

South African Homes: The Spatial Politics of Belonging in Post-Apartheid Novels

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I interrogate the postcolonial condition in contemporary South Africa still controlled by the effects of unjust geographies. This project offers an examination of conceptualizations of home in contemporary South African novels in English; specifically, the focus reveals how these representations reflect the multifaceted politics of belonging and identity formation. Drawing on the frameworks of home, belonging, and space of Foucault, Soja, Bhabha and others, this dissertation contends that concepts of home provide fertile areas of exploration into past and continued dislocation, while challenging the binaries embedded in South African identity discourse haunted by colonialization and apartheid. The primary texts reflect various subgenres of the South African novel in English, and each chapter explores how a spatial reading expands the aesthetic texture of the novel. Rachel Zadok's *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* (2005), Sindiwe Magona's *Mother to Mother* (1998), and Matlwa's *Coconut* (2007) interact and transform South African novel sub-genres born in traditions established through European colonialism and apartheid rule, and I explore the sites of dwelling as heterotopias. Next, I examine Andre Brink's *The Rights of Desire* (2000) and Damon Galgut's *The Good Doctor* (2004) and *The Impostor* (2009) alongside J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) as crime novels revealing the unhomely condition of their white, middle-age protagonists. Finally, Zoë Wicomb's *October* (2014), and Zukiswa Wanner's *London Cape Town Joburg* (2014) reveal stories of those who left South Africa during apartheid and later returned. In this chapter, I utilize Bhabha and Soja's dual vision of the thirdspace to reveal how Wicomb and Wanner explore the balance between the vacillating push and pull of home and the postmodern flux of cosmopolitan migration and rootlessness.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO SPACE AND THE POST-APARTHEID NOVEL

Following the Native Resettlement Act, No 19 of 1954, the apartheid regime began an insidious campaign to destroy the individual spirit, family, history, and fundamental humanity of black and colored South Africans through the violent, destruction of home. Afforded little warning and no opportunity to fight or stop the apartheid machine, hundreds of thousands of non-white South Africans witnessed the demolition of their homes when bulldozers razed communities such as District Six in Cape Town and Johannesburg's Sophiatown.¹ The utter desolation of the human spirit, brought down by falling rubble, drives Don Mattera's poem (1962) "The Day They came for Our House":

clumsy crushers crawled over
the firm pillars
into the rooms that held us
and the roof that covered
our heads
We stood.
Dust clouded our vision
We held back tears
It was over in minutes,
Done. (15-26)

¹ Between 1950 and 1982, over 3.5 million people were forcibly removed from their homes. For more information see, Isabella Kentridge's (2013) "'And so they moved one by one': Forced Removals in a Free State Town (1956-1977) which examines rural forced removals exemplified by the Northern Free State town Kroonstad, the Western Cape Oral History Project's (2001) *Lost Communities, Living Memories: Remembering Forced Removals in Cape Town* edited by Sean Field.

The horrors of apartheid culminate in the annihilation of physical dwellings in Sophiatown and the erasure of South African identity. The demolition of home—“the rooms that held us” and “the roof that covered / our heads”—echoes the erasure of personal and public histories of the non-white majority. Mattera concludes the poem with the dramatic image of bulldozers reducing the history of generations to dust:

Bulldozers have power.
They can take apart in a few minutes
All that had been built up over the years
And raised over generations
And generations of children
The power of destroying
The pain of being destroyed,
Dust. (27-34)

Instead of homes raised over generations, Mattera presents rubble razed to the ground, as home and humanity are simultaneously reduced to dust. Mongane Wally Serote presents a similar vision of the destruction of Sophiatown in “Death Survey.” Like Mattera, Serote juxtaposes the physical ruins and rubble of home alongside intimate and personal images of loss:

Cruel
Even screams don't come in a dream like this
Why
This bloody bulldozer has done a good job and its teeth
Dripped blood:
Bricks-pillars-hunks-of-concrete-zincs-broken-steps-doors-
Broken-glasses-cracked window-panes-broken flower-
Pots-planks-twisted-shoes
Lay all over the show

Like a complete story.

The anthropomorphized bulldozer, “teeth dripped in blood,” exposes the horrors of apartheid forced removals and the monstrous dehumanizing machine masquerading as a political doctrine. The rubble and ruin exist alongside the shattered images of everyday domestic life. The “broken flower-pots” and “twisted-shoes” no longer foster feelings of comfort and home, but instead reveal the overwhelming reality of the unhomely and “unhomed” existence that underpins South African belonging. Mattera describes this unhomely sensation of displacement in “Sophiatown,” as “an unearthly odour / strange, / unfamiliar to my senses,” where:

Buildings lie beaten by bulldozers
And scavengers rake
The skeletal dreams
Of a dispossessed people
.....
The steeple clock
Records the seizure of our dreams:
Why
Do we lie
In the dust
Like clowns
In a receding twilight
Laughing at the dying day (1-4, 8-11, 10-17)

Ruined homes abandon individuals to scavenge for what remains of their historic identity, and they only exist as dehumanized clowns with “skeletal dreams.”

The communities razed in the 1950s and 1960s following the Native Resettlement Act were destroyed in part because they refused to conform to the racial organization of

apartheid. Sophiatown, in particular, represented a community that defied the National Party's segregation mission, and fostered homes that nurtured difference and hybridity. In *Gone with the Twilight: A Story of Sophiatown*, Mattera (1987) evokes the community's physical homes prior to the forced removals and physical devastation:

Double-storey mansions and quaint cottages stood side by side with rusty wood-and-iron shacks, locked in a fraternal embrace of filth and felony...The rich and the poor, the exploiters and the exploited, all knitted together in a colourful fabric that ignored race or class structures...it was a dog-eat-dog world, harsh and yet tender in a strange, paradoxical way. (76)

These homes, characterized by a paradoxical synthesis of architectural styles and building materials, mirror the hybrid racial and ethnic population that resisted binaries of white/black, self/other, and insider/outsider. The destruction of physical home corresponds to the destruction of a spiritual, metaphysical sense of home and belonging. Apartheid, founded on centuries of colonization, made home in the nation inescapably impossible.

This dissertation explores the politics of belonging and representations of home in post-1994 South African novels written in English. I examine a body of literature in which the atrocities of apartheid and the future of reconciliation are tied to the land and the conflicting, impossible South African desire to be "at home." Complex questions of belonging are not unique to South Africa, but the distinct colonial and apartheid history, and the diverse cultural composition of the nation, complicate traditional constructs of spatial justice and home. Land and home endure as the spoils of not only colonization but a culture of power characterized by vast human rights violations based on racial and ethnic difference. Moreover, the pronounced question facing the idealized new South

Africa remains not only what defines the post-apartheid nation, but who is excluded and who belongs.

I focus on concepts of home in novels that explore South African identity and national belonging as conditions determined by longstanding centuries of colonization—from the founding of the Dutch Cape Colony in 1652 and the formation of the British controlled Union of South Africa in 1910—and nearly half a century of state-sanctioned race-based oppression. Home in South Africa—shaped by the imaginary homelands of European settler claims, the forced removals of the non-white majority, the erasure of a spiritual connection to the land, and the continued disregard for basic human rights—remains inevitably artificial, continually illusory, and always inauthentic. The history of the nation is rooted in the struggle for land, and the national literature reflects a preoccupation with this struggle. As a philosophical concept and a literary trope, home served as an instrument for colonial writers who supported the imperial mission, and then as a key site for the anti-apartheid writers who emphasized the horrors of white rule. South African novels written in English, from Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* (1883), to the popular novels of Alan Paton and Nadine Gordimer, and Alex La Guma, Lewis Nkosi, and Es'kia Mphahlele's protest writing of the 1960s and 1970s, focus not only on land and landscape, but also on physical dwellings. Because home itself was physically and spiritually impossible for the nation's black majority, apartheid writers associated homes with political protest and metonymic tropes of the nation.

The shrunken horizon of apartheid writers was limited aesthetically in favor of protest. For example, the white playwright Athol Fugard (1973) critiques the limited perspectives of apartheid writers in an essay discussing his own career and his (1969)

Boesman and Lena: “like everyone else in the country, black and white, my horizons have shrunk, and will continue to do so. Today’s future barely includes tomorrow. It is not impossible to think of a today in which the thought of tomorrow will be a luxury. I’m trying to live and work in preparation for that eventuality” (54). Writing, rooted in the present moment of struggle, was driven temporally towards a future of possibility. The end of apartheid in 1994 not only marked a shift towards equality and democracy, but signaled a new opportunity for novelists to focus on aesthetics propelled by spatial concepts and representations of home. I address a gap in the field that often emphasizes temporality over the spatial at the expense of a deeper understanding of the novel genre saturated with questions of identity and belonging.

Material and abstract concepts of home provide fertile areas of exploration into what it means to dwell and belong, and this project asks how post-apartheid South African novelists, working in diverse subgenres of the English novel, write the liminal space of home and push the boundaries of generic innovation. My argument focuses on post-apartheid texts and representations of home resulting from a preoccupation with the land as home triggering oscillating claims of ownership and dispossession. English novels written in the first two decades of South African democracy deploy images and tropes of home to document and critique ongoing spatial injustices of the nation, and when read together, writers such as Rachel Zadok, Sindiwe Magona, Kopano Matlwa, J. M. Coetzee, Andre Brink, Damon Galgut, Zoë Wicomb, and Zukiswa Wanner illustrate that the novel genre itself is contaminated by the impossibility of belonging. Ultimately, I argue that regardless of subgenre—*plaasroman*, the contemporary protest novel, *Bildungsroman*, crime novel, or fictions of exile and return—the post-apartheid novel is a

novel of home. As authors in my study reinvent South Africa's unsettled homes, they critique and revise binary constraints of identity and belonging. Thus, the post-apartheid novel in English stands at the forefront of generic invention. Liberated from the burden of political protest, post-apartheid novels foster new ways of reading, and present greater aesthetic textures and engagements beyond being vehicles of resistance.

Colonial and Apartheid Spatial Legacy

The contemporary novels in my study are born from South Africa's colonial and apartheid history, and literary investigations of spatial justice are interwoven with centuries of dispossession and the destruction of physical and spiritual homes. The tenuous search for belonging in South Africa, and the feeling of being at home, is tied to the destruction of dwelling spaces and the dehumanization of indigenous and slave populations, as well as myths of belonging and ownership presupposed by European settler colonists. The nation's literature cannot be meaningfully appreciated without first understanding the multiple identity constructs mediated by a connection or lack of connection to the land and the nation as home. When discussing the role of South Africa in the global imaginary, Leon De Kock (2001) highlights the role of space and belonging in the creation of identity, by echoing Breyten Breytenbach's (1998) imagining of the country as a place of "glorious bastardization." De Kock states, "the dialectics of 'here' and 'there' have haunted South Africans for so long now that one may justifiably talk of it as a country that is neither here nor there but a place of 'glorious bastardization', a country of thoroughly interstitial identities" (272). These interstitial identities, visible in the nation's eleven official languages, emerge from conflicting claims to the land and

spatial frameworks of identity that are predicated on tensions of here/there and insider/outsider.

South African spatial frameworks of identity are rooted in the imperial mission beginning in 1652 as Dutch settlers endeavored to view the Cape Colony as home and develop a mythology to justify their occupation and eventual dwelling. In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) Edward Said establishes that “at some very basic level, imperialism means thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is abstract, that is lived on and owned by others” (5). Said’s imperialism then, is inseparable from dwelling and being at home, because, “everything about human history is rooted in the earth, which has meant that we must think about habitation” (7). Imperialism exists as a spatial mission tied to the desire and need for home. This spatial impetus surfaces in colonial literature, including Joseph Conrad’s seminal *Heart of Darkness* (1899). In the novel, Marlow, even as a child, desires to lose himself in “all the glories of exploration” of the “many blank spaces on the earth” (35). Marlow’s focus remains on the land and the possibility of possession, and the spatial tropes of home reveal imperialist concerns of identity. Conrad utilizes tropes of home already present in the Victorian novel tradition, and Rosemary George suggests that “the overwhelming problematic that this fiction constantly returns to is that of finding home and of being hailed as ‘one of us’” (67). When in the “heart of darkness,” Marlow ignores the indigenous populations around him and internalizes the landscape: “the forest stood up spectrally in the moonlight, and through the dim stir, through the faint sounds of that lamentable courtyard, the silence of the land went home to one’s very heart,—its mystery, its greatness, the amazing reality of its concealed life” (48).

In the colonial setting, issues of space transcend temporality, and issues of home and dwelling are inseparable from identity formation, imagination, and literature. Said emphasizes the role of space, and the destruction of a connection to home, in creating the colonial identity. He positions,

Imperialism after all is an act of geographic violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted and finally brought under control. For the native, the history of colonial servitude is inaugurated by the loss of the locality to the outsider; its geographical identity must thereafter be searched for and somehow restored. Because of the presence of the colonizing outsider, the land is recoverable at first only through imagination. (271)

The creation of otherness and identity in the periphery is tied to space and land not only in metaphor but in terms of power and subjection. Imagination and literature become the tools of the oppressed to reclaim and reestablish home and geographic identity. Jennifer Beningfield (2006) expands Said's assertion of the role of geographic violence propelling imperialism, and telescopes the connection between colonial power and land to the South African context, suggesting,

landscape can be understood as hybrid representation, the meaning of which is inseparable from ambiguity and uncertainty, but which also draws its power from these struggles, and its presence in varied forms of representation. In post-apartheid South Africa, the intersection of different representations and claims on the land allows the struggle over history and identity to be both written and read. (273)

Early Dutch settlers viewed the new continent as home and develop a mythology of an imaginary homeland justifying their occupation and eventual dwelling. Drawing on Charles Taylor's theories of the social imagination and Heidegger's concept of dwelling, Dominic Griffiths and Maria Prozesky (2010) claim that early Afrikaners lost connection

with Europe and began to see the land of South Africa as home; ultimately, they emphasize that the social imaginary, which enabled and actualized apartheid, was built on a fabricated, artificial sense of dwelling (31).² Afrikaner mythology of identity parallels that of the biblical Israelites: a chosen people kept from their promised land. Andre Du Toit designates this historical myth as the “Calvinist paradigm,” stating, “the idea of an Afrikaner national mission as a Chosen People is linked with their conquest of indigenous peoples and the unequal racial orders...the ideology of a Chosen People functioned to legitimate racial inequality and oppression...the underlying Calvinist dichotomy between the elect and the non-elect” (927). This mythology created an imagined community between Afrikaners scattered throughout South Africa, and united a people under a common goal: to claim their homeland.³

The Afrikaner myth of nationality, identity, and belonging continued to connect to the physical landscape with the rise of the Nationalist Party in the 20th century. During apartheid, maintaining the unity of the nation relied on presenting the public with a revised history. Hilda Bernstein (1971) highlights this revisionist endeavor continuing in the time of apartheid:

The myths that the Dutch landed in South Africa in an empty territory, and that the early settlements of Whites were marked by massacres of innocent

² Taylor defines the social imagination as: “the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations” (23). Griffiths and Prozesky go on to claim that this early false sense of “being at home” developed by the collective, Afrikaner social imagination, lead to the emigration of many white South Africans in the decades since the end of apartheid that feel that they can no longer dwell in the nation.

³Benedict Anderson (1983) states of imagined communities: “It is imagined as a *community*, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings” (7).

unsuspecting Whites by the Africans, are inoculated into the child's mind...land tenure and its relationship to frontier clashes between Whites and Africans...as taught in the schools, the Africans were thieves, marauders and murderers, the white farmers blameless. (63)

The Afrikaner illusory homeland necessitated the historical whitewashing of colonial brutalities against indigenous peoples of South Africa, and identity rhetoric and mythos of belonging was founded on a racial hierarchy justifying a pseudo-homeland. Writing at the heart of apartheid in 1971, Breytenbach describes the system of apartheid based on the Afrikaner "Vulture Culture"; a people "neglected, unsupported and unprotected by the motherlands...[who] soon imposed, in the first place upon themselves, their view of what they thought themselves forced to be: an new 'people'" (140). Breytenbach further suggests that their uncertainty and desire for home led early Dutch settlers and later Nationalist Party members to "define." He specifically refers to early Afrikaners' need to define themselves as a people and a nation; furthermore, key to personal definition was defining the physical space they wished to claim as home—naming and mapping the landscape. The action of naming became the action of claiming. Naming asserts ownership over the land and suggests the intimacy accompanying a homeland. The act of naming simultaneously makes the landscape familiar to the colonizer and unfamiliar to the colonized. Moreover, when examining the similarly colonized space of Australia, Paul Carter (2010) states that language is "an instrument of physical, rather than symbolic, colonization...it translates the landscape into a familiar arrangement of mental objects, tied together by rules of grammar and syntax" (9).

Naming as a colonial tool to dominate the land, is reflected throughout South African colonial, apartheid, and post-apartheid literature as writers are unable to escape

the physical colonization of space by language. Andre Brink speaks to the power of naming in his novel *An Instant in the Wind* (1975) which reveals a colonial inter-racial relationship only made possible after a white woman, Elizabeth, is lost in the unforgiving wilderness with a runaway slave. Brink's character Erik Larsson, Elizabeth's lost husband states, "Sometimes one is completely overwhelmed by a new place...but then you set to work, naming things, trying not to look too far ahead but concentrate on one thing at a time...now you can handle it, it belongs to you. Nothing can take it from you again...now you possess a small portion of the earth" (36). Larsson's desire to possess the land through language reveals the colonial enterprise.

Similarly, settler myths of possession, belonging, and identity connected to ownership of and dominance over land as home can be seen in Herman Bosman's novel *Willemsdorp* (1977). Boesman's characters justify possession of the land, and the creation of a false homeland, as a direct result of an intimate knowledge and control of the land:

We Afrikaners have got everything. We've got a feeling for the country that is part of our blood. I can pick up a clod of earth, red Transvaal earth, between my fingers and crumble it. Where's your intellect and economics there? What I feel about that handful of soil is the guts of a nationhood...it is only we Boers that have got it. (104)

While white settler-colonists attempted to bury imaginary roots into the soil of the bushveld and cape, indigenous South Africans were disconnected further from their homeland—the tangible representation of their belonging in the nation. Moreover, Martin Murray (2013) asserts, "The radicalization of Afrikaner Nationalist sentiment was born out of the memory of destroyed farms, ruined earth, and uprooted people. In a real sense,

the memory of a particular architecture of humiliation became the construction of another one” (35).

For black South Africans, land displacement and seizure based on racial lines increased in the 20th century with the union of South Africa under British rule. The 1913 Native Lands Act and amendment in 1936 established “reserves” to segregate black and white South Africans, in which “Millions of black people were forced to leave their ancestral lands and resettle in what quickly became over-crowded and environmentally degraded reserves” (2.5 Land Policy). The development of reserves and homelands seized physical control of the land, and also grasped a deep-seated hold on the nation and the physical manifestation of the settler imaginary homeland. The creation of reserves or homelands, was a physical act assisting the development of an illegitimate spiritual homeland for the white minority and a direct dehumanization of the black South African majority.

The Afrikaner mythology of belonging, founded on communal forgetting and re-remembering, required the co-opting and reimagining of the past of the other. Jo Noero (2003), writing on the role of memory in South Africa, states that minority occupation was justified by the dual processes of clearance and erasure: “first, there is *clearance*; this constitutes the erection of a barrier at a certain point so that no knowledge can leak through to the present. Second, there is *erasure*; this constitutes the ongoing destruction of selective traces in the present” (186). The removal of indigenous South Africans, first through the creation of reserves and homelands, and later through forced removals, Noero argues, erected a barrier of memory and set in place the ongoing destruction of traces of the past in the present. If a group is cleared and erased from the collective memory, then

they are outside the national identity, because as Murray states, “the very idea of nationhood and national identity is impossible without the mediating force of collective memory” (31). He continues,

According to the circular logic enshrined in the racially exclusivist principles of apartheid, nonwhite peoples had no right to claim a legitimate role in the founding of the nation, and hence had no place in its destiny, because their historical roots and hence their destinies lay elsewhere, tied to Bantustans, or fake homelands, non-contiguous pieces of barren landscape carved out of the inhospitable veld. (36)

Sol Plaatje recognizes this disconnection in his work *Native Life in South Africa* (1916): “Awakening on Friday Morning, June 20, 1913, the South African native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth...they confiscate[d] our birthright to the soil for our ancestry in favour of 600,000 Boers and aliens whose languages can show no synonym for home...because their dictionaries contain no such loving term” (86).⁴ Plaatje connects the loss of physical land to the loss of home, and Alex La Guma furthers the correlation between a loss of home and a loss of identity and humanity. La Guma reveals the relationship between the homelands, first named Native or Bantu Reserves, to the well-known game reserves of South Africa:

Like game reserves, the Homelands have always been regarded as places where the Africans could be seen in their ‘natural, unspoilt surrounds...Animals in game reserves cannot make decisions for themselves as they do not have the power of rational thinking...When the animals are no longer of use to the humans outside the game reserve they have to be sent to it—by force. (95-96)

⁴ In the introduction to *Native Life in South Africa*, Bessie Head continues Plaatje’s sentiments and states that The Land Act “created overnight a floating landless proletariat...the land had finally and securely passed into the hands of the ruling white race” (3).

An individual's relationship to home, both real and imaginary, is intricately tied to their personal and communal identity. The reverse personification associating homelands with game reserves, reveals the dehumanizing missions of colonization and apartheid.

As in Serote's and Mattera's Sophiatown poems, the forced removals and razing of multiple communities, including District 6, represent the culmination of the centuries-old project of dislocation and the destruction of home. Ingrid De Kok (1998) asserts, "The name "District Six" signified for years apartheid's savage attack on family life and its ruthless destruction of the fabric of functioning communities" (64). Without physical home, family life and community suffered, which is the precise motivation of the colonizing and apartheid mission. Ndebele states that through the destruction of community and family life "political deprivation is given a concrete social, cultural form," and to regain political and social agency, the oppressed must discover "a new, rich, and very complex social language of their own" (119).⁵ The razing of these communities furthered the destruction of home, and realized the act of misremembering and the rewriting of history undertaken by early Afrikaners in search of a homeland. The destruction of the metaphysical tie to the land and the sense of belonging in the nation occur with the destruction of physical home, and De Kok speaks of the erasure of identity and the erasure of home in District Six:

What happens in the register is chillingly logical: first the occupations of residents are deleted, so that there is no sense of economic activity at all. Then the names of residences become fewer and fewer and then, as the houses are demolished, even street names are no longer recorded. By the end it is as if nobody had ever lived in

⁵ He also states, "The racist system of South Africa has systematically denied the oppressed majority any meaningful opportunity for creative involvement in the entire arena of cultural practices... they have had no say in the planning of their communities; in the designing and the building of the houses they live in...in decisions to demolish old historic buildings, or to build museums" (119).

District Six. (65)

This erasure of a community, and at the basic level the erasure of home and identity, reflects Noero's concept of minority memory, and through the destruction of home, the apartheid mission erased the record of a people and in turn erased their humanity.

Issues of home, land, and belonging continued in the early 1990s as the nation formally ended decades of race-based oppression. Cultural and political attention turned towards restitution and reconciliation of apartheid trauma. While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission concentrated on gross human rights violations and physical trauma, which the commission described as acts "result[ing] in physical or mental harm or death and were incurred in the course of the political conflicts" (1.2.19), the commission recognized dehumanizing land conflicts in the nation. The final report states,

While only some 21,300 persons filed gross human rights violations petitions with the Commission, apartheid was a grim daily reality for every black South African. For at least 3.5 million black South Africans it meant collective expulsions, forced migration, bulldozing, gutting or seizure of homes, the mandatory carrying of passes, forced removals into rural ghettos and increased poverty and desperation. Dumped in the 'nation states' without jobs, communities experienced powerlessness, vulnerability, fear, and injustice. (1.2.44)

History remembers the TRC's focus on physical trauma and human rights violations. However, reversing nearly a century of fractured land relations was also a vital political mission in the first years of the new democratic South Africa. One of the key rights of the new constitution focuses on the possibility of achieving a material home: "everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing...No one may be evicted from their home, or have their home demolished, without an order of court made after considering all the relevant circumstances. No legislation may permit arbitrary evictions" (2.26.1, 2). In

addition, the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994, restored the rights of those displaced as a result of various land acts that bolstered apartheid. The 1994 act began the process of land reform in the New South Africa, by establishing the Land Claims Commission and Land Claims Court; however, reversing centuries of land inequality proved to be a multifaceted, problematic issue and the act was amended in 2014 extending the claim deadline to June 30, 2019. The extension reveals the lasting legacy of apartheid's destruction of home, and the difficult and enduring nature of land restitution and reform.

Derek Hanekom, Mandela's Minister of Land Affairs, published the "White Paper on South African Land Policy" in 1997, which compiled evidence from the first three years of the democratic government, examining issues of post-apartheid land reform; furthermore, the department was concerned with the trifold goals of land "restitution, redistribution, and tenure reform" (2.1). Hanekom states, "Land ownership in South Africa has long been a source of conflict. Our history of conquest and dispossession, of forced removals and a racially-skewed distribution of land resources, has left us with a complex and difficult legacy" (Forward, Land Policy).⁶

2014 marked the centennial of the 1913 Land Act and 20 years post-apartheid, and even with the new amendment to the Restitution of Land Rights Bill, 79% of the nation's land is possessed by white South Africans and 14% is possessed by the government. In 2014, 70% of black South Africans do not have access to land even after

⁶ The White Paper continues to justify the importance and necessity of land reform for the nation to move forward into democracy and equality: "Our land is a precious resource. We build our homes on it; it feeds us; it sustains animal and plant life and stores our water...Land does not only form the basis of our wealth, but also our security, pride and history...Past land policies were a major cause of insecurity, landlessness, homelessness and poverty in South Africa...Land is an important and sensitive issue to all South Africans. It is a finite resource which binds all together in a common destiny. As a cornerstone for reconstruction and development."

the end of overt oppression. Pusch Commey claims in the *New African*: “The devil is in the details [of the Restitution of Land Rights Bill]—in the form of the erasure of history, lack of education, lengthy procedures and legal complications, amidst a growing outcry for a permanent and satisfactory resolution of the land issue. Indeed nothing can sum up the pain, deprivation and suffering South Africans have gone through over the years of both colonialism and apartheid. It is simply immeasurable” (9). Commey goes on to refer to South Africa’s land inequality, leading to economic inequality, as a “ticking timebomb” (11). The detrimental effects of a lack of land are not just economic, with an inability to farm, but are also socially and spiritually harmful.

Murray reminds us that questions of identity, home, and belonging remain in the new South Africa, specifically, how the nation can move past attempts to foster false belonging and dwelling: “What becomes of the social memories of settler colonialism and white minority rule while the myth-laden, socio cultural world of their making lies in ruins?” (29). Questions of the lingering nature of early myths of belonging, and the parallel mass destruction of home, are interrogated within South African literature throughout the 20th century and beyond.

Space and Apartheid Writing

Prior to apartheid’s demise, protest and resistance dictated the dominant modes of narrative fiction in English. Protest novels reveal flagrant images of squalor and subjugation as many images focus on hardships in the townships and homelands juxtaposed with formulaic wealthy, white landowners. For decades, imaginative art in South Africa that teased out ambiguities and rejected binaries was overshadowed by

apartheid literature instrumental in revealing black and white issues of race, morality, and justice in the timely battle to end state-sanctioned subjugation. As we will see, politics made aesthetics secondary, and journalistic realism, political relevance, and spectacular imagery were the driving forces of fiction.

The amplified metaphors of houses and homes in apartheid literature reveal the bifurcated nature of South African society. Drawing on Franz Fanon's connection between colonial society and Manichean binaries, Abdul JanMohamed (1983) suggests that the colonial mentality is dominated by an "allegory of white and black, good and evil, salvation and damnation, civilization and savagery, superiority and inferiority, intelligence and emotion, self and other, subject and object"; moreover, he claims that "the Manichean organization of colonial society has reached its apogee in the 'Republic' of South Africa, where the segregation and exploitation, have become the major concerns of government" (4). Driving JanMohamed's critique of Manichean aesthetics and colonial African literature, is Fanon's (1961) crucial contribution that colonial society is propelled by the twofold binary: "on the logical plane, the Manicheism of the settler produces a Manicheism of the native. To the theory of the 'absolute evil of the native' the theory of the 'absolute evil of the settler' replies" (93).

Apartheid novelists were politically propelled by the mission to draw attention to and confront the Manichean foundations of the dividing and dehumanizing force of apartheid, by revealing the social, psychological, and physical effects on individuals and communities. Nahem Yousaf (2001) speaks to the political role of the apartheid writer "occup[ing] a space that was dangerous and incredibly necessary. Their position was dangerous because the writers' words were often considered on a par with the actions of

those who were politically active, and important because they might help to give a voice to those who found themselves beaten into silence, but not into submission” (viii). The end of apartheid presented an opportunity for South Africans to reevaluate not only the thematic focus of literature, but also aesthetic standards. De Kock connects the aesthetic transformation with the progression of history propelled by the temporal break between past and present—apartheid and post-apartheid. He suggests,

With the collapse of institutional apartheid in the 1990s and the gradual disappearance of the rallying cry of political liberation, a certain energy was lost to the literature in its guise as a “site of struggle” . . . the newfound permeability of “inside” and “outside” itself meant the literature emanating from South Africa could no longer take for granted its status as a global allegory of the struggle against racial injustice. Yet within the country’s institutions, both economic and cultural, stratifications inherited from apartheid have been slow to disappear. (270)

Apartheid literature presents countless images of township and homeland squalor, and protest novelists rely on the metaphorical representations of apartheid oppression as crumbling, dilapidated, foreboding houses. Alex La Guma’s *And a Threefold Cord* (1964) and *A Walk in the Night* (1962) are notable protest novels presenting the dehumanization of daily life in Cape Town’s District Six and Cape Flats alongside stark descriptions of derelict houses reflecting the inability to be at home. In *A Walk in the Night* Michael Adonis loses his job, and while angry at his white overseer and brutish police—“deep down inside him the feeling of rage, frustration and violence swelled like a boil, knotted with pain”—he kills his elderly Irish neighbor (11). Adonis’ friend, Willieboy is falsely accused of the crime, shot, and left to die in the back of a police van. Following a similarly tragic plot, *And a Threefold Cord* presents daily life in Cape Flats

and the degradation of the Pauls family. The novel opens with a rainstorm threatening the stability of the family's "pondokkie," and progresses through a series of tragedies—the father's death, an early morning police raid, and the son's arrest. The novel ends with the tragic death of Freda's children who are burned alive in their home when the stove tips.

La Guma's plots depend descriptions of setting and home. The stark images leave the racial and cultural binaries—us/them, white/black, and insider/outsider—intact, as the novels serve a singular purpose that Nadine Gordimer deems "weapons of struggle" (13). As with other protest novels—such as Miriam Tlali's *Amandla* (1980) and Es'kia Mphahlele's *The Wanderers* (1971)—La Guma's images of homes offer metonymic representations of the nation, and home remains an inhospitable dangerous place. In *A Walk in the Night*, Adonis's apartment is bleak and desolate:

Once, long ago, it had had a certain kind of dignity, almost beauty, but now the decorative Victorian plaster around the wide doorway was chipped broken and blackened with generations of grime. The floor of the entrance was flagged with white and black slabs in the pattern of a draught-board, but the tramp of untold feet and the accumulation of dust and grease and ash had blurred the squares so that now it had taken on the appearance of a kind of loathsome skin disease. A row of dustbins lined one side of the entrance and exhaled the smell of rotten fruit, stale food, stagnant water and general decay. (20)

These images reflect the nation-as-home: a home that was once grand, but now relegated to a broken carrier of disease after years of apartheid.

In *And a Threefold Cord*, the underlying action of the novel is to maintain the shanty houses during the rainstorm. The Pauls' house is unsafe and derelict:

sheets of rusty corrugated iron, planks, pieces of cardboard, and all the astonishing miscellany that had gone into building the house. There were flattened fuel cans advertising a brand of oil on its sides, tins of rusty nails ... pulled from

the gathered flotsam and jetsam and straightened with a hammer on a stone; rags for stuffing cracks and holes, strips of baling wire and waterproof paper, cartons, old pieces of metal and strands of wire, sides of packing-cases, and a pair of railway sleepers. (39-40)

This jarring imagery reflects the reality of many non-white South Africans following the devastating land policies of apartheid. La Guma describes the house as “warping here and cracking there, groaning like a prisoner on the rack, then settling down in the face of the season with the stubbornness of ancient ruins...the whole place had the precarious, delicately balanced appearance of a house of cards” (41). The Pauls’ home—built with flotsam and jetsam—reflects the corrosion of the nation under apartheid: a nation that is deteriorating, fragile, and unsustainable.

Zakes Mda’s timely novel *Ways of Dying* (1995), speaks to the changing conception of home in the face of the “Rainbow Nation,” but like La Guma, Mda utilizes tropes of home with a predictable political correspondence. *Ways of Dying*, set between Mandela’s release and the first democratic elections, follows Toloki, a professional mourner, as he reconnects with a woman from his village, Noria, after witnessing her son’s funeral. The novel deals with unresolved pasts and the violence of everyday South African life, setting the stage for the TRC. After meeting Noria, Toloki helps her rebuild her home, which unites the community. The house is a hodgepodge of corrugated iron similar to the home in *And a Threefold Cord*, and Mda uses the image of Noria’s home to represent an idealized image of the nation-as-home. The narrator describes the home, “the structure is a collage in bright sunny colours. And of bits of iron sheets, some of which shimmer in the morning rays, while others are rust-laden. It would certainly be at home in any museum of modern art” (60). Mda presents a home of promise, even a bit rusty, as a

microcosm of the nation. In fact, the “bright sunny colours...shimmering in the morning rays,” reflect Desmond Tutu’s repeated moniker of the “Rainbow Nation.” The image of the rainbow represented the promise of equality for the democratic nation, and the rainbow home reveals an optimism for a reversal of displacement and homelessness perpetuated by apartheid.

In theory, aesthetic transition would be quick and clear alongside political and social reform; however, in reality the new post-apartheid literature was as elusive as the new Rainbow Nation. The end of apartheid left the generation of writers who fought to end oppression and bring international attention to human rights violations without direction or momentum. Change from the protest novel was slow. As Elleke Boehmer (2012), interrogating crisis in the transition from apartheid and post-apartheid literature, states, “South African literature since 1994 has, in terms of its thematic, symbolic, and stylistic preoccupations, seemingly staggered, punch-drunk, from one crisis and cry of pain to another, from one classic manifestation of trauma or inner wound to the next” (29). Boehmer believes that post-apartheid writers are unable to move beyond focusing on the trauma thematic utilized in the protest novel of the second half the 20th century. She goes on to suggest that South African national literature is grasped in the “fist of crisis—of definitions of crisis, structures of crisis, and crisis compulsion,” and she questions if there is a way “beyond this particular imprisoning subject category, of escaping the burden, of moving beyond such repeated compulsions” (42).⁷

⁷ Boehmer draws from Ato Quayson’s *Calibrations: Reading for the Social*, where he defines the “symbolization compulsion”: “the drive towards and insistent metaphorical register even when this register does not help to develop the action, define character or spectacle, or create atmosphere. It seems to be symbolization for its own sake, but in fact is a sign of a latent problem” (775).

The crises of apartheid were trapped in what Albie Sachs (1991) deems the “multiple ghettos of the apartheid imagination” (131). He goes on to suggest the need for a change from the provoking, clear-cut aesthetics of apartheid literature:

In the case of a real instrument of struggle, there is not room for ambiguity: a gun is a gun is a gun, and if it were full of contradictions, it would fire all sorts of directions and be useless for its purpose...but the power of art lies precisely in its capacity to expose contradictions and reveal hidden tensions—hence the danger of viewing it as if it were just another kind of missile-firing apparatus. (133)

Post-apartheid novels, while still focusing on the various crises facing the nation, challenge contradictions and ambiguities, and allow the space for internal examination of identity. This internal examination continues to be shadowed by anxiety over land and the politics of belonging, and I argue that many post-apartheid South African writers are unable to move past issues of crisis standardized by the protest novel, because the foundational crisis of belonging and being at home still remains unresolved. Home in South Africa is always and inevitably deceptive, unstable, or inaccessible, and a temporal critique focusing on the historic movement from apartheid to post-apartheid does not adequately serve the literature produced in the nation since the 1994 transition. A linear, temporal framework continues to reveal the Manichean binaries of apartheid—good/evil, progress/subjugation—and the disconnected aesthetic trajectories of protest and reconciliation; however, the foundations of differences often remain intact.

Sarah Nuttall (2011), drawing from concepts of entanglement from South African scholars such as Achilles Mbembe and Leon De Kock, develops a concept of entanglement specific to the South African post-apartheid context. She suggests that

Entanglement is a condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with; it speaks of an intimacy gained, even if it was resisted, or ignored or uninvited. it

is a term which may gesture towards a relationship or set of social relationships that is complicated, ensnaring, in a tangle, but which also implies a human foldedness. It works with difference and sameness but also with their limits, their predicaments, their moments of complication... So often the story of post-apartheid has been told between the register of difference—frequently for good reason, but often, too, ignoring the intricate overlaps that mark the present and, at times, and in important ways, the past, as well. (1)

Entanglement speaks to a foldedness of human experience and temporality which not only confronts the Manichean binaries present in the South African reality still reeling from apartheid, but provides the opportunity for deconstructing and dismantling the tangled nature of South African identity and belonging. While the concept of entanglement commonly registers within a temporal dimension, as with Mbembe's "time of entanglement"— "multiple durées made up of discontinuities, reversals, inertias, and swings that overlay one another, interpenetrate one another"— I suggest that entanglement also speaks to a complicated spatial reading of home and belonging (14).

Concerns of the post-apartheid novel have been preoccupied with the role of history and memory to speak to reconciliation in the post-TRC nation. Instead, this project calls for an increase in spatial explorations of the South African novel, which breaks free from standard temporal readings of post-colonial literature which often explore the time of modernity, narratives of progress, and revisionist history. A spatial reading liberates South African writing from the constraints of politics specific to the nation, and instead offers a globally relevant exploration of changing identity responding to transnational spatial issues of home and homelessness. 21st century South African novelists can and should be read alongside other global English novels preoccupied with spatial politics of belonging.

In this dissertation, I explore how South Africa functions as home, and I believe that it is critical to question the continued search for home that is revealed across novel subgenres. Studies have focused on the change in South African literature as a result of the transition from apartheid, the importance of the land in national identity, and the politics of belonging in response to apartheid policies and racial differences.⁸ Each area of study is critical to my examination; however, I expand these frameworks to explore how post-apartheid authors utilize home, both metaphysical feelings of being at home and images of physical dwelling places, to reflect current identity and land issues propelling questions of spatial justice. Shane Graham (2009) describes South African literature following the TRC as exhibiting a “collective sense of...disorientation amid rapid changes in the physical and social landscape. These changes necessitate new forms of literal and figurative ‘mapping’ of space, place, and memory” (1-2). In the pages that follow, I examine how contemporary South African writers negotiate the new physical and social landscape of the nation, and how these authors utilize and manipulate concepts of home and physical descriptions of homes to interrogate the possibility to be “at home” physically and spiritually in the nation.

In the wake of postcolonial criticism’s attention to geography—as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin suggest, “the dialectic of place and displacement is always a feature of post-colonial societies”—South African literary criticism and fiction remains preoccupied with manifold concerns of land (9). Landscape, cartography, land labor, and

⁸ For example see Shane Graham’s *South African Literature after the Truth Commission: Mapping Loss*, Rita Barnard’s *Apartheid and Beyond: South African Writers and the Politics of Place*, J. M. Coetzee’s *White Writing*, Jenifer Wenzel’s “The Pastoral Promise and the Political Imperative: The Plaasroman tradition in the Era of Land Reform,” Ampie Coetee’s “South African Literature and Discursive Formations: Land and the Farm Novel,” Jennifer Beningfield’s *The Frightened Land: Land, Landscapes, and Politics in South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, “ and Andrew Foley’s “Truth and/or Reconciliation: South African English Literature After Apartheid.”

land ownership are explored in connection to national identity and belonging. In my spatial reading of post-apartheid novels, I distill these concerns to focus on the psychic and physical space of the house and the ideological work of making and taking away home. The home remains the most simple and yet complex nexus to explore questions of identity and belonging, and I build on frameworks connecting identity and landscape established by scholars such as Jessica Debow (2012), Jessica Murray (2011), and Kate Darian-Smith, Elizabeth Gunner, and Sarah Nuttall (1996).⁹ My work engages in ongoing conversations about the politics of space and the importance of place and home; further, I connect the spatial analysis of home to the psychology of belonging. Scholars such as Rosemary George (1999), Sara Upstone (2009), and Valerie Prince (2005) have taken similar approaches to African American and postcolonial literature, and this dissertation builds on their work while also establishing that South Africa's complicated history of imaginary homelands, forced displacement, and land reform of colonization and apartheid has created a historical and social context unlike any other modern nation in the African continent.¹⁰

⁹ Jessica Debow *Settling the Self: Colonial Space, Colonial Identity and the South African Landscape* (2012), Jessica Murray "They Can Never Write the Landscapes out of Their Systems": Engagements with the South African Landscape" (2011), Kate Darian-Smith, Elizabeth Gunner, and Sarah Nuttall *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature and History in South Africa and Australia* (1996).

¹⁰ Sara Upstone *Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel* (2009), Valerie Prince *Burnin' Down the House: Home in African American Literature* (2004), and Rosemary George *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction* (1999).

Spatial Concepts of Belonging

Ato Quayson (2012) suggests that “many of the most common ideas that circulate in the field, such as colonial encounter, neocolonialism, nationalism and postnationalism, hegemony, transnationalism, diasporas, and globalization are organized around often unacknowledged spatial motifs” (342). As Said situates, the imperial mission and colonial condition as a struggle over land and habitation highlight the critical importance of postcolonial movement and dwelling. Quayson in turn calls for a reevaluation of postcolonial literature in terms of spatial considerations. Spatial reading reevaluates current dialogues concerning the temporal relevance of the term post-colonial as he suggests, “it is the entire domain of colonial space making and its aftereffects in the contemporary world that gives postcolonialism its significance today” (344). This significance necessitates a reevaluation of analysis, and “the challenge remains how to assemble reading practices that allow us to read the rhetorical, the historical, and the spatial all at once” (347). Quayson’s challenge is one that I pick up in this project through my reading of home in post-apartheid literature.

Michel Foucault and Edward Soja have claimed that the issues of space transcend time and the examination of history in current criticism.¹¹ Soja anticipates Quayson’s critical spatial emphasis, and states,

¹¹ Foucault states in “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” (1984), “the present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed...I believe that the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than time” (1,2). Similarly, building on Foucault, in *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (1989) Soja states, Today, however, it may be space more than time that hides consequences from us, the ‘making of

For at least the past century, thinking about the interrelated historical and social interests of our lives has tended to be much more important and widely practiced than emphasizing a pertinent critical spatial perspective. Thinking historically somehow has been made more intellectually stimulating than thinking spatially or geographically. (3)¹²

A spatial framework emphasizes a connection between space and power, and critical anxiety focuses on the intersections and juxtapositions of the public/private and internal/external space.¹³ Contemporary spatial concepts I explore in this dissertation are indebted to Gaston Bachelard and Henri Lefebvre's mid-20th century writings focusing on the dual realities of home as a dream space and physical dwelling.

Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1958), remains a foundational text in contemporary spatial analysis and develops a concept of dwelling which transcends the spatial confines of the physical house, and connects home with the sacred and internal. Bachelard sees homes as fully saturated spaces, lived in our imaginations, that "on whatever theoretical horizon we examine it, the house image [appears] to have become the topography of our intimate being" (xxxii). He goes on to propose that the "house constitutes a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability...the house helps us say: I will be an inhabitant of the world, in spite of the world" (46). Bachelard presents a concept of home that transcends the physical and resides in our dreams. While his work connecting physical homes to the home of our dreams relates to the

geography' more than the 'making of history that provides the more revealing tactical and theoretical world. This is the insistent premise and promise of postmodern geographies" (1).

¹² For example see, Robert Tally's *Spatiality*, Ulf Engel and Paul Nugent's *Respacing Africa*, and Barney Wark and Santa Arias' *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*.

¹³ Foucault states of these juxtapositions: "there are oppositions that we regard as simple given: for example between private space and public space, between family space and social space, between cultural space and useful space, between the space of leisure and that of work. All these are still nursed by the hidden presence of the sacred" (2).

metaphysical connection, or disconnection, between South Africans and their birthplace, most important to my study is Bachelard's framework connecting images of home to language. He states,

The great function of poetry is to give us back the situations of our dreams. The house we were born in is more than an embodiment of home. It is also an embodiment of dreams...it [is] reasonable to say we 'read a house' or 'read a room' since both room and house are psychological diagrams that guide writers and poets in their analysis of intimacy. (15, 38)

I use Bachelard's vision of home and language's ability to reveal the connection between the internal home and dreams and desires, to "read" the homes of South Africa. I believe that an examination of the concepts of home developed through the imaginations of South African writers, reveal the "topography of the intimate being" of the nation.

Critics following Bachelard agree with his primary focus connecting the imagination with physical space; however, many theorists begin to focus not only to internal/personal space but external/social space. When considering *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre states of Bachelard's conception of home, "the house is as much cosmic as it is human. From cellar to attic, from foundations to roof, it has a density at once dreamy and rational, earthly and celestial. The relationship between Home and Ego, meanwhile borders on identity" (121). Lefebvre highlights the connection between home and identity and recognizes Bachelard's conception of dwelling and home as a social act; however, writing in the late 1960s, his focus turns to the social and external nature of the home, with the real and practical implications on housing. He states,

Dwelling, a social yet poetic act, generating poetry and art work fades in the face of housing, an economic function. The 'home,' so clearly evoked and celebrated by Gaston Bachelard, likewise vanishes: the magic place of childhood, the home

as womb and shell, with its loft and its cellar full of dreams. Confronted with the functional housing, constructed according to technological dictates, inhabited by users in homogeneous shattered space, it sinks and fades into the past. (*Critique of Everyday Life* 3.94)

Lefebvre speaks of a rupturing of the dream house when confronted with practical issues of housing; moreover, he contrasts the act of dwelling with the act of housing. Dwelling, to Lefebvre, cannot take place in the housing of “everyday life [which] has lost a dimension/depth: only triviality remains;” instead, he posits that apartment buildings and housing estates are often constructed “machines for living in” (2.78). Like Lefebvre, Foucault and Soja turn their attention to the practical concerns of space as they interrogate the intersections between place, knowledge, and power that are layered existences connecting, converging, and revealing the interstitial spaces of daily life. Foucault’s heterotopia and Soja’s thirdspace highlight the ambiguities fostered by hybrid identity and reveal inconsistencies of home and the possibility of belonging.

