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Representation of Trauma in Mandela's speech "No Easy Walk to Freedom"

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Abstract

At the time of his death on December 5th, 2013, Nelson Mandela was a well-known political and social leader on an international scale. In recent years, historical trauma has emerged as a concept to describe the effects of Black colonization, cultural suppression, and historical oppression. The scope of this study encompasses fields as diverse as history, literature, trauma studies, linguistics and psychology. This research paper attempts to investigate the trauma ideology inherent in Mandela's speech "No Easy Walk to Freedom". Therefore, the main research questions are: How is trauma communicated in Mandela's speech? Moreover, how is trauma transmitted by critical discourse analysis strategies? The paper draws upon Mandela's presidential address No Easy Walk to Freedom to the ANC (Transvaal) Congress on September 21st, 1953 in Transvaal, South Africa.

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1. Introduction

Following its victory, the National Party immediately consolidated its control over the state, subsequently capturing a succession of elections with larger majorities in future years. In 1956, the Congress removed individuals of colour from the general voter rolls. By 1969, the entire electorate was white.

Apartheid presented huge obstacles to the majority of South Africans. The disparity between the rich few, who were nearly entirely white, and the destitute masses, who were almost entirely Black, Coloured, or Indian, was greater in this country than in any other. While whites had a high standard of living, Indians, Coloureds, and especially Blacks faced severe poverty, starvation, and sickness. Despite the country's economic prosperity, the majority of South Africans struggled to make ends meet on a daily basis. Foreign investment was momentarily banned in the early 1960s, but it resumed when the government was able to quell dissent for nearly a decade. These circumstances, however, proved to be just temporary.

In 1973, Black trade unions conducted a series of strikes for higher wages and improved working conditions, ushering in a new era of resistance. The conflict developed and grew increasingly politicized in the early 1980s. The new constitution of 1983 sought to split the anti-apartheid movement by addressing Indian and coloured issues while denying Blacks political rights outside of their homelands. As events unfolded, government officials met with Mandela, the imprisoned ANC leader, several times, but Botha was opposed to Blacks participating in the democratic system. Nine days later, Nelson Mandela was released from prison. The following year, Parliament repealed the core apartheid legislation, removed the state of emergency, released a large number of political prisoners, and enabled the return of South African exiles. Eventually, Mandela was elected President of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1991. Along with de Klerk, they wished for a peaceful resolution to South Africa's problems and met with the majority of the country's political parties to design a new constitution. These discussions took place in the midst of widespread and rising violence.

1.1. Significance of the study

The significance of this paper is to analyse the speech of Nelson Mandela, in order to shed light on the extent to which language is employed in political discourses. It is set to encode the ideology of trauma

1.2. Aims of the study

This research paper attempts to establish a link between what is ideological and linguistic. It also demonstrates how language communicates and encodes specific meanings and ideologies. The paper offers a better comprehension of how language is used to communicate specific ideologies within diverse sceneries.

1.3. Research questions

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The present paper attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- How is trauma communicated in Mandela's speech "No Easy Walk to Freedom"?
- 2- How is trauma conveyed by CDA strategies?

2. Methodology

The data used in the analysis of this paper are based on Nelson Mandela's presidential address "No Easy walk to Freedom," delivered on September 21, 1953, to the ANC 'African National Congress' Conference. Mandela had been handed a prohibition order after being elected president of the ANC (Transvaal) earlier in the year; the address was thus read on his behalf. The speech is consisted of approximately 4760 words and is taken from Nelson Mandela Foundation web site available at:

http://db.nelsonmandela.org/speeches/pub_view.asp?pg=item&ItemID=NMS003

Reading the selected speech carefully, then underlining the significant statements that are pertinent to the present study so as to get them available for analysis are the steps involved in the technique adopted here. In the analysis phase, the focus is to expose the speaker's intended meanings and any concealed beliefs, including trauma.

3. Theoretical framework

A combination of sociocultural, critical, and postcolonial theory is used in an effort to provide a better understanding of the ideologies that underpin the construction of trauma in Mandela's speech. This is followed by providing a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the chosen speech in order to identify the linguistic, psychological, and ideological components of our corpus. This approach would enable us to identify the precise connotation of ideology in the discourse, which is trauma in its three distinct forms: racial, historical, and cultural.

