RETHINKING REPRESENTATION OF AFRICAN IDENTITY AND BELONGING IN A SELECTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WRITINGS

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DECLARATION

I declare that RETHINKING REPRESENTATION OF AFRICAN IDENTITY AND BELONGING IN A SELECTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WRITINGS is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

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ABSTRACT

In debates around Afrocentrism and decolonisation after the #rhodesmustfall student protests, as well as in historicising the marginalisation of black writings in the South African literary landscape, there is agreement on the urgency to shift African theoretical perspectives to the centre. With the aim of contributing to these conversations, this thesis engages with African literary thought as an attempt to disrupt the epistemological and ontological exclusion of black writings and writers.

Deploying qualitative textual analysis, this study examines the representation of identity in Herbert Dhlomo's Writings (1935); Bloke Modisane's *Blame Me on History* (1963); Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali's *The Washerwoman* (1971); Sipho Sepamla's *Words, Words, Words* (1984); Mongane Wally Serote's *To Every Birth Its Blood* (1981); Lauretta Ngcobo's *And They Didn't Die* (1990); and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to our Hillbrow* (2001). This survey of black writings and literary representation aligns with the history of colonial/apartheid resistance and key periods including: the rise of Afrikanerdom in the 1930s; 1960s Sharpeville; 1970s Black Consciousness and Soweto; the advent of democracy with Mandela in 1994; and the post-apartheid neo-liberal dilemma of the black nationalist elite.

In order to highlight how private, domestic, and political/national space is manifested and contested in African literature, the thesis leans on the ideas of Henri Lefebvre and Stuart Hall. Postcolonial theories of Gayatri Spivak, Valentine Mudimbe, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Homi K. Bhabha enhance perspectives on identity, power, subalternity and resistance. Foucault's notion of heterotopia is valuable in this study as its purpose is to disrupt the entrenched order of existing spaces, and, as a result, points to the production of knowledge. This study's contribution lies in the re-reading and interpretation of black writings through a decolonial lens with a particular focus on power, heterotopic space and resistance. The analyses align with the subaltern struggle against inhumanity and injustice during apartheid and in contemporary South African society.

KEYWORDS

African Identity, Black South African writings, Spatial Studies, Subalternity, Black Consciousness, Decolonisation

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A whole history remains to be written of spaces … from the grotesque strategies of geopolitics to the little tactics of the habitat … (Foucault, 1980:94).

1.1 Introduction

Deliberations in South Africa around who is or is not an African, how South African identity links with African identity in general, the relation between ethnic identity and national identity, and the relative significance and impact of tradition and modernity, suggests that identity politics are far from resolved. South Africans always have and are still battling with the question of identity, of who they are and what they are, as individuals, as communities, as a nation (Bekker et al., 2001:87). It is to be expected that race would remain a contentious domain of identity politics as South Africa aims to settle the apartheid past, and to an extent this is happening through discussions around affirmative action, quota systems and other means of redress, as well as through deliberations around African cultural beliefs, ethics and values as opposed to Western cultural value systems (Bekker et al., 2001:94). These viewpoints are subjects of contemporary debate with the impetus being Thabo Mbeki's (1999) speech —*I am an African*. It is against the backdrop of ongoing identity politics in the South African black community that the present study is located. Mbeki (1999:34) contends that African identity is not one rooted on "race, colour, gender or historical origins but is rooted in a firm assertion made by ourselves that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white".

This thesis is written with the premise that African intellectuals have much to offer on social, political, identitarian and literary analysis, yet many remain shrouded by history and peripheral to contemporary academic disciplines. As Foucault argues:

> The work of an intellectual is not to shape others' political will; it is, through the analyses that he carries out in his own field, to question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident, to disturb people's mental habits, the way they do and think things, to dissipate

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what is familiar and accepted, to re-examine rules and institutions…to participate in the formation of a political will. (1989a:265)

To investigate intricate concerns related to African identity in selected literary works, this study centres on spatial theory. Such a practice using spatiality theory and literary cartography permits this research to move more easily across decades and juxtaposes texts that, within the logic of periodisation, could not easily be examined together.

One of the key claims of this thesis is that social spaces are not neutral, but are instead influenced by power dynamics that take place within them. Space is no longer perceived as a constant or static category but rather as a complex, divergent reality. A spatial analysis of a literary text(s) is crucial since works of literature portray events taking place in spaces—some real, some imaginary. Characters and performers also interact in spaces. Both the spaces and the boundaries describe human relations as portrayed in the characterisation as well as the interplay of concerns and interests represented in the texts. Characters' identities and statuses are described in relation to prevailing spaces. In the texts, as this study demonstrates, space has been used by the writers as a means to create characters and delve into the motifs of power, identity, inequality, inclusion and exclusion, subalternity and women's voices.

1.2. Aims of the study

1) To examine selected texts within the themes of African identity and space;
2) To illustrate how subaltern subjects are represented and reveal how pain is presented as an important marker for constituting subalternity; and
3) To analyse the spatial component of identity and to illustrate how the process of identity formation is epitomised in the literary works.

The thesis intends to explore how identity politics is embodied in the writings of black South African writers from the 1930s to early 1990s, pursuing, through the literature under consideration, what is meant by the notion of an African identity in the local and national context. Liberty from racial regulations in 1994 and its attendant forms of oppression has not necessarily resulted in the disappearance of race and ethnicity as determinants of identity and sources of animosity. Earlier

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studies of identity politics were written during the struggle for liberation, endeavouring, from within this struggle, to express alternative conceptualisations of African identity to those offered by colonialism and apartheid.

The critical works of Ezekiel Mphahlele (1962) and Lewis Nkosi (1981) examine the themes of black South African identity within a Pan-African literary context. Scholars such as David Attwell (2005), re-evaluate African literary history from a more distanced critical perspective. This thesis builds on the ambitious project undertaken by Attwell (2005) in examining the literature from the post-apartheid perspective. It returns to and re-reads this literature with an acute sense of the ambiguities ingrained in the notion of an African identity represented in it. Rather than see the literature of the past half-century as emerging from the politics of racial absolutes to the politics of non-racialism, as reflected in the dominant national narrative of the rainbow nation, this thesis intends to expose the ambiguities that have symbolised the diverse stages of identity politics.

I interrogate how space is conceptualised in texts penned by African writers and how sites and social rules are incorporated through contextual and differing power-based attachments between characters, identities, spaces and activities. In investigating manifestations of space in these writings, the thesis concentrated on everyday private/personal space, family/domestic space, and political/national space. The three spaces form the locus of this thesis because they are perceived as umbrella spaces while other spaces such as symbolic, social, communal and public spaces among others, are infused in them and, therefore, cannot be scrutinised in isolation.

The thesis examines how identity politics is represented in the writings of Herbert Dhlomo, Bloke Modisane, Black Consciousness poets (Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali, and Sipho Sephamla), Mongane Wally Serote, Lauretta Ngcobo and Phaswane Mpe. The thesis specifically comprises of an analysis of the following six literary works:

- Dhlomo's *The Girl who killed to save* (1935);
- Modisane's *Blame Me on History* (1963);
- Black Consciousness and protest poets: Mtshali's *The Washerwoman's Prayer* (1971) and Sepamla's *Words, Words, Words* (1984);
- Serote's *To Every Birth Its Blood* (1981);

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- Ngcobo's *And They Didn't Die* (1990); and
- Mpe's *Welcome to our Hillbrow* (2001).

The key research questions explored are:

- How is African identity and belonging represented in a selection of South African writings?
- What are the major themes explored in relation to African identity?
- How are private, domestic and political/national spaces as components of identity manifested and contested in African literature?

I contend that the identities are not sealed entities, but they transformed over time to mirror changing circumstances. Thinking of identity as divergent provides a beginning point for my examination to reveal the extent to which policies of segregation and apartheid haunt postcolonial identities, and to endeavour to answer a series of questions. Firstly, how do these writers under consideration engage with identity? Secondly, how do their texts transmit a desire for identities to be read distinctly from previous literary creations of the region and national spaces? Thirdly, how do these writers voice the need to recover their African heritage from the 1940s to the 1990s? Fourthly, what is the role of their writings in remembrance and memories? Fifthly, who are they writing for? Lastly, how do their narratives challenge and exceed local and regional spaces to national literary borders? This is why, in this thesis, I engage with questions of identity and belonging with the intention of deconstructing the current narrative about what is understood as South African writings made possible by black writers. I argue chiefly in favour of a non-essentialist perspective on African identity.

1.3 Methodology and rationale for the study

The study investigates writers within historical moments, showing how the ambiguities of identity politics are embodied around the structural significance of moments. The study undertakes textual analysis using the process of descriptive qualitative research. This requires the selection of data in the mode of statements from the texts studied; these are analysed, evaluated and compared within and between texts in relation to identity, belonging and space. The writers selected for study in

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relation to each historical moment best demonstrate issues relevant to the moment and appropriate to the focus of the study on diverse facets of black identity politics.

In focusing principally upon the politics of identity, representation, belonging, spatiality and power, I believe that this thesis will promote a crucial methodological move, from largely a historical and a political direction which has previously monopolised critical discourse to an approach instead grounded in the spacio-cultural and political realities of the periods under discussion.

Michel Foucault's (1980) call for the revitalisation of the knowledge of space (as indicated in the epigraph), has ramifications for the decolonisation of space. There is a steadfast understanding that not only Eurocentric philosophies termed as 'knowledge' should be challenged, but also the definition and representation of lands and landscapes that were seized in the advancement of colonisation and dispossession and later in South Africa through the segregationist policies of the British and apartheid. People were not only placed according to how they were classified, but were also segregated according to their location, resulting in distinct links between identity and space. For example, a 'native' was prescribed by the General Law Amendment Act 102 of 1967 to include someone legally subsisting in a location.

South Africa's apartheid history is defined by the unequal organisation and construction of spaces by law. It is represented by spatial laws, segregation, allocation and especially the organisation of spaces politically through a carefully crafted system of laws. Numerous laws all dealt indelibly with the spaces and places in South Africa, and therefore the law can be illustrated as mapping. The geographical and built environment stories of South Africa are histories of social domination through segregation along racial and linguistic lines. We can start with the Native Land Act of 1913, one of the fundamental pieces of law in the design and entrenchment of spatial segmentation. Before 1913, the General Pass Regulations Bill of 1905 and the Asiatic Registration Act of 1906 introduced the pass system and entrenched the tone for social control. The journey from 1913 to the victory of the National Party in 1948 includes the following legislation: The Native in Urban Areas Bill of 1918, which made forced removals to locations possible; The 1923 Urban Areas Act

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which enabled residential segregation; and The Native Administration Act of 1927 which complemented The Native Lands Act.

The Asiatic Land Tenure Bill of 1946 barred land sales to Indians. The National Party's runaway success in the whites-only 1948 election was the start of deepening stages of racial segregation, dispossession and spatial determination. The crux of this intensified legislation was the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act, both of which were gazetted in 1950. This apartheid era also sanctioned the Separate Amenities Act of 1953, which radically transformed public spaces such as beaches and parks into exclusive spaces for "whites only". Following the Native Resettlement Act, No. 19 of 1954, the apartheid regime began a treacherous crusade to crush the individual spirit, family, history and fundamental humanity of black and coloured South Africans through the violent annihilation of their homes. With little notice and no opportunity to fight or stop the apartheid machinery, hundreds of thousands of non-white South Africans witnessed the demolition of their homes as bulldozers devastated communities such as District Six in Cape Town, Cato Manor in Durban and Johannesburg's Sophiatown. During the apartheid era, black communities were restricted to homelands in rural and barren areas and black residential locations on the margin of urban cities. It was effortless and economical to isolate and put under surveillance: to use Foucault's words, to manage and control the "environment, the milieu in which they live" (1997:245).

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I scrutinise the relationship between space, body, and power. Linda McDowell perceives the body as the "most immediate place", a realm with which identity can be linked, and which influences and is affected by identity (1999:34). A body is the natural entity with which we exist and connect in social spaces; therefore, it is also engaged in social processes and the formation of power dominions. By definition of being 'social', these ideas are not created in a neutral context, but are configured by the encompassing systems of power dynamics and shared values. This is why researching bodies and social spaces is purposeful in the diverse eras of history. As a beginning point for such exploration, I recognise that the body and spaces often represent domains where social inequalities are manifested, reproduced and localised (Foucault, 1970).