Homi Bhabha, in “The World and the Home” (1992), turns attention to the spatial framework of postcolonial literature and describes the unhomely space as “a paradigmatic post-colonial experience” (142). Bhabha utilizes Freud’s discussion of the unhomely to reveal that in a post-colonial context the home has the ability to “invade, alarm, divide, and dispose” into a state of unhomely hybridity and displacement (152). The unhomely is at once familiar and unfamiliar, as well as personal and public. Bhabha states,

Private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy. It is an intimacy that questions binary divisions through which such spheres of social experience are often spatially opposed. These spheres of life are linked through an ‘in-between’ temporality that takes the

measure of dwelling at home, while producing an image of the world of history...the inscription of this borderline existence inhabits a stillness of time and a strangeness of framing that creates the discursive 'image' at the crossroads of history and literature, bridging the home and the world. (19)¹⁴

The home in South Africa blurs the lines of public and private, and is a truly unhomey space of ambiguity. The homes of South Africa, the unreal/real, public/private, uncanny spaces, are connected with violence and subvert the traditional meaning of home: "the place where a person or animal dwells...with reference to the feelings of belonging, comfort, etc., associated with it" ("Home"). Instead of security, homes are the sites of what Bhabha deems "history's most intricate invasions...forming upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting.

The fin de siècle acknowledgement of the intertwined nature of the spatial with hybrid notions of identity occurred simultaneously alongside the transition from apartheid in South Africa, and an increased global awareness of cultural difference. Multiple spatial metaphors have risen out of the spatial turn to explore complex issues of hybrid identity, the search for belonging, and a connection to "home." For example, Driver and Gilbert describe place in the imperial/post-imperial frame as a "meeting point" and a "crossroads" (5). Additionally, Allison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan illustrate the spaces of postcolonial geographies as "crossovers" (184).¹⁵ Similarly in Chicana cultural studies,

¹⁴ Bhabha examines Nadine Gordimer's *My Son's Story* and states that this liminal space of the unhomey mirrors homes in South Africa, he states that the in-between space between home and world, the heterotopia to use Foucault's term, is "like the coloured South African subject represent[ing] a hybridity, a difference 'within', a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality" (19)

¹⁵ Blunt and McEwan continue to highlight the importance of the spatial in postcolonial thought: "focusing on the temporal differences between a colonial past and post-colonial present not only obscures colonial and neocolonial inequalities that persist today, but can also obscure the power relations between colonizer and colonized...while it is important to challenge a temporal binary between colonial past and colonial present, it is also important to challenge a spatial binary between colonial centers and postcolonial margins" (3).

Gloria Anzaldua's "mestiza" provides the spatial metaphor of a borderland to represent cultural hybridity and the double consciousness necessary to break down binaries of oppression and difference. More recently, Anzaldua uses the spatial metaphor of the bridge to signify the liminal experience of the hybrid individual. She states,

Bridges are thresholds to other realities, archetypal, primal symbols of shifting consciousness. They are passageways, conduits, and connectors that connote transitioning, crossing borders, and changing perspectives. *Nepantla es tierra desconocida* [Nepantla is unknown land], and living in this liminal zone means being in a constant state of displacement—an uncomfortable, even alarming feeling. Most of us dwell in nepantla so much of the time it's become a sort of "home." (1)

The uncomfortably and even repellent nature of the nepantla home is the liminal zone of hybrid identity formation.

Anzaldua's *Nepantla* remains an unknown land similar to Breytenbach's spatial metaphor for increasingly cosmopolitan identities. Breytenbach's "Middle World" is "positioned somewhere equidistant from East and West, North and South, belonging and not belonging...other, to be living in the margins and on the live edge...emerging archipelago of self-enforced freedom and unintentional estrangement" (136).

Breytenbach's spatial metaphors both reflect the simultaneous pendulum-swinging desire for home, and also reflect the personal identity formation and feelings of belonging/exile felt on an individual level.

While critical theory following the spatial turn privileges these metaphors, and others useful to literary textual analysis, critics have pointed to the danger of spatial metaphors overshadowing the lived experiences of those navigating daily life in a very real, material geography. Abstract spatial metaphors, such as the "Middle World" and

“Nepantla,” present imaginary spaces to theorize and perform belonging. However Matthew Sparke criticizes metaphor in cultural studies,

the more and more that space is used to metaphorize other things such as politics and identity—‘the space of the political,’ ‘the terrain of identity,’ ‘mapping multiculturalism,’ and so on—the less and less are the geographical contexts of politics and identity adequately explored. (xxvii)

Likewise, Benita Perry questions using similar metaphors of liminality and hybridity for the colonizer and colonized, ”to speak then of the metropolis and colony as inhabiting the same in-between, interstitial ground ignores that this territory was differentially occupied, and that it was contested space” (69). While metaphors provide imaginary spaces to illustrate issues facing individuals attempting to find home in contemporary South Africa, they do not provide the space to discuss the real geography of the nation. Acknowledging these cautions, I believe that the spatial metaphors and frameworks of hybridity and liminality found in Foucault’s heterotopian space, Bhabha’s unhomely space, and Soja’s thirdspace provides a beneficial framework for exploring hybridity in 21st century South Africa complicated by the cultural fragmentation of colonization, apartheid, and increasing cosmopolitan movement.

Spatial Readings and the Post-Apartheid Novel in English

A spatial reading of home enriches our understanding of post-apartheid South African novels written in English, and reveals the forward aesthetic invention of various novel subgenres. The primary texts of this dissertation are united temporally by publication, linguistically through the English language, and literarily via the novel genre.

In a nation with eleven official languages, the choice to focus on literature written in the language and genre of the colonizer, might appear limiting and reductive; however, I focus on South African novels with a presence on the global literary stage. Discussing the internal conflict facing African writers utilizing the English language, Chinua Achebe highlights the opportunities of “one central language enjoying nationwide currency,” because even though “English failed to give them a song, it at least gave them a tongue for sighing” (244). He suggests that “for those of us who opt for English, there is much work ahead and much excitement,” and the writer in English has the opportunity to creatively address a language “still in full communication with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings” (249). Achebe presents the spatial image of home to address the hybrid nature of the English language in Africa, and in doing so, he acknowledges that African literature written in English presupposes an impossibility of belonging.

Simon Gikandi (2011) observes that the authority of the African novel is haunted by a “set of paradoxes,” and “the novel is the most displaced from the centers of social life in what one may call precolonial societies” (14). Regardless of its European import, Gikandi deepens the paradox of the African novel by suggesting that

It is precisely because of its belated, or even its alienated, nature that the novel has become the quintessential genre of postcolonial writing, creating the parameters for the African imagination and providing vistas into the culture of colonial modernity and its postcolonial consequences. In effect, the novel has come to function as the central register of the experience of societies emerging from the tutelage of colonialism; it has served as both the narrative of liberation and the mode for imagining the future. (14-5)

Likewise, Leon De Kock recognizes the paradoxical nature of South African English literature, asserting that “historically, for reasons originating in the politics and power of the English missionary-colonial project in South Africa, English-language publishing has seen by far the greatest number of works, whether ‘South African’ by origin, theme, or content” (265). De Kock goes on to suggest that it is the illogical prominence of the language of the colonizer in the post-colonial, post-apartheid, nation that reveals the fractured nature of South African identity. Again, he maintains that South African literature “is a literature that has been, almost by definition, *other to itself*” (266). The paradox of the novel genre and English language literature in South Africa mirrors the paradox of home and belonging that I explore in this dissertation. Just as the novel in English reveals the fractured subject, images and spatial concepts of home question the possibility of belonging in the nation.

In the next chapter, “Genre Transformation and Heterotopian Homes,” I examine three novels that expand the genre conventions of the South African novel, while interrogating the possibility of belonging. Rachel Zadok’s *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* (2005), Sindiwe Magona’s *Mother to Mother* (1998), and Matlwa’s *Coconut* (2007) interact and transform South African novel sub-genres born in traditions established through European colonialism and apartheid rule. These writers challenge the *plaasroman* (farm novel), the protest township novel, and the *Bildungsroman*. In my analysis I explore the sites of dwelling, the farm, the township, and the gated community home through Foucault’s imagining of the heterotopia, which are “real sites that can be found within culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality”

(4). These writers create heterotopias to redefine and revalue Eurocentric and apartheid-era traditions. For Zodik, Magona, and Matlwa, the space of the heterotopian home fosters the context to expose the reality of hybrid belonging in post-apartheid South Africa.

In the third chapter, “Apartheid Transition and the Spatial Uncanny,” I focus on ethics in the crime novel and examine the unhomely condition of white South African men in the decades post-apartheid. Specifically, I examine Andre Brink’s *The Rights of Desire* (2000) and Damon Galgut’s *The Good Doctor* (2004) and *The Impostor* (2009) alongside J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace* (1999). The main characters in these novels are middle-age, academic men reevaluating life after the great rationalization in the post-apartheid nation. Their struggle to find home in the new nation reflects the shifting politics of national belonging. Drawing on Bhabha’s conception of the unhomely, I argue that the homes in these novels are unhomely representations on South African homes of transition, and each dwelling is haunted. The uncanny home spaces reflect the unhomely condition of the male protagonists; and, in these novels that focus on ethics, morality, and crime, the homes reflect the self-perceived unmoored existence of the white male minority in the decades following apartheid’s abolition. David Lurie, Rubin Olivier, Frank Eloff, and Adam Napier are haunted by the past and their complicity within the apartheid culture of power. Coetzee, Brink, and Galgut develop the space of the home to question the possibility of belonging and personal progress in the post-apartheid nation, as Lars Engel (1993) suggests that the uncanny is “trying to change one’s mind, to admit new categories or reject old ones, and forced change is painful” (113).

My fourth and final chapter, “The Thirdspace and the Writing of Home” focuses on essential post-apartheid novels of exile and return narratives. I expand the context for spatial analysis by exploring how cosmopolitanism and an increasingly global world affect the possibility of being at home in South Africa. I examine Zoë Wicomb’s *October* (2014), and Zukiswa Wanner’s *London Cape Town Joburg* (2014), which deal with stories of those who left South Africa during apartheid and later returned. In this chapter, I utilize Bhabha and Soja’s dual vision of the thirdspace to reveal how Wicomb and Wanner explore the balance between the vacillating push and pull of home and the postmodern flux of cosmopolitan migration and rootlessness. Both authors subordinate the temporal concerns of apartheid protest and turn-of-the-century reconciliation novels in favor of conflicts over spatial identity. Thus they create novels of home negotiating the hybridity of the roots and routes of South African belonging and identity 20 years post democratic transition. While the male protagonists of the previous chapter seek refuge in the home only to face the unhomely reality of change, Wicomb and Wanner’s characters possess fluid identities, easily crossing and recrossing illusory national boundaries, as they consider themselves to be citizens of the world while simultaneously attempting to find home in South Africa. These two novels reveal the lasting effects of apartheid visible on contemporary housing reform, which affects the ability for citizens of all kinds—naturalized and native born citizens, exiles and returning exiles, immigrants and emigrants—to create home and feel belonging. Therefore, Wicomb and Wanner question unjust geographies in contemporary South Africa that prevent the possibility of home.

Ultimately in this dissertation, I wish to interrogate the postcolonial condition in contemporary South Africa still controlled by the effects of unjust geographies. My

dissertation answers this challenge by offering an examination of conceptualizations of home in contemporary South African novels in English; specifically, I focus on how these representations reflect the multifaceted politics of belonging and identity formation. Drawing on the frameworks of home, belonging, and space of Foucault, Soja, Bhabha and others, I contend that concepts of home provide fertile areas of exploration into past and continued dislocation, while challenging the binaries embedded in South African identity discourse haunted by colonialization and apartheid.

CHAPTER II: GENRE TRANSFORMATION AND HETEROTOPIAN HOMES

Post-1994 South African novels written in English increasingly draw the attention of global-western readers, as novelists dwell in the shadows of internationally acclaimed Nobel Prize winners Nadine Gordimer and J. M. Coetzee. The near quarter century temporal distance from apartheid presents South African novelists with a fresh, global aesthetic visibility, and necessitates the thematic shift from political protest to social reconciliation. While many novels in the 1990s and early 2000s mirrored the reconciliatory mission of the TRC and the excavation of memory which speaks the past alive into the present, I contend that these novels interrogate not only what it means to find belonging and home in the physical and spiritual nation, but by aesthetically excavating the ruins, the foundations, and the standing edifices of homes, writers such as Rachel Zadok, Sindwe Magona, Kopano Matlwa respond to the established genre conventions of the novel and begin the process of deconstructing and rebuilding the house of South African literature.

Zadok's *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* (2005), Magona's *Mother to Mother* (1998), and Matlwa's *Coconut* (2007) engage with and transform South African novel sub-genres born in traditions established through European colonialism and apartheid rule; specifically, these writers challenge the *plaasroman* (farm novel), the protest township novel, and the *bildungsroman*. Generic interrogation responds not only to the atrocities of apartheid, but also to the legacy of European colonialism on South African literary discourse.

To utilize Ngũgĩ's (1986) eminent phrase, European literary traditions can be seen as "cultural bomb[s]" which "annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves" (3). Language, reinforced by literary traditions and unbending aesthetic principles, served as a colonial apparatus propelling imperialism. Ngũgĩ continues, "language was the most important vehicle through which that power fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (9). Discussing the mapping of English culture onto Africa, Simon Gikandi (1996) similarly invokes a combat metaphor and asserts that "texts were important and indispensable weapons in the imposition of rule and governance...texts provide the medium through which the crisis of both colonial and domestic identities were mediated" (xix). Colonial literature became a tool of hegemonic cultural and identity formation at the expense of indigenous languages and literary traditions.

Elleke Boehmer (1995) focuses on the role of the novel in colonizing the imagination and land of indigenous people, while simultaneously justifying the civilizing mission of empire. She states, "[colonialism] transferred familiar metaphors, which are themselves already bridging devices, which *carry meaning across*, to unfamiliar and unlikely contexts. Strangeness was made comprehensible by using everyday names, dependable textual conventions, both rhetorical and syntactic" (15). Turning to the work of postcolonial writers, Boehmer reverses the potential power of the novel. Novelists challenge aesthetic traditions as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989) influentially suggest that postcolonial writers must

escape from the implicit body of assumptions to which English was attached, its aesthetic and social values, the formal and historically limited constraints of genre, and the oppressive political and cultural assertion of metropolitan dominance, of centre over margin...theories of style and genre, assumptions about the universal features of language, epistemologies and value systems are all radically questioned. (11)

Post-colonial writing, specifically writing that challenges genre and aesthetic traditions, develops as a way to challenge and re-evaluate not only the defining category of 'literature,' but also hegemonic discourses buttressing imperialism and essentialist methodologies. Boehmer concisely states, "generic intrusion [has] the potential for powerful transvaluation" (113).

Generic intrusions in post-apartheid novels bring to the forefront a reevaluation not only of the values underlying colonization and apartheid rule, but the beliefs surrounding belonging, home, and spatial politics. In addition to land and home used as tools of oppression and injustice, the physical spaces of daily life became the site of intrusion as European colonial writers "civilized" the land and home through language. As postcolonial, and more narrowly post-apartheid, writers respond to and rewrite this metaphorical and linguistic intrusion, the space of the home becomes a point of reevaluation and questioning from which genre traditions are transformed and placed in conversation with contemporary politics. I suggest that the farm in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, the township home in *Mother to Mother*, and the gated community home in *Coconut*, align with Foucault's concept of heterotopia and open the spaces of the novels for dialogue, deconstruction, and transformation.

Foucault develops the heterotopia primarily in the preface to *The Order of Things* (1966) and a lecture "Of Other Spaces" (1967), where he discusses first textual spaces

and later similarly defined cultural/social spaces. Heterotopia remains equally attractive and illusive to contemporary scholars as a debated, fluid model of space that defies definition as both and neither a real/imagined and utopian/dystopian place. The schema of the heterotopia to explore the homes in these novels of generic intrusion opens noteworthy dialogues of the possibility for liminal belonging in the heterotopia which Foucault describes as, “the space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that draws and gnaws at us” (3). At its most basic, the heterotopia is a place of otherness, a space within space, which reveals the interplay between power, politics, and place. Zadok, Magona, and Matlwa develop heterotopian homes in their novels, which represent real sites found within South Africa, to trouble and challenge belonging in the nation.

Traditionally, heterotopia belongs to the medical lexicon defining misplaced body parts that are “absent, extraneous, or foreign to the body” (Hetherington 21). The term heterotopia is intricately tied to the condition of displacement and it serves to complicate belonging and home. Foucault’s work expands this concept of displacement to textual and social space. Kevin Hetherington (1997) describes Foucault’s heterotopia as “places of Otherness, where Otherness is established through a relationship of difference with other sites, such that their presence either provides an unsettling of spatial and social relations or an alternative representation of spatial and social relations” (8). The Afrikaner farm, the township home, and the home of the gated community unsettle and present an alternative representation of spatial and social relations, as the authors work towards reevaluating South African social and political life through genre traditions.

Foucault develops two forms of heterotopias: crisis heterotopias, which are often sacred sites of personal transition, and heterotopias of deviation. The farm, township home, and the home of the gated community represent heterotopias of deviation, which as Michalinos Zembylas and Ana Ferreira (2009) argue represent “sites of otherness around which marginalized individuals and groups...give meaning to their hybrid identities through transgressive practices;” in other words—sites of resistance to the dominant culture (6). Peter Johnson (2006) also spotlights the connection between identity formation and heterotopian spaces suggesting: “heterotopias are fundamentally disturbing places...[they] draw us out of ourselves in peculiar ways; they display and inaugurate a difference and challenge the space in which we may feel at home. These emplacements exist out of step and meddle with our sense of interiority” (84). A consequence of a meddled sense of interiority is displacement and a lack of spiritual, national, and even physical belonging.

Foucault’s work provides a heuristic for my close readings of home in Zadok, Magona, and Matlwa’s novels, as he “reminds us that our understanding of our relationship inside and outside of the spaces we occupy are constantly renegotiated, remapped and rearticulated” (Quang et al 879). In “Of Other Spaces,” Foucault outlines six principles of a heterotopian space which are exemplified by the farm, township home, and home of the gated community. First, heterotopias are spaces where norms of behavior are suspended in either terms of crisis or deviation; second, heterotopias have a precise function and reflect the society that they represent; third, heterotopias juxtapose several real spaces simultaneously and they represent spaces of elsewhere coming together; fourth, heterotopias are linked to slices of time and either are transitory or

reflect the accumulation of time; fifth, have a system of closure and opening; and finally, heterotopias have a function relating to the rest of space as either places of illusion or compensation. While the homes in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, *Mother to Mother*, and *Coconut*, reflect Foucault's framework, these heterotopias work to deconstruct the binaries established by apartheid, and in the broader sense essentialist constraints of genre and temporal analysis. If language and literature offered power to construct the cultural edifices perpetuating colonization and apartheid, then the same tools have the inverse potential of deconstruction. Ngũgĩ states that there are two "inter-related" problems," or opportunities, facing the writer: "his relationship to the form, to the genre itself ; and his relationship to his material, that is the reality before him. How would he handle the form? How would he handle the material before him" (75). Zadok, Magona, and Matlwa utilize the space of the heterotopian home to interrogate and expose the reality of hybrid belonging and identity in post-apartheid South Africa, and ultimately, they create novels which serve as heterotopias to redefine and revalue Eurocentric and apartheid genre traditions.

Plaasroman Heterotopia- *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*

The South African *plaasroman* tradition is deeply tied to colonization through the barren landscape of the veld and the security of the farm. The farm provided Afrikaner settlers the Boer identity, and allowed colonists to stake claim to the continent and subdue the earth which was home to indigenous populations. Jennifer Beningfield (2006)

explores the site and landscape of the farm in the development of a collective imagination, stating that the farm

Is bound up with the identity of the Afrikaner as Boer, as farmer and therefore as ‘natuurmens’, living close to the earth and expressing his knowledge of it. It was that closeness to the land, the familiarity with both its wildness and domesticity, that was used to argue for the natural right of the landscape. (9)

Essentially, if the Boer farmer could cultivate the land, in many cases following European farming traditions, then he owned the rights to the land as a responsible steward. Beningfield continues to describe the role of the farm in shaping the national narrative founding apartheid minority rule decades later: “the Afrikaner desire to imprint the land with the fulfillment of their nationhood, hinted that the ‘dark’ and unknown past of the continent could be overwritten by a narrative which both claimed a more specific and recent history and looked towards a modern future” (80).¹⁶ The *plaasroman* provided the means for the propagation of the Afrikaner myth of belonging, and helped replace the economics of the farm with a sentiment of belonging romanticizing the settler position. The genre colonized the land with European language and metaphor necessary for imperialism, as Boehmer states,

In explorer literature, and also in colonial fiction and poetry, even ordinary declarative sentences... ‘at the foot of the kopje lay the homestead’—had the power to organize a new landscape, to plot site lines and give perspective, and in so doing conjured up places to believe in...the fascination with difference

¹⁶ This sentiment of possession, belonging, and identity connected to the land as home can be seen in Herman Bosman’s novel *Willemsdorp* (1977), “We Afrikaners have got everything. We’ve got a feeling for the country that is part of our blood. I can pick up a clod of earth, red Transvaal earth, between my fingers and crumble it. Where’s your intellect and economics there? What I feel about that handful of soil is the guts of a nationhood...it is only we Boers that have got it” (104). While Bosman’s novel was censored for the subtle exposure of Afrikaner prejudice against black South Africans, *Willemsdorp* remains an example of the Afrikaner imagination propelling the farm novel tradition.

competed with a reliance on sameness and familiarity. (17)¹⁷

Afrikaner Boers attempted to navigate the margin of sameness and familiarity, struggling to find home on a land that was both welcoming and threatening. As such, the *plaasroman* highlights the irony of home for European settlers in South Africa. Gerrit Olivier suggests the *plaasroman* returned to mainstream attention in the mid-twentieth century, as writing about the farm complicates the binaries of “occupation and dispossession, gain and loss... Thus the farm always is a place of triumph as well as vulnerability, a place of happiness as well as anxiety” (318). Fundamentally, the farm and the subsequent farm novel develops a space that encourages irresolution, and fosters questions of belonging, identity, and home.

Coetzee’s analysis of the *plaasroman* in *White Writing* (1988) deconstructs its generic elements to suggest that the *plaasroman* glorifies the poor white farmer and generations of Boer farmers’ connections to the land. He maintains that “by and large, the programme espoused by the *plaasroman* is one of a renewal of the peasant order based on the myth of the return to the earth” (80). The *plaasroman* narrates the reciprocal connection between the Afrikaner farmer and the land—the Boer brings life to the arid, sterile land through labor, and the land provides the settlers the foundation for purpose, spiritual belonging, and a physical home. The *plaasroman* illustrates this relationship and the genealogy of possession, which leads Beningfield to summarize the genre as “a complicated family romance” (94).

¹⁷ Here Boehmer references the English novel written in the *Plaasroman* tradition, *Story of an African Farm* (1883) by Olive Schreiner (published as Ralph Iron). While often considered a quintessential example of the *Plaasroman* genre, J. M. Coetzee questions this assumption, comparing Schreiner to novelist Pauline Smith: “One might even argue that neither is a true farm novelist. As women, as people of English culture, as free thinkers, they perhaps stood too far outside the insular patriarchal culture of the Boer farm to write of it with true intimacy” (63).

In part the complicated and even problematic nature of this genre stems from what Coetzee deems the two dream topographies of the South African pastoral. He suggests,

One dream topography that the South African pastoral projects is therefore a network of boundaries crisscrossing the surface of the land...each a separate kingdom ruled over by a benign patriarch with, beneath him, a pyramid of contented and industrious children, grandchildren, and serfs. But there is a rival dream topography as well: of South Africa as a vast, empty, silent space, older than man...and unchanged long after man has passed from its face. (7)

The *plaasroman* is therefore a conflicted genre—novels vacillating between the desire to own and dominate the land and the fear of the unknown and hostile environment. Olivier suggests that Coetzee’s genre analysis presents *plaasroman* fiction as “a creative and symbolic appropriation; that it is, therefore, never simply a descriptive genre” (316).

Olivier offers an alternative vision, proposing that

Within a wider political and social framework, the *plaasroman* must be understood against the background of the dispossession and destruction brought about by the Anglo-Boer (or South African) War. From this perspective...the farm novel related idyllic evocations of a ‘Boere past’ belong to a genre of restitution. (316)

While Olivier envisions these two perspectives of the *plaasroman* tradition as incongruous, the *plaasroman* in fact occupies both frameworks, which is precisely why the genre provides a novel space to interrogate the intricate and conflicting claims of home and belonging on the farm and in the nation.

During and after the apartheid era, many South African novelists have taken up the challenge to either continue the tradition of the *plaasroman*, or transform the genre as a tool to critique the social and political landscape of the nation. The reworked

plaasroman, or, as Olivier labels it, the “farm novel in inversion,” often involves the upset of power relations and the uncertainty of ownership and home (318).¹⁸ The setting of the farm, always navigating the divide between Coetzee’s dream topographies—ownership of the land and the threat of removal—becomes a space in the *plaasroman* to deconstruct binaries of farm/city and home/dispossession. Hein Willemse suggests that modifying the tradition of the *plaasroman* “compellingly probes the narrow divide between good and evil” (442).¹⁹ The narrow divide can be seen in novels written in Afrikaans; however, the inverted *plaasroman* has often been taken up by South African novelists in English.

The influential *plaasroman* written in English, Olive Schreiner’s *The Story of an African Farm* (1883), remains a precursor for many contemporary farm novels. Schreiner destabilizes the setting of the farm, and Coetzee claims, “Schreiner is anticolonial both in her assertion of the alienness of European culture in Africa and in her attribution of unnaturalness to the life of her farm. To accept the farm as home is to accept a living death” (66). Notably, Nadine Gordimer advanced the inverted *plaasroman* with *The Conservationist* (1974), in which Nicole Devarenne asserts is “preoccupied with the relationship between land ownership and colonialism, between the claiming of territory and the erasure of non-white histories, the symbol of a suppressed blackness asserting its presence invades apartheid’s ideological milieu” (634).²⁰ Coetzee’s *Disgrace* is perhaps

¹⁸ Olivier sites Afrikaner novelists Karel Scheeman, Eben Venter, and Van Niekerk as “deliberately re-engag[ing] with the tradition and ideological burden of the farm novel” (318).

¹⁹ Willemse makes this assertion with regards to his examination of Anna M. Louw’s family farm epic *Kroniek van Perdepoort* (1975).

²⁰ Rita Barnard contends that the Booker Prize-winning novel *The Conservationist* “remains Gordimer’s most impressive achievement,” and it “derives its poetic power from the master narrative of the dispossession and restitution of the land—the chief mobilizing myth of the antiapartheid struggle, and for better or worse, of the new nation” (70, 74).

the most well-known contemporary reworking of the *plaasroman* tradition, and Susan Smit-Morais and Marita Wenzel (2006) describe Lucy's farm as "a contested space inscribed with a history of violence and dispossession – a dystopia... a liminal zone representative of uncertainty and ambiguity – in which the protagonists (and the reader) are forced to renegotiate presupposed notions of 'self' and 'other'" (26, 29). The polarizing undulations between ownership and dispossession and between belonging and erasure is the thematic impetus of the inverted *plaasroman*.

Rachel Zadok writes *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* in the tradition of the *plaasroman*, while subtly distorting and even inverting the genre to make way for discussions necessary in post-apartheid South Africa.²¹ Miki Flockermann suggests that we must "extend horizons for reading Zadok's text beyond currently popular South African literary trends such as the ubiquitous coming of age story, the farm novel, or even the burgeoning genre of crime fiction" (7). While an unrestricted critical lens would open the possibility for new and transnational explorations of the novel, I argue that examining *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* as a *plaasroman* opens the dialogue of belonging and home; moreover, its presence in the international literary community highlights the tension of Eurocentric generic foundations in the space of contemporary South Africa.

Gem Squash Tokoloshe is structured in two parts which both interact with the traditions of the genre. The first half of the novel is set in 1985 and is the first person narrative a young girl, Faith, as she lives alone with her mother on a failing small farm in the Limpopo province. Faith experiences the farm through her mother's growing madness

²¹ Zadok's novel, nonetheless, is problematic when considered as an exemplary South African novel. Zadok was living in the UK when writing the novel, and the novel itself was published for the Richard and Judy "How to Get Published" competition. Chosen from 46,000 entries and later nominated for a Whitbread Award, *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* is most popular in the UK.

and obsession with spirits and fairies that she believes control the natural environment of the farm and the veld. The second half of the novel picks up the narrative in the present tense as adult Faith comes to grips with the traumatic event of her mother's supposed murder of the young black woman, Nomsa, who arrives at the farm to help look after Faith and the home. Faith is called back to the farm, never feeling at home in Johannesburg, to assume ownership of the farm following her mother's death in prison. Like Gordimer's *The Conservationist*, *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* is haunted by "the dark side of farm life, its buried half, the black corpse in the garden is at last brought to light" (Coetzee 81). Beningfield offers a similar comparison between Zadok's novel and Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull* (1998) where the, "landscape refuge is complicated by the haunting spectre of death...the land which is the battleground of power also becomes a place of terror" (32). From the start of the novel, the farm is an uncanny representation of the Boer settler farm, and proceeds to complicate the tradition of the *plaasroman* genre in two respects. The two methods of generic inversion reflect Coetzee's two dream topographies of the South African pastoral—representations of the physical land and farmhouse, and representations of the individuals living on the farm.

Early in the novel, readers learn that the farm is occupied only by Faith and her mother: "the orchard had been abandoned for over a year, ever since Papa had taken a job as a salesman and Moses, our farmhand, had disappeared. It hadn't rained for a long time. I couldn't remember it ever having rained, and Papa said that it was either give up the farm entirely or go on the road" (8). Instead of bringing together the Afrikaner family's dominance over the land, the farm disconnects Faith's family. While the failure of the

farm is often a threat in the traditional *plaasroman*, the farm in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* is never fertile. Coetzee states that in the *plaasroman* we see,

Efforts to buttress Afrikaner patriarchalism in order that a heightened significance should be attached to the acts of the founding fathers, to maintain their legacy and perpetuating their values. Thus we find the ancestors hagiographized as men and women of heroic strength, fortitude, and faith, and instituted as the originaries of lineages...the farms they carved out of the wilds, out of primal, inchoate matter, become the seats to which their lineages are mystically bound, so that the loss of a farm assumes the scales of the fall of an ancient house, the end of dynasty. (83)

While supporting the family on the road, Faith's father begins an affair with a woman in town, leaving Faith alone to care for her mother and the farm. Zodok removes the potential for *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* to support Afrikaner patriarchalism by removing Faith's father as the head of the family and the farm with faultless values, and instead he becomes the villain that sets the course for Faith's childhood trauma and upheaval of the traditional farm. Zodok leaves no room for question concerning her presentation of the farm as a reversal of the idealized Boer farm; instead, she names the farm "Legae La Morwediake/My Daughter's Home," removing ownership from male lineage central to the *plaasroman*, as years prior the farm was broken off of a larger farm and given to the owner's childless daughter.

Images and representations of the farm and farmhouse are shadowed by the lack of labor and the absence of family and societal hierarchy. The scarcity of humanity, necessary to turn the land, Coetzee's "primal, inchoate matter" into a farm, foregrounds Faith's mother's descent into madness and Faith's fear of the spirits controlling the land. Even the family dog, Boesman, is shot and killed during an argument between her parents shortly after the affair is uncovered. While his death highlights the farm's isolation, Zodok

uses the dog before his death to once again stress the difference between her farm and the romanticized farm of Boer settlers. Faith recollects how the dog joined the family: “he’d given Boesman to papa free because he wasn’t a pure dog; his father was a stray and the litter wouldn’t sell. This didn’t bother papa. He said mongrels were stronger because their genes were mixed” (8). This description cannot be read without the echoes of apartheid racial categories and the metaphoric function of dogs in apartheid and colonial society, as “dogs themselves are stratified within racialized social orders” (Woodward 258).²²

Smit-Marais and Wentzel argue that pure-bred Afrikaner dogs and police dogs served the “the social function of guarding and protecting not only white property and boundaries, but on a metaphorical level, also the apartheid system” (31). The connection between purebred dogs and police enforcement was cemented early in the South African national consciousness, as seen in a 1912 Police Inquiry Commission which reported that white farmers were “unanimous” in praising the use of dogs on the police force “particularly the magical ‘deterrent effect which their employment ha[d] on the mind of the Native stock thief.’ Farmers, believing Africans to be ‘very much afraid’ of police dogs, readily attributing declines in crime to the dogs’ presence in a district” (Shear 204). If purebred dogs serve as a metonymic representation for police power, the inverted metaphor represents black South Africans who were often compared to dogs, or treated less than dogs, under systemic oppression.

Schreiner in her early *plaasroman* develops this metaphor reducing humanity to the image of a dog in the hands of a brutal master: the ox dies in the yoke beneath its

²² Wendy Woodward provides an overview of the dog as a metaphor from colonial through post-apartheid literature. See, “Social Subjects: Representations of Dogs in South African Fiction in English” in *Canis Africanis: A Dog History of Southern African* eds. Lance van Sittert and Sandra Swart (2007).

master's whip; it turns anguish-filled eyes on the sunlight, but there is no sign of recompense to be made it. The black man is shot like a dog, and it goes well with the shooter" (114). Laura Wright (2006) reflects that "rhetorically, oxen, black men, and dogs occupy the same symbolic space...the space of silence and subjection" (27). Faith's dog Boesman occupies this symbolic space of silence and subjection, and Zadok removes all metaphoric ambiguity as Boesman is Afrikaans for Bushman. The brief inclusion of Boesman reverberates the background of apartheid's racial hierarchies, and also foregrounds the subverted *plaasroman* farm without the coveted purebred canine protection.

Zadok utilizes Faith's childlike narrative voice to highlight the unproductive and even unsettling nature of the farm. Faith constantly feels fear in response to her mother's incessant professions of the power of spirits on the farm, but Faith also recognizes the cold and inhabitable nature of the house which "embraced the cold, drawing it in like some forgotten cousin, and once inside it refused to leave. Even when we collected wood to light a fire in the evening, the cold hovered around us, chilling our backs as we warmed our hands" (104). The farmhouse is incompatible with the warmth desired of a home. The traditional farm instilled a sense of pride within the Boer settler; however, Faith only acknowledges negative feelings associated with the farm and the farmhouse. Instead of pride, Faith is filled with embarrassment when an elderly woman from town visits to check on her welfare: "a wave of shame ran through me as I opened the kitchen door and the stink of unwashed dishes and rancid milk rushed out" (61). The smell of rot permeates the house. The farm remains on the precipice of failure, instead of a place of growth, identity, and pride.

The novel's turning point occurs when a young, black woman from town comes to live on the farm to help take care of Faith in response to her mother's growing depression and mental decline. Nomsa becomes a surrogate mother to Faith, and is her only companion. Together they begin regaining control of the farm's garden, and Faith describes Nomsa's first morning on the farm: "after a breakfast of gritty milk porridge eaten with two spoons out of the shared pot as we sat on the kitchen step, Nomsa and I set off to explore the farm. She'd said we, meaning me and her, were responsible for the running of the farm until mother was better" (70). Nomsa steps into the caretaker role of the home, again subverting the patriarchal nature of the pastoral farm in terms of gender and more significantly in terms of race.

Faith remains ignorant to racial tensions in the nation and apartheid policies of separation, even offering Nomsa her bedroom when she arrives at the farmhouse and asking if her parents had owned a farm similar to "My Daughter's Home." Faith is embarrassed by her own ignorance but unable to grasp her own racial privilege when Nomsa responds, "at first she looked puzzled then she threw back her head and laughed. 'no, Koko, it wasn't the same. My father and mother worked on the farm, they weren't rich, not like you'" (71).

The irony of Nomsa working on the farm for Faith and her mother, without the freedom to own a farm on her own, is reflected in the traditional *plaasroman* and Coetzee's exploration of the South African pastoral: "how can the farm become the pastoral retreat of the black man when it was his pastoral home only a generation or two ago?" (5). In the first half of the novel Nomsa's presence in the novel is to facilitate Faith's character development, and she suddenly disappears from the text following her

brutal murder. Following the night of the murder, Faith believes that her mother, who confesses to shooting Nomsa, committed the crime. However, the novel's second half is propelled by Faith uncovering the repressed memory that in fact, she killed her only friend and companion while trying to shoot Nomsa's rapist in the act. Flockermann reflects that Nomsa becomes the "common motif in South African writing, the black woman becomes a sacrificial victim" (12). Instead of Zadok focusing on Nomsa's trauma, Nomsa reflects the role of black characters in traditional *plaasromans* who are relocated to the background which Boehmer deems "Foil to white action," and this "exclusion mirrors in literary form the physical marginalization of indigenous peoples by whites" (84). Nomsa's rape and death entirely changes Faith's life—with her mother imprisoned, declared criminally insane, and Faith with no memory of her role in Nomsa's death removed from the farm and forced to live in Johannesburg away from the pastoral home of the veld.

The second half of *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* focuses on Faith's return to the farm as an adult, and Zadok continues to interrogate the *plaasroman* tradition. The time Faith spends in Johannesburg is haunted by a lack of belonging. As Faith reflects on the city, Zadok continually employs images of a "broken sky" in contrast to the open landscape of the veld. Faith reflects early after her move, "I looked around the room, taking in the view of the jagged Johannesburg skyline. I had only been in Johannesburg a few hours and already I hated its broken sky," and later as an adult, "I've lived in Johannesburg for the greatest part of my life and I still haven't got used to the broken sky. Some parts of me still wants to look up and see nothing but blue, without the interruption of the telephone wires, buildings, houses. The sky looks more fragmented than usual"

(180,194). Faith associates her displacement with her life in the city. The power of the pastoral to overshadow the city and draw inhabitants back to the land, mirrors Coetzee's description of the farm novel genre: "the movement of the prototypical *plaasroman* is steadily toward the revelation of the farm as a source of meaning. (The city, by contrast, steadfastly refuses to reveal any meaning to the questing pilgrim from the countryside: the implication is that it has none)" (88). If the novel were a true *plaasroman*, then Faith would only find belonging and meaning on the farm.

Zadok follows this supposed progression as Faith finds out that she now owns the farm following her mother's death while incarcerated, and her encounter with a local sangoma healer. While walking through the park, Faith comes across an elderly woman who offers to pray for her. The woman proclaims, "bad things have happened and need to come out. You don't let them come...the woman leans forward, her hand still tightly gripping mine, and hisses the words 'go home.' There is a look in her blind eyes that reminds me of mother, a madness I've forgotten, or chosen not to remember" (191). For Faith, the allure of the farm is not a positive draw for meaning; instead, there is a sense of foreboding as she returns: "'go home.' Fortune-teller words when they don't want to reveal what awful fate they have seen in the mulch of tealeaves at the bottom of your delicate porcelain cup. Omens, I can see them everywhere" (194).

When Faith returns to the farm, she is laden with dread of memories of her childhood, specifically Nomsa's death; however, Faith still hopes to find home. She reflects, "The loss of her [Nomsa] memory made me feel small and insignificant and homeless, like I belonged nowhere. Now, years later, the sudden power of the returning memory makes me feel the same way. Fifteen years on and I'm still displaced, unsettled,

homeless” (203). When she returns to the farm, memories of the pastoral setting overcome her:

Things I had forgotten. The way dusk shrouded the farm with the mysterious glow of twilight that paints the sky in hazy pinks and oranges and deep purple-blues, and makes silhouettes out of the solid things so that they become black holes against the last-light. The fertile soil-heat that escapes from the earth as the ground cools, releasing the rich smell of night, a loamy perfume lost under the tar and concrete of the city. The nocturnal insects that rise out of the bush in a cloud of powdery wings as the light fades, ready to feed and mate and commit suicide in candle flames and cooking fires and high-voltage bug zappers. The symphony of night-crawlers and frogs and scavenging jackals yip-yapping that makes the work hum and vibrate and makes you realize the density of the new-moon a night that there is no such thing as silence. Then there is the creeping of shadows and creaking of floorboards, the thick darkness that envelopes me...the gnawing hunger that hollows me out and makes me bone-cold in spite of the warm night, that reminds me of bad times, a sensation that memory had dulled into unfamiliarity yet I know belongs to this place and to me in it. (268-9)

Instead of the farm bringing her a “a sense of meaning” as Coetzee suggests of the prototypical *plaasroman*, Faith’s first night on the farm quickly descends into memories of the harsh nature of the farm. Her first observations of the sunset contrast the jagged Johannesburg skyline, but the images quickly become threatening, and Faith is left both physically and spiritually hungry for meaning and home.

Faith encounters not a fertile farm, but land that is rotting slowly and a home fraught with decay. Walking through the long abandoned orchard Faith observes, “Long grass and weeds cover the ground, fruit flies have infested rotting fruit. I press down on one of the decaying brown orbs with the toe of my shoe and it collapses, spewing a cloud

of black flies... I wonder if the trees are dying” (292). Also, when she first arrives at the farmhouse Faith inspects the kitchen,

The kitchen is dark, the air dank and heavy with the smell of mildew. I’m surprised at the low light, considering the brightness of the morning, until I notice the windows, opaque with dirt. Nothing seems to have changed, or my memory deceives me into thinking it’s the same...the clock, though silent, still hangs on the wall, its face coated with thickened grey dust...It feels like a tomb. (261)

Two areas of the farm, the orchard and the kitchen, which should be surrounded with images of nourishment and prosperity, are connected instead to subverting images of death and decay. Zadok develops these images to both challenge the fertile success of the farm and to highlight Faith’s increasing lack of belonging. She considers, “For the first time in my life, I am truly alone,” and later, “It’s strange, all the time spent in Johannesburg I felt out of place, the simple country cousin. Here, where I thought I belonged, I’m city folk” (267).

The second half of the novel continues to interrogate the *plaasroman* tradition in terms of race. Faith returns to the farm to meet the black, middle-aged Petrus Kgagle and his family who are living on the land. Faith only knows of Petrus from the information supplied by her mother’s lawyer: “from his date of birth I ascertain he is fifty-eight, but other than this, there is no information. Michael Hurwitz said he’d been installed on the farm after several failed tenants. That was the word he’d used, installed, like Petrus Kgagle was an appliance” (238). To Faith, he remains the other. Coetzee speaks to the role of black characters in the South African pastoral: “The black man becomes a shadowy presence flitting across the stage now and then to hold a horse or serve a meal...Blindness to the colour black is built into South African pastoral” (5).

Faith is not an altruistic, allegorical character attempting to amend centuries of oppression in the South African farm. She resents Petrus's position on the farm, and feels the need to assert her ownership over the land. When waiting on Petrus to go to town Faith emphasizes her supposed belonging: "I'll wait for you at *my* house to bring *my* van to we can go get supplies for *my* farm.' I speak to Petrus, but accent every 'my' for Maswabing [Petrus' wife]. I shoot her a look to make sure she understands before I turn to leave" (272). Faith is only concerned with her own belonging, and her own ability to be at home on the farm where she feels "buried inside me, somewhere, must be a knowledge of this place" (275). Flockermann investigates race *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* by drawing from Judith Coullie's (2002) exploration of post-apartheid whiteness where she states, "more and more whites are reinterpreting past experience and identities and are, in the process, questioning the significance of race" (232). In line with Coullie, Flockermann suggests,

the "madness" and psychic breakdown described in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* expresses the "impossibility" of feeling oneself grounded in-between groups designated simultaneously colonizer (white) and yet also somehow marginalized (as child, woman, unbelonging, and as mad); it appears that this also how "being white" is experienced by Faith, who inherits her mother's farm, but since Petrus Kgagle and his family have taken over the running of it, it is no longer "hers" to belong to. (14)²³

Faith loses any fragile belonging, solidified identity, and even sanity when she remembers the night she killed Nomsa by a misaimed shotgun directed towards the

²³ Flockermann goes onto suggest that "Zadok's texts invites comparison (even if not intentionally) with representations of the white creole experience of in-betweenness when read in a diasporic context. For instance, Faith sees herself as literary lacking substance, and is afraid she will become 'zombified' like her mother" (13).

woman's rapist. Faith's mind wanders more and more from reality, and she struggles with her own guilt and her perceived in-between belonging and identity: "my thoughts become fragmented, sliding around my mind, intangible, momentary, briefly incandescent. Lighted shadow shapes play against my eyes; it feels like my body's asleep, totally relaxed, but my mind still wakeful, is trying to see the world through the stretch of pink eyelid. sleep, unsleep, a halfway world" (201). As she seemingly falls into the madness which haunted her mother, Faith's body begins to deteriorate, and Petrus and his family take care of her. Not only does Faith feel alien to the farm, she no longer feels at home within her own body and mind: "my body shrinks, sweats, wastes away. It's no longer the house for my soul but is my soul, a shrunken husk devoid of life" (319).

In a traditional *plaasroman*, Faith might have uncovered a deeper understanding of herself and a realization that the farm was home, when she returned to the pastoral setting from the city. Coetzee asserts that the craft of the prototypical *plaasroman* "must therefore lie in creating the preconditions for an epiphany, an eruption into words, in which for the first time the farm appears to the farmer in the glory of its full meaning, and for the first time the farmer fully knows himself" (88). Instead of meaning, instead of tapping into a spiritual connection with the land and "an ideal Afrikaner consciousness," Faith becomes increasingly ill—both mentally and physically (Coetzee 114). Faith is not restored by an epiphany of imagined belonging to the land, but she undergoes a type of exorcism by a traditional sangoma healer called by Petrus and his family. The healer at once notices: "there is a thing inside of her, a thing that has been there for many years, maybe since she was a small girl. It grows. She will not let it go; for some reason she wants to hold it inside her, even though it will destroy her" (321-2).

Faith's possession and mental break can be explored in terms of repressed memory and fracturing of self in line with Freudian psychoanalysis and contemporary trauma studies. For example, Cathy Caruth (1996) speaks of the latency and inexpressible nature of trauma: "the experiences of trauma, the fact of latency... consist[s], not in the forgetting of a reality that can hence never be fully known, but in an inherent latency within the experience itself" (18). Following this line of thinking, Faith is not possessed by a spirit, but her own repressed memories of Nomsa's death, and more importantly the repressed collective trauma of apartheid, as Caruth continues "one's own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another" (8). However, Zadok does not privilege this western hermeneutic of trauma, and instead presents the supernatural as a viable inquiry.