3.1. Critical discourse analysis

The study of "*language as a social practice*" is referred to as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). (Fairclough, Wodak and Dijk) And it "*takes consideration of the context of language use to be crucial*" (Wodak and Meyer)

Discourse analysis is the study of language in use, which includes political discourse (Brown). It is a study of the functions of language (Brown). Critical Discourse Analysis is a method of analysing language that focuses on language, power, and ideology.

Norman Fairclough, a prominent researcher who pioneered the field of Critical Discourse Analysis, believes that analysing a specific discourse involves a three-dimensional process: text analysis (description), processing analysis (interpretation), and social analysis (explanation). According to him,

"CDA is concerned with the interaction between text production, the text itself, and text interpretation or consumption.(N. Fairclough, Language and Social Change 3)

CDA is an interdisciplinary approach of study that looks at how inequality and power manifest themselves in language use, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between language and power (or discourse). (Wodak and Meyer, Methods of critical discourse analysis) In addition to that, CDA's aim is to examine "opaque as well as transparent structural linkages of dominance, discrimination, power, and control as manifested(R. Wodak, Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis)

The movement was founded in the 1970s by "Critical Linguists" at the University of East Anglia, including Fowler, Kress, and Hodge. Furthermore, Fairclough (1989), Wodak (1989), and Van Dijk (1985), as well as British Cultural Studies, influenced CDA. Since the CDA continually tackles social, cultural, and political concerns relating to changes in late capitalism society in Britain, several of the topics have become hotbeds of activity (such as neo-liberalism, racism, etc.). (Bloomaert)

CDA is concerned with the investigation of social interactions while taking linguistic form into consideration. It also looks into the relationship between language and society. According to Wodak, "*CDA studies real, and often extended, instances of social interaction which take (partially) linguistic form. The critical approach is distinctive in its view of (a) the relationship between language and society, and (b) the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed*"(R. Wodak, Critical discourse analysis and the study of doctor-patient interaction). Wetherell, Taylor, and Yates also describe CDA as "*the study of talk and texts. It is a set of methods and theories for investigating language in use and language in social contexts*".

According to Fairclough(N. Fairclough, Language and Social Change), "critical" entails revealing hidden linkages and causes. Therefore, the task of Critical Discourse analysts is to reveal the concealed parts of the discourse that are not readily apparent to the general audience.

3.2. Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis

Most of the principals of CDA approach are summarized in Fairclough & Wodak (1997) citation as follows:

- *CDA addresses social problems*
- *Power relations are discursive*
- *Discourse Constitutes Society and Culture*
- *Discourse does ideological work*
- *Discourse is historical*
- *The link between text and society is mediated*
- *Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory*
- *Discourse is a form of social action.* (Fairclough and Wodak, Critical Discourse Analysis. In T.A. van Dijk (ed.) Introduction to Discourse Studies:)

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4. History of apartheid

For millions of South Africans, apartheid represented a much darker reality. In 1948, Afrikaners adopted this worldview from the National Party (NP) administration that appeared to promote equal growth and cultural expression, but its administration prevented that. This legalized racial segregation and forced different races to live and develop apart and unequally for nearly 50 years.

Pre-apartheid racial segregation existed for as long as anyone can remember. The Natives Property Act of 1913 limited black African land ownership to seven percent and barred them from buying or living on land unless employed by a white master. The National Party-led administration expanded apartheid after more than three decades.

South African racial segregation intensified. The country's all-white government implemented apartheid and the party wanted to split South Africa's white and non-white populations. Beaches, hospitals, and schools were segregated. Black people were refused citizenship, while white people received superior service. Uprisings were common by adopting hundreds of race-based regulations affecting every aspect of life and denying people of colour basic human rights. Non-whites were barred from voting and interracial marriages were outlawed. Violence and assassinations occurred throughout this time.