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1.4 Concepts of space, subaltern and the dehumanised

Space is often an area disregarded or unacknowledged despite being a decisive platform for literary analysis. This study is an endeavour at reinvigorating our appreciation of spatiality and stimulation of fresh forms of thinking and acting in regard to the spaces experienced in texts. This is not an endeavour to provide a substitute for or option to the perception of literary discourses but to deepen and extend spatial alertness and practices in critical literary studies. This conceptualisation of space permits a more stimulating discourse that literature examines in the often-puzzling representation of space, which is commonly neglected or devalued.

Spatial discourses have become pronounced in contemporary studies in recent years. In the arts and social sciences, it has been a preeminent form of analysis with significance placed on the historical relationship of events and their subsequent ramifications. I have utilised spatial discourse from a critical viewpoint, concentrating on how interpretations can be gained from ongoing discussions on space, gender, migrancy, apartheid, memory, belonging, patriarchy, power and identity. Thus, in order to amplify how space is manifested, contested and devised in African literature studies, this study leans on the theories of Foucault, Doreen Massey (1993), bell hooks (1984), Henri Lefebvre (1991), Stuart Hall (1990); Gayatri Spivak (1999), Valentine Mudimbe (1988), Frantz Fanon (1963), Edward Said (1978), and Homi K. Bhabha (1984) on identity, belonging and space.

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For an extended period, marginalised groups commonly referred to as the 'subaltern' lacked both physical and social security. As Spivak argued the subaltern ─the marginal, the oppressed, or the Other ─ lacks any kind of agency or representation. According to her, the "true" subaltern group, whose identity is rooted in its distinctiveness, does not possess the ability to articulate its own experiences and perspectives (Spivak, 1988:271). Spivak (1988) has advanced further on this issue, also interrogating the question of the double, or even multiple, suppression faced by the subaltern. She avers that if the subaltern as male has no voice, then the subaltern as female, agonises even more for facing more than one primary kind of suppression.

It was Frantz Fanon who initially attracted attention to colonisation not merely as an issue of political domination and economic monopoly but more as a system of wielding power by

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portraying the colonised as inferior and childlike in comparison with the superior, powerful and civilised coloniser. By articulating this perspective, Fanon conceptualised a more fundamental and radical postcolonial theory that is significant in the history of post-colonialism. He called for relentless opposition against alien occupation and external hegemony and perceived colonialism as fundamentally destructive. For him, the colonised must oppose colonial dispossession, subjugation and dehumanisation. Through his treatises, Fanon investigated the potent psychological effects of colonisation on the indigenous masses and advanced anti-colonial sentiments and new directions for social justice.

Belonging as a culture of an abode in a community is what is passed down from the ancestors, and this contributes to an understanding of belonging as a culture of place (hooks, 1984:29). hooks' spatial commitment lies primarily in how she illustrates one's place in the world: the politics of identity and belonging. For hooks, identity is moulded in accordance with white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (1984:29). This culture of belonging takes remembrances and the bygone eras as origins of belonging (hooks, 1990:5). "Our struggle", hooks writes, is also "a struggle of memory against forgetting" (hooks, 1992:147). Our mental presence and our sensibilities are "deeply informed by the geography of place" (hooks, 2000:8). Reliving the past can be a journey in "mapping the territory" a way of defining ourselves and "finding home place" (hooks, 2000:15).

Massey avers that space is constructed out of interrelations, as the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at all spatial scales, from the most local to the most global (1993: 264). "A place," Massey asserts, "is formed in part out of the particular set of social relations which interact at a particular location". According to Massey (1994), there is an association between identity and space. The geography of social relations forces us to recognise our interconnectedness, and underscores the fact that both personal identity and the identity of those envelopes of space-time in which and between which we live and move are constructed precisely through that interconnectedness.

Hall (1994) made a fascinating study of identity and cultural representation in his treatise 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora'. "Identity," contends Hall, "is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, we should think,

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instead, of identity as a 'production,' which is never complete, always in the process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (Hall, 1994). In addition, identity, writes Hall, "belongs to the future as much as to the past' (Hall, 1994:394). Our history plays a significant role in describing ourselves. Our identity goes through constant transformations. Therefore, collective identity "is a matter of 'becoming' as well as being" (Hall, 1994:394). With the impact of all the subjective and objective aspects, we may occupy and undergo different identities under diverse circumstances.

The production of identity could be perceived as a process of exclusion and power battle, between the subjective/internal aspects and the objective/external factors. Each system of representation can be understood as a system of power that is shaped by the inseparable pairing: the concept of power/knowledge refers to the interplay between power and knowledge (Foucault, 1980). Identity is not something static, already existing, but fluid and uncertain. It is "subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" (Hall, 1994:394). History embodies the principal shape of collective identity, but the transforming world is unceasingly shaping it. As Bhabha (1991) argues, identity is not predetermined or complete.

During colonial times, the colonisers justified and strengthened their strategy of annexation by denying the African the means to represent themselves as the owners of their land. They projected the natives as uncultured, inferior and barbaric, and thrust this identity on them. Colonisers standardised the portrait of Africa and natives with their own imagination. What made the colonisers most victorious was not only that they precluded the black, made them as others, and set up the binary opposition black/white, but also that they etched this value system on the blacks' minds, which made them internalise this stereotype and perceive themselves in the similar way hence Wa Thiong'o (1986) called for the decolonisation of the mind. Hall argues that "the colonial experience" is agonising because:

> The ways in which black people and their experiences were positioned and subjected in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalisation. Not only, in Said's 'Orientalist' sense, were we constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as 'Other.' (1994:394

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Fanon (1994) argued clearly of the results of this suppression. He writes, "If our culture and history form the basis of our identity, colonialism denies the black history. Furthermore, colonialism is not satisfied merely with hiding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form of content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turned to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it" (Fanon, 1994:37). The black perceives everything about the white as tempting and desirable, but his as inferior:

> I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. In the white world the man of colour encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema… I was battered down by toms-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects… I took myself far off from my own presence… What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood? (Fanon, 1967a:218)

She hated her body, hoping to take up white masks that made her blackness disappear, thus resulting in the unbalanced mind of the colonised's identity. The black not only loses her origins and history but was also ingrained with debased views of her past which made her resent herself. She turned away from her culture and mimicked the apparently superior European. Identity is not unconditional, but relational. As Ania Loomba contends, "blackness confirms the white self, but whiteness empties the black subject" (2005:144). Said (1994) and Bhabha (1989) note that the colonised's history, devastated by colonialism, needed to be reinvigorated, as it is the fundamental source and grounding for recreating their identity. Amilcar Cabral argued that "t(he) national liberation of a people is the regaining of historical personality of that people, it is their return to history" (1973:62).

1.5 Literature and politics

Given South Africa's history of black disenfranchisement, concluding in the codification of racial supremacy and the onset of the liberation struggle in 1913, it is unsurprising that much of South African literature has dealt candidly with colonialism and apartheid (Chetty, 2010). This is particularly true of black South African literature from the 1930s onwards, which increasingly

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shifted to literature as an agent of political protest as apartheid policies systematically diminished black liberty. An important enterprise in South African literary studies has been to theorise the affinity between literature and politics (Watts, 1989:72). Following the intervention of Ndebele (1991), who bemoaned what he termed the literature of spectacle and favoured a return to a more comprehensive literary response to the situations of existence. Ndebele (1995:336) also opposed what the government's hegemonic discourses camouflaged and found it problematic to fully acknowledge the supposedly unified and unmasked South Africa. He avers that the slogan, 'new South Africa,' is one such mask that is "fraught with much meaning and meaninglessness all at once".

Postcolonial studies, with its more distinct understanding of identity politics and discursive hegemony than the then dominant Marxist thought, has provided further impetus towards subtler scrutiny of the interrelationship between modes of writing and forms of power (Boehmer et al., 1994:96). African identity emanated as a question in South Africa in reaction to European formulations of identity along racial lines during the colonial and apartheid eras. Whilst the discourse of the African Renaissance seeks to replace the discourse of apartheid, the idea of African identity prevails, and is accessible to divergent interpretations. In some contexts, a confining and reductive notion of identity is followed, while in other contexts a more extensive notion is proposed. The matters linked with black identity politics have assumed centre stage in the light of recent developments around intensified calls for the return of land to the indigenous people from various quarters, decolonisation and Africanisation. Then the possibility of an African breakaway on the international stage, concerning monopolising of food security, industrialisation and monetarisation leading to less dependence on major westernised powers, masked by altruism and exploitative intentions extending 'neoliberalism' in second world countries, that is now opposed by alternative power blocs by emerging countries, on the world platform in the establishment of BRICS and South Africa as a major player on the continent, representing the African voice.

The concerns of identity are symbolic in the postcolonial framework in that colonialism disfigured and demeaned identity perspectives in Africa by segregating African people along ethnic lines, which colonialists referred to as 'tribal'. As a result, colonial administrations exacerbated existing

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divisions among African people and constructed new ones in the name of alleged 'tribalism'. Thus, the expansive notion of African identity was compromised in favour of distinct identities through colonial regulations of divide and rule (Mutloatse, 1980:12). This resulted not only in segregation among Africans but also bolstered ethnic animosities which mirrored themselves in ethnic strife both in the colonial and postcolonial period. The same contention can be advanced in the case of post-apartheid South Africa. Just like the colonial predecessor, apartheid segregated black South Africans along ethnic lines, whether Xhosa, Zulu and so on.

Foucault's analyses of power relations that focus on his investigations of the power/knowledge axis reveal the important role of discourse in maintaining power, modern disciplinary techniques and systems especially "the techniques of the body" and "Panoptic mechanism", and the ensuing resistance of the powerless against power. In fact, he examines the operations of power on the subject and regards it as a relational force which is reinforced in the process of resistance. He asserts that power manipulation presents a positive and productive repercussion on the body rather than being a negative and oppressive impact: "We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. The reality is that power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production" (1980:194).

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1.6 The voice of the black writer

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During the period of discrimination and disparity (with the ushering in of the Nationalist Party in 1948), draconian legislations of racial inequality silenced many black writers. White authors and white publishers monopolised the literary milieu, advancing their stereotypical perspectives, while black authors were perceived as insignificant and inferior to their white counterparts (Gordimer, 1973:32). Particular white writers and eminent publishing houses strongly allied themselves to the apartheid ruling party in thwarting and deterring black publishing institutions and were complicit in limiting opportunities to potential African writers, restraining their access to power and recognition in powerful 'white' society (Gordimer, 1973).

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Numerous studies that have endeavoured to embrace South African literature as a whole, of which Stephen Gray (1979) and Michael Chapman (1996) have been the most ambitious single author accounts. In various respects, Gray's (1979) study is the more satisfactory of the two large-scale surveys as he does not seek to present a coherent narrative of the literature, contenting himself with the image of a constellation or archipelago of disparate bodies of works. Chapman (1996), on the other hand, looks to embrace all the divergent works in a single narrative that informs of the development of a national democratic ideal. There have also been numerous edited collections of essays on South African literature.

It was challenging for black African writers to articulate their perspectives and experiences of living in a society complicated by suppression, bias and unequal economic and educational prospects that impeded their career opportunities. Unquestionably, white and black authors produced their works for many divergent purposes and with varied aims. The black writer had an important role to play in conscientising the masses of the enormity of the inhumane and deadly consequences of the colonial and apartheid machinery and its agencies on their daily lives. Who was going to speak on behalf of the disenfranchised and powerless, considering that any public announcements and gatherings were banned due to it being a threat to the state, thereby confirming a society that was buttressed by institutionalised discrimination and racism? The subaltern postcolonial theory reacts to the question of enslavement of the suppressed and marginalised people in colonial and postcolonial societies. Thus, the theory is mainly devised to interrogate the voice of the subaltern subject. Spivak (1988) argues that the subaltern cannot be spoken for by privileged people; they are subjects who should speak for themselves. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2010) argues that power and authority work in tandem to marginalize and subjugate others, thereby perpetuating the hegemony. The subaltern groupings are those individuals or classes enslaved by hegemony, subordinated by the dominant worldview, and barred from having any worthwhile platform from which to speak.

However, in issues of voice and representation of a disparate, unequal and racially segregated society, the writer who is enslaved and regarded as muted by a suppressive racist ideology is better positioned to speak for the silent core. She, as an advantaged and prominent person and by virtue of her locus as the cultural representative, conscience and voice of society, engages with the

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experiences of the other before heading into writing. The processes by which the suppressed subjects were brought into subjugation, whether under colonial or apartheid environments, always encompassed the suppression and systemic devaluation of their voices and modes of knowledge formulation in varying periods in their histories.

