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The University of Johannesburg acquired *The Thinker* in April 2019 from Dr Essop Pahad. Over the last decade, *The Thinker* has gained a reputation as a journal that explores Pan-African issues across fields and times. Ronit Frenkel, as the incoming editor, plans on maintaining the pan-African scope of the journal while increasing its coverage into fields such as books, art, literature and popular cultures. *The Thinker* is a 'hybrid' journal, publishing both journalistic pieces with more academic articles and contributors can now opt to have their submissions peer reviewed. We welcome Africa-centred articles from diverse perspectives, in order to enrich both knowledge of the continent and of issues impacting the continent.



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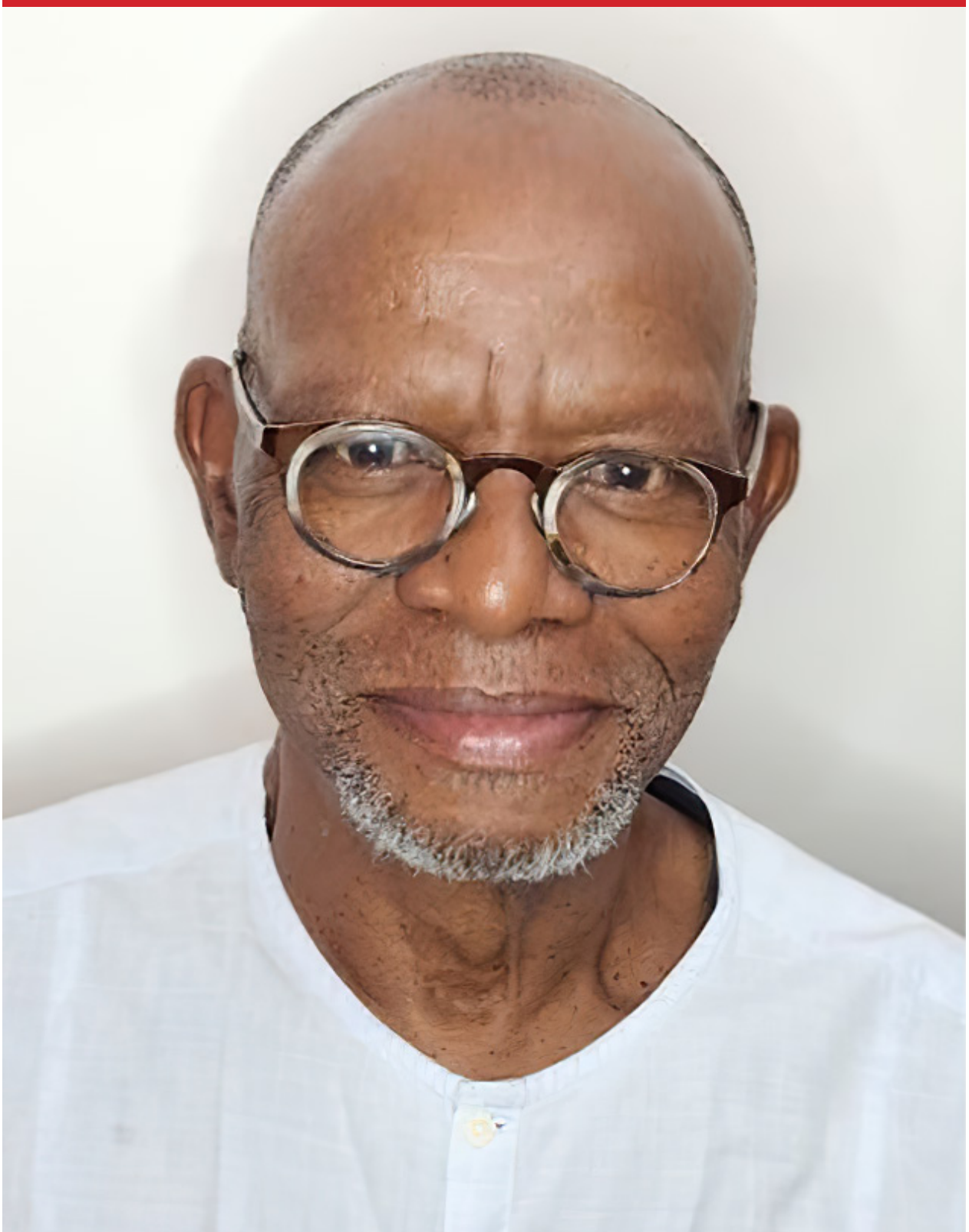
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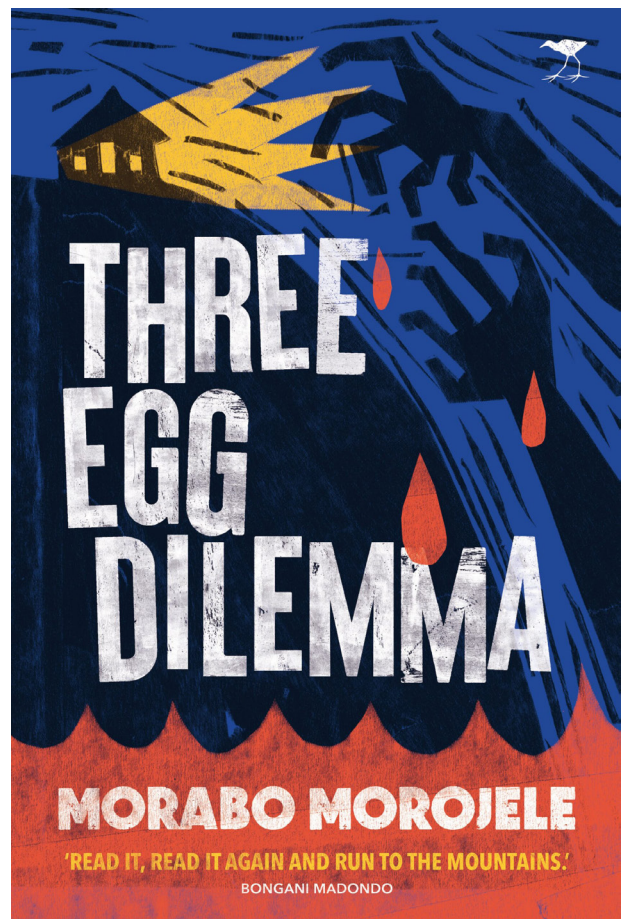
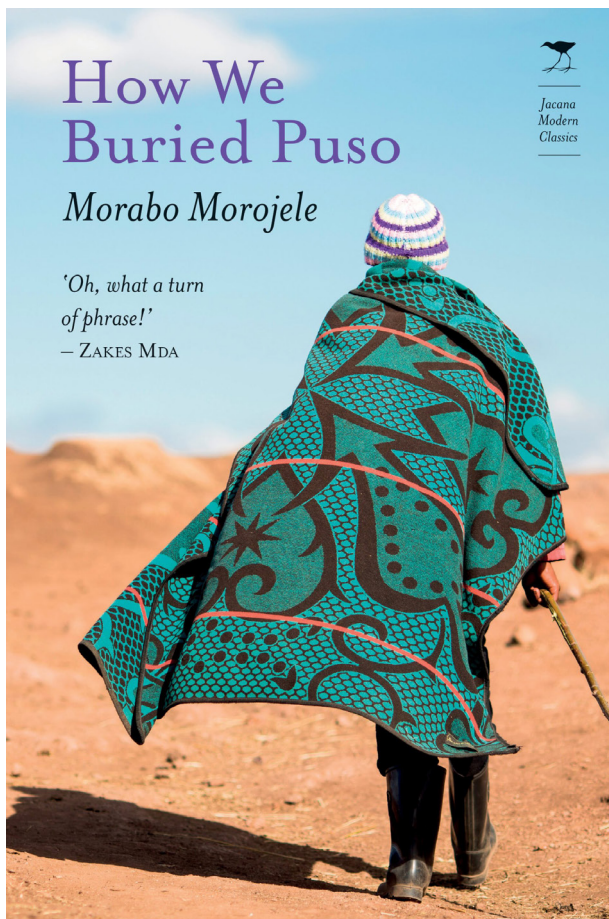
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MORABO MOROJELE (1960-2025)





A Satirist of the Present, Chronicler of our Exile and a Visionary of the Possible: A Literary Tribute to Morabo Morojele.

By Thabo Tšhloane, University of Johannesburg.