The Race Classification Act classified people as white, Indian-coloured or mixed, black, and black of African heritage. Ethnic and tribal groups were further segmented. Black South Africans had to carry a passbook, and peaceful political rallies and Freedom Fighters like Nelson Mandela opposed apartheid. Oliver Tomball, Walter Sisulu, and Ahmad Cathrada also became prominent in African and Indian national congress parties.

In 1952, a Defiance campaign encouraged individuals to break apartheid laws to be imprisoned, hoping that the large number of convicts would bring down the system.

The 1953 public safety act and criminal law amendment act increased penalties for unauthorized demonstrations. Police shot unarmed passbook demonstrators in Sharpeville, a black Township, on March 21, 1960. The ANC and other opposition political parties were proscribed under a state of emergency, forcing many to fight underground.

The Rivonia trials, which garnered international attention, sentenced most opposition leaders to life in jail in 1964, including Nelson Mandela. International pressures eventually hampered the government. Negotiations between the African National Congress (ANC) and the National Party helped end apartheid with domestic instability and the weapons race. Mandela was released in 1990, and four years later, on April 27, the ANC won 62% of the vote and Nelson Mandela became president. He led the victorious South African equality campaign. Apartheid ended and South Africa was regained.

5. Mandela's struggle against racial segregation and Apartheid

Nelson Mandela is regarded as a symbol of the most revolutionary period in South Africa. The analysis of his interpersonal communication style and impression management methods assisted in determining how he was able to market his image, and achieve his lifelong objective of defeating the apartheid government for South Africa to become a democratic nation.

The objective of Nelson Mandela was to establish a country with a non-racial and democratic constitution. In his youth, he contributed to the development of the African National Congress Youth program. The National Party then created apartheid. Along with white women, the majority of blacks were forbidden to vote. The Union adopted racial segregation as its official policy, laying the groundwork for apartheid. Jan Smuts and J.B.M. Hertzog, the two leading politicians at the time, were the architects of segregation. The South African Native National Congress (later renamed the ANC), the white miner strikes (from 1913 to 1922), and the first black trade union were among the earliest groups to oppose the new state (the ICU). The majority of this dissent was subdued by force. There is ample evidence of the harmful effects of racial discrimination, the unfair or biased treatment of people based on race on Blacks, and it is well documented

Mandela was vehemently opposed to this, as were many others. He led campaigns to oppose the new legislation. Mandela was convicted guilty of subverting communist legislation. Years later, he was arrested and accused of treason. The National Party became increasingly aggressive, killing law demonstrators. Then, Mandela was charged with unauthorized departure and strike plotting. He was condemned to five years of hard labour in prison. The police subsequently discovered documents from the African National Congress affiliated with Nelson and seven other individuals. As a result, he was sentenced to life in prison. During his imprisonment, violence increased. He was given the chance to be released from prison with the condition to stop the violence. Mandela responded that apartheid should be ended and blacks should be afforded democratic rights.

6. Racial segregation

As whites addressed the "native question" during the first two decades of union, segregation became a distinguishing aspect of South African political, social, and economic life. New laws mandated segregation in the industrial, territorial, administrative, and residential sectors. This avalanche of legislation was the consequence of conservative beliefs inherited from the past as well as an attempt to govern class and race relations amid an era of rapid industrialization when the Black population was steadily increasing.

No other state in world history has devoted as large a proportion of its energies and resources in imposing racial segregation as South Africa has done since 1948. Blacks were "retribalized" and their ethnic distinctions were emphasized. While apartheid has been the object of abundant literature", the degree of physical distance attained by segregation measures is one of its most crucial characteristics that was disregarded. There are three main levels of segregation that we can distinguish:

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- 1) **Micro-segregation**, i.e. segregation in public and private facilities (such as waiting rooms, train cars, post office counters, restrooms, etc.) located in areas inhabited by members of multiple "racial" groupings. (Berghe)
- 2) **Meso-segregation**, which is the physical separation caused by the existence of racially homogenous residential ghettos in mixed urban regions. (Berghe)
- 3) **Macro-segregation**, or the segregation of racial groups in specific territorial entities, such as the "Native Reserves" of South Africa, which are currently being renamed "Bantustans". (Berghe)

However, the preceding distinction is not just one of "degree" but also of "kind". Indeed, each kind of segregation serves a distinct function for the governing albinocracy and has distinct repercussions for South African society as a whole.