The colonial engagements did not only divest the subjects of their human dignity but, most significantly, through what Ramon Grosfoguel (2011) labels epistemic violence (the suppression of the 'colonial others' ways of knowing), robbed the subaltern of their voice. One individual who did not succumb against all odds is Richard Rive. He edited anthologies for Heinemann's African Writers series: the short story anthology *Quartet* (1963) - containing stories by Alex La Guma, James Matthews, Alf Wannenburg and Rive himself, and the anthology *Modern African Prose* (1964).

Black South African identity has been significantly shaped by the liberation struggle. The contexts of black identity have been roughly framed as non-racialism, pan-Africanism and Black Consciousness. Nevertheless, these are representations that are considered problematic by the multiplicity of positions within each of these extremities, as a consequence of the ambiguities and discrepancies that emerge from the battle to entertain the multiple considerations of identity, including the stresses between rural and urban, traditional and modern, the conflicts arising from ethnicity and class, and the divisions between the perspectives of exile and township.

I consider very carefully the need to utilise African theorists as well to focus on the notions of African identity. There has been a dependence on continental, Eurocentric theories, favoured by institutional and disciplinary alignments. However, there is also an emanating critical motion in the periphery, to disrupt these categories by engaging with alternate knowledges. This is markedly indicated by the adoption of critical, feminist, gendered, postcolonial and postmodern theoretical underpinnings, an awareness of the apparent dominance of West/Eurocentricism on content choices and knowledge production, and responsiveness to alternate knowledge frameworks, thereby emphasising the Decolonial Turn.

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The hub that Afrocentricity accords to history is critical for this study. Baldwin (1964:10) contends that: "To accept one's past, one's history is not the same as drowning in it, it is learning how to use it". History therefore should be perceived as an opportunity to relearn, revise, and extol people to effectively deal with the present. Entertaining an African-centered approach, with its significance on the history and culture of African people, empowers an examination of history focusing on national identity formation. Identity as a concept is, therefore, laden with implications that may not be easily detected by an uncritical mind.

Among many, there was an understanding that African literature began in the 18th century, but that would be a major misinterpretation. African literature has prevailed for as long as Africans have existed as communities and societies. The comprehensive reserves of orature and performances created by Africans before the slave enterprise and before connecting with Europe, make up centuries of African literature in indigenous languages, although not sufficiently recorded. These non-written but voiced performances of literature of Africa come from over ten thousand small civilizations and societies that populated the continent before the emanation of the nation-states as a result of colonisation. Africans preserved their literature to posterity through word of mouth by storytelling, legends, performances, sermons, rituals and folktales (Williams, 2003:355).

In southern Africa, Jordan noted in his *Towards an African Literature* (1973), the history of the literature begins long before the onset of the European. The Africans gave artistic articulation to their thoughts and feelings about those abstract and concrete elements that came within their experiences; to their reflection about the derivation of things including man himself and the universe; to their understanding of the battle between man/woman and the mysterious impulses that envelops him/her, and to their appreciation for those individuals of the human race to whom legend gave credit for the rejoicing of man over such forces; to their interest in the ways and inclinations for animals; to their traditional knowledges and histories concerning behaviour (Jordan, 1973:36).

In the Afrocentric and the Foucauldian approaches which the current study adopts, there is a space for engagement of all knowledges (Cesaire, 1995). The notion of supremacy and monopolisation

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of knowledges and resources such as land and economic materials is both self-defeating and shortsighted. African writers' acknowledgement of previous colonial and apartheid machinery of refusing them a sense of identity in the name of 'civilisation and good governance' in their land of birth over the decades reclaims the Afrocentric vision of their art and its criticism. Achebe notes:

> It is too late in the day to get worked up about it or to blame others, much as they deserve such blame and condemnation. What we need to do is to look back and try and find out where we went wrong, where the rain began to beat us. The writer cannot expect to be excused from the task of re – education and regeneration that must be done. (1990:43–45)

There can be no purposeful movement ahead without a re–membering, a revival of the lost and obliterated components of a subdued past; there must, therefore, be a "return to history" (Cabral, 1973:130), to what Serote defines as the:

> … simple things which are forgotten
> desecrated
> and defiled
> they are fossilized into a past which is out of reach. (1988:9)

It was Tengo Jabavu who launched a printing press in 1984 when he recognised the need for a printing establishment which was not regulated by the church. Finance for the press was provided by white liberal friends. The newspaper *Imvo Zabantsundu* (African Opinion), noted that "the time is ripe for the establishment of a journal in English and Xhosa, to give expression to the feelings of the native population" (Jordon, 1973:34). This was the first newspaper to be managed completely by an African. Jabavu wrote over 2000 articles for his paper.

1.7 Representation of reality and memories

Writing in the postcolonial moment and gaining from the theoretical interventions of the 1970s and 1980s (when notions of hegemony, ideology and identity) were subjected to rigorous criticism and interrogation by Foucault (1989a), Halbwachs (1992) and Hall (1996), among others, is expected to result in the re-evaluation of earlier thinking around African identity. In particular, Foucault and Halbwachs focused on the characterisation (such as figures, sketches, images, etchings, paintings, manuscripts, sermons, speeches, autobiographies and biographies etc.) of the

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past which are materialised in their original modes. Their approaches are utilised in this study to investigate the interplay between power and representations of the bygone eras as well as to deconstruct modes of representations and thereby disclose the power battles and configurations they mirror and epitomise. Thus, the separation and apartheid official portrayal of the past embodied a limited narrative depicting white history and selected achievements, in favour of the dominant power. It described white rule and suppression as well-established and beneficent for the whole of South Africa while marginalising the masses and subduing alternative representations (Mzamane, 1984:149).

The depiction of the bygone era was not that of the contest between segregation/apartheid in the regime's media organs as much as that of the defiance to segregation/apartheid. In other words, if one examined the apartheid phenomenon, for example, in the alternative, underground new sources, also transmitted abroad, the spotlight was on defiance, and apartheid was merely contrasted as its linear opposite (Minkley and Rassool, 1998:90). Apartheid was least portrayed, within the regime's media in terms of wanton abuse and recklessness by the security forces, death squads, trials, states of emergency, forced removals of the black populace into self-governing territories and homelands that were under consistent surveillance by the apartheid regime.

Memory is essential to the resurrection of the past. Bhabha (1984) goes one step further on the matter of memory when he maintains that the act of remembering is inherently devoid of tranquilly, as it does not include solitary reflection or retrospection. The process of re–membering can be characterised as a distressing endeavour, involving the integration of fragmented historical events in order to comprehend the current state of trauma. The significance of reading history through a colonial and Western cultural spectrum is that the culture of the colonised must be established, and its political experience portrayed as a system of power in apparent distance from and paradoxical to the European mode (Mzamane, 1984:151–153). What, then is the nature of power in Africa? Maquet (1972) argues that research on Africa has been monopolised by the control thesis. Closed, lineage-rooted, totalitarian and autocratic systems in 19th century Dahomey, Asante and Zulu societies are the more prominent representations of the pre-colonial African state. Not only were these political establishments unique to the specific circumstances of the 19th century, but the implications of discourses which constructed and preserved these empires still need to be

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excavated and exposed for what it originally was. This is where the work of spatial theorists is fundamental.

1.8 Outline of thesis

The thesis is arranged around seven key moments in South African literary historiography since the 1900s (The mission educated writers, advent of the Apartheid state, Sharpeville, Black Consciousness, Soweto uprising, the interregnum, and the Mandela era). These historical moments are expressed not as determining events but as structural moments. The thesis does not seek to argue that these historical events engendered literary works under consideration, or even that they found expression in these works. Rather, each of these historical moments is seen to demarcate a domain of concern in relation to which black identity politics in South African literature is interrogated. Each of these moments documents a distinct structural dynamic in the representation of identity politics in black South African literature.

Chapter 1. This introductory chapter presents a broad overview of the subject matter on which this study focuses. It lays the critical foundation of the study and outlines the study aims, highlights a number of themes that are carried through this research and captures the scope of the study. It tackles the research gaps that the study sought to address through a review of related literature, lays out the theoretical framework as well as the methodology of the study.

Chapter 2 outlines how Dhlomo approached the concerns of modernity and nationalism and how he played a significant role in the creation of a space in which the black intellectual could work. In addition, the chapter will explain how postcolonial literature can be read as contributing to the reimagining of decolonised, decentred or multi-centred geographies. I will interrogate the ways in which selected works by Dhlomo engage with the sense of displacement, identity and marginalisation engendered by European mappings of the colonial space. Beginning with *The Girl Who Killed to Save: Nongqawuse the Liberator* (hereafter referred to as *The Girl*, a play that to a certain extent shows what David Attwell calls an "implicit faith in the terms of the civilising mission" (1999:268), and then move on to the poems 'South Africa' (1941), 'The Question: Beasts or Brothers' (1944–1948) and 'Because I'm Black' (1949). The chapter indicates how Dhlomo's

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creative work reflected the changes and developments that his political stance underwent as he recognised that there were significant contradictions between his ideals and actual experience.

Chapter 3 examines Modisane's *Blame Me on History* (1963). Space functions as the spheres through which characters co-exist within the domestic space, the community space and the national space. His autobiography represents space as the product of interrelations. In all of the spaces, we experience proximity, exclusion, marginality, and dislocation among others. For example, displacement is related to identity and geographical spaces which also leads into mental, psychological, and ideological spaces.

Chapter 4 presents Black Consciousness ideology as the dominant political force from 1969 to 1977 opposing white hegemony in South African politics as advocated by Steven Bantu Biko and the works of the protest poets Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali and Sipho Sepamla disseminating the consciousness-raising philosophy of the Black Consciousness Movement. In these poems, violence and pain wreaked on the subaltern bodies are presented as important markers for constituting subalternity and representing them as such. On the one hand, these bodies are presented as spaces exploited for the wielding of power, and, on the other, they are sites for resistance against gendered, class, and ethnic violence. Mtshali represents the gendered subaltern voice through graphic images of bloodied, decaying, and diseased bodies—bodies that have been rendered as such due to their oppressive conditions of work under the apartheid regime. Works of Elaine Scarry and Julia Kristeva take significant space in this part of the chapter. I hypothesise that if pain is the only thing that the female subaltern can claim as her own, then it is through pain that the female subaltern can extend her voice consciousness.

In Chapter 5, Mongane Wally Serote's novel *To Every Birth its Blood* (1981) explores the post–Soweto history of resistance as signifying a change in political ideology from Black Consciousness to the emergence of non–racialism. Bhabha (1990) and hooks (1990) contend that when space becomes a space of opposition, it no longer merely imagined, but becomes a Third Space. According to hooks, being at the margin does not become a matter of choice because it is disempowering; people are marginalised, they also have no choice but to single out the margin as a space of resistance.

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Chapter 6 outlines the way rural women in South Africa, from the early 1950s to the 1980s, were relegated to the periphery of both white and black traditional society. Lauretta Ngcobo's *And They Didn't Die* investigates the various battles faced by rural women, and how women have to negotiate their own identities within different societal systems. In narrating from the perspectives of Black women and in creatively engaging the spatiality of apartheid, Ngcobo proposes new ways of reading the nation, valuable for exemplifying the ways in which the national space genders Black women, and how Black women, in turn, mould and remould that space.

Chapter 7 represents the ambivalent nature of the current South African city. It is populated by the majority of the dwellers whose identity is between the rural area in which colonial and apartheid hegemony placed their permanent homes. In Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, I establish that most urban dwellers assume numerous identities which shift with each distinct circumstance, but are chiefly associated with predominantly individual, social and psychological displacement. This chapter also interrogates how social space is illustrated, drawing on the notion that space is a social construct and that it is in a continuous process of formation and modification.

Chapter 8 presents the conclusion of the ideas discussed in the thesis in the form of closing arguments. By subverting the power of white social and literary space, all the indigenous writings interrogated in the thesis focus on counter-narratives of marginalised black lives—in both public and private spaces—which have been written out of, but persist to influence, contemporary South African society. They also endorse the significance of acknowledging and resisting the violence of colonial and apartheid history in order to transform South Africa into a genuinely democratic nation. Fundamentally, these indigenous writings have also given a space for 'subaltern' voices of a micro proportion to be heard, and be better incorporated into a macro-narrative. Thus, it has given a space and platform for the third-world subject, to be spoken for in Western discourse for what they are and who they represent.

