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**Mourning for Collective Redemption: A Reading of Zakes Mda's
*Ways of Dying***

Literatures of Africa often reflect the violence and deaths that are endemic to the postcolony in a way that allows the writers to reflect, address and cope with the overwhelming tragedies that shape their emerging identities and nationhood. "Transitional" literatures, especially those of South Africa, bear the additional burden of negotiating with a horrific colonial past and the disillusionment of the new present that fails to deliver on its promises of freedom and equality that ought to have come with the official transfer of power. Zakes Mda's novel *Ways of Dying* (1995) offers an introspective account of a community looking inward to contemplate on its own culpability in the violence that affected its people. It challenges the conventional notions of the colonizing "other" as the perpetrator of violence towards a victimized agency – less colonized "self" by offering a nuanced understanding of a heterogenous populace that in their own varied ways sought to grapple with the new post – Apartheid government. Mda's novel focuses on rebuilding and reparations which cannot be limited to the discursive and cultural, but must happen in material terms rooted in the everyday.

My paper would address how grieving and loss allows a community to come together to rebuild itself, heal and repair old hurts to envision a future that is based on care and nurture. Mda's novel warns against a complacency that comes with self – governance that the struggle is over, thus problematizing teleological readings of postcolonial literatures – that the freedom from colonial powers marks an achievement and end of struggle, thus is cause for celebration. Instead, it argues for decolonization as a "anticipatory discourse" that must be dialogic, and shows how mourning can be seen as resistance, as a different kind of political discourse.