

## Abstract

In a study of dedications in eighteenth-century Croatian religious writing, Zoran Velagic, following Micheline White, observes that few researchers “have explored dedications as complex documents that, among other things, ‘seek to reshape readers’ interpretations of texts” (2014:366). Velagic’s writings are notable for the ways in which they explore how dedications may function in relation to the larger body of a text. By drawing on his observations, this article specifically examines how, through paratextual elements, dedications subtly influence the reading of the body of novels. In its brevity, the novelistic dedication sub-genre nevertheless provides a window into the life of the author, which shapes – or perhaps seeks to shape – the ensuing reading of the textual body. The nucleus of the analyses is on Katama Mkangi’s two dedicatory sentiments in *Uwā*, “Desolation,” (1975) and in *Walenisi*, “Those-Are-Us,” (1995).<sup>1</sup> The analyses highlight how Mkangi’s dedications go beyond paying homage and immortalising dedicatees for various reasons, to inscribing his moral-political self in a hostile world that he seeks to transform.

A critical review of the dedications sheds light to the visions engendered in the author’s literary works.