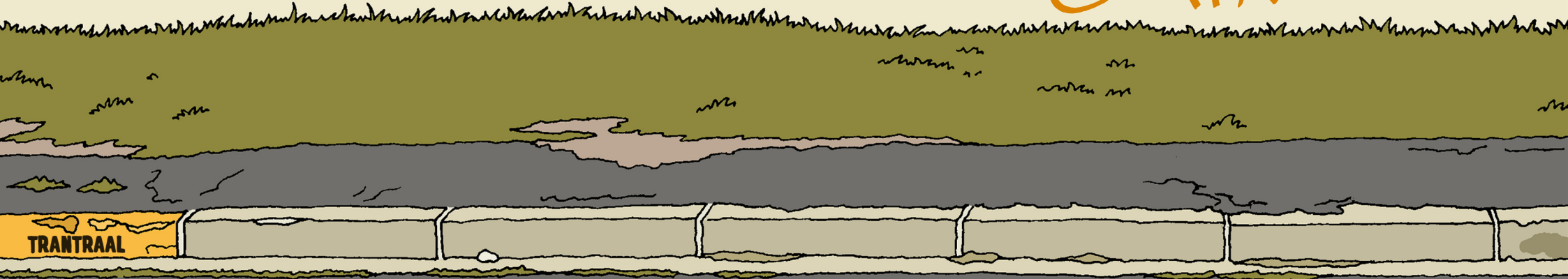




ASHLEY VISAGIE

ANDRE TRANTRAAL

IMAGINING OTHERWISE COMIX



CRITICAL COMIX FOR TEENS



INTRODUCING

ERNESTINE



LIKES: HAIR TUTORIALS, NINA SIMONE SONGS, COFFEE
DISLIKES: REALITY TV SHOWS, HUFFLEPUFFS, TEA

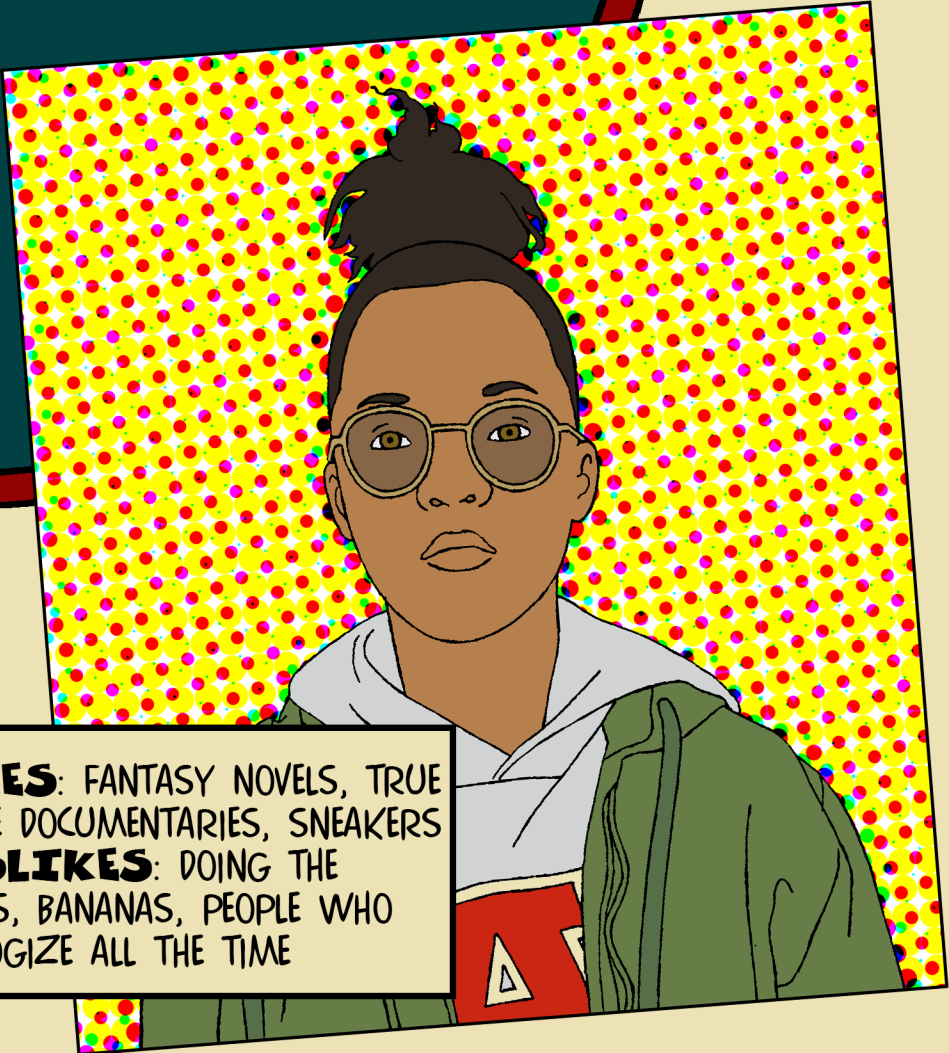
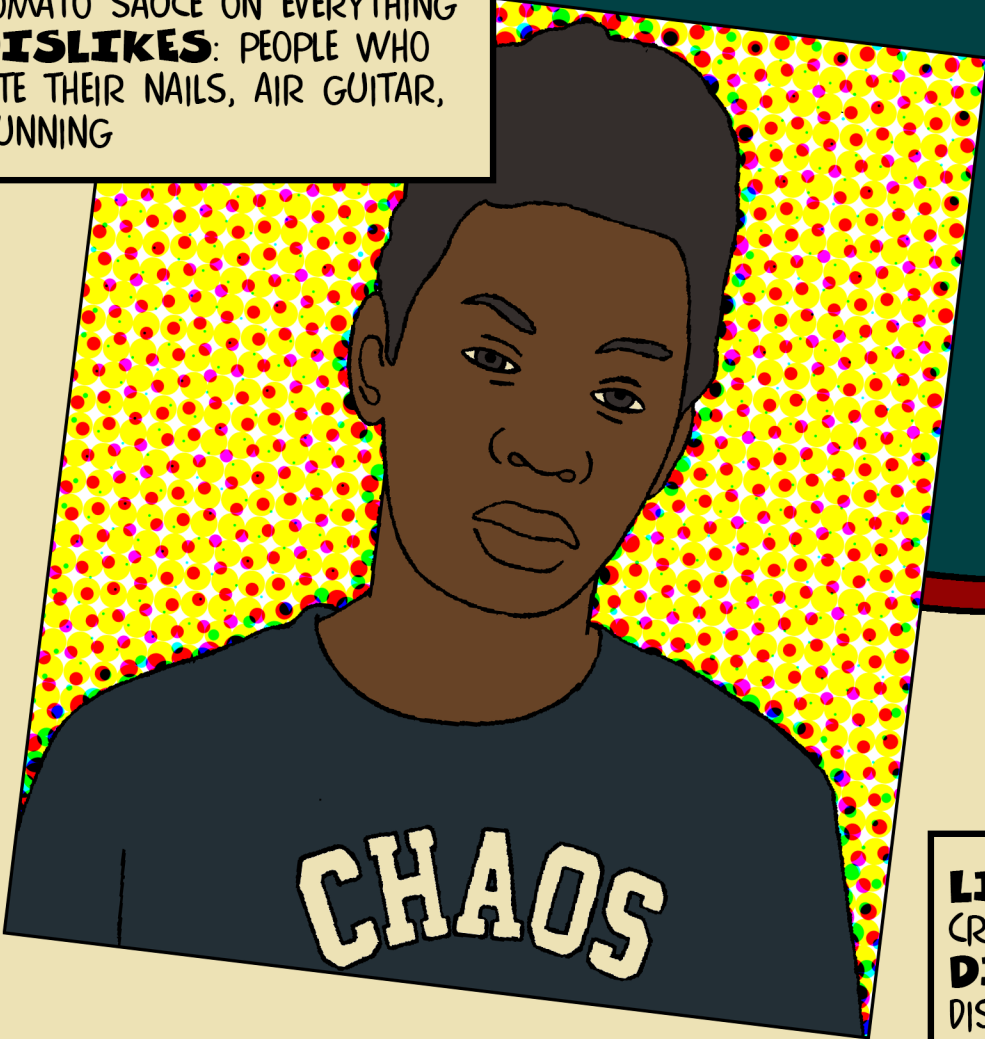
LOGAN



LIKES: FOOTBALL, BLACK HOODIES, LICORICE
DISLIKES: ZOMBIE MOVIES, RUDE PEOPLE, MAKING HIS BED

LWANDISO

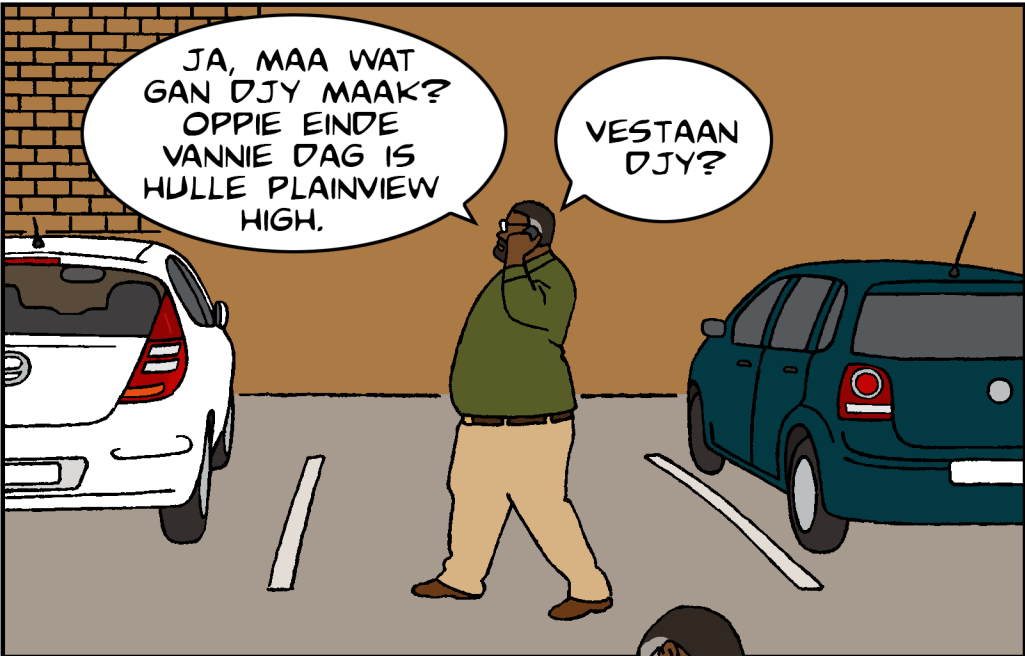
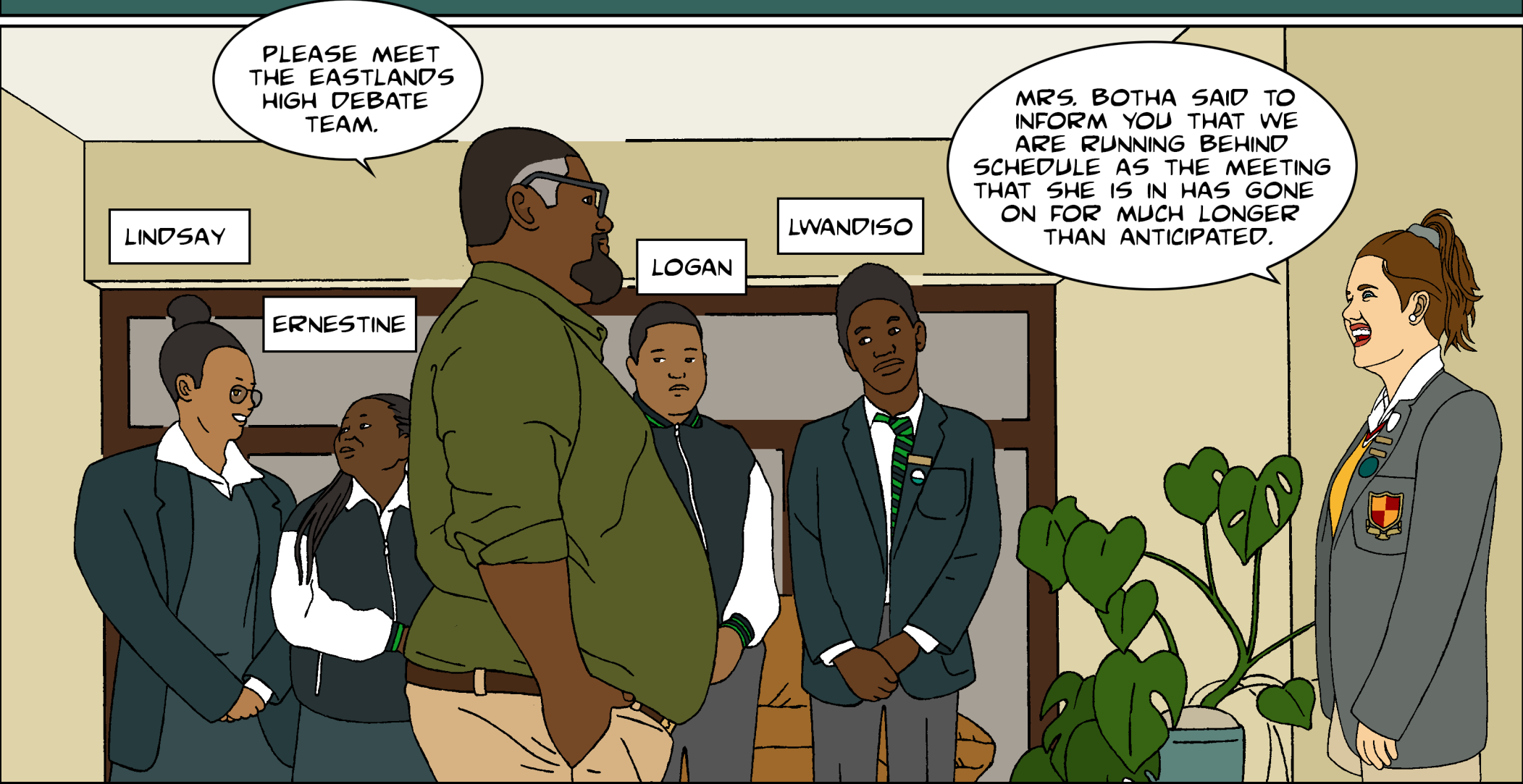
LIKES: CARS, DOG VIDEOS, TOMATO SAUCE ON EVERYTHING
DISLIKES: PEOPLE WHO BITE THEIR NAILS, AIR GUITAR, RUNNING

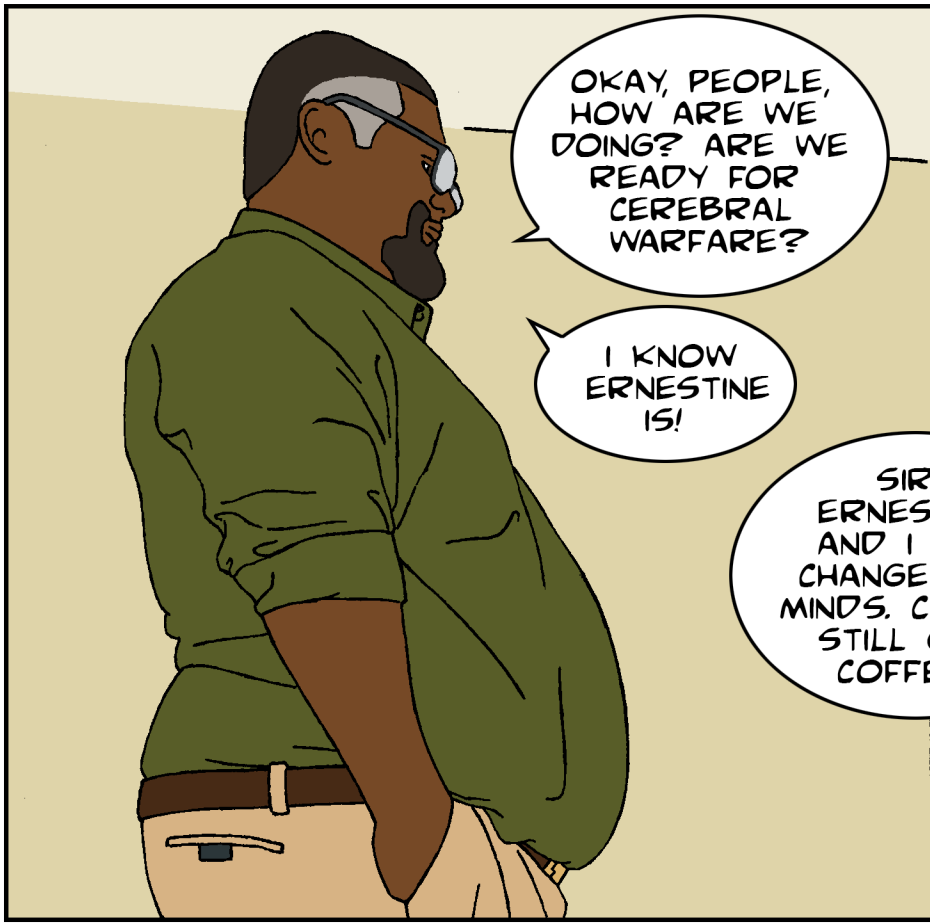


LIKES: FANTASY NOVELS, TRUE CRIME DOCUMENTARIES, SNEAKERS
DISLIKES: DOING THE DISHES, BANANAS, PEOPLE WHO APOLOGIZE ALL THE TIME

LINDSAY

THE MYTH OF MERITOCRACY

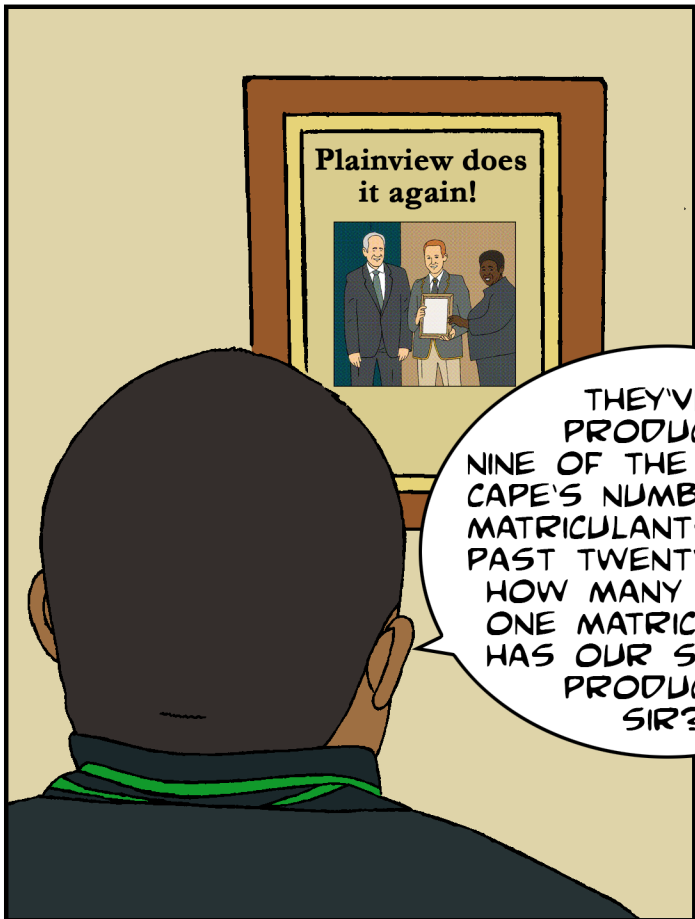




OKAY, PEOPLE,
HOW ARE WE
DOING? ARE WE
READY FOR
CEREBRAL
WARFARE?