These three degrees of segregation have caused higher rates of trauma among the ethnic and racial groups in South Africa culminating in trans-generational post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). One explanation for this is racism, which can be traumatic in itself. Trauma caused by racist experiences is sometimes referred to as racial trauma. (Williams)

Furthermore, investigating the cultural context of a person's or a group's trauma experience allows for a greater emphasis on depictions of extreme experiences such as war, colonial oppression, American slavery, the Holocaust, rape, the Gulag, and racism.

7. Historical trauma

It alludes to huge populations' historical subjugation, cultural suppression, and colonialism, as well as the accumulated and ongoing harm and injustice that has occurred during their lifetimes and across generations. The concept of historical trauma was widely addressed in scholarly and community debates concerning the health and healing of Indigenous and other oppressed communities in North America beginning at the end of the 1980s, and continuing throughout the 1990s. (Lee) Furthermore, in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), Freud constructs a concept of historical trauma by modifying his ideas on latency and recurrence of traumatic memory for the individual patient and applying them to Jewish society in order to explain their cultural psychology and history. The "traumatic experience" of Jews, according to Freud, can be regarded as a historical trauma caused by the reappearance of the repressed and the delayed repercussions of the original ancient trauma, the assassination of the "father" Moses. (Freud)

8. Trauma's impact on identity and memory

Our understanding of the linkages between individual and community traumatic experience is enhanced by the combination of external and internal factors, as well as individual personality traits and cultural variables. Memory mechanisms continue to play a significant role in depictions of the effects of trauma. Keeping memory as a fixed process in which all life experiences are stored properly and

literally lends itself to the classic trauma model, since the painful experience is preserved in an eternally haunting condition. If memory is viewed as a fluid process of reconstruction rather than a repository, the traumatic past is not retrievable in a frozen condition but is rather generated and reconstructed throughout periods of remembrance.

Analysis and discussion

Before delving into Mandela's speech, a brief summary of the political and social settings in which it was delivered is required. Nelson Mandela delivered this speech to the ANC Transvaal Conference as his Presidential address. He was elected as the ANC Transvaal President earlier this year, but he had been served with a ban, therefore the address was read on his behalf by Andrew Kunene, an ANC executive member. (Mandela)

The suffering of the Blacks

Nelson Mandela started his speech by talking about the suffering of his people for ages, and the appalling treatment of the Whites against the Blacks, as evidenced by the following:

“Year after year thereafter, in their homes and local areas, in provincial and national gatherings, on trains and buses, in the factories and on the farms, in cities, villages, shantytowns, schools, and prisons, the African people have discussed the shameful misdeeds of those who rule the country” (Mandela)

Emphasis

Mandela emphasized the negative aspects of the enemy "white authority" in order to illustrate their ill-treatment of the black population and to discuss the government's racist measures against African defiance, and this is demonstrated in the following passage,

“Year after year, they have raised their voices in condemnation of the grinding poverty of the people, the low wages, the acute shortage of land, the inhuman exploitation and the whole policy of white domination”(Mandela)

Mandela seeks to convey that Africans protested against the unjust actions of white authorities by emphasizing. Thus, he uses the phrase "year after year" to refer to the recurrent crimes committed by white authorities *year after year*.

Depicting Blacks traumatic experience

Mandela describes the unjust actions carried out by racial authorities, such as the prohibition of anti-apartheid activists from gathering together.