The presence of the supernatural destabilizes the *plaasroman* which is founded in the verisimilitude of the pastoral experience. Throughout the novel, Faith describes her mother's and her own belief in and visions of fairies on the farm, stating that she had always "been surrounded by fairies. They lived on the peripheries of my vision" (7). In addition to the haunting nature of the spirits, Faith questions her mother's and her own connection to the supernatural:

mother was becoming one of them, crossing over into the realm of fairies... I froze; the warmth emptied out of me and the space it left was filled with a sick feeling. Mother's voice was dreamy now, like she was drifting off somewhere. 'I think the day I conceived, the fairies came and put you inside me. I used to wonder about that; your father wasn't even there, I think.' The sick feeling was rising. I thought I might vomit. (99, 129)

Andreas Trimbacher suggest that Zadok utilizes fairies and the presence of the supernatural for three main motives: "to stress the characters' mental instability, to create a world to take refuge in, as well as to display their fears" (88). However, the inclusion of

the supernatural moves beyond a trope to point towards Faith and her mother's growing mental instability and displacement, and the inclusion of the supernatural destabilizes the norms of genre and western scientific discourses which discredit the presence of supernatural beings and the process of exorcism. Faith's name serves as a self-fulfilling reflection of her identity as her search for belonging coexists with her faith in the supernatural. It is only after the supernatural is legitimized through the sangoma's three day visit, that Faith feels at home in herself and the world: "three bottles of medicine he has fed me from over the past nights, black, then red, then white, and he leaves me, completely alone, for the first time ever...my grief pours from me, making the first marks on my fresh soul, and outside it begins to rain" (324). It is not the mythic, white Afrikaner connection to the divine ownership of the farm, but traditional, black African spiritualism which realigns Faith to reality. Faith finds a sense of belonging which manifests in the spiritual and physical rain over her soul and the land.

The farm itself is central to Zadok's inversion of the *plaasroman* genre and inquiry into the supernatural; moreover, the heterotopian nature of the farm destabilizes not only the genre but the Eurocentric apparatuses structuring thought and society. "Legae La Morwediate/My Daughter's Home," the farm in the novel, reflects the six principles outlined in Foucault's "Of Other Spaces," and these characteristics allow the farm to subvert the traditional setting of the *plaasroman*. First, the farm is a heterotopia of deviation, where the norms of behavior are suspended. Instead of embodying the norms of belonging, safety, and comfort, the farm is the site of infidelity, rape, and murder. Additionally, the farm suspends norms of reality and makes way for the authority of the supernatural.

The farm also has a precise function within the society it exists, to provide food and attempt to extend the Boer identity and way of life. However, in contrast to the utopian vision of the farm in the traditional *plaasroman*, the heterotopian farm in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* also represents spaces of elsewhere coming together. This spatial juxtaposition on the farm can be seen through the residence of both Faith and Petrus' family, and once again through the inclusion of the supernatural. The fairies present in Faith's childhood are products of her mother's imagination; however, many spirits are drawn from traditional Zulu mythology, such as the titular tokoloshe. Young Faith reflects, "Mary told me about the Tokoloshe in the cellar. She said a witchdoctor had sent a Tokoloshe to live with us, to steal our souls while we slept. She said that the land we lived on didn't belong to us, and unless we moved and gave the land back, the Tokoloshe would stay" (20). Nomsa also introduces the Lobedu Modjadhi Rain Queen, which Faith intertwines with her belief in Sillstream a water fairy. Nomsa informs Faith: "My mother comes from Lobedu..and there, high up in the mountains, lives Modjadji...ever year there is a feast and Modjadji pours her magic water to appease the ancestors and bring rain... she is the Rain Queen" (75). Faith responds to Nomsa, "Maybe Sillstream is one of the ancestors...ma says she makes the rain" (75).²⁴ In addition to combining the spaces of indigenous Africans and European settlers within the heterotopia, Zadok also draws attention to the incongruities between Boer and English settlers. Faith finds her parents' marriage certificate and the representation of spaces of elsewhere coming together on the farm: "Marius Albert Steenkamp and Isabel English, even their names seemed mismatched, incongruous that they should share a page let alone a marriage" (239).

²⁴ Queen Modjadji is a historical figure and rule of the Lobedu, from Modjadji I who ruled 1800-1854 to the most recent Modjadji V (1980-2001).

As a heterotopia, the farm is linked to time, and in fact accumulates time. Faith often presents the farm as untouched by the passage of time. Returning to the farm as an adult, she observes, “it almost seems as if the house has been waiting for us to come back, frozen in time, patient,” and later, “I look at the kitchen clock, but it’s still three-fifteen, the same time it was when I first saw it, in spite of the new batteries. The second hand jerks against the minutes hand, stuck, and I am struck by a feeling that the farm will not be budged from its past” (265, 291). Isolated in time, the farm is also isolated in space mirroring the necessity for a heterotopia to have a system of opening and closure.

The farm is separated from the nearby small town by a winding, ungraded dirt road, but it is the farmhouse itself that satisfies the enclosed condition of the heterotopia. When she returns to the farm, opening the front door represents Faith opening up to her own memories, and the transformative power of the heterotopian farmhouse. Entrance to the farm is not assumed, and requires ownership represented by a key; however, “the key does not turn, it sticks and scrapes and I imagine I can see the rusted lock teeth straining to release their oxidized bonds. Petrus rattles the key from side to side, then grasps it in both hands, twists and, slowly, it gives” (261). As a child Faith also notices the critical role of the door to serve as a protector and an impenetrable barrier: “Our front door was sturdy, made from old railway sleepers, thick and capable of absorbing bullets. Often I’d run my fingers over the two embedded in its surface, trying to reenact in my imagination just what had caused them to be there” (44).²⁵ The door serves as an opening and closure,

²⁵ Faith reveals the supposed origin of the bullets: “I’d once overheard Papa tell Oom Piet that the previous farmer had gone mad on the day his wife gave birth to her first child, a child so dark it might well have been a kaffir. The farmer had gone on a rampage, shooting all his laborers before turning the gun on his wife and then, finally, himself. The baby was the sole survivor. Papa said it was thanks to that kaffir baby

and reveals the hidden violent nature of the farm and Boer subjugation of the land and its inhabitants to create belonging.

This heterotopian space remains both outside and intricately entwined with South African reality. The farm is the space where identities are negotiated and unbound, as we see with Faith's attempt to find belonging and home on the farm as well as her gradual descent into madness. The farmhouse heterotopia rejects norms of Western thought and where the supernatural is legitimized and flourishes. These characteristics destabilize the traditional utopian spaces of the Afrikaner farm of the *plaasroman*. Farms of the *plaasroman* exist in the Afrikaner imagination and cultural production, which reflect Foucault's utopias that are "sites with no real place...they present society itself in a perfected form" (3). The utopian farm of the *plaasroman* represents the idealized space of belonging for the Afrikaner which legitimizes the settler myth of ownership and subjugation of the land; however, the heterotopian farm of the *plaasroman* in inversion reveals a space of deviation, which in Foucault's terms, "draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us" (3).

Township Heterotopia, Protest Literature, and *Mother to Mother*

While the setting for the *plaasroman* is the simultaneously tranquil and hostile veld, the apartheid protest novel often finds home in the urban setting of South Africa's

that he got the farm for next to nothing. Oom Piet laughed and said it was probably nothing more than a touch of the tar brush" (44).

townships. Beginning in the 1970s, a majority of novels published by black South Africans emphasized the horrors of daily life in the apartheid township as a form of protests against minority rule and human rights violations. The aesthetics of the protest novel were founded on fighting apartheid; therefore the fall of apartheid necessitated the redefinition of the South African protest novel. Countless critics have discussed this genre transition, many suggesting that the post-apartheid novel of the 1990s and early 2000s was a novel of reconciliation mirroring the process of the TRC, and as James Graham (2009) suggests “repossession and revolution have been replaced by reform and renewal as the emergent motifs in South African fictions” (7).

Prior to the TRC and the fall of apartheid, an entire generation of South African writers were concerned primarily with “the injustice and destructiveness of apartheid” and the mode of writing was almost exclusively one of “protest, resistance...to expose [apartheid’s] evil and to help – in whatever way literature can – to bring about its downfall” (Foley 126). However, with the accomplishment of this goal, many writers found themselves without subject matter or reason to write. Andrew Foley (2007) states that following the TRC, new South African Literature became centered on the twin motifs of truth and reconciliation, and many writers reveal “how much has been achieved in the process of national healing and reconciliation, but also, more importantly, just how much more remains to be done” (139, 140).

The protest novel tradition is tied to the relationship between literature and culture, and the belief that writing has the potential to change politics. South African protest novelists navigate the often indistinct line between artist and activist. Aesthetics became secondary to the urgency to inform global audiences to the atrocities of apartheid.

For example, Muthobi Mutoatse (1981) states, “We need a writing that records exactly the situation we live in and any writing which ignores the urgency of political events will be irrelevant” (quoted in Ndebele 36). Similarly, Oswald Mtshali (1976) asserts “To embellish this urgent message with unnecessary and cumbersome ornaments like rhyme, iambic pentameter, abstract figures of speech, and an ornate and lofty style. We will indulge in these luxuries which we can ill afford at the moment when we are a free people” (quoted in Heywood 127). Writers facing the day to day struggle of apartheid focused on the political and social potential of the written word while self-admittedly sacrificing aesthetics. Protest literature is driven by, to use Louise Benjamin’s term, a rhetoric of urgency.²⁶

Exploring the work of Black South African writers, Rita Barnard suggests that the protest writer “tends to document his physical and human setting in stark, grim detail, to document minute-to-minute experience. There is a specifically African drama in the ghettos that the writer cannot ignore;” moreover, Barnard continues to connect politically motivated literature, specifically novels set in the townships, to Walter Benjamin’s “urban shock” which she describes as “an unmediated sensory overload, destructive of any sustained contemplation” (125).

Ez’kia Mphahlele, Lewis Nkosi, and Njabulo Ndebele suggest that the urban shock and sensory overload of the protest novel became problematic for the development of a South African literary tradition during the waning years of apartheid. Nkosi (1983) disparages attention placed on the day to day atrocities at the expense of artistic value,

²⁶ Benjamin (2001) speaks to the *trope-as-truth* overwriting the *trope-of-truth* and states, “discussions of literary fiction and value in South African literature in English, I claim, are refracted through an elaborate rhetoric of urgency that strains to effect a secular closure between the word and the world precisely to safeguard the ethical claims of South African literary culture” (368).

and suggests, “what we get most frequently, is the journalistic fact parading outrageously as imaginative literature... without any attempt to transcend or transmute these given ‘social facts’ into artistically persuasive works of fiction” (132). Ndebele echoes this sentiment:

The fact that much of the writing produced in the townships of South Africa since 1976 still reproduces this protest tradition, with little mediation, reveals what seems to me to be the characteristic of a socially entrenched manner of thinking about the South African reality; a manner of thinking which, over the years, has fathered its own momentum and now reproduces itself uncritically. (60)

Mphahlele bolsters the discussion by suggesting that a foundational issue with South African literature is that are haunted by “a brooding fate dogging our movements everywhere, land mines are all over. And then the catastrophe” which therefore requires a “response to the immediate, to the instant, a direct confrontation with the dominant political morality” (374).

While these three South African writers are critical of the genre tradition, they also highlight the opportunities facing novelists who turn from the closed epistemologies of protest. Ndebele suggests, “the greatest challenge of the South African revolution is in the search for ways of thinking, ways of perception, that will help to break down the closed epistemological structure of South African oppression, structures which can severely compromise resistance by dominating thinking itself” (63). Following the democratic election and the TRC, authors were propelled into a new political reality which required a reevaluation of the social imaginary. Specifically, post-apartheid novelists began to navigate the aesthetics of progress and reform in place of protest and revolution, and in the process instigated a redefinition of art and the role of the artist.

Published in 1998, Sindiwe Magona's *Mother to Mother* serves as a representative novel for this genre transition. Magona probes and advances the protest genre while investigating the possibility for aesthetic innovation within the novel tradition. *Mother to Mother* remains outside the immediate struggle of apartheid, and therefore Magona enters the struggle of contemporary South African writers to, in Ndebele's words, "redefine relevance." While critics, such as Stef Craps consider *Mother to Mother* to be a "truth-and-reconciliation novel" which "supplement[s] the work of the TRC by critically revisiting its limits, exclusions, and elisions," Magona in fact presents an imaginative reality that drives South African literature beyond characterizations of political or cultural weapons of struggle (44). In *Mother to Mother*, Magona provides a fictionalized account of Fulbright Scholar Amy Beihl's murder in a South African township months prior to the 1994 democratic elections. In 1998, the year of the novel's publication, the four young men convicted of Beihl's murder appealed for and received amnesty. This specific amnesty hearing was highly publicized and broadcasted on the weekly television reports, which firmly embed the account in the national collective unconscious of reconciliation. Additionally, Beihl's murder and the subsequent amnesty trial became recognized in connection with the TRC and the political transition in the nation through the documentary *Long Night's Journey into Day* (2000). On the national and international stage, Beihl's murder was a political event reflecting the culmination of colonial and apartheid oppression, with one of the young men, Ntobeko Peni stating, "our killing of Amy Biehl had everything to do with politics—the unrest at the time and international attention helped bring South Africa to where we are today" (Graybill 71).²⁷

²⁷ See http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/decisions/1998/980728_ntamo%20penietc.htm Accessed 1 March

More than simply narrating the events of the 1993 killing, Magona flips the script and provides an account of one of Beihl's killers, Mxolisi, and his mother Mandisa. The novel is told from Mandisa's perspective, and Magona frames the work as a letter from Mandisa to Beihl's American mother, which mirrors the act of confession in the TRC. The epistolary frame serves to bring the two worlds into contact and conversation, and the novel remains bridge-building in focus. In a 1999 interview with David Attwell and Barbara Harlow, Magona describes the novel's origins in her realization that she grew up with the mother of one of Beihl's killers: "Well, we grew up together! As we say in the township, 'I know her saliva!' because I have eaten candy from her mouth... I thought of the little Mandisa—how was she handling this?" (283). *Mother to Mother* paints a portrait of brutality under apartheid in the townships, and gives voice and history to a character who, under apartheid, would have remained unheard.

The novel interlaces the stories of Mandisa's and Maxoli's childhoods with the days following Beihl's murder, and in her descriptions of the township setting, Magona continues the protest novel tradition of "urban shock" and a regurgitation of mindless apartheid violence and subjugation. The term "regurgitation" reflects Nkosi's (1986) assertion that "black South African writers attempt to reproduce or re-enact in their writings what is happening in the streets, as if language is ever capable of consuming reality, of digesting it, then of finally regurgitating it to us exactly as it was given without essentially changing it" (43). Nkosi is critical of this "naïve realism" of the protest genre, and Magona's text saddles the transition from "journalistic fact parading outrageously as imaginative literature," to contemplation and opening epistemological structures (165).

Many setting descriptions and actions of the novel center on the (im)possibility of the township as home. The action of Mandisa's childhood is tied to the forced removal of her family from Blouvlei to Guguletu, and through the straightforward metaphors and personification similar to the protest tradition, Magona connects the loss of home to the loss of humanity under apartheid. Mandisa remembers Blouvlei prior to the removal:

The sea of tin shacks laying lazily in the flats, surrounded by gentle white hills, sandy hills dotted with scrub, gave us (all of us, parents and children alike) such a fantastic sense of security. We could not conceive of its ever ceasing to exist... This was home, they said. Home. Always had been, always would be. HOME... Blouvlei was an honest-to-goodness tin shacks place. No pretense. No fooling... we lived in Blouvlei because we wanted to live there. Those were the shacks we had built ourselves, with our own hands. Built them where we wanted them. With each put together according to the wishes whims and means of its owner. The people there, a well-knit community. (55)

Images of Blouvlei are connected not only to a sense of belonging and identity, but also to agency. Magona reflects the destruction of belonging and subjectivity with images of the razing of Mandisa's childhood home during the forced removal of 1968. Mandisa reflects, "our shack had simply disintegrated, just turned to rubble. Unusable rubble which the trucks of the government continued to flatten like so many birds' nests torn off bough and flung down by a tornado" (28-9). Like their homes, the lives of forced removal victims were also destroyed. Later when discussing the displacement to Guguletu, Mandisa envisions herself in place of her home's rubble: "I came to Guguletu borne by a whirlwind... perched on a precarious leaf balking a tornado" (48). The overwhelming force of apartheid, represented by the tornado has the power to destroy the

physical home, but Magona's choice of the verb "balk" suggests the continuance of Mandisa's agency.

The image of this destruction gives way to the droning setting of the township—imagined as void of individualism, community, and belonging. Magona's imagery reflects Mphahlele's assertion that the protest writer cannot ignore images of the "physical and human settings in stark, grim detail, to document minute-to-minute experiences...of the African drama in the ghettos" (199). Magona's imagery reflects this protest tradition and the urgency to connect the harsh reality of the townships to the need for political reform to stop the destruction of the human spirit. Magona's township setting is not characterized overtly with violence or destruction, but instead the absolute void of humanity. Mandisa testifies,

How my eyes were assaulted by the pandemonium...And then the forest of houses. A grey, unending mass of squatting structures. Ugly. Impersonal. Cold to the eye. Most of their doors closed. Afraid...as far as the eye can see. Hundreds and hundreds of houses. Rows and rows, ceaselessly breathing on each other. Tiny houses huddled close together. Leaning against each other, pushing each other. Sad small houses crowned with gray and flat unsmiling roofs. Low as though trained never to dream high dreams. Oppressed by all that surrounds them...by all that is stuffed into them...by the very manner of their conception. And, in turn, pressed down hard on those whom, shameless pretense stated, they were to protect and shelter...the deadening uniformity of Guguletu houses...an unrelieved monotony of drabness; harsh and uncaring in the manner of allocation, administration and maintenance...for some reason, the small, inadequate, ugly concrete houses seemed to loosen ties among those who dwelled in them. (27, 34)

This palpable and distinct personification leaves the reader with no question of interpretation. The township houses, personified as "squatting," "breathing on each

other,” “huddled close together,” “leaning against each other,” “sad,” “unsmiling,” “oppressed,” and “trained never to dream high dreams” unquestionably reflect the lives of black South Africans removed from their homes, their birthplace, under the guise of apartheid progress. Magona’s work reflects early protest writers and the descriptions of the townships and the forced removals. For example in “What is Black Consciousness” Steve Biko describes the townships, stating, “the homes are different, the streets are different, the lighting is different, so you begin to feel that there is something incomplete in your humanity” (101). Like the protest tradition, Magona leaves no room for ambiguity, and her imagery presents a dialogue governed by the binary logic of oppressed/oppressor and the urgency of apartheid/anti-apartheid writing.

Guguletu in *Mother to Mother*, serves not only as the setting of Amy Beihl’s murder, but Magona sets it up as the catalyst for the action. Mandisa describes, “trouble is, there is always trouble in Guguletu...of one kind or another...since the government uprooted us from all over the show: all around Cape Town’s locations, suburbs, and other of its environs, and dumped us on the arid, windswept, sandy Flats,” and she describes the creation of the township as “a violent scattering of black people, a dispersal of the government’s making. So great was the upheaval, more than three decades later, my people are still reeling from it” (26).

Rita Barnard criticizes Magona’s foundation in the protest novel tradition and suggests that in *Mother to Mother*, through the images of the township, “she reverts to the poetics of imaginative confinement and urban shock implicit in the idea of ‘the tyranny of place’—and turns it into a full-blown determinism” (143). This determinism suggests that Mxolisi should not be considered a murder, but a victim of circumstance and the

overwhelming dehumanizing powers of apartheid townships. *Mother to Mother* continues the binary structure of protest literature; however, I suggest that the novel also provides space for social and narrative ambiguity which represents a shift from the anti-apartheid to post-apartheid novel. Specifically, a reading of the township as a heterotopia pries open epistemological structures of the protest genre and increases the ambiguity surrounding historic and continual trauma of colonialism and apartheid.

Ambiguity contrasts the stark determined images of the protest tradition, and remains central to the work of post-apartheid writers. David Attwell suggests that literature following the end of apartheid focuses on the

political ambiguities of transition: the tension between memory and amnesia. It emphasizes the imperative of breaking silences necessitated by long years of struggle, the refashioning of identities caught between stasis and change and the role of culture—or representation—in limiting or enabling new forms of understanding. (3)

Ndebele (1996) suggests that South Africans create spaces for “posing questions and researching them for solutions,” as well as opting “for complexity, ambiguity, and nuance. It is here that we will develop new political meanings and values. It is here that we will find new homes” (np). Heterotopias, as different spaces, require a change of thought and undermine tradition. Zembylas and Ferreira emphasize that “heterotopias challenge the ways we think and feel, interrogate our discourses and practices, and contest the formalities in which we often settle” (5). Heterotopias are spaces of ambiguity.

The township as a heterotopia of deviation can be seen in the construction of a segregated space where the norms of behavior are suspended, existing with the precise

function to uphold the apartheid bifurcated society. Beningfield describes the creation of the township as an othering, artificial space: “as well as being a spatial strategy whereby black presence was removed from white inhabitation, the creation of the townships contained the threat of violence within a policeable area” (218). The township as a heterotopia possesses a system of closure and opening to contain black South Africans, and as in *Mother to Mother* is enforced by police brutality. Mandisa recounts, “they say Guguletu is completely surrounded...Saracens everywhere...Grotesque. Humongous. Reminiscent of a cross between a farm-fattened pig and a bed bug...Enormous. Appearing without legs, wheels, or other means of locomotion. Saracens. Deadly, bullet-spitting contraptions” (26, 36). This enforced system of entrance, reflects J. Yolande Daniels’ (2000) assertion that heterotopias are “spaces of segregation” as “the place that is other and is yet localizable” (197-8).

As a space of segregation, the township follows Foucault’s claim that the heterotopia possesses a precise function in relation to the space which remains outside. He suggest that “this function unfolds between two extreme poles”: spaces of illusion or spaces of compensation (8). Foucault furthers his argument suggesting that early European colonies functioned as heterotopias of compensation, and they “create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled” (8). Foucault envisions the purpose of seventeenth century colonies to create a perfected space. Likewise, apartheid rhetoric speaks to the intricately planned and impeccably designed space of the township, as one apartheid report states, “while monotonous in the extreme, there is no doubt that they provide distinctly superior facilities to the notorious slums and shanty towns they replaced...given

the favorable climate their streets will in time be lined with trees and their gardens filled with banana and mango trees and subtropical plants” (100). This romanticized image contrasts Magona’s description of the township:

The streets are narrow, debris-filled, full of gullies alive with flies, mosquitoes, and sundry vermin thriving in the pools of stagnant water that are about the only thing that never dries up and never vanishes in Guguletu...in no uncertain terms, the coarse unfriendly sand told us nothing would ever grow in such a place. It would take a hundred years of people living on it to ground the sand and trample some life into it as that it would support plant and animal. (27)

In terms of creation and propaganda, the township is a heterotopia of compensation, as apartheid architects’ attempted to create a faultless separated society. However, the township setting in *Mother to Mother* represents a heterotopia of illusion reflecting the brutal, dehumanizing reality of the space.

The township, on paper, creates an illusion of white dominated culture in South Africa, and reduces the majority population to brief images of township violence which in turn upholds the illusory need for separation. Beningfield suggests that “the separation from the white city, the control of transportation systems and the internal planning of the townships also allowed the violence to be held at a distance, seen by many white South Africans only through the government controlled news broadcasts on television, and heavily censored newspaper reports” (218). The heterotopian township provided the illusion that the space itself remained far removed and outside of the dominate space of the nation; moreover, the township as a heterotopia of compensation creates the image of a safer environment for the white minority. Daniels again connects the heterotopia with segregation and the heterotopia’s power to turn the objectified other into a spectacle. She states:

Lexan dividers; chain link fences; hand-cuffs; barbed wire; attack dogs; penal codes, slave codes; brands; cages: mediations within “free” space. Crime is the vehicle by which the heterotopic space of the black is objectified and spectacularized as this evening’s media spectacle. It is also the justification for twentieth-century enslavement of suspicious “others.” (214)

In addition to creating the illusion of a safe and protected white society and the illusion that the white population possessed innate rights to the land, the heterotopian township also juxtaposes several spaces at once. When first describing her move to Guguletu, Mandisa is struck by the heterogeneity of the crowded township which destroys the possibility for community. She reflects,

That was part of the problem: this throwing together of so many, many people, all at once, into a new place. All of them new in the place. All of them still grieving, yearning for the places they were forced to leave. All of them with no heart for the new place, having left their hearts in their erstwhile homes: Blouvlei; Vrygrond; Addersvlei; Windermere; Simonstown; Steenberg; District Six; as well as many pockets of real suburbs, where predominantly white people lived. (28)

This amalgamating of multiple spaces into one space aligns with Foucault’s principles of the heterotopia.

The connection between the heterotopia, in this case the township, to temporality is important to my study of Magona’s novel as a transition novel between the protest tradition and the post-apartheid novel fostering questions and ambiguity. Foucault suggests that time functions in the heterotopia on two ends of spectrum—accumulating or transitory. Heterotopias such as museums and libraries represent spaces which continually build and accumulate, establishing an archive which “enclose[s] in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes” (6). On the opposite end of the spectrum, heterotopias such as the festival “are not oriented towards the eternal, they are rather

absolutely temporal” (6). Temporality functions uniquely in *Mother to Mother*, and ultimately reflects Foucault’s assertion that “the heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time” (6). The heterotopian township accumulates time, the histories of a colonized and oppressed people, but time also remains transitory as the township itself is illusory and not built on the homeland of its inhabitants. Magona manipulates temporality in her novel, and creates a space of ambiguity to interrogate Western epistemological structures and traditional genre constraints of the novel.

I suggest that through the space of the township heterotopia, Magona questions the authority of Western linear temporality, legitimizes mythological time of Xhosa tradition, and disrupts the narrative time of the novel, which presents an example of the generic shift fostering ambiguity following the fall of apartheid. As time in the township heterotopia is both accumulating and transitory, it reflects Achille Mbembe’s “time of entanglement.” Mbembe develops entangled temporality as multiple times “made up of discontinuities, reversals, inertias, and swings that overlay one another, interpenetrate one another: an entanglement...where [times] retain their depths of other presents, pasts and futures, each age bearing, altering and maintaining the previous ones” (16).²⁸ The entangled time of the heterotopia allows for a (re)folding of time, moving past linear or even cyclical time structures which allows for the production of multiple futures which fosters ambiguity.

²⁸ Micahela Borzaga connects Mbembe’s time of entanglement with South African literature as way to explore trauma. He suggests, “if we envisage the past, present, and future as an unified tangle, the repetition and re-living of traumatic experience as well as the potential for overcoming trauma: i.e. the process of working through it are not separated and set at the two ends of the spectrum but coexist and struggle with one another in complex and unexpected ways” (78).

Through her narration, Magona disrupts the hegemonic authority of Western time and implements a time-based structure that is tangled and non-linear, which echoes Mbembe's critique that the West perceives time as "a current that carries individuals and societies from a background to foreground, with the future emerging necessarily from the past and following the past, itself irreversible" (16). Magona breaks free from one-directional text-time and creates a story-time that is layered—intertwining past and present.

Standardized, linear time is present throughout the novel as chapter titles provide the time, date, and year of the events: such as "5.15pm- Wednesday 25 August 1993" (20), and "10.05 pm- Wednesday 25 August 1993" (67). In all, there are nine specific headings that present a standardized time reference, and with regard to the storyline, Magona uses the full time and date heading for the chapters that begin in the present. When narrating the day of Biehl's murder, the standard time markers reflect the facts necessary for recounting the event during the TRC amnesty hearing. However, the narrative of Mandisa's childhood remains outside Western time markers; instead, the sun is often personified. For example, Mandisa's grandfather instructs her "to go and play with my friends before Mama found me soothing to do or the sun when home to sleep" (178).

While Magona employs foreshadowing and flashbacks, she takes the development of her story-time a step further by developing analepsis and prolepsis, which modify the narrative time of the novel. Analepsis occurs when an early story event is told following later events, and prolepsis is used to tell a story event before previous events have been mentioned, essentially, jumping the narrative time into the future. Analepsis and prolepsis

create a type of secondary temporal narrative for an account that is overlaid on the primary, first narrative; therefore, the time of the first narrative continually circles back around through the past and future to the present.

The primary narrative is the story of the events surrounding Amy Biehl's murder on Wednesday, August 25th, and analepsis springs the narrative to the past to retell the story of Mandisa and Mxolisi's upbringings and the hardships under apartheid. For example, Chapter Five begins in the present as Mandisa talks to a neighbor, but soon the narrative time abruptly transports to Mandisa's childhood and the forced relocation to Guguletu. Within a few paragraphs, the story-time breaks the confines of linear time and uses the length of nearly 20 pages to tell the traumatic details of the relocation of black South Africans to townships. The two times are linked by the image of the tea kettle: in the present, "Come over, let me put the kettle on," and the past, "Put the kettle on first, and run!" (48, 49). This connecting image makes the time transition smooth, as the new analeptic time overlays the first narrative time. The story-time returns to the present abruptly with the standardized time heading, "10.05PM-- Wednesday 25 August 1993" (67).

Magona also utilizes the less common prolepsis, by shifting the narration to the future; ultimately, the novel begins with such a shift. Chapter 1, titled "Mandisa's Lament," occurs outside of the primary narration as a letter from Mandisa to Biehl's mother. The first sentence of the chapter, and the novel, "My son killed your daughter. People look at me as though I did it. The generous ones as though I made him do it," removes all question, all suspense, from the audience with regards as to the main action of the novel (1).

To contrast with the authority of linear temporality, Magona develops a mythic time that simultaneously propels the narrative into the present and the past. Late in the novel, during a flashback conversation, Mandisa's grandfather tells the story of the Xhosa Cattle Killing. Magona could have easily told the story of the 1857 Cattle Killing in terms of standardized facts and figures alongside jarring images of urban shock, which fit the temporal thrust of the TRC and the aesthetic constraints of the protest tradition; however, she presents the story in mythic time encompassing and entangling an accumulating past, present, and future. Instead of temporally locating the collective traumatic event of Xhosa people, her Grandfather simply states, "long, long ago...in the times of our ancestors...", which allows the true events to take on mythic qualities, to the point where the events cannot be given a specific time reference (174).

The Xhosa Cattle Killing revolves around a cyclical concept of time, and as Mandisa's grandfather voices the story to expose the intense hatred between the Xhosa people and their European oppressors, he also questions the validity of Western, linear time. He states,

Deep run the roots of hatred here
So deep, a cattle-worshipping nation killed all its precious herds.
Tillers, burned fertile fields, fully sowed, bearing rich promise too.
Readers of Nature's Signs, allowed themselves fallacious belief.
In red noon's eye rolling back to the east for sleep. (176)

Following a prophecy from a young girl, the Xhosa people killed their cattle and decimated their crops in the belief that the sun would rise to the highest point at noon, and then reset along the same path in the east. When this occurred, the oppressive colonizers would be gone; essentially, time would restart at a point that predates

colonization. This nonlinear movement of time contrasts the consistency of Western time, and reveals a deeper belief in time reversal and the ability to rewrite the past.

Historically, the sun did not reset: “Soon, soon, tragically soon, there could be no doubt however. The sun was progressing, as before” (178). The facts of this event reveal the intense unbridled desperation of a people who are willing to do whatever it takes to free themselves from oppression; however, the Cattle Killing also displays the very essence of a nonlinear temporality.

Instead of concluding the novel in standard time, as one would expect a confession novel following the tradition of the TRC, Magona once again returns to a mythic temporality. If the first reference to the mythic Cattle Killing is retrospective, then the final reference to the myth is prospective to shape the future. The final section of the novel includes the heading “Guguletu, late afternoon, Wednesday 25 August,” and contains a direct retelling of Amy and Mxolisi at the time of her death. Mandisa then states of her son, “We have been cheering him on since the day he was born. Before he was born. Long before” (209). This proclamation echoes Mandisa’s grandfather’s retelling of the Cattle Killing, “Long, long ago...” (174). Mandisa continues, “Nongqawuse saw it in that long, long-ago dream: a great raging whirlwind would come. It would drive abelungu to the sea. Nongqawuse had but voiced the unconscious collective wish of the nation: rid ourselves of the scourge” (210). Just as Nongqawuse and the Xhosa people killed their livelihoods in the hope that their oppressors would be removed, so did Mxolisi murder Amy Biehl, crying “One Settler! One Bullet!” in the hopes of rectifying and ending the trauma of the apartheid machine (205).

Mother to Mother moves from the political, away from literature as a weapon of culture, and towards aesthetic innovation and an imaginative reworking of temporality. Magona manipulates temporality and develops a mythic time that inserts Mxolisi into the Nongqawuse myth and the story of the Cattle Killing. She draws a parallel between Mxolisi and Nongqawuse: both are an embodiment of their society's values and desires, and yet both are rejected by the same society. Nongqawuse "had but voiced the unconscious collective wish of the nation," just as Mxolisi enacted the "deep, dark, private yearnings of a subjugated race" (210). Magona concludes the novel: "But for the chance of a day, the difference of one sun's rise, my son, perhaps not a murderer. Perhaps, not yet" (210).

Mandisa places her son within the Cattle Killing narrative, stating that "the difference of one sun's rise" would have kept her son from being a murder. This image reflects entangled time of the heterotopia, as the sunrise dually represents the start of the day of Amy's murder, and the second sunrise of the Cattle Killing that remains unfulfilled. *Mother to Mother* is based on true events, and the facts and times of Amy Biehl's murder are documented and accepted as truth. By ending the novel in a direct reference to Nongqawuse's prophecy, a direct privileging of mythic time, Magona brings into question the validity of standard time.

Mother to Mother focuses on the trauma caused not only by apartheid, but centuries of colonization. Like the TRC, the novel excavates trauma from the past; however, it problematizes the linear progression to healing. Shortly following the publication of *Mother to Mother*, Magona states that in the years after the elections in 1994, she was afraid that South Africans would "wake up in five years or ten years and

be badly surprised and angry... disillusioned because they were expecting far too much, more than could be delivered” (1990). Instead of presenting an utopian image of South Africa, Magona highlights the limitations of the linear constructs of the TRC. Ultimately, *Mother to Mother* reveals the interconnected nature of past and future which compels an entangled, traumatic time which embraces irresolution and encourages dialogue.

Gated Community Heterotopia and *Coconut*

One of the most discussed long narrative genres in the European tradition remains the classical *Bildungsroman*, or transformative, education novel. In the decades following the decolonization of Africa, contemporary critics have turned their attention towards the development, and in some cases rupture, of the postcolonial or African *Bildungsroman*. African novelists engage with the well-established genre discourse, but, while a well-known genre, the *Bildungsroman* tradition lacks all-inclusive consensus among scholars.²⁹ Tobias Boes (2006) ventures that the term *Bildungsroman*

remains at once one of the most successful and one of the most vexed contributions that German letters have made to the international vocabulary of literary studies. More, perhaps, than any with any other genre designation...the heuristic value of the *Bildungsroman* label has been disputed, defended, taken for granted, and otherwise muddled. (230)

This muddled nature concerns the plot, thematic, and aesthetics of the genre, and Marc Redfield (1995) maintains that *Bildungsroman* is a “phantom formation” which “doesn’t

²⁹ The European bildungsroman is already a genre of translation because it moves from Germany to England – Swales (1978) goes as far to begin his study of the Bildungsroman by suggesting: “By any standards, the German Bildungsroman is not an easily accessible novel tradition for the Anglo-Saxon reader” (ix).

properly exist” and is “a trope for the aspirations of aesthetic humanism” (10, 39).

Redfield continues his contention quoting what he deems Hegel’s “ironic summary” of the *Bildungsroman* plot, in which the hero “in the end usually gets his girl and some kind of position, marries and becomes a philistine just like the others” (39). While the aesthetic value and philosophical basis for the genre remains in flux, the fundamentals of this literary tradition involve the maturation, education, and enlightenment of the protagonist. However, additional characteristics of the *Bildungsroman* rise to the forefront when we consider post-colonial revision of the master genre narrative.

Early twentieth century scholar Wilhelm Dilthey (1913), set the stage for descriptions of the genre for the remainder of the century by suggesting that the *Bildungsroman* concerns “a regulated development within the life of the individual...the dissonances and conflicts of life appear as the necessary growth points through which the individual must pass on his way to maturity and harmony” (quoted in Swales 3). Martin Swales (1978) continues this assessment while analyzing the German novel tradition, stating that the genre is a “highly self-reflexive novel, one in which the problem of *Bildung*, of personal growth, is enacted in the narrator’s discursive understanding rather than in the events which the hero experiences” (4). The protagonist’s transition from disorder to development is often a social journey to become incorporated into society, or as Dilthey designates as obtaining “harmony.” The *Bildungsroman* is a novel of transformation in relation to both personal and social development, and the individual harmony necessitates social harmony.

When exploring the connection between human rights and narrative form, Joseph Slaughter (2007) suggests that the traditional *Bildungsroman* reflects the German ideal of

personality development: “simultaneously as an *unfolding* of an individual’s latent humanity in its encounter with the structures of the social world and as an *enfolding* of the individual within and by those structures” (101). This “double movement,” both internal and external formation, suggests a socio/political drive of the genre. Slaughter progresses the concept of double movement within the *Bildungsroman* to the narrative development of citizenship. He proposes,

The *Bildungsroman* represents and reproduces the socially acceptable form for the story of the human personality’s coming to historical and autobiographical consciousness—for both the novel’s protagonist and its reader, as potential civil subjects. In this sense, the genre itself becomes part of the objective world, a cultural form and social institution with which the individual’s untutored impulses for self-expression must be reconciled to acculturate to the modern social order. (117)

The social policing of the *Bildungsroman* highlights the genre’s connection to political and collective change within the ever-fluctuating modern world. When exploring the genre, Bakhtin (1981) emphasizes the connection between the *Bildungsroman* as a novel of emergence and historical change. He describes,

It is no longer man’s own private affair. He emerges along with the world and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself. He is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other. This transition is accomplished in him and through him. He is forced to become a new, unprecedented type of human being. What is happening here is precisely the emergence of a new man...it is as though the very *foundations* of the world are changing, and man must change with them. (23-24)

Slaughter utilizes Bakhtin’s focus on the transition of the subject alongside the development of time between historical eras to understand the significance of the

classical German *Bildungsroman*. He states, “the classical *Bildungsroman* bridges the transition from ritual, feudal, agricultural, and cyclical time to modern, secular, historical time...and establishes the syntactical patterns by which similarity and difference may be identified across time” (109).

These two characteristics of the *Bildungsroman*, the internal and external development of the subject along with the critical time of changing epochs translates to the postcolonial context—as individuals navigate identity and belonging in the transitions between colonialism and independence. Leela Gandhi (2001) unravels the *Bildungsroman* to echo the colonial mission of empire. She suggests, “in its European transmission, the narrative and ideology of *Bildung* aims to produce citizens: on its colonial travels, however, it aims somewhat differently to produce subjects” (60). Slaughter furthers Gandhi’s reading by suggesting “the foreign service of the *Bildungsroman* intended to consolidate a split between citizen and subject that, in Europe, the genre aimed to reconcile” (123). If the *Bildungsroman* served the expansion of the European empire and imagination, then postcolonial writers necessitate the transformation of the genre. With this transformation in mind, Slaughter connects the movement of the *Bildungsroman* to socially integrate the protagonist and the reader to the postcolonial condition, stating, “as part of its social work, the idealist *Bildungsroman* conventionalizes and naturalizes the...process by which historically marginal subjects are to become natural citizens” (27). The postcolonial *Bildungsroman* becomes a genre of identity formation and education of those previous marginalized and integrated into an oppressive culture. Feroza Jussawalla (1997) describes the transformative moment of the postcolonial *Bildungsroman*, suggesting that the hero “made his journey from the initial

cultural contact, the absorption into the colonizers' frame of mind, a move towards hybridity, and a final coming to a recognition of himself as belonging to the culture that he started from" (37).

Just as the traditional European *Bildungsroman* remains difficult to isolate and identify, the postcolonial, and in the case of this reading the African *Bildungsroman*, exists as a problematic genre; however, writers and critics are continually drawn to this tradition. Jose Santiago Fernandez Vazquez (1997) suggests that many postcolonial writers are drawn to the *Bildungsroman* because they are drawn to the connection between "the construction of the individual subject, which is the main topic of the traditional *Bildungsroman*, and the emergence of a postcolonial identity after World War I" (33). More importantly, Vazquez (2001) draws attention to the desire of postcolonial writers to rewrite and subvert the master narrative of the European *Bildungsroman*: "the desire to incorporate the master codes of imperialism into the text, in order to sabotage them more effectively" (86). Maria Helena Lima (1993) notes, "For "postcolonial writers [who] have used the *Bildungsroman* as a way of inventing fictions in order to understand/explain/constitute themselves," the genre presents an opportunity to "explore precisely the complexities and contradictions of growing up in a region where (post)colonial racial relationships exacerbated an already oppressive patriarchal situation" (440).

Contemporary black South African writers coopting the traditional *Bildungsroman* genre, respond to European, colonial, and apartheid master narratives of identity formation, education, and public integration into society. The *Bildungsroman* serves as a fertile genre for post-apartheid writers engaging with historical change and the

questions of belonging and identity. Kopano Matlwa's 2007 novel *Coconut* picks up the tradition of the *Bildungsroman* by presenting the narratives of two young black women maturing in contemporary South Africa under vastly different circumstances. While Matlwa interacts with the traditional novel of personal formation and education, she subverts the mission of the *Bildungsroman* to establish identity and social integration and harmony. Ultimately *Coconut* presents two first person narratives of Ofilwe (Fifi) and Fikile (Fiks), separated into two halves, and connected by a fleeting encounter in a café. Matlwa interrogates questions of race, privilege, and language in the bifurcated *Bildungsroman*; moreover, both girls struggle with their cultural/racial identities and place in the changing post-apartheid society. Ofilwe and Fikile aspire to be white and the novel details their internalization of whiteness and struggle to accept their identity as black women. The narrative projection follows what Gandhi suggests is the typical postcolonial *Bildungsroman*; however, Matlwa obscures her protagonists' culminating recognition of self. Vicki Manus (2012) describes the novel as "a narrative that poignantly straddles the two worlds of new black middle class, whose economic situation entitles them to move to what were previously whites-only suburbs; yet their cultural roots are in the indigenous rural community" (224-5).

Coconut is situated into a larger discourse of race and identity within South African youth culture. In what Manus recognizes as a subversion of Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), the coconut reveals an image of a black outside and white interior. Often used as an insult, the term "coconut" "is the African person, or the person of African descent, who, although black outside, is deemed by detractors to be white inside: that is, to have adopted certain traits which apparently deny an 'authentic'

Africanness” (Chapman 166). Matlwa’s novel in part sparked Ndile Mngxitama’s *City Press* article “Coconut Kids have Lost Touch with their Roots” (2007), in which he claims that the term/identity of the coconut is “peculiar” and the “development of post-apartheid South Africa has been the rapid emergence of influential young people who are neither black nor white” (np). He questions children who are being raised and educated into being “nothing but agents of whiteness...who will in the end denounce their own parents as too black and backward” (np). Mngxitama critique of “coconuts” expands on the imbedded discourse within Matlwa’s novel, that “coconuttiness” creates a destabilized subject. Drawing on both Matlwa and Mngxitama’s 2007 dialogue concerning the formation and sustainability of “coconut” identity, Natasha Distiller’s *Shakespeare and the Coconuts: On Post-apartheid South African Culture* (2011), suggests that

The ‘coconut’, burdened with the accusations of self-hatred or cultural rejection which the assumed imperative for social advancement in a neo-colonial society apparently commonsensically ensures, is intrinsically part of what it has always meant to be a particular kind of South African. The coconut kids are not a new invention. They belong to what this country is. As such, they cannot be fully inauthentically African. (143)

Distiller elevates and legitimates the coconut, in the face of criticism, as a uniquely South African identity blurring the binary between black/white, privilege/disadvantage, and tradition/development. Michael Chapman (2014) bolsters Distiller’s argument, claiming that she

grants the coconut a difficult, fraught, but creative, contribution to a modernizing South African identity: an identity which, while it cannot hope to encompass the full spectrum of diverse and unique body politic, can begin to complicate binary,

and often essentialized, categories of the West and Africa, or the modern or traditional. Indeed, such categorizations—often meant to be synonymous with white and black—are marshalled, in all kinds of discourse, in greater proportion than the more elusive and undoubtedly problematic category, South African: a category, which within a single geographical terrain, has to embody the heterogeneity of contested racial, economic, cultural and belief systems. (166)

Matlwa's novel unpacks the postcolonial *Bildungsroman* tradition, and presents the development of two diverse coconut identities which undermines the absolutism of racial binaries. Returning to the two notable aspects of the *Bildungsroman* translated to the postcolonial context—the dual creation of private and public subjects, and the connection of the protagonist to shifting historical epochs—*Coconut* is representative of the genre. Referring to the term “coconut,” Chapman recognizes the connection with the binary breaching identity and changing historical eras. He suggests that the term “coconuttiness” is a “wonderfully oxymoronic shorthand description of the move from the tribalized past, whether Europe or Africa, to a modicum of modernity, in which power shifts from kings, chiefs, or more recently, ‘big men,’ towards constitutional safeguards for all citizens” (166). The coconut identity formation parallels Bakhtin's assertion that the hero of the *Bildungsroman* “is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other...it is as though the very foundations of the world are changing, and man must change along with them” (23-4).

Coconut presents the growth and development of Ofilwe and Fikile coming to age in the first decades of post-apartheid South Africa, as they each straddle the traditions of their parents and predecessors, and the modernity of the post-apartheid era. Rita Barnard (2011) recognizes the novel's temporal straddle in terms of modernism and consumer culture. She states, “the ‘then’ and ‘now’ aspect of the novel's rendering of the cusp-time

of transition is gradually being replaced by the ‘here-and-there’ of a modernity from which a temporal and developmental thrust has disappeared” (229). While Barnard utilizes the “cusp-time of transition” in *Coconut* as an example of developing a post-apartheid modernist reading of contemporary South African literature, the simultaneous bridging and rupturing of historical time of the novel context, helps situate the novel within the *Bildungsroman* genre. Barnard does not discuss *Coconut* in terms of genre, besides arguing that it should be considered “something more than chick-lit fluff”; however, she concludes her discussion of modernist literature quoting Jed Esty’s work on the modernist *Bildungsroman* (2012). Esty suggests “the modernist era should be located at the dialectical switch-point between residual nineteenth-century narratives of global development and an emergent twentieth-century suspicion of such narratives as universalist and Eurocentric” (quoted in Barnard 239). Situated temporally in the “switch-point” of South African society which brought the identity of the coconut to the forefront of cultural discourse, Matlwa’s *Coconut* can be considered in the *Bildungsroman* generic tradition.