I KNOW
ERNESTINE
IS!

SIR,
ERNESTINE
AND I HAVE
CHANGED OUR
MINDS. CAN WE
STILL GET
COFFEE?

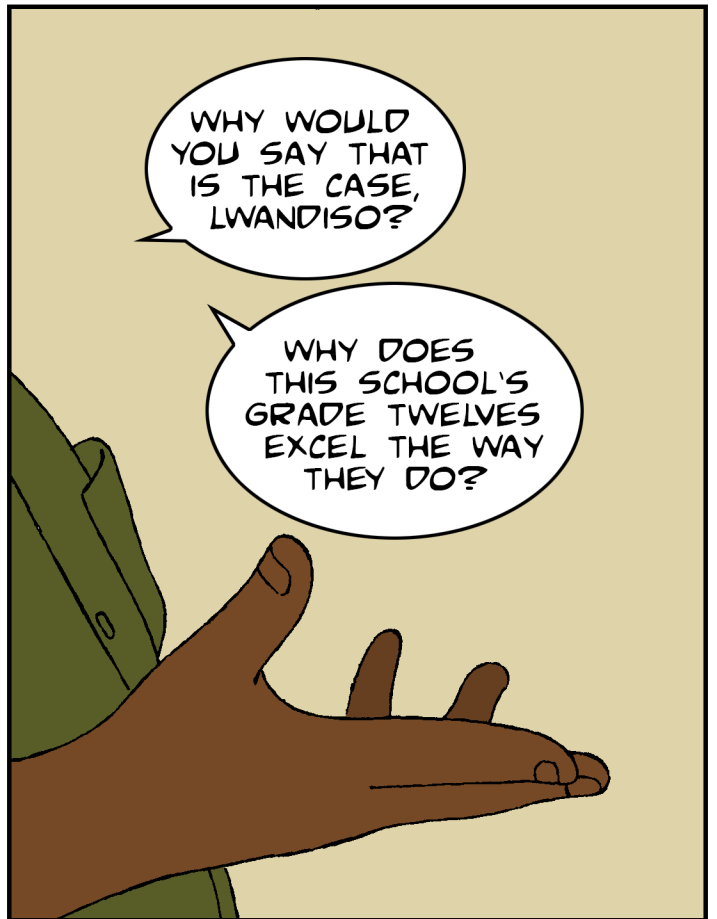


Plainview does
it again!

THEY'VE
PRODUCED
NINE OF THE WESTERN
CAPE'S NUMBER ONE
MATRICULANTS IN THE
PAST TWENTY YEARS.
HOW MANY NUMBER
ONE MATRICULANTS
HAS OUR SCHOOL
PRODUCED,
SIR?



(SNORT!)
ZERO.



WHY WOULD
YOU SAY THAT
IS THE CASE,
LWANDISO?

WHY DOES
THIS SCHOOL'S
GRADE TWELVES
EXCEL THE WAY
THEY DO?

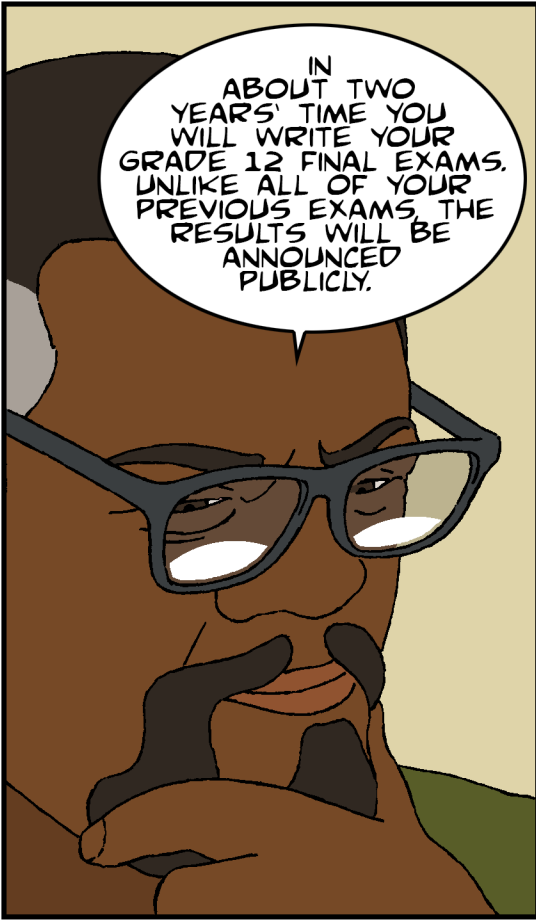


I
GUESS THEY
JUST WORK
HARDER THAN
EVERYBODY
ELSE?

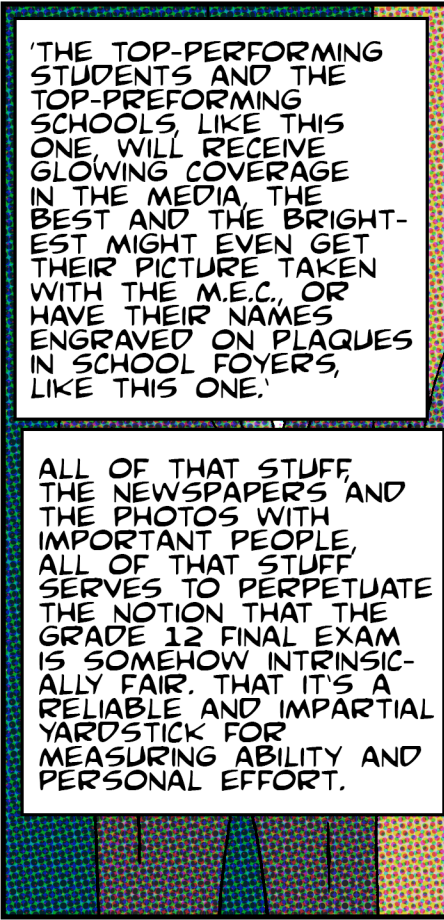
I DON'T
KNOW!



THAT IS A
BIT OF A MYTH.
DO YOU WANT
TO KNOW
WHY?



IN ABOUT TWO YEARS' TIME YOU WILL WRITE YOUR GRADE 12 FINAL EXAMS. UNLIKE ALL OF YOUR PREVIOUS EXAMS, THE RESULTS WILL BE ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY.

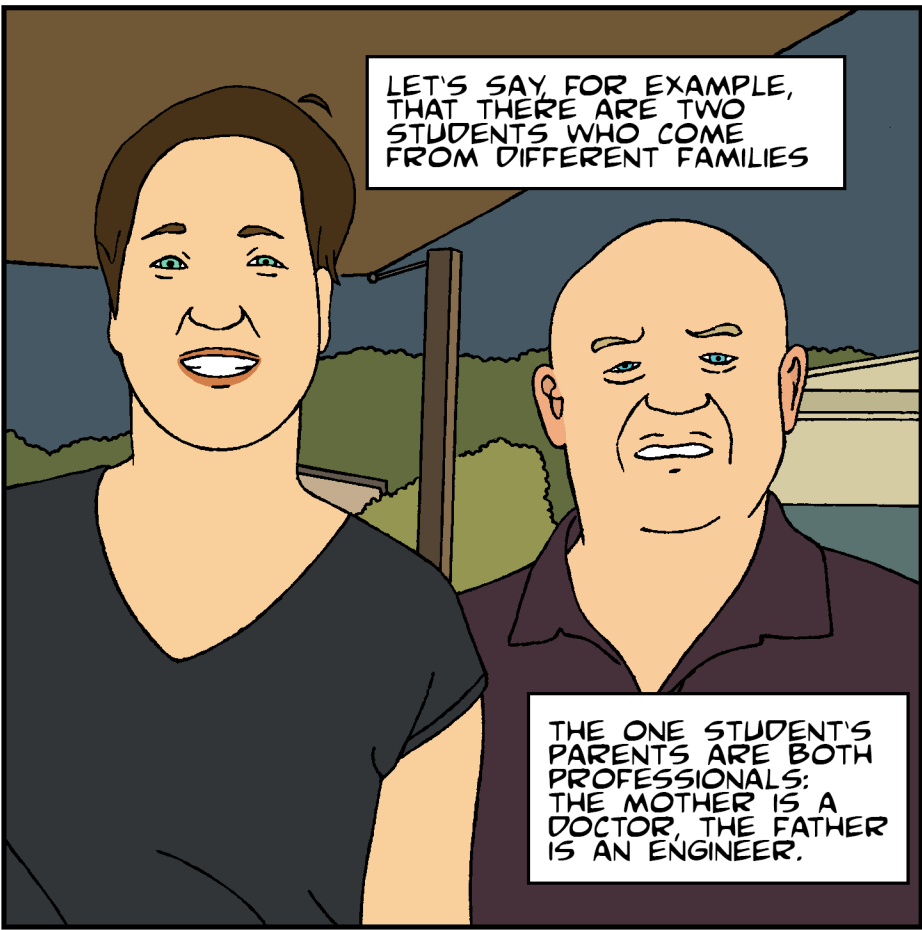


'THE TOP-PERFORMING STUDENTS AND THE TOP-PERFORMING SCHOOLS, LIKE THIS ONE, WILL RECEIVE GLOWING COVERAGE IN THE MEDIA. THE BEST AND THE BRIGHT-EST MIGHT EVEN GET THEIR PICTURE TAKEN WITH THE M.E.C., OR HAVE THEIR NAMES ENGRAVED ON PLAQUES IN SCHOOL FOYERS, LIKE THIS ONE.'

ALL OF THAT STUFF, THE NEWSPAPERS AND THE PHOTOS WITH IMPORTANT PEOPLE, ALL OF THAT STUFF, SERVES TO PERPETUATE THE NOTION THAT THE GRADE 12 FINAL EXAM IS SOMEHOW INTRINSICALLY FAIR. THAT IT'S A RELIABLE AND IMPARTIAL YARDSTICK FOR MEASURING ABILITY AND PERSONAL EFFORT.

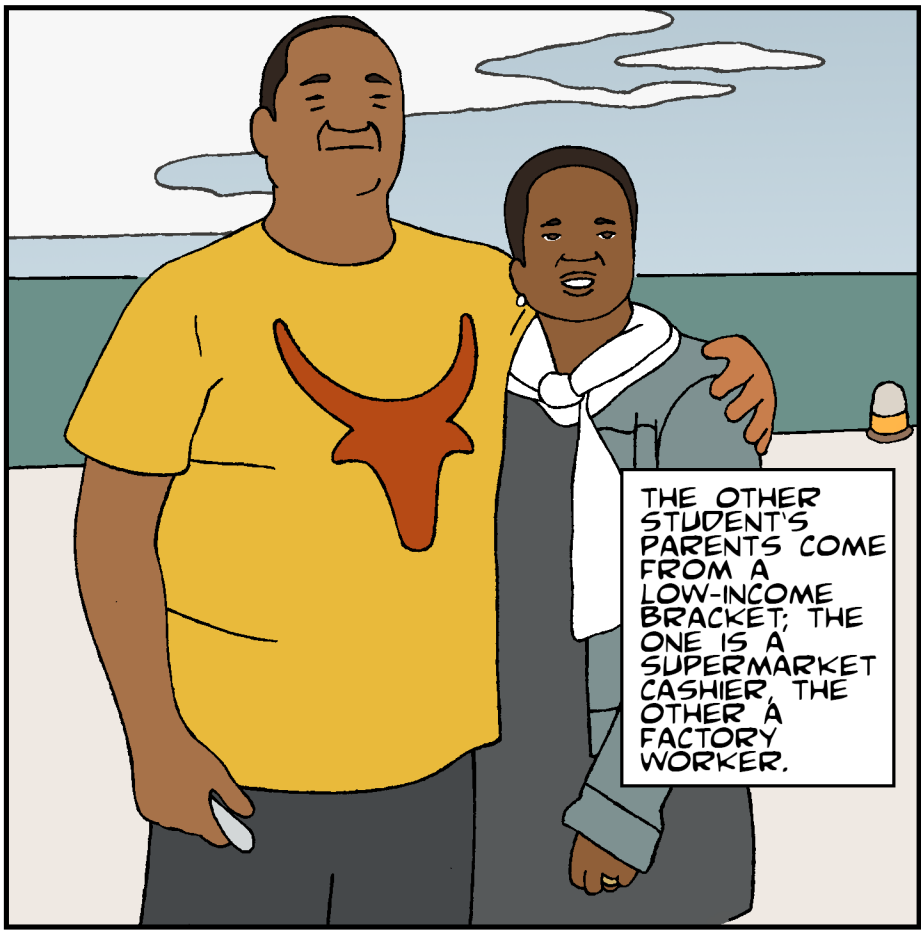


HERE'S THE THING THOUGH: IT ISN'T.

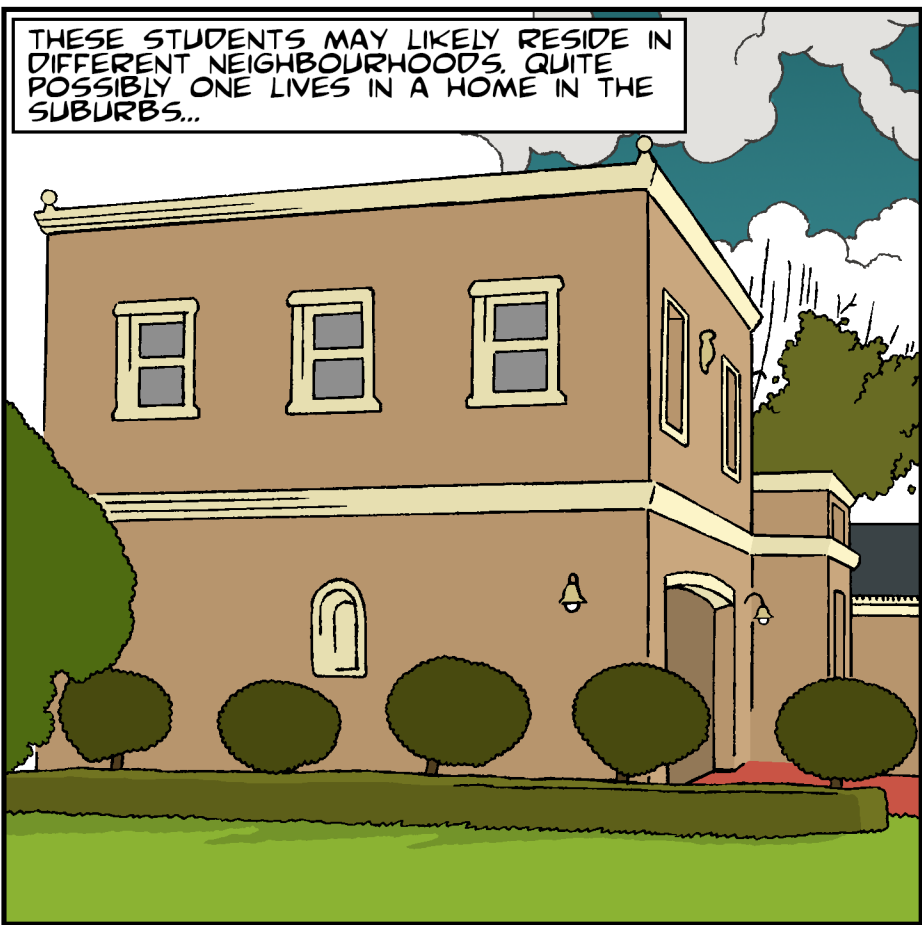


LET'S SAY FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THERE ARE TWO STUDENTS WHO COME FROM DIFFERENT FAMILIES

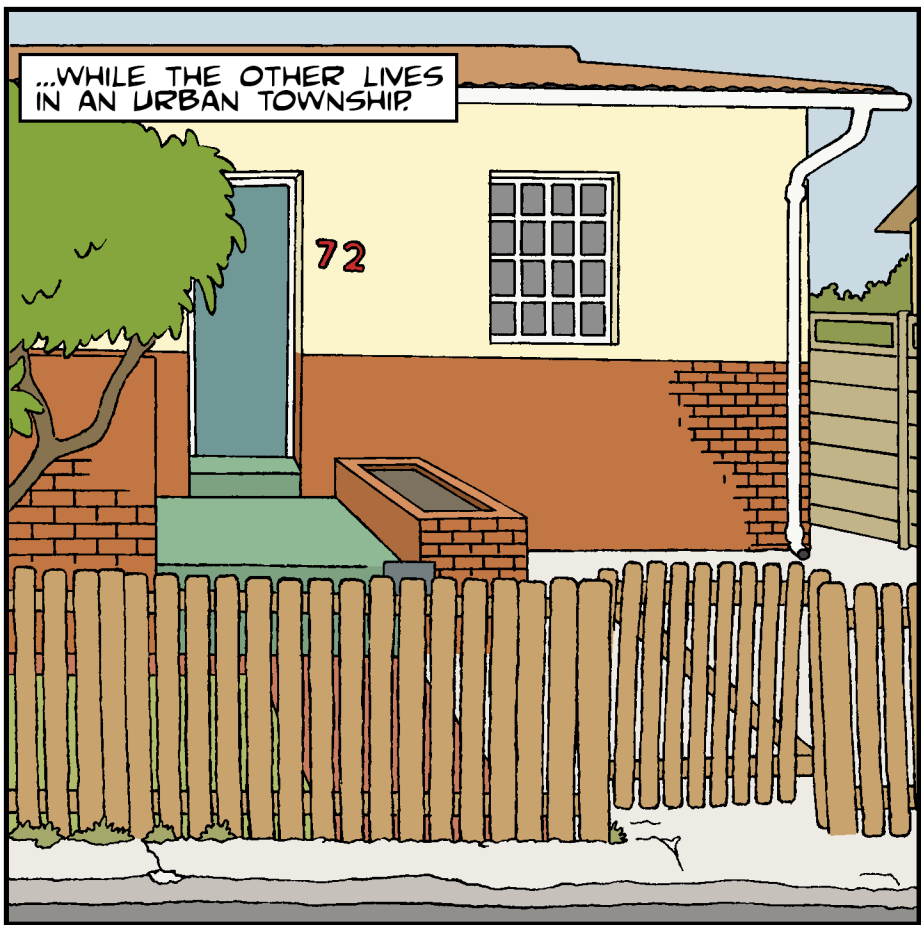
THE ONE STUDENT'S PARENTS ARE BOTH PROFESSIONALS: THE MOTHER IS A DOCTOR, THE FATHER IS AN ENGINEER.



