I am Ndumiso Ngcobo

“His humour is effortless as he peppers you machine-gun style with the home truths of a township raconteur”

-Fred Khumalo
Brief Biography

- Ndumiso Ngcobo was born in Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale in 1972.
- He spent the first decade of his working life as a Mathematics and Science teacher, research and development specialist and technical consultant in the food manufacturing industry.
- Ngcobo is also a regular featured columnist in newspapers, literary journals and magazines such as The Sunday Times, The Mail and Guardian, Cosmopolitan, Men’s Health, Wordsetc, Afropolitan, amongst others. As a blogger, he often writes under the pseudonym Silwane which means animal. Also a radio talk show host and television scriptwriter.
- NDp IT, Systems Analysis and Design/ Lecturer
“I write because that’s who I am, what I do. I write purely out of compulsion, the same way a dung beetle is compelled to spend its days rolling balls of excrement around. If nobody ever paid me to write, I’d still be writing. The best response I’ve managed to conjure up as to why I write is; the source of inspiration for my writing is human beings. Forget aliens, technology, tsunamis or any other phenomenon”
Any advise for us maybe?

- “That advice is, write, write and write some more. The best way to become a published author is to always be writing, every single day. Yes, writing requires a fair amount natural talent and a flair for it. But like most other endeavours in life, writing is a skill that one has to nurture through practice, among other methods”- Ngcobo
After tiring of the corporate world, Ngcobo put together his years of writing and in 2007 released his first literary offering, *Some of My Best Friends Are White*, which became an instant bestseller.

Peaking at number two in the Sunday Times Bestseller list. It was subsequently short-listed for the 2008 Nielsen’s Booksellers Choice literary award. It is also being translated into Italian and German.

In 2009, Ngcobo once again cast his streetwise eye on South African society and followed with another laser-sharp commentary on the Rainbow Nation, entitled *Is It Coz I’m Black?*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Books</th>
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<tr>
<td>Some of my best friends are white (2007)</td>
<td>Is it ‘coz I'm black? (2009)</td>
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Distinctiveness as a Writer

- You can feel his **presence** in his writing. He is a highly colourful and loaded with opinionated remarks.

- Fred Khumalo said his distinctiveness lies in his “**ballsy in-your-face-writing.**” His presence is felt in the type of words that he uses. Very clever, sharp, loud and witty. Some have called him a satirist and a humourist.

- He has lots of **fun** with his choice of words and choice of phrases. He uses this humour to tackle very complex South African issues, always coupling it with his own experience.
The topics he chooses to deal and write about make him an exceptionally distinctive writer. He unapologetically speaks of the “black experience” in the new South Africa. Ngcobo always uses himself and his experiences as the centre point. For example some of the chapters in his book include: Kasie Fabulous- life in the suburbs versus life in the townships. Taxi Commuting: an experience from hell.

His identity as a ‘black Zulu man’ living in South Africa and the complexities of having multiple identities. That is what drew me to him, because in many aspects I can relate.
The post-apartheid South African black experience

Double consciousness of being black i.e.: a coconut. Part time being typically white and then black.

The expectations of being black and educated

What it means to be black. What it means to have a Township background

Life in the township versus life in the suburbs - the vast differences

Crime in South Africa and how this affects black people’s identity and physic
His writing almost seems ‘effortless’ and ‘casual’. It is as if one is reading a personal ‘dairy entry.’ He is not shy to often use ‘bad language’ i.e. swear or use socially unaccepted terms and phrases.

His style of writing is very witty, funny and entertaining. But in a not-in-your-face kind of way. In other words it seems as though he is not intentionally trying to make you laugh.

He uses this style to break the tension when writing about a complex and ‘touchy’ matters that often have socio-political underpinnings.
Style of Writing

- His writing style is a strong reflection of personality (character) and voice.
- **Descriptive writer** (use of anecdotes - describes people and events)
- **Narrative writer** where he often recreates characters and dialogue
- **Persuasive writer** - (Thought Leader Blog) - equipped with reasons, arguments and justifications.

- Very ‘real’ style type of writing. In other words he writes as if he speaks style type of writing. Therefore often one can hear a strong voice in the head when reading. One is able to recreate his character and personality through his style of writing.
## Dissection of Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The “how” question</th>
<th>Techniques the “way”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Chronology</td>
<td>- Non-linear</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Time</td>
<td>- Interchange between past and present tense</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Presence of “I”</td>
<td>- Strong presence of point of view</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Structure of book</td>
<td>- “Mini essay” chapters</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Dialogue</td>
<td>- Loud- recreates conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Story telling techniques</td>
<td>- Recreates scenes, events and characters</td>
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Data collection methodology

- Visual Material
- Voice

Note booking and journal/diary entries
- Writing short essays
- No formal interviewing
- No formal researching

Illustrations before each chapter
- Non-journalistic
## Position as a Writer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left wing</th>
<th>Right wing</th>
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<tr>
<td>Creative non fiction</td>
<td>Traditional Journalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memoir style writing</td>
<td>Hard news style writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literary Journalism</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satirist / Opinion</td>
<td>Columnist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guided by experiences</td>
<td>Guided by news values</td>
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Likes and Dislikes

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- Short, punchy chapters
- Idea of “mini essays” can be seen as “mini ideas”
- Use of humour to break tension
- The presence of “I”
- Key goal to entertain

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- Ideas too stereotypical
- Too focused on the humour
- Too comical sometimes I didn’t trust him
- No ‘other ‘strong character