

Attwell: And what impression is the man going to have of the white system who reads this? Whether he be a Zulu or a Xhosa or an Indian or anything else?

Biko: It is the same old thing, you know, it is again what he knows okay. Now at the funeral the focus of course is on the man who is being buried. Now if you go to any black funeral the trend is the same. We attempt to bring to light the good facts about the person who is dying, we are paying our last respects to him. Secondly we talk about how he died. This is you know the average conduct of any funeral amongst the blacks. They are just held in that context. The man, who is he, what does he believe in, and so on, what does he stand for? And what caused him to die? We normally say in Xhosa for instance there will be a speaker about the life of the person---[the witness quotes in Xhosa]. There will be a speaker about the sickness of the person, okay, that is now---[witness again quotes in Xhosa]. It is done that, in any funeral, so that as a speaker you must find---if I am called upon to speak at somebody's funeral I must go out of my way to trace his life and bring out what is good in him. So this is quite logical, besides it is an African funeral.

Attwell: I submit to you that they brought out all the good in Mr Shezi, whatever good there may have been, and neglected any weak points that he may have had?

Biko: This is done.

Attwell: And brought out all the evil nasty possible things they can about the whites, and ignored all the good that there may or may not be. Would you agree with me?

Biko: I think they have not finished all the evil.

Attwell: They have not finished all the evil yet?

[...] Biko: Not necessarily me, but I am saying anybody could have gone further if he wanted to. If the intention was to try and portray white society as bad, and use that to make everybody who was there angry, you could have produced a whole litany of evil if you cared to. This just shows the selflessness of the death in that someone in view of the mentality which he has got from a society, which has got no respect for black people, killed Shezi. It could have been prevented, that is all that this thing is saying.

Attwell: If I understand you correctly then, that to portray or to cause racial hostility, you consider that one of the possible ways to do so would be to list a whole lot of all the things that the whites do against you?

Biko: I said that if really the intention is to cause that kind of feeling, to come out to the fore amongst blacks, you can again use their conception of language, you have got to use very colourful language. Take a simple event, not describe it now in concrete terms, but play around the nastiness of the various aspects of the event, you can carry many across to the blacks and they can become angry. It is thus necessarily enough to make anybody angry in black society. This is really regarded as a description of the circumstances in which the man died. All right, we must blame that guy who pushed him, okay, we have got to, and we have got to explain that it is not as if he personally hated Shezi. He is portraying a mentality which he has borrowed from his society, but if one had to make society angry at that funeral, there would be a whole litany of things we can pick up, and we would describe them in precise language calculated to you know, bring out the emotion of the black man, would make people angry. It is not difficult to make people angry if you want to. Thus this was not the intention here. It was purely to describe the circumstances in which the man died. That is all.

Attwell: You say it is not difficult to make the black man angry?

Biko: If you want to, you have just got to draw up whatever you say in very beautiful floral language, concentrate on the detail, you can, assuredly.

Attwell: What more do you think the man who drew up this document should have done? If that had been his intention?

Biko: This is all fair comment on the factual evidence, at least on the factual situation of what happened at that funeral, I mean at that station, a fair comment.

Attwell: You consider this fair comment?

Biko: Completely fair comment.

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