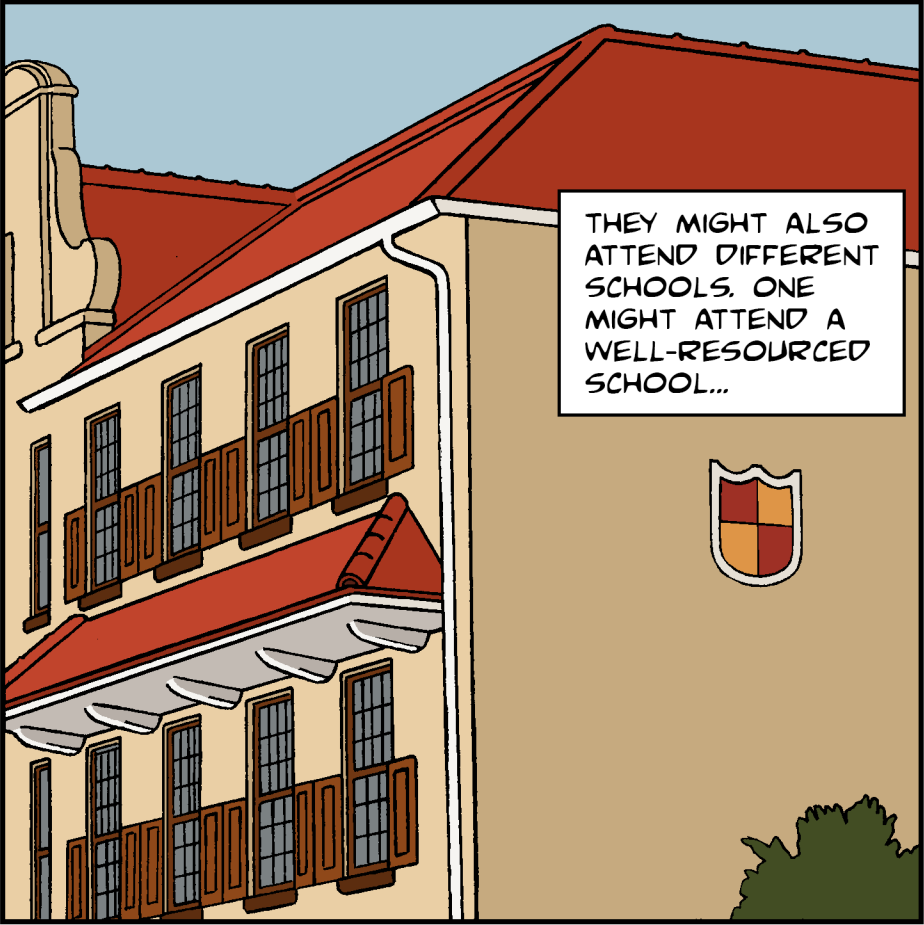
THE OTHER STUDENT'S PARENTS COME FROM A LOW-INCOME BRACKET; THE ONE IS A SUPERMARKET CASHIER, THE OTHER A FACTORY WORKER.



THESE STUDENTS MAY LIKELY RESIDE IN DIFFERENT NEIGHBOURHOODS. QUITE POSSIBLY ONE LIVES IN A HOME IN THE SUBURBS...



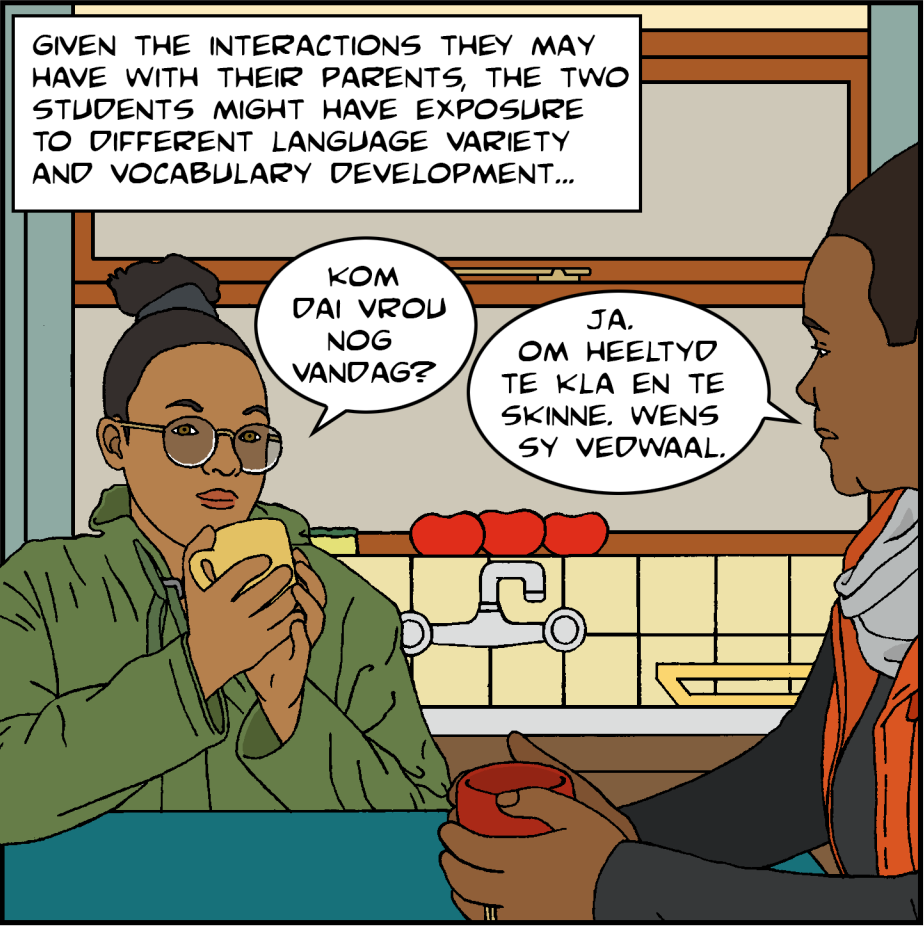
...WHILE THE OTHER LIVES IN AN URBAN TOWNSHIP?



THEY MIGHT ALSO ATTEND DIFFERENT SCHOOLS. ONE MIGHT ATTEND A WELL-RESOURCED SCHOOL...



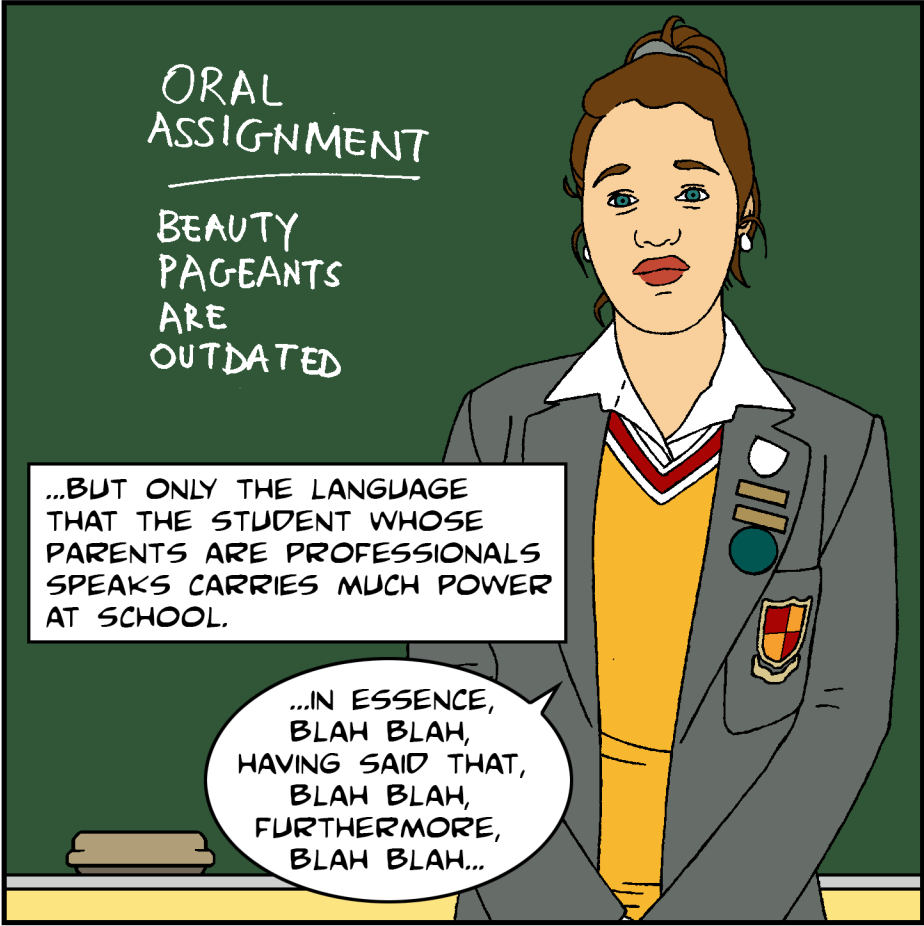
...WHILE THE OTHER MIGHT ATTEND AN UNDER-RESOURCED, LOW-FEE OR NO-FEE SCHOOL.



GIVEN THE INTERACTIONS THEY MAY HAVE WITH THEIR PARENTS, THE TWO STUDENTS MIGHT HAVE EXPOSURE TO DIFFERENT LANGUAGE VARIETY AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT...

KOM DAI VROU NOG VANDAG?

JA. OM HEELTYD TE KLA EN TE SKINNE. WENS SY VEDWAAL.

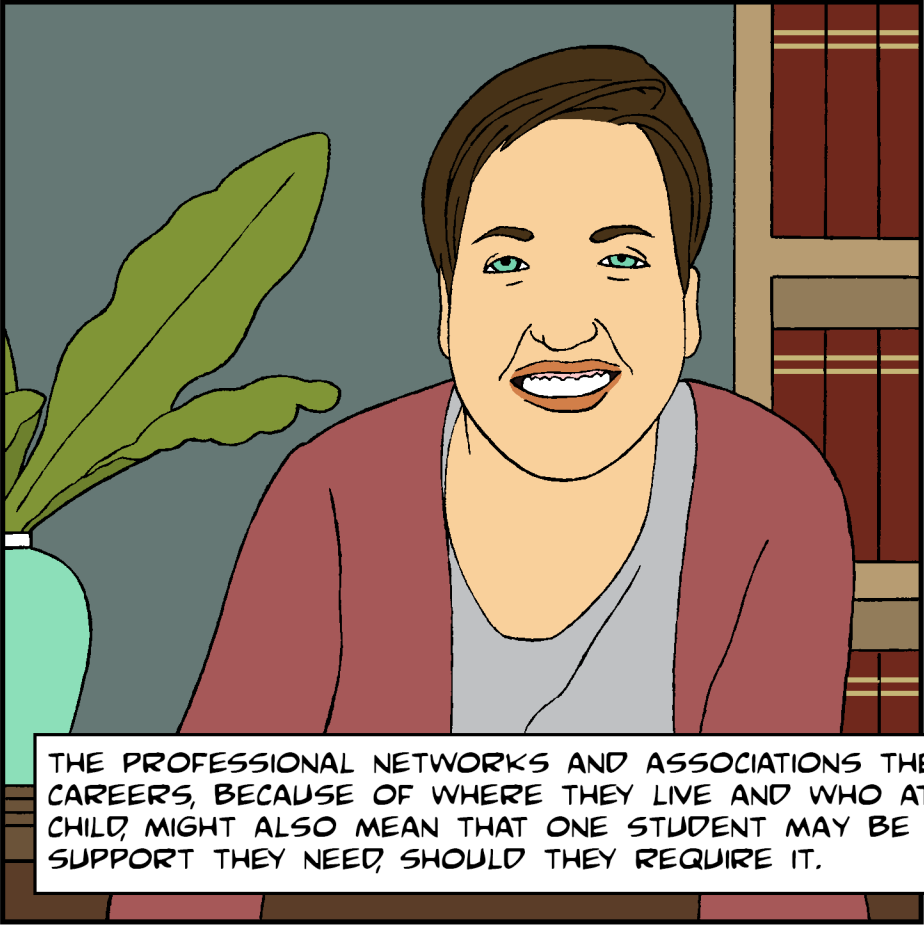


ORAL ASSIGNMENT

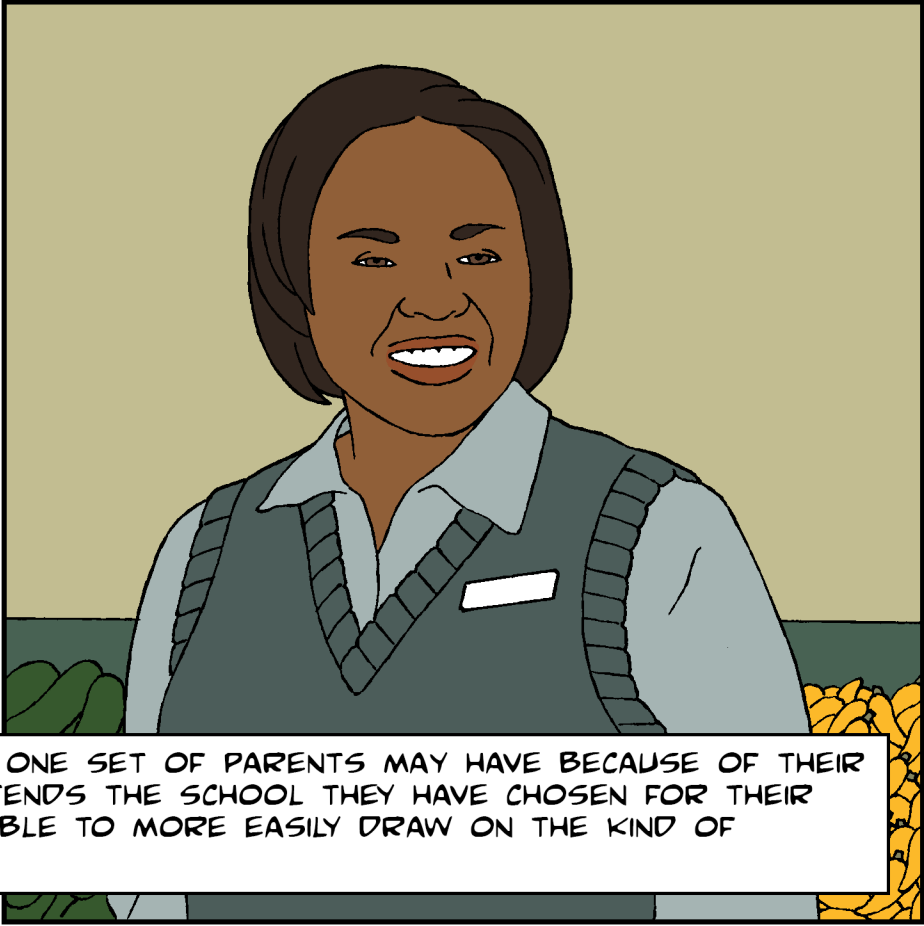
BEAUTY PAGEANTS ARE OUTDATED

...BUT ONLY THE LANGUAGE THAT THE STUDENT WHOSE PARENTS ARE PROFESSIONALS SPEAKS CARRIES MUCH POWER AT SCHOOL.

...IN ESSENCE, BLAH BLAH, HAVING SAID THAT, BLAH BLAH, FURTHERMORE, BLAH BLAH...



THE PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS AND ASSOCIATIONS THE ONE SET OF PARENTS MAY HAVE BECAUSE OF THEIR CAREERS, BECAUSE OF WHERE THEY LIVE AND WHO ATTENDS THE SCHOOL THEY HAVE CHOSEN FOR THEIR CHILD, MIGHT ALSO MEAN THAT ONE STUDENT MAY BE ABLE TO MORE EASILY DRAW ON THE KIND OF SUPPORT THEY NEED, SHOULD THEY REQUIRE IT.