The narratives of the two girls are stylistically similar—first person stream of consciousness which transitions between memory and the present with the simple change of italic font. While their narrative voices remain similar, Ofilwe and Fikile represent two sides to the same coin. Ofilwe lives with her family in the gated community of Little Valley Country Estates as her father is a product of the upward mobility of Black Economic Empowerment. Ofilwe is concerned with her lack cultural connection to her heritage in comparison to others. In contrast, Fikile lives in a one room shack with her uncle behind a house in a Johannesburg township, and she envisions her blackness as the

only obstacle to achieving her dreams of success. As seen with the imbedded meaning of the title, each girl frequently contemplates issues of race in terms of their own black identity. Ofilwe repeatedly connects her perception of whiteness to beauty, or more specifically her blackness to undesirability, in flashbacks to various moments in her primarily white, former “Model C” school. The narrative begins with a memory of her desire for straight hair and the Black Queen Hair Straightener Cream:

American TV girls on the box of the relaxer cream had hair so straight and so long that Mama assured me it could not be real....a chemical reaction. A painful exothermic chemical reaction. Burn. Burning. Burnt...I was not bothered by the tenderness of my scalp that sent quivers down my neck as the teeth of the comb slid past it, nor was I alarmed at the white of my roots that had come to the surface. No, I was just delighted to be beautiful again. (3-4)

Ofilwe is willing to undergo incredible pain to modify her appearance, in order to fit into a wider cosmopolitan popular culture driven by Western values and Eurocentric features. Featured in the *New York Times*, Panashe Chigumadzi’s “White Schools vs. Black Hair in Post-Apartheid South Africa” (2016) speaks to the connection between natural hair, identity, and belonging. She states,

Today’s anti-black hair policies have a precedent in apartheid South Africa’s infamous “pencil test.” This was an important tool in the enforcement of the Population Registration Act of 1950, which classified people according to “racial characteristics”...whether someone’s hair would hold a pencil in place or let it fall through would help to place that person in apartheid’s racial hierarchy. Whether you had “white hair” or “black hair” thus determined access to all kinds of resources and opportunities. More than 60 years after that legislation, schools in South Africa are still using a de facto form of the pencil test to classify natural black hair as untidy or exotic, and thereby exclude noncompliant black children

from academic opportunities.³⁰

Ofilwe has adopted the condition of whiteness in relation to hair, and internally accepts apartheid racial, physical classification. However, she falsely views her chemically straightened hair as a path to whiteness.

Ofilwe also reflects on her blackness and how her peers perceive her. A boy in her class tells her she is different and “not like the other black girls in my class. He said I was calmer, cuter and that I looked a little like Scary Spice” (7). Again, Ofilwe desires not only her appearance to be whitewashed, but she also ignores the insinuation that she is less desirable because of her blackness. In her mind, Ofilwe overcomes her perceived disadvantage by pursuing a whitewashed appearance and personality. However, as the narrative progresses, she begins to further internalize her desire for whiteness and disregard for her true self. Evoking the memory of a childhood kissing game, she is unnerved by an experience of rejection based on the color of her skin, and the pronouncement from a boy she liked: “No ways! Her lips are too dark!” (44). Her internal monologue spirals around the rejection:

Now the eyelids fastened tight (No ways! Her lips are too dark), I shifted back to my ready spot (no ways! Her lips are too dark), unsure of what to do next (no ways! Her lips are too dark), whispering the words to myself, “No ways! Her lips are too dark), no believing they were spoken words (No ways! Her lips are too dark); live words (No ways! Her lips are too dark); words that had been followed

³⁰ In a lecture published in *The Guardian*, Chigumadzi appropriates the term “coconut” to dismantle the fantasy of a post-racial Rainbow Nation. She states, “I’ve chosen to appropriate the term and self-identify as a coconut because I believe it offers an opportunity for refusal. It’s an act of problematizing myself—and others—within the landscape of South Africa as part of a black middle class that is supposed to be the buffer against more ‘radical elements.’ Instead of becoming the trusted mediators between black and white, we are now turning to conceptions of blackness and mobilizing anger at the very concept of the rainbow nation. The fantasy of a color-blind, post-racial South Africa has been projected onto us coconuts, but our lived experiences are far from free of racism.”

by an explosion of general laughter (No ways! Her lips are too dark). (44-5)

Ofilwe internalizes the humiliation attached to the racism of her classmate, as his repetitious words invade her recollection. The connection between whiteness and physical desirability is reinforced when a fellow black student at the school rejects her romantic advances with a simple “Tell her I only date white girls” (23). The repeated negative utterances begin to shift and form Ofilwe’s self-identification and the outlook on her future. She discloses, “strangely enough, I think about my future children quite a bit. I imagine lovely round dimpled faces and Colgate smiles running past sticky walls. In my dreams they are painted in shades of pink. I am afraid of what that means” (57). Even though she values whiteness and desires to reflect Eurocentric features, Ofilwe fears her internalized whiteness, and questions her identity. She remains uncertain of her coconut identity as she develops internally and socially through the *Bildungsroman*.

Ofilwe’s identity development relates directly to the actions and beliefs of her family in post-apartheid South Africa. Though Ofilwe connects the possibility of progression and success with whiteness, she remains haunted by a nostalgia of her would-be life if her parents had not benefited from BEE and moved from their Sepedi village. Through her internal monologue she continually defines herself in terms of who she is not.

Ofilwe’s family has a pronounced obsession with European, particularly British culture. In fact, the present action of the novel occurs as Ofilwe and her family eat their weekly traditional British breakfast at the local Silver Spoon Café. Even her grandmother is infatuated with British culture, as Ofilwe admits, “Grandmother Tlou, Daddy’s mother, can tell you anything, including the things nobody would bother to know, about the

British royal family...daddy chided Grandmother Tlou for appearing to be more devastated over the death of the princess than that of her own husband four years earlier” (17). Remembering her grandmother’s actions, Ofilwe questions her connection to her own community and culture. While priding herself in physically resembling Scary Spice and American movie stars, her grandmother’s fascination triggers the question:

Who is my own Princess Di? Does my royal family still exist, some place out there in barren, rural South Africa? Please do tell me about their dynasty. I am afraid my history only goes as far back as lessons on the Dutch East India Company in grade two at Laerskool Valley Primary School. Were they once a grand people, ruling over a mighty nation, audaciously fighting off the advance of the colourless ones? (18)

Ofilwe continues this line of thought imagining how her life would be different if she had been born in her family’s village. The sensory detail and emotional reaction of the daydream reveals nostalgia for a life she has not lived:

Would I steal handfuls of sugar from the former mielie-meal bucket under the sink and run out to lie on the grass to let the sweet crystals melt on my tongue instead of forgetting to give daddy back his change, forget it was not mine for the keeping and forget I was not supposed to use it to buy honey and almond nougat bars from the health shop outside the estate gates. Instead of a decaf café latte at Dedazzle on Thursday nights would I freeze my Cool-Aid and save it for a really hot day?...would it be the complex security guard’s wandering eye or gunshots drawing ever closer in the night that made me uneasy? Would it be brightly lit tarred roads or whistling dusty streets that I travelled along? (13-4)

Ofilwe desires a life that is unobtainable from her middleclass, gated community and coconut existence. She questions her own belonging in the idealized world of BEE upward mobility passing behind closed gates, instead she craves the home of her

ancestors—what her mother calls “home-home,” the space of belonging they left behind in the Eastern Cape.

The novel presents very little action that can be considered plot, yet both narratives turn on a brief encounter between Ofilwe and Fikile at the Silver Spoon Café. Sunday Mornings at the Silver Spoon Café become a ritual of racial performativity for Ofilwe’s family. Through their presence in a traditionally white café, eating a traditional English breakfast, Ofilwe’s family endeavors to cement their own belonging, and through attempted passing and performance they desire to legitimize their place in the supposed new South Africa. Despite their repeated attempts, Ofilwe only feels less and less at home, and notices her non-whiteness more and more. On the day of the encounter, Ofilwe describes the breakfast, and her impressions of Fikile, and the narrative is sliced by her internal monologue which begins to resemble a prayer where she agonizingly recognizes her blackness and unbelonging. These glimpses reveal Ofilwe’s disgust towards Fikile’s performed whiteness, but her inability to recognize the same fault within herself. Ofilwe considers Fikile as she talks to other patrons in the cafe,

I do not like Fikile. She has a strange air about her. Although small, Fikile can’t be much older than me. Is she not embarrassed? Does she not wonder what the rest of us will think of her Hanky-Pankies with that *Oupa*? The grey-headed, pale man with the blue eyes she has been speaking to looks like he has been in that suit since Friday morning. Stale. The type you know is pathetically desperate. Sies. Is a lack of melanin her only criterion? (22)

Ofilwe wonders if the other young woman is embarrassed at her behavior, and yet the narrative immediately switches to Ofilwe’s prayer, signaled only by the change to italics, and reveals that it is Ofilwe who is ashamed while at the Silver Spoon Café:

I hate it, Lord. I hate it with every atom of my heart. I am angry, Lord. I am burning within. I am furious. I do understand. Why, Lord? Look at us, Lord, sitting in this corner. A corner. A hole. Daddy believes he enjoys this food. Poor Mama, she still struggles with this fork and knife thing. Poor us. Poor, poor, poor, pathetic us. It is pitiful. What are we doing here? Why did we come? We do not belong. (31)

Ofilwe is ashamed of and pained by her family's desperate attempt to belong. However, the encounter reveals the heart of the issues with post-apartheid society which Ofilwe feels necessitates their passing and her desire to be white. She prays,

We dare not eat with our naked finger tips, walk in generous groups, speak merrily in booming voices and laugh our mqombothi laughs. They will scold us if we dare, not with their lips, Lord, because the laws prevent them from doing so, but with their eyes. They will shout, "stop acting black!" "stop acting black!" is what they will shout. And we will pause, perplexed, unsure of what that means, for are we not black, Father? No, not in the malls, Lord. We may not be black in restaurants, in suburbs and in schools. Oh, how it nauseates them if we even fantasize about being black, truly black. The old rules remain and the old sentiments are unchanged. We know, Lord, because those disapproving eyes scold us still; that crisps air of hatred and disgust crawls into our wide-open nostrils still. (32)

Even while desiring to physically conform and reflect white traits of appearance and demeanor, it is her encounter with Fikile—witnessing a mirror of her own coconutiness—that prompts Ofilwe to excavate her authentic desire and belief that it is impossible to find true home in society still acting on apartheid norms.

In many ways, Fikile's life is the reversed mirror image of Ofilwe. Instead of living in a traditionally white, gated security park with many of the same privileges of the former apartheid ruling class, Fikile lives in "a one-bedroom hovel" in the garden of a

Johannesburg Mphe Batho township house. Ofilwe is part of a stereotypical middle-class family with a supportive mother and father; however, Fikile, orphaned young, lives with her pedophilic uncle. Ofilwe has a room of her own and space for solitude.

Contrastingly, Fikile sleeps on “on the hard cement floor...without the protection of any covers,” of which she states, “it’s actually not all that bad. I use old sweaters as pillows and in the winter sleep in three or four layers of clothing....five years since that night I decided it was not my responsibility to lull Uncle to sleep by rubbing his dick. And now it is only my neck that continues to groan and moan” (115-6). Despite the differences in their upbringing—Ofilwe’s privilege and Fikile’s poverty and years of sexual abuse—both girls possess similar desires to be white. Ofilwe associates whiteness with beauty while she maintains nostalgia for a culture to which she has never belonged, but Fikile sees whiteness as the only means to achieve success and allow her to move “out of this hole, gone and gone for good, never to return again” (116).

In a narrative voice similar to Ofilwe’s interior monologue of the book, Fikile reflects on her internalization of white culture and ultimate coconut identity. Instead of questioning this identity as Ofilwe, Fikile wishes to be seen as only white. She recalls processing this desire as a child when asked about her future by her classroom teacher:

And you, Fikile, what do you want to be when you grow up?

White, Teacher Zola, I want to be white...

But why would you want to do that, dear?

Because it’s better.

What makes you think that, Fikile?

Everything. (135)

This desire and belief continue into the present moments of the narrative as she travels to work at the Silver Spoon Café. She gazes at other township residents with a sense of

superiority bolstering her internal monologue. She ruminates, “*I am not one of you*. I want to tell them. Some day you will see me drive past here in a sleek air-conditioned car, and I will roll up my windows if you try to come near me, because *I am not one of you*. You are poor and black and I am rich and brown” (140). Again, the connection between success and material possessions is tied to Fikile’s perception of her skin’s lightness compared to those around her. To assert her own subjectivity and power to shape her future, Fikile repeatedly defines herself by those she perceives to be the other, which further separates her from her heritage and the possibility for community connections. She sees the township and other members of her community as necessary players to define her own internalized whiteness and subjectivity. When questioning if the township, and her own shack should advance so that every home has running water, she doubts, “but perhaps it is for the better that the conditions in this dump never improve. They can serve as a constant reminder to me of what I do not want to be: black, dirty and poor. This bucket [to collect rain water] can be a daily motivator for me to keep me working towards where I will someday be: white, rich, and happy” (118).

Fikile drafts a new narrative of her life to fulfil her internalized whiteness and shortens her name to the easier English pronunciation “Fiks.” Fikile tells her employer and patrons of the Silver Spoon Café a story to establish her alleged superiority to other black South Africans. She recalls snippets from various conversations, the texts presents only one side of the conversation, which allows readers to question the reality of the dialogue that Fikile tells herself to reinforce her assumed identity. She begins by claiming, “I grew up in white environments for the most part of my life, from primary school right through high school,” and progresses to assert, “many people think I am

foreign, from the UK or somewhere there. I think it's because my accent is so perfect and my manner so refined. Yes, I have always been different" (146). Ultimately, Fikile polishes and expands her story to the point that she alleges that "I lived in England for a while, Mummy and Daddy still lecture there. I couldn't stand the weather, absolutely dreadful, so I moved back here first chance I got" (146). The narrative shifts and Fikile defends and justifies her untrue self-aggrandizement: "It wasn't all lies. I have never been able to relate to other blacks, that's is the honest to God truth" (146).

Fikile's self-formation continues past the present into what she deems "Project Infinity" or her plan to realize her dreams of white privilege, as she has never let go of her childhood goal of being successful, rich and happy—all the qualities she associates with being white. All of her hopes for the future rest on this dream she developed as a child, and she concedes, "I have not a cent in the bank nor very much of an education, but a heart so heavy with ambition that it may just fall to the depths of my stomach if Project Infinity is not realized" (110). Readers learn the details of Project Infinity as the text switches between Fikile's opinions of the present moment at the Silver Spoon Café, the afternoon when Ofilwe's family performs their ritual of the traditional English breakfast, and her memories and theories of her life plan. Separated only by line breaks and shifting italics, Fikile's internal monologue oscillates between disgust of Ofilwe's family's failed attempts at passing, and her glorified, abstract idea of the future. When the Tlous family enters the Silver Spoon, Fikile criticizes,

I do not serve the black families, they're just an annoyance and waste of my time. Especially this specific family. I hate them. I hate them so much. I don't know why they come here. Every Sunday they come, nobody knows who they are, they do not fit in here, everybody can see it, everybody knows it, I am sure they know

it too, but they come anyway. Such forced individuals. New money is what they are and I hate them. (165)

Ignoring the family, Fikile becomes introspective and remembers first developing Project Infinity when she was 11. Following the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, this moment becomes a critical point in Fikile's self-formation. Fikile learns about the concept of infinity from her teacher, Mrs. Zodwa, but she does not believe that something so immeasurable could exist. She immediately turns to the dictionary to do her own research, and it is then that Fikile begins to formulate her plan and allow Project Infinity to shape her life. Fikile's self-motivated education parallels the *Bildungsroman* genre as Jerome Hamilton Buckley (1974) notes that one of the principle elements include "unprescribed reading" and "self-education." (16-7). Additionally, Ralph Austen (2000) asserts that "unprescribed reading" and "self-education" "becomes especially acute in the African *Bildungsroman*, where literacy itself is an issue inevitably associated with an alien colonial education system" (219). Fikile's initiative to learn propels the development of her life-altering plan based on the concept of representing limitless potential:

It came to represent all I strove for in life. It became my secret word, a charm I hung around the neck of my soul, the key to something limitless. I know that someday I would achieve Project Infinity. It did not matter that I was not exactly sure what Project Infinity was, because I knew it would be infinitely better than where I was then. I would leave this life of blackness and embark on something larger than large and greater than great, something immeasurable and everlasting. (171)

She goes on to admit that "*people like me have to make difficult choices. We were not the fortunate ones who were born into the lap of luxury, and so we have to fight our way*

there. Anything worth having in life comes at a price. A price that is not always easy” (176). Fikile is abruptly drawn out of her meditation as the narrative shifts and she waits on the Tlous family. As they leave, she notices “of course they go without leaving a tip, but then again, what more does one expect from black people?” (176). In this moment, the balancing point of the two narratives, both girls see each other, see themselves in each other, and are simultaneously filled with revulsion and desire for change.

Following the *Bildungsroman* tradition, Fikile and Ofilwe develop privately and socially as they face reevaluations of apartheid racial categories. Matlwa destabilizes racial identity as well as the potential for belonging. Aretha Phiri suggests that *Coconut*

Consistently problematizes and undermines racial absolutism and authenticity. The novel, while gesturing toward essentialism, highlights race and culture as inevitably porous and performative, precisely a “mirage”...in a world in which whiteness and blackness in fact mirror and reflect each other in shifting and complex ways, *Coconut* exposes race and culture as dialectical fictions. (172)

As Mtlwa destabilizes concepts of race and culture, she also dismantles the essentialist nature of both the traditional *Bildungsroman* and the postcolonial *Bildungsroman*. Both the traditional and postcolonial *Bildungsroman* are linear in movement as the protagonist undergoes personal and cultural education and ends with a recognition of self and belonging in society. The Eurocentric model of the genre focuses on the protagonist’s journey to become a spiritually, morally, and socially mature citizen, while the postcolonial *Bildungsroman* often reveals the hero who “reaffirms his or her turn away from westernization or modernization and turns towards an introspective knowledge of who he or she is within the parent culture” (Jussawalla 31). Matlwa’s *Coconut* breaks from both traditions, and instead of presenting a unified protagonist possessing an

understanding of herself spiritually and within culture, Ofilwe and Fikile's narratives both end in ambiguity. *Coconut* ends with the two protagonists increasingly divided and psychologically displaced, which is in direct contrast to the *Bildungsroman* hero's initiation into modern culture, or as Marianne Hirsch (1979) deems the "precise stand and assessment of himself and his place in society" (298). Neither Ofilwe nor Fikile can fully integrate into a society still dominated by Eurocentric values, and at the same time, neither young woman possesses the ability to return to the culture of her parents and ancestors. Alternatively, Ofilwe and Fikile occupy the space of the coconut in contemporary South Africa.

Ofilwe's narrative begins to reflect her fragmented sense of self as she contemplates her inability to integrate fully into white or black culture and ultimately society haunted by colonialism and apartheid. Moving alphabetically, the narrative becomes a list of consumer culture—items and experiences which shape Ofilwe's self-identity and belonging:

After-Sun. Bikini. Ballet. Barbie and Ken. Cruise. Disneyland. Disco. Diamonds and Pearls. Easter Egg. Fettuccine. Frappe. Fork and Knife. Gymnastics. Horse Riding. Horticulture. House in the Hills. Indoor Cricket. Jungle Gym. Jacuzzi. Jumping Jacks and Flip Flacks. Khaki. Lock. Loiter. Looks like Trouble. Maid. Native. Nameless. No, not me, Madam. Napoleon. Ocean. Overthrow. Occupy and Rule. Palace. Quantity. Quantify. Queen of England. Red. Sunscreen. Suntan. Sex on the Beach. Tinkerbelle. Unicorn. Oopsy Daisy. Unwrap them all at once! Video Games. World Wide Web. Wireless Connection. Xmas. Yoga. Yo-yo diet. You, and You and you. Zero Guilt. (41)

This list reveals the influences of Ofilwe's culture as she describes herself as a glass of water "forgotten on a tray in the reading room, we start to collect bits...bits of bits. All

sorts of bits. No two combinations the same” (41).³¹ Ofilwe’s internal monologue reveals the discontinuities with herself, and the gaps and ruptures only continue to grow as the narrative progresses.

Instead of Ofilwe’s narrative ending with an understanding of herself and her place in society, Ofilwe remembers her brother’s questions “*are you not tired Ofilwe?*” and “*who are you, Ofilwe? You do not know who you are,*” as well as his final assertion that she is “*stuck between two worlds, shunned by both*” (41, 96). She ends her narrative no longer striving to understand herself and her place, but stuck in an ambiguous zone of hybridity. The forward motion of the *Bildungsroman* is halted as she asserts, “I just sit here. I’m done. I am done with doing calculations. I am through with working out vectors. For now it is no longer a goal of mine to find answers. It is what it is. Why try and understand it?” (96).

Like Ofilwe, Fikile is unable to progress in her narrative to reach an understanding of herself or her place in society. Both girls ultimately desire a sense and place of belonging; however their hybrid, coconut identities necessitate a liminal space of physical and spiritual home. Fikile’s narrative ends much the same as Ofilwe’s—in ambiguity. She states,

I need to spring-clean my head. There is a real big mess up there but I am too afraid to go in because I do not think I have the strength to handle the task of tidying it all...I am fearful of the cluttered floor, the dusty shelves, the locked cases, the stuffed drawers, the broken bulbs and the cracked windows. (177)

³¹ She continues the metaphor: “like the two glasses of water forgotten on a tray in the reading room, we start to collect bits. Bits of fluff, bits of a broken beetle wing, bits of bread, bits of pollen, bits of shed epithelial cells, bits of hair, bits of toilet paper, bits of airborne fungal organisms, bits of bits. All sorts of bits. No two combinations the same. Just like with the glasses of water, environment, jealous of our fundamentality, bombards our basic minds with complexity. So we become frighteningly dissimilar, until there is very little that holds us together” (41).

Reminiscent of Ofilwe's water cups full of bits, Fikile imagines her mind as a cluttered, dirty home full of the detritus of her existence. She ends her narrative stuck, no longer progressing to develop personally and socially, repeating that she is tired—

I am tired of waiting, waiting for the day when it will all be different, when it will be my turn, my story, my rose. I am tired of the fear, the anxiety, the endless debates within my head, the empty feeling in my chest and the knot in my stomach. I am tired of looking around, in the mirror, at my legs and my hands wondering when they will be different. I am tired of the same outfit worn in different styles. I am tired of sleepless nights, phone calls to far-away places, crossed fingers and bended knees. (178)

Fikile reveals her mired progress with word play, utilizing the polarized meanings of the minimal pair “tired/tried.” She states, I am tired, I have tried. I am always trying, but now I am tired. I want it now” (178). Fikile remains stuck, unable to move beyond her desire to be white, even though she is tired from the struggle of reshaping her identity.

Throughout the novel, the setting plays a notable role in shaping both girls perception of others and themselves. This influence is especially true of the gated community in which Ofilwe lives and Fikile works nearby. Matlwa utilizes the setting of the gated community to interrogate not only the coconut existence and (in)ability to find belonging, but the ambiguous and fabricated nature of houses behind locked gates in South Africa. The gated community, or security park, depends on the perpetuation of binary oppositions of identity and belonging, including us/them and inside/outside; moreover, the gated community in Matlwa's *Coconut* can be explored as a heterotopia.

Post-1994 South Africa has witnessed a dramatic increase in security parks and gated communities as a result of white South Africans' response to “emigrate or dig in with style.” Gated communities in South Africa remain a prominent site of criticism in

South Africa, and I am not the first to suggest that the security park reflects Foucault's description of the heterotopia. Derek Hook and Michele Vrdoljak (2002) analyze the security park and its social and racial privilege in terms of Foucault's spatial construct.

They suggest,

Given that heterotopias are those 'other' places which arise around points of crisis (and particularly around crises of living space), it would seem as if there could be little doubt that the security-park qualifies as a heterotopia, at least in the sense that upper-class (and predominantly white) South Africa perceives the current crime problem as attaining crisis-proportions. (211)

Building on Hook and Vrdoljak's historic analysis, I suggest that the gated community heterotopia is a place of otherness which helps reveal Ofilwe and Fikile's increasing destabilization of self. The heterotopia is not a space of hybridity itself, but an "other" space which necessitates the creation of hybrid identities—in this case, the coconut identity which rejects *Bildungsroman* narrativization.

Following Foucault's conceptualization, the gated community, functions as a heterotopia of compensation in relation to the space that remains. As such the gated community represents an attempt to create a perfect space in comparison to the rest of South Africa, "as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged" as the South African reality is "messy, ill constructed, and jumbled" (Foucault 8). The gated community heterotopia represents an attempted utopia, and Hook and Vrdoljak draw attention to the idyllic imagery associated with these sites of exclusion, suggesting, "Security-park developments are more easily dissociated from the city and its environs by being portrayed as 'rustic escapes.' Imaging a bucolic rural lifestyle is achieved through continual reference to nature...the result...is the promise of a lifestyle increasingly

divorced from reality” (201). The heterotopian gated community in *Coconut* is presented as an attempted rural utopia, and Ofilwe observes,

Little Valley Country Estates sells itself as your rustic escape from the rat race. Daddy says that there were many such developments coming up in the city when he bought our house because South Africans were attracted to the idea of a residential area right in the melting pot of the country but even more so to ones that also assured the 24-hour a day maximum security mandatory for survival in Johannesburg. Daddy, however, said that he fell for Little Valley because they had created the most captivating horse-riding trails within their estate, and although he did not ride, he said that they were reason enough to learn to. (74)

Leaving behind their actual rural home in the formal Transvaal, Ofilwe’s family adopts a fabricated pastoral utopia maintained by language, gates, and regulations.

As a heterotopia, the gated community relies on a codified form of entrance and exit, as Foucault suggests, “the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place. Either the entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications. To get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures” (7). In the case of Little Valley Country Estates, entrance and exit are controlled by gates, barbed wire, and an established form of ritual. Ofilwe describes,

Residents of Little Valley Country Estates use a hand sensor to enter through the booms at the main gatehouse. Guests use a separate entrance. Guests are only allowed in after their visit has been telephonically verified by the guards, with those whom they are there to see. Daddy greets the security guard who is writing down the number plates of the vehicles lined up at the Visitors to the Estate Admissions Gate with his left hand while his right hand commands the striped red-and-white poles to rise. (71)

The controlled entrance and exit fortifies the development of an insider/outside and us/them mentality for inhabitants, visitors, and those who inevitably remain outside of the gate. Instead of responding to the real threat of danger in South African urban areas, Hook and Vrdoljak highlight that the gated community heterotopia creates a precedent for legitimizing separation. They highlight that “these divisions defer largely to the structural socio-historical opportunities left behind by apartheid, and serve to reify inequality in the old terms of a privileged white minority and a dispossessed black majority” (204).

The heterotopia becomes the space build around the policing of identity, not only through entrance and exit, but through the development of micro-governance. Matlwa highlights the development of the gated, security park as a heterotopian, other space, by revealing the homeowner association’s role in policing culture and identity. Ofilwe describes the response of the artificial governing body to her family’s Thanksgiving ceremony which required the letting of blood from a live animal. They received a letter of complaint

From two security guards that explained that the couple in NO. 2042 behind us had alerted them that we were sacrificing animals after they spotted a chicken hung up on our washing line. The letter warned that we were liable to be heavily fined because we had breached rule no. 12.3 and 15.1 in the Little Valley Country Estates Code of Conduct Handbook.

12.3 Residents of Little Valley Country Estate may not keep any wild animal, livestock, poultry, reptiles or aviaries or any other animal of the sort on the Estate grounds.

15.1 Residents of Little Valley Country Estate must avoid installing visible laundry lines, Wendy houses, tool sheds, pet accommodation and the like in areas that are visible from public view and must ensure that the

above are screened from neighbouring properties. (73)

It is not the sacrificial ritual itself that troubles the homeowners association, but the animal and the washing line that detracts from the pristine nature of the community.

Concerned with appearances, the gated community heterotopia also combines many spaces into one in terms of architecture. Hook and Vrdoljak are quick to point towards this qualifying condition of the heterotopia, asserting, “Tudor, Mediterranean, medieval and modern styles frequently coexist in the security-park, in a mishmash of colliding architectural genres” (201). Ofilwe similarly comments on the artificial spatial heterogeneity of the estates,

“‘Tuscan is the architectural style,’ the sales agent had said to Daddy...however, inside my home it is not the smell of sautéed prawns and ricotta stuffed pasta with mushroom sauce that wafts into the garden, but rather the sharp smell of mala le mogodu” (75).

Matlwa highlights the heterotopian nature of the gated community as a space contesting and navigating identity. Immediately following her recognition that her gated home brings together divergent spaces and identities, Ofilwe’s narrative turns introspective as she returns to her ongoing prayer-like rumination of self. She contemplates,

I do not know where I may have lived before, or who I may have been. I do know that this world is strange, though, and I somewhat of an anachronism. Locked in. Uncertain whether I have come to love this cage too. Afraid of the freedom that those before the time before—before I knew. There is jeopardy in the sky. (75)

The heterotopian space mirrors Ofilwe’s, and in turn Fikile’s, fracturing of self and attempts to find belonging; moreover, Matlwa utilizes the heterotopia to highlight the liminal space and identity of the “coconut” of contemporary South Africa. As Zembylas

and Ferreira assert, “heterotopias challenge the affective space in which we may have settled and thus allow the invention of new identity configurations” (5).

Post-Apartheid Novels of Home as Heterotopias

My analysis of the homes in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, *Mother to Mother*, and *Coconut* center on the spatial constructs of heterotopias as spaces which assists in destabilizing traditional genre norms. The heterotopias of the farm house, township home, and the home of the gated community each reflect Foucault’s spatial formation of “other spaces,” and they “challenge the ways we think and feel, interrogate our discourses and practices, and contest the normalities in which we often settle” (Zembylas and Ferreira 5). The heterotopian homes in these novels challenge the norms of belonging and identity, and the novels themselves also serve as heterotopias which question the conventions of genre as well as Eurocentric and postcolonial discourse.

Foucault’s conceptualization of the heterotopia can be considered not only in terms of physical space, but also as a discursive/linguistic site that disrupts our normal sense of order, and as Benjamin Genocchio (1995) suggests “gives each the ability to transgress, undermine and question the alleged coherence or totality of self-contained orders and systems” (37). These sites that undermines order, and in my analysis of the *plaasroman*, protest novel, and *Bildungsroman* genre, are the novels themselves. In “Of Other Spaces,” as Foucault outlines the principles of the spatial heterotopia, he presents the mirror as the quintessential “other space,” which I suggest relates directly to post-

apartheid novels interrogating belonging and, borrowing Ndebele phrase, redefining relevance. Of the mirror, Foucault states,

From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me. From the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass. I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal. (4)

The novels in my study reflect society back on itself, and serve as catalysts for examinations of self and identity. *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, *Mother to Mother*, and *Coconut* are unreal, other spaces of deviation which suspend and expand the norms of genre conventions. These heterotopian novels reflect the society that they represent, and juxtapose multiple identities and spaces of elsewhere coming together. Following Foucault's principles of the heterotopia, heterotopian novels are linked to slices of time, and while they are transitory, the novels simultaneously accumulate time. Zadok, Magona, and Mtlawa present the fleeting moments of Faith, Mandisa, Ofilwe, and Fikile's lives, and the characters' histories and experiences are abridged to passing words on the page. However, the novels build on the accumulated history of the nation, the land, and human experience, and will continue to exist—suspended in an accumulation of time—in the present moment of the reader. Finally, these novels represent textual heterotopias of illusion, and reflect the complicated, ambiguous, and shifting reality of post-apartheid South Africa. Instead of a heterotopia of compensation, which Foucault suggests is a space that is “as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill

constructed, and jumbled,” the novels as heterotopias of illusion recognize the beauty in the ordinary, disordered human existence (8). Specifically, *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, *Mother to Mother*, and *Coconut* reflect the at times “messy, ill constructed, and jumbled” struggle for belonging, and the search of home in the nation.

CHAPTER III: APARTHEID TRANSITION AND THE SPATIAL UNCANNY

The end of apartheid catalyzed a generic shift in diverse sub-genres of the South African novel, and the separation of aesthetics and politics removed focus from protest and gave rise to the developing genre of South African crime fiction. Crime novels, often underestimated as popular fiction, interrogate the political, social, and ideological ambiguities of the first decades of the democratic nation, and seek justice by uncovering hidden truths. The TRC-like thrust of crime fiction shifts the focus of the novel from an engagement with apartheid, the “sustained, singular crime that bent this country so badly out of shape,” to “violence that continues to unravel our social fabric” (Orford 220). Margie Orford (2013) claims that crime fiction “is a negotiation of social anxiety,” which reveals the multileveled ambiguity that characterizes post-apartheid South Africa (221). Jonathan Amid and Leon de Kock (2014) suggest that “if the state no longer monopolizes violence, then it becomes increasingly difficult to know what and who is right, what and who ‘wrong’” (59). This ambiguity of guilt and morality—simultaneously creating the space for and issuing from the genre’s overarching thematic impetus—remains inseparable from the racial legacy of apartheid.

Post-1994 South African crime novels are written primarily by white South African writers. Moreover, de Kock deems this preoccupation with often violent crime as a “white whine” reworking the “black peril” colonial and apartheid narrative of black on white crime (61).³² White crime fiction represents the infiltration of black township crime

³² De Kock utilizes Lucy Graham’s tracing of “black peril” in South African literature which capitalizes on the fear of black men raping white women. See, Graham’s (2012) *State of Peril: Race and Rape in South African Literature*.

that once only haunted the secure white suburbs through news reports. Apartheid itself was built on separating the white minority from black crime and violence, and the end of apartheid presented not only the conclusion of racial division, but also the loss of a barrier containing crime and keeping it out of the white home. Gary Kynoch (2013) describes the political and social shift to democracy and the increase in white fear, where “previously insulated from the worst effects of violent crime, the white population was shaken to the core by the robberies, hijackings and home invasions that introduced a horrifying new element into their lives” (428). The white fear underlying the South African crime novel reveals the nation’s focus on crime since the late 1990s, which reflects a perspective that Antony Albeker (2007) deems “selfish and self-regarding” to overlook centuries of crime against black South Africans (65). He emphasizes, “it is horribly unjust that it is crime’s movement into the suburbs—rather than its already high levels in the townships—that has made violence so significant politically” (65).

A study of white crime fiction not only reveals an underlying fear of racial hostility and violence, but also the struggle to be at home in the nation reeling from the apartheid past and moving towards equality. The struggle to be at home and a growing anxiety about the future pervades the genre, as Kynoch highlights that many white south Africans “see themselves as unmoored from the state that formerly promoted their interests, including, vitally, protection from the black majority” (439). In the first decade of the 21st century, I believe that white, male South African writers present characters grappling with the national transition and increasingly feel unmoored and unhomed in their physical dwellings and social emotional connections to the nation and community. The concept of the unhomely provides a fertile framework to explore the psychic

development of white male characters, created by white male South African writers, during unhomey moments of crime. In these moments, their private, present, and interior homes conflate with the public, past, and outside world. Specifically, David Lurie in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), Rubin Olivier in Andre Brink's *The Rights of Desire* (2001), and Frank Eloff and Adam Napier from Damon Galgut's *The Good Doctor* (2003) and *The Impostor* (2008), face their own unhomey existence in post-transition South Africa as they grapple with being both witness to and participant in crime.

Unheimlich, or the unhomey for Freud, "was more than a simple sense of not belonging; it was the fundamental propensity of the familiar to turn on its owners, suddenly to become defamiliarized, derealized, as if in a dream" (Vidler 7).³³ Ultimately, Freud draws the distinction that "the uncanny *unheimlich* applies to everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open" (132). Considered temporally, the uncanny confuses the barrier between past and present and blurs questions of progress, and Ato Quayson (2003) echoes Freud, underscoring the connection between "the unsettling recognition of the strange within something that is normally perceived as *Heimlich* or ordinary...a breach in the commonplace" and trauma, repressed anxiety, and memory recall (80).

Expanding the uncanny to architecture, Anthony Vidler suggests that the unhomey "open[s] up problems of identity around the self, the other, the body and its

³³ Anneleen Masschelein is quick to point out that many scholars use the term '*unheimlich*' "rather than its transition (often in grammatically incorrect ways) in order to pun on the root "*heim/home*" leading to the alternative concept 'unhomey' in architecture and postcolonial theory. This fetishistic attachment to the signifier again reveals the complex relationship between word and concept" (14). Throughout this chapter, I use uncanny and unhomey interchangeably when referencing "*unheimlich*"; however, I primarily use "unhomey" as the postcolonial term developed from the ideas of the psychic uncanny, which confer on the term spatial rather than temporal import. Gelder and Jacobs' connect this dreamlike defamiliarization and derealization to "one's sense of place in the modern, changing environment and it attends to anxieties which are symptomatic of an ongoing process of realignment in the post-war modern world" (23).

absence: thence its force in interpreting the relations between the psyche and the dwelling, the body and the house, the individual and the metropolis” (x). The spatial framework of the uncanny emphasizes a connection between place and power, and its critical anxiety focuses on the intersections and juxtapositions of public/private and internal/external space. These interstitial spaces—blending the public with private and the internal with external, as well as spatial representations of the temporal past within the present—are the spaces of the uncanny, which catalyze the disintegration of self-identification and Freud’s potential for neurosis.

Important to my use of the term is Homi Bhabha’s “The World in the Home” (1992), which reconfigures and translates the uncanny to the spatial dimension of the *unheimlich*—the unhomely. Celia Britton (1999) suggests that Bhabha’s “unhomeliness is the anxiety that accompanies both the repression of the historical trauma and the ‘estranging relocation’ of cross-cultural experience,” and Bhabha highlights the importance of examining the concept and image of the home in literature, asserting that in the uncanny of displacement “the border between home and world becomes confused...forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting” (121) (144). This unhomely existence is illustrated by the image of the house or dwelling which allows a visualization of the collapse between world and home, or perhaps more appropriately, world into home. The term “uncanny” can be used to describe South Africa’s colonial and apartheid past—“marked with incursions of the grotesque, the uncanny, and the apparitional”; however, it is the moment following transition that

remains psychically, temporally, and I suggest—spatially uncanny.³⁴ As Quayson asserts, “in situations of long-term social disjuncture, such as under apartheid, the social can be read as a locus for the mapping of psycho-structural trauma and the evolution of social reactions and perceptions” (208).³⁵ The “white whine” of crime fiction reflects the perceived uncanny displacement of white South Africans anxious over belonging in the face of evolving social perceptions, and unable to contain the threat of crime following a collapse of the world into home.

Gerry Turcotte (2002) asserts that “uncanny narratives are ruptured spaces, forever incomplete because of excess meaning, the past and the present are forever in competition and, hence, contaminating each other—they inhabit the same space simultaneously—making resolution impossible” (135). The search for reconciliation always will be inevitably uncanny, and images and concepts of physical and spiritual homes reveal post-apartheid white crime novels as ruptured spaces of the unhomey.

Rita Barnard suggests, “the comfortable suburban house, in both a historical and socially symbolic sense, was inseparably connected to its prototypical and repressed other: through the house in the township, a place that has remained unseen (perhaps even now) by many, if not most, white South Africans” (49). Barnard goes on to suggest that in Freudian terms apartheid functioned “by mechanisms of neurosis (repression),” and therefore, white South African writers persist in a mode of writing “that is precisely

³⁴ Jack Shear uses these terms to describe the uncanny nature of colonial and apartheid South Africa in his exploration of haunted houses in Marlene van Niekerk’s *Triomf* (2004).

³⁵ Many scholars have commented on the uncanny nature of the TRC proceedings which highlight and perpetuate the uncanny moment of the conflation of the familiar and unfamiliar and the past alive in the present. Charmaine McEachern (2002) states, that the media perpetuated uncanniness made “that which was familiar strange thus opening up the way for new ways of looking ... worked to produce sameness rather than difference and so deconstruct both Other and Self under apartheid...the uncanny is a condition of the TRC’s enactment of transition” (55). The TRC ruptured the space between the secret, hidden, and repressed history of apartheid in the present.

neurotic, perpetually engaged in recording the return of the repressed, in seeking out what lies at the limits of its own epistemological frame. It is a literature hovering, as a result of its peculiar geopolitical situation, between colonial and the postcolonial” (47). Barnard builds her observations on Lars Engle’s (1993) theory of the political uncanny in relation to white South African writers. Engle characterizes the political uncanny as:

The return of repressed truths, the rising of dead bodies, the discovery of the strange in the close at hand and of the familiar in the bizarre...it arises not so much when the world plays disturbing tricks on us, but when our minds, or our senses, play disturbing tricks on themselves, so that any security we enjoy with respect to the content of our minds is diminished. (111)³⁶

While Engle specifically addresses white apartheid era writers, I believe the characteristics of the political uncanny as a mode of writing hold equal importance for the post-transition dispensation—specifically, the emerging crime novel genre. Engle states that “the uncanny event is trying to change one’s mind, to admit new categories or reject old ones, and forced change is painful” (113). The unsympathetic male protagonists of *Disgrace*, *The Rights of Desire*, *The Good Doctor*, and *The Impostor* reveal the unhomely condition of the white male who refuses to recognize the changing nation and his changing subject position. Lurie, Ruben, Frank, and Adam’s uncanny condition is founded in their fear of being insignificant in the new dispensation. Each directly affected by rationalization within the academic and public service fields, the four men uncannily revive past fears of settlement, dispossession, and contamination into the present.

³⁶ Engle specifically connects the white South African writer with the political uncanny as a mode of writing. He states, “the revolutionary sublime is not available to white South African writers, because white appropriation of black work and suffering is precisely what sublime revolution in South African aims to end” (110).

Over the course of these crime novels, Lurie, Ruben, Frank, and Adam—four academic, middle-aged, single, white males—find their private existence indistinguishable from the public existence of the nation and face social fragmentation and ego restructuring. These men are not physically un-homed and they remain members of the culture of power, but I am concerned with how they navigate their changing subjectivity in the spatial and psychic intersections of past/present and home/world. As Quayson suggests,

The trauma of apartheid counts for both the perpetrators as well as the victims of violence, because there is a sense in which the perpetrators were themselves pawning their humanity on behalf of the then dominant order. The guilt that is depicted in the testimonies of many of the perpetrators testifies to the late recognition of this loss of humanity. (203)

The boundary between public and private is erased, along with the rupture between past and present. Therefore, the characters must come face to face with their own relationship with the nation, apartheid, colonization, and transition. What remains is unhomely—their psychic existence and identity remains familiar, but is now equally as unfamiliar and disorienting. Lurie, Ruben, Frank, and Adam's narratives represent the uncanniness of their destabilized, post-transition lives where they are required to undergo forced change to find belonging and their home in the world, as well as comfort in the world in the home.

***Disgrace*- Unhomely Hospitality**

David Attwell's (2015) critical biography, published nearly two decades following *Disgrace* highlights the novel's creation from irreconcilable forces. He states, "the novel wrestles with South African problems that were untouched by the halo of the rainbow nation...Coetzee was more interested in the social psychic toxicity that he must have felt could manifest at any point" (215).³⁷ This haunting, leering, potential social and psychic toxicity is an uncanny presence in the novel that focuses on Lurie's unpredictable moral progression as a victim and perpetrator of crime. The novel concerns Lurie's attempts to find home not only in the changing nation, but also home in his aging career, body, and sexuality.

Alice Crary reads *Disgrace* in terms of perception and Lurie's ability to learn "to see 'the other'," she states that Lurie is like other Coetzeean characters "whose social privileges are marks of complicity with society's injustices and who, even if they to some extent try to free themselves from biased and unjust ways of thinking, fail to arrive at the sort of undistorted understanding" (255). In his moral, ethical journey, Lurie is thrust into uncanny moments: he is both perpetrator and victim of uncanny violence, and undergoes uncanny reversals of position as he vacillates and relocates between the uncanny dwellings of Capetown, his daughter Lucy's farm in Salem, and his eventual home at the animal refuge as "a dog undertaker, a dog psychomp, a harijan" (146). As Lurie

³⁷ Attwell also points towards Coetzee progressing disengagement from South Africa while writing the novel before his eventual emigration to Australia in 2002, which connects to my examination of David Lurie's feelings of being "un-homed" in his own nation keeping in mind Coetzee's *Doubling the Point* interview in which he states "all writing is autobiography, and all autobiography is storytelling" (391).

navigates his various unhomely, unhospitable dwellings he is confronted with his own uncanny position in his profession, fatherhood, and sexuality.

The novel opens with Lurie ‘at home’ in his perceptions and beliefs, stating that “for a man of his age, fifty-two, divorced, he has, to his mind, solved the problem of sex rather well” (1). Lurie is at home with himself, and his world is familiar, private, and in the present; however, the problem with Lurie’s fixed temperament and inflexible belief system is that his personal identity finds foundation on a fictional homeland and the unhomely. The novel soon reveals Lurie’s instability and precarious position in the former culture of apartheid power. While Coetzee never directly references apartheid, the novel contains unspoken traces of history situating David Lurie in his “generation”—the white generation of apartheid who are “burdened with upbringings inappropriate for the tasks they are set to perform” (4). Lurie does not recognize South Africa or his home and instead he asks, “This place being what?” (112). Viewing himself as a victim of “the great rationalization,” in which he transitioned from a modern languages professor to an adjunct of communications, Lurie has become what he sees as a “clerk in a post religious age;” however, his academic career loss highlights his uncanny displacement, because teaching “brings it home to him who he is in the world” (4, 5).³⁸ Lurie’s transition is unsettling because he can no longer distinguish himself in and from the world. While at home in his perceptions and the realm of ideas, he is physically not at home in the world—professionally as a professor turned adjunct and socially as a fixed white South

³⁸ A report issued in May, 1997 by the SA Public Service Commission describes the Great Rationalization “as the process of moving from a fragmented and dysfunctional system of administration to one which constitutes a balanced, integrated unity in which every component is essential for the effective functioning of the whole” (1. 1). Lurie, despite attempts from the state, resists his place in the new South Africa developing a homeland of “balance, [and] integrated unity.”

