT	AGE
2003– now	Cape Town	Writer in Residence at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town; also works for Georgia State University (USA).	
2007	South Africa	In this year, Magona is awarded several major prizes. She is presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award for her contributions to South African Literature, as well as other prizes recognising her literary work, her social activism and her efforts to promote and celebrate Xhosa culture.	64
2012	South Africa	2012 she is joint winner with Nadine Gordimer of the Mbokodo Award in Creative Writing. ¹	69

1 http://www.mbokodoawards.co.za/mbokodo_awards_2012_winners.html



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