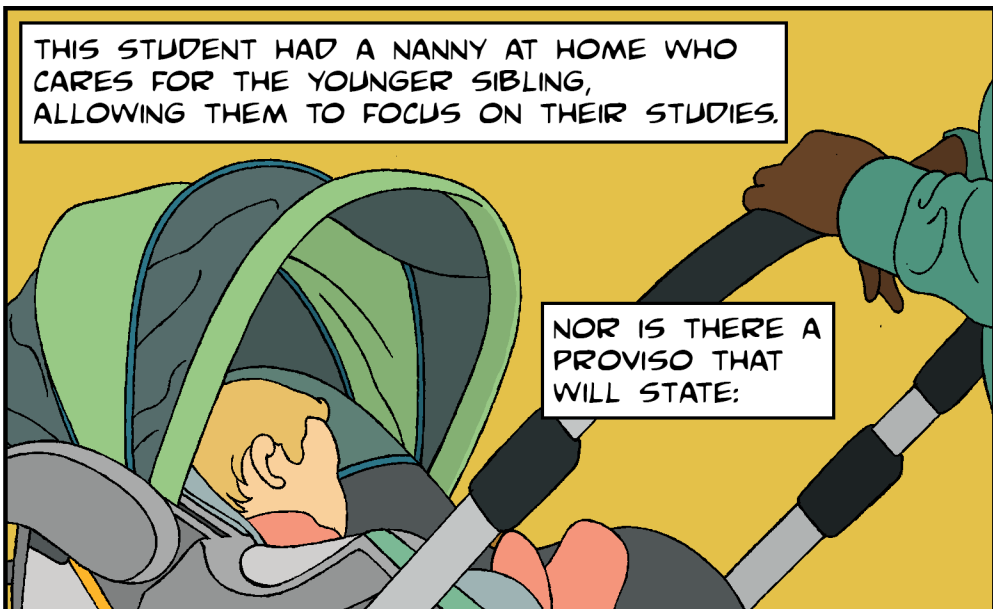


WHEN THESE TWO STUDENTS WRITE THE EXAM, THEY ARE MEASURED SOLELY ON THE WORK THEY PRODUCE AND NONE OF THESE DIFFERENCES ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. WHEN THE CERTIFICATE IS ISSUED THERE IS NO PROVISIO THAT STATES:

THIS STUDENT HAD ACCESS TO A PAID TUTOR.



THIS STUDENT HAD ACCESS TO A SCHOOL LIBRARY EQUIPPED WITH AN ARRAY OF TEXTBOOKS AND EXERCISE BOOKS.



THIS STUDENT HAD A NANNY AT HOME WHO CARES FOR THE YOUNGER SIBLING, ALLOWING THEM TO FOCUS ON THEIR STUDIES.

NOR IS THERE A PROVISIO THAT WILL STATE:



THIS STUDENT HAD TO CARE FOR A YOUNGER SIBLING WHILE THEIR PARENT IS AT WORK.

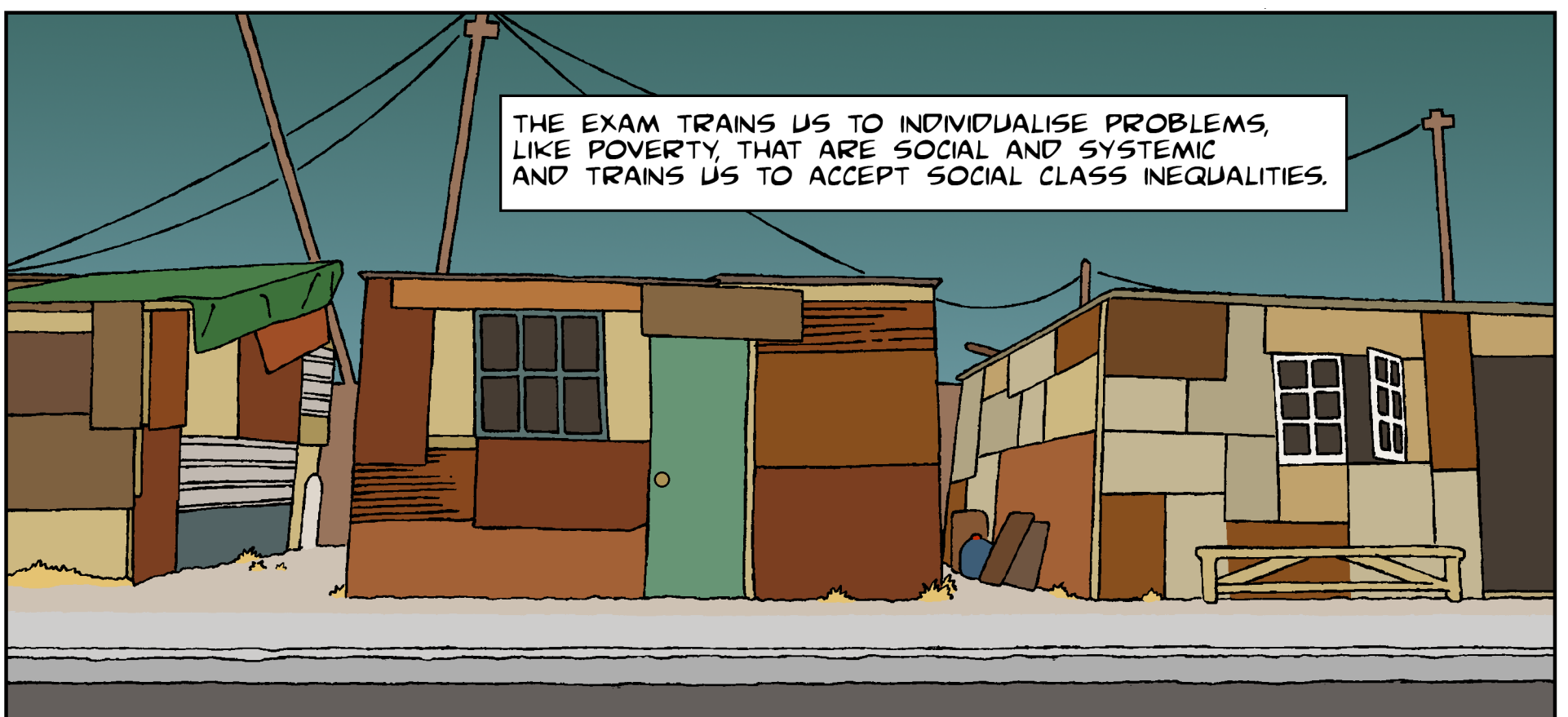
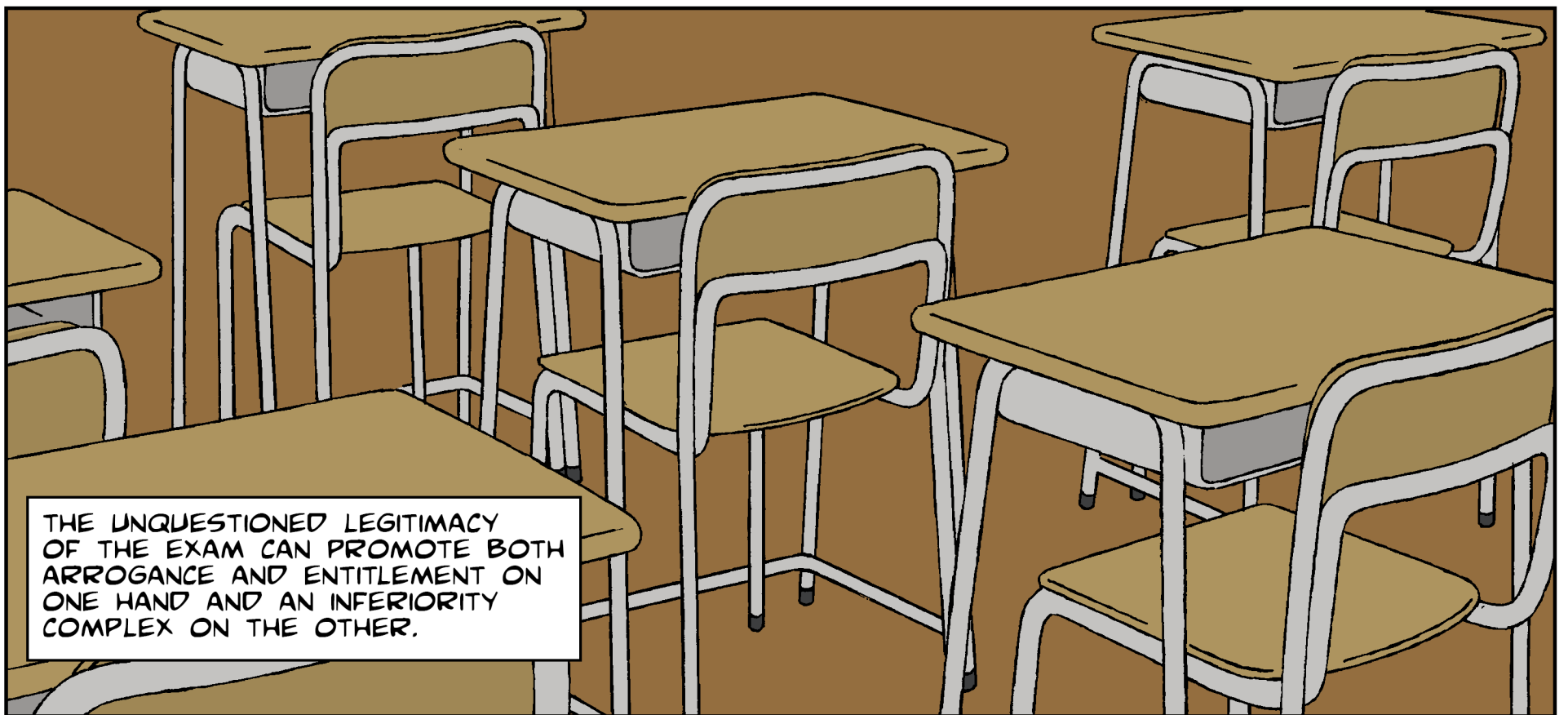


THIS STUDENT HAD NO INTERNET ACCESS AT HOME AND ONLY DURING INTERVAL AT SCHOOL.

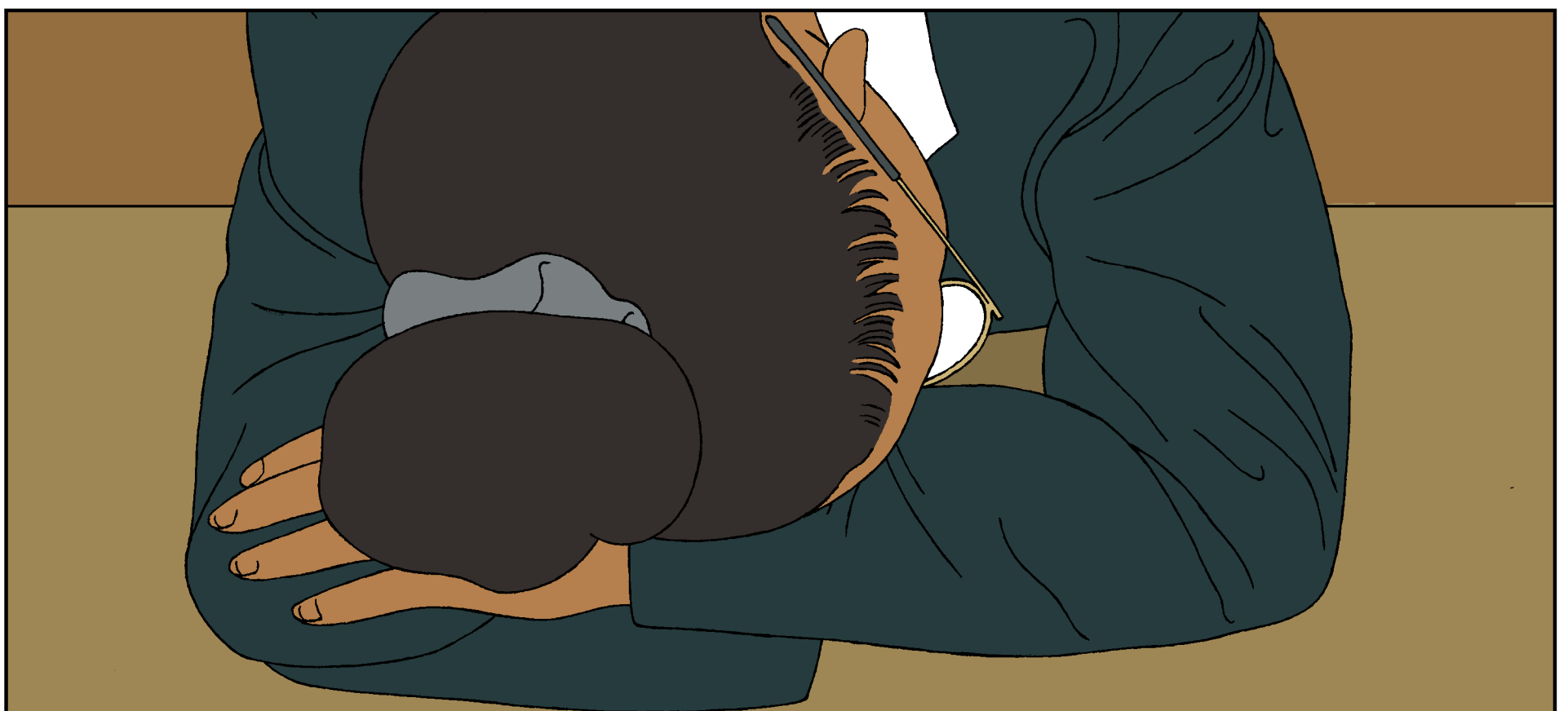


THIS STUDENT WAS GRIEVING THE LOSS OF A FRIEND WHO WAS KILLED IN GANG VIOLENCE.

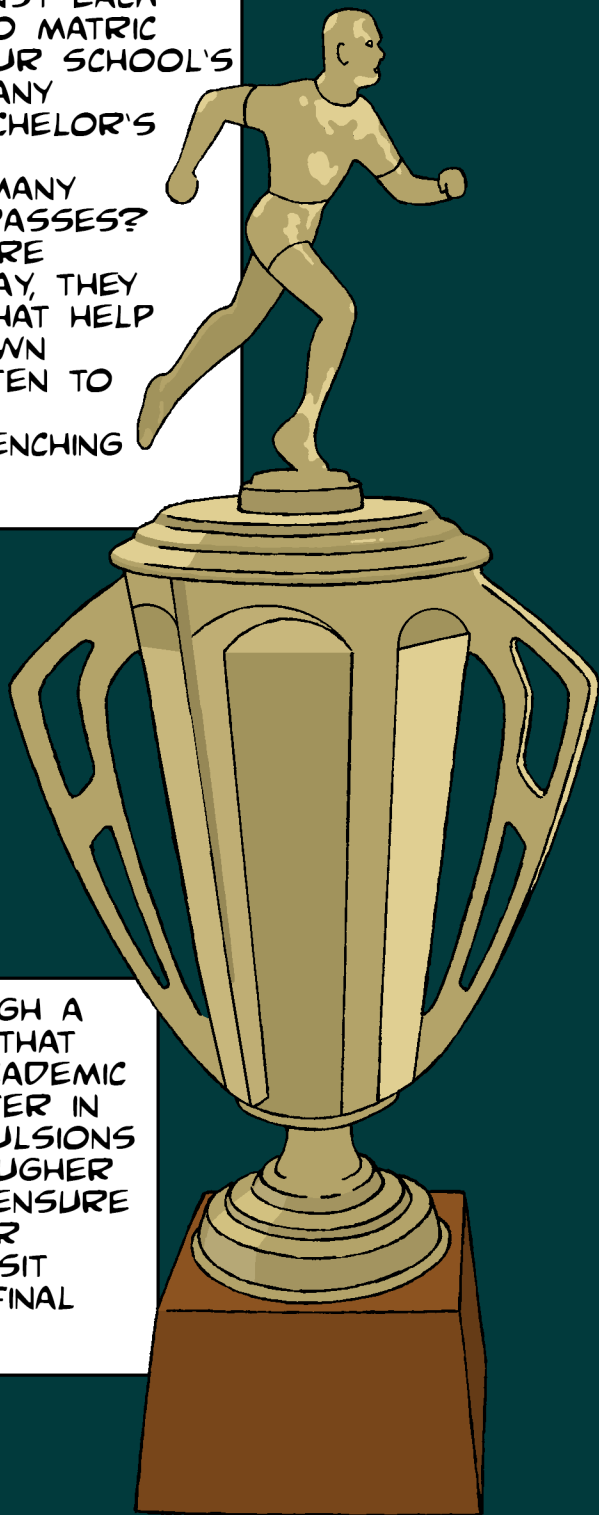




WHEREAS PROBLEMS LIKE UNDERFUNDING, UNDERSTAFFING, CURRICULUM BIAS AND LINGUISTIC DISCRIMINATION ARE SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS, FOR WHICH THE SYSTEM AS A WHOLE MUST BE HELD TO ACCOUNT, THE MERITOCRATIC MYTH PLACES THE TOTAL BURDEN OF RESPONSIBILITY ON THE SHOULDERS OF THOSE WHO SUFFER AS A RESULT OF SYSTEMIC INJUSTICES, RECASTING THE PROBLEMS AS A CRISIS OF UNMOTIVATED STUDENTS OR LAZY TEACHERS OR POOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP.