African—because as Bhabha suggests, “the unhomely moment relates the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence” (148).

Not at home politically and professionally, Lurie attempts to find comfort, and feelings of belonging through sexual experiences and relationships, as he questions, “At what age, he wonders did Origen castrate himself...so that one can turn one’s mind to the proper business of the old: preparing to die” (9). Lurie believes sexuality to be “the backbone of his life” and without it, “overnight he became a ghost” (7). Lurie attempts to find a pseudo-sense of home through his sexual, artificially romantic relationships, and attempting to find home with Soraya from Discrete Escorts in the No. 113 apartment, Lurie counterfeits a domestic scene of husband and wife with his “uxorious” feelings” (4). Lurie deceives himself into believing “that ninety minutes a week of a woman’s company are enough to make him happy, who used to think he needed a wife, a home, a marriage” (5). Despite his attempts to perform a domestic home, Lurie is unable to satiate his desire for belonging because No. 113 remains an unhomely space. While No 113 is a dwelling, the apartment is neither familiar nor intimate, only “a place of assignation, nothing more, functional, clean, well regulated” with “the promise of shuttered rooms, cool sheets, stolen hours” (5, 7). No. 113 is uninviting, cold, and defamiliarizing, and yet because of his inability to change his fixed temperament, Lurie deceives himself into believing the allusion.

It is not until Lurie imagines Soraya’s true domestic space that he realizes the unhomely nature of his constructed site of desire. When Lurie sees Soraya as a mother, he is disoriented and realizes that his attempt to create a home was futile. He states, “It is

Soraya, unmistakably, flanked by two children, two boys...He has always been a man of the city, at home amid a flux of bodies where Eros stalks...But this glance between himself and Soraya he regrets at once” (6). At once, reality confronts Lurie with his unhomeliness. In a future attempted rendezvous, the “memory hangs over them” and only “strangeness” follows (6, 7). Witnessing Soraya outside of No. 113, destabilizes Lurie’s position in his illusory world. At once, his world is both familiar and unfamiliar, and he can no longer be “at home amid a flux of bodies where Eros stalks.”

When No. 113 ceases to be homely, Lurie turns his attention to his own house “where he has lived for the past twelve years, first with Rosalind, then, after the divorce, alone” (12). In its emptiness, Lurie’s residence triggers feeling of dissatisfaction, displacement, and in his unhomely sentiments “he doesn’t know what to do with himself” (12). To transform his home into a place of belonging, a domestic space, Lurie lures Melanie, his young college student, to play the coopted role of young wife. Like Soraya, Lurie sees Melanie not only as a sexual conquest, but also as a creator of the homely. After he encounters Melanie in the old college gardens, Lurie invites her for drinks, and later dinner at his house. As he cooks dinner, the narrator presents a pseudo image of home: “the young wife with the daring clothes and gaudy jewelry striding through the front door, impatiently sniffing the air; the husband, colorless Mr. Right, aproned, stirring a pot in the steaming kitchen. Reversals: the stuff of bourgeois comedy” (14). Reversals provide an image that is destabilizing and subverting to the traditionally held view of

home, and while it provides Lurie an opportunity to “see” the other, the reversal instead amplifies his unhomely condition.³⁹

The unhomely nature of the house and Lurie’s displacement is highlighted when he consummates his relationship with Melanie. After taking her back to his house, Melanie “is passive throughout, he finds the act pleasurable, so pleasurable that from its climax he tumbles into blank oblivion” (19). In his pursuit of passion, Lurie is left only with emptiness. What should be a moment of unity, a moment of belonging, is an uncanny, one-sided encounter. Even in his pleasure, Lurie is plunged “into blank oblivion.”

Coetzee presents the two homes of Cape Town, No. 113 and Lurie’s house on Torrance Road, in unhomely terms; moreover, while in Cape Town, Lurie, acting as an unhomely agent, invades Soraya and Melanie’s sense of home and turns the dwellings into sites of trauma. Bhabha asserts that “in a feverish stillness, the intimate recesses of the domestic space become sites for history’s most intricate invasions...as divided as it is disorienting” (141). Lurie does not possess, despite his efforts, a domestic home; instead, he invades and usurps. When lecturing on Wordsworth’s book six of the *Prelude* Lurie expounds on the definition of what he deems the “unusual verb form ‘usurp upon’” (21). He states, “‘Usurp upon’ means to intrude or encroach upon, ‘Usurp,’ to take over entirely, is the perfective of ‘usurp upon’; usurping completes the act of usurping upon”

³⁹ Lurie attempts to seduce Melanie with the destabilizing images of an uncanny film by Normal McLaren: “Two dancers on a bare stage move through their steps. Recorded by a stroboscopic camera, their images, ghosts of their movements, fan out behind them like wingbeats...the instant of the present and the past of that instant, evanescent, caught in the same space. He wills the girl to be captivated too. But he senses she is not” (15).

(21). With this definition in mind, Lurie usurps upon Melanie and Soraya—intruding on their home in order to take over and find belonging through his possession.

When Lurie realizes that Soraya lives a life outside of No. 113, he feels the need to contact her in her home, in her place of safety and refuge. After obtaining her telephone number from Discrete Escorts, Lurie phones Soraya, and she responds, “I don’t know who you are... You are harassing me in my own house” (10). Lurie usurps upon Soraya destroying the homely nature of her domestic sphere with the residue of their affair. Lurie recognizes his intrusion, but feels no remorse or reason to change: “what should a predator expect when he intrudes into the vixen’s nest, into the home of her cubs?” (10). To Lurie, the blame resides with the victim not the predator. In fact, after Lurie ends the call, “a shadow of envy passes over him for the husband he has never seen” (10). Lurie not only desires Soraya physically, but he desires a place of belonging within a home.

Lurie also begins his predatory advance of Melanie by obtaining her personal information including her home address. He wastes no time pursuing her, and immediately calls her only to be greeted with hesitation on Melanie’s part. She answers, “hello,” and “in the one word he hears all her uncertainty. Too young. She will not know how to deal with him; he ought to let her go. But he is in the grip of something” (18). Later, Lurie claims he was gripped as “a servant of Eros” (52). While his invasion of Soraya’s home ends with the phone call, Lurie invades Melanie’s home and inflicts trauma:

He has given her no warning; she is too surprised to resist the intruder who thrusts himself upon her. When he takes her in his arms, her limbs crumple like a marionette’s...But nothing will stop him...She does not resist...Not rape, not

quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core” (25).

While a central question of the novel remains the classification of Melanie’s “not quite” rape, the text clearly presents Lurie as an unhomely agent destroying the safety and comfort of Melanie’s home as she “decided to go slack, die within herself for the duration, like a rabbit when the jaws of the fox close on its neck” (25).⁴⁰ Again Lurie is in the position of predator, and when Melanie forces him to leave he “is overtaken with such dejection, such dullness, that he sits slumped at the wheel unable to move” (25). Lurie realizes he made “a mistake, a huge mistake,” yet he later defends his actions saying, “I was enriched by the experience” (56). Lurie is blind not only to his predatory, potentially criminal behavior, but he is also blind to his unhomely nature.

Melanie, no longer at home in her apartment seeks refuge at Lurie’s house, and Lurie once again sees her presence in his house as an opportunity to transform his empty dwelling into a homely, domestic space; only this time, he situates Melanie in the role of daughter instead of wife. Zenon Luis-Martinez’s (2002) exploration of incest in Renaissance tragedy connects incestuous desire to the notions of the uncanny and the unhomely. After sleeping through the night, Lurie “trying to comfort her. ‘tell me what is wrong.’ Almost he says, ‘tell Daddy what is wrong’” (26). This moment proves uncomfortable for the reader as Lurie conflates his sexual and parental desire for Melanie. When she asks if she can stay, Lurie is at first appalled by the thought of her living with him, but then he sees it as an opportunity to not only have her at his beck and

⁴⁰ Lucy Graham suggests “Lurie’s relationship with Melanie in *Disgrace* is depicted as a betrayal of ethical responsibility, as he violates and will not take responsibility for her as an embodied human being. Although Lurie protests to the contrary, the act that he commits is rape, it is ‘undesired’ by the girl and involves an abuse of herself” (438). Elsewhere, Graham continues this thought asserting that Melanie “becomes ‘nothing’ as David’s desire has not the capacity to imagine her embodied subjectivity” (151).

call sexually, but also the chance to complete his domestic space: “He stretches out on the bed beside her...the thought is intoxicating. Every night she will be here; every night he can slip into her bed like this, slip into her” (27).” Because Lurie invades her home and destroys her sense of belonging and comfort, Melanie deludes herself into feeling at home in the false domestic space of Lurie’s house. In fact, Melanie is presented as, “sitting at the kitchen table, eating toast with honey and drinking tea. She seems thoroughly at home” (27). Drawing on Freud’s definition that the uncanny represents the unfamiliar brought back into the familiar, Luis-Martinez claims “incestuous desire inscribes itself in the familiar space as the homeliest, but also the most abhorrent, form of desire” (58).⁴¹

In *Disgrace*, Lurie attempts to deal with his loss of belonging and his aging body, and female characters, particularly Soraya and Melanie prop up his characterization. Coetzee highlights Lurie’s displacement by revealing his inability to see the female other as more than a conquest. Both Soraya and Melanie are described in dehumanizing, animalistic, and fetishistic terminology. Lurie chooses Soraya from the Discrete Escort’s “Exotic” label, attracted to the “exotic, red passion flower in her hair,” her “dark, liquid eyes,” and her “quiet, quiet and docile” nature (7, 1). He dehumanizes Soraya as “a little malachite heron that caught his eye in a curio shop” (7). Likewise, Melanie is othered, as Lurie again is drawn to her exoticized features: “close-cropped black hair, wide, almost Chinese cheekbones, large, dark eyes...*Melani*: the dark one” (11, 18). He thinks of her as a child and doll-like, wearing “slippers in the shape of comic-book gophers,” and as a

⁴¹ While Lurie never reveals blatant sexual attraction to his daughter Lucy there are moments, uncomfortable to the reader, where Lurie connects his daughter with sexual imagery. For example: “he sits on the bed, idly fondles her bare foot. A good foot, shapely. Good bones, like her mother. A woman in the flower of her years, attractive despite the heaviness, despite the unflattering clothes” (76).

“marionette” and “apparition” (24). During his forceful, undesirable “not quite rape” he thinks of Melanie as a “mole burrowing” and “a rabbit in the jaws of a fox” (25). Both of these women are reduced to sexual objects, as Lurie, in the face of his own unhomely condition, remains unable to recognize the subjective of others.

When his affair with Melanie goes public, the university disciplinary hearing confronts Lurie with his uncanny condition as the private is suddenly thrust into the public. This hearing mirrors the uncanny nature of the TRC, as the past is forced to exist simultaneously in the present, and the barrier between public and private is destroyed. Lurie refuses to cooperate with the hearing, asserting repeatedly that it was a private matter. Even thrust into an uncanny exhibition of his private affairs, Lurie remains falsely confident in his position which is “beyond the reach of counseling” (49), which echoes early reflections of his temperament: “His temperament is fixed, set...it is a rule, like the Rule of St Benedict” (2). The reference to the St reveals Lurie’s problematic temperament, unwillingness to accept change, and foreshadows his trouble finding hospitality on Lucy’s farm or the changing nation.

The Rule states that an individual found to be contumacious, who when interrogated by a judge refuses to answer, will be excommunicated from the monastery and must perform penitence in order to return home. Francis Cuthbert’s (1887) exposition on the Rule of St. Benedict states, “Contumacy is refusal to open [testimony]...open and obstinate resistance...then comes pride, habitual self-exaltation, self-inflation, and the worship of one’s own worth...it reveals the beast, headstrong and restive” (155). Lurie is contumacious, refusing to cooperate by providing his witness, and therefore he must leave his home and refuge of racial and professional privilege built up behind uncanny,

locked security gates attempting to hold-on to a bygone age. After the hearing, reporters and students surround Lurie, and exposing him as St. Benedict's "beast, headstrong and restive" as "a hush falls, they circle around him like hunters how have cornered a strange beast and did not know how to finish it off" (56).

Lurie's home and other attempted places of dwelling in Cape Town become unhomely, and "once he has made up his mind to leave, there is little to hold him back" (59). Abandoning his house, Lurie travels to his daughter Lucy's farm in the Eastern Cape following a traditional pastoral escape in order to find belonging. Lurie hopes that Lucy's farm will provide a constant, absolute home.⁴² Lurie's encounter with the farm is uncanny as the past invades the present, and as he hopes to find "refuge on an indefinite basis" rather than "go[ing] on a ramble, a long ramble" (65). Lurie first describes Lucy's home in picturesque terms as a traditional farm: "five hectares of land, most of it arable, a wind-pump, stables and outbuildings, and a low, sprawling farmhouse painted yellow, with a galvanized-iron roof and a covered stoep" (59). However, while the narrative glosses over the farm in a positive description, the farmhouse itself remains an image of the unhomely: "The house, which is large, dark, and even at midday, chilly, dates from the time of large families, of guests by the wagonful" (60). Lurie's perception of the farm, and his daughter's position on the farm, is haunted by centuries of Afrikaner history: the past simultaneously existing in the present. Lurie thinks of Lucy as an antiquated farmer's wife: "here she is, flowered dress, bare feet and all, in a house full of the smell of baking, no longer a child playing at farming but a solid countrywoman, a *boervrou*," and he connects Lucy's development on the farm to history: "a frontier farmer

⁴² Ampie Coetzee states, "the farm, nature, land meant the opposite to the city: the idyllic against the ugly; the farm was a constant, and absolute" (104). It is this absolute, ideal dwelling that Lurie hopes to find.

of the new breed... The more things change the more they remain the same. History repeating itself, through a more modest vein. Perhaps history has learned a lesson” (60, 62). Lurie even questions his own role in her maturity as a “sturdy young settler,” puzzling if “it was not they who produced her: perhaps history had the larger share” (61).

Ampie Coetzee (2007), in his discussion of the *plaasroman* suggests that with a traditional farm “a closed-off unity is created, a peaceful place, a self-contained world, where threats, from outside can be warded; threats which are related to specific social changes and confrontation” (107). Lurie’s experience on the farm is anything but peaceful, and free of violent, uncanny threats, and instead of peace, the farm exists as a site of forgotten and present trauma and dislocation. Susan Smit-Marais and Marita Wenzel (2006) reveal the new version of Ampie Coetzee’s farm “as a contested space inscribed with a history of violence and dispossession—a dystopia” (26). Moreover, when examining the subverted pastoral of *Disgrace*, Smit-Marais and Wenzel go on to suggest that, “the farm in *Disgrace* is presented as an alien and impenetrable space—“a foreign land. A liminal zone representative of uncertainty and ambiguity—in which the protagonist (and the reader) are forced to renegotiate presupposed notions of ‘self’ and ‘other’” (29). This liminal zone is the space of the uncanny.

Disgrace presents an unhomely representation of the traditional characteristics of an Afrikaner farm, which is the type of farm Lurie believes he will belong. In *White Writing* (1986), Coetzee suggests that each farm possess “a patriarch ruling over” a wife, sons, daughters, tenants, servants, beasts, and the land (7).⁴³ This rural order is

⁴³ Lurie believes this structure to still be the guiding order of the Eastern Cape. When thinking of Ettinger: “another peasant, a man of the earth, tenacious, eingewurzelt [deep-seated]. But Ettinger will die one of

undermined in *Disgrace*'s presentation of Lucy's farm, because under conventional terms, Lurie would be the master of the farm, Lucy, and then Petrus his subordinates. However instead of a patriarchy, Lucy represents a matriarchal farmer—a "boervrou" without a husband. Lucy rejects Lurie's attempted classification of her farm along the Afrikaner tradition, and after Lurie's repeated insistence on identifying her land as a farm, Lucy exclaims, "Stop calling it the farm, David. This is not a farm, it's just a piece of land where I grow things - we both know that" (200). Gilbert Yeoh (2004) states, "In Lucy's epistemology, the land is stripped of pastoral's rhetorical and ideological coding; her statement in fact reflects a mind *devoid* of pastoral rhetoric and ideology. Given pastoral's dense rhetorical web, its erasure within Lucy's consciousness is significant—one could suggest that Lucy's mind is decolonized of white pastoral ideology, a contrast with how pastoral epistemology persists in framing Lurie's consciousness" (23). This reversal and undoing of the white-constructed farm leaves Lurie with another unhomely dwelling where he has no place of belonging. Displaced not only in terms of physical dwelling, the reversal of the familiar, patriarchal hierarchy reveals Lurie's uncanny identity as his white, male subject position which on the farm is unstable and unfamiliar.

The farm presents Lurie with a world that is simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar with the past intruding on the present, and while he recognizes Petrus's new position in the "new" South Africa, he is unable to separate the present situation with the past of the Afrikaner farm. Lurie assist Petrus in various tasks around the farm, in turn falling further down the traditional patriarchal ladder. Lucy suggests that Lurie help Petrus, and Lurie replies "Give Petrus a hand. I like that. I like the historical piquancy"

these days, and the Ettinger son has fled. In that respect Ettinger has been stupid. A good peasant takes care to have lots of sons" (117).

(77). Lurie sees Petrus as “a peasant, a paysan, a man of the country” (23). Yeoh emphasizes Coetzee’s term “peasant” drawing connections between the traditional “African peasant” representing “the white frontier farmer of South Africa” (23). Later, Lurie also describes Lucy as a peasant: “Lucy straightens up, stretches, bends down again. Field-labour; peasant tasks, immemorial. His daughter is becoming a peasant” (217). This characterization suggests that both Lucy and Petrus are uncanny mirrors of the white frontier farmer.

Lurie thinks of Petrus, reflecting that he “has a vision of the future in which people like Lucy have no place... Country life has always been a matter of neighbours scheming against each other, wishing on each other pests, poor crops, financial ruin, yet in a crisis ready to lend a hand” (117). While they share the same plot of earth, Lurie remains unable to acknowledge Petrus and his family as neighbors. Petrus’s home is visible during the land transfer party, and presents the alternative to the traditional farm’s homogeneity, and also illustrates a reversal of apartheid culture. Petrus’s home is decorated, homely, and inviting: “Shaded lamps and pictures on the walls, Van Gogh’s sunflowers, a Tretchinkoff lady in blue, Jane Fonda in her Barbarella outfit, Doctor Khumalo scoring a goal” (128). The image of Petrus’s home is comforting and reveals a cosmopolitan aesthetic of progress, which directly contrast the dusty, sparsely decorated farmhouse.

Just as the two unhomely dwellings of Cape Town, No. 113 and Lurie’s apartment, become sites of trauma, Lucy’s farm houses the most vicious and invasive traumatic crime of the novel. Garreth Cornwell (2003) points out that ironically, Salem—the name of the area of the Eastern Cape border where Lucy’s small holding is situated—

means “peace” (43). Instead of acting as the unhomely agent, Lurie witnesses and experiences the invasion of the Eastern Cape farm, Lucy’s gang rape, and his own torching. Feigning the need for assistance, three young men overrun Lucy and take control of the house; immediately, Lurie knows “something is wrong, he knows at once...From the house there is silence... the door-latch clicks shut” (93). The young men usurp and take possession of Lucy’s house, and through the invasion and rape, Lucy and Lurie lose their sense of home. The house is left altered: “the living room is in a mess, so is his own room. Things have been taken: his jacket, his good shoes, and that is only the beginning of it” (95). Although Lucy and Lurie respond to the trauma in a different manner, both recognize the unhomely nature of the house following the attack. Lucy struggles to regain her sense of belonging: “

He returns to find Lucy installing a camp-bed in the musty little pantry that she uses for storage... ‘Take over my room,’ he says. ‘I’ll sleep here.’ And at once he sets about clearing out his things. But does he really want to move into this cell, with its boxes of empty preserve jars piled in a corner and its single tiny south-facing window? (111)

Later, Lurie thinks, “They ought to turn the farmhouse into a fortress...the house feels alien, violated; they are continually on alert, listening for sounds” (117).

Vidler suggests that the unhomely’s “favorite motif was precisely the contrast between a secure and homely interior and the fearful invasion of an alien presence” (3). However, Freud maintains that “the uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated” (241). Just as the prevalence of violence propelling the crime fiction genre is not new to the nation, Lucy’s rape and Lurie’s violent attack are reprisals of other attacks

in the past and present of South Africa, and the events are uncanny invasions on their private bodies and psyches. Even Bill Shaw states, “A shocking business... atrocious. It’s bad enough when you read about it in the paper, but when it happens to someone you know...that really brings it home to you” (102). In the days following the unhomely attack, Lurie begins to fill the role of servant on the farm, once again attempting to create a false domesticity where he “keeps the garden from going to ruin, he packs produce for the market. He helps Bev Shaw at the clinic. He sweeps the floors, cooks the meals, does all the things that Lucy no longer does” (120). However, Lurie again is forced to recognize the uncanny nature of his dwelling and position as he tries “to get used to looking odd, worse than odd, repulsive—one of those sorry creatures whom children gawk,” and realizes being on the farm “is like sharing a house with strangers, sharing noises, sharing smells” (120) (127). Lucy further shatters any semblance of a domestic home when she states, “I cannot be a child forever. You cannot be a father forever” (161). Home is structured as a set of relationships—family, profession, sexuality—and once again, home eludes Lurie, because he no longer fills the set role of father. Instead, Lurie remains an outsider and unhomed.

In this moment, and throughout the novel, Lurie vacillates concerning his perceived lack of belonging; however, it is Lucy who suffers a traumatic rape, unwanted pregnancy, and genuine potential to soon lose claim to her land and home. Lurie is unable to see his daughter’s true un-homed position, and instead Lucy remains a flat character whose primary purpose it seems, at least to Lurie, is to provide a space and audience for his personal reflection. Lurie thinks only of Lucy in relation to himself, and he repeatedly relegates her character to her female body or her position as his daughter.

When he first arrives on the farm, Lurie reflects on her physical form: “she has put on weight. Her hips and breasts are now (he searches for the best word) ample” (59), as he believes “a woman’s beauty does not belong to her alone. It is part of the bounty she brings into the world. She has a duty to share it” (17). Lurie also sees Lucy’s sexuality as “Sapphic love, an excuse for putting on the weight” (86).

During her traumatic rape, Lurie does not think of Lucy’s well-being in regards to her position as a woman in her own right, but as his daughter: “his child in the hands of strangers” and later, “‘My child, my child!’ he says, holding out his arms to her. When she does not come, he puts aside his blanket, stands up, and takes her in his arms. In his embrace she is stiff as a pole, yielding nothing” (94, 99). Lurie reflects on how “things have changed” following Lucy’s rape and instead of focusing on his daughter, he connects the transformation to himself: “not her father’s little girl, not any longer” (105).

Lurie repeatedly considers Lucy’s identity only in relationship to himself. She is a secondary character in his life narrative to support his search for the homely: “she becomes his second salvation, the bride of his youth reborn...poor Lucy! Poor daughters! What a destiny, what a burden to bear!” (86-7). Lucy even confronts her father on this account,

You behave as if everything I do is part of the story of your life. You are the main character, I am a minor character who doesn’t make an appearance until halfway through. Well, contrary to what you think, people are not divided into major and minor. I am not minor. I have a life of my own, just as important to me as yours is to you, and in my life I am the one who makes the decisions. (198)

Lurie will never find belonging at home and in the world until he is able to recognize the subjectivity of those around him. Covering his eyes from trauma, from history, and the need to change, Lurie can no longer stay on the farm, and returns to Cape Town.

When Lurie reenters Cape Town, he feels no more at home than he did three months prior: “It does not feel like a homecoming. He cannot imagine taking up residence once more in the house on Torrance Road” (175). Lurie feels no connection to his home, and once again reveals his unchanging nature through a desire to return to the days of the Afrikaner farm, the days where South Africa was a frontier to be possessed and he would feel at home on the land. He thinks, “inexorably...the country is coming to the city. Soon there will be cattle again on Rondebosch Common; soon history will have come full circle” (175). Not only does Lurie perceive history as coming full circle and the uncanny presence of the past inhabiting the present, but he also recognizes his return to the site of his first attempts to find belonging and a home: “The end of roaming. What comes after the end of roaming?” (175).

Upon his return, his house is more unhomely than before, but instead of simple feeling the inhospitable nature, Lurie recognizes the uncanny threat. He states,

The moment he opens the front door and smells the air he knows there is something wrong. His heart begins to thud with a sick excitement...he wanders through the house taking a census of his losses. His bedroom has been ransacked, the cupboards yawn bare. His sound equipment is gone, his tapes and records, his computer equipment...papers are scattered everywhere. The kitchen has been thoroughly stripped: cutlery, crockery, smaller appliances. His liquor store is gone. Even the cupboards that had held canned food is empty. (176, 7)

Lurie has never felt more displaced, not as a perpetrator, witness, or victim to trauma, but now he “is too depressed to act. Let it all go to hell, he thinks, and sinks into a chair and

closes his eyes” (176). Completely dislocated– “obscure and growing obscurer. A figure on the margins of history”– Lurie sees a return to the farm as his only option, as he “rattle[s] about in the house like a pea in a bottle” (167) (178).

Lurie eventually returns to the farm, and unlike his previous stay, Lurie does not attempt to find belonging in his Lucy’s home: “Lucy's farm, Lucy's patch of earth. Is it his earth too? It does not feel like his earth...it feels like a foreign land” (197).

Recognizing the farm as a foreign land is Lurie’s recognition of the unhomey. Instead of attempting to find home at the farm or his imagined place in the traditional Afrikaner farm structure, Lurie releases all claim, and recognizes Lucy in the traditional role of patriarch. However, after his arrival, Lurie learns of his daughter’s pregnancy, potential marriage, and loss of land to Petrus, which shifts their position to the lowest status of Coetzee’s farm hierarchy. They discuss, ““perhaps that is what I must learn to accept. To start at ground level. With nothing. Not with nothing but. With nothing. No cards, no weapons, no property, no rights, no dignity.’ ‘Like a dog.’ ‘Yes, like a dog’” (205). Lucy tells her father ““I will become a tenant on his land.’ ‘A bywoner.’ ‘A bywoner. But the house remains mine, I repeat that. No one enters this house without my permission. Including him. And I keep the kennels’” (204). Rita Barnard points out that the word bywoner

should mean the same thing as ‘neighbor’ does in English...But bywoner bears none of the English word's implications of equality and reciprocity: it conveys instead humiliating connotations of indebtedness and poverty and suggests, depressingly, that the old rural economy has remained intact, even if the roles within it have been reassigned along racial lines. (221)

At once, father and daughter are relocated to the most subservient position on the Afrikaner farm—animal. Lurie leaves the farm and returns to the one place he can attempt to forge a feeling of belonging, the animal refuge. Lurie reflects the imbedded fear of an unknown place in future of the nation held by many white South Africans following the end of apartheid, which is imbedded in the crime novel genre.

During his first visit to the Eastern Cape, Lurie began helping Bev Shaw at the animal clinic or refuge. Patricia Sutcliffe (2009) points out the dual meaning of the word refuge as both a “shelter of protection from danger or distress,” and “a home for those who are destitute, homeless, or in disgrace” (201). By his second visit, Lurie looks to the refuge to provide “a home for those who are destitute, homeless, or in disgrace” (201). After his movement from unhomely, traumatic homes throughout the novel—No. 113, his Cape Town house, and Lucy’s farm—Lurie finally finds home in a clinic responsible for euthanizing over-populated dogs of the Eastern Cape. Lurie admits that “In the bare compound behind the building he makes a nest of sorts, with a table and an old armchair from the Shaw’s and a beach umbrella to keep off the worst of the sun. He brings in the gas stove to make tea or warm up canned food” (211). The scene of Lurie’s new home is comical, however it is not unhomely. Lurie feels at home for the first time in the text, and it is not until he finds a homely space that he returns to Lucy’s farm. Lucy asks her father, “Will you come in and have some tea,” and Lurie thinks, “she makes the offer as if he were a visitor. Good. Visitorship, visitation: a new footing. A new start” (218). Lurie accepts the new start, and despite his inability to change throughout the novel, he slowly begins to recognize that in order to be at home, in order to have a relationship with his daughter, he must adjust. Lurie even admits his ability to change in regards to Lucy’s

unborn child of trauma: “what will it entail, being a grandfather? ...He lacks the virtues of the old: equanimity, kindness, patience. But perhaps those virtues will come as other virtues go: the virtue of passion, for instance...There may be things to learn” (218).

The Rights of Desire- Unhomely Ghosts

Andre Brink’s *The Rights of Desire* reveals the uncanny position of Ruben Olivier, an aging former librarian navigating post-transition apartheid, through the concept of the unhomely reflected in his deteriorating colonial-era home. In many ways, Ruben parallels Lurie in his self-perceived unhomely identity, deviant sexuality, and attempts to maintain a feeling of belonging within the changing nation. Brink stresses that these parallels are intentional as he titles the 2000 novel from David Lurie’s defense of his sexual abuse of power: “I rest my case on the rights of desire...On the god who makes even the small birds quiver” (89). Brink begins the novel quoting Coetzee, firmly situating the text within the conversation of post-apartheid literature focusing on the possibilities of truth and reconciliation; however, Brink also draws from Wallace Stevens’s poem “The Motive for Metaphor:”

The obscuring moon lighting an obscure world
Of things that would never be quite expressed,
Where you yourself were never quite yourself
And did not want nor have to be. (9-12)⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Brink draws the Afrikaans title *Donkermaan*, from Wallace’s poem with *donker maan* translating as “obscure moon.”

Brink uses the obscure world as an epigraph to begin shaping Ruben's uncanny existence, as the known is invaded by the unknown and things not "quite expressed." This reflects his growing destabilization "where you yourself were never quite yourself." While Brink introduces the uncanny, Saskia Lourens (2009) also points out that the speaker of Wallace's poem, like Ruben, desires change from the weightlessness of the obscure world, and using Kristeva's exploration of poetic language and semiotic excess, she posits that *The Rights of Desire* "complicates the process of re-defining a South African identity in the post-apartheid era in a broader context, and...Brink's use of the concept of desire homes in on the precarious negotiation that inhabits the relationship of every South African with her or his country" (120).

While Lourens focuses on Ruben's encounters with the textual excesses of desire, I believe it is the uncanny condition produced by this liminal excess which most reveals Ruben's ambiguous, fading, uncanny existence.⁴⁵ Freud asserts that the "uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, [the] imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolizes" (367). Unlike Lurie who travels from dwelling to dwelling to find home and offset his lack of belonging, Ruben faces his uncanny liminality, "when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced," through the haunting of his dilapidating home and the invasion of the past into the present by the ghost of the colonial slave Antje of Bengal (367). Ruben begins to question his own

⁴⁵ James Tuedio relates liminal excess to boundaries and translations: "Boundaries, like horizons, are forever in translation, always receding from our efforts to transgress them...we have entered a liminal space, a membrane between inner and outer. This is a place of uncanny exile, for we still intuit a sense of home: the cultures of domination, the schemes of normalization, exclusion, disruption, resistance, translation, excess. Passing into these boundaries we encounter a liminal excess we can neither escape nor exceed" (1).

unhomely, ghostlike reality, and as Heidegger's suggests "the human being as the most uncanny being...in the singular sense, not homely, and that their care is to become homely...[those who] think themselves at home, are unhomely" (71). Ruben desires to remain at home in his rundown, physical place of dwelling, but he must recognize and accept his own unhomely position.

Like Coetzee, Brink mirrors his disillusioned protagonist's identity and development with the images and structures of dwellings; moreover, Ruben sinks further into the haunted ruins of his old Victorian on Papenbroom Road. The novel begins,

The house is haunted. Which is why it was so cheap, long ago almost forty years ago: Ghosts were not yet fashionable...this house, more Victorian than anything else, squatting on the massive foundations of the original Cape-Dutch mansion and with only a stretch of boundary wall left of what was once, reputedly, an estate of impressive dimensions. (3)

Bhabha asserts that the "image of the house has always been used to talk about the expansive, mimetic nature of the novel" (16). However, Ruben's home, is simply "squatting" and lacks the metaphorical power to reflect the expansive Western novel or empire. The *Oxford English Dictionary* highlights the definition of squatting as "occupying land as a squatter or squatters," which points towards the house itself being built on land that belonged to another. Also, the description of the squatting house cannot be separated from the history of the destruction of home central to apartheid's dehumanizing policies, with the South African Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951 that authorized the forced removal of squatting communities. This reference and image brings the past alive into the present moment, and situates the house as an uncanny space. Ruben recognizes and reflects on the unhomely architecture of the house,

“Haphazardly inspired by its original Dutch foundations, there’s something unpredictable about the architecture of the place” (18). The house is uncanny in its unpredictable and haphazard nature, because of physical remainders of colonialism and apartheid.⁴⁶

The aging, unused house mirrors Ruben’s existence, and like Lurie, Ruben is concerned not only with his aging body transitioning into late middle age, but he also feels displaced professionally. Outside of his house on Papenbroom Road, Ruben feels at home in the library, and he loses this sense of belonging during the Great Rationalization. He states, “My world was shrinking...Books have always offered me almost all I need. But then, without warning, that last small, safe sanctuary was invaded too...Dead wood had to make way for the previously disadvantaged” (8, 9). Ruben goes on to state, “‘Rationalization’ it was called, an abuse of language. There’s nothing rational about it. A whole new vocabulary proliferating unchecked around us...I had become more brooding annoyed with the world and myself” (13). Ruben is not at home in the world because he refuses to recognize the role of the past within the present. When he is a victim, he recognizes the power of language; however, he does not see the role of language in colonization and apartheid. As Ngũgĩ asserts, language “was the most important vehicle through which that power fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of physical subjection. Language was the means of the spiritual subjection” (7). Ruben is no longer at home in the world and sinks further into his superficial belonging in his haunted house.

Rubin faces his children’s desire for him to leave his home and South Africa, but like Lurie, Ruben is characterized by his inability, or refusal to change. For example,

⁴⁶ Ruben’s expatriate children also reveal the house as “falling apart. It’s getting darker and gloomier every year. No one has touched the garden in ages. It’s a wilderness” (17).

Ruben's daughter-in-law criticizes Ruben: "Jesus, Ruben, please...! Don't be so pig-headed. You can't live here on your own" (5). And later, Ruben admits when questioned why he does not leave the country, "I've never tried to figure it out. I suppose one gets used to a place. Perhaps, in a way, you even love it... You can't teach an old dog new tricks" (25, 26). Ruben is destabilized, and only sees his life in relationship to his dwelling: "A life defined by [the house]...unthinkable without it" (4). Not only is the house haunted, but Ruben is haunted by his experiences in the house, and he is repeatedly reminded of his unhomely existence as the past invades the present: "The long twilight that follows happiness and unhappiness, guilt and innocence, with nothing more to hope for, no new surprise, no sudden moon...only the intricate treachery of memory to keep one awake at night" (3).

Isidore Diala (2003) draws attention to Ruben's displacement and unhomely position in the new South Africa, pointing out that Ruben desires a welcoming oblivion. Ruben reflects, "when I think of death I think: acquiescence. I think: space. I have no fear of it. Or very little. I certainly have no fear of what comes after" (66). Ruben's desire for oblivion parallels Lurie's "tumbling into blank oblivion" following his sexual encounter with Melanie. In many ways, both characters reflect Freud's "death drive" in the face of their own unhomeliness.⁴⁷ Again, Ruben reflects Heidegger's unhomely figure which "everywhere venturing forth underway, experienceless without any way out, he comes to nothing...the unhomely one shall not be someone homely, so long as they stick merely and solely to their being unhomely and thus let themselves be driven about amid beings, without any constancy" (82, 117). Attempting to deal with his own empty unhomeliness,

⁴⁷ See Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), in which Freud suggests, "the aim of all life is death" (38).

Ruben is forced to open his home to a boarder and create a false sense of hospitality in the haunted house.

Rueben's position in the home, and in turn his subject position within his aging identity, is disrupted as Tessa, a 29 year old young woman, occupies his spare bedroom down the hall from his last bastion of comfort—his office and library. While it is Ruben's house, Tessa at once feels at home claiming that she "feels safe here," and Ruben reflects that she looks "as if she belonged there, had always been there, a child of the house," even as he recognizes her "unusual voice, with a kind of liquid darkness to it, and hidden laughter" (53, 21, 7). Tessa invades Ruben's fabricated security of the home, especially his library, the "place of ultimate refuge, a wild and sacred space...my sanctuary from the upheavals outside" (32).

Until Tessa catalyzes the invasion of the public into Ruben's private, pseudo-comforting home, Ruben's self-absorption blinds him from social responsibility. Ruben refers to the 1994 election, in which he did not vote, as "That famous moment when we were supposed to become a democracy and our lives changed utterly for at least three months" (8-9). In the post-apartheid nation, he also refuses to see his potential connection with violent crime as he states, "this country is going to pieces and no one lifts a finger to stop the crime. But that doesn't mean anything is going to happen to *me*," and after his neighbor is murdered, "for at least a month we all kept our front doors locked, but already we are drifting back into the peace and quiet we have always enjoyed" (4, 15).

Tessa acts as an unhomely agent as she lies, uses drugs, and sleeps with multiple, dodgy men as a guest in the house. Ruben's calm, albeit fabricated, is destroyed by Tessa's public presence. It is not simply her presence that fosters the uncanny, but the

fact that Ruben is both drawn to and repulsed by her lack of morals, shifty past, and nonexistent future. His uncanny emotions towards Tessa leaves Ruben questioning his actions and his identity as he feels her trust in him and presence in his life “as alarming as it was disarming” (53). The dual nature of their relationship, hazardously unreliable and captivately neutralizing reflect the uncanny simultaneity of safety and danger. Ruben desires Tessa with the same intensity that she repels him. Ruben desires Tessa sexually, and desires to manufacture a domestic home and an uxorious relationship, while he repeatedly is placed in the role of the father. Tessa sarcastically tells Ruben “thanks Daddy” after his intrusive advise concerning her casual sexuality, and when he cares for her after an abortion she introduces him to the nurse as her father (104). Later, Ruben stands over her while she sleeps, “listening to her breathing as many years ago [he] used to do beside the boys’ little beds when they were ill... *Have you met my father?* She’d asked...my darling” (190).

As the novel progresses, Ruben feels less and less at home with himself and more and more destabilized by his desire. His obsession is revealed though his deteriorating homeliness. Tessa’s presence, not haunting but uncanny nonetheless, causes Ruben to recognize his unstable position, stating, “on the surface my life may not seem different, but I know that deep down nothing is the same. Her presence has shifted relations in the house” (69). Even Ruben and Tessa’s roles undergo reversals throughout the text which mirror his destabilization. While his sexual desire never wanes, Ruben infantilizes himself as he imagines Tessa taking on the dominate role in their fictional relationship. He admits, “once again I had the impression that she was the grown-up, I the child” (104). Ruben continues to see Tessa in a caretaker role: “she does wifely things for me:

takes me shopping...to buy me some new clothes...She does motherly things, even if she is less than half my age: makes sure I take my vitamins...She does sisterly things: berates me for not telephoning or writing to my children regularly enough” (239-40). In response, Ruben feels castrated in his desire, in the same way Lurie contemplates Origen’s castration in *Disgrace* as a way “one can turn one’s mind to the proper business of the old: preparing to die” (9).⁴⁸

As Tessa brings various men home to the house on Papenboom Road, Ruben’s unhomely feelings grow. Faced with Tessa’s young lovers, Ruben questions his own masculinity and sexual prowess, which manifests in a fear of intruders at the house. Nightly, he makes “usual nocturnal rounds about the house, inside and out...every nook and hideout in the garden” (129). Ruben feels destabilized and it is exhibited in a fear of the unknown. One night however, he attempts to stab Tessa’s lover’s car tires while they make love in the house: “I huddled down...and made a stab at the tyre. The knife bounced back. Clenching my teeth in rage I lunged forward again, with the same result...Another stab; another mortifying failure” (130). In this moment, Ruben is impotent. However, he returns to the Porsche with his father’s pocket knife:

There was an uncanny luminosity in the moonless night...one, two, three more furious stabs. This will change the course of history. And each time the peg penetrated—this was becoming wholly surreal...at last it was done. Came four times, now I’m going...I slept more soundly than I had in months. (131)

⁴⁸ An examination of Freud’s conceptualization of the uncanny cannot overlook the connections he draws between the uncanny, fears of castration, and womb-phantasies; moreover, he goes as far to suggest that the female sexual organs serve as useful examples of the uncanny space. He states, “this *unheimlich* place, however, is the entrance to the former *heim* [home] of all human beings, to the place where everyone dwelt once upon a time and in the beginning...the *unheimlich* is what was once *heimisch* homelike, familiar; the prefix “un” is the token of repression” (398-9). Freud continues to connect the uncanny to thoughts of castration which “excite a peculiarly violent and obscure emotion” (384).

Ruben uses his violent attack to reassert his masculinity and wards off his fear of castration and impotence; additionally, the enactment of his masculinity also highlights his unhomely nature in the “uncanny luminosity of the moonless night.” Textually, the scene is further situated in the strange familiarity of the uncanny beginning with an unacknowledged quote from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*: “’tis now the very witching time of night where churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out contagion to the world” (130, quoted from *Hamlet* 3.2.380-81). Brink’s inclusion of this allusion not only helps develop the unhomely scene and highlight Ruben’s uncanny, violent actions, but the reference to *Hamlet* also aligns the text within the discourse of the uncanny. Many theorists from Freud to Heidegger to Derrida use *Hamlet* and his interactions with his father’s ghost to develop and exemplify aspects of the uncanny.⁴⁹

Tessa’s uncanny influence on Ruben is not caused simply by his sexual desire and potential oedipal and castration anxieties, but it is tied to his memory or rememory of repressed moments forced to the present. Ruben’s memories are independent of himself and connected to the house. Ruben reflects on his own process of memory, “For a brief moment it had seemed real, now it was no longer part of the possible. I thought: strange word, remember. To put the members together again to reconfigure” (92). Elsewhere, Ruben describes the creation of memory: “Remember how it will look then, how it will be, will have been. I live in a liquid future perfect” (33). Ruben remains a passive player in the act of remembering as his memories are tied to and structured by the physical locale of his home; moreover, the house becomes unhomely to Ruben when his repressed memories are forced to the surface of his present existence as Tessa prompts thoughts of

⁴⁹ Hamlet’s reflection that “time is out of joint,” founds Derrida’s *Specters of Marx* (1994).

his dead wife, children, and his own childhood. Ruben reflects on his own process of memory thinking of Tessa's body, "For a brief moment it had seemed real, now it was no longer part of the possible. I thought: strange word, remember. To put the members together again to reconfigure" (92). In this moment, Ruben reflects on the fleeting memory as it is created and slips from his control. The moments in which Tessa's presence conjures a repressed memory, always exists as moments of trauma. One such moment, Tessa's abortion, catapults Ruben into the dual existence of caring for Tessa in the present, and caring for his wife, Riana, following a miscarriage in the past. Ruben relates the experience to Kierkegaard: "to live forward, and understand backwards" (186). The text states,

'Don't talk now,' I said, to Tessa; to Riana. Neither paid attention to me. Riana was hysterical and soon had to be sedated again; Tessa spoke with what sounded like controlled anger. Tessa said, 'I don't know how the hell it happened, Ruben. I was trying to be so careful.' Riana: 'I've made a mess of everything. It's all my fault.' 'What was it?' I dared to ask. 'I don't know,' said Tessa. 'It was too early to see on the sonar. I don't *want* to know.' 'A girl,' said Riana. She had just been told. I felt my stomach contract. (186)

Rememory in terms of repression remains central to the concept of the uncanny, as Freud states the "uncanny is in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old—established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression" (394). Tessa's abortion elicits Ruben's repressed memories of the trauma of losing his unborn daughter.

Freud is concerned with the repression and revival of "infantile complexes" and "primitive beliefs," but the uncanny moment also translates into forgotten memories that haunt and invade the present: familiar and yet strange. Ruben states, "memories stealing

back to haunt me, like old ghosts. I've tried for so long to lay them to rest but they have a way of coming back" (82). Ruben recognizes the ephemeral nature of memories as ghosts, both fully born in the past and fully experienced in the present, but he also recognizes that the uncanny nature destabilizes his sense of home and identity. When he experiences memories, he asserts that "for as long as I can remember there have been gradations of the same sense of displacement. The way, I suppose, an actor is inevitably aware of both role and self, and the precarious interval between them" (28). The interstitial space between actor and role is the place of the uncanny, and occupying neither role fully leaves the subject displaced.

Throughout *The Rights of Desire*, Ruben grapples with his desire to be at home in his own self-identity, the house, and the changing nation as Ruben attempts to come to grips with his unhomey condition as a white male struggling with being unmoored from the minority culture of apartheid power. However, the novel tells the parallel story of the housekeeper Margrieta's physical and traumatic struggle to find a place of dwelling of her own, and Ruben sees her hardship only in terms related to himself. Ruben attempts to help Margrieta, at one time even heckled as a "bloody white kaffir" running from the bulldozers in District Six, but he is unable to notice his complicity in the culture of power buttressing apartheid policies of displacement and the continuing post-apartheid housing crisis (87). Instead, when remembering the destruction of her home, Ruben reflects "'the day of the bulldozers. They flattened me as surely as they did your house,'" Margrieta's trauma is relegated to a plot point in Ruben's life; moreover, Ruben claimed to be "completely shattered by the label "white kaffir," and he is unable to acknowledge the depth of Margrieta's trauma (87).

Ruben attempts to see Magrieta only within his insolated home and limited frame of reference. When Magrieta witnesses Ruben's affair years prior, he tells her "we must talk about it...you're a member of the family Magrieta," to which Magrieta simply replies, "I got my own family" (62). Ruben cannot see Magrieta's subjectivity outside of the house, and he even reflects that she has been present "since the day she'd become part of the deal when we bought the house" (87). Magrieta is a fixture of the house, and Ruben claims to not understand why she would want to live in her own home, other than flippantly asserting that "Magrieta had a thing about independence" as if describing a petulant child (88).

