Finding isiXhosa Literature: three major tools

First tool – library catalogue for printed works.

Mouse over Search & Find on the Library Homepage [www.lib.uct.ac.za](http://www.lib.uct.ac.za) and click Catalogue:

On the catalogue type: **Xhosa and (fiction or literature or novel)**
This results in 295 hits, ordered by date – most recent on top.

This will tell you which library the book is in and will give you its shelf number:

Not all of the books will be in isiXhosa – some may be English translations or the word Xhosa may appear in another context.

You can fix this by going to the Filter option at the top right:

And limit it to those books which actually are written in isiXhosa:
You can weed out the children’s books by adding **NOT juvenile** to the end of your searches.

*Xhosa and (fiction or literature or novel) NOT juvenile*
You might also want to try searching for **Xhosa and (poetry or poems)**

Clicking on the number next to each record will open up the details of the book – this will give you publication details for the book (important when referencing it) and also give you some insight into its contents:

![Book search results]

Finding books by and about a particular author:

Type the author’s name into the catalogue – first and last name is usually fine, but you can use just last name if you want to be safe.

For example: **Nontsizi Mgqwetho**
This search will bring up books by and books about her. 😊

In this case there is a book with a chapter on her:

As well as two books by her:
Second tool – journal databases – to find articles on your author or topic:

From the Library homepage, mouse over Search&Find and select Databases A-Z

We have about 180 databases – but they are largely American, and very few cover isiXhosa literature. However we do have three that are usually useful:

**SA ePublications**

**Africa-Wide Information- via EBSCOhost**

**MLA International Bibliography - via EBSCOhost**
On the A-Z Database list under S, select SA ePublications – a full text databases of specifically South African journals.

Search it for the name of your author or the title of your book.

To keep the words together as a phrase, check the Exact Words/Phrase box.

In this case I found six articles which reference Nontsizi Mgqwetho, though only one of specific focus.
A broad subject search for Xhosa and poetry (as below):
The Africa-Wide Information- via EBSCOhost is not always full text – but it often has SFX links to the full text on other databases.

A search for Nontsizi Mgqwetho on this database brought up 148 results (though many of these are references to book reviews rather than exact studies of her.)

There is no full text attached to the second record, but clicking on the SFX link tells me which of our databases has that journal in full text, and gives me a link to find it:
If the full text is not available, we may well have that journal in the library in print, or be able to get the article through inter-library loan.
The **MLA International Bibliography - via EBSCOhost** is a major database for world literature, though it focuses mainly on Western writers.

A search for Nontsizi Mgqwetho brought up only 5 references.

One is a reference a chapter in a book (helpfully, it says *book article*.)

The trick here is to check on our catalogue for the title **of the book** – not the title of the article/chapter:

![Library Catalogue Screenshot](image)

And (deep joy 😊) we have it, so you can get hold of the chapter in print.
It is possible to cross-search a number of the Ebsco databases (including the Africa-Wide and MLA databases) by mousing over Search & Find, selecting Databases By Platform and selecting EBSCO.

These databases should be useful to select for cross-searching:

- Academic Search Premier,
- Africa-Wide Information,
Third tool – theses

There is a very good database for South African Masters and PhD theses in full text under N on our A-Z Database list:

**National ETD Portal South Africa: South African theses and Dissertations**

In this case I found only one thesis which focuses upon her, at least in part.
There is a link to the full text at Rhodes....

Which does not work....... (mutter, mutter, mutter....)

However by Googling the title, in inverted commas, with PDF in front of it...
I can get the thesis. Chapter 3 is the bit I want:
On one more matter .... No presentation on African Literature would be complete without mention of the African Writers Series. This database contains work by all the major African authors of the second half of the 20th century published by Heinemann. Over 350 volumes of fiction, poetry, drama, myths, memoirs and reportage.

2.5.1 A Call to Unity
2.5.2 Redeeming Christianity
2.5.3 Education: Precursor to Black Liberation
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Chapter 3: Looking Back and Looking Ahead: The Poetry of Nontsizi Ngqweni

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3.5 A Biblical Model for Leadership: “Leaders, shade for the nation with truth derived from God” 75
3.6 Christianity as a Unifying Force 79
And so done 😊

I wish you the best of luck in your studies this year.

With best wishes
Alex D’Angelo
2016