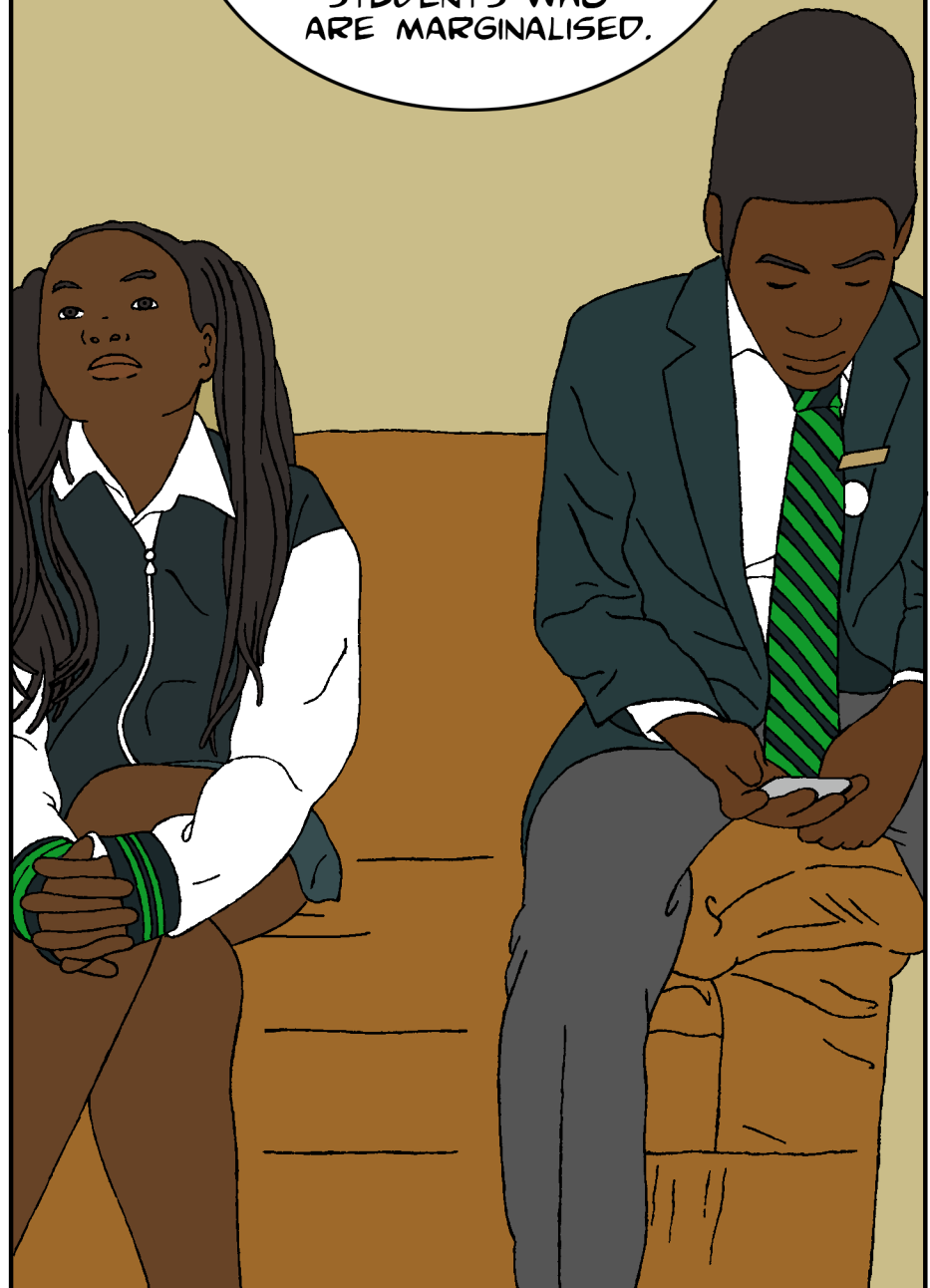


'LIKE THE STUDENTS WHO TAKE THE TEST, SCHOOLS THEMSELVES ARE MEASURED AGAINST EACH OTHER IN RELATION TO MATRIC RESULTS. WHAT IS YOUR SCHOOL'S PASS RATE? HOW MANY STUDENTS GOT A BACHELOR'S PASS? HOW MANY DISTINCTIONS? HOW MANY MATHS AND SCIENCE PASSES? AND BECAUSE THEY ARE MEASURED IN THIS WAY, THEY ADOPT STRATEGIES THAT HELP TO IMPROVE THEIR OWN SOCIAL STANDING, OFTEN TO THE DETRIMENT OF STUDENTS AND ENTRENCHING CLASS PRIVILEGE.'



'THIS IS DONE THROUGH A SELECTION PROCESS THAT ONLY ALLOWS TOP ACADEMIC PERFORMERS TO ENTER IN AT GRADE 8, BY EXPULSIONS OR BY SETTING A TOUGHER GRADE 11 EXAM TO ENSURE THAT ONLY THE HIGHER ACHIEVING STUDENTS SIT FOR THE GRADE 12 FINAL EXAMS.'

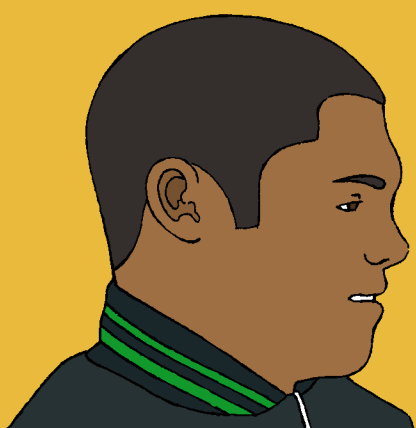
GIVEN THE ENTANGLEMENT OF RACE, CLASS AND LANGUAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA, SCHOOLS MIGHT EVEN USE THE LANGUAGE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING AS A MEANS TO EXCLUDE STUDENTS WHO ARE MARGINALISED.



AND THAT, IN A NUTSHELL, IS WHY THE GRADE TWELVES OF THIS SCHOOL DO SO WELL IN THE EXAMS EACH YEAR.



SO IF WE LOSE TODAY IT'S BECAUSE SOMETHING SOMETHING THE SYSTEM? GOT IT, SIR!



(SIGH)

I WONDER IF PLAINVIEW HIGH IS HIRING...




Disposable Youth

 whatlindsaylikes




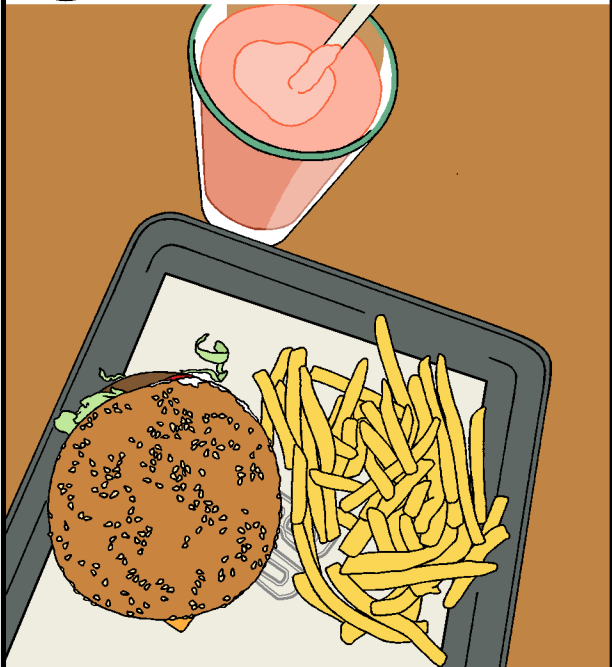

52 likes
whatlindsaylikes Won our first debate competition today! [#debatekings](#)


 whatlindsaylikes




31 likes
whatlindsaylikes Celebrating our win with Mr. Edwards [#smilingissolastyear](#)

 whatlindsaylikes




44 likes
whatlindsaylikes Thanks for the treats, sir! [#winnerwinnerchickendinner](#)



GUYS, CAN WE PUT THE PHONES AWAY, PLEASE? WHAT CAN POSSIBLY BE SO INTERESTING?




ONLY THIS WHOLE VIDEO MONTAGE OF PRANKS GONE WRONG.

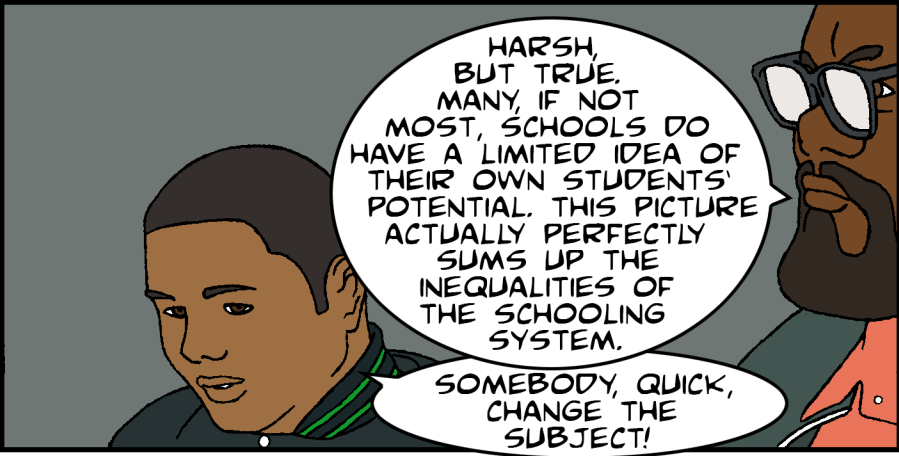


SORRY, I GOT STUCK DOWN A MEME RABBIT-HOLE. CHECK THIS ONE, SIR.

CAREER DAY

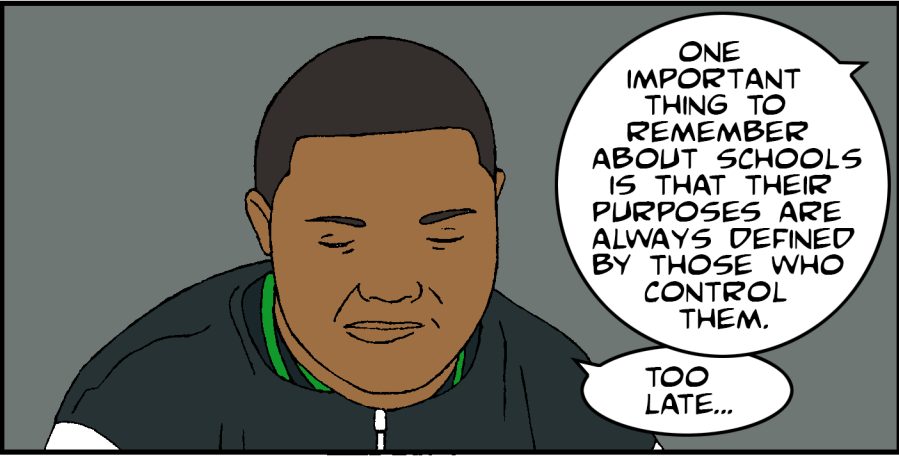


AT MY SCHOOL



HARSH, BUT TRUE. MANY, IF NOT MOST, SCHOOLS DO HAVE A LIMITED IDEA OF THEIR OWN STUDENTS' POTENTIAL. THIS PICTURE ACTUALLY PERFECTLY SUMS UP THE INEQUALITIES OF THE SCHOOLING SYSTEM.

SOMEBODY, QUICK, CHANGE THE SUBJECT!



ONE IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER ABOUT SCHOOLS IS THAT THEIR PURPOSES ARE ALWAYS DEFINED BY THOSE WHO CONTROL THEM.

TOO LATE...



'THE FIRST SCHOOL IN THE CAPE, FOR INSTANCE, IT WAS OPENED IN 1658, BY PIETER VAN STAEL, THE BROTHER-IN-LAW OF JAN VAN RIEBEECK. WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT WHAT WAS TAUGHT THERE YOU REALIZE THAT THE MAIN AIM OF THE SCHOOL WAS REALLY JUST TO TEACH PEOPLE TO BE BETTER SLAVES.'



SIR, WASN'T IT HENDRIK VERWOERD WHO SAID: 'THERE IS NO PLACE FOR THE BANTU IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY ABOVE CERTAIN LEVELS OF SLAVE LABOUR.'

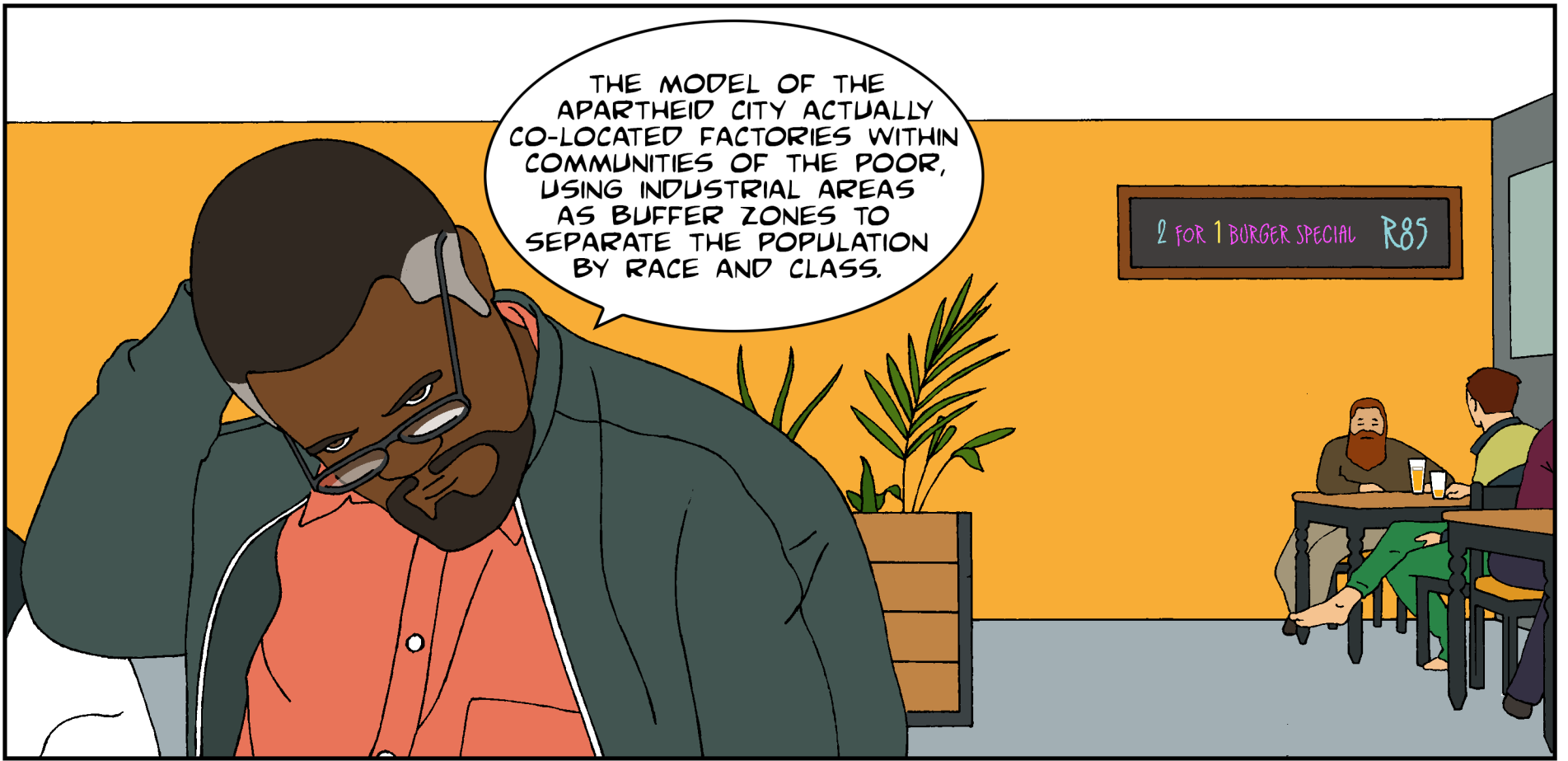


THAT IS CORRECT, LWANDISO! VERY GOOD!



WELL, WE WROTE A HISTORY TEST TWO DAYS AGO, SO SOME OF THE STUFF IS STILL FRESH IN MY MEMORY.





THE MODEL OF THE APARTHEID CITY ACTUALLY CO-LOCATED FACTORIES WITHIN COMMUNITIES OF THE POOR, USING INDUSTRIAL AREAS AS BUFFER ZONES TO SEPARATE THE POPULATION BY RACE AND CLASS.

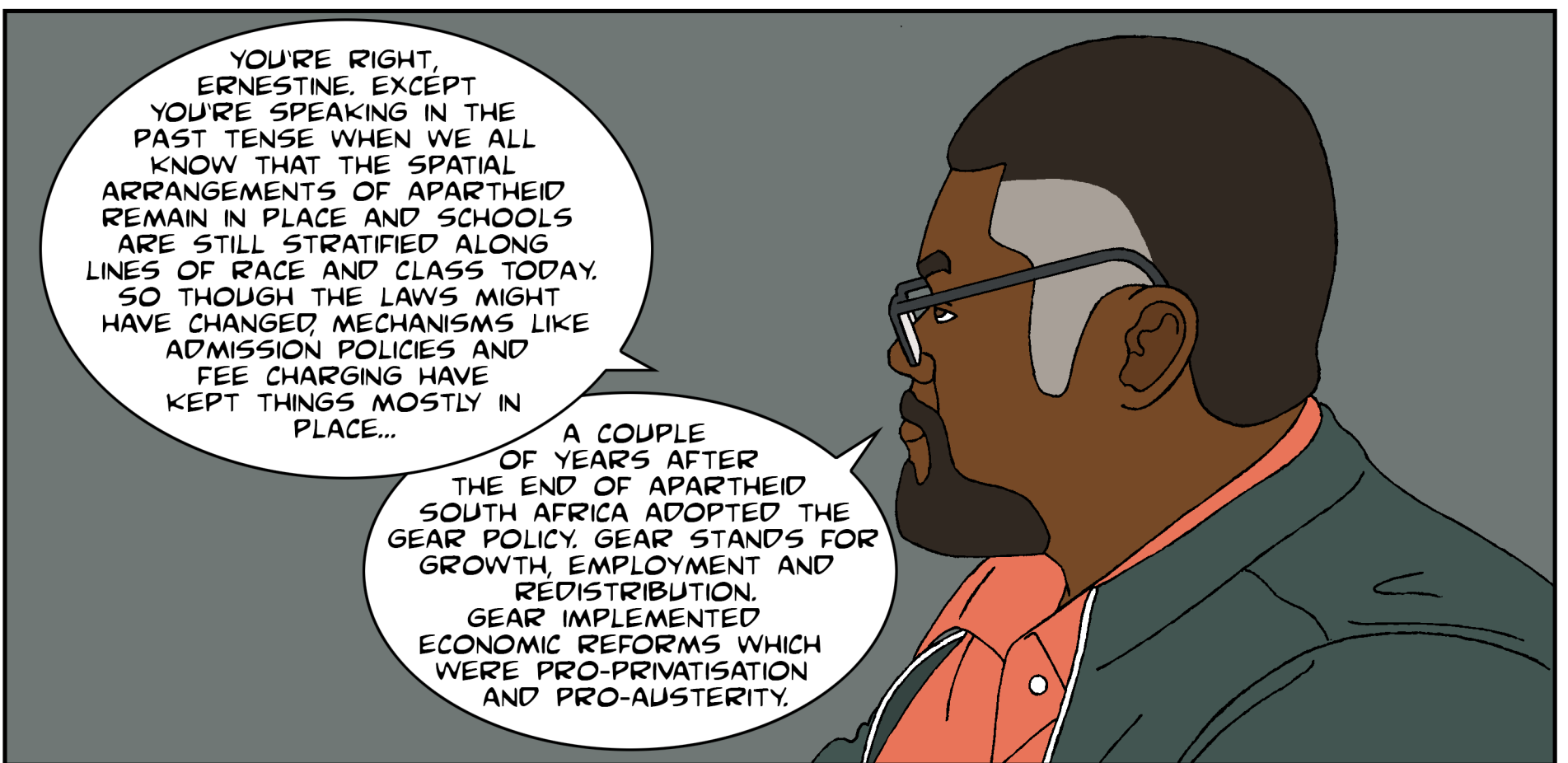


SO THE FACTORIES BOTH SEPARATED THE DIFFERENT RACE GROUPS AND WERE A WAY OF REMINDING PEOPLE OF WHAT THEIR ROLE IN SOCIETY WAS SUPPOSED TO BE?