Just as Antje of Bengal is voiceless to tell her own story, Magrieta also remains silent and not the subject of her own story that includes the repeated destruction of her physical dwelling space. Magrieta describes the destruction and violence in the township, and the danger facing her home and personal sense of belonging,

Everything has been smashed in the gang wars raging through the Flats over the last God-knows-how-many months...by the time there were two dead bodies in the street, one headless, both hacked to pieces. The perpetrators had long gone, but here and there in the dark a few of them were still lurking, like scavengers, to keep watch...but my house is now a marked place, Meneer. Those kids will be coming back. (141)

Magrieta is devastated because "All my life I been waiting for that place of my own...I know I won't see my house again" (141). Moving into the house on Papenboom road once again, Magrieta packs her meager possessions "shoes and clothes, her TV set a box of her most prized kitchen utensils, a sewing machine, blankets and pillows, two pink lamps with frilly shades," which causes Ruben to question, "what, I wondered, would I salvage if I were suddenly given a day to clear out my home?"; however, he simply

questions Magrieta, “is this all?” (173). Magrieta’s home eventually burns to the ground, and Ruben reflects that his “private celebration” of a potentially budding romance with Tessa “had to be postponed because of another crisis in Magrieta’s life” (201). Ruben relegates Magrieta, now homeless with all possessions fitting into one bag, to an interruption. The catalogue of the contents of Margieta’s bag reveals the trauma of physical displacement:

Every item, ludicrous and exposed in its nudity, its incongruity, its hopelessness... a comb with missing teeth... the broken-off heel of a shoe, the pocket bible, several lengths of string, an assortment of little boxes, some with pills, others empty... an empty scotch-tape holder, some used bus tickets... large colored beads from a broken neckless, keys, a purse, a little green ID book ,a single yellow knitting needle, a broken glass paperweight... a pink pompom from a slipper... a pocket watch that had stopped going years ago, a half packet of acid drops, a pair of rusty pliers... an empty perfume bottle, a baby’s bottle-teat... a half set of dentures, a life. (204)

The list presents Magrieta’s life in terms of broken trash, unusable objects, and empty containers. When learning the news that Magrieta’s new home with her niece in Bonteheuwel was “blown up”, Ruben reflects “my household, I realized, needed taking care of. In many ways. There was Tessa. There was the house itself. There was the need to find Magrieta a new home” (232). To Ruben, the “problem” with Magrieta is equal to fixing a broken fence or faucet in the house. This comparison again highlights Ruben’s association that Margieta is a fixture of the house on Papenboom road.

Magrieta is not present at the novel’s conclusion; instead, after helping Ruben bury Antje of Bengal’s body, she leaves the house following Ruben’s failure to choose her over Tessa. She asserts, “I got my self-respect, Meneer” (278), and leaves to attempt

to make a new home once again. Critics have very little to say about Magrieta's character outside her role in Ruben's self-disintegration and attempted self-discovery. Early reviewers of the novel praised Brink's construction of Magrieta, such as Celyn Jones' (2000) claim that "it is in the character of Magrieta that Brink has created his best achievement, investing in her a great deal of humanity" (19). Likewise, Rebecca J. Davies (2001) reviews *The Rights of Desire*:

The truest voice is given to Magrieta, the coloured housekeeper who for nearly 40 years has nurtured all the lives within the house. She lends the realities of the outside world to Olivier's suburban island. The real distance between her realm and his smaller circumference are tellingly revealed in the rhythms of violence—vigilante justice, inept and corrupt police, rapes, indiscriminate terror, killings, and gangsters—that plague her daily existence. Magrieta absorbs the blows dealt her; her mantra "one lives when one must live" is that of a survivor on the harshest of the world's continents. (1300)

These reviews highlight the problematic nature of Magrieta's characterization. While she might provide the "truest voice" in the sense that her experiences reflect the reality of township life during and post-apartheid, readers never witness the trauma through her eyes. Instead, we are presented with Ruben's devastation over being called "white kaffir", and not Magrieta's trauma of the destruction of her home, possessions, and ensuing miscarriage. Ruben is a unhomely character, not at home in his self-identity or his place in society, and a symptom of his self-imposed lack of belonging is his inability to see the true un-homed and homeless Magrieta.

Ruben is not only haunted by the unhomely revival of his repressed past and his aging sexuality, body, and mind, but the house on Papenboom road is haunted by a specter of the past. Vidler suggests that buildings and spaces are uncanny "because they

act, historically or culturally, as representations of estrangement” (7). In the case of Ruben’s home, the house is haunted by the ghost of former slave Antje of Bengal and centuries of oppression. Ruben’s unhomely nature further destabilizes as the house brings the issues of the past into the present, which Ruben like many others in the first decade following the transition believe should be forgotten, repressed and hidden.⁵⁰

The beginning of the novel presents the ghost as an uncanny invader of the house, who has had an active role in the affairs of the house such as Rueben’s wife’s and later his own marital affair, and the housekeeper Margrieta’s family. Ghosts are the physical representations of the past invading the present, and Reuben reflects that when they bought the house 40 years prior “ghosts were not yet fashionable” (3). By opening the novel with this assertion, Brink highlights the increased importance placed on reconciling the past in the present permeating the social and political consciousness of the nation throughout and continuing after the TRC.⁵¹ The ghost of Antje of Bengal represents past trauma haunting the present. At one point, Ruben retells Antje’s story, admitting that “there was something fishy about this, but it is difficult to get to the truth as there is so little documentation” (41). Antje’s tragic story as a slave, sexual conquest of her master, and victim of unjust beheading is told parallel to the story of the house.

Many of the conventional images of the horrors of colonization occur in the house. For example, Antje’s sexual relationship with her master took place in the bedroom, and after drugging his wife to sleep, he would “lead Antje by the hand into the

⁵⁰ Ruben admits that he never felt bothered by the outside world, and the current issues in the nation provoked feelings of “annoyance to vague irritability” (261).

⁵¹ Andre Brink was outspoken concerning how post-apartheid writers were to deal with the TRC, and he highlights ambiguities in the process which reveal the uncanny nature. For example, he suggests “ultimately like all narratives, this one must eventually be constructed around its own blind spots and silences...hence my argument in favor of an imagined rewriting of history or, more precisely, of the role of the imagination in the dialectic between past and present, individual and society” (37).

bedroom and copulate on the zebra-skin mat at the foot of the bed...but one night Willem went so far as to draw Antje into the bed itself” (42-43). The house embodies Antje’s tragic spiral to her eventual beheading, falsely accused of murdering Willem’s wife, and her mysterious, questionable burial in the house. Rubin tells the story of the house following Antje’s death:

Open and deserted, the whole place pervaded by an ungodly smell...there were soon rumours of a marauding ghost and no one showed any interest in acquiring what under normal circumstances should have been a coveted property ...the house was razed to its foundation. The estate was subdivided and the peripheral portions sold off. But the central plot remained vacant...only towards the end of the nineteenth century an elderly gentleman from England bought the plot and constructed on the old foundations a dwelling in the colonial Victorian style. (48-49)

Antje of Bengal haunts the house as an unhomely presence, “the figure of a young woman in a long dress, carrying her head in her hands” (58). Freud claims many individuals experience the uncanny “in the highest degree in relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts”; moreover, Antje is further uncanny because “dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist...all of these have something peculiarly uncanny” (163).

Building on Freud and Heidegger in *The Specter of Marx* (1994), Derrida deconstructs Marxian texts and the ghost of Marxism in the contemporary, increasingly globalized world. In his close reading, he constructs *Hauntology* in which being does not necessitate presence, and he analyzes the ghosts that haunt the space between being and nothingness: the uncanny. The ghost, or specter, defies semantic identification because it

spans various categories, simultaneously occupying multiple identities, spaces, and temporalities:

Here is—or rather there is, over there, an unnameable or almost unnameable thing: something, between something and someone, anyone or anything, some thing, “this thing,” but this thing and not any other, this thing that looks at us, that concerns us [*qui nous regarde*], comes to defy semantics as much as ontology, psychoanalysis as much as philosophy...one does not know: not out of ignorance, but because this non-object, this non-present present, this being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge. (5, 6)

The ghost is living and dead as well as past and present: both and neither at once. Antje’s haunting reveals the temporal and spatial uncanny, because time and space are both out of joint with her concurrent presence and non-presence. She remains “an an-identity that *without doing anything*, invisibly occupying places belonging finally neither to us nor to it” (Derrida 217).

Antje does not destabilize Ruben and reveal his unhomeliness by physically occupying the same space, the same house, but following Derrida, Ruben is disoriented by the fact that he “cannot see, localize, fix any form, one cannot decide between hallucination and perception, there are only displacements; one feels oneself looked at by what one cannot see” (170). The gaze of the specter is destabilizing; the pinnacle of the world invading the home. Ruben, as a white, middle class, South Africa male, no longer possesses the dominant gaze in the house. He is othered as the specter that “looks at us even before we see it or even before we see period. We feel ourselves observed, sometimes under surveillance by it even before any apparition” (Derrida 125). For example, right before Ruben stabs the tire of Tessa’s lover’s Porsche, Ruben feels the presence and gaze of Antje: “Glancing back for one last time—there was a rustling in the

trees: perhaps Antje of Bengal breathing down my back?—I huddled down at the nearest wheel and made a stab at the tyre” (130). The power and presence of Antje’s gaze is destabilizing, and leaves Papenboom hauntingly unhomely.

Ruben desires to gaze upon Antje, but unlike Tessa and Magrieta he has never seen the apparition, and admits that in a sense “Antje’s absence was more real than anything around us, visible, in the half-dark study. Like an obscure moon illuminating our darkness from somewhere very far away, very long ago” (51). Returning to Stevens’ poem, Brink highlights the uncanny nature of Ruben’s existence, and focuses attention to Antje’s invasion of the past into the present and the uncanny realization that “you yourself were never quite yourself.” Antje’s gaze, coupled with his lack of gaze, causes Ruben to witness on his own unhomeliness:

The house stirring accusingly in its sleep. Antje of Bengal gliding through the empty room, always just beyond the reach of sight. My own pale face caught in the bathroom mirror, disconcertingly old and close but distanced by the mottled glass...and I here face to face with what purports to be myself, yet not the same, not ever, not me. (23)

Ruben is now under the gaze of his own mirror-specter, and he is haunted by himself. Derrida questions, and answers, “How do you recognize a ghost? By the fact that it does not recognize itself in a mirror” (196). Using the same negation language Derrida utilizes to grasp the concept of the specter, Ruben views himself as the haunting unhomely.

As the novel progresses, the attention focuses more on Ruben’s decentering within the presumed safe, comfortable home becoming increasingly unhomely as Tessa and Antje catalyze the past into the present and the public into the private. Early in the text, Ruben is comforted by books, words, and his study; however, he admits, “I am

beginning to lose faith in making notes. For so many years I have done this to obtain a hold on my world, on the treacherous water of life running through my fingers” (230). Ruben no longer controls the trajectory of his self-insulated world. Still consumed by his obsessive desire for Tessa, Ruben loses his sense of self when he misplaces Tessa’s ruby navel ring that was a birthday gift. As the physical appearance of the house represents the unhomely nature of the dwellers, Ruben’s disintegration is projected onto the dwelling as he gradually begins to dismantle the house, beginning in his office, to find the lost ring—his lost sexuality, his lost belonging, and his lost identity.

Ruben begins to physically destroy the once safe haven of his library by ripping up the floor boards to find the imagined buried ring. The ring itself an unobtainable, uncanny object occupies a space on the boundaries of his imagination:

I go down into my basement like a hermit into his cell: not to escape visions of temptation, but to conjure them up in my search for the small magic ring, which seems to have evaporated in the stale, dusty air of my underfloor world...up here are only the intricacies of a world in which I feel less and less at home. (241)

Because his private world has been invaded by the public, Ruben only feels safe in his “underfloor world,” buried below an existence and home that he now perceives to be uncanny. At times, Ruben even contemplates making his new dwelling more permanent and hospitable, “I toy with the idea of moving a chair down there, even the small chess table, and perhaps a light on an extension cord. I can turn it into my private bunker, safeguarded against all the threats of the outside world” (259).⁵² Ruben essentially begins to bury himself beneath the house. Freud suggests “to many people the idea of being

⁵² Ruben’s desired new place of dwelling reflects David Lurie’s squatter holding outside the Animal Refuge: “he makes a nest of sorts, with a table and an old armchair...the gas stove to make tea or warm up canned food” (211).

buried alive while appearing to be dead is the most uncanny thing of all”; moreover, being buried connects to the repressed fantasy of intra-uterine existence with the return to the womb’s uncanny existence—a place both comforting and terrifying (143). Buried, Ruben visualizes himself as the physical manifestation of the uncanny:

It was as if some force beyond myself had caused me to levitate, to look down on myself from the trapdoor above—in the dark my body below seemed to glimmer spectrally, like ectoplasm—and then hurled me down again in disgust. All I could feel was weariness. Almost literally unto death. I lay down on the uneven ground...I was old. Old. I must have fallen asleep, or passed out. I woke up to find something crawling over me. It was terrifying. Unable immediately to remember where I was and how I’d got there. (254-5)

In this moment, Ruben experiences an uncanny death and rebirth—he becomes the spectral uncanny, and in his recognition of his uncanny position, Ruben admits “my life seems to have drifted loose from its moorings” (272).⁵³

As he continues to search for the lost navel ring, Ruben uncovers the broken, cast-aside, and unburied body of Antje of Bengal, following Derrida’s suggestion that “every revenant seems here to come from and return to the earth, to come from it as from a buried clandestinely (humus and mold, tomb and subterranean prison)” (117). As a ghost, Antje confuses and deconstructs the lines of linear time allowing the past to coopt the present, and her corporal remains force Ruben to face the past in the present as neither an

⁵³ Connections can again be made between Ruben’s uncanny existence, his self-burial, and Freud’s conceptualization of the death drive: In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud states, “the emergence of life would thus be the cause of the continuance of life and also at the same time of the striving towards death; and life itself would be a conflict and compromise between these two trends...the struggle between Eros and Death.” If the uncanny embodies the deconstruction of past/present, private/public, known/unknown, then the uncanny can also be considered the simultaneous desire of life and death.

observer of the specter nor the object of her gaze, but he now must act within his new uncanny temporality. He becomes an actor in the uncanny past-present, present-future.

As he continues his “subterranean explorations,” Ruben loses all sense of time, and when he touches Antje’s bones, cast aside, half buried in the basement ruins of the house, he is struck with the uncanny: “A chill moved down my spine like a slow, hairy caterpillar. It wasn’t exactly fear. Nothing as uncomplicated as that” (279). Ruben’s uncanny feelings are familiar and equally unfamiliar, as he faces the indecipherable and enigmatic nature of the uncanny human existence: “Never before had I been faced with this ultimate essence of bone that both defies and defines humanity...*Because* it decays, *because* it is mortal, *because* nothing endures but bone. All of it gone, and now forever here and now” (280, 281). Ruben praises Antje’s meager bones and realizes, “I’m trying to use words to worm myself into what was pure bone, unmitigated reality” (281). Ruben uses multiple allusions as he describes Antje’s skeleton, primarily biblical references from Song of Solomon Chapter 4. He ends his litany with an uncredited quote of Ecclesiastes 1:2 “vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.” Not included in Brink’s text are the following verses “what profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passes away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever” (1:3-4). Ruben must come to terms with this realization over the course of the novel, and perhaps his experiences with Antje of Bengal and helping to physically right her desecrated remains, he can understand the uncanny, yet necessary, movement of the nation to rectify the past in the present. Ruben cannot cultivate and tame the uncanny with language. Louren’s highlights that Ruben’s connection to language as a tool attached to his position of power is clear in his early

association with language and the act of colonization: “To read, to think, to trace the words back to their origins real or presumed; to invent; to dare to imagine. And then to reread, a new Columbus let loose on endless worlds beyond unnamed seas” (32); moreover, Louren’s suggests that Ruben’s “need and failure of capturing reality into words is expressed by [his] preoccupation with possession (of language, of women)” (133). I believe Ruben desires to tame the world through language because he recognizes and is unbalanced by the uncanny.

After replacing Antje’s severed skull on top of her vertebrae, Ruben once again emerges from his self-designated tomb, and imagines himself reborn from death: “My whole body felt wrapped in a film of dust and cobwebs and death. This, I thought as I came past a mirror and saw my reflection, was what Lazarus must have looked like stumbling from the death” (283). Ruben eventually replaces the floorboards “for what [he] hoped would be the last time” (283). At this point in the story, Brink begins to neatly tie-up Ruben’s uncanny experiences in the novel, presenting Ruben as a character who, now that he recognizes his unhomey nature, can seek to be homely.

The conclusion is swift in the last few pages of the novel, as Ruben appears to be at peace, and instead of a perpetual sense of instability, he emerges comfortable with his position in the house and the nation. Instead of viewing himself outside the history of the nation, Ruben recognizes the uncanny invasion of the outside world on his familiar, private home. He reflects, “The whole shared history, private and public, hers and mine, Riana’s, our children’s, the country’s. As if in some inexplicable way it all became focused on this house, like rays of light through a magnifying glass” (285). Instead of writing his notes from the excavated ruins of the house’s foundation, Ruben moves to the

stoop outside of the house. Later, he agrees to walk with Tessa for the mere purpose of “make[ing] sure the world is still a beautiful place” (291).

However, while Ruben and Tessa walk through Newlands Forest, Brink develops a moment of trauma potentially reflecting the uncanny violence of Lurie’s burning and Lucy’s gang rape in *Disgrace*. In a presumed robbery attempt, Ruben is held at knife point—his throat pricked with the knife—while Tessa is thrown on the ground, surrounded by a group of men who begin to remove her clothing. The difference between the attack at Lucy’s farm and the attack in Newlands Forest, is the fact that people come to the rescue of Ruben and Tessa. Other hikers in the woods stop the violence: “Then there was a sound of dogs barking. People’s voices. From lower down some hikers appeared, running and panting/ and the attackers fled in among the trees” (296).

More than a rewriting of Coetzee’s controversial rape in *Disgrace*, Brink develops this moment as a challenge to Ruben’s long-held suspicion and revulsion of the movement of the world into the home. In this moment, Ruben’s private world—locked up in his comfortable, safe home on Papenboom Road—crumbles as he begins to realize his own culpability in the present and the present-future. If Antje’s presence forced on Ruben a vision of the past in the present that was disorientingly uncanny, then Ruben’s experiences outside the house in the world emphasize the fabricated nature of his unhomey existence and private self-absorption:

How many other voices have there been shouting for help throughout my life, shouting for me to help?...All those cries for help from a clamoring world. While I chose not to listen. I couldn’t bear to get involved. Unlike those strangers, this afternoon. I complain, often, like everyone I know...of how the place is going down the drain. Misery, violence, terror, the lot. All the voices, voices. Yet I

prefer not to listen, not to respond...and by turning a deaf ear I help create the very space in which the world can sink into the morass. The mindset that makes atrocity possible...the world is too much with us. I cannot bear it. (299-30)

Ruben begins to understand his uncanny position in the world, and that his manufactured homeliness, as a white, male member of the culture of power, is not sustainable. He is overwhelmed by his first glimpse of the world outside his private home and his own complacency in its existence and perpetuation. By reburying Antje, Ruben undergoes a rebirth of sorts, but he must recognize the existence of the unhomely world and his position as an unhomely subject capable of action.

The Good Doctor and The Impostor- Unhomely Morality

Damon Galgut's *The Good Doctor* (2003) and *The Impostor* (2008), continue the path laid by Coetzee and Brink to explore the changing subject position and unhomely condition of white masculinity in the new century. The novels present the parallel stories of Frank Eloff and Adam Napier, white men who feel disconnected from their past and are drifting arbitrarily into an undefined, insignificant future. Both men feel displaced, unfulfilled professionally, and occupy an uncanny position in marginalized landscapes: Frank endures as a doctor in a derelict, ineffectual hospital in a former homeland, and Adam attempts to prevail as a poet in a lifeless town in the Karoo. Throughout the novels, Galgut highlights the uncanny tensions within the characters as they are faced with moral ambiguities and destabilizing relationships while attempting to find home in inhospitable spaces of the nation. Jason Cowley (2003) draws attention to Frank and Adam's unhomeliness:

Galgut dramatizes the tensions confronting even the most optimistic liberal whites in a country that they feel is increasingly indifferent to their fate. These were people who believed in the struggle to liberate the black majority, who despised the cruelty of apartheid, but who cannot now accept the loss of their own exceptionalism. (23)

Galgut's crime novels explore Kynoch's claim that many white south Africans "see themselves as unmoored from the state that formerly promoted their interests," and like Lurie and Ruben, Frank and Adam are unhomely and desire to be at home not only in the nation, but at home in their own identity and future (439).

Similar to criticism facing Coetzee's *Disgrace*, these novels are admittedly serious and at times haunting in their presentation of South Africa.⁵⁴ Ken Barris (2005) criticizes Galgut for the image of South Africa that he creates, asserting that Galgut endorses a cynical view of the post-apartheid dispensation and he "fails to move towards the invention of what might become a post-apartheid episteme; towards reshaping the South African literary canon, rather than stretching it curiously out of shape" (39).⁵⁵ Sofia Kostelac (2017) focuses on Galgut's representations of the democratic nation and its changing future, and suggests that the novels reveal shifts in thinking which are required

⁵⁴ *Disgrace*, remains one of the most polemic, revered, and criticized texts of post-apartheid literature. Derek Attridge summarizes the controversy surrounding *Disgrace*, questioning if the novel and the "largely negative picture it paints of relations between communities hinder the steps being made towards reconciliation?" (99). Famously, Athol Fugard refused to read the novel believing that the story of David Lurie's transgression and refused reconciliation, along with the trauma of his burning and his daughter's gang rape, did in fact impede and hinder the growth of the fledgling nation. Fugard dismisses the world Coetzee envisions "where we have to accept the rape of a white woman as a gesture to all the evil we did in the past... [as] a load of bloody bullshit" (quoted in Attridge 99).

⁵⁵ Barris views the problem with Galgut's *The Good Doctor* is that it is a "book in which the present in its difference is appropriated (without noticeable resistance) by the past. In effect, the novel justifies its disillusionment by writing *forward* the apartheid past into a present to which it cannot do justice in any other way. (35). He also views *The Good Doctor* as an example of Afro-pessimistic tendencies of neocolonialism: "The Man Booker Prize trajectories... suggests that books which predict failure for the new dispensation most centrally define the properties of South African political writing under present conditions" (35).

for the foundations of personal and social change. While not dismissing Barris, she suggests that *The Good Doctor* (which I extend to *The Impostor*) “rejects an epiphanic formulation of change as that which is dramatically and observably manifested in favor of one which is calibrated to the subtle shifts in thinking that are not always immediately perceptible, but without which any level of transformation, public or private, is unlikely” (37). Likewise, Michael Titlestad (2009) asserts that the issues Barris addresses do not reveal a pessimistic outlook on the nation, but because of a

haunting of the present by established patterns of affect and cognition...it seems strange to insist that literary representations of subjectivity, in its faltering progress, should eliminate those traces of feeling and thought that do not accord with the logic of a historic and ideological watershed” (115).⁵⁶

I believe that Adam and Frank’s subtle shifts of thinking from established patterns of affect and cognition rather than epiphany, reveal that these characters function, and Galgut writes, from the position of Lars Engle’s political uncanny. Engle asserts that in the space of the political uncanny “the edges of mental systems are felt as areas of threat, and the result is paralysis and alienation, no longer knowing how to live in the world...a breakdown of systems of interpretation” (114). Adam and Frank are no longer at home in the false world created by apartheid systems of racial power, and instead the two men struggle with their own self-discrepancy and change.

⁵⁶ Titlestad continues to assert, “while a pathological recidivism still manifests occasionally in certain individuals and communities, and while many whites retain a measure of nostalgic attachment to their erstwhile power and privilege, most have sought ways to embrace the post-apartheid dispensation. This embrace may be reluctant, polite, or passionate; it may be only a public display later renounced in private. But generally speaking, white South Africans are reconstructing their identities. The old is dead, and although the new is struggling to be born, the vector of whiteness is generally progressive: most white South Africans are being remade, existentially and politically, in the light of the nation’s transformation” (119).

Exploring social psychology and the relation of self to affect, E. Tory Higgins (1987) develops the theory of self-discrepancy, which I connect to the space of the political uncanny and the unhomey condition of white male subjectivity. He describes how different, inconsistent representations of self result in emotional and cognitive discomfort and instability as individuals attempt to minimize the void created by internal binaries. Higgins suggests there are three domains of the self:

(a) the actual self, which is your representation of the attributes that someone (yourself or another) believes you actually possess; (b) the ideal self, which is your representation of the attributes that someone (yourself or another) would like you, ideally, to possess...and (c) the ought self, which is your representation of the attributes that someone (yourself or another) believes you should or ought to possess (i.e., a representation of someone's sense of your duty, obligations, or responsibilities). (320-1)⁵⁷

These fissures within the domains of the self result from the uncanny invasion of the home by the world. What Frank and Adam once considered solid and safe—white male subjectivity—is now equally perceived to be vacillatingly volatile.

Adam and Frank's self-discrepancy rises out of fissures from their comfortability with what Abdul JanMohamed (1983) terms "colonial mentality." JanMohamed states, that colonial mindsets are "dominated by a Manichean allegory of white and black, good and evil, salvation and damnation, civilization and savagery, superiority and inferiority,

⁵⁷ Higgins views of self-discrepancy reflect many postcolonial theories and discussion of identity. For example, Franz Fanon speaks of self-division in *Black Skins, White Masks* stating, "the black man possesses two dimensions: one with his fellow Blacks, the other with the Whites. A Black man behaves differently with a white man than he does with another black man. There is no doubt whatsoever that this fissiparousness [self-division] is a direct consequence of the colonial undertaking." (1). Similarly W. E. B. DuBois' conception of double-consciousness in *The Souls of Black Folk*: "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt or pity. One ever feels his two-ness...two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideas in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (9).

intelligence and emotion, self and other, subject and object” (4). Unlike Fanon’s subjects who must break free of the binary that keeps them oppressed physically and in terms of self-identification, Adam and Frank face the destabilizing allegorical scheme of “white equals right” that functioned as the master code of European colonialism and apartheid in South Africa. By deconstructing binaries within the space of the uncanny—Galgut not only focuses on binaries of power and identity, but also the Manichean divides between right/wrong and ethical/corrupt.

When questioned concerning his motivation for writing *The Good Doctor*, Galgut states that he wanted to write “a book about being South African now,” he continues,

It seemed to me that part of the experience of “the new South Africa” has to be a shattering of all the old moral signposts. The rules are all different, the characters have all changed shape, and things couldn’t be defined in the old way. Ambiguity, ambivalence, I think, is the territory we’ve gone into now... I think it’s more human now. (142-3)

In *The Good Doctor* and *The Impostor*, Galgut highlights Frank and Adam’s humanity by forcing them to face their own ambiguity, ambivalence, and unhomeliness in the spaces of shifting paradigms and deconstructed binaries. Both of these characters question and navigate their own self-discrepancy and wavering subjectivity when faced with ambiguous moral dilemmas while dwelling in unhomely places within the crime novels.

The two protagonists resonate as unlikable, insubstantial characters who accept living allocated lives. Both once had what they considered success, Adam was a published nature poet and Frank was married and thriving in Cape Town, but now both men are set adrift with no true place to call home. Frank lives in a converted room in the insignificant hospital of an unnamed former homeland, which he describes in efficient

detail: “two beds, a cupboard, a small carpet, a print on one wall, a mirror, a green sofa, a low coffee table made of synthetic wood, a lamp...as in some featureless bleak hotel” (2). A hotel room, a temporary place marked by travel and movement, and yet Frank is stagnantly trapped in the idea of his own lacking mobility. He recognizes his stasis, and yet makes no moves to change—Frank is mired in ambiguity and ambivalence: “years of my life, sour with caffeine, had been sipped away in this room. A clock on the wall stood silent and broken, the hands fixed forever at ten to three” (10). Frank feels, “restless, uncontained,” “full of directionless fury,” and “uneasy” towards his position and dwelling, but he does not desire to return to “the shambles of his old life” (38, 4, 32).

Likewise, *The Impostor* opens with Adam at home in his self-defined moral superiority, his ivory tower of the artist where he sees himself as “the real soul of the country...the center of things,” but he must face his homeless situation, living in his brother’s dilapidated Karoo investment home (32). Before arriving at the house, Adam runs a stop sign, because, “nothing was coming, it was safe, what he did posed no danger to anyone,” and yet he is pulled over by a local policeman. Adam asks the cop to bend the rules, but is horrified when the cop simply states, “if you want me to break the rules, you have to make it worthwhile” (3). Adam rejects the bribe—“outraged”—comfortable in his own morality, while refusing to recognize that he was in fact the instigator in the unethical encounter—first by breaking the traffic law, and second by imploring “it would be nice if you stretched [the rules] a bit” (3).

Adam sees himself as a victim of “unfortunate circumstances” of rationalization in the new century —“humiliation he hadn’t seen it coming...In just a few months, he’d found himself stranded—alone and futureless in the middle of his life” (15-6). Adam

connects his current situation to political and social movements out of his control. He loses his job due to racial quotas, and his house as a result of falling market values as white South African's fled the cities post-transition: "The area of Johannesburg in which he'd bought—trendy and vibrant and multi-cultural when he'd first moved in—had been sliding badly for a few years. All of his friends who lived nearby had been selling up and getting out...but for some reason, some passivity in his character, he hadn't done anything about it. He'd just sat there, watching it all go to pieces" (15). Adam stays in the city not out of moral or political obligation to the new paradigm of equality, but out of his own lack of drive, as Galgut suggests of post-apartheid characters, he is characterized by his "ambiguity and ambivalence."

Adam is unhomey, and the haunted house in the Karoo highlights Adam's displacement, and calls him to question his own uncanny, self-discrepancies. As he enters the house, Adam immediately notices the uncanny environment:

The air inside was dead and heavy, as if it had been breathed already. The furniture was a depressing mixture of old, clunky pieces interspersed with the tastelessly modern. The four rooms were functional and barren. There was no carpeting on the concrete floor, no pictures on the walls, no softness anywhere. All of it was immured in a thick, brown pelt of dust. There was the distinct sense that time had been shut outside and was only now flowing in again behind them.
(7)

Adam feels connected to the house in an uncanny way, "he could feel the house pulling at him, drawing him in—claiming him. It was almost a physical sensation" (7). Later that night, Adam again feels haunted by the house, "it was as if another person, from another time, was buried under his skin. This person was squatting by a fire, with a vast darkness pressing in" (9). Adam's sister-in-law, a self-proclaimed psychic, feels the presence of an

“old woman...very old and very sad” (8). The specter of the house is an elderly, black woman, which dislocates Adam’s perceptions of himself as he is haunted by the presence of his ultimate other. Adam, once at home with his perceived-self, his white male subjectivity, is now destabilized and forced to face his own insecurities.

In both novels, an uncanny agent forces the two men to recognize their unhomely nature, and the fact that they operate within uncanny spaces. Frank and Adam form friendships founded on the uncanny simultaneous feelings of desire and repulsion. Through their supposed friendships, with Lawrence and Canning respectively, Frank and Adam come face-to-face with another that is the mirror image of their own white masculinity. However, instead of identification, Frank and Adam are repulsed by their uncanny mirror/other.

Mike Marais (2014) contends that the story told in the *Good Doctor* is the story of the struggle for recognition, and that Lawrence’s arrival prompts Frank’s desire for affirmation in recognition, but instead, Galgut presents an uncanny representation of fraternal friendship, “a friend who is both familiar and irreducibly strange” (464). Lawrence is Frank’s opposite. Frank is stagnant, unpleasant, and pessimistic; Lawrence is dynamic, charismatic, and idealistic. Lawrence believes that he can change the lives of the individuals living in the former homeland, brushing aside Frank’s concerns, emphasizing, “You mean politics...but that’s all past now. It doesn’t matter.” When Frank questions his idealistic vision: “The past has only just happened. It’s not past yet,” Lawrence quickly separates from political and social concerns, asserting, “I don’t care about that, I’m a doctor” (6). Frank is skeptical of Lawrence’s idealistic vision in the face of history alive in the present, and he remains unsure how to reconcile his own outlook

for the future against this new figure. When Frank asks Lawrence why he chose the hospital, in contrast to Frank's passive assimilation, Lawrence replies, "I thought: Let me be different to them. Let me find the tiniest place, the furthest from anything. Let me make it hard on myself" (40).⁵⁸ Frank cannot solidify his feelings towards Lawrence, and the image of the white male he represents, and he continually thinks of Lawrence in contradictory terms. He reflects, "already I was finding it difficult to resent him completely. Which, in another way, made me resent him more" (41).

Lawrence serves as an uncanny agent destabilizing Frank's self-understanding by both invading his place of dwelling, and by catalyzing Frank's recognition of the physical world surrounding the neglected hospital. Tom Penfold (2012), exploring South African public and private space represented in literature, asserts that Frank experiences "the imagined new space distinct from the past that never quite becomes attainable and the private space he actually inhabits, compromised by the present of an Other," which causes Frank to question his "perception of himself and of the new South Africa" (993).⁵⁹ Lawrence moves into Frank's room, and invades the safe place created over years. Frank again, is undecided and wavers between how to see Lawrence: "on the one hand he was my shadow...an unwanted usurper crowding me in my own room. And on the other hand he was a companion and confidant...so I was also two people when dealing with him. There was the darker, angry Frank, who felt himself under siege. And there was a softer Frank too, who was grateful not to be alone" (42). These contradictory feelings soon turn

⁵⁸ Lawrence later tells Franks, "I believe it is only the beginning. Of this country. The old history doesn't count. It's all starting now. From the bottom up. So I want to be here. I don't want to be anywhere else in the world, where it doesn't matter if I'm there or not. It matters I'm here now...I wouldn't mind being in Soweto, said Laurence, but this is better. This is really nowhere" (51).

⁵⁹ Penfold goes on to suggest that the novel interrogates questions of space vital to the nation: "To what extent has South Africa succeeded in claiming a new, bare space that can provide a better future? How has post-apartheid South Africa adapted to sharing space?" (993).

to apathy and ambivalence as Lawrence continues to make changes to the room, and completely removes Frank's sense of home. At first Frank claims that he "felt a flash of personal outrage, as if he'd violated my home," but as soon as Lawrence continued redecorating that outrage turned to feelings which felt "natural and normal...dimly this time, less deep"; eventually, Frank admits he "almost felt nothing at all" (43).

The years before Lawrence's arrival, Frank turned the hospital into an insular home, rarely interacting with the setting and life outside of the hospital. However, Lawrence's appearance soon requires Frank to venture back to the town as he provides a tour for Lawrence, and later his visiting girlfriend, and hikes with Lawrence through the nearby hills as he attempts to locate local villages for outreach programs. The deserted town, including the hospital and the former Brigadier's compound, is an uncanny place: familiar and strange, benign and threatening. Frank reflects on how Lawrence arrived at the hospital, mirroring his own experience: "Maybe the first clue was a disturbing detail...And you slowed down, looking around you with vague anxiety, and suddenly it all came into clear focus...And you were not sure any more of where you were" (3). The town has a destabilizing quality: disturbing and creating a haunting sense of vague anxiety. The uncanny nature of the town does not rise from the fact that the town exists in disrepair, but the fact that it is not what one would expect of the capital of a homeland. The imagined homeliness of the town is destroyed with the reality that it is in fact a façade and simulacrum of home. Falsely created by the system of apartheid which Derrida deems "judicial simulacrum" and "political theater," the homelands are not just a

degraded copy of home, but they uncannily destabilize the original (294).⁶⁰ Frank recognizes the false origins of the town, and the homeland itself, and he reveals the pretense to Lawrence:

This was not a town that had sprung up naturally for the normal human reasons...It was a town that had been conceived and planned on paper, by evil bureaucrats in a city far away, who had probably never even been here. Here is our homeland, they said, tracing an outline on a map, now where should its capital be? Why not here, in the middle? They made an 'X' with a red pen and all felt very satisfied with themselves, then sent for the state architects to draw up plans. (4)⁶¹

Following the fall of apartheid the homelands lost even their menacing political purpose, and instead uncannily existed as neither a part nor apart of the nation: "Then the homeland had ceased to be a homeland, and with its reabsorption into the country the meaning and the future of the hospital became permanently unclear. So it was a strange twilight place, halfway between nothing and somewhere" (33). Frank continues to describe the condition of the forgotten hospital in the now non-homeland:

The little jumble of disconnected buildings, like all the structures in the town, was slowly falling into ruin. Grass had started growing on the roof. The pink walls – nobody knew why it had all been painted pink – had faded with the weather into a pale shade of orange. The grounds behind their high wall and gate were going to

⁶⁰ Derrida's discussion of apartheid in "Le Dernier Mot du Racisme" (1985) opened a critical dialogue picked up by Anne McClintock and Rob Nixon in "No Names Apart: the Separation of Word and History in Derrida's 'Le Dernier Mot du Racisme'" (1986), and followed by Derrida's "But, Beyond..." (1986).

⁶¹ Shireen Ally (2015) examines the former homeland KaNgwane and states that it is "apt that a one-time seat of Bantustan rule should lie here in ruin. Indeed, as Ann Stoler suggests, colonial pasts are not merely relics in the present, but accrue in a process of 'ruination' that leaves the indelible stain of imperial histories everywhere...the Bantustan's past was laid not to rest, but to waste. This was the fate of the site of one of apartheid's most audacious political experiments, 'the greatest single fraud ever invented by white politicians', as Steve Biko once characterized the Bantustans" (868). Ally draws from Stoler's (2013) *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination*, which "seek[s] to ask how empire's ruins contour and carve through the psychic and material space in which people live and what compounded layers of imperial debris do to them" (2). The unnamed homeland in *The Good Doctor* exemplifies this ruin of empire.

seed. At night most of the windows, regularly repeated behind bars, were dark. For the few of us still remaining, life went on between twin poles of banality and violence. There were long periods of tedium when nothing happened, the place was empty. (34)

The post-apartheid homeland exists in the liminal space of the uncanny suspended between the past and the present, the home and the world, and existence and non-existence. Frank fabricates a false home and sense of belonging within his room of the hospital, but the unhomely condition of the pretense of the town highlights the inhospitable, unhomely nature of the homeland. Instead of a place of comfort, connection, and meaning, the homeland is a spatial representation of the false reality of apartheid. Moreover, Frank's ability to recognize the fabricated nature of the homeland, but not his connection and implied culpability as a member of the white culture of power once responsible for the "judicial simulacrum" of apartheid, highlights his own self-discrepancy and unhomely condition.⁶²

When walking through the woods one day as a part of Lawrence's quest to make a difference in the lives of the residents of near-by villages, Frank experiences a moment fused with the political uncanny which causes him to question his place in the hospital, the homeland, and the present course of the nation. In nature, Frank experiences a brief moment of pastoral escape from the hospital and the town, as he admits, "I felt happy – happier than I'd been in months. I'd forgotten how good it was to be away from buildings and people and familiar objects. It was cool and lovely under the trees" (70). In nature,

⁶²Maria Jesus Cabarcos-Traseira (2005) claims, "Frank has tried his hardest not to get involved, not to think, not to act, and simply to live day after day, in an eternal present with no personal history claiming retribution and with no future demanding commitment...Frank has been metaphorically paralyzed because in the last years of apartheid he did not side with the oppressed when his moment of truth presented itself" (47, 50).

Frank admits that he is not himself, and instead is once again presented in terms of reversal with Lawrence when he loses concerns for modesty while lying in the sun. Frank notices the reversal: “in the room I was the shy, private one, always changing in the bathroom or under a towel, while he didn't care how I saw him. But out here our roles had somehow reversed” (71). Naked, Frank’s homely feeling of comfort is soon destabilized, as his natural surrounds turn ominous and he feels subject to an uncanny gaze:

The pool was a dark mirror, its surface cracked and broken by the force of the water...I felt chilly and alone...Now I felt watched. The trees were a dark cryptic presence all around me, the rocks bulged with hard inner life. It had been years since the world observed me like this; it made me a child again. (73)

Alone and powerless as a child, Frank loses comfort with his own self under the gaze of a presence he cannot comprehend. Attempting to escape his loneliness and the uncanny moment, Frank follows Lawrence into the woods, but instead of comfort, Frank is faced with the unhomely invasion of the past into his present happiness as he uncovers the ruins of an abandoned Afrikaner home—a legacy of apartheid’s uncanny, counterfeit creation of the homeland. Frank questioningly approaches the former dwelling, “A house. Here. Why? I took a full step back, not to touch...Nobody had lived here for a long time...the fence – which was once formidable – was folding and falling in on itself. I went over” (74). Drawn to the house, Frank is unable to resist entering the ruins:

Down the long wall of the passage somebody had scratched a huge word, BEASTIE, in big drawling letters that collapsed towards each other. But in the little dunes of sand that had collected on the floor, the only footprints were mine...And I was afraid here. Not in the same way that the pool at the waterfall made me afraid. No, that was aloneness, and this was something else: the very

opposite of being alone. There was nobody with me, but it felt as if somebody was there, just at the edge of my sight, moving around the corners before I got there. It was a faceless figure, on the verge of being human, not a personality so much as a force. Malevolent but amused. Something that this country had thrown up between me and it, conjured out of ruin and wilderness and not belonging completely to either, a shape, an outline, a threat. It meant me harm. (74-5)

Frank is haunted by the uncanny threat of the past encroaching on the present. The eerie name, *beastie*, haunts the text and destabilizes Frank, because he is the beast—the one who does not belong. In a novel including moments of crime, where Frank fears for his life and the lives of others, as he uncovers a smuggling ring controlled by the former homeland Brigadier, this scene, while not including physical action, remains a climactic scene in the novel, as Frank comes face to face with the uncanny nature of the homeland and his own unhomely, haunted existence. Naked, Frank's uncanny feeling of terror at the thought of being both alone and surrounded, serves as a moment of uncanny rebirth. The ruined house itself is uncanny. The house reflects Freud's suggestion that ruins reveal "everything that ought to have remained...secret and hidden but has come to life" (4). The house exposes the repressed history of the homeland, and forces Frank to recognize his own repressed relationship with the present. Recognition begins the scaffold for Frank to experience a potential revision of his moral outlook, what can be deemed a moment of "regenerative catharsis" as the present reiterates the past. This moment reflects Freud's assertion that the uncanny arises "when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced," and Frank's uncanny connection to the past while standing in the ruins of the settler home is not reminiscent, but violent (367).

Like Frank's relationship with Lawrence, Adam experiences a similar fluctuating relationship with a supposed childhood friend Canning. Adjusting to his new home in the

Karoo, members of the community repeatedly remind Adam of his destabilized identity by continually prescribing him the wrong name. For example during his first visit at the local hotel restaurant, Adam is called “Adrian” and his corrections are ignored, leaving him feeling “full of insecurity about what he was doing, the whole move up here, the big change in his life” (12). Later, Adam again returns to the hotel, and this time is identified as Alan: ““So Alan, what is it you do?’ ‘Adam.’ ‘Sorry?’ ‘My name is Adam. I write poetry.’ A gaunt older woman with a leathery face leaned towards him. ‘I didn’t catch that. You do pottery?’ ‘No, no. Poems. I write poems.’ Silence descended on the room” (30). Adam’s self-identity is challenged and fractured, and the misnaming is important to consider as a signpost to Adam’s destabilization and self- discrepancy. Nicholas Royle (2003) connects the uncanny condition with the loss of subject position, manifested in the disturbance of names. He asserts,

The uncanny involves feelings of uncertainty, in particular regarding the reality of who one is and what is being experienced. Suddenly, one’s sense of oneself...seems strangely questionable. The uncanny is a crisis of the proper: it entails a critical disturbance of what is proper...the disturbance of the very idea of personal or private property including the properness of proper names, one’s so-called “own” name. (1)

Adam’s disconnection from his name and his “sense of one’s self” becomes most clear when he reconnects with his supposed childhood friend, Canning. Until he meets Canning, Adam sinks further into his haunted house:

The world shrank very quickly to the size of the house. He hardly ever went out, unless it was down to the supermarket or the bottle store. He started drinking in the afternoons, to make the evenings come faster...now he could feel a different time—old time, dead time—trapped inside, unable to pass back out, into the

current. It had become shaped to the rooms, looping back on itself, piling up in compacted layers so dense and heavy that they were almost substantial...so he was alone, but he didn't feel alone" (43, 46).

Canning, like Lawrence's effect on Frank, serves as a destabilizing force in Adam's life, forcing him to reevaluate his own desires, ethical limitations, and future. The only problem with Canning's introduction into the novel, is that Adam has no memory of their childhood relationship or his supposed dramatic influence of Canning's rise to success. Adam feels his unhomey state when shopping for yard tools: "he felt like an obvious fraud: anyone could see he didn't belong here" (49). It is here, already in a state of not-at-home, which Canning calls out to Adam his old childhood name, "Nappy" (49). This one name, mired in childhood embarrassment and hazing, sets the novel into a new direction physically ending the first section "Before" and the beginning of the section "Gondwana." When Adam hears the name, he connects to the long-lost identity: "Adam jumps. 'Nappy' is a name he hasn't heard for twenty-five years, but it re-attaches itself to him instantly, with a jolt of shame. It's like being hit by a fist" (53). Adam uncannily reattaches to a name both familiar and yet distant—a name tied to shame, humiliation, and trauma from the hazing following adolescent bedwetting, he states, "the moment he heard that name, all the vulnerability and embarrassment returned in an instant. It is astounding how much history can be stored up in two syllables" (57).

Regardless of the pun wordplay of his name, Canning is an uncanny agent. Because Adam has no memory of the man or their childhood relationship—his presence divides Adam's identity. Moreover, Canning introduces Adam to a facet of the "new" South Africa and ethically dubious position allocated for the white, male power position Canning inhabits. Adam's lack of belonging and uncanny morality, is exposed by the

dwellings of Canning's gated game reserve—Gondwana. Kostelac (2010), summarizes Adam's relationship with Canning as an escape from isolation. She states,

Mired in loneliness and poverty in the Karoo, [Adam] is seduced by the emotional and material comforts offered by Canning, a wealthy childhood friend who is involved in a corrupt development deal set to destroy vast tracks of land of an unspoilt Karoo Valley ironically called Gondwana. The name signals the state of pre-lapsarian innocence for which Adam yearns, but it is here that he is drawn into the very world of self-promoting materialism from which he felt protected by his poetic aestheticism. (57)

Adam's relationship with Canning and his introduction to the space of Gondwana, reveals not only issues of home and belonging in post-transition South Africa, but the false friendship and false preserve mirror Adam's own unhomely condition. Like the hospital and homeland in *The Good Doctor*, Gondwana serves as an unhomely space, but also represents an heterotopian space of pretense.⁶³

Gondwana presents Adam with an uncanny past alive in the present, with the name Gondwana reaching back to the southern continent of the Precambrian southern super-continent of Pangea.⁶⁴ Adam immediately recognizes the uncanny nature of the reserve, and he imagines the prehistoric history of the land: "he has a shivery sense of the whole landscape looking utterly different, full of sex and death in forms he can hardly

⁶³ As seen in my previous chapter, Foucault's heterotopias are spaces which are disturbing, intense, incompatible, contradictory, and transforming. They are spaces both in and out of space. Gondwana fits all six guideline descriptions, (as does the hospital and former homeland of *The Good Doctor*). As a placeless place, the heterotopia is the space of the uncanny. See Foucault's "Of Other Spaces" (1984).