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CHAPTER 2

DHLOMO'S *WRITINGS*

2.1 Introduction

I am an African
I am the grandchild of the warrior men and women who entered Sekukuneland,
patriots that Cetswayo and Mphepu took to battle,
the soldiers Moshoeshoe and Ngungunyane
taught never to dishonour the cause of freedom.
I am the child of Ngungunyane.
And being part of all these people,
and in the knowledge, that none dares contest that assertion,
I shall claim that I am African today.
It feels good to be an African (Mbeki, 1999).

This chapter turns to the writings of Dhlomo, delving into his social and political thought, and considering how his work can be perceived as part of an African literary tradition. Relying on Dhlomo's use of history and his literary works as both the method and site of social inquiry, this chapter indicates how Dhlomo created a powerful leverage point on social transformation in order to construct knowledge for African people under colonialism and apartheid.

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The idea of "heterotopia" which is arguably among the most provocative concepts devised through the works of Foucault is useful to intepret Dhlomo's works. Simply put, a "heterotopia" is a space whose purpose is to disrupt the embedded order of an existing space, and, as a result, point to the production of knowledge (Foucault, 1980). Dhlomo's goal was to make meaningful knowledge for African people, contrary to the colonial writer's work to construct knowledge of African people (Hountondji, 2009). As Paulin Hountondji asserts, to address the marginalisation of Africa and the Third World, it is imperative for scholars in these regions to actively engage in a deliberate and rigorous process of reclaiming their own practical and cognitive history. This entails rejecting the marginalisation of their indigenous knowledge and expertise (Hountondji, 2009).

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Here, we need to recognise that knowledge formulation was constructed in a pronounced genre rather than contemporary journal articles or academic books. Loomba (2005) accentuates the importance of extending colonial and postcolonial methods of analysis of texts accepted by the academia. She asserts that:

> Non-literary texts such as newspaper stories, government records and reports, memoirs, journals, historical tracts or political writings are also open to an analysis of their rhetorical strategies, their narrative devices. So, it is not that literary texts are useful for analyzing colonial discourse, but that the tools we use for their analysis can also be used for understanding the other texts of empire. (Loomba, 2005:81)

The African intellectual tradition in South Africa is documented in newspaper articles, political speeches, izibongo, sermons, pamphlets, autobiographies, poems and novels. In the case of Dhlomo, poems such as *Because I'm Black*, was first published in *Ilanga Lase Natal* on the 22nd of January, 1949. In this poem, Dhlomo challenges the idea of racial bias, prejudice that was the foundation for the entire community and society in which he was living. Dhlomo highlighted basic questions of human existence linked to racism. His voice is against the powerful and dominant forces rooted in racism who dehumanise black subjects.

Dhlomo devoted himself to investigating history and apprised people about their past. He embodied his historical and sociological research into his literary works and also published histories of individuals and common and major incidents in popular African newspapers of his day in *Ilanga Lase Natal*. Dhlomo specifically perceived this work as part of his vast project of safeguarding the values and worldview of African culture and beliefs.

Dhlomo utilises history as a means to fight back against the denigration and subversion of African lives formulated by both colonial education and societal transformation. Literary writings by Dhlomo bring to the fore the social concerns of the African, which they endured within a white sovereign culture and values. Blacks experienced a difficult time to create an identity of their own without the intrusion of white biases which lectured them on how they should be, instead of being their natural selves. Dhlomo's mediation into history is principally done through scrutiny of highly

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influential African leaders and particular historical incidents (such as the cattle killing of 1853) and their historical frameworks. These works yearn to create a sense of pride and act as a psychological bulwark against the dehumanisation of colonialism, intending to offer African history as a location for mirroring and amending colonial misinterpretations. Fanon (1967a) has expressed how such defamation and dehumanisation of identity causes numerous personal and emotional anguish for the colonised. In his writings, Dhlomo responds to this violation on African identity by creating narratives of key African leaders and incidents that are of a historical essence, central to the hearts of the colonised. This practice of history is repeated throughout Dhlomo's work: his analysis fuses together knowledge of bygone days with its lessons for the tumultuous present. In this way, his histories operate as empirical testimony to validate his social narration, criticism and theorising.

2.2 Dhlomo's literary works from a Foucauldian perspective

To underscore Dhlomo's literary works from a Foucauldian standpoint will be a worthwhile exercise when studying a given era in order to reveal the "other history, which runs beneath history" by "go[ing] back from statements", "towards [the] interior secret" (1970:121). Put in another way, a Foucauldian historian must reconstitute "on the basis of what the documents say, and sometimes merely hint at, of the past from which they emanate, and which has now disappeared far behind them" since that "document" articulates "the language of a voice since reduced to silence" (1970:6).

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Various chronicles of histories in South Africa have not been 'told', and if they have been disclosed, they have only partly been documented in formal history. Foucault encourages us to disrupt "truths" that are presented in society as glorious narratives. He transmits the idea of "truth" as the "history of errors which has hardened through the long baking process of history" (1979:79–80). The elements of truth and the revelation of stories, are central to this chapter. Generally, a huge majority of the writing, including much of the colonial, postcolonial and anti-apartheid works and performances were generally officially and openly dominated by white writers. In general, history presents the dominant narrative entrenched by those in power. In this chapter, I argue that materials in the mode of manuscripts that were later made public, present alternative, confined, opposing narratives of individuals from an unequal society, such as Dhlomo's, who were

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effectively kept away from publication as there was no formal training or access to publishing houses for the marginalised, due to the prevailing racial conditions.

In the case of Dhlomo, his literary works came to light as a result of Tim Couzens' (1985) research and the subsequent revelation of Dhlomo's works. These buried stories often opposed the dominant narrative and demanded the restoration of existing histories as divergent perspectives on the past were thus offered. Trinh contends that "the re-writing of history is therefore an endless task... The more [marginalised people] dig into the maze of yellowed documents and look into the non-registered facts of their communities, the more they rejoice upon discovering the buried treasures" (Trinh, 1989:84). hooks' (1993) conceptualisation of space is strengthened in her suggestion of the pliability that comes with it. She avers that "space have the potential to be disrupted, claimed, and altered through the use of artistic and literary methods. Given that these narratives and accounts are created and susceptible to interpretation, it is possible to appropriate and modify them accordingly. This debate is true for Dhlomo's writings, in that he modifies parts of his history and grants the figure(s) to mix with each other, thereby disrupting time and geographical cohesion and lets the figure(s) navigate back and forth until they ultimately run into each other, as the play, *The Girl*, reveals.

In order to reword and re-illustrate history, Dhlomo engages a number of historical figures and/or characters from divergent historical eras who show up together with fictional figures and/or characters. Dhlomo associates great relevance to ancestors in these narratives, plays, and poems of those "timeless people whose relationship to the characters are benevolent, instructive, and protective, and they provide a certain kind of wisdom", as argued by Morrison (1984:343). Nongqawase, Dingaan, Shaka and Moshesh constitute a gallery of powerful female and male characters. These figures are entrusted with the guardianship of tradition and the role of disseminators of knowledge to the growing generations.

By tackling history and remembrances from an array of angles, Dhlomo depicts delicate perspectives that allow readers to challenge and revise the dominant narratives. For black South Africans who were refused the right to literacy and to write, cumulative memory was one of the instruments that helped them create indigenous histories and transform their own past. As hooks

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(1993) contends, the history curriculum in public schools fails to adequately address the topic of racial imperialism. Conversely, we were presented with idealised conceptions of the "new world" and the "American dream". The United States of America serves as a prominent example of a multicultural society, often referred to as a "melting pot," where individuals from diverse racial backgrounds converge and coexist harmoniously. It was imparted to us that Christopher Columbus is credited with the discovery of America, and it was believed that God, in his divine authority, had ordained their role as labourers in the form of woodcutters, farmers, and water providers. The discourse around Africa as the birthplace of civilisation, as well as the historical presence of African and Asian populations predating Columbus, has been notably absent.

Through his historical literary works, Dhlomo triumphed in finding roles for his black contemporaries when he turned to characters from Zulu history who constituted a sense of meaningful identity in the framework of a colonised South Africa. In Dhlomo's writings, there are components of modernism, such as referring back to the past as more enduring and unfragmented. For Dhlomo, the golden past becomes an imagined passageway to the reality of the prevailing 'fragmentation':

> The past should be the chief basis of our literary drama. The past should be preserved in a living dynamic form, not by going back to it but by recreating it into a new and lovely form. (Visser and Couzens, 1985:xiv)

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2.3 Biography, reclamation of identity and education

Dhlomo (1903–1956) was born into an esteemed family in Siyamu (now part of Caluza), Edendale, in the then Natal Province, and became one of the most prolific and original black African writers in English in the era of modernisation in Africa. Dhlomo's mother undeniably believed in the usefulness of an education for her sons, so he attended the American Board Mission School, after which he studied teaching at the Amanzimtoti Training Institute. His mother's enthusiasm and passion for education was passed on to Dhlomo, who said, "I'll concentrate and read and carry on later and go to universities but I must keep on my reading and writing and see what I can get" (Couzens, 1985:46). And so, he did, and never stopped writing until his untimely death in 1956.

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Through his writings, we get to know his feelings, sentiments and experiences and those of his people. According to Dhlomo (1936), European historians have associated African people with “barbarism.” However, this perspective is limited by their preconceived notions and biases, preventing them from truly understanding the thoughts, aspirations, and emotions of Black individuals. The portrayal of prominent African figures and heroes, such Dingane, Moshoeshoe, Shaka, Nongqawuse, and others, in South Africa is often characterised by a shallow treatment and a tendency to reject their significance as barbaric. Furthermore, the societal, psychological, and everyday experiences of the people are regrettably overlooked or misinterpreted. Hence, the maintenance of accurate historical knowledge necessitates a commitment to ongoing research, regular review, a receptive attitude, and diligent effort (Couzens, 1985). In depicting the history of his people, Dhlomo assists the reader to comprehend something of the circumstances of social and political change in his own day. Furthermore, he is able to expertly portray these leaders as three-dimensional figures, meshing in both praise and criticism to construct a well-rounded image of them (such acclaim and criticism is a hallmark of izibongo praise poetry (Jordan, 1973:112)). This historical illustration is targeted against colonial histories that denigrate and vilify African leaders. In this sense, Dhlomo rehabilitates a sense of positive identity in any African reader, permitting a proud link with these great, genuine leaders of the past. This close association establishes the foundation for a common social identity. Scrutiny of these narratives highlights the identity formation that Dhlomo’s works offer. They permit the individuals tools of identity markers to perceive themselves praiseworthy as African and part of the human race. This individual identity is then shared collectively and associated with all other Africans, thus establishing pride in a common identity positioned on a shared set of cultural and historical principles (Jordan, 1973).

As Hall (1990:225) asserts, “identities come from somewhere, have histories”, and that “identity is not once-and-for-all. It is not a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute return” (1990:226). Therefore, identity is an operation that is always in evolution and must be seen as a matter of becoming rather than just being.

Dhlomo reclaims his identity through the recreation of his past. Writing for him signifies an association to remembrance and the collective past. Past histories and remembering become one of the fundamental themes in his works and play a central role in re-gaining his identity in the

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colonial and apartheid spaces and thwart its main objectives of suppression and dispossession. In this case, writing operates as a space to remember and reclaim things that endows Dhlomo with self-autonomy and presents him with the courage and determination to resist the dominant ideology.

In South Africa, the initial stages of modernisation were characterised to be advanced mainly through Christianity and education. Schools and churches were institutions which Dhlomo saw as valuable to blacks, and which allowed them increased accessibility into the new governmental institutional power systems being set up by colonialism and its agents such as missionaries. Dhlomo thus narrates both discrepant differences faced by blacks and new plans of empowering means of progress, on offer. Here, for Dhlomo, lies the complicated ambiguity of colonial advancement: both loss and benefit characterise the lives of the people present in the colonial encounter. Knowledge from education assists us to judge between good and evil, truth and dishonesty, right and wrong. If ordinary people, regardless of gender, class, caste or religion, are enlightened or gain wisdom, they can use their knowledge for advancement. Wa Thiong'o offers another perspective on colonialism and education. For him, colonialism through the school system, lacked consideration of the previous systems of the colonised and saw education as essential in promoting assimilation. The assertion of such a system resulted in the colonised's loss of identity and a reduced sense of their indigenous history and beliefs once adapted and observed it slowly disappearing (Wa Thiong'o, 1986). The colonised became a combination of two extremely divergent cultural systems. Thus, Wa Thiong'o (1986:17) contends that the process "annihilates a people's belief in their names, their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves".