Morabo Morojele stands as a singular and resonant voice within the landscape of contemporary African literature. With only two novels—*How We Buried Puso* (2006) and *Three Egg Dilemma* (2023)—he has carved epochal milestones in the literary cartography of Southern Africa. These works do far more than chronicle the existential anxieties and social dislocations of their era; they radically reimagine the very possibilities of narrative form, language and the African novel itself.

A Literary Innovator

Morojele's body of work is marked by a fearless departure from convention. His prose is a tapestry of linguistic innovation and formal experimentation, blending realism with the magical and the mundane with the extraordinary. By centering marginalised perspectives and embedding incisive social critique within richly textured, non-linear

narratives, Morojele redefines African literary expression and invites readers into a dynamic and transformative engagement with his texts. His novels are as intellectually demanding as they are aesthetically rewarding.

At the heart of Morojele's narrative strategy is a dismantling of the archetype of the flawless and triumphant hero. His protagonists are ordinary,

fallible, and deeply enmeshed in the intricate web of social and gender dynamics. By foregrounding the limits of individual agency amidst societal collapse and amplifying the voices of the marginalised, Morojele offers a nuanced, realistic, and ethically complex vision of human experience. Through layered characterisation, ambiguous narration, and captivating dialogue, he transcends the boundaries of conventional heroism, presenting instead a tapestry of lived realities that are both particular and universal.

The Lyrical Exile: *How We Buried Puso*

In *How We Buried Puso*, Morojele crafts a narrative that is at once intimate and epic, lyrical and political. The novel follows Molefe, a young man whose search for opportunity abroad mirrors the broader postcolonial African experience—torn between the allure of the foreign and the gravitational pull of home, tradition and memory. Morojele's poetic and musical prose—marked by syntactic daring and linguistic playfulness—imbues the novel with a haunting rhythm and a palpable sense of perpetual exile.

Thematically, the novel excavates the wounds of colonialism, the ache of alienation and the complexities of return. Through flashbacks and fragmented memories, Morojele constructs a world where past and present bleed into each other, mirroring the psychic dislocation of his characters. The result is a novel that is challenging yet profoundly rewarding—a work that asks much of its readers and gives even more in return. *How We Buried Puso* stands as a moving testament to the enduring power of memory and the complexities of return for those marked by displacement.

Satire and Spectrality: *Three Egg Dilemma*

With *Three Egg Dilemma*, Morojele extends his literary project into the realms of satire and speculative fiction. Winner of the 2024 University of Johannesburg Main Prize for Literature, the novel has been celebrated for its wit, vibrant characters, and incisive social critique. Set against a backdrop of civil disintegration and societal malaise, it is unflinching in its depiction of violence and uncertainty, yet suffused with moments of hope and resilience. In the midst of the unfolding

tragedy, the narrative is alive and vibrating with witticisms, humour and thrilling descriptions.

Morojele's use of magical realism and satire enables him to paint a dystopia that is both universal in its resonance and deeply rooted in African realities. The narrative orbits around EG Mohlala and his ill-assorted companions, whose habitual congregation at Mada's tavern becomes a microcosm of survival amid the breakdown of social and political order. For these characters, fantasy becomes an alternative reality—a wellspring of comfort and strength in the face of adversity. Their dreams and desires, though unattainable in the present, illuminate the possibilities of a different world. With its unforgettable characters, evocative setting, and profound insight, *Three Egg Dilemma* stands as a new classic of Southern African literature—a work both timely and timeless.

Morojele's Enduring Legacy: Visionary of the Possible

Morabo Morojele's novels are demanding and transformative. His work challenges the conventions of narrative and language, compelling readers to confront the ambiguities of identity, the scars of history, and the dilemmas of modernity. In *How We Buried Puso* and *Three Egg Dilemma*, Morojele has given us more than stories; he has provided instruments for thinking, feeling, and imagining alternative realities.

His novels function as both mirrors—reflecting the fractured realities of postcolonial Africa—and windows—opening onto new vistas of possibility and hope. For his audacious reimagining of the African novel and the enduring music of his prose, Morabo Morojele deserves our deepest gratitude and highest acclaim. With just two novels, he has not only enriched African literary discourse but also expanded the horizons of global literature itself.

Morabo Morojele may have left us, but his words and vision remain—a beacon of hope for future generations of readers, writers and literary scholars. As a satirist of the present, a chronicler of our exile, and a visionary of the possible, Morojele's legacy endures—timely, timeless, and transformative.

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