THAT'S ACTUALLY KIND OF CLEVER. I MEAN, IN AN EVIL SORT OF WAY.

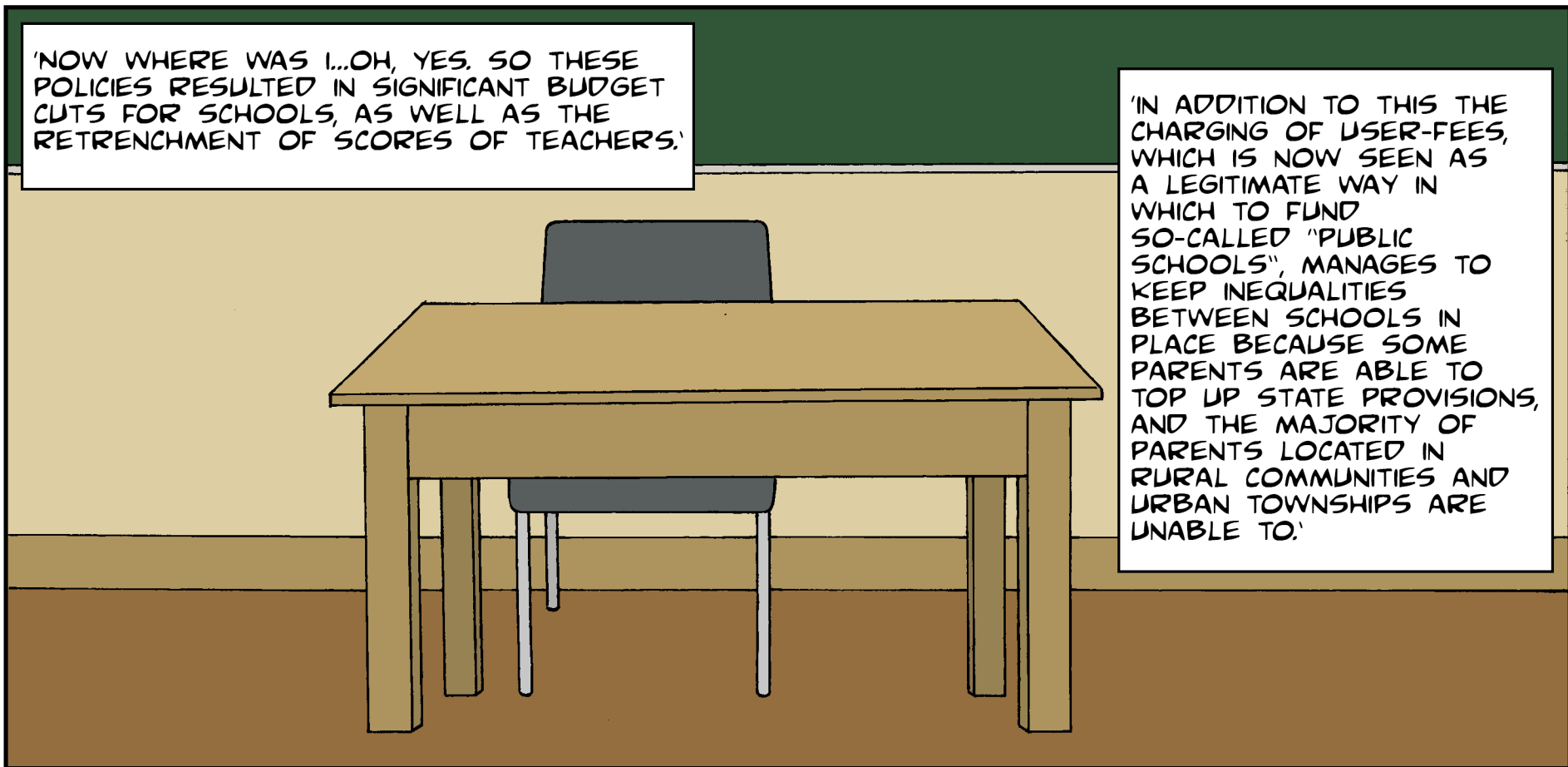


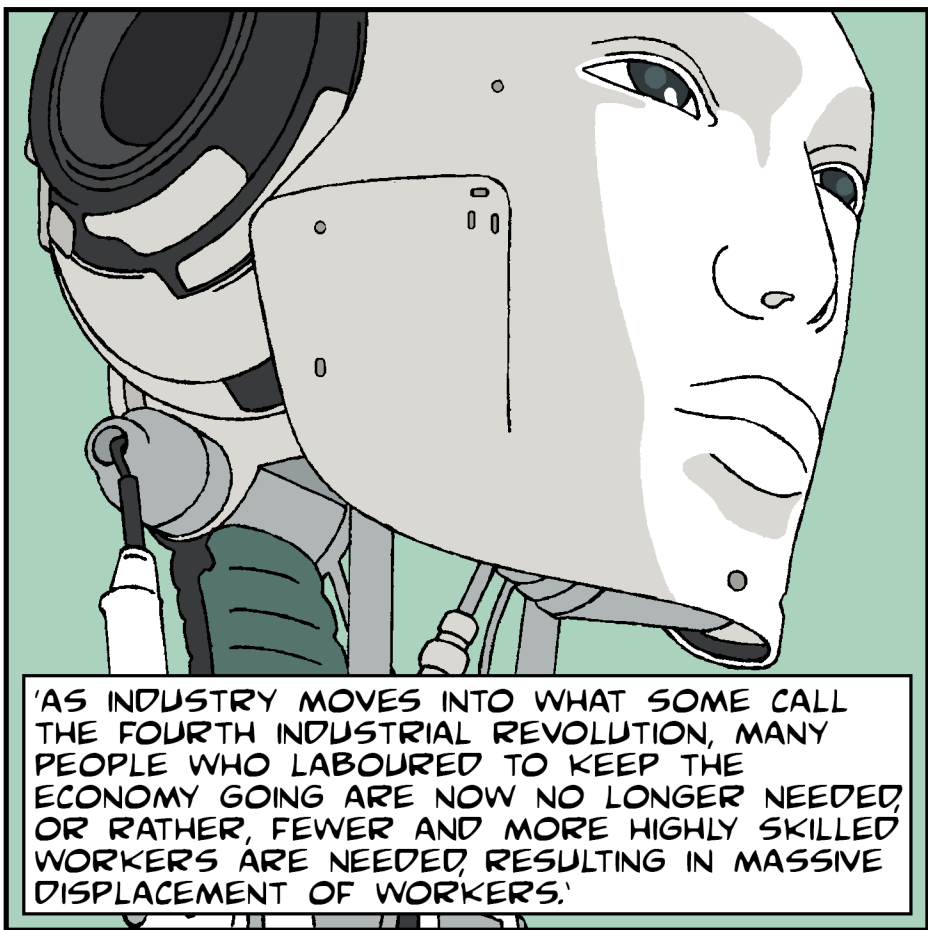
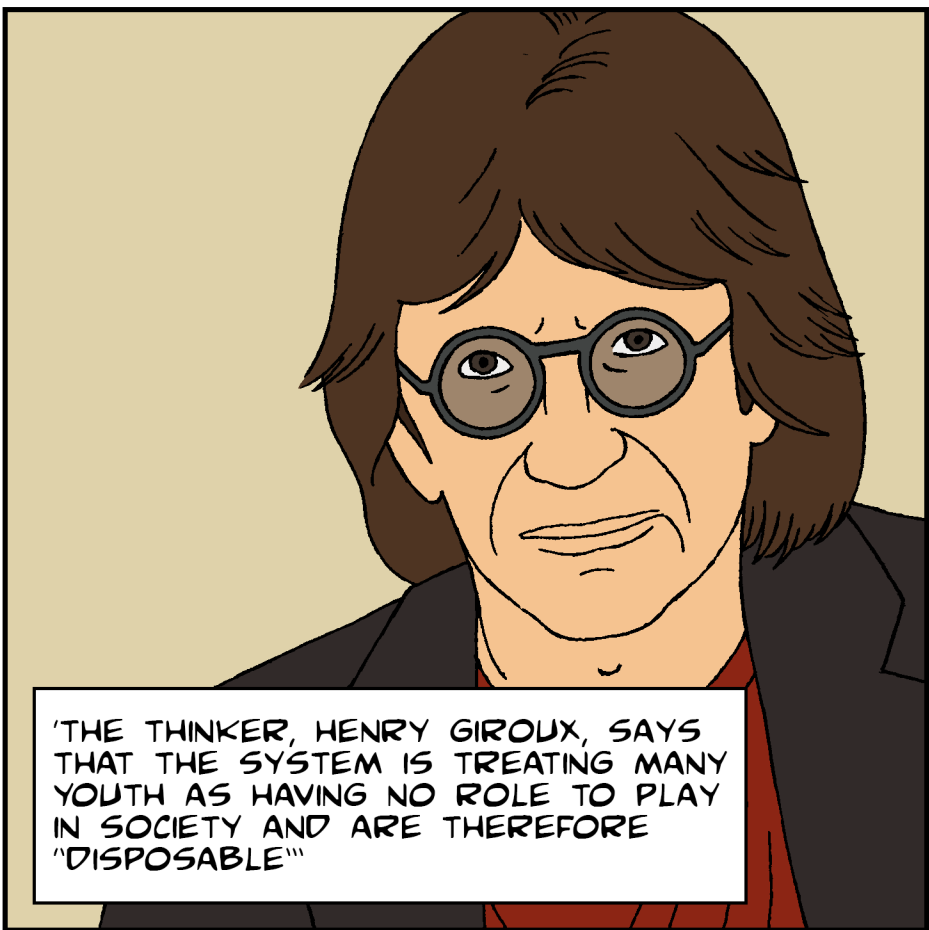
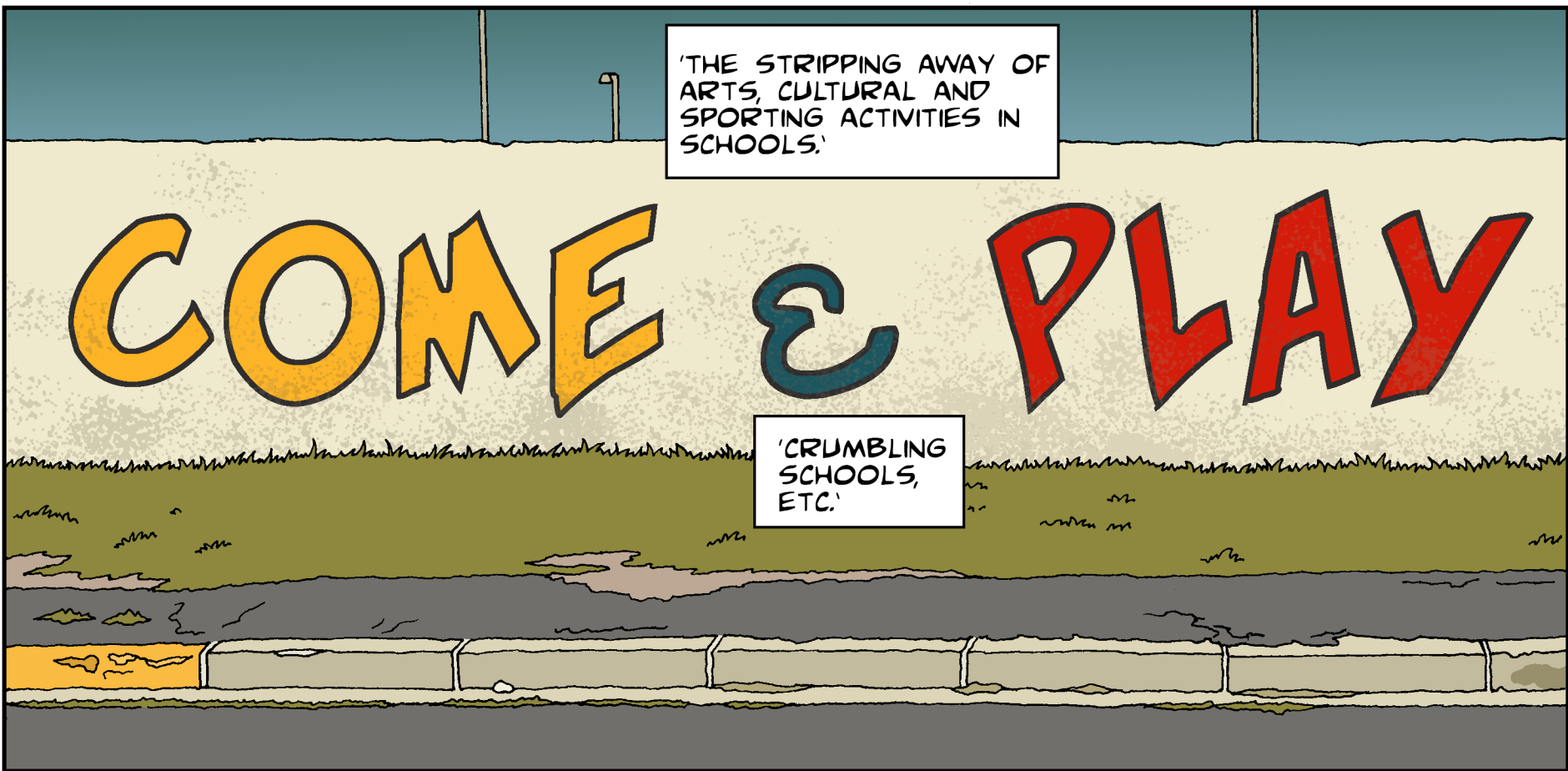
WHAT? I FIND THIS STUFF INTERESTING.

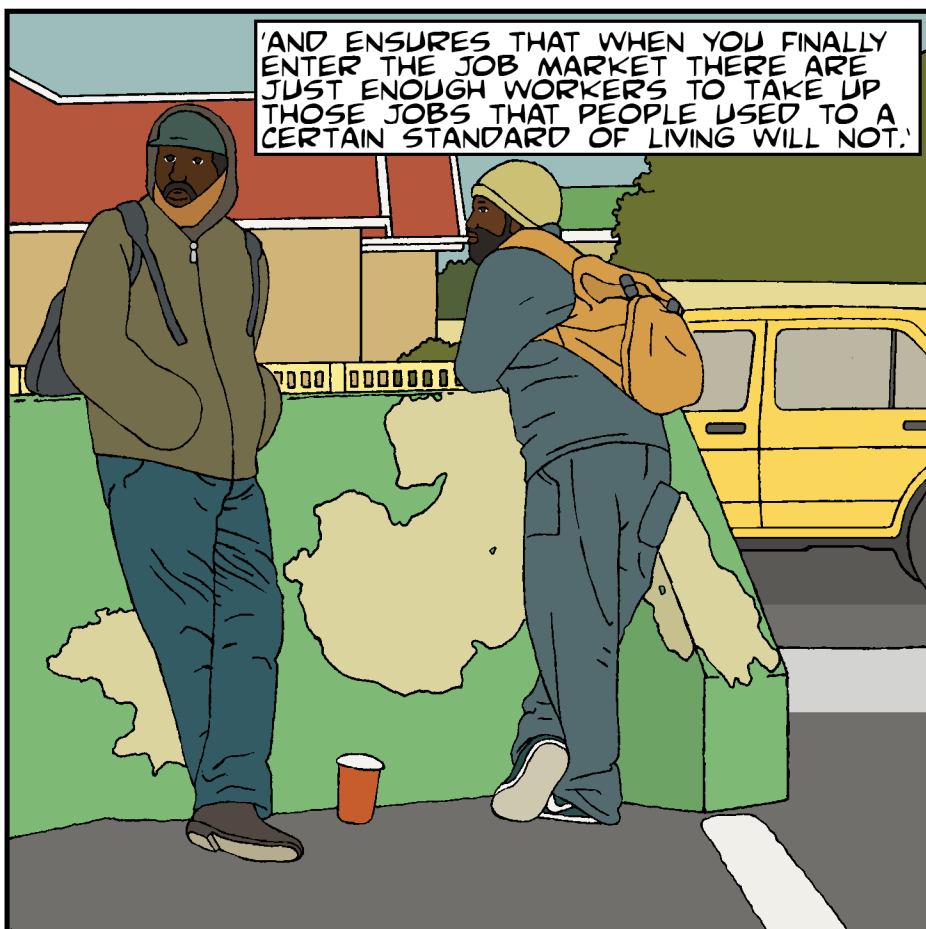
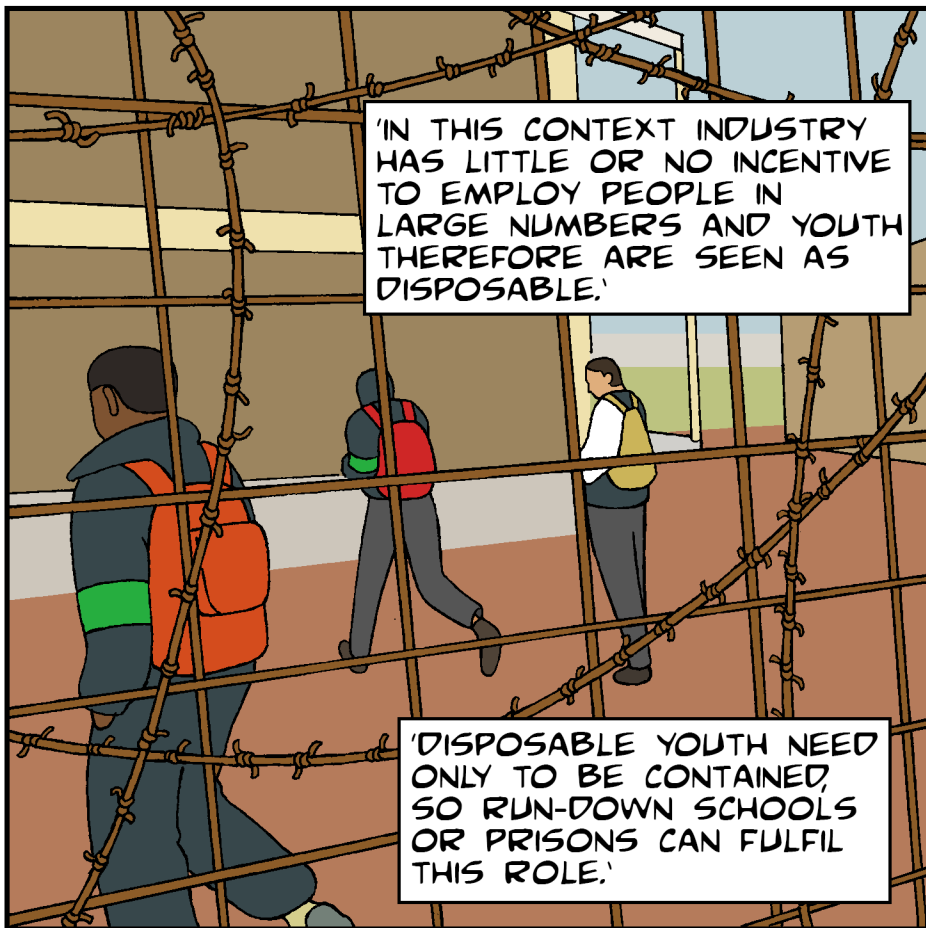