In addition, Wa Thiong'o argues that it makes them see their bygone era as one barren land of non-accomplishment, and it makes them want to separate themselves from that barren land. Education, according to him, should not be a "means of mystifying knowledge and hence reality but should boost the identity of the liberated people and unite previously isolated individuals" (1986:21). Wa Thiong'o further writes that:

> Education: far from giving people the confidence in their ability and capacities to overcome obstacles or to become masters of the law governing external nature as

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human beings tends to make them feel their inadequacies and their ability to do anything about the conditions of their lives. (1986:18)

However, Foucault argues that knowledge can be amassed by "methods of observation, techniques of registration, and procedures for investigation and research" (Smart, 1985:80). Foucault views power and knowledge as intertwined, as each bolsters the other. Thus, Foucault writes of a single conception: power/knowledge. Power/knowledge is linked to particular modes of education or institutions such as schools and churches, which have legitimacy in all societies (O'Farrell, 2005:103). It was widely believed that improvement through Christianity was attainable, and that if the Black masses embraced the central tenets of Christian modernity, a flourishing and just future for South Africa was feasible (Petersen, 1991:67–68). Foucault (1989b:xiv) has argued that the position of the intellectual was to analyse the relationship between truth and power within an association, rather than be "a spokesperson for truth". Dhlomo was an intellectual who trusted in such a future, and thereupon adapted these tools of missionary education to try to attain it. In time, however, his optimism was curtailed, and finally it was taken over by bitterness, disillusionment and despondency, after which his work began to indicate a nationalist slant (Visser and Couzens, 1985:39).

2.4 Nationalism and the importance of land

Ngara asserts:

> Nationalism thus has the effect of raising the consciousness of subject people; it gradually opens the spiritual eyes of the oppressed so that they can begin to see that it is not right for a foreign power to subjugate them, and as they awaken to this new reality, they also begin to reject the ideology of the ruling colonialists and to appreciate their own cultural values. (1985:26)

A further favourable definition of nationalism is articulated by Ernest Gellner:

> Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent. Nationalism as a sentiment, or as a movement, can best be defined in terms of this principle. Nationalist sentiment is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment … But there is one particular form of the violation of the nationalist principle to which nationalist sentiment is quite particularly sensitive: if the rulers of the political unit belong to a nation

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> other than that of the majority of the ruled, this, for nationalists, constitutes a quite outstandingly intolerable breech (sic) of political propriety. (1983:1)

Nationalism therefore emerges either when nationalist desires are realised and appeased, or when optimism and a positive outlook are reinstated by frustration, resentment and dissatisfaction due to the realisation that it is implausible that a compatible political and national affinity will be attained (Gellner, 1983). Said (1994) argues that nationalism is "an assertion of belonging in and to a place, a people, a culture, a heritage. It affirms the home created by a community of language, culture and customs; and, by so doing, it fends off exile, fights to prevent its ravages" (161). This is precisely what Dhlomo did when he recognised the commonality of the community by stressing that the Black masses have common obstacles and common potential. Later on, due to the inequalities and injustices experienced by Blacks, Dhlomo becomes despondent and writes about his dissatisfaction:

> Pains, Poverty, Frustration, combined with the will to live, have taught him (the unprivileged African) many lessons. Denied many avenues to lead a quiet, comfortable, secluded life, the African has discovered that he can find solitude, holiday, refreshment and seclusion within himself if he is to find them at all. How important it is, then, for him to keep the inner self clean, beautiful, full and fragrant! For unless he does so, he will find that when he retires into himself, he will meet, not beauty, song, truth and peace; but demons of bitterness and revenge, despair and defeat. Pains and obstacles do heal, educate and invigorate, but there is a level beyond which they madden, poison and kill. (Couzens, 1985:1)

How Dhlomo tackled the issues of modernity and nationalism and the vital role he played in the construction of a space in which the Black South African intellectual could work is augmented by the idea that the present will only be emancipated if the distorted knowledge of the bygone era would be excised from thought (Spaulding, 2005:23). From *The Girl Who Killed to Save: Nongqawuse the Liberator* (1935) (hereafter referred to as The Girl), a drama which to some extent indicated what David Attwell calls an "implicit faith in the terms of the civilising mission" (1999:268), followed in chronological ranking, the poems 'South Africa' (1941), 'The Question: Beasts or Brothers' (1944-1948) and 'Because I'm Black' (1949), this chapter delineates how Dhlomo became mindful of the momentous "contradictions between [his] ideals and actual

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experience”, (Attwell, 1999:268), mirroring the corresponding changes and advancements of his political positions.

The history of a country is grounded in a struggle for land; a consideration for this battle is therefore also echoed in the nation’s literature. Tuan’s recognition of place as having “a history and meaning” is vital in this explanation of land:

> Place incarnates the experiences and aspirations of a people. Place is not only a fact to be explained in the broader frame of space, but it is also a reality to be clarified and understood from the perspectives of the people who have given it meaning. (1974:236)

Land confiscation, displacement, dispossession and subjugation along racial lines escalated in the twentieth century when the Union of South Africa was under British control. The Native Land Act of 1913 and Amendment Act of 1936 created ‘reserves’ to isolate black and white South Africans, according to which “Millions of Black people were forced to leave their ancestral lands and resettle in what quickly became over-crowded and environmentally degraded reserves” (Beningfield, 2006:128). With the establishment of reserves and homelands, physical control over the land was acquired leading to a deep-seated hold on the nation. Furthermore, with the physical development of reserves or homelands, there was continuity of the white minority settlement in urban and suburban areas exclusively. The black South African majority was thereafter relocated to spaces (in most cases barren and unproductive) where conditions for farming and agriculture were virtually impossible and this further alienated the black masses (Beningfield, 2006).

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Through spatial separation, the colonists aimed to etch cultural maps in which the spaces reserved for Blacks were undervalued. Beningfield (2006) describes the establishment of the reserves and townships as artificial spaces, “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” (2006:218). Dhlomo’s writings oppose the confiscation and representation of the land that proposes to marginalise individuals or groups attached to places and demonstrate vehemently that unequal power relations trigger dispossession and homelessness.

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2.5 Writers on Dhlomo's writings

Couzens (1985), Peterson (2000) and Attwell (1999) have written expansively about Dhlomo's first work, *The Girl*. While *The Girl* is grounded on an unsophisticated and idealistic idea that is divergent from Dhlomo's later works, the text's motif is not so diametrically opposed to later works. Rather than a variety of ideals that he would abandon, *The Girl* is a compilation of ideas that Dhlomo would repeatedly return to and expand throughout his career, contributing to many of his later works. While there was a pronounced and perceptible deviation in Dhlomo's posturing on modernity, the ideals he illustrated in *The Girl* continued to emanate, albeit in more encompassing, complete and, at times, more intense modes. As a central part of this chapter, I will examine the contribution that *The New Negro* by Alain Locke (1999) had on Dhlomo as he used *The New Negro* as an example to construct his own African adaptation of the modern black man in South Africa.

A well-known link between Dhlomo and the American Negro writers is Dhlomo's acknowledgement of Locke's notion of the New Negro, to such a degree that Couzens' biography of Herbert Dhlomo is labelled *The New African* (1985). This relationship is a continuation of the fundamental cooperation between South African and African American intellectuals, as expressed by Ntongela Masilela:

> The New Africans appropriated the historical lessons drawn from the New Negro experience within American modernity to chart and negotiate the newly emergent South African modernity. (1996:90)

Dhlomo adapted The New Negro as an inspiration for his own theory, which he practised in his writing. The essay The New Negro was authored by Locke in 1925, where he chronicles and explains the changeover that the American Negro underwent 'in the last decade' (so probably from 1915 to 1925), a metamorphosis of what he terms 'the Old Negro' into 'the New Negro'. Dhlomo would most certainly have come across and referred to this book shortly after its revelation, and much of it would have been chiefly pertinent to his own position in South Africa (Steadman, 1990). The concept of The New Negro, epitomises the modernist leaning in the potential of human reason and emboldened African Americans to re-establish themselves as free and goal-driven individuals, thereby confirming the myth of the American dream for the ascending mobility in Harlem.

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Locke depicts the 'Old Negro' as:

> …. a creature of moral debate and historical controversy. … an historical fiction partly in innocent sentimentalism, partly in deliberate reactionism. The Negro himself has contributed his share to this through a sort of protective social mimicry forced upon him by the adverse circumstances of dependence. So, for generations in the mind of America, the Negro has been more of a formula that a human being - a something to be argued about, condemned or defended, to be 'kept down', or 'in his place', or 'helped up', to be worried with or worried over, harassed or patronized, a social bogey or a social burden. (1999:3)

Locke then perceives the 'Old Negro' as an image constructed by society, and further bolstered by the Negro himself/herself. He/she is perceived, not as a human being or a person, but as a social 'problem' that needs to be attended to, either in a sympathetic, but patronising, or judgmental manner. The Negro is 'othered' and dehumanised. Dhlomo concurs with both of these ideas from Locke, as well as with the manner in which a segregated society affects a black person's acknowledgement, even of himself:

> The trouble is that their [Whites] opinions and conclusions and pictures of African life often come to be accepted as the right thing. In this way, great harm has been done to race attitudes and relations, to the African himself, and, above all, to truth, values and the human personality. (Couzens, 1985:15)

Fanon (1963) comments on this mode of dehumanisation:

> Every (colonial) effort is made to bring the colonized person to admit the inferiority of his culture which has been transformed into instinctive patterns of behaviour, to recognise the unreality of his "nation" and, in the last extreme, the confused and imperfect character of his own biological structure. (1963:236)

Locke depicts the emergence of the New Negro as something that occurred without any caution:

> Similarly, the mind of the Negro seems suddenly to have slipped from under the tyranny of social intimidation and to be shaking off the psychology of imitation and implied inferiority. By shedding the old chrysalis of the Negro problem, we are achieving

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> something like a spiritual emancipation. Until recently, lacking self-understanding, we have been almost as much of a problem to ourselves as we still are to others. (1999:4)

According to Locke, the New Negro is "shaking off the psychology of imitation and implied inferiority", relating back to the 'mimicry' of the 'old Negro'" (1999:3). From this description, it is obvious that Locke means something very specific by 'imitation' than Bhabha (1989) who utilised the concept in his essay 'Of Mimicry and Man'. For Bhabha, "Mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" (1994:85). Colonial mimicry, which represents an ironic compromise, "is the desire for a reformed, recognisable other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite, the colonised, therefore, become almost the same but not white". The discourse of mimicry, which is constructed around an ambivalence, emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal" (1994:86–89). For Locke, mimicry is precisely that, an imitation that, in a vital manner, suggests inferiority; it consists of none of the threat and insinuations of which it is incriminated against, in Bhabha, and is certainly not a concealed mode of resistance. Bhabha affirmed that mimicry has a dual vision which, in exposing the ambivalence of colonial discourse, also disrupts its jurisdiction (1994:88). For Locke, the New Negro has the courage to thwart mimicry, and to be himself/herself, in life and in art.