“In November last year, a proclamation was passed which prohibited meetings of more than ten Africans and made it an offence for any person to call upon an African to defy. Contravention of this proclamation carried a penalty of three years or of a fine of three hundred pounds”. (Mandela)

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It is notable that throughout the same paragraph, Mandela mentioned in detail the congressional representatives' names who were forbidden to attend any assembly by the authorities. In addition, he made it obvious that the adversary attempts everything it could to break the anti-apartheid movements, as demonstrated in this quote:

"The Government, alarmed at the indomitable upsurge of national consciousness, is doing everything in its power to crush our movement by removing the genuine representatives of the people from the organizations". (Mandela)

Mandela continues to describe the inhuman deeds of the white authorities towards the Blacks and the daily sufferings they were endeavouring during the period of apartheid, the following passage shows how atrocious were these deeds and what the Blacks had endured during the years of pro-apartheid regime:

"You will recall how human beings, wearing only sacks with holes for their heads and arms, never given enough food to eat, slept on cement floors on cold nights with only their sacks to cover their shivering bodies". (Mandela)

In (a) and (b) Mandela recalls the story of the labourers who had suffered during that period of the harsh manner in which their masters behaved towards their suffering and how they dealt with them on a daily basis.

a- *"You will remember how they are woken up as early as 4 a. m. and taken to work on the fields with the indunas sjambokking those who tried to straighten their backs, who felt weak and dropped down because of hunger and sheer exhaustion."* (Mandela)

b- *"You will also recall the story of human beings toiling pathetically from the early hours of the morning till sunset, fed only on mealie meal served on filthy sacks spread on the ground and eating with their dirty hands. People falling ill and never once being given medical attention."* (Mandela)

Mandela then tells the story of a labourer who was harshly beaten to death for pleading for water because of thirst.

"You will also recall the revolting story of a farmer who was convicted for tying a labourer by his feet from a tree and had him flogged to death, pouring boiling water into his mouth whenever he cried for water." (Mandela)

Mandela finishes this passage mentioning that acts of this kind have disappeared elsewhere, but still exist in South Africa, and that they must find a solution to these unpleasant activities

"These things which have long vanished from many parts of the world still flourish in SA today. None will deny that they constitute a serious challenge to Congress and we are in duty bound to find an effective remedy for these obnoxious practices." (Mandela)

Mandela also describes the Minister of Labour, Schoeman's harsh and inhumane actions against the anti-racial movement in the following paragraph

“Speaking on the Labour Bill, the Minister of Labour, the minister of labour, Ben Schoeman, openly stated that the aim of this wicked measure is to bleed African trade unions to death. Forbidding strikes and lockouts deprives Africans of the one weapon the workers have to improve their position. The aim of the measure is to destroy the present African trade unions ...”(Mandela)

Mandela elaborated on the rationale behind the government's strike ban in an effort to dissolve the African Union. Mandela says the Native Labour Act is "wicked" because workers have no recourse other than strikes and lockouts to demand their allegedly aborted rights.

More importantly, in his final lines, Mandela painted a comprehensive picture of criminal and inhuman activities around the world. So, he concluded:

a. “Children are being burnt alive, women are raped, tortured, whipped and boiling water poured on their breasts to force confessions from them that Jomo Kenyatta had administered the Mau Mau oath to them. Men are being castrated and shot dead. In the Kikuyu country, there are some villages in which the population has been completely wiped out”. (Mandela)

Mandela's speech can be understood in terms of the struggle of black South Africans for social and political equality if one follows the thread of his words. In a repressed way, Mandela expressed his pain towards what was happening to his people, his comrades, and black politicians. He vented his rage against the laws of the white minority that forbade the blacks from doing their natural rights and duties.

Skilful critical discourse analysis devices include the use of word choice to convey ideology. Mandela used this technique to effectively communicate his thoughts during his speech. As was mentioned earlier, certain words and phrases are used to describe the unfair treatment Black people receive at the hands of White authorities. They intend to show the White government in a negative light by detailing the atrocities committed by it against the Black population of South Africa. Mandela's words and deeds reveal his deep understanding of and empathy for the plight of Africans under fascist apartheid. Furthermore, it is evident that Mandela represented his opponent negatively in his discourse by employing terms with negative meanings and connotations.