YOU'RE RIGHT, ERNESTINE. EXCEPT YOU'RE SPEAKING IN THE PAST TENSE WHEN WE ALL KNOW THAT THE SPATIAL ARRANGEMENTS OF APARTHEID REMAIN IN PLACE AND SCHOOLS ARE STILL STRATIFIED ALONG LINES OF RACE AND CLASS TODAY. SO THOUGH THE LAWS MIGHT HAVE CHANGED, MECHANISMS LIKE ADMISSION POLICIES AND FEE CHARGING HAVE KEPT THINGS MOSTLY IN PLACE...

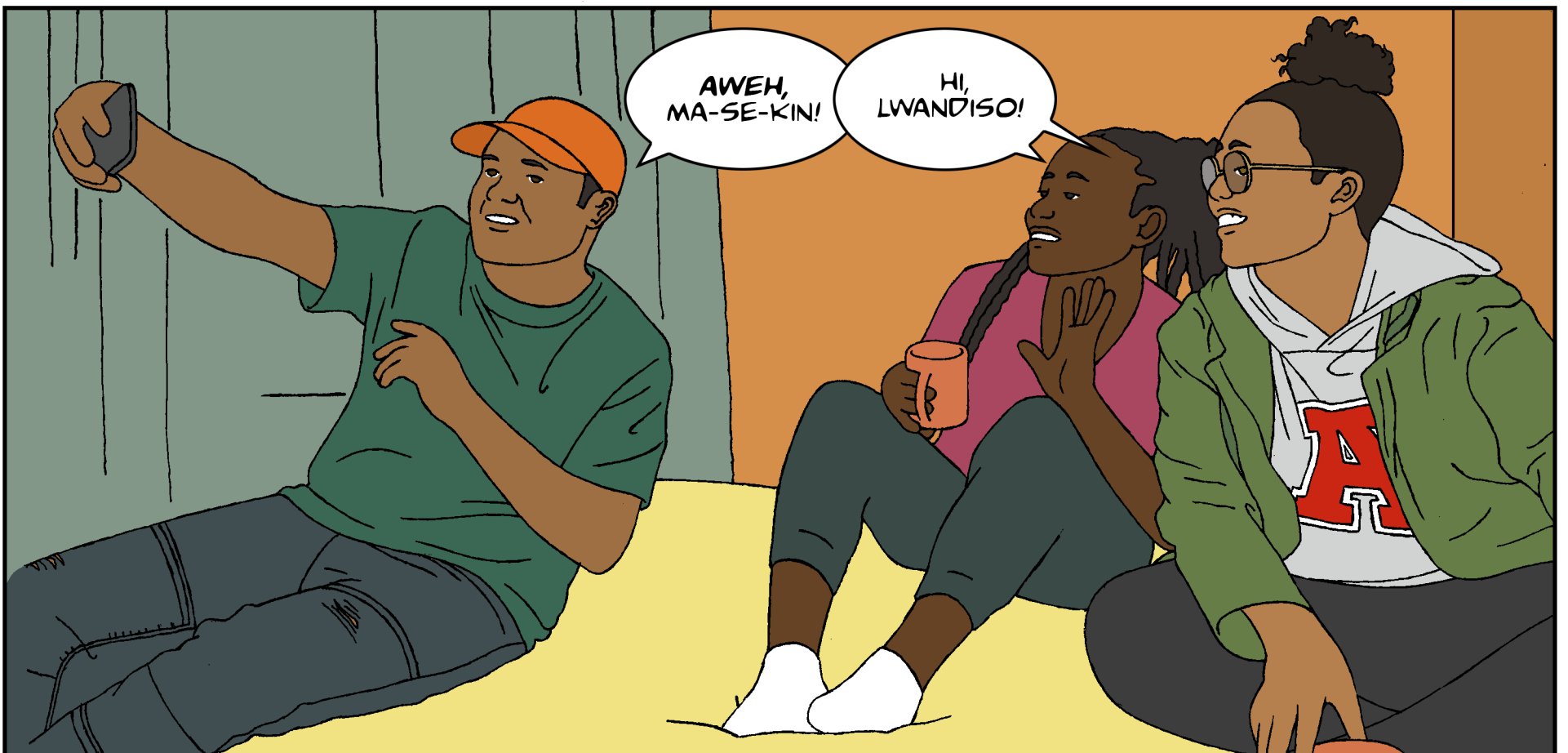
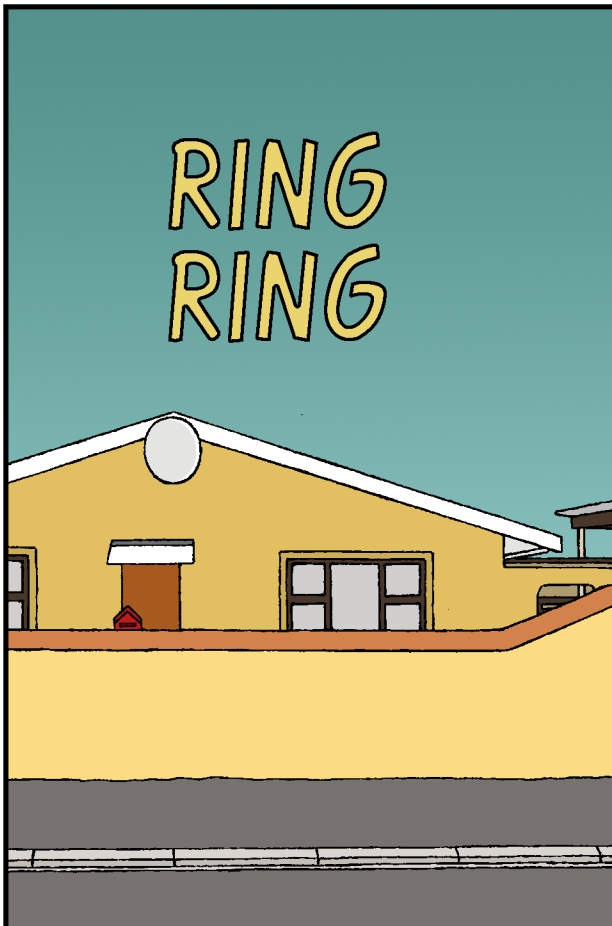
A COUPLE OF YEARS AFTER THE END OF APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA ADOPTED THE GEAR POLICY. GEAR STANDS FOR GROWTH, EMPLOYMENT AND REDISTRIBUTION. GEAR IMPLEMENTED ECONOMIC REFORMS WHICH WERE PRO-PRIVATISATION AND PRO-AUSTERITY.

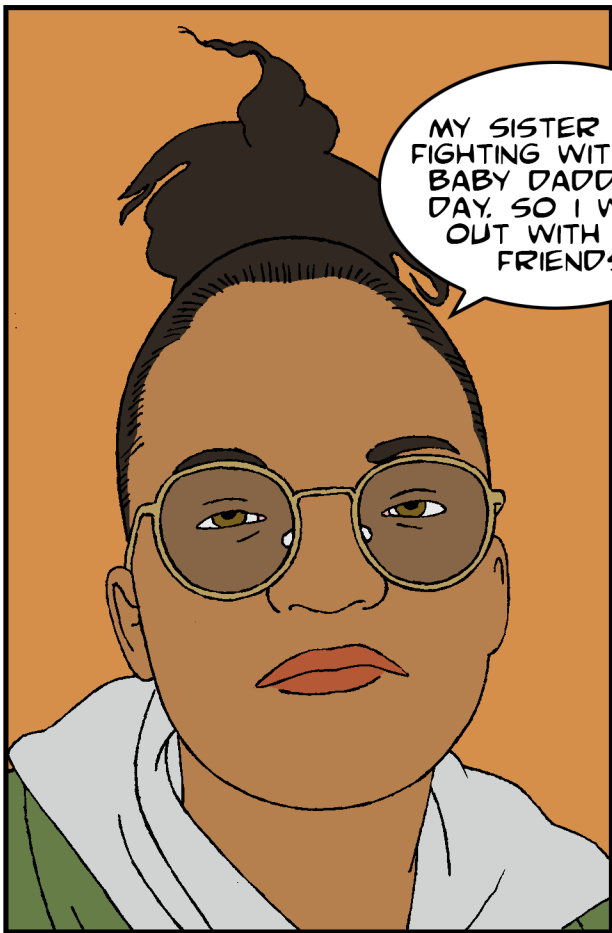
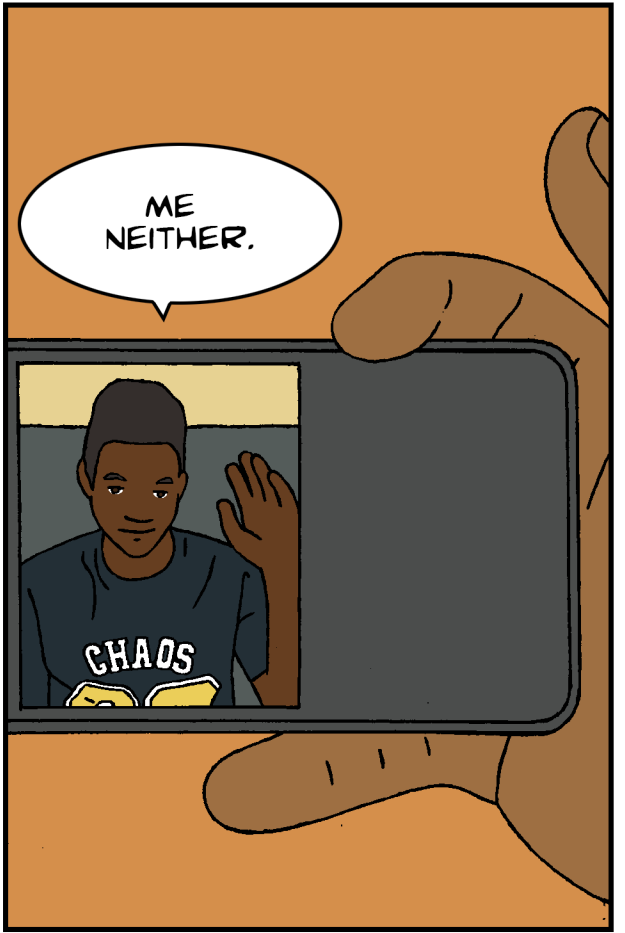