Dhlomo identified the same problem, but unfortunately does not perceive the same solution:

> The tendency is to look up to European [sic] in these matters. Even educated Africans still look upon certain European papers, individuals and groups as leaders and makers of standards in these matters. Men who hardly comment on articles, speeches, poems and books by their fellow Africans discuss heatedly, enthusiastically and – 'with learning'- productions by Europeans even on African affairs and life. There would be no danger in this if it did not discourage and stifle African original and creative expression – and that means African culture, initiative and originality. (Couzens, 1985:68)

By opposing the same solution, namely to emulate Western customs, Dhlomo is in support of Fanon's ideology about the adverse austerity of cultural customs. Fanon contends that custom, unlike culture, is a distortion:

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> Custom is always the deterioration of culture. The desire to attach oneself to tradition or bring abandoned traditions to life again does not only mean going against the current of history, but also opposing one's own people. (1963:224)

Dhlomo's argument corresponds with Fanon's contention that the native, after being compelled to refute his own identity in order to support the colonial regime, becomes "dominated by exceptional sensitivity and susceptibility" followed by "withdrawal, which is due in the first instance to a begging of the question in his internal behaviour mechanism and his own character, brings out, above all, a reflex and contradiction which is muscular" (Fanon, 1963:220). Thus, for Dhlomo, as an intellectual, to speak of culture therefore means to resist and surmount the colonial cultural superiority. Foucault elaborates about the intellectual, as one who is:

> …no longer commissioned to play the role of advisor to the masses and critic of ideological content, but rather to become one capable of providing instruments of analysis… (1989b: xii)

2.6 Constructing knowledge

The native establishes an identity rooted in a pre-colonial image to sustain independence and resolute individuality from the coloniser. The quest of constructing knowledge was Dhlomo's objective. He sought opposition through writing that granted him supremacy, authority, new identity and power. Writing became a crucial component of survival under oppressive rule, as it not only allowed people to assert themselves and find their individuality, but also empowered them with voice and agency that liberated them from oppression and granted them independence in oppressive circumstances. As Anzaldúa affirms, anyone enslaved by the dominant culture or oppressive regimes, should "write to record what others erase," "to become more intimate" and "preserve" oneself because "the act of writing is the act of making soul, the quest for the self" (2001:319). It was an endeavour to raise awareness of what unconsciously shaped the production of identity. Hall (1997:20) argues that identity is "a way of becoming, as well as being. Hence, it is constantly undergoing transformation".

Locke (1999) also highlights the reaction that the change from the countryside to the city had on the New Negro. They "hurdle several generations of experience at a leap, and also gain experience

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in life – attitudes and self-expression – in his poetry, his art, his education and his new outlook" (Locke, 1999:5). The massive migration to the city also had severe social repercussions, some of which actually advantaged the native in terms of race relations and economic opportunities. Another aspect that Locke underscores in relation to this new development of urbanisation and industrialisation is that of class:

> …with the Negro rapidly in process of class differentiation, if it ever was warrantable to regard and treat the Negro en masse it is becoming with every day less possible, more unjust and more ridiculous. In the very process of being transplanted, the Negro is becoming transformed. (Locke: 1999:5)

When Dhlomo depicts the ideal 'New African' that he foresees emanating in South Africa, the influence of Lock is strikingly clear:

> This class consists mostly of organized urban workers who are awakening to the issue at stake and to the power of organized intelligently-led mass action and of progressive African intellectuals and leaders. The New African knows where he belongs and what belongs to him, where he is going and how, what he wants and the methods to obtain it. Such incidents as worker's strikes, organized boycotts, mass defiance of injustice – these and many more are but straws in the wind heralding the awakening of the New African masses. (Couzens, 1985:24)

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According to Fanon, a colonised writer's impression of sovereignty and national consciousness is shaped through stages, the eventual of which is the fighting phase, where the writer, after trying to surrender himself/herself in and with the people, is now trying to awaken the powerless. This awakening leads to the emergence of a radical literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature. The writers, as Fanon (1967a; 1967b) argues, possess a desire to engage in communication with their nation and assume the role of representing a novel reality through their actions.

Similar to the 'New Negro', the 'New African' is educated and an intellectual; with this education, the 'New African' becomes knowledgeable, and is directed into the future by competent guardship. However, one must take into account the era in which Dhlomo wrote. While *The Girl* was penned

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in 1935 and published a year later, most of his critical writings were written between 1939 and 1949, and all of the above theories were indeed written in the period between 1945 and 1948. The Girl therefore does not correspond directly with his idea of the 'New African' or with Locke's 'New Negro', but one can already take cognisance of the start of the ideas that Dhlomo would later advance and write about in detail. The writer's position, then, is to configure memory so that a people can perceive it, speak it, explain the stories and see the stories and figures of their own history in their manifold and complex frameworks. The authenticity of these people and their histories rests in the collection of the stories and their multiple transmissions to the generations to follow. The truth is complex and divergent, sometimes beautiful and often painful. If these stories and histories are told, the individual and society have options with which they can appraise their past and so, reform, transform, develop and change. Dhlomo thus points out that he feels that African narratives are vulnerable to external forces that seek to distort their histories, and thus they need to be reconsidered and documented, in order to help create new identities for them. Gates Jr (1987:104) informs us that, "[t]here would be no presence of African [American]s in history without this power of representation". By writing and disseminating their knowledge, this power of representation is a means to acquire identities, power and social stature.

According to Foucault (1979; 1980), power is not an instrument of coercion, but is everywhere; disseminated and encompassed in everyday interactions within interpersonal relationships. My central interest here is to designate power within the ordinary daily interactions of subjects. Foucault (1979) bolsters this perspective of power with his statement that the repercussions of power are not always negative in the sense that it excludes, represses, censors and silences, but instead that it constructs reality and realms of objects and rituals of truth (1979:194). In other words, in various situations and distinctly in this case (The New African), subordinate subjects affirm themselves, and by documenting positive outcomes, better relationships are produced. Dhlomo took total advantage of The New Negro by utilising it for his own writings and empowering himself and thus leaving an endowment of upliftment for his readers—thus adapting to the realm of a 'foreign idea' in order to present himself as a voice of authority. We need to acknowledge the fact that "individuals are the vehicles of power" (Foucault, 1980:98). Dhlomo ushers in the idea of power as dynamic—in other words "as something which only functions in the form of a chain." His view is that "Power is employed and exercised through a net-like

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organization" (Foucault, 1980:98). In this sense, not only do subjects disperse between its threads but "they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power" (Foucault, 1980:98).

2.7 Power and modernity

Even in situations where Dhlomo did not take an authoritative position publicly, his voice was heeded through his writings and it placed him in a locus of power. Spatial theory espouses this idea by identifying spatial practice as both text and tactic. Lefebvre avers that "spaces contain messages" (1991:131). *The Girl* and a 51-page epic poem, 'The Valley of a Thousand Hills' (1941) are the only Dhlomo's writings to be commissioned in his lifetime. Much of the commentary written about *The Girl* was sceptical and judgmental because of its "sentimentality and because it inscribes the values of Dhlomo's petit-bourgeois Christian missionary education" (Steadman, 1990:213). *The Girl* has been depicted as constituting of "all too obvious defects" (Gerard, 1971:227), and although it can be illustrated quite simply as a drama, its importance for the scholar of African literature stretches far beyond the work's status as 'the first play in English by a black South African' (Gerard, 1971).

In Dhlomo's case, "language is a material practice and as such is determined by a complex weave of social conditions and experience (Ashcroft et al., 1989:41), and he appropriates English concisely and originally. For Dhlomo, writing became a means of creating an identity that was omitted by European literary texts that equated knowledge, modernity and advancement with Europe while depicting Africa from the viewpoint of the antithesis of positive traits associated with Europe. As Achebe maintains, European literatures perceive the opportunity in Africa to investigate the darkness and the 'strangeness' of the unknown as well as to return to a primitive stage of civilization (1978:2). According to Achebe, Joseph Conrad's novel projects Africa as " the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilisation, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality" (Achebe, 1978:3). Conrad was thus depicting the colonial image of Africa in the European mind. As natives did not have an avenue to fiction, and the Western reader had no direct contact with the natives, Western writers could and did misinterpret the figure of the native subject to any stage of existence and commodify him/her

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into a stereotypical being and abuse him/her as a 'resource' for the colonialist imagination (JanMohamed, 1985:83).

Dhlomo understood that the African writer must be original. His writings emanated from his desire to produce an African understanding of the socio-political perspective of Africa and not that propagated by colonial literature. Subsequently, Dhlomo established unique personal traits by embodying African values and beliefs in his writings to revise the disfiguring and misinterpretations of his society. In so doing, Dhlomo devoted himself to the redress of the collective voice that resisted the 'fixity' and the dominance of the colonial discourse.

In her analysis of Yoruba drama, Karin Barber depicts modernity as "not the rejection of the traditional, but the possibility of selectively recuperating it" (2002:424). An alternative mode of presenting this same idea is "It does not mean to say that because you see civilized people and wish to become like them, that you should discard your own which is good" (Attwell, 1999:272). *The Girl* is exactly an example of that. The African writer became involved in the position of what Fanon (1967a) and Bhabha (1994) called "a collector and translator". These African writers who 'write back' therefore gathered the material produced by the culture of the dominant power, and then returned to their own people's old traditions which they explain and fathom out in the light of the acquired aesthetics. African writers, at that point, wanted to reveal that their cultures were not annihilated, that they had braved all the storms, and that they became shaped by the minds of people who transmitted it orally from one generation to the next. It is said that any culture is multi-cultural and diverse, and its qualities are configured by its relationship with other cultures and by its interaction with the community one lives in.

Dhlomo utilises historical incidents to fill in the voids in the history of black South Africans. He uses fiction to expose the inner life of his characters to highlight the drab areas of their lives and to revise readers' knowledge of the past. In this way, he incorporates the absent voices and perceptions of history through fiction. The kinfolk narratives of reverence (Shaka, Dingane, Nongqawuse and Cetshwayo) devised by Dhlomo (1936) mirrored the integrity and values of people who did not have their origins in the Western conventions either historically or culturally, even if behaviour that mirrored Western values had an enlightened and evolving impact on them.

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Dhlomo's inventive acknowledgement of this impact assisted rather than restricted his preservation of a value adaptation and creative tradition deeply grounded in African cultural heritage. Through his historical writings, Dhlomo reflected and exposed the colonised feelings of resistance against the ideals of the colonial system which denied African self-autonomy. Dhlomo further exposes dissent by opposing the colonial system and questioning the colonial superiority in what he writes. As Fanon would note, "the native, after having tried to lose himself in the people and with the people, will on the contrary shake the people […] an awakener of the people […] a revolutionary figure" (1963:222–3).

Dhlomo uses a famous historical event as it is told in the vernacular, and appropriates it to articulate his own message by 'selectively recuperating' certain components of it— reconstructing it into an opportunity for the Xhosa subjects to engage in the discourse of modernity. In *The Girl*, Dhlomo writes about the vast elimination of the cattle (1853), which brought the Xhosa people to their knees and devastated their nation, economically and otherwise, through the prophecies of Nongqawuse, a teenage prophet (Peires, 1989:62). The story on which Dhlomo grounded his play is both authentic and famous, and undeniably remorseful. Nongqawuse listened to voices, believed to be those of her descendants, informing her that the Xhosa people must eliminate all their animals and destroy all their food in order to be rescued from brutality and eventual extermination. Once this is done, all their descendants will assist the Xhosa subjects, and all whites will be forced into the sea. It is noted that the Xhosas did as they were told, but that the prophesied elation did not materialise. It is noted that more than twenty thousand Xhosas perished because of this prophecy (Peires, 1989:92).

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Although the circumstances (namely the extermination of the cattle) which granted an opportunity to the Xhosas were far from ideal and could even bring about the demise of Xhosa society, the only other choice was to be left behind by modernity, which according to Dhlomo, could mean the termination of a distinguishable Xhosa culture. In this case, Dhlomo demonstrated his public interest by bringing history into the present context through past events. The past in *The Girl* (Nongqawuse) is a chronicling of a generation's sagacity that mirrored worldviews, and which, for that reason, must be inferred in the broader context of cultural dissemination and history. Foucault (1980) avers that "the body becomes a useful force if it is both a productive body and a

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subjected body. This subjection is not only obtained by the instruments of violence; there may be a "'knowledge' of the body", and "this knowledge and this mastery constitute what might be called the political technology of the body" (1980:26). Dhlomo exhibits this power/knowledge relationship and "the political technology of the body" quite appropriately in his play, *The Girl.*

2.8 Christianity in Dhlomo's works

Historical plays function as a mediated space through which national myths, traditions, beliefs and public experiences in politics can be challenged, agreed upon and transformed, as observed in the work of Sindiswa Magona (1998). Magona's central character, Mandisa, retrieves her grandmother's story of the Great Xhosa Cattle Extermination, corroborating how collective memory resulted in a 'deep hatred' of a political context, and led to the killing of an American in Cape Town. Mandisa recollects her grandmother's story, in which, established on a prophecy, the Xhosas eliminated their cattle and destroyed their crops in 1857 expecting such a sacrifice "[would] drive abelungu to the sea, where, so the prophet had said, they would perish. All, to the very, very last one" (1998:178). The sacrifice, of course, did not culminate in Xhosa liberation, but resulted in an even greater reliance on White settlers for their sustenance. As it became necessary for the Xhosas to seek employment in the British mines for decades, another prophecy was attained, namely that the Xhosa would be subservient to Europeans by way of other modes of social control, such as "the Good Volume and the button without a hole" (1998:182). Histories of the past thus created a cultural identity that is allied with the "deep roots of hatred" for those who misappropriated the land and kept the Xhosa people subjugated and denied freedom (Peires, 1989).

