

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye and the quest for freedom. It studies two of her works; *Coming to Birth*, (1986) and *Song of Nyarloka and Other Poems*, 1977, in effort to find out if Macgoye's works are shaped by her search for freedom. The five chapters of this thesis are essentially about freedom as seen through different perspectives as well as its relevance to Kenya at a special period, the years preceding and following Uhuru (independence). We have looked at freedom's different facets in an effort to see it as a whole. We have in the first chapter, given Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye's background because this thesis is about freedom as seen through her own life and creative works mentioned above. In the subsequent four chapters, we have dealt with the meaning of freedom and its relevance to her characters living in Kenya in those years when many thought that they would have freedom served them along with political independence. In looking at socio-economic freedom, freedom of expression and finally aspects of socio-cultural freedom, we have tried to see the author's call and search for these in the novel *Coming to Birth*, and the collection of poems in *Song of Nyarloka and Other Poems*. It is obvious that such freedoms did not automatically come to be when the Union Jack came down. This study is inspired by the idea that a quest for freedom has influenced Macgoye both as a person and a writer. This has meant that extensive personal interviews with the author were carried out in the process of preparing this study. These have been the source of her ideas about freedom and also how the search for freedom has influenced her life.