

RHODES 24 JOURNALISM Review

RJR 24 September 2004
<http://www.rjr.ru.ac.za>

Ten Years of Democracy and Media Freedom in South Africa

Editor

Anthea Garman

Commissioning Editors

Sonja Boezak and
Sarita Ranchod

Design

Brian Garman

Photographs

Benny Gool
Ruth Seopedi Motau
Neo Ntsoma

Advertising

Bryan Robinson

Administration

Marietjie Meyer, Linda Marais,
Sonwabo Niwa

Publisher

The Department of Journalism and Media
Studies, Rhodes University

Special thanks to:

- The Ford Foundation
- Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
- Nederlands Instituut voor
Zuidelijk Afrika
- Sappi Fine Paper

All correspondence to:

The Editor
Rhodes Journalism Review
Department of Journalism & Media Studies
Rhodes University
Box 94 Grahamstown 6140
South Africa
Tel Dept: 27-46-6038336/7
Fax: 27-46-6228447
Cell: 27-83-4095591
Email: a.garman@ru.ac.za

Annual subscription:

R100 international
R60 Southern Africa
R30 for students

Advertising queries:

Bryan Robinson
Cell: 27-82-8527807
Email: bmkrobin@mweb.co.za

Cover, Contents and Editorial
page photos: Neo Ntsoma



Neo Ntsoma

studied photography at Peninsula technikon in Cape Town and Pretoria technikon after which she freelanced for two and half years. In 2000 she joined *The Star* as staff photographer. She left for a period between 2002 and 2003 when she tutored at Pathshala South Asian Institute of Photography in Bangladesh. She has numerous awards, the latest of which is the CNN Africa Photographer of the Year 2004.



Planting the Seeds of Memory



**Sonja Boezak and
Sarita Ranchod**

Despite the relative arbitrariness of 10 years as marker, it provides us with an opportunity to stand still and critically reflect on the road travelled thus far; in terms of what 'freedom' has come to mean and how South African media expresses and reflects freedoms.

Ten years into democracy, we now have the freedom to publicly speak to each other in and through media – and a conversation (albeit mediated) has begun.

But now that we are no longer embroiled in struggling for political freedom, there are new and different

issues, and new, other limitations. The political meaning of freedom seems to have been replaced or superseded by its economic meaning: the freedom to shop, the freedom to consume.

The voices in this Review are voices rising out of and above this excess, debris, the bling-bling obsession with more, the corporate/media co-option/complicity of remaking/re-imaging freedom as the freedom to have, the freedom to buy, creating the 'consensus' that this is what freedom, and indeed democracy means.

It is this new (other) meaning of freedom that enables the erasure of memory. In the aspirational race for more it is easy to forget where we come from; forget about the land that is now available to the highest bidder; forget about the rapes of our grandmothers; forget about peers killed by police bullets... and no, one probably should not dwell on these things... all in the past...

But here are voices speaking about those horror memories of our not-too-distant past(s), voices calling up images of pain and physical violation, of psychological and psychic pain, suffered as children, as youth, as people in this country, on this continent. Here are voices wanting to create the whole by looking at ourselves completely – where we have come from, where we are now.

From these voices come also the reminder that writing and remembering truthfully are painful, difficult things to do. And often there are images and realities

that cannot and will not have themselves be recalled because those realities are still too close for us not to be pained by them; wounds still too raw to be looked at. But sometimes remembering depends on the memory of one other to awaken our collective memory, and to make it possible for us to see and understand ourselves more completely.

This Review reflects the trees that have been and the seeds that are being planted through starting these conversations about memory, meaning and media. The handpicked contributors to this edition have provided a snapshot of media and society in the new 'free' South Africa. They have presented us with the picture, while also holding the mirror up to themselves: this is South Africa, 2004.

Contributors' thoughts, images and words have provided a collective memory of this moment, 10 years into freedom. While from different locations and contexts, through sharing their words and images contributors are in conversation with each other as South Africans and Africans who engage with and in reflections of who we are in and through media.

We are thankful for making the acquaintance of these minds.

Reviewing Review



Anthea Garman

In this 10th year of freedom of media in South Africa, the *Rhodes Journalism Review* has entered its 14th year as chronicler of media in South Africa. RJR was started in the year that actually unrolled the changes we now live with – 1990 – and attempted to document the complex journey out of apartheid. In the last 10 years *Review* has been charting the even more complex journey into freedom.

When I inherited *Review* in 1997 its writers and contributors very much reflected the times; newspapers were dominant as the central medium for news; editors and reporters – mostly male and white – had the most to say about the preoccupations of the times.

It's a salutary experience to look through the pages that face you in this 24th edition of *Review*: new voices have emerged and they are from all over the media spectrum, the dominance of newspapers has receded, broadcasters speak loudly and those who are located in institutions – of learning, activism and research, have lots to say too. We also see the emergence of those hybrid people who span media and arts, media and activism, media and academia, media and management, media and money. And their subjects are no longer solely news and journalism. Media in all their facets and interconnections have come to the fore for debate. And we've opened up and connected our concerns to Africa and the wider world as well.

Our readers have also shifted in profile: while we're still distributed into every newsroom in the country, increasingly *Review* is used for research and by students of media and gets put into teaching situations as a resource. We also have a rapidly growing readership of African journalists beyond our borders.

Over the years that I've been based in Grahamstown and worked – most often – at a distance from its contributors and the media moments it is documenting, it has been important to ask the question of just what the location at Rhodes can offer through *Review*. I've become increasingly convinced that the university and its remove from the urbanised media concentrations gives us a precious distance which allows us to ask questions – and pull into the debates, voices – that are not the obvious ones.

This *Review* is quite different in focus and emphasis from the publication I inherited in 1997, but I'm very proud of the new things it offers for your thoughtful consideration as you live through a year of reflection of what 10 years of democracy means to us.