⁶⁴ A top-rated game reserve in South Africa is named Gondwana. Opened in 2004, this reserve is similar to the vision outlined by Canning for his soon-to-be game reserve turned golf course. Like Canning's vision, the real Gondwana ignores the land's connection to home and history in South Africa. The website solicits visitors to "Return with us to Nature's Perfect Playground," while describing the history of Gondwana's first residents as "short, slight bodies, small hands and feet and yellow-brown skin that wrinkles early. The women tend to store fat in their buttocks and have sharply hollowed backs. The chief owned neither land nor the resources on it was not owned by an individual...Some Bushmen went to live with [early explorers] and others moved on west and north in search of land where they could live freely" (<http://www.gondwanagr.co.za/reserve/history/>).

imagine. Prehistoric creatures moving through a soupy twilight...the landscape itself is like a fossil of that time. In all the miles of desolation, the car is a tiny shape, going from nowhere to nowhere” (58). Canning picks Adam up, giving him the impression of “being ill-fitting, expensive and unnatural” (57), and on the way to the reserve, they pass a “peculiar little village...with its mixture of poverty and pretension” (60). Canning explains that the village, “Nuwe Hoop,” was built to head off land claims and provide nearby workers for the developing Gondwana golf course and tourist attraction. Adam feels uncomfortable with Canning’s assertion: “these people have done very well. Partnership between big business and the previously disadvantaged—it’s a new South Africa solution” (60). Uncannily, Canning connects his work, and his usurped sense of belonging at Gondwana, with apartheid rhetoric, similar to D. F. Malan’s 1954 “Apartheid: South Africa’s Answer to a Major Problem,” in which he asserts, “I must ask you to give White South Africans credit...they are a small nation, grappling with one of the most difficult problems in the world. To them millions of semi-barbarous Blacks look for guidance, justice and the Christian way of life” (7).

Gondwana itself, secured inside layers of security gates is uncannily anachronistic, eerily empty, and pseudo-homely:

A huge building under a thatched roof, bright patterns daubed onto its outside walls. Around it is a cluster of *rondawels*, in the same *faux*-African style...the place is very strange. It is like an old colonial dream of refinement and exclusion, which should have vanished when the dreamer woke up. But here it is, solid and permanent, its windows burning with friendly light—or perhaps the reflection of the lowering sun...now they have walked into a tall, sepulchral space, in which Adam’s eyes have to adjust...it feels as if it should be jammed with people but the place is empty. The sound of their feet quavers coldly around them...“But where

are all the people?" (62, 64)⁶⁵

Adam is struck by the unhomeliness of the game reserve, but as he spends every weekend with Canning—partying, and eventually initiating an illicit affair with Canning's wife Baby—he slips further from his perceived self.

Baby remains a flat character in the text and silently supports the plot and Adam's character development and confrontation of his uncanny condition. As he begins his affair, further blurring the line of his own ethics, Adam often fetishizes Baby as exotic:

She seems rapt in some private fantasy...her legs are very long. Although her feet are bare, it's as if she's wearing high heels. Even before he sees the bright paint on her face, Adam has a flash of the woman on the road outside the town, selling herself. She seems to have been transported here, garish and gorgeous and improbable...she is like an exotic doll, all her tiny features in immaculate proportion. (63)

Adam removes Baby's humanity, relegating her to the position of an improbable, sexualized, exotic doll. Baby's presence in the text serves to further Adam's destabilization when he notices her gaze: "he notices something peculiar: she has green eyes, which he's never seen in a black person before. And not only that—one eye is distinctly larger than the other. This tiny imbalance seems to reflect a deeper imbalance

⁶⁵ Rita Barnard, when looking at the role physical homes play in the post-apartheid narrative suggests, "In the old white homes of the 1940s a kind of structural alienation from Africa, a way of hiding the continent's very spoil under the administer carpets, that alienation has not disappeared in South Africa's neoliberal democracy. Indeed one might argue that it has been rather vigorously marketed and in surprising new ways. The exuberant prose of real estate developers, Bremner notes, now 'conjures up images and creates aspirations for lifestyles divorced entirely from reality—Victoria, Tudor, Mediterranean, medieval, modern.' It is as if style has become 'a vehicle for denying the violent context of the city and creating the image of a preferred life style. 'if you can't emigrate,' Bremner sardonically observes, 'you can at least dig in with style'" (68). See Rita Barnard's *Apartheid and Beyond* and Lindsey Bremner's "Crime and the Emerging Landscape of Post-Apartheid Johannesburg" (1998).

in her character, which both draws and disturbs him” (69).⁶⁶ Adam is both drawn to and repelled by Baby, and she highlights his uncanny self-discrepancies as he pursues an affair with her without thinking of the consequences.

Baby is a sexual object of desire, and she continually is represented by animal imagery, and as she sleeps with Adam in Canning’s father’s ruinous cabin, Baby even admits in the “thronging bestiary, like the menagerie on the ark,” that “he’d have shot and stuffed me as well” (120). To this remark, Adam simply “laughs uneasily at the image of her, preserved amongst the animals,” but he uncannily begins to connect himself with Canning’s father—the hunter (120). He is equally attracted and repulsed by the connection: “Beauty and violence together: it would be easy to hate the old man. But Adam has a sneaking fascination with him. It’s his guilty secret that he suspects they might have been alike: that they might have understood one another far too well” (149). Adam, as hunter, relegates Baby to the role of prey.

Adam, while trying to find a sense of home and belonging, minimizes Baby’s identity not only through animalistic imagery, but also through biblical allusions: “here at last she is, intervening between him and the landscape—not an identifiable person, but an emblematic female figure, seen against the backdrop of a primal, primitive garden. All of it is very biblical” (92) As Adam turns Baby into his muse, he also relegates her to a flat representation of an archetypal Eve character. Adam further dehumanizes Baby’s

⁶⁶ The figure of the doll is central to Freud’s development of the uncanny in relation to the “Sandman” text. He states, But I cannot think—and I hope that most readers of the story will agree with me—that the theme of the doll, Olympia, who is to all appearances a living being, is by any means the only element to be held responsible for the quite unparalleled atmosphere of uncanniness which the story evokes; or, indeed, that it is the most important among them” (4).

indemnity and subject position through the metaphorical Eve archetype, and Kostelac suggests:

Typical of the self-contesting character of Adam's narrative: he admits to his need for human exchange, yet he cannot resist turning Baby into a literary device, an 'emblematic female figure' who symbolically mediates his relation to the land. The irony, of course, is that, while Adam imagines that his perspective is a startlingly original one, he is constructing a version of Baby steeped in the tropes of colonial discourse, which merge the black female body with the land to render it similarly available for conquest. (155)

Adam feels unhomey in his self-identity, and acts in patterns reflecting his self-discrepancy; however, it is Baby who embodies the true un-homed position in South African history of colonization and apartheid. While Adam's name is confused throughout the text, it is Baby whose true name is never given. Most critics ignore Baby's presence in the novel, other than an object of Adam's lust, and reviewers gloss over her presence as Canning's "beautiful black wife" or "gorgeous young black wife."⁶⁷ However, her eroticized, stereotyped presence highlights the continued dehumanization of black women in South Africa, and the disconnect of the white patriarchal culture.⁶⁸

Adam's affair with Baby, as well as much of his self-exploration, takes place at Gondwana, which exists as a politically uncanny space. Returning to Engle's exploration of the political uncanny, the space of the white South African writer, the uncanny

⁶⁷ See "Worlds in their hands; Fiction." *Sunday Times* [London, England] 6 July 2008: 48, "Adam and Nappy; New Fiction." *The Economist* 2 Aug. 2008., and Rochman, Hazel. "The Impostor." *Booklist* 1 Dec. 2008: 22.

⁶⁸ Kastelac maintains, "By inserting himself into a patrilineal consciousness, Adam constructs for himself a fantasy of virile domination, in which Baby's subjectivity is pointedly negated. Exalted archetypes, then, are shown to border very closely on reductive stereotypes, both of which recuse Adam from the demands of inter-subjectivity by maintaining Baby's exotic otherness...Baby remains typecast in racial and gendered terms as the avaricious 'black diamond' of the new South Africa; a femme fatale defined by her sexual power. This is an emergent stereotype of black femininity, bolstered by all the old ones: embodied and sexualized" (156).

“locates itself at moments of crisis in our theories of ourselves, specifically when we encounter an enclosure of secret purpose...whose investigation is both invaded and discouraged by the probability that it may force revision of the theory that distinguishes it in the first place” (112). Adam is struck by the unhomely nature of Gondwana, because he recognizes the secret purposes at play in the crossing of ethical boundaries to increase development of the Karoo at the continued expense of those un-homed and displaced by apartheid. However, Adam does not notice at first the “moment of crisis” within himself that places him in the space of the uncanny, because in doing so, he would have to revise the theory of his white, male subjectivity.

Gondwana, instead, becomes a second home, even though “he feels as if he’s fallen through a hole into another world,” and after his first night “he wakes into pre-dawn dimness, with no idea of where he is. The mosquito net enshrouds him, like the last skeins of a dream...a toxic uneasiness is rising” (67, 77). Unlike Canning, Adam cannot ignore his place in the world. As he walks around the preserve, Adam, like Frank in *The Good Doctor*, sheds his clothes in the sun and the perceived safety and solitude of nature: “He turns his chest to the sun, trying to take its heat into his paleness. Let him open up to the world! The poet in him will sing about moments like these” (80). as he swims into a pool, Adam experiences a similar baptism moment, again paralleling Frank, as

He imagines it washing him clean carrying the past away. It is like baptism, but for that you need to be fully immersed: he ducks his head beneath the surface...half of his body in suspension, the other half projecting into the world. He is like the still point at the centre of everything. The first man, alone on the very first morning. (80)

He identifies with the biblical Adam, the world his dominion, the ultimate sense of belonging; however, his fabricated homeliness shatters when he realizes he is not alone—his metaphorical home is invaded. Just as Frank uncovers the haunted ruins of the abandoned colonial home, Adam’s imagined, homely connection with the land is severed, as he realized he does not belong. His reversal of identity is instantaneous:

The first man, alone on the very first morning. And then not. Because somebody else is there. First he can feel the eyes, a feeling, that’s all—an animal alarm, some vestigial instinct in his cells...he stares and stares—until, quite suddenly, he sees. It’s a horrible moment. His body becomes colder than the water. Centuries of history drop away: the forest itself is staring at him—*into* him—with a dark face, lined and worn and old, marinated in ancient contempt. The face belongs here. Adam is the intruder, alien and unwanted; the single element in the scene that does not fit...so they look at one another, the black face in the forest and the naked white man, treading water. (80)

The uncanny moment reflects, Engle’s political uncanny in that “the spatial metaphor is one of complex enclosures, on which a gaze from outside, sensitive to hidden threats, is directed” (111). Moreover, Engle’s continues, “a home is a reminder, to those within it facing out, of their own security, fixity, stable meaning, knowledge of what matters...to those outside it facing in, a reminder of their own insecurity, vagrancy, uncertain social meaning, inability to see into the heart of things” (112). Under the gaze of the other, Adam’s feeling of home, “the point at the center of everything,” is reverse to an “inability to see into the heart of things.” The gaze is not the gaze of a specter or ghost, but of an old man who works on Canning’s estate; in the space of the uncanny, Adam must face the other, and recognize the fallibility of the constructed binary of difference and superiority—which remains in the “rainbow nation.” The unsettling moment prompts

Adam to clear the uncultivated backyard of his borrowed Karoo home, write poetry again, and make friends with his neighbor, all while continuing to visit Canning at Gondwana. Adam ignores his false position in the unhomely space: “he always slept in the same *rondawel* where he spent the first night, and it’s soon so familiar to him that he starts leaving some of his clothes in the cupboard...in the beginning, he had felt like a fraud, a bit of an impostor. But by now he has half-persuaded himself that they do have a meaningful connection” (114).

Frank and Adam, both face moral and political ambiguities from their destabilized, unhomely position, as Galgut interrogates and highlights issues of belonging in the 21st century, democratic nation. Specifically, Galgut challenges two areas of questionable spatial justice—the isolationist, white compound of *The Impostor’s* Gondwana, and *The Good Doctor’s* abandoned former homeland—from the position of the political uncanny. Returning to Galgut’s motivation in writing, “Ambiguity, ambivalence, I think, is the territory we’ve gone into now,” these crime novels not only focus on the unhomely condition of post-apartheid, white, male subjectivity, but also on the uncanny, equally beneficial and harmful, morality promoted in the nation.

In *The Good Doctor*, Frank at various times in his life at the homeland hospital instigates an affair with a nearby village woman. Critics focus on Maria’s presence in the novel as a character that helps reveal Frank’s moral ambiguity. Cabarcos-Traseira views Maria, along with the new fence and security wall, as a “poignant example of...an instance of the lingering presence of apartheid in contemporary South Africa” (50), and Titlestad footnotes that Maria “is just another way that Eloff avoids the actual demands of intersubjectivity” (121). Frank’s affair with Maria highlights his unhomely condition and

his search for belonging. As he sleeps with Maria, the small shack becomes an unhomey home—it is the site of their intimacy, and yet it instills fear and repulsion. Not only is Maria the object of Frank’s lust, in which he sometimes even pays for sex, but she is dehumanized and voiceless. Maria is not even her name:

‘What's your name?’ ‘I am Maria.’ ‘No, what's your real name? Your African name.’ But something closed over in her face; she dropped her eyes. ‘Maria,’ she repeated. ‘Maria.’ I left it like that. The name was wrong on her, it didn't fit into her mouth, but I liked the demure determination with which she'd set up this little barrier. She seemed suddenly mysterious to me. (23)

Her lack of name implies her lack of subjectivity, and Barris asserts that “her name is not really Maria; the villagers with whom she lives do not recognize it; her real name remains unknown to Eloff and so to the reader. In this important respect, a European construct masks her aboriginal identity” (36). Maria, lacking her own identity, becomes the object of Frank’s obsession: “I had never in my life had anything like this wordless obsession, with so many meanings implied or understood... All I had to go on was what I came to there at night: the poor inside of the shack, the hard dirt floor, the smell of her sweat – sometimes vaguely repellent” (25).

Because she does not speak English, Maria is voiceless in the text; however, one night after sex, Frank reflects on Maria’s attempt to communicate in her own language: “once she did speak to me, a long soft monologue in her own language. I didn't understand a word, but her voice sketched out a story on the inside of my eyelids, in which she and I were somewhere else” (26). In her one moment of speech, Frank internalizes her action and uses it for his own self-exploration. While lacking agency, Maria highlights Franks ambiguous morality.

The Good Doctor concludes with Lawrence's disappearance, and presumed death, following Frank's uncovering of a smuggling ring managed by the former Brigadier of the homeland. Frank admits, "The past and the future are dangerous countries; I had been living in no man's land, between their borders, for the last seven years. Now I felt myself moving again, and I was afraid" (117). Frank recognizes the unhomely condition of his stasis. Moreover, as soon as he opens the door to Tehogo's room and sees the piles of stolen hospital contraband revealing the nurse's connection to the smuggling ring, Frank reflects, that "it was like a spell to carry me over the threshold. At that moment the afternoon outside, and my reason for being there fell away; I was entering into a place inside myself, a sordid little room of my own heart, where a secret was stored" (124). In the face of moral ambiguity, Frank is forced to recognize his own dubious morality.

Readers are never fully aware of the intricacies of who is involved and what is being smuggled by the ring, but as Titlestad points out, "all we know is that it connects vestiges of apartheid power—which persist, almost spectrally, in the continued influence of Colonel Moller and the Brigadier—all the post-apartheid realities of crime and illegal immigration" (112).⁶⁹ Frank, feeling the need to confront the moral ambiguity of others, sets off a chain of events that leaves Tehogo shot and near death and Lawrence missing. Regardless of the obvious dramatic action, the novel ends quite abruptly with Frank, once again feeling at home in his position at the hospital, and his life. Critics have commented on the abrupt ending and lack of moral resolution; however, María Jesús Cabarcos-

⁶⁹ This is what Barris sees as an afro-pessimist affirmation of apartheid in the novel: "the novel unwittingly recapitulates the structure of apartheid politics: a black underclass destined through its supposedly inherent qualities to remain precisely that; the oppressive Nationalists represented by Moller; the moderate yet complicit English-Afrikaans United Party (Eloff); and in Waters, the ostensibly liberal Progressive Party. In so doing, at a different level, the novel again superimposes an image of the past onto the present" (38).

Traseira asserts that “*The Good Doctor* refuses to give anything but a staunchly realistic image of contemporary South Africa in which the past is more than a lingering influence, and that the novel resists the temptation to make grand gestures of either blind idealism or stubborn negativity about the future of the country” (46). There is no moral conclusion to the novel because Galgut highlights the uncanny, moral ambiguity in the nation; furthermore, writing from the position of the political uncanny, Galgut focuses on the changing position of white, male subjectivity.

Frank experiences a form of contentment finally occupying Dr. Ngema’s long-coveted position.

So the situation is dire and the prospects not good. But still—although I can’t logically explain it—I am content. Maybe this is only the false peace of resignation. But I feel, somehow, that I have come into my own...a whole new sense of the future, because of one tiny change. Which makes me wonder if all of this might have happened differently if I’d never had to share my room. (214-5)

Titlestad views Frank’s unexpected contentment, as a shift from apathy, “he has also started to edge beyond the resigned fatalism that has crippled him until now...[a] modest existential reorientation” (112). Marais points out that Frank is at home regardless of the fact that he is, “effectively in transition to he knows not what or where, and is therefore ostensibly without roots and the comfort of a secure future...his sense of belonging can only be located in some kind of negative capability, that is, a Keatsian ability to live with insecurity and uncertainty, and thus to be in a permanent state of transition” (467). By obtaining a new dwelling, Frank does not become homely, but he is able to be at home in his unhomely condition—“a new room, bare, and clean and empty: a good place to start

again. I spread my things around...anything to stamp myself onto the blankness. And now my life has taken root again” (215).

In *The Impostor*, Adam similarly faces an ethical dilemma when Canning informs him of the plans to turn Gondwana into a golf course resort. When Adam first hears the news, “desolation flowers briefly...the emptiness, the spiritual vapidness, are hard to express; the word that comes to him is *deseccation*” (136). Adam sees the scheme not in terms of moral ambiguity but as a crime of violation. Canning discusses the reasoning behind the golf course name—Ingadi, “garden” in Zulu, he states, “I wanted a Xhosa name. This was never a Zulu area, of course Eluhlangeni isn’t that a beautiful word?...means ‘in the place of creation’ or some such shit in Xhosa” (137). When Canning next uses the nickname “Nappy,” Adam sees an opportunity to address his destabilized identity, “I wish you wouldn’t call me Nappy....my name is Adam. I wish you’d call me by my name....I hate being called nappy. It’s a cruel, stupid name” (139). Canning’s moral ambiguity destabilizes Adam, and he attempts to reconcile his own self-discrepancy; however, that night, Adam initiates his affair with Canning’s wife Baby. Similar to his early encounter with the traffic cop, Adam remains unable to recognize responsibility for his own shifting morality, and instead he blames Canning: “He has lost his innocence, and in this moment Canning is responsible. He picks up his bag, and goes back inside” (143). Adam begins a moral decline, to the point he even contemplates murdering Canning in which “he would have left behind a blank place, an absence, into which Adam could have stepped...Murder, not progress, is the great enduring truth, and we shrink from it not in virtue, but in weakness” (161). Adam immediately recoils from his thoughts, but again, does not own his failing morality, but instead “the voice that had

been playing in his head was not his own; it belonged to the serpent in the garden. But it continues to whisper” (161). Adam’s physical appearance begins to mirror his moral decline and his unhomely nature. When he visits his brother, he is “thin and dirty. He needs a haircut. He looks like a refugee...he feels flagrantly conspicuous, as if he’s dressed like a clown” (176-7). After leaving the Karoo, Adam’s brother admits that he thought he had a nervous breakdown while living in the small house (237).

Adam learns of his culpability in Canning’s scheme by unwittingly bribing the mayor, and soon after he decides to leave the Karoo, he learns that Canning’s investors are planning on killing him that very night. In one last moral dilemma, Adam chooses between saving himself or allowing his neighbor to fall victim for his crimes. Adam chooses to do nothing, and yet, for the first time he acknowledges and owns his responsibility: “‘I don’t know what I supposed to do.’ *Do nothing*. A hand extended in the cliff-face: a choice entirely his” (233).

The novel concludes with Adam’s return to his former space and position in the city, and yet readers are unsure of the effect the past months in the Karoo on his unhomely nature. Adam admits, “he didn’t believe in other planes and invisible entities, even though he hadn’t felt alone in that house. But he thought of the other presence as a split-of his own mind, something real and imaginary at the same time” (238). Adam was haunted by his own uncanniness. Kostelac presents Adam as “a dejected anti-hero, solemnly resigned to live his lot in life (53),” referencing Adam’s final ruminations on morality,

That was how it felt. There were principles, rules by which one should live, and these hovered in the air, shining and inviolate. Then there was the way one *did* live, which was a ramshackle constriction of compromise and half- truth. Perhaps

it was age, but he was learning to accept reality” (241).

Even though Adam recognizes the uncanny nature of morality, in the moment, he chooses to tell the truth regarding his default payment for the traffic ticket when he first arrived in the Karoo. The novel leaves Adam, as a dejected antihero, to navigate his unhomely nature, after finally understanding his own culpability in the destruction of Gondwana, his neighbor’s death, and ultimately his passive role in upholding vestiges of apartheid still alive in the present. Galgut leaves the readers with the image of Adam, rushing through the city—“as if he’d left something behind, something vitally important that he would need in just a moment”— through the “shadow cast by a statue, rusting and discoloured and streaking with bird-shit, of some forgotten hero” (249).

CHAPTER IV: THE THIRDSPEACE AND THE WRITING OF HOME

As Nelson Mandela said only the other day, even if there is a war on you must negotiate—negotiation is what politics is all about, and we do negotiate even when we don't know we are negotiating: we are always negotiating in any situation of political oppression or antagonism...hybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them.

Homi Bhabha "The Third Space" (216)

Exile

is the reproach

of beauty

in a foreign landscape,

vaguely familiar

because it echoes

remembered beauty.

Dennis Brutus "Sequence for South Africa" (277)

For centuries, South Africans have negotiated the possibility and reality of home on the southern tip of the continent. The false claims of pseudo-belonging of European settler-colonists, the diasporic belongings of slaves brought from the interior, and the spiritual roots of indigenous peoples have created a shifting ground for the nation as home. In the 21st century, in the aftermath of the TRC, South Africans still must negotiate belonging and home complicated by the complicit oppression of the black majority and perceived imaginary "oppression" views of the Nationalist party of apartheid. Moving forward, South African post-apartheid identity is challenged and negotiated on an increasingly global, cosmopolitan stage. Belonging and home are complicated by 21st century moves towards an "African Renaissance," growing cosmopolitanism, exile/return, new emigration/immigration, and rising xenophobia criticized on the global stage. These social issues catalyze the discussions of hybrid identity and belonging

navigated by contemporary South African novelists breaking down and complicating the binaries of self and other, attachment and alienation, roots and routes, and home and exile. With a growing temporal distance from the reconciled “rainbow nation” of the late 1990s, South African novelists now turn their attention to spatial concerns and the hybridization of national belonging and home. Zoë Wicomb and Zukiswa Wanner explore the balance between the vacillating push and pull of home and the postmodern flux of cosmopolitan migration and rootlessness. Wicomb and Wanner privilege the spatial over the temporal concerns of the apartheid protest novel and the turn-of-the-century reconciliation novel, to create novels of home which negotiate the hybrid roots and routes of contemporary post-apartheid South African home and identity.

Wicomb’s *October* and Wanner’s *London, Capetown, Joburg*, both published in 2014—the 20th anniversary of the first democratic elections in South Africa—reveal the difficulty of finding home in the nation for returning elective exiles and new European immigrants. As novels of home, I believe these novels offer spatial metaphors of hybridity alongside growing concerns for spatial justice in the contemporary nation. Wicomb and Wanner demonstrate that as cosmopolitan movement destabilizes the distance between the center and periphery of South Africa and Europe, the nation moves beyond the constraints of post-apartheid identity. Exile and return narratives are not new to the national literary tradition, as many black and white writers were exiled under the apartheid regime and forced to navigate an exilic connection with home. In 1961, Lewis Nkosi was given a one-way exit permit to leave South Africa that was “a journey from which there could be no return home,” and during his nearly four decade separated from

the land of his birth, he often wrote concerning the double identity of exiles (ix). Nkosi (1983) describes the South African exilic existence:

Each one of us survives exile... as South African writers we must continue to be the unsilenced voices of the repressed millions of South Africa. No doubt, having lived in England for fourteen years, I am now in a position to write stories and plays set in that country, but always from the perspective of an 'outsider.' (95)

Possessing the outsider perspective, Nkosi claims that "exile is a complex fate," and yet despite the "well-known deprivations brought about by such a condition, also [leads] to new discoveries" (ix). Wicomb and Wanner build on the tradition of exile and return fiction established in the nation during apartheid, but open a dialogue concerning elective exile, new immigration, and increased transnational movement. The end of apartheid expanded Nkosi's claim that "new discoveries" develop from the exilic condition, and Wicomb and Wanner's novels present new discoveries of hybrid identity and belonging.

October and *London, Capetown, Joburg*, as a growing number of contemporary novels, fall into the category of transnational literature which Stephen Clingman suggests concerns "the grammar of identity and location; the nature of boundaries both transitive and intransitive; and navigation as a modality of existence in, and as defining, both the transitive self and transnational space" (11). Writing the space of home, Wicomb and Wanner create novels that blur the boundaries of citizenship, self/other, while maintaining a rootedness within the South African literary tradition, as De Kock (2009) suggest "the 'trans' in 'transnational' creates a cusp between the national and what lies beyond it, not a severance" (31). De Kock continues,

I would argue that the category 'South African' as a marker of a literary field remains important, even necessary for a sense of history and determination in what one might call a 'national imaginary', but that the space of the 'national' has

irrevocably entered into the fluid waters of ‘trans’, the transitive cusp of crossing and recrossing, of absorbing the fictional self into (now easier, more fluid) spaces of related elsewhere, and of absorbing the otherness of such elsewhere into the fictional self. (32-3)

The protagonists in Wicomb and Wanner’s novels possess fluid identities, easily crossing and recrossing the illusory national boundaries, and they consider themselves to be citizens of the world while simultaneously attempting to find home in the nation of South Africa. These exile and return novels explore the possibility of hybrid identity and belonging in the expanding global world. I suggest that the development and negotiation of home in *October* and *London, Capetown, Joburg* mirrors Bhabha and Soja’s conceptualizations of the thirdspace, which remains a hybrid space “neither the one...nor the other...but something else besides” (45).

Before investigating the possibility of a thirdspace home in Wicomb and Wanner’s novels, it is important to first parse the cultural fragmentation of South Africa twenty years post-apartheid, and the increased need for a spatial critique of hybridity. Following Mandela’s focus on reconciliation and unity, Thabo Mbeki’s message became one of “transformation and renaissance...redressing apartheid legacy, and restoring Africa’s sense of pride” (“From Madiba Magic to Mbeki’s Reality”). Despite Mbeki’s visions of Africanism, African Renaissance, and Ubuntu,⁷⁰ which P. Eric Louw (2004) deems “vague and fuzzy discourses,” Mbeki highlights the perpetual division of the

⁷⁰ Simply translated from Bantu, Ubuntu means “personhood.” Desmond Tutu describes the vaguely uniting discourse of Ubuntu stating: “A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed” (31).

nation (184). In his inaugural address, rainbow rhetoric is replaced by an acknowledgement of spatial and social boundaries within the nation:

This reality of two nations, underwritten by the perpetuation of the racial, gender, and spatial disparities born of a very long period of colonial and apartheid white minority domination, constitutes the material base which reinforces the notion that, indeed, we are not one nation, but two nations. And neither are we becoming one nation. (“Reconciliation and Nation Building”)

Despite the call for continued reconciliation and the movement towards unified equality and not merely unified patriotism, Mbeki’s argument resurrects apartheid rhetoric of division. Mbeki’s two nations reflect Malan’s 1954 apartheid aspiration of two nations: “Theoretically the object of the policy of apartheid could be fully achieved by dividing the country into two states, with all the Whites in one, and all the Blacks in the other” (7). Decades after the fall of apartheid, political rhetoric remains focused on division of space which leads to the division of cultural identities and people.

The division within the fledgling democracy is complicated further by growing cosmopolitanism and migration from the continent’s interior as migrants seek the comfort and prosperity of the imaginary “rainbow nation.” However, as Francis Nyamnjah (2013) points out, “in a world fresh with the wounds of slavery, colonialism, apartheid, genocide, and terrorism, xenophobia often explains, as much as it is explained by, poverty, underdevelopment, economic disparities, and assumptions of social and cultural superiority” (5). The xenophobia present in South Africa is a legacy of apartheid, and while not exclusive to the continent, it further troubles the ability to find home and belonging in the nation still divided. Again, the rhetoric of apartheid reappears, as Everatt (2011) critiques:

the echoes with the language of apartheid are uncanny: the language and practices of the past were internalized by participants as solutions to the present. The former victims of apartheid's influx control and attempt to animalize black South Africans...had by 2008 become the language of those enfranchised by apartheid democracy. (17)

The fluctuating movement of national sentiments between growing cosmopolitanism and xenophobia reveals a nation which has outgrown the imagined reality of "rainbow" unity and reconciliation of the 1990s. Instead, critics point to the growing tensions in the wake of globalization and movement. Speaking at the release of the 2015 edition of *Imagined Liberation*, Breyten Breytenbach questioned the unity of the nation and the ability to progress in the face of xenophobia and problematic national identity:

This dream has no legs. We were never a nation. Maybe a future necessary step would be to agree that without a utopia to strive for we are condemned to killing one another. That if we were to stop dreaming this shared 'space' we call South Africa we shall revert to fighting factions that we are obliged to provide for movement or else stagnate and destroy or self-destruct. (xiv)

For many, Breytenbach's "shared space" of South Africa has failed to serve as home and provide the stage for performing belonging. The failure of Breytenbach's idealized "shared space" provides the context for contemporary South African writers to dream and write the novel of home.

The pessimistic vision of a failed dream grows as national criticism on the global stage centers on growing xenophobia towards migrating Africans from the interior. Rory Carroll, *The Guardian's* South African correspondent, controversially left his post in South Africa in 2006 stating, "This never really became home...mainly it was because South Africa was such a fraught place to live. The anxiety about crime, the crunching on

racial eggshells, the juxtaposition of first-world materialism with third-world squalor—it all added up” (“How I Never Quite Fell for South Africa). While Carroll was never a South African citizen, instead a traveler navigating the nation without ties to the land or people, many white South African citizens share his sentiments and have enacted the privileged exile of emigration. Routes continue to flow to and from the nation and topographical and imaginary borders are crossed and re-crossed. Nyamnjoh compares the increasing emigration and immigration: “While other African countries are losing skilled and unskilled brains to a reluctant South Africa, the country is losing some of its traditionally privileged white brains to a welcoming New Zealand, Australia, North America, and Europe” (69). The once derogatory and now tongue-in-cheek “packing for Perth” movement resulted in what Dominic Griffiths and Maria Prozesky (2010) calculate as an emigration of 20-25 percent of white South Africans who “have left their country of birth since the 1990s”, and attempted to find home in other former European commonwealths (28).⁷¹

South Africa, in the more than twenty years following transition to democracy, represents a nation struggling to navigate citizenship and the insider/outsider binary. Issues of belonging in the nation are connected to spatial concerns of identity and equality. Bhabha’s hybridity provides a helpful heuristic to explore belonging in the nation. Just as Mandela called for negotiation, Bhabha’s hybridity is “precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you

⁷¹ Griffiths and Prozesky draw their estimates from various census information, both reported in South Africa and in other nations: “the South African Institute of Race Relations’ official figures, which show that the white population, numbering 5,068,300 in 1991 census, shrank by about 850,000 between 1996 and 2005....a telling indication of white emigration can be found in New Zealand census statistics. In 1991, the number of South-African born people living in New Zealand was 5655, but in 2006, it was 41,676” (28).

should translate your principles, rethinking them, extend them” (216).⁷² The oppositional categories of before/after and colonial/postcolonial are not linear temporal solutions to social change. In the case of South Africa, the division between apartheid and post-apartheid continues to require negotiation and borders must be crossed. As Edward Soja (2011) states,

Lasting interpretive power of binary logic and Big Dichotomies, such as colonizer-colonized, East and West, North and South...is rejected in search for alternative spaces, for *other* ways of thinking and writing about the postcolonial condition and its unending struggle over geography. (x)

The history of colonization, apartheid, and reconciliation is the “unending struggle over geography,” and triggers the unending fluctuation of belonging. Considering spatial concepts of hybridity sheds light on the destabilized sense of belong in the first decades of 21st century South Africa.

Homi Bhabha (1994) and Edward Soja (2000) point towards the 1990’s spatial turn and the influence of spatiality on social/cultural identity and difference. Bhabha states, “in the *fin de siècle*, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion” (2). Utilizing similar language, Soja claims, “as we approach the *fin de siècle*, there is a growing awareness of the simultaneity and interwoven complexity of the social, the historical, and the spatial, their inseparability and interdependence” (3). Spatial thinking allows hybridity to be understood in terms of

⁷² Bhabha’s hybridity mirrors Said’s reflection of culture, in which: “Gone are the binary oppositions dear to the nationalist and imperialist enterprise. Instead we begin to sense that old authority cannot simply be replaced by new authority, but that new alignments made across borders, types, nations, and essences are rapidly coming into view, and it is those new alignments that now provide and challenge the fundamentally static notion of *identity*” (xxiv-xxv).

liminality and the “in-between” space: “the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (Bhabha 211). Navigating and establishing home in 21st century South Africa requires this type of critical negotiation of cultural hybridity and a thirdspace understanding which allows new meaning to emerge.

I believe that the spatial metaphor of hybridity found in Bhabha and Soja’s dual vision of the thirdspace provides a beneficial framework for exploring hybridity in 21st century South Africa complicated by the cultural fragmentation of transnational movement and exiles and returns. When used together, Bhabha and Soja’s thirdspace provides an analysis of real and imagined space that presents the opportunity to bridge two discursive worlds.⁷³ In particular, novelist such as Wicomb and Wanner develop fictional thirdspaces to reveal the real issues concerning spatial justice. Unlike other metaphors, the thirdspace is not the condition of hybridity, but the space which enables other positions to emerge. Bhabha asserts, “This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives” (211). Further, Soja unites geographical concerns to locate thirdspaces in the material world:

In its broadest sense, thirdspace is a purposefully tentative and flexible term that attempts to capture what is actually a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances, and meanings...the original binary choice is not

⁷³ Andrew Teverson and Sara Upstone (2011) defend, “in this sense, the opposition between geographical and literary practice is increasingly a false one, since they have been brought together by the acknowledgement of a ‘simultaneously real and imagined’ space in the colonial and postcolonial discourse. That Bhabha and Soja share a ‘third space’ indicates this confluence—but also the important differences of emphasis—between the two disciplines. While Soja’s thirdspace is primarily real—located in LA—and secondarily is imagined through its inhabitants, Bhabha’s third space, in contrast, is primarily imagined—a metaphor for the hybrid postcolonial encounter—and only secondarily rooted in a material geography. That the two fields are so similar and yet conterminously so different in their approach speaks to how each enriches the other” (10).

dismissed entirely but is subjected to a creative process of restructuring that draws selectively and strategically from two opposing categories to open new alternatives. (2, 5)

While Soja recognizes Bhabha's "strategic envisioning of the cultural politics of thirdspace that helps to dislodge its entrapment in hegemonic historiography and historicism," he also criticizes Bhabha's formulations as "occasionally teasingly on the edge of being a spatially ungrounded literary trope, a floating metaphor for a critical historical consciousness that inadvertently masks a continued privileging of temporality over spatiality" (142). To prevent the descent into an analysis of "floating metaphors" and literary tropes of home, I believe it is important to combine Bhabha and Soja's theorization of thirdspace in my examination of concepts of belonging and material homes as thirdspaces in *October* and *London Cape Town JoBurg*. Both exile and return novels reveal the imagined liminality of hybrid home-making, as well as the real thirdspace environments in 21st century South Africa that speak to the need for political and social action. While the novels provide a meditation on the possibility for belonging and the spiritual connection to home and roots, the novels also turn a critical eye towards tangible housing problems grounded and uniquely situated in South Africa. Perhaps more importantly, Wicomb and Wanner develop novels of home which serve as a literary thirdspace rising out of and functioning beyond the protest and reconciliation novel.

October

Wicomb's loosely autobiographical novel, *October*, tells the story of South African black, intellectual Mercia who electively remains in exile following the fall of

apartheid. Like Wicomb herself, Mercia lives in Scotland, and has a vacillating push and pull connection with the country of her birth, place of her childhood, and home of her family. Writing about Wicomb's early works such as *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town* (1987) and *David's Story* (2000), Dorothy Driver (2011) reflects on what she deems Wicomb's "rooted cosmopolitanism"—a condition that I find helpful for reading *October*. Like Mercia, Wicomb was born in Namaqualand, and considered colored in the South African racial scaffolding; moreover, she continues to live between her two homes of the Cape and Scotland. By navigating the persistent routes between the changing roots of home, Driver suggests that

In the course of her movements back and forth between her two homes, the Cape and Glasgow, her writing increasingly binds the two together, historically and figuratively. Cast out by choice and circumstance from what we may call her hearth and home, she is inevitably in her set of returns more and more the cosmopolitan, the one who travels, who is—while still remaining a figure of the Cape—forced to look at the Cape increasingly year after year with the eyes of an outsider. (93)

The interstitial space created by the compression of the two homes, allows the third space of hybrid identity to emerge. Belonging neither to the Cape or Glasgow, Wicomb's fictional Mercia navigates a home that is not the combination of the two places, but a new space of belonging altogether.

Mercia envisions herself as a modern, cosmopolitan woman. While she is called in jest by friends and fellow academics as "Dr. Ants in her Pants" and "citizen of the world" (224, 230), the novel repeatedly draws attention to Mercia's self-identification as a cosmopolitan traveler. She sees herself "propelled effortlessly through the world, eager to see yet another place. Not a pathological restlessness" (224). However, this identity is

questioned when she is called home to care for her brother, sister-in-law, and young nephew. Mercia receives the call home following the devastating dissolution of her long-term romantic relationship with the Scottish-born Craig. As a 52-year-old woman, Mercia mourns the end of the relationship in terms of the “less-than-helpful metaphor” of a “death of sorts,” sensing the emptiness and displacement produced by being left behind (1). Mercia imagines the end of the relationship in spatial terms, left in a space that she no longer understands or finds connection. While grieving, Mercia immerses herself in her academic studies, teaching at the university and working on a conference paper ironically focusing on the topic of postcolonial memory; moreover, she also begins to see her life uncannily, simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar, connected to the recently published Marilynne Robinson novel *Home* (2008). Mercia recognizes the correlation to American writer Robinson’s novel, where a brother and sister return to their childhood home to care for their father:

As it turns out, Mercia is consumed by the novel...Mercia may not be as good as the glorious sister in the novel, but the correspondences are there, including the ironic depictions of home. Strangely familiar, this story of siblings...but theirs—Mercia and Jake’s story—is from a different continent, a different hemisphere, a different kind of people, a kind so lacking in what is known as western gentility. Theirs is a harsh land that makes its own demands on civility. (12)

Mercia distorts the barrier between the American setting of the novel and her own South African reality, and speaking of her connection with Robinson’s *Home*, Wicomb (2015) states, “I decided to use it, to transpose the story of genteel Americans to rural Namaqualand...this novel was turning out to be the same old story: my preoccupation with moving between two countries” (np). By exploring questions of home on both

continents, complicated by movement, Wicomb highlights universal questions of belonging.

With the novel heavy on her mind, Mercia receives a cryptic letter from her brother Jake who still lives in their childhood home of Kliprand in Klien Namaqualand. The letter simply states,

Come home Mercy. Then plaintively, you haven't been home in ages. There is a gap, as if time has passed and he has deliberated over the next line. The child (yes that was how he referred to his son) needs you. Please come and get the child.

You are all he has left. It is signed Jacques, which she has never called him. (14)

Mercia sees the letter, nonetheless complicated and vague, as an opportunity to return to the metaphorical image of "home, a place where the heart could heal" (14).⁷⁴ However, the novel immediately becomes a space for Mercia to reflect on the nature home in South Africa, both her own fraught position as an elective exile and also the concept of home in the nation birthed from colonization and apartheid. Mercia reflects:

The thought of the Cape as home brings an ambiguous shiver... *how could anyone want to live there? Why would anyone stay there?* These are questions that Mercia too must ask, although in those parts the words live and stay are interchangeable. South Africans, having inherited the language from the Scots, speak of staying in a place when they mean living there. Which is to say that natives are not expected to move away from what is called home. Except, of course, in the case of the old apartheid policy for Africans, the natives who were given citizenship of new Homelands where they were to live. But they were required after all to work and therefore to stay in the white cities from which they had been ejected. *Come stay with me and be my slave...* (14)

⁷⁴ Later, Mercia again connects space to the possibility of healing and moving forward temporally: "confronted with the same thorny gorse crowding the pathways, she will turn the past into something she does not crave. Only there can memory be neutralized. Yes, the cliché of time healing the wound may be true, but she would accelerate the process, and to the medicine its old mate, space" (68).

Place in South Africa will never be delineated into straightforward spatial markers such as here and there, and Mercia's ruminations on the ability to find home in the nation are overshadowed by the apartheid policies creating the homelands through forced removals. Wicomb grounds Mercia's reflection on belonging, and the differentiation between the action of living and staying, as more than imaginary tropes of home. In the space of a paragraph, Mercia's story of cosmopolitan movement and return from exile is grounded in the reality of 21st century South Africa shaped by routes and roots.

After being called home to South Africa, Mercia is thrown inexplicably into a tug-of-war battle of sense-driven nostalgia complicating her contradictory desire of and repulsion from home. Before travelling,

Mercia finds her nose twitching to various smells: onions sizzling in a pan, a patch of dug earth, or infuriatingly, something she cannot identify that nevertheless transports her to the cape...in places like Kliprand, where the idea of home is overvalued, laden with sentimentality, the soul produces its own straitjacket. Then she swallows, once, twice, to relieve the lump in her throat. (19)

Once in Kliprand, Mercia's senses and memory once again take over: "Mercia knows that this is home. There is a part of her, perhaps no more than insensate buttocks, that sinks into the comfortable familiarity of an old sofa...besides, the light slants onto the floor precisely as it does at the other end of the year in Glasgow—the world simply reversed" (127).

Primal instincts of desire and memory draw Mercia to her South African home that she is unable to contain and redirect with her rational, academic mind. Instead, she remains at the center of her oscillating home and exile—feeling the interchanging magnetic polarity of her dwelling in South Africa and Scotland. While emotionally

connected to the place of her birth, Mercia also “would like to wash her hands of these people who are her own, would like to pack her back right away and leave,” and “she wishes herself far away from this place called home” (25, 45). Even though Mercia cannot recognize her belonging to South Africa, or at least rejects the connection between her identity and the home of her birth, Mercia also remains distant to her exile home in Scotland—first with Craig and now alone. Mercia equates the possibility of belonging with the elusive nature of the soul, while still maintaining her independence from both home and exile:

In Glasgow Mercia insists on the distinction between living and staying; she is only there temporarily; it cannot be her home. She visits Kliprand often, but knows at the same time that to stay there would allow the soul to die rather than to live. Which is how Mercia and Jake had always thought of the place, although they would have balked at the word soul. The soul of black folk? (14-5)

Alluding to W. E. B. Du Bois’s (1903) conceptualization of double consciousness, which is the “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity,” expands Mercia’s experience to the contemporary diaspora (9). Mercia possesses a double identity suspended between her two spatial homes and she ever feels her twoness—“two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideas in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (9).

The novel immediately returns to the tangible and specific setting of South Africa, as Mercia continues, “Or rather, Jake corrected her on an earlier visit—colored folk like them who once adopted soul; nowadays it is better to come clean as colored...so she exclaimed provocatively, *Mayibuye Africa!*” (15). The Xhosa phrase “*Mayibuye*

Africa” or “bring back Africa” remains rooted in the South African liberation struggle, which brings to mind anti-apartheid chants and Mandela’s own call for the end of apartheid. Globally, the call “Mayibuye iAfrika” became synonymous with the South African liberation struggle as seen with the *New York Times* 1990 focus on South Africa’s new era and the chanting between the crowd and released Mandela:

Mandela: Amandla [power]!

Crowd: Ngawethu [It is ours]!...

Mandela: Mayibuye [Let it come back]!

Crowd: i-Afrika [Africa]! (“South Africa’s New Era, Power! It is Ours!”)

Mayibuye Africa also speaks to the collective traumatic memory of the nation recalling the Mayibuye Uprising of November 1952 in Kimberley where 13 black South Africans were killed and over 78 wounded. Mercia does not possess a sense of belonging in the nation, but her statements bring home not only the history of the liberation struggle, but also the complicated history of colored belonging in South Africa. In the position of elective exile, Mercia’s routes from South African directly contrast the mission of “Mayibuye Africa” to return to the roots of the continent.