As an addition, he used rhetoric to stress the other drawbacks and criticisms. From what Mandela has said, it is clear that the defiance campaign and Africans are being brutally repressed by racist forces. The significance of Mandela's message is emphasized here. The following table displays the pejorative terminology used by Mandela during his speech, which is indicative of a history of psychological trauma. The procedure of the analysis in this study is to identify the negative representation of the white racial authorities that encodes trauma in Mandela's speech, and this is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. The pejorative terminology frequency used in Mandela's speech

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Negative Terms	Frequency
Oppress (11), struggle (8), Bann (6), Fight (6), defiance (5), Dangerous (3), destroy (3), Inhuman (3), Oppression (2), repression(2), penalty (2), Harm (2), Criminal (2), Deny (2), evil (2), Enemy (2), Massacre (2), Defy (2), Beat (1), apartheid(1), War (1), prison (1), crime (1), horror (1), threat (1), Condemnation (1), Violence (1), evil (1) Arrest (1), Misdeed (1), massacre (1) Forbidding (1).	79

In the above-mentioned table, it is obvious that Mandela used negative representations to describe the enemy, which is the white authority. Terms like horror, evil, inhuman, struggle, oppress, oppression, repression, and condemnation, depict the horrible image that the apartheid left on its victims and show a side of a traumatic effect on them. This trauma is the result of the pain caused by the apartheid's segregational acts. Furthermore, Trauma in its definition is the experience of being an object; the victim of another person's rage, nature's indifference, or one's own physical and psychological limitations. Along with the anguish and anxiety associated with rape, battle trauma, or natural disaster comes a marginally bearable sense of helplessness, a knowledge that one's own will and desires become unimportant to the flow of events, leaving either a damaged picture of the self or a fragmented sense of self. (Spigel)

Furthermore, a traumatic experience can be defined as one that refuses to fit within the social, ideological, and linguistic frameworks we have at our disposal. According to this theory, traumatic events do not really happen. They are essentially a non-experience, or, in the words of French author Maurice Blanchot, (1980: 17): 'Le désastre inexpérimenté, ce qui se soustrait à toute possibilité d'expérience' ['The inexperienced disaster, that which is beyond any possibility of experience'] (authors' translation). Trauma is an unsolvable problem of the unconscious that illuminates the inherent contradictions of experience and language. (Balaev)

- a. *"It shall promote understanding, tolerance, understanding, and friendship among the nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace". (Mandela)*
- b. *"But gone forever are the days when harsh and wicked laws provided the oppressors with years of peace and quiet". (Mandela)*

Mandela intends to convey an implied promise to promote national peace in the preceding words. Using the word "shall," he promises them a bright future in (a), and he promises them peace and security in (b).

"There is no easy walk to freedom anywhere, and many of us will have to pass through the valley of the shadow (of death) again and again before we reach the mountain tops of our desires. (Mandela)

At the end of his speech, Mandela makes a biblical reference by bringing up the phrase "valley of the shadow of death." Here, he argues that his listeners should give up some luxuries in order to fight inequality and injustice. In addition, he encourages them to face death with courage and to hold fast to the belief that they will one day be free.

Conclusion

Using critical discourse analysis, this paper analysed Nelson Mandela's speech "No Easy Walk to Freedom". This research sought to answer the question, "How does Nelson Mandela use ideology to convince his audience to resist the various forms of oppression and injustice practiced by racial authorities in South Africa?" by analysing his famous speech "No Easy Walk to Freedom" which was delivered to the ANC congress and his other supporters on September 21, 1953. This study attempted to analyse the ideological strategies in this speech.

Accordingly, Mandela described in his speech the "other" or "the racial authorities who sought to impose their domination over Blacks" by using expressions with negative representation; he also used words like oppress, struggle, ban, inhuman to describe their horrible deeds, and segregational acts to put emphasis on the bad actions of his enemy.

In this present study, we provided a critical analysis of Mandela's speech as it appeared in this study. The study's findings shed light on the many ways in which ideologies were conveyed to their targets through language. This was linguistically demonstrated through the deployment of Critical Discourse Analysis strategies, such as word choice, direct address, rhetorical flourishes, and the dexterous application of argument structure. In his speeches, Mandela employed these strategies to advocate for the liberation and equal rights of South Africa's black population. Proof of this can be found in the skilful deployment of a variety of linguistic, rhetorical, and discursive devices central to his ideology, which he used to great effect when communicating with a global audience.

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4. Appendices

- Table 1. The pejorative terminology frequency used in Mandela's speech