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Highlighting African Anthropologists: Anne-Maria Makhulu

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Anne-Maria Makhulu

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College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University

Sociology Department



Introduction

Anne-Maria Makulu is an anthropologist whose work we chose to study because her breadth of work stood out to us and we wanted to highlight a woman anthropologist. Her work is important because her motivations, mentorship, and inspirations intersect with her scholarship which makes it both genuine and intentional. Her experiences as a biracial woman with ties to South Africa have strongly influenced her as a scholar of race and post-apartheid South Africa,

African History

Makhulu was born in England to a white British mother and a Black South African father. Her father was an anti-apartheid activist who fled the country in the 60's and eventually made his way to England. She also lived in Belgium and Botswana growing up. Her experiences with race, her dad's underground railroad to get anti-apartheid activists out of South Africa, and her grad school advisors were all instrumental in shaping her academic works and interests. Her work is primarily based in South Africa, and she focuses on race, economic systems, the way that post-apartheid life is still influenced by apartheid-era ideology, and urbanization.



Conclusion

Anne-Maria Makhulu is a professor at Duke University and is duly appointed in the departments of Anthropology and African and African American studies. Her work reflects her passion for racial justice and activism in post-apartheid South Africa and continues to shape her current scholarship. This is important because her work to end injustice in South Africa extends to decolonizing anthropology and research done primarily by people outside the community. There must be a diverse scholarly community with people that have a connection with the country. Scholarly work is not complete if we disallow people with lived or personal experience from having a voice.

Personal History

From an early age, Makhulu was exposed to ideas about race, racial justice, and activism. This is because her father was an anti-apartheid activist who she says implicitly instilled a critical and curious household environment which allowed Makhulu to begin processing post-apartheid subconsciously. Her mother studied policy and economics in University. Her interest in economics came from her mother, and her interest in South Africa and post-apartheid life came largely from her father.

Scholarship

Making freedom: apartheid, squatter politics, and the struggle for home.

"Reckoning with Apartheid The Conundrum of Working through the Past. Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East"

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