As a child, Mercia was taught that her apartheid colored classification set her apart from other families living in Kliprand. She remembers:

It was, according to their father, important to remember that they did not belong there...they simply belonged, a word that need not be followed by where or to...thus the notion of home was revised. Decoupled from location and belonging, and crucially from community, it was shrunk into a prefabricated rectangular structure of walls that could be dropped down anywhere as long as it was surrounded by people who looked like them, people related to them. (81)

Mercia was taught to construct her connection to South Africa and her sense of home to the fabricated racial divisions of apartheid, and she can no longer find home in the firstspace of South Africa or the secondspace of exile. She remains paradoxically both and neither insider and outsider. She belongs to a new space altogether, the thirdspace of hybridity that emerges from the liminality of her roots and routes of exile and return. Mercia recognizes her thirdspace positionality, jesting, “as if exile were a frozen affair in which you are kept pristinely in the past, one that a swift thaw could restore so that, rinsed and refreshed, you are returned in mint to an original time, an original place” (144). Mercia’s reflection of her thirdspace exilic existence continues to return to the image of salmon rushing upstream to return home in October: “salmon seemed to float effortlessly upstream, then, bracing themselves, gathering speed in order to scale the rapids...how awful that return” (123-4). Later when writing her memoir, Mercia admits that she does not connect with the intrinsic drive to return home:

Who has crossed the boundaries from fresh to salt water, from river to sea, from sea to river, my scales glittering with guanine crystals, my kidneys primed with Italian wine, my skin bleached by sunless skies, I am the one flailing in the shallows, the one who has not managed the leap. This she deletes and replaces with: the one who has declined the leap. She ought to delete the lot. (133)

Following her return to Kliprand, Mercia faces the traumatic task of managing her alcoholic brother satisfied to drink himself to death, and coping with the stunning revelation that her nephew is actually the child of Jake’s wife Silvie and Mercia’s own deceased father. The revelation eventually uncovers their father’s sexual abuse and seduction of the then underage Silvie. Mercia is not only shaken in terms of her identity

within the family and the memory of her self-righteous father, but she is also further disconnected from her home in Kliprand:

Mercia puts the mobile in her handbag, looks about the room, and slinging the bag onto her shoulders, knows that she cannot stay there. Not in that house. Not in Kliprand... above all she cannot bear to be in that place. She has to get away...Mercia, must live, will live, as long as she can get away. Out of Kliprand. Out of the country. (198)

Haunted by the actions of her family, her childhood in South Africa, and her life in Scotland marked by Craig's affair, Mercia repeatedly returns to ruminations of belonging and home as she desires to find a foundation for her anguished existence. She feels trapped in the nation of her birth to the extent that leaving is the only means of life. Mercia's contemplation of home, both specifically in her situation suspended between South Africa and Europe, and theoretically questioning the possibility of a modern conceptualization of home, deepen as the novel progresses. For Mercia, there has always been a disconnect between the reality and the possibility of home:

How the Old Ones would have danced around the strange word, home, poured into it their yearning for a break from the mud and wattle and hide and shelters of hunter-gathers who followed their herds...if nowadays ambition cannot accommodate the old notions of home, there has surely always been ambivalence, the impatience for something new, for moving on, across the world, whilst at the same time, at times, feeling the centripetal tug of the earth. (18-9)

Mercia's own cosmopolitan existence mirrors that of the hunter-gather. She questions if in her own wandering "was there not the risk of being irretrievably lost? Between cities? Between continents?" (111). Mercia quickly shakes off these thoughts as "nonsense," but in this moment she recognizes that she belongs to neither the home of her birth or the home of her exile. She longs to find belonging in both homes, but does not wish to stay in

either place. Following the destabilizing revelation of her fathers' sexual immorality and the dissolution of her family, Mercia recognizes the pull of home, and yet she ignores the "centripetal tug of the earth" returning to Glasgow. Instead of belonging, Mercia finds an uncanny homecoming. Her home which should be a place of comfort and safety, is now repellent and disconcerting:

She wanders through the ice-cold apartment, sparse and elegant after Sylvie's cramped rooms. Something is wrong, a disturbance of some kind, as if someone has rearranged everything ever so slightly, so that she can't put her finger on it...is this where she lives? Is this her home? What does she do with all these things, all this space?...her grand nineteenth century Glasgow apartment built by sugar and tobacco lords from the spoils of slavery. (222)

Mercia cannot vocalize the cause of the unhomely nature of her apartment, but the subverted home reflects her material and metaphysical displacement. Instead of her home being connected to European modernism and development, the unhomely apartment now brings the colonial past alive into the present.

Realizing that she can no longer stay in the home of her exile, Mercia quickly suggests that she perceives herself as a global citizen. However, her friend contradicts Mercia's identification with a tortoise carrying its home on its back, and instead states that Mercia has in fact "lived here in the West End for twenty-four years. And what, by the way, have you done with your shell? Mercia looks bewildered. Really? Twenty-four years. As if she did not know" (228). Mercia accepts an interview for a position at a university in Macao, because she still seeks to bury roots in a new home from new routes of exile. Mercia reflects, "or Macau. Have these people not made up their minds as to what to call their place?...but that appeals to Mercia. Shows a healthy attitude to their place, their home as either this or that. Is it a country? A city?" (230). In true

cosmopolitan fashion, Mercia turns to Google, and finds a connection between Macao and South Africa through the exiled poet Camoes and his monster Adamastor that transforms into Table Mountain.

Josiah Blackmore (2009) discussing Camoes' influence on African writing, states that Adamastor as a "specter is simultaneously many things. He is, for instance, the anthropomorphic manifestation of the Cape of Good Hope and a nebulous, airy phantom, a joining of the empirical and the phantasmal worlds; he is an earthbound body and an end point of geographic and cartographic knowledge" (118). Mercia is comforted by this uncanny connection to her roots, and identifies with Camoes as a poet in exile "grumpily brooding in his grotto" (261). However, she equally turns from the image of Adamastor, whose purpose was to warn future European explorers, because he has "nothing to do with her and her kind" (260). Regardless, Mercia sees the connection to Camoes and Macao as a "homecoming of sorts," and she continues to desire belonging even loosely connected to the home of her birth (230).

However, once in Macao, Mercia experiences a moment of epiphany and crisis. While waiting for her interview, Mercia observes a turtle pond and the activities of the young and old animals:

She is drawn to the strange movements of a small turtle with yellow markings on its shell, the markings, she assumes, of youth...give me a break, it seems to cry; give me space to breathe, but when the head drops back in the water the little face is right there, looking into the elder's eyes, supplicating...I am here! Please, oh please. It is I!...phew, what a performance. What could the little chap be pleading for? What does it want? Perhaps, unlike its land cousin, the tortoise, who can walk away from its eggs, this lot left against nature in the same pond, thrown

together in the same waters as their parents, will not be abandoned. Will keep on circling the elder in abject supplication. Will stutter through those quivering hands, Acknowledge me, it is I I I I...(234).

In this moment, Mercia identifies with the young turtle, and she recognizes the connection between her displacement and her precarious family. Mercia, in part, remains unable to find home, because she has never been acknowledge as a member of either space. Always outsider, Mercia “stutter[s] through those quivering hands, Acknowledge me, it is I I I I” (234).

Mercia leaves the pond, hails a cab, and returns home without attending the interview. She uncomfortably recognizes her unhomely displacement, and while in the airport “she avoids looking in mirrors” (235).⁷⁵ Mercia avoids the mirror, because she would be face with her own dislocation and hybrid identity. The novel ends abruptly following Mercia’s experience in Macau, as she is called home once again to South Africa to bury her brother who dies from alcohol poisoning. While there, Mercia reconciles with her family, and promises that one day her nephew, or biological half-brother, will one day visit her in England. At the novel’s conclusion, Mercia has accepted her home as a thirdspace—neither a part or apart from the home of her birth or the home of her exile. This liminal belonging reflects the condition of many 21st century South Africans, such as Zoë Wicomb, navigating roots and routes of home.

⁷⁵The mirror remains a significant trope when exploring spatial concepts of displacement and hybrid identity. For Foucault, the mirror is a “simultaneously real and unreal space, and “from the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there” (4).

London, Cape Town, Joburg

Like *October, London, Capetown, Joburg* focuses on the 21st century movement following transnational routes of home and exile. Zukiswa Wanner develops a continent and decade-spanning story of a family deciphering what it means to be South African in the 21st century. Winner of the K. Sello Duiker Award, the novel presents an often shattering vision of a young family's early life in London and their eventual immigration and homes in Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa. In 1994, Germaine, a white British ceramicist marries Martin, a black South African born in Ireland during his mother's exile. The novel ends in 2010 with the rape and subsequent suicide of Germaine and Martin's son Zuko. The span of the novel is bookended by two important events for South Africa, Mandela's 1994 election and the highpoint for South Africa on the global stage with the 2010 FIFA World cup.⁷⁶ As much as this novel is about Martin and Germaine's family, it is also a novel concerning post-apartheid South Africa and the ability for the nation to be home for returning and immigrating South Africans. Although Martin is South African, he did not grow up in the nation, and Germaine can only be considered South African as a European immigrant who adopts citizenship in the nation.

⁷⁶ The 2010 FIFA World Cup becomes an image of the growing cosmopolitan nature of the world. The protagonist Martin reflects: "South Africa's world cup. Africa's world cup. ...young black South Africans have been returning back from England and America in droves. Lured by advertisements of a South Africa alive with possibilities. Young white South Africans have been departing in equal numbers to England, America, Australia. Crying about reverse racism and lack of jobs due to employment equality. An English comedian we saw performing last time we were in London referred to the white SAffers in England as 'them exiles from democracy.' But being that some dead men in history created the borders we now know...maybe they are just world citizens" (222-3).

With these outsider/insider perspectives, Wanner crafts a novel which she deems “a love letter to my country...and a very angry letter as well” (BridgeBooks).⁷⁷ Wanner presents two first-person, cosmopolitan perspectives on what it means to belong in South Africa and how to navigate the hybrid identity as an outsider in the nation. Considering her own transnational position, Wanner asserts that she is concerned with questioning and parsing identity; moreover, because she was born in Zambia to a South African father and a Zimbabwean mother and currently lives in Kenya, Wanner states that she “always has the outsider glance when looking at South Africa or any country” (BridgeBooks).

London, Cape Town, Joburg is a transnational novel which privileges the outsider glance, and as such it is, in the words of Stephen Clingman, “concerned with the grammar of identity and location; the nature of boundaries, both transitive and intransitive; and navigation as a modality of existence in, and as defining, both the transitive self and the transnational space” (11).

The novel’s structure and visual arrangement remind readers that the story and characters are crossing borders and transitioning to new spaces and new modes of belonging. Divided into three narrative sections, Wanner crafts the novel around a spatial and temporal framework: London: 1994-1998, Cape Town: 1998-2008, and Johannesburg: 2008-2010. Visually, the spaces of the pages designating new sections are marked with a silhouette graphic of the named city’s skyline, which directly connects each section of the narrative with notable architectural and spatial reference points, such as: Big Ben, the London Eye, Devil’s Peak, Table Mountain, Hillbrow Tower, and the

⁷⁷ Wanner gave a book talk and reading from *London, Cape Town, Joburg* on August 8, 2016 in celebration of Women’s Day in South Africa. A video of the talk can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=72ISFAAmbx8.

Vodacom Building. Additionally, each section opens with a poem further situating the action of the plot in a specific location, which also facilitates setting the tone for the novel. “London” begins with Tapiwa Mannie’s “Ode to Her,” which concludes with the lines “my love for her is over—/ the bitch I call London” (14). “Cape Town” opens with Phillippa Yaa de Villiers “Love’s Landscape”:

The rocks, the seas, the sky, the tree,
and me and you and you and me.
It’s all the same, this you, this me
This landscape where we’ve come to be. (150).

For Johannesburg, Wanner returns to Villiers, and introduces the conclusion of the text with “Home Drenched”:

We South African’s rarely
Discuss the Weather
.....
We are terminally surprised
When we get home,
Drenched. I had no idea, we say
That you were so angry” (246).

These poems foreshadow the emotional progression of the novel, and the images are tied to the setting, which bring the readers’ attention back to the search and desire for home. Space remains in the forefront throughout the novel, as does Geraldine and Martin’s desire for belonging and presumed identities as transnational citizens of the world.

Readers never forget that the characters are living in a world with decreased cultural borders and increased fluidity of knowledge and entertainment birthed from growing technology and globalized consumerism. The first section of the novel, “London,” which chronicles Geraldine and Martin’s brief courtship and early marital

years, is inundated with pop-culture references from United States Hollywood and other Western companies and entertainment groups. Disregarding references to specific spaces within London or the characters' history in the country, Germaine and Martin's meeting, courtship, and marriage could have taken place in any major American city. Cultural references to Blockbuster movies in the early 1990s assert the characters' connections to a global economy of entertainment. As Germaine talks with her best friend about boyfriend troubles, both young women punctuate the conversations with references to romantic comedies:

We had done the ice cream from Ben & Jerry containers... We had watched *Sleepless in Seattle* one too many times. "Why couldn't he be a Tom Hanks? Why does he have to be a bloody Boy George?"...[we] went to watch the long-running *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. Bad call on my part. When we got home she started crying, "Why can't he be like Hugh Grant, why? Is it because I'm not American?" (24, 25)

Martin likewise references Hollywood films and movie stars, describing Germaine chewing gum "a la *Pretty Woman*," and later after a fight, he reflects, "I hope Germaine forgives me. If she doesn't I'll pull a John Cusack in *Say Anything* go and buy a ghetto blaster and play a song outside her window until she comes out. After all, I already have the trench coat" (111). In each of their narratives, Germaine and Martin continue to reference pop-culture icons and brands throughout the section providing a who's who and what's what of the American early 1990s. MTV, Gordon Gekko's "Greed is Good Speech," John Grisham, Playboy librarians, Adidas, Pizza Hut, Oprah Winfrey, O. J. Simpson, and Alexis Colby from *Dynasty* are all references that shape Germaine and Martin's perceived cosmopolitan identities. Martin even introduces himself as Marty defending himself saying, "I'm living in an era where guys my age with nice ordinary

Jewish names like Mark Wahlberg choose to call themselves Marky-Mark, so perhaps it makes some crazy sense in my fuzzy mind” (20).

Germaine and Martin’s identities are shaped by an increased globalization at the turn of the century, which Anthony Giddens (1990) describes as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vis versa” (64). Global consumerism and technologies such as television, film, and the internet allow Martin and Germaine to develop global identities. They are shaped by transculturation and cultural flows of mediascapes and ideoscapes in the imaginary community, not of Benedict Anderson’s print news, but of the community created by instant cultural exchange of digital media.⁷⁸

Even when Martin earnestly considers his identity as a South African born in Ireland and living in London, his identity and desire to find home on both continents is influenced by the flow of media. Martin reflects,

Odd how I have been brought up to think of South Africa as home, and yet I was born and grew up here... [which] may have some people arguing that I can’t call it home, but there it is. I grew up knowing I was Irish and South African. Believing I was Irish and South African. Getting angry when I saw my people being shot by the British or teargassed by the Afrikaners on the Beeb [BBC], so who is to tell me otherwise? (31)

Martin’s confidence in his cultural identity and spatial belonging in two nations is founded on feelings elicited from news reports from the BBC. What is more, his

⁷⁸ Arjun Appadurai (1996), contemporary social/cultural critic, develops mediascapes (global flows of electronic and print media) and ideoscapes (global flows of ideologies) as two of the five overlapping areas of global culture.

reflections are interrupted by further images of global consumer culture as his friend “moonwalks into my thoughts in his Doc Martens, hair-gelled, Joe Boxers showing above his oversized jeans” (31). Martin feels South Africa to be home despite distance, and connects to the media and culture of the USA despite distance, because as James Rosenau (2003) suggests, “distance is not measured only in miles across land and sea it can also involve less tangible spaces, more abstract conceptions in which distance is assessed across organization, hierarchies, event sequences, social strata, market relationships, migration patterns, and a host of other territorial spaces” (6).

From the start of the novel, readers are aware that despite physical spaces on a map, that Germaine and Martin perceive themselves to be citizens of a global world with distances abstracted by media, travel, and popular culture. When Martin and Germaine marry, they soon have a son and it is then that they decide to move to South Africa. Both Martin and Germaine, despite never living in the nation, feel as if they belong to South Africa. Wanner highlights the couple’s contrasting seeds of belonging. For Germaine, finding home in South Africa provides an opportunity to become a citizen of the world and satisfy an adolescent desire to travel to Africa after buying the singles “Do They Know Its Christmas” and “We are the World” in high school, despite the deterrent of “watching starving children on television with distended bellies and pleading eyes” (37). She reflects,

So given a choice between Abuja and Madrid for summer, I want Africa. And that’s pretty sad on my part because I hear there is female circumcision there and the worst thing, it is supposedly the women who do it. Where are Africa’s feminists to stop this? And then there are wars in Africa...my nana taught me better than to believe I am the great white hope. I think my going to a concert where Peter Gabriel sand “Yeah Biko, Biko, because of Biko...” contributed to

the freedom of South Africa as much as my buying “Do They Know It’s Christmas” contributed to ending drought in Ethiopia. I am not saying it had no impact at all. I am just saying that perhaps there was more work with impact that was done by people on the ground. (38)

Germaine’s sense of belonging to South Africa is fabricated by images presented through Western news and Hollywood media; moreover, she realizes that she is drawn to the nation by misguided white guilt.

In contrast, Martin possesses dual citizenship with both nations and dual connections to both lands as home. In a humorous moment, Martin even says a silent prayer to St. Patrick and Archbishop Tutu, while in jest acknowledging a spiritual connection to both homes. While he always identified as an Irish O’Malley while growing up, Martin never felt as if he truly belonged in the nation or with his adoptive white father who married his mother. His acceptance of Ireland as home was predicated by his difference. He remembers, “I was in the park with my dad and some patronizing adult asked what African country I was from and my dad answered, ‘He is Irish,’ making me feel even more like I was his little boy” (70). Martin later remembers a similar event from his childhood:

One day, I must’ve been about four or five. I was walking in Hyde Park with my Dad. And some stranger who was walking with his friend looked at me, looked at my dad and said out loud, “Bloody hell, that’s a really black child...Ow, would you look at that, mate? An Irishman and his little monkey...but then I was crying. My father held me for a while until I stopped crying. And then said to him in a small voice, “Daddy, I am scared...what if the monkey those men were talking about comes? I don’t like monkeys.” (137)

As a child, Martin is conflicted over his racial identity, which is further complicated when considering the history of blurred distinctions between whiteness, blackness, and

the Irish. Martin connects with his artificial Irish identity, which confuses his search for belonging. While othered by many because of his visible blackness, Ignatiev Noel's (1995) provocative *How the Irish Became White* provides a framework that further muddles Martin's conflicting identity. Whether he considers himself Irish or black, Martin identifies with the oppressed. Despite his father's quick defenses during childhood, Martin decides to move to South Africa for the sake of his biracial son, as he reflects, "I want my son to grow up among people that look more like him...Money can shelter you from a lot of things but at some point in time, he was going to realize he was a young black man" (137).

The first section of the novel reveals the global nature of Germaine and Martin's identity and their connection to South Africa based on the influences of race or moral obligation; however, belonging is complicated as time and the novel progresses, and as the borders of home become redefined through migrant movement. Home becomes "neither one nor the other but something else besides, inbetween," and Germaine and Martin occupy positions as simultaneously neither and both insider/outsider within South Africa (Bhabha 219). The family's time in South Africa is fraught with issues facing the 21st century nation. The family struggle to forge a true home in the nation outside of the comforts of their elite homes in Cape Town, and eventually in Johannesburg where Martin describes the house as "the home of our dreams, or as close to the dream home as possible" (252). Soon after immigrating, Germaine acts on her teenage acknowledgement of the "white man's burden," and opens a pottery studio in the Cape Town Guguletu Township teaching ceramics to women to sell to tourists. However, soon after buying a small house to convert, Germaine is faced with her identity as a *mlungu* in a black

neighborhood. She states, “I thought I was cosmopolitan enough to hack anything but it was not as easy as I thought,” and after her first encounter with the studio’s neighbor Scarface, she thinks, “I shouldn’t have come here. I should’ve looked for a studio in town. What am I doing here? I can afford to pay rent. Why did I come here? Everyone says the townships are violent. Germaine, you bloody idiot” (172). Germaine feels a visceral disconnect from South Africa as home, and yet as time passes she is influenced by the push and pull of belonging and admits

There were too many of my fellow English here who disparaged everything about ‘this government, these people; while living the type of life they could never afford at home. Don’t get me wrong. I didn’t want to be the only English person at the dinner party—although I became less and less that and more South African the longer I stayed. (231)

Germaine’s belonging in the nation and connection to South Africa is predicated on her consumption of media and culture. In contrast, Martin’s belonging, or lack of belonging, finds foundation in racial matters embedded in the national socio-political apparatus. Even Germaine comments on the entrenched racial discourse: “most conversations in my new country seemed to be laced with race, be it in newspapers, private discourse, pretty much all around” (156). When first arriving back home, Martin is delayed at the airport carrying a citizenship passport, while Germaine and Zuko quickly enter the nation as British travelers— a situation which reveals the lingering effects of the segregated society. Martin reflects, “the mother city. I never thought at any time I’d stop thinking of London as ‘home’”. I mean. I knew South Africa existed in the same way Ireland existed as a home...I can’t imagine any other place where a young black man would have such endless possibilities” (160). However, dwelling in the physical space of the nation,

Martin no longer feels at home in the first space of South Africa, or the second space of Europe. The liminal space highlights his cultural hybridity and his racial difference, and his assumed belonging is destabilized: “it is madness to discover that the one place where I’ve been made to feel my race the most is the place where the majority of the population looks like me. Go figure” (180).

Martin navigates the space between the roots of his family homeland and his European cultural home, and finds belonging in neither space. Discussing the continued reverberations of apartheid in contemporary South Africa with his brother Liam, Martin is torn by feeling connected to the atrocities of the previous century, and separated by space and time: “do you and I have any reason to co-opt this battle for our own? We were born and grew up in London, for heaven’s sake,” to which Liam replies, “I never know what to do with you. You know that an injury to one is an injury to all, and besides, we’d never have been born in exile if so many of these white South Africans hadn’t supported apartheid so long” (164). Liam speaks of a sense of belonging, similar to Mercia’s allusion to *The Soul of Black Folk* in *October*. However, instead of a spiritual sense of belonging, Martin desires an understanding of his place in the nations of his home and exile.

The plot of the novel pivots on Martin’s movement from Cape Town to Johannesburg seeking business opportunities and a deeper connection to the nation. While there, Martin becomes involved, unknowingly, to a white-collar Ponzi scheme lead by his brother Liam, and a man uncovered to be his biological father. Martin’s desire for home deepens as he realizes that he needs to connect to the land of his father to find belonging in the cultural first space of his ancestors. His father writes him: “I would like

to show you where your grandparents—my parents—and the other Mtshalis are buried. As Africans, there are certain rituals I will need to do to welcome you back to the family to save you and your family from future complications” (273-4). Martin’s desire for belonging and an ancient, spiritual connection to the land despite his cosmopolitan and exiled routes from the nation, blinds him to invest in his father’s scheme, which destroy his and Liam’s careers. Martin loses both his desired connection to home, and the family disintegrates turning the physical home into a site of trauma.

The novel begins with Germaine and Martin’s son’s death, and reader soon learn that the almost 13-year-old Zuko committed suicide. Days prior to taking his own life, Zuko reveals to Martin that he was raped by his uncle, Liam. As the novel returns to 1994 and slowly move towards Zuko’s death, the plot, characters, and descriptions of home are haunted by the dramatic irony of impending trauma. The home becomes a site of violence, and belonging is impossible.

Third Space Novels of Home and Spatial Justice

October and *London, Cape Town, Joburg* both present characters navigating transcultural identities as citizens in the 21st century South Africa. Mercia, Germaine, and Martin seek to find home in the nation, but they are simultaneously outsider and insider in the spaces of South Africa and Europe. Bhabha’s metaphor of the third space reveals the characters’ liminality and Wanner and Wicomb question the possibility of home in the nation, and highlight the fact that home in contemporary South Africa does not fragment into the systematic binaries of insider/outsider, citizen/alien, and home/exile. In

the novels, Bhabha's conception of the third space can be seen in the discussions of language, and the role language and translation plays in Martin, Germaine, and Mercia's hybrid identities.

Bill Ashcroft (2008) highlights the power of language to reveal liminality: "language itself is a zone of difference, struggle and transformation rather than a zone of identity. Language, most notably in the transcultural performance of postcolonial writing, is a Third Space of enunciation between poles of cultural identity, a space within which cultural identities themselves are transformed" (120). Language as a third space remains central to Wanner and Wicomb as representative 21st century South African novelists, and to the national setting and home. Language has always revealed the place/zone of difference, and the creation of hybrid cultural identities, in South Africa invaded by Dutch and British colonization and apartheid. Language persists as a tool of colonization, and represents an invasion of the European, hegemonic secondspace into the firstspace of the colonized. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin assert in their formative *The Empire Writes Back* (1989):

One of the main features of imperial oppression is control over language. The imperial education system installs a 'standard' version of the metropolitan language as the norm, and marginalizes all 'variants' as impurities. Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' become established. (7)

Wanner and Wicomb's discussion of language reveals the action of translation and the creation of new spaces where difference is negotiated. The third space becomes the place of the cultural translator. For Bhabha, the creation of this space is in response to a specific historical moment, a moment of crisis between the first and the second space,

and as Robert Young (2008) suggests, “the Third Space above all is the site of enunciation, the instance of every utterance, and, at the point of the tongue, the fall into language” (82). This fall into language is the space of translation and the space where difference and identity is negotiated.

In *October*, Mercia’s struggle for home—growing up classified as colored in apartheid South Africa, and returning as a cosmopolitan, adult, and elective exile—parallels the nation’s struggle over language as a sign post of difference. During her return visit to Kliprand, Mercia reflects on her father’s insistence that his children learn English “because it was important to remember that they did not belong there” (144). Instead, using English over Afrikaans and languages indigenous to the nation, Mercia was raised believing that “physical geography is not everything; it is important in the interest of self-improvement, to dispense with the nation of home. It is after all the excessive sense of belonging that leaves the people of Kliprand tied to the place” (144).

Language becomes a tool for differentiating between the colonized and the oppressor, and language is privileged over space in identity formation. Possessing a transcultural identity, Mercia recognizes language has a foundational role in her perceived global identity, claiming, “it is so much better to speak more than one language” (155). However, while Mercia connects language to the creation of difference and the third space birthed out of enunciation—the space of the cultural translator—language equally creates a sense of belonging and creates home: “this place, home, is a place for doing and thinking at an angle, a place where speech, triumphs over genteel silence, has many different functions” (39). The third space is not a liminal space of silence but a space of translation and active negotiation of identity and home.

One of the only times Mercia asserts that she feels connection to her home in Scotland is when she personally connects to the language and is called “Pal” by the locals:

Mercia loved being called pal. When Glaswegian bus drivers or workmen said, there you are, pal, or, got the time, pal? She was named, felt the warmth of an embrace, a welcome that came close to a sense of belonging. Whatever that was, Mercia was careful to add. And Craig teased, opps, we mustn’t let go of the exilic condition now, must we? (67)

While she remains skeptical of the possibility of belonging, it is in these moments when she is named, when she is hailed as pal, that Mercia recognizes her subjectivity. What is more, this language both challenges and highlights her exilic position.

Language in relation to naming also reveals Mercia’s liminal identity and the identity of her bastard nephew/half-brother Willem. Following her mother’s death and preceding her exile to Europe, Mercia disregards her given name Mercy:

How much better something plain, like Mary or Jane; she hated both Mercy and Mercia...and once in bygone days, Mercia was a place, an English region, the name for border people, which she supposes has its own resonance for certain South African people like them or for that matter her own liminal self. (27)

Choosing a name other than her own, other than a name connected to the traditional languages of South Africa, Mercia recognizes her adopted third space identity translating her cultural identity in the liminal space of the border—the third space between South Africa and European colonization.

Elsewhere in the novel, Mercia’s sister-in-law Sylvie laments her son’s African’s name, Willem, which was given to him to set him apart as outsider by the language attached to his identity. She reflects, “why not at least William? Jake was of course

drunk, but for all her scolding, he just nodded knowingly, and spat, call him Klass if you'd like and count yourself lucky I didn't call him Theophobe" (5). At issue is not the meaning behind Willem's name, but the language. Jake gives his son an Afrikaans name, aligning him with the culture of apartheid power.

Like Wicomb, Wanner also highlights language and translation as a space creating hybrid identity—a third space. When first moving to South Africa, Germaine struggles to navigate the languages of the nation, particularly isiXhosa, the language of Martin's family and heritage. Germaine struggles to learn the language, and she reflects, "just when I thought I had got a letter, I would mix it up with another" (175). And later, after opening the pottery group in Guguletu, Germaine feels disconnected from the group of twenty-five women when she does not understand the meaning behind the name Nomakanjani Girl's Club: "when I asked what "nonakanjani" meant, Mamuthembu cheekily told me to go and buy a Xhosa/English dictionary. Bulelwa explained it to me, though. She said it meant 'no matter what'" (175). Language complicates Germaine's integration into the nation, and her ability to feel truly at home despite her citizenship. Martin's connection and interaction between language and identity is similar to Mercia's struggle to find belonging as a child with language serving as a catalyst for separation. Martin connects his primary language to his position in society and cultural identity: "when mum decided that we should learn isiXhosa, I didn't take my lessons very seriously because I was Irish and NOT the other" (140).

Wanner highlights cultural hybridity and the liminal third space by focusing on her characters' names and language. When Germaine arrives in South Africa to first meet Martin's family, she questions "does he have something easier? An English baptismal

name perhaps? As soon as I said it I knew how stupid I sounded. Liam sneered, ‘and do you have a Xhosa name, Germaine’” (124). Germaine is embarrassed by her admitted desire for South African names, and in turn identities, to fall in line with European norms and language. Years later, Germaine realizes that her family uses the English version of their housekeeper Gladness’s name: “I found out her name was actually Jabulile but she had made a direct translation of it so that I wouldn’t be inconvenienced. I was horrified at the idea of course, but by then Gladness was stuck in my head and Jabulile sounded like a stranger. So Gladness she stayed” (176). To better fit her own cultural language, Germaine usurps Jabulile’s identity forcing her identity to align with the language of oppression.

Martin also finds his identity through his English name and Irish surname, and he is surprised by his brother Liam O’Malley’s rejection of his Irish/English name, in favor for a Xhosa name after moving back to the post-apartheid nation. He reflects,

It came as no surprise when he moved back to South Africa to join Mum...what came as a surprise was that he decided to change his name. It was something that shouldn’t have shocked me but it did...Liam took on his mother’s maiden surname...Swart Mokoena. Swart. An Afrikaans word meaning “black.” (140)

Liam’s name embodies the identity of the colonized and the colonizer, and Wanner emphasizes the linguistic third space fashioning hybrid identity—the hybrid identity of contemporary South Africa.

Expanding on the third space as a spatial metaphor for the moment of enunciation and the contact zone of language translations, I believe that Wicomb and Wanner reveal the liminal third space nature of art. In the novels, Mercia and Germaine both seek to create and produce artistic expressions of home as they navigate their own dwelling

between spaces. Early in *October*, soon after receiving the call home, Mercia uncharacteristically begins a creative non-fiction memoir, aptly titled “Home”:

It was in the small dark hours that things get tough, and Mercia must find ways of stemming the phantasmagoria of grief...the memories will be strictly for midnight...how little really, she remembers or knows of them, how much there is to invent. She saves the file as “home.” (9)

Mercia continues to return to the memoir, despite her misgiving, in what she terms “the uncanny flow of words” (13). The memoir becomes Mercia’s self-portrait which occupies the space between truth and fiction, and becomes a third space for Mercia to reflect on her hybrid identity. The memoir, embodying its name, becomes a home:

She thinks of such writing as private, not for publication, then really she is free to write; there is no thinking through the reason or purpose, no need to retract her view on memoir. And more importantly, no repetition of the angst-ridden biting of the pencil. There is after all a screen ready to receive an image of herself, but, also to protect, to conceal. (8)

Mercia’s art becomes a home—a safe place.⁷⁹ The memoir is more than an exercise in nostalgia, but instead it is third space active in hybrid identity formation.

In *London, Cape Town, Joburg*, Germaine’s ceramic art provides her an international identity. Her artwork sells globally, and she participates in gallery exhibitions and workshops across continents. Even Martin’s newly discovered sister from his biological South African father, knows Germaine’s reputation as an artist: “Germaine Spencer. Oh damn, we love your work. You are brilliant. We bought a piece of yours at a bargain price at twenty thousand dollars while in California. This is such an honor” (298).

⁷⁹ Mercia’s vision of the memoir’s ability to protect and conceal, mirrors a definition found in the OED for home: “A refuge, a sanctuary; a place or region to which one naturally belongs or where one feels at ease” (4).

In the novel, Germaine's art reflects her assumed global identity, but more importantly her art also functions as a third space where cultural identity emerges hybridized. Like Mercia's memoir, Germaine finds home in her ceramics, and connects events in her life as she navigates belonging in South Africa as a new immigrant and eventual citizen. Zones of interaction between Germaine's European cultural identity and the various cultures of South Africa result in artistic pieces. For example, when Zuko is young, and suffering from nose bleeds, Germaine solicits advice from women in the Guguletu ceramic group:

Mthembu went and got some herbs and instructed me to burn them in his room before he went to sleep. I was skeptical but by this time I'd have tried anything...it was this that got me working on a piece called *Plant Healer*- shaped like a giant urn. *Plant Healer* was etched with some of the herbs I'd used. I chose the shape to show that although we may sometimes heal, life is still fleeting. Or rather, that's what some art journalist wrote in an article about my work. (178)

Germaine's art becomes a third space where she can integrate her changing identity through the interactions of the first and second space. Along these same lines, Germaine's piece *Braiding*, responds to Zuko's, and therefore her own, hybrid identity in South Africa. Following what she deems "Zuko's hair braiding period," Germaine "took three stands of clay, mixed them with Zuko's hair from the last time he had a haircut and wove them up all the way until it was the size of a vase. This piece had no duplicate" (220). The vase speaks towards a moment when Zuko is faced with his own identity as a South African and as a global teenager influenced by the cultural flow of media.

Germaine remembers, "Bow Wow, Omario, and lil Romeo were the young musicians who seemed to be on television, whether on MTV or children's shows on ETV or SABC...these three young Americans were the most influential musicians for Zuko. And

this being the case, Zuko too wanted his hair braided like the celebrities” (216). However, instead of a moment of identity expression, soon after Gladness braids Zuko’s hair, his uncle Liam asks if he is a “fag” (218). The moment impacts Zuko’s identity formation, but also causes Germaine to reflect on the cultural distinctiveness of her family.

As the characters throughout both novels maneuver through their at times tenuous senses of belonging, Wanner and Wicomb highlight art’s ability to act in the liminal space of difference and become a third space of identity formation. Taken a step further, I believe that the moments of artistic creation in the novels, Mercia’s memoir and Germaine’s ceramics reflect the creative process of the novels themselves. Wicomb and Wanner, write from the liminal position of the third space, both belonging and not belonging to South Africa and other national and imagined spaces of the global cosmopolitan world. *October* and *London, Cape Town, Joburg* embody hybrid identity creation and the subsequent search for belonging and home. When speaking about contemporary cosmopolitanism Anthony Appiah (2006) describes the connection between identity and imaginative creation. He states, “Conversations across boundaries of identity—whether national, religious, or something else—begin with the sort of imaginative engagement you get when you read a novel or watch a movie or attend to a work of art that speaks from some place other than your own” (85). The third space is the space of imaginative production which allows discussions of difference to emerge; moreover, as Renato Resaldo (1993) describes borderlands not as “empty transitional zones but as sites of creative cultural production,” the novels become representative of the third space (208). Both novels explore an identity that is unique to the return of the

South African exile and the immigration of new citizens in the 21st century. Through the novels, Wanner and Wicomb write the third space into existence.

In terms of genre, these novels, and others published in the first decade and beyond of the 21st century, are novels of home. Emerging from both the protest novel of apartheid and the reconciliation novel following the TRC, the novel of home interrogates the possibility of belonging in the nation and the ability to find and create home. *October* and *London, Cape Town, Joburg* are novels of protest highlighting the continued political turmoil in the nation, and reconciliatory as the characters must reconcile their own hybrid cosmopolitan identities; however, these novels are simultaneously the opposite. In this tension, Wicomb and Wanner craft the novel of home by focusing on the third space contested home, and the perpetual push and pull for belonging.

Bhabha's hybridity—emerging from the third space functions along Soja's trilectics of space, culture, and history—reaches beyond the present moment into the past and the future. Bhabha suggests that to live in the border or in the third space is,

To live somehow beyond the border of our times...being in the 'beyond', then, is to inhabit an intervening space...but to dwell 'in the beyond' is also...to be part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human, historic commonality; *to touch the future on its hither side*. In that sense, then, the intervening space 'beyond', becomes a space of intervention in the here and now. (7)

The liminal third space calls for an intervention in the here and now. The real and imagined space requires a connection to concerns for spatial justice. Specifically, the third space functioning in the beyond “captures something of the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and world—the unhomeliness—that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations” (13). This “estranging sense of the relocation of

the home and the world” reflects not only imaginary connections and belonging to home, but also tangible, contemporary spatial crisis facing housing in South Africa, and the need for spatial justice.

Instead of an ungrounded literary trope, Soja’s thirdspace presents a space founded in material geography as a “real-and-imagined” or “realandimagined” space as “an-Other way of understanding and acting to change the spatiality of human life, a distinct mode of critical spatial awareness that is appropriate to the new scope and significance being brought about in the re-balanced trialectics of spatiality-historicity-sociality” (10). He goes on to suggest, “Thirdspace too can be described as a creative recombination and extension, one that builds on a first space perspective that is focused on the ‘real’ material world and a second space perspective that interprets this reality through ‘imagined’ representations of spatiality” (6).

Soja points towards his theory of “critical thirding” which, instead of breaking down binaries, provides an-Other set of options entirely. I am most interested in Soja’s contribution to thirdspace theory in terms of his privileging of the real over the imaginary, which speaks towards the unique situation facing South African spatial concerns in the 21st century. The land in South Africa can no longer be divided into the binary oppositions of colonizer and colonized, South Africa and homeland, white space and black space. Instead, a new space must emerge, a critical “thirding-as-othering,” in which “the original binary choice is not dismissed entirely but is subjected to a creative process of restructuring that draws selectively and strategically from two opposing categories to open new alternatives” (5). Soja speaks of “thirding-as-othering” as

Much more than a dialective synthesis a la Hegel or Marx...Thirthing, introduces a critical ‘other-than’ choice that speaks and critiques through its otherness. That

is to say, it does not derive simply from an additive combination of its binary antecedents but rather from a disordering, deconstruction, and tentative reconstruction of their presumed totalization producing an open alternative that is both similar and strikingly different. Thirthing recomposes the dialectic through an intrusive disruption that explicitly spatializes dialectical reasoning. (61)

Bhabha's third space provides a critical framework for examining *October* and *London, CapeTown, Joburg* in terms of cultural identity and translating the liminal space into hybrid identity; moreover, Soja's thirdspace reminds us to consider also the spatial politics of the real, material setting and home of South Africa.

Mercia, Germaine, and Martin, each approach home from different levels of belonging to South Africa complicated by transnational movement. The three characters recognize their hybrid identities because they do not fully occupy cultural spaces of South Africa or Europe, and instead dwell in the liminal space of exilic return, reflecting Bhabha's third space identity. While the novels rely on tropes of home, and the exploration of third space as a metaphor of belonging and hybridity, Wicomb and Wanner continually remind readers that Mercia, Germaine, and Martin navigate belonging in the real nation of South Africa.

In *October*, Mercia recognizes her position between the cultural first and second space and the third space in terms of metaphors of belonging, but Wicomb continually grounds the novel in South Africa by resisting the privileging of the imaginary over the real. While the novel focuses on Mercia's personal battle to accept her hybrid identity and belonging to a new third space, the novel also reveals contemporary housing problems facing the nation 20 years following the fall of apartheid. Early in the novel, when Mercia first receives the call home, she reflects on a conversation with her brother:

“Mercia assumed that he was speaking of the state of the country, of the disappointing aspects of the New South Africa. Perhaps you have unreasonable expectations, she said, given how much of the old South Africa is still in place” (16). The lingering effects of apartheid remain evident on the nation where Mercia struggles to find home and is simultaneously rejected. The darkest time of apartheid in terms of spatial politics was the creation of the homelands or Bantustans through forced removals, and the destruction of home and the perpetuation of injustice haunt Mercia’s connection to and perception of the nation. She muses,

It was not so long ago that the barbaric Homelands policy for those less privileged than coloreds was justified by the belief that black people do not care for their children in the usual ways. Just look at how they pass them round! Wages from the cities easily compensate for leaving behind children in the desolate Bantustans! (41)

Wicomb focuses readers’ attention on the real material issues facing South Africa struggling to create new spatial structures outside of the white/black, colonizer/colonized binaries, and the privileged first space of white belonging and the second space of the homelands and townships. Mercia, with her hybrid, colored identity in the nation, underscores the need for a new third space home through descriptions of RPD housing in the nation. She describes the RPD settlement near her childhood town of Kliprand:

There is a colony of RPD houses on the horizon stretching eastward from the town’s rubbish dump as far as the eye can see...in a country where land is plentiful, houses are virtually butted against each other with barely any space between the boundary fences. There is no question of a small patch where people could grow vegetables, a few mealies and pumpkins to keep the wolf from the door. How strange that the architects of these townships, living as they no doubt

do in comfortable houses lost in large gardens, and well out of sight of their neighbors, should imagine that the poor want to huddle together in cramped conditions, that they do not want to grow vegetables, let alone flowers. (43)

Mercia questions the ability of her sister-in-law and her nephew/half-brother to survive in the public housing opportunity modeled on apartheid separation and build on the derelict ruins of oppression.

Germaine and Martin's belonging in the nation is juxtaposed by various descriptions of the homes in which they live and encounter in the nation. Images of these homes, while they metaphorically reveal the various struggles for belonging in the nation, serve as more than an imaginary trope of spatial dwelling. The descriptions return the discussion of hybrid identity and belonging to the material spatial divide still present in the nation. The novel often presents two different lifestyles and identities in South Africa separated by racial and economic lines. When first driving through Guguletu, Liam humorously suggests that Germaine will be homesick passing the Surrey neighborhood: "I started laughing because he knew as well as I did that Surrey, Cape Town, was far removed from Surrey, England" (157). Housing in parts of South Africa, particularly the townships remain so dissimilar to housing in England, that the suggestion is laughable. However, this juxtaposition is often seen between township homes and images of Germaine and Martin's homes in the nation.

When they move to Johannesburg from Cape Town, the couple buys a home of excess separated from the other by security fences. Martin describes the house:

The security, despite its proximity to the hodgepodge of some of Africa's wretched that is Yeoville, seems alright. The four bed-roomed house has an ensuite bathroom in the master bedroom...there are two living-rooms—one of which Germaine and I agree we'll convert to a games room for Zuko—plus a

study, and we are both easily sold when we see the bar. The braai area on the stoep is not too shabby either. And we agree that the servant's quarters can easily be converted into Germaine's studio. (252)

Germaine mocks the issue of spatial injustice, but her family perpetuates the dichotomy still present in South African housing. She ridicules a former friend for desiring the "monstrosity of homes beloved by JoBurgers, a home in Tuscan style in the northern suburbs" (213). Also, when she first sees her husband's family home "a sprawling two-story mansion among the poverty and huts of the rest of the village," she questions, "I've often wondered what it is with affluent South Africans and multiple storied houses" (294). While Germaine is unable to see her own role in maintaining the standard of spatial separation, with her own dream house of security and excess separating her from those less fortunate, the novel continually reminds readers that many in South Africa are subject to spatial injustice.

The critical action of *London, Cape Town, Joburg* occurs after Martin loses the family's savings through scheming investments of his brother Liam and his long-lost father. In the aftermath, Liam rapes his nephew Zuko, and Zuko no longer having a safe space with his family commits suicide on his 13th birthday. Germaine and Martin's search for belonging and their experiences as new citizens in the newly democratic nation are overshadowed by this horrific, violating crime and the resulting loss of life.

Wicomb and Wanner craft novels of home that interrogate the possibility for belonging in the contemporary South African nation through spatial metaphors of hybridity. Both novels can be read through the lens of Bhabha's third space "which enables other positions to emerge...displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new-political initiatives" (211). More importantly the novels

also reflect Soja's conceptualization of the thirdspace as grounded more in the discourse of lived geography which points towards the continued spatial injustice in the nation still hampered by the lingering effects of apartheid and growing perceptions of neo-apartheid. Soja asserts that spatial injustice can be contextualized "from the external creation of unjust geographies through boundary making and the political organization of space" (9), and he goes on to connect this form of injustice to apartheid policies of housing, forced removals, and homeland creation. He states in his formative work *Seeking Spatial Justice* (2010):

The story of apartheid revolves paradigmatically around struggles over geography. Through legislation, ideological rationalization, and violent political action, the political organization of space in South Africa was reshaped starting in 1948 into a hierarchy of territorially segregated and tightly bounded areas...Ideologically rationalized as separate but equal, the South African "badlands,"...rigidly confined daily life and urban, regional, and national politics in multiscale straitjackets of spatial control. (39)

In spite of the passage of 20 years since the creating of the democratic nation, the "straitjacket of apartheid spatial" control still dominates the urban and rural landscape of South Africa. More importantly, the lasting effects of apartheid remain visible on contemporary housing reform and the ability for citizens of all kinds—naturalized and native born citizens, exiles and returning exiles, immigrants and emigrants—to create home and feel belonging. Wicomb and Wanner are concerned with interrogating the unjust geographies of contemporary South Africa preventing the possibility of home. Along with other contemporary novelist, Wicomb and Wanner write in the genre of the South African novel of home which points towards the need for spatial justice.

In a 2016 interview, Wanner responds to the controversial movement of the novel and her harsh critique of the nation:

I don't write for the sake of it; I write because I have something to say- we don't talk about the rape of young boys. Liam is modeled around three politicians I know in this country...what are we doing to change it what are we doing to stop it...Do we have safe spaces for our children, do we have safe spaces for us. You know. Are we all hiding behind high gates because we cannot trust our neighbors. Have we made other people in the society so poor that we are scared of seeing poverty, in case, a) they make us feel guilty, and b) they rob us? Who are we?
(BridgeBooks)

While their novels are creative works which utilizes spatial metaphors such as Bhabha's third space to explore hybrid identity and belonging, Wicomb and Wanner ground thoughts of home in the real, material reality. The issue becomes not if someone feels at home or connects to an imaginary trope of spatial belonging, but the focus shifts to if there are tangible "safe spaces" in the nation destroyed by spatial injustice and continuing down the path of cultural, social, and political power determined by spatial separation.

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