Dhlomo used myths as an ideological instrument to resist those myths propagated by colonialism. He used the Xhosas' ancestral myths grounded on folklore, dispensed orally from generation to generation. The myths of origins are illustrated together with symbols, motifs and images in his works, not only to connect people with their culture, beliefs, values and origins, but also to interrogate colonial discourse, which described Africans as people without history and traditions. Remembrances of tribal origins, local establishments and indigenous knowledge systems become important to rehabilitate Africans to their history. Myths served to remind indigenous people of their ancestors' intrepid deeds, rituals, customs and traditions, as Basil Davidson argues:

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> African writers use myth to counteract colonialism and its politics of divide and oppress, create an identity and restore self-confidence and pride in that identity and its historical evolution. It is a nationalistic myth derived from ancient sources as from new ones, foreign and native. This myth of the ancestors is recognized as standing in the line of succession back to the power without beginning. Their office is to channel this power, which enhances life, protects all generations and guarantees the future to living men. (1995:49)

Dhlomo's use of myth can be related to Davidson's assertion through the ordinary manner in which he returns to a specific aspect of his heritage to recollect phenomenal ideas that are never lost to African people, but remain forever accessible and recoverable, rendering the present more understandable by agitating for lasting discourses that connect people to a culture from which they cannot be severed. One of the more common theories contributing to this assertion is that *The Girl* is a dramatic portrayal of Dhlomo's belief in black advancement towards modernity by acquiring Western culture and religion, or as Steadman argues that it is "not so much a conflict between benevolent missionaries and superstitious pagans, as between progressive modernism and retrogressive tribalism" (1990:214). It also projects a perception of an inclusive nationalism as opposed to individualised tribal progress (as does the fact that it is a Xhosa tale and Dhlomo is a Zulu man). There is also an explicit correlation between this and Dhlomo's own philosophy that … "the tribalism which so many people desire to protect and prolong, must be broken down at all costs and hazards. It is one of the most formidable foes to Bantu progress" (qtd in Steadman, 1990:214).

There are other means to understand *The Girl*. The most unfavourable is that *The Girl* is nothing more than a sample of missionary literature demonstrating that Christianity holds the true liberation of the Xhosa people and that their own pagan beliefs and values will only prompt them to a catastrophe. According to this theory, the slaughter of the cattle is crucial to Dhlomo because it compelled the Xhosas into Christianity and modernity. Through repeated allusion to the Bible and the Christian belief, Dhlomo stressed that a new life begins after one's demise. Another explanation is that Dhlomo, in *The Girl*, is lauding one of the first moments of political defiance by the colonised in Africa (Steadman, 1990).

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However, it seems that Dhlomo does perceive modernity as a space where the ancestors and tribal beliefs cannot co-exist. It is also obvious that Dhlomo saw Christianity as a crucial component of the Africans' advancement towards Western modernity. By Dhlomo exemplifying the African intellectual elite, the desire to be educated firstly by the oppressor or British colonialism, was to acquire education. Thereafter the African is on his/her way towards liberation. This African intellectual elite would revolutionise the circumstances of suppression, offering a pedagogy of liberation as his works are acknowledged (Freire, 1970).

In Christianity, there was an acceptance of the European, in a way in which education was granted, and automatic admittance to the mainstream economy and society. An example of this is when Tiyo Soga, the representative of a well-informed black man, surfaces in the last scene of the play. Soga's historical narratives and other works are housed in Lovedale, which came to light in 1826 and leaned towards Christianity (Mphahlele, 1970:41). Ndletyana (2008:17) avers that Soga was a Christian clergyman who "turned his educational training towards awakening the very same national pride and consciousness that his missionary teachers had denounced". The awakening of national pride, honour and consciousness affirms a technology of power, which "determine[d] the conduct of individuals and submitted them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject" (Rabinow, 1984:18).

2.9 Political writing

As Dhlomo matured, his works became more forthright and consisted of more pronounced nationalist tendencies. Through his increasingly politically inventive writings, he put his own theory into operation, as expressed below:

> We must … fight for the Dawn. The artist must rise and shine, for there is no one better placed and equipped than he. Great art is born out of great material, profound experience and acute inspiration. A whole nation in the throes of transition and rebirth, contending against both internal weakness of timidity, docility and ignorance, and the external forces of oppression and frustration - what rich material for creative living art! … of the burning questions of today, of the Mass struggle. (Couzens, 1985:61)

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Expressions like ‘we must’, ‘a whole nation’, ‘throes of transition and rebirth’, and ‘of the mass struggle’ establish a sense of attachment, while on the other hand, they elicit a sense of shared identity. Here, using collective identity epitomises a shared obligation, one that South Africans must be ready to carry. The artist’s illustrations of the predicament of the masses reflects Fanon’s (1967a) ambivalent thinking of them as the enslaved group, as well as that which has the possibility of affording revolutionary transformation in the postcolonial state (1965).

One of the most pronounced changes is Dhlomo’s decision to accentuate nationalist sentiment in the poetry of this era. For a further understanding of nationalism and nationalist sentiment, I again refer to Gellner:

> Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent. Nationalism as a sentiment, or as a movement, can best be defined in terms of this principle. Nationalist sentiment is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment. (1983:1)

With a white minority regime and the suppression of a large black majority, South Africa naturally lent itself to a rise of nationalist sentiment, and it was also illustrated as such in the works of black intellectuals. Written five years after *The Girl* emerged, ‘South Africa’ is a candidly political sonnet about suppression. It also revealed a significant advancement in Dhlomo’s ideas about modernity to a situation more aligned with nationalism. ‘South Africa’ was written as part of ‘The Valley of a Thousand Hills’, published independently as a sonnet, or was written as a sonnet and incorporated into Dhlomo’s epic poem. As they were both written and published in 1941, it is possible that ‘South Africa’ was written as a component of the larger venture, but then published independently before ‘The Valley’. ‘South Africa’ opens in a vein of despondency, but also relates to the beauty of South Africa, reminiscent of the start of ‘The Valley of a Thousand Hills’ in which Dhlomo depicts the past splendour of his country and the land, when it was still in the hands of his people.

In a battle against a colonial power, the land becomes a crucial standpoint of a nation’s struggle. Land as space is at the centre of yearning, identity, longing, and belonging. Indigenous peoples make home and place by linking personal, collective and communal experiences and histories to certain locations, settings, terrains and landscapes— thus preserving these spatial relationships is

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one of the most important components and implications of identity. In colonial and postcolonial literature, the land becomes the heart around which both major and minor events and incidents are spotlighted and etched in memories. Colonial and postcolonial discourses, therefore, present a relevant context within which to appreciate the relationship between landscape and national mythologies, chiefly the manner in which discourses of colonial history are revisited, subverted and transformed. In 'South Africa,' the land is elicited as a motif of national feeling and identity and is acknowledged as a form of defiance against the coloniser. The land is underscored as part of the author's endeavour to call to attention the Africans' relationship it. There is an intimate association between land and national identity and, subsequently, between them and the political autonomy. As two interdependent components, the land and people become interwoven objects in the battle against colonisation. Indigenous people, contends Foucault, continue to understand space or the purpose of land as more than a location upon which humans create history or as a site that accrues history. For Foucault (2002), history possesses significant force and potential due to its exploration of concepts such as development and suspension, crisis and cycles, and the continuous accumulation of the past.

2.10 Poetry as the voice of defiance

The function of the poetic imagination is to retain memory and history, thus advancing the voice of defiance and opposition against absent power. Poets such as Dhlomo withstand the "censure of memory", as Ricoeur (2004) maintains. That is the pronouncement of their pledge to the people, in opposition to the power structure and its insensitivity, the only manner they find to safeguard the possibility of a dissenting and critical voice. With Ricoeur, we are assured that dissent is "the echo of the unforgetting memory of discord", and that "only poetry preserves the force of unforgetting" (2004:501). According to Dhlomo:

> …the modern African poets gives us, as far as it is possible, poetry that is distinctly and truly African. Like our music, it should not be a mere imitation, an adulterated copy, of European poetry. It must be original and African in content, form and spirit. (Couzens, 1985:57)

Dhlomo's poems become a manifestation of his quest to recover his past under the suppressive regimes that have been manipulating, distorting, rewriting, and dispossessing people of their history to strengthen the regime's hegemony and establishing cities and towns for whites

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exclusively and what Foucault (1979) refers to as "the disciplinary society". The idea of culture as resistance was underscored by Fanon, who saw the quest for a pre-colonial identity as one of the defences of the natives against the danger of being overpowered or assimilated by Western cultural dominance. Cabral argues that:

> In culture there lies a capacity (or the responsibility) for forming and fertilising the seed which will assure the continuity of history, at the same time assuring the prospects for evolution and progress of the society in question. Thus, it is understood that imperialist domination, by denying the historical development of the dominated people necessarily also denies their cultural development. (1973:55)

'South Africa' is a categorical denouncement of the Native Land Act of 1913, which assured that Blacks had very few or no liberties in relation to land. As a result of this regulation, Dhlomo is powerless to own land, and feels like an outsider, "an outcast" in the land of his ancestors, or "a pariah in the land of his birth" (Marks, 1986:64). This would have particularly distressed people like Dhlomo, since he came from a family that was a member of a small black middle class and could possibly afford land, but who was not authorised to lay claim to it:

> 'South Africa'
>
> This beauty's not for me! My Home is not
> My Home! I am an outcast in my land!
> To live and be free, my fathers fought.
> Must I still fight and bear anew the scars?
> Must freedom e'er with blood, not sweat, be bought?
> My country's not my own – so will I fight!
> My mind is made; I will yet strike for Right!

Dhlomo could be argued to be displaying dissent as one means of endeavouring to oppose fragmentation to acquire a sense of community leadership and identity. In accordance, Freire (1970:24) also writes, "to surmount oppression, people must first critically recognise the causes of the oppression so that through transforming action they can create a new situation". Dhlomo

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demonstrates that the battle is about who has authority over the land, who can speak for it and about it, and whose bygone times are expressed by the land. By depicting places, communities and individuals, the attempt is not only to consign them to tell their histories, but also to endeavour to acknowledge their identity in places thus depicted. The poem would be a poem of Zulu history, and the "fathers [who] fought" would be Dhlomo's Zulu ancestors. Dhlomo makes an impressive association with the past in these lines when he states "must I bear anew the scars", because here again he relates to his descendants and the era when they fought for the land and were victorious. Dhlomo illustrates his narrative about identity and affinity with a historical background where he confronts numerous historical paths and cultural realities. Dhlomo elicits diverse histories and applies various cultural pieces so that we recognise his people's identity and the right to land. He affirms his place in this country, not only as a piece of it, but also as a legal possessor of land, which also illustrates the injustices of the land ownership policies of the dominant regimes.

Dhlomo goes on to confront the whites who think they know the "native" mind:

> They call me happy while I lie and rot
> Beneath a foreign yoke in my dear strand.

This framework assures that whiteness is positioned as dominant, while blackness is situated as uncommon and minor. When analysed through the lens of Foucault's (2002) notion of "dividing practises," it is justifiable to interpret the white response to Blacks as a manifestation of disembodied practises, wherein the individual is objectified (as exotic) and separated from others, consequently being excluded from the dominant collective. Dhlomo's historical contextualisation of the battle for liberty assists the reader to acknowledge the scope of the intentions of those fighting for their freedom. The battle is illustrated as something that is much more deep-seated than a struggle between the powerless and the powerful. It is a struggle for land and a crusade for human dignity (Mnthali, 1999:39). These lines from South Africa therefore not only explicitly censure the whites who think they know the "native" mind, but also display the artistic implementation of Dhlomo's own philosophy:

> Only Africans themselves given opportunities and means enjoyed by European experts can reveal the soul of the African to the world. Experts will write books on African languages

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and cultures, they will lecture on these and be recognised far and wide as the interpreters of what the African feels and desires, but the real African – the African whose soul yearns to translate the glorious past into the Present – the African who longs to reveal the cravings of his soul in creating – can only be discovered by himself. (Couzens, 1985:11)

Simultaneously, these lines also propose strong resistance to generalisation—another idea intimately linked to Locke: "with the Negro rapidly in [the] process of class differentiation, if it ever was warrantable to regard and treat the Negro en masse … it is becoming with every day less possible, more unjust and more ridiculous" (1999:5–6). There is an element of this application in South Africa, that it is inconceivable and ludicrous to think of all Negroes (in this case, Africans) in an equivalent way and then regard them differently from white men who are regarded in the colonial space, as superior from the very outset. Dhlomo, therefore, immediately censures this ideology and calls for the acknowledgement of Africans as part of the human race and their existence. This mirrors Soja's statement that "spatial practices … representations of space, and … spaces of representation … are always being profoundly shaped by the workings of power" (1996:87).