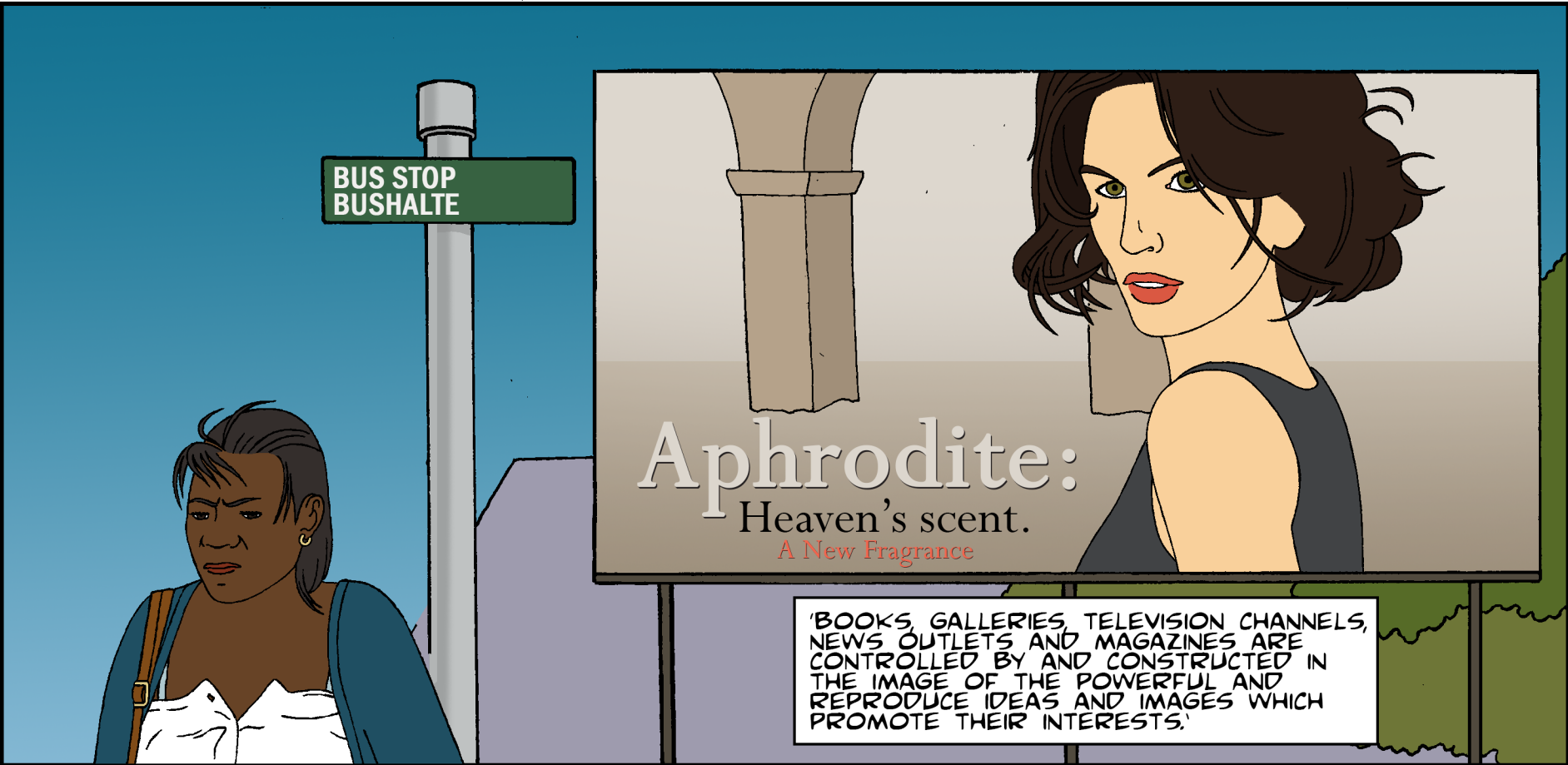
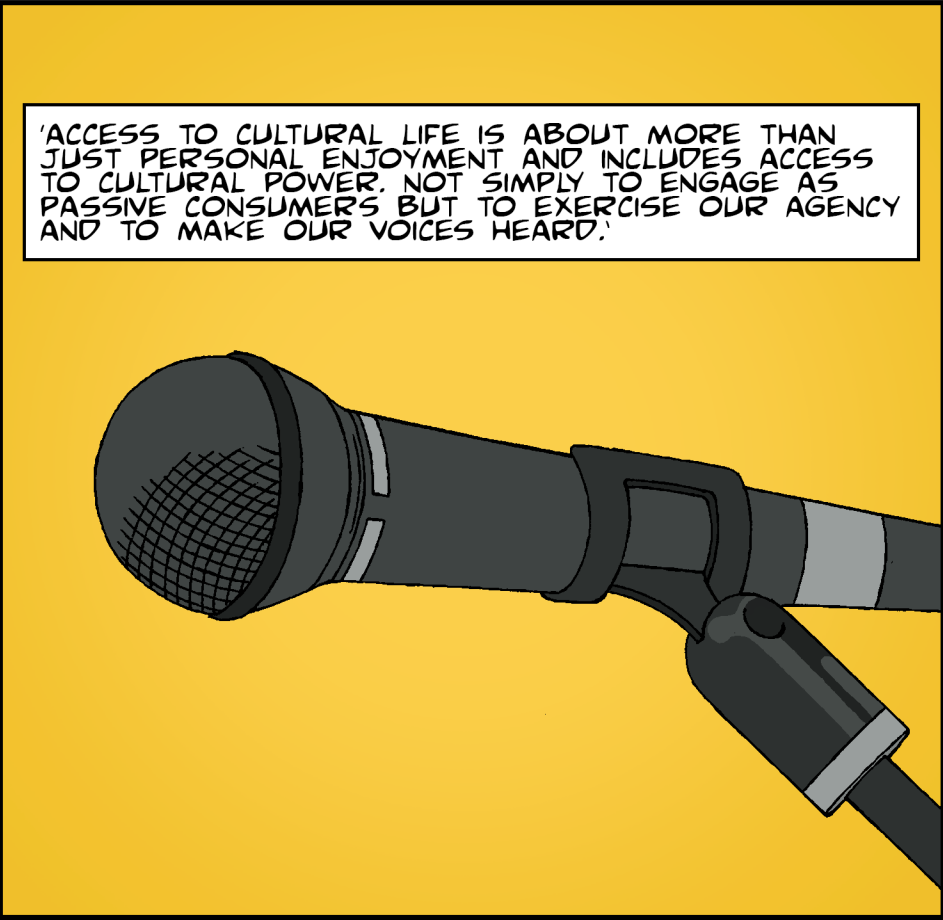
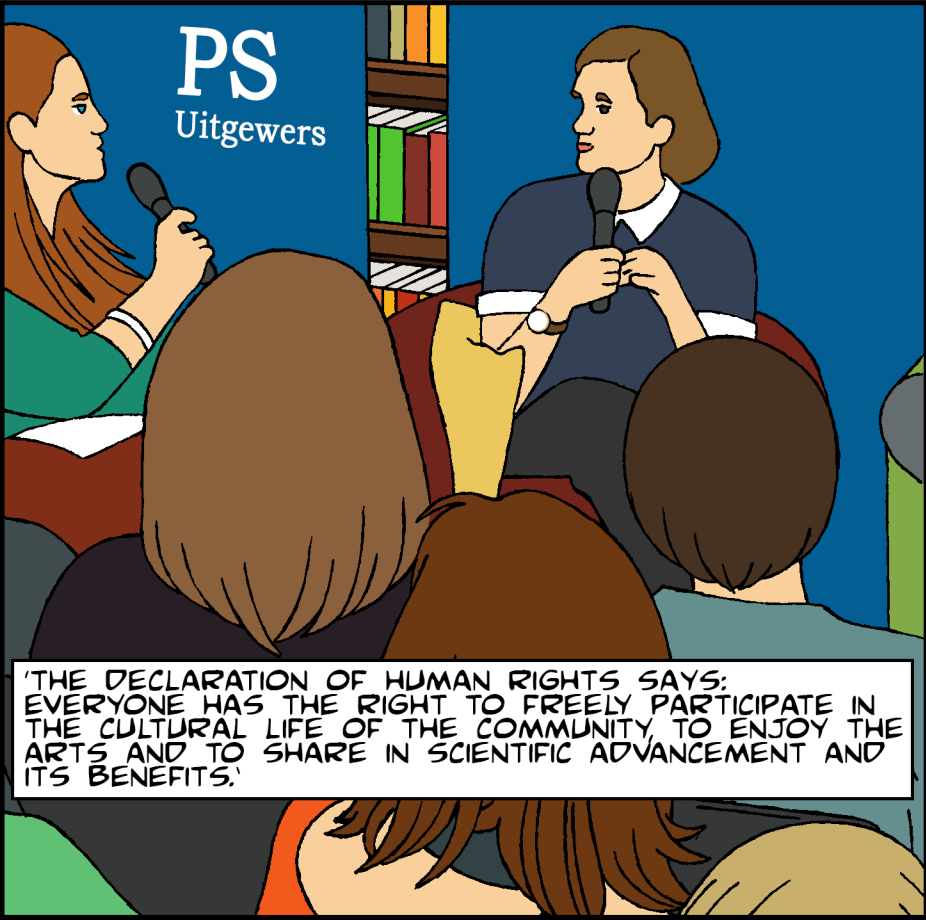
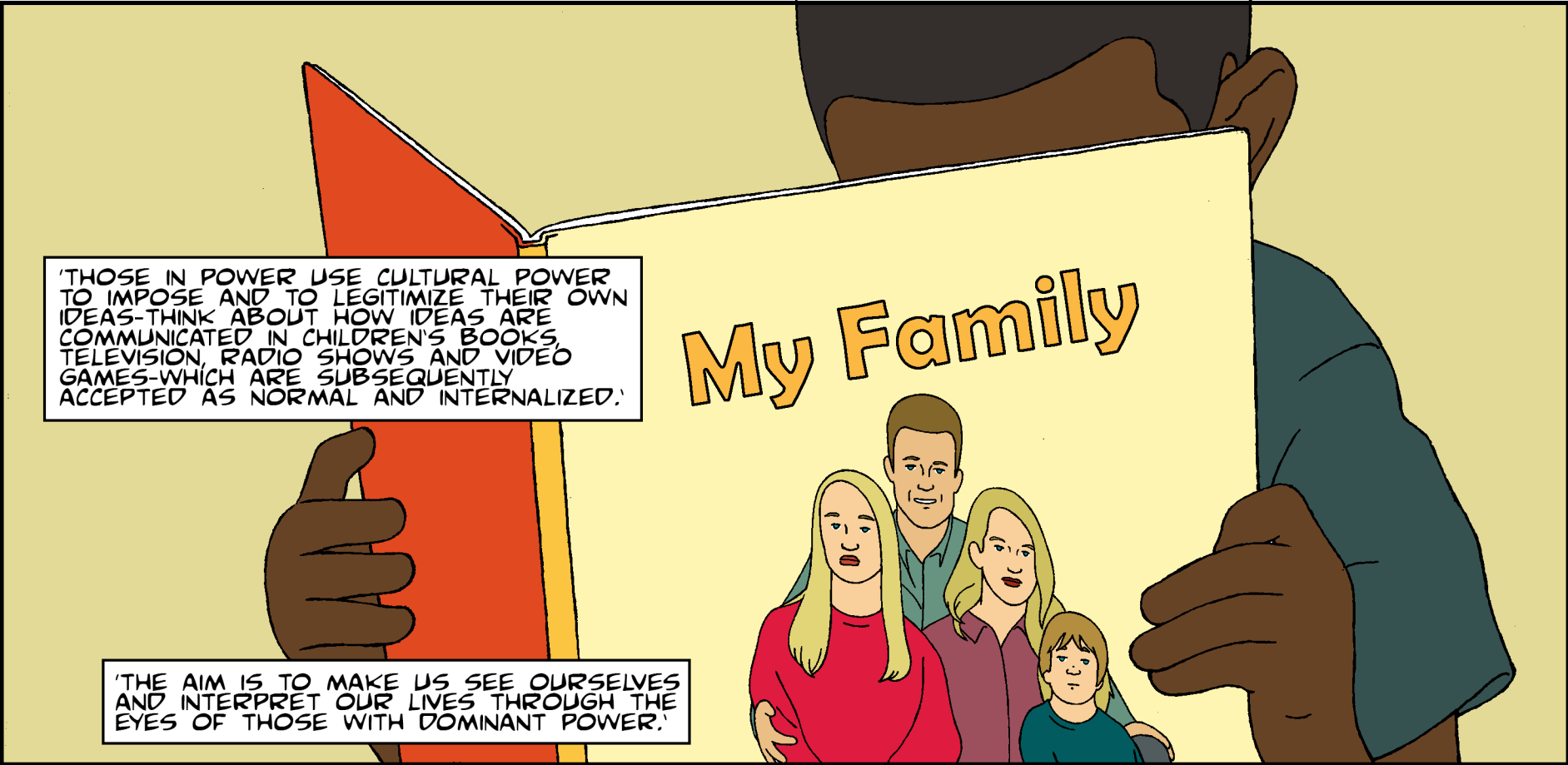


MARTIAL ARTS-THE WEAPONISATION OF CULTURE









'FOR EXAMPLE, A SCHOOL TEXTBOOK THAT HIGHLY VALUES SONNETS BY SHAKESPEARE BUT UNDERVALUES THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE TO LITERATURE BY LOCAL SLAM POETRY.'

OPEN
MIC
tuesday

'SIMILARLY, A PICTURE SOLD AT AN INTERSECTION IS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE ART IN THE SAME WAY AS A PICTURE DISPLAYED IN A PRESTIGIOUS GALLERY.'

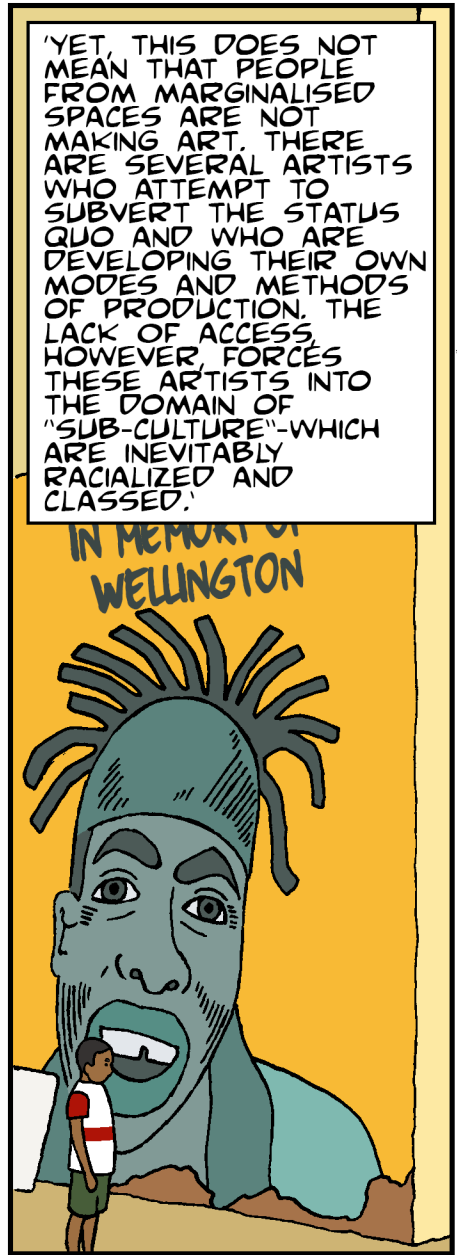
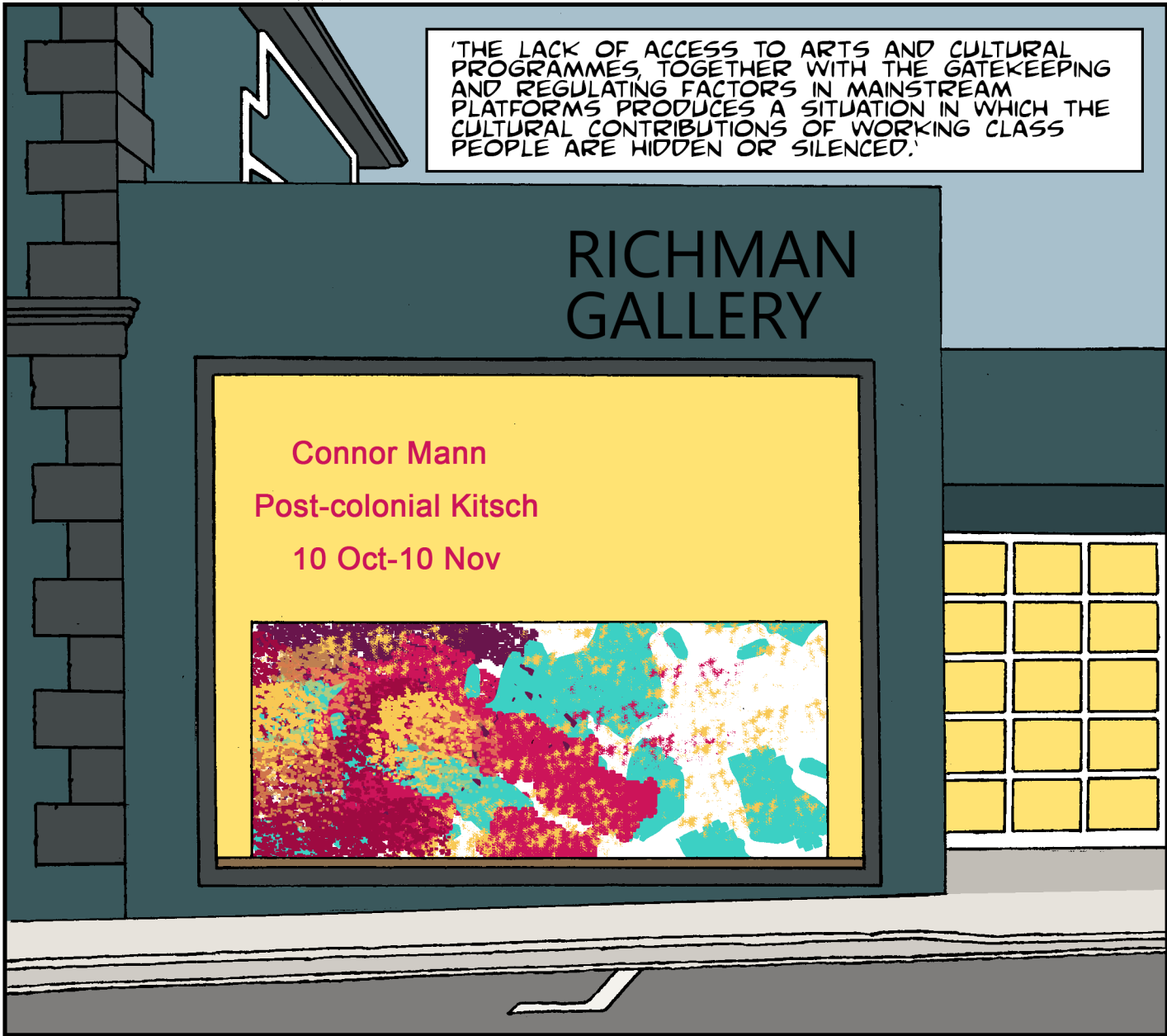
'WHO AND WHAT COUNTS WHEN IT COMES TO LEGITIMISING SOME ARTISTIC FORMS, AESTHETICS AND STYLES OVER OTHERS?'

'SCHOOLS THAT SERVE THE WORKING CLASS (THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA) HAVE SUFFERED THE LOSS OF ARTS AND CULTURE PROGRAMMES, FACILITIES AND TEACHERS DUE TO BUDGET CUTS.'

'ASIDE FROM THE ACTUAL LOSS OF THESE ARTS PROGRAMMES, CUTS LIKE THESE ALSO SIGNAL THAT PERHAPS THE ARTS ARE NOT TO BE VALUED AS MUCH AS OTHER AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE LIKE, SAY, LEARNING QUADRATIC EQUATIONS OR PROGRAMMING COMPUTERS.'

THA KID





IMAGINING OTHERWISE

Project IO

Imagine Otherwise was a year-long participatory arts project (2020-2021) run in Cape Town, South Africa with 25 young people aged 14-22 from the Cape Flats and surrounds.

This project involved young people reflecting on their own stories and learning about film-making, writing and visual art as well as conducting social history in their own neighbourhoods.

The Cape Flats is a flatland area to which many people were forcibly moved under the Group Areas Act of Apartheid.

This area of Cape Town typifies the spatial planning legacies of Apartheid which mean that the further communities are from the city centre, Table Mountain and the beauty and resources that the city offers, the more these neighbourhoods are beset with a host of social problems. People live in various degrees of poverty and many areas are characterized by excessive violence due to gang activity. Schooling, health care services, access to safe public transport and social services are all grossly under-resourced and inadequate.

This project came about as a collaboration between three partner organisations committed to learning about the possibilities for arts and social justice in communities that often feel hopeless. We wondered what it was like to be young in such spaces and to find ways to think, express and imagine through the arts about social problems and different futures.

We are grounded in the knowledge that artistic practices can provide a safe way to story our worlds and the freedom to imagine other ones. And so ImagineOtherwise was born, with funding from the Global Challenges Research Fund (AHRC) project Changing The Story.

What are the comix for?

The hope for these short stories is to empower high schoolers in understanding important sociological concepts in an accessible and digestible format that will appeal to them. These short stories portray everyday situations familiar to teenagers and mediate new sociological terms applied to a particular situation. We believe that when we are able to see the world through a sociological lens we can begin to truly understand the way our world is structured and how inequalities are held in place.

They are comics that offer a vocabulary of resistance, to name and dismantle dominant narratives about the suffering on the Cape Flats.

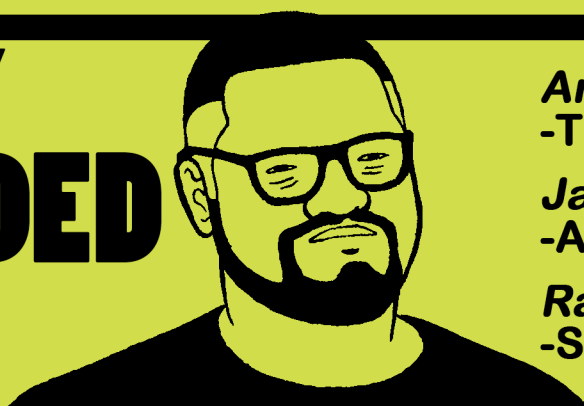
The comics offer students relatable stories and tools to "Imagine Otherwise".

Bottomup

Bottomup is a non-profit organisation that promotes active citizenship and participatory democracy with children and youth, and an organisation that believes in the power of critical education to contribute to a better society and a future that is more just and fair for all people, and also the environment in which we live. Imagining Otherwise Comix will be distributed to schools on the Cape Flats as a resource to help further the work that Bottomup does with high schoolers.

-The ImaginingOtherwise Comix Team

**MR. EDWARDS'
RECOMMENDED
READS**



Ariel Dorfman
-The Empire's Old Clothes

Jay Macleod
-Ain't No Makin'It

Raewyn Connell
-Schools and Social Justice



ImaginingOtherwise Comix follows the story of the Eastlands High School debate team.

The students represented in the stories are young people with hopes and aspirations but are located on the Cape Flats, in communities with histories of forced removal, social dislocation and lack of investment in schooling, healthcare, housing and other key public sectors.



They are young people who enjoy life like young people anywhere but they are discovering that the way in which society works is constructed to disadvantage them.

The politics of race and class inequalities, and the ways in which society attempts to portray these inequalities as fair and deserved are exposed in the differences they encounter, and in the manner in which they reflect on their experience through conversations with each other and their school teacher.

