TRANSFORMING MOMENTS

Gcina Mhlope
Transforming means change from one state to another. The story is about the narrator who changes from someone who has a low self-esteem to a confident female praise poet within a short space of time due to an encounter with a praise poet.
SUMMARY

★ A young Xhosa girl at a boarding school in the Eastern Cape knows she is very clever but thinks she is ugly. The church minister takes her to watch a traditional praise-poet performing. That makes her decide to become a poet herself and allows her to transform from having a poor self-confidence to loving herself as she is.
SETTING

★ A high school in the Eastern Cape (boarding school)
★ A village near Tsolo in the Eastern Cape
★ Time: ± 1975 in SA (during Apartheid)
POINT OF VIEW AND NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

- First person narrator
- Memoir – selected memories and reflections of the author’s life
• The story is told in a narrative form and description of the events are only from the point of view of the narrator.

• The style of the language is formal.

• The writer used idiomatic expressions in order to emphasises meaning, for example “causing such a stir” or “kicked out of the school choir.”
• The tone is mainly a gloomy, despairing and depressed tone, except after she watched the praise poet performing she eventually discovered her talent. That is when the tone becomes exciting.

• The mood is matter-of-fact at first, but the reader sees the emotional undercurrents that grow progressively towards the end.
THEMES

• **Self-discovery** – understanding one’s true self

• **Self-actualization** – the realisation or fulfilment of one’s talents and potential

• **Talent development**
PROTAGONIST

- Teenage Xhosa girl in boarding school
- She experiences inner conflict and is changed by it
- She was emotionally weak, lacked confidence and had a low self-esteem
- She was intelligent
- After the encounter with the praise poet she was transformed to be confident
- She becomes determined to pursue her talent.
OTHER CHARACTERS

- Bulelwa – her only friend at school, stands by her when she is bullied
- Sizwe – her boyfriend; handsome rugby player, popular, good friend, sincere
- Father Fikeni – minister, mentor, recognised the girl’s talent
- Cira – Imbongi (praise poet), the person who inspired her
THE TRANSFORMATION

FROM
• Feeling ugly; not liking herself
• Everything was going the same
• Low self-esteem
• Deep, droning voice

TO
• Not feeling ugly; truly liking herself
• Looking forward to the future
• Truly liking herself; confident
• Liked the sound of her own voice
IMBONGI (PRAISE POET)

- Very important in traditional black culture
- Traditionally a mediator between the chief and (mostly male) subjects
- Modern imbongi = political and social commentator
The moment in between what you once were, and who you are now becoming, is where the dance of life really takes place.

Barbara De Angelis

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