2.11 History

It is clear why Dhlomo renounces the duplicity of the Western, 'civilised' world with regard to slavery and forced labour. While slavery was already prohibited in America in 1838, more than a century before his poem, 'South Africa', was conceived, Dhlomo still saw himself and his people as slaves under colonisation. In the battle to ensure his identity, Dhlomo illuminates Fanon's second phase of the native intellectual: since "the native is not a part of his people," the native becomes "disturbed" and "decides to remember what he is" (Fanon, 1963:222). The first stanza of South Africa closes with a resume of black South African history, another concept of Barber's idea of 'selectively recuperating' the traditional in order to enact it in the discourse of modernity (2002:424):

Midst these sweet hills and dales, under these stars,
To live and be free, my fathers fought.

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Dhlomo's histories serves as empirical testimony to substantiate his social commentary, criticism, evaluation and theorising. By utilising his narrative prowess, Dhlomo is able to oppose the negative interpretations transmitted by missionary education of African chiefs and leaders in the roles they played in leading their people. This affirmation of the role of African leadership is presented in another way as these histories illustrated African leaders as role models, permitting Dhlomo to use both their successes and failures as instruments to teach specific lessons to his people (Jordan, 1973). In addition, through his historical works, Dhlomo attempted not only to find role models for his Black contemporaries but also turned to figures from Zulu history who constructed a sense of meaningful identity in the framework of a colonised South Africa. Cetshwayo (a Zulu king), a play devised by Dhlomo in 1936, exposes something of the general form, structure and content of his work. Couzens (1985) maintains that Cetshwayo was penned to shield the 'New African' under danger and to establish a legitimising lineage from the past (1985:201).

Memmi (1965) notes that the colonised native is isolated from his/her past through colonialism's disruption of a nation's history: "The history which is taught [to the colonized] is not her own" (1965:105). At the same time, the native is generally dislodged from the creation of his/her own independence, so that "planning and building her future are forbidden. She must therefore limit herself to the present, and even that present is cut off and abstract" (Memmi, 1965:102). For Dhlomo, the capability to plan for the future comes out steadfastly in him, who believes that his own imaginative freedom cannot be rendered obsolete by colonial politics. Since Dhlomo is not vulnerable and can oppose his obstacles, he does not become totally disinterested or depressed, as his texts reveal.

The play 'Cetshwayo' encompasses themes ranging from the idea of love and marriage to the impact of the presence of the ancestor in today's world, to contemporary political matters such as the ancestral role of chiefs and kings. For example, with regard to love and marriage, Dhlomo censures polygamous marriage and states that it must be changed to a new mode of love, "an individual form of love that can only be found outside of marriage" (Couzens, 1985:199). In this work by Dhlomo, Cetshwayo is depicted as a hero who rejoices over white colonial officials such

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as Shepstone (a British colonial ruler in South Africa). This historical association appears to be a confrontation with the colonial political set up of Dhlomo's own time.

Dhlomo does not claim exclusive authorship since his plays are acquired broadly from various sources. The major use of literary and factual intertexts further signifies that fiction and history are human-created discourses which can be re-examined, rehabilitated and reworked in space where the central characters of these plays, locked in struggles with the mainstream, aim for their own independence, autonomy and individualism. Thus, Dhlomo initially "uses and then abuses, installs and then subverts" the historical discourses and indigenous knowledges (Hutcheon, 1993: 243).

In 'Cetshwayo', Dhlomo confronts the status quo of racial prejudice against Black people, exposing the hypocrisy of social practice within a space, and the unequal power implicit in that space, rather than around history to expose it. Dhlomo's reconstruction of events, such as the ones depicted in this play, serves as a prophecy and promise of counter-histories of devalued knowledge that has to be de-subjugated and reinterpreted. In this sense, this play is a "counter-history play." To contend for this claim, I cite Foucault's (2003:133) interpretation of history and counter-history, according to which "history had never been anything more than the history of power as told by power itself, or the history of power that power had made people tell: it was the history of power, as recounted by power" to bolster sovereignty (2003:70). Accordingly, "counter history" alludes to "the discourse of those who have no glory, or those who have lost it and who now find themselves, perhaps for a time – but probably for a long time – in darkness and silence" (2003:70). Counter-history then endeavours to highlight those dark spots and unravel the silences and commits to the dismantling of the "twin functions" of history as it both "breaks up the unity of the sovereign law that imposes obligations" and "breaks the continuity of glory" (2003:70–74). In other words, counter-history is a mirroring of muted voices, lived life histories, experiences and remembrances that have never dovetailed into the composition of 'official history'.

For Dhlomo, the African traditions, beliefs and cultural norms should not be allowed to disappear. They should be revitalised because they are still practical, and should be disseminated and shared equally with the immediate community and the African society at large. Dhlomo thus becomes the originator of a new reality functioning as a historian, in which he exposed disturbing situations

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through eradicating colonial propaganda. Writers like him transformed themselves into 'awakeners of people', whose main objective was to make people attentive and to embolden them to resist the occupying alien forces (Couzens, 1985:79).

By expressing his works in the mode of poems that correlates directly to Locke's works, whose spatial viewpoint was adapted to a liberated ideal of the New Negro, Dhlomo began to propose and chronicle new "sites and spaces of resistance" (Soja, 1996:107–108) through his writings. In turn, De Certeau presents seemingly meaningless or unimportant actions within a space, such as the presentation of poems for defiance, as "clever tricks of the 'weak' within the order established by the 'strong', an art of putting one over on the adversary on his own turf" (1984:40). Hence Dhlomo's words in his poems in the hegemonic space and for the future do not remain mute but speak to the suppressed black masses:

> You ask me whence these burning words and wild;
> You laugh and chide and think you know me well.
> I am your patient slave, your harmless child,
> You say... So tyrants dreamt as e'en they fell!
> My country's not my own - so will I fight!
> My mind is made; I will yet strike for Right!

Dhlomo derides the foolishness of anyone who thinks they know Black people. This is an issue about which he feels robustly, and which is also conveyed in his philosophy: "Many so-called experts on African life and affairs know very little about the soul, feelings and mind of the African people" (Couzens, 1985:15). Dhlomo's argument corresponds with Fanon's contention that the native, after being compelled to deny his own identity in order to tolerate the colonial regime, becomes "dominated by exceptional sensitivity and susceptibility" followed by "withdrawal, which is due in the first instance to a begging of the question in his internal behavior mechanism and his own character, brings out, above all, a reflex and contradiction which is muscular" (Fanon, 1963:220). de Sousa Santos (2010) argues that the subaltern can be perceived within the backdrop of counter-hegemonic practices, movements, defiance and struggle against specific social exclusion.

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2.12 The subaltern

For a community and society to be represented, the writer or playwright is in an exceptional position to speak in support of those in the core who cannot articulate themselves. Some playwrights/writers speak for the powerless. This can be linked to the fact that they are subaltern voices who write from the margins to speak candidly to the centre. Dhlomo is such a writer who falls within this rank. Dhlomo is enraged by those who think that the black person is happy or content or better off being suppressed and includes a caution in these lines. Dhlomo cautions that this is the idea that "tyrants dream of" and by internalising it, those dictators are neglecting the warnings about their own demise. However, Dhlomo does not accept liability for the violence he cautions about, because, as he writes, it is only because his land has been misappropriated that he will resort to arms: "My country is not my own – so I will fight!" Dhlomo's threat to propose violence is strikingly akin to what Fanon (1967a) presented as "terror counter-terror, violence counter-violence". Fanon contends that the native answers back violently to injustice, suppression and the chain of hatred from which the violence of the oppressor originates.

The theme of advancement is particularly paramount as it appears in Dhlomo's philosophy as well as in his prolific works. It is precisely improvement that he endeavours to devote through his art, thus establishing a national black literature of South Africa to demonstrate to the world that the black 'black genius' is not a misnomer. This is, therefore, a solid example of Dhlomo exercising the social responsibility of the expert about which he so regularly theorises:

> African art must deal with the things that are vital and near to the African today ... We want dramatic representations of African Oppression, Emancipation, Evolution. To do this, the African dramatist must be an artist before being a propagandist; a philosopher before a reformer; a psychologist before a patriot; be true to himself. (Couzens, 1985:7)

It is evident that space had a great impact on Dhlomo's texts, specifically *The Girl* and 'Cetshwayo'. Lefebvre (1991) makes it apparent when he notes that diverse art forms have inherent implications. He maintains that "Among non-verbal signifying sets must be included music, painting, sculpture, architecture, and certainly theatre, which in addition to a text or pretext embraces gesture, masks, costume, a stage, a mise-en-scène – in short, a space" (1991:62).

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According to Lefebvre, theatre does not only occur within a space, but it constitutes its own space within itself.

Dhlomo's ideal of reciprocal advances that advantage both black and white is not only fitting for literature, but for society as an entirety. Dhlomo concedes that black South Africans must encompass the technologies and social ideals that have already been successfully discharged in the Western world to successfully embrace modernity. A crucial aspect of the black man's perspective of modernity is that of the "primitive" versus the "modern", or the "temporalities of the modernity" (Bhabha, 1994:151). In this perspective, black culture is illustrated as a primitive interpretation of European culture; European culture is depicted as a more evolved version of a likened society. This rears a feeling of inadequacy in black culture—a feeling of "backwardness" and underdevelopment. This connection between "primitive" and "advanced" also leads to a feeling of "accelerated time" or "temporality spinning out of control" (Attwell, 1999:272), and a subsequent feeling of loss of direction over one self's life, culture and the future. It would be impossible to retreat to traditional black culture after so much awareness of 'Europe'; therefore, for Dhlomo, a new, indigenous and South African culture must be established, a crucial form of which would be national literature.

Like '*South Africa', 'The Question'* contains cautionary reminders from Dhlomo to the oppressors. If they are not keen to reside together as "free men cooperating", they face the risk that the black masses will be compelled to "Starve, kill, revolt and die". This theme is replicated in the fifth stanza:

> Would you have us work together
> And live and build in peace?
> Or prefer us fight and blather
> And racial hell release?

A factor that Dhlomo announces in these lines from the outset of the poem is that of Christianity ('hell'), a hint, perhaps, of the orthodox Christian whites and their ethical convictions, which they neglect by suppressing their fellow citizens. This religious inclination is strengthened when Dhlomo uses the word 'neighbour', an allusion to the Christian doctrine of "love thy neighbour".

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While this may present itself simply as a missionary-driven religious crusade, Dhlomo's reference serves several purposes. Firstly, it impresses on the conscience of White Christians, hoping for transition due to sentiments of guilt. Secondly, Dhlomo hopes to take advantage of their fears of divine retribution by referring to Cain's fate. Thirdly, Dhlomo plans to highlight the commonality between black and white thoughts by bringing the supreme authority of many Christians, the Bible, to bear intertextually into his writings. Finally, it also underlines Dhlomo's own thinking, namely that the only way black culture can advance towards modernity is by recognising Christianity as the way to salvation. In the 1940s, primarily due to the Second World War, South African society became more politically informed. It compelled people to become mindful of world affairs and the turbulent politics involving the second wave of nationalism across the colonised world, particularly Black Nationalist movements' calls for freedom in Africa.

2.13 Discrimination

Skin colour is the most prominent symbol of a race. In the colonial world, it has meant stigmatisation and objectification. As Fanon noted: "I am over determinate from without. I am the slave not of the 'idea' that others have of me but of my own appearance" (1967a:116). Hence, skin colour becomes the first reason for dehumanising the native.

This state of affairs, which was perhaps unavoidable in a draconian state like South Africa, revealed a resemblance to *The Fact of Blackness,* written by Fanon three years later in 1952. In this treatise, Fanon writes about