

Recent Books from South Africa – May 2021

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Art

Mintirho Ya Vulavula : Arts, National Identities and Democracy in South Africa / (Eds) Innocentia J., Mhlambi & Sandile Ngidi
Johannesburg, South Africa : Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA), 2021
xxiv, 456p. ; 234x156mm. ; Colour Illus. and Colour Photographs.
Includes Index
9781920690236
\$ 63.00 / PB
900gm.

Mintirho ya Vulavula: Arts, National Identities and Democracy examines the role of arts and culture in development, and specifically its value in consolidating our nascent democracy and in facilitating the transformation of South African society.

Contributors to this edited volume interrogate the role of arts, culture and heritage from a transdisciplinary perspective, enriched by the cross-generational perspectives offered by young and older artists, cultural practitioners, activists and scholars. Authors also offer some policy recommendations on how the contribution of arts and culture to social cohesion and nation-building can be enhanced.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=765322>

Economics

LEAP 4.0 : African Perspectives on the Fourth Industrial Revolution / (Eds) Zamanzima Mazibuko-Makena & Erika Kraemer-Mbula
Johannesburg, South Africa : Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA), 2021
xxvi, 448p. ; 229x152mm. ; Colour Illustrations and Colour Photographs
Includes Index

9781928509165
\$ 65.00 / PB
700gm.

Leap 4.0: African Perspectives on the Fourth Industrial Revolution seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities the 4IR presents to South Africa and the rest of the African continent, especially to workers and marginalised sectors of society.

Authors examine the prerequisites for the successful introduction of the 4IR, including infrastructure, skilled personnel and appropriate regulation. They underline the importance of inclusive innovation, with a deliberate objective to create net new jobs and reduce inequality.

The 4IR is well established in many parts of the world, with technological advances driving profound social and economic change. However, for many developing countries, particularly countries in Africa, the 4IR may not offer the anticipated 'leap' forward. There is a danger that the continent may find itself dictated to by experiences that are not in tune with its social contexts.

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Wrecking Ball : Why Permanent Technological Unemployment, a Predictable Pandemic and Other Wicked Problems Will End South Africa's Experiment in Inclusive Democracy / Stu Woolman
Makhanda, South Africa: NISC (Pty) Ltd, 2021
422p. ; 244x170mm.
9781920033729
\$ 55.00 / PB

Wrecking Ball explores, in an unprecedented manner, a decalogue of wicked problems that confronts humanity: Nuclear proliferation, climate change, pandemics, permanent technological unemployment, Orwellian public and private surveillance, social media that distorts reality, cyberwarfare, the fragmentation of democracies, the inability of nations to cabin private power, the failure of multinational institutions to promote collaboration and the deepening of autocratic rule in countries that have never known anything but extractive institutions. Collectively, or even severally, these wicked problems constitute crises that could end civilisation.

Does this list frighten you, or do you blithely assume that tomorrow will be just like yesterday?

Wrecking Ball shows that without an inclusive system of global governance, the collective action required to solve those wicked problems falls beyond the remit of the world's 20 inclusive democracies, 50 flawed democracies

and 130 extractive, elitist autocracies. Flawed democracies and autocracies that already struggle to produce goods necessary for their own citizens to flourish, are simply incapable of committing to international arrangements that address the existential threats posed by the decalogue of wicked problems.

This then is our children's inheritance: Dystopias far, far worse than the polities that we ourselves have known. What, if anything, can mitigate the harms that are our legacy?

Wrecking Ball offers, as an answer, a ground-breaking analysis of South Africa's political economy. It demonstrates that this country's elitist and extractive political and economic institutions not only make resolution of ongoing domestic crises unattainable, likewise, they make meaningful responses to wicked problems impossible.

Smart people think they have all the answers. Without laboring under any such illusions, Martin Luther King Jr eloquently opined: 'The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.' But what will happen, King would acidly ask, if we continue to dawdle, and simply run out of time?

Wrecking Ball simialrly operates under no such 'smart' pretenses, and undeterred and unmatched ventures into terrains traversed by truly great political economists: Smith, Ricardo, Marx and Keynes. By knitting together what we all know to be the facts, with cutting edge theory in economics, sociology, history and political science, the book paints an unflinching portrait of where we are, and where we are headed.

Are we ready to be honest with ourselves about the likely future of this overheated, overpopulated planet?

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=765324>

Literature

The School Gates / Fiona Snyckers

Cape Town: Modjaji Books, 2021

318p. ; 210x140mm.

9781928433194

\$ 18.00 / PB

404gm.

"We know what's best for our children."

Burnt out after years as a professional dancer, Ella Burchell moves to a small town on the KwaZulu Natal north coast hoping to rebuild her life.

Things look up when she gets a job teaching dance to children at a for-profit private school.

But Ella hasn't reckoned with the cabal of private-school mums who run the Pines Academy as their own personal fiefdom. Circling into cliques at the school gates every morning, the mums are a force to be reckoned with. Soon Ella is too busy fielding their demands to concentrate on her own troubles. Distraction arrives in the form of an attractive cricket coach, but Ella hardly has time to pay attention.

Fun, fast-paced and hilarious, this novel by an award-winning author skewers the world of private-school privilege.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=765325>

Go Away Birds / Michelle Edwards (Ed) Emily Buchanan
Cape Town: Modjaji Books, 2021

282p. ; 198x129mm.

9781928433057

\$ 17.00 / PB

328gm.

Skye is looking for normal. She grew up different and it rankles. Home isn't normal; her mom isn't normal. Her brother, beloved as he is, isn't quite normal, either. Her marriage was kind of normal (Cam is a wealthy, handsome man who's nice enough) and now it's a dumpster fire. And look at South Africa—entirely NOT normal.

She's got PTSD and she's in mourning. She doesn't know who she is or what she wants.

She tries to anchor herself to tangible things: to her cooking, to her neighbour's children, to sex. But as she relives her past and tries to plan her future, she feels increasingly dislocated. Skye escapes when things get overwhelming and realises almost too late that she's about to make everything worse.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=765326>

The Promise of Memory / Michael Weeder (Ed) Diana Ferrus
Johannesburg, South Africa: Africa Perspectives Publishing, 2021

xii, 78p. ; 210x148mm.

9781990976766

\$ 14.00 / PB

134gm.

This selection of poems - covering the years from 1980 to the present day - expresses the poets' personal attempts at making sense of the everyday, ordinary difficulties, and the small victories of life. The offering emphasises, sometimes in an exploratory suggestiveness, how differences should not be

divisive and that they form part of the range of ways in which we belong to - and are of - each other.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=765327>

Still Further : New Poems 2000-2020 / C.J. Driver (Ed) Douglas Reid
Skinner

Durban, South Africa: Uhlanga Press, 2021

138p. ; 203x133mm.

9780620928137

\$ 14.00 / PB

172gm.

Imbued with a sense of history - not to mention an ample wit and sharp eye for irony - C.J. Driver's first full collection of poems since 2005 is cause for celebration. Selected from the many poems Driver has written and published in magazines, booklets, and anthologies since his professional retirement in 2000, *Still Further* manages to take in the international scope of his many careers: as anti-apartheid activist, teacher, headmaster, and - of course - as writer and poet.

While showing an impressive range of formal poetics, weighty philosophy, and Driver's trademark political forthrightness, this is a book bound by love, replete with reflections on family, companionship, and old friends remembered. As such, this collection does not just portray one of South Africa's great living poets; *Still Further* is a testament to the value of people - no matter how great or humble - whose shared lives and histories make one's own life worth living. Affirming, immersive, and generously conceived, this is a must for any serious reader of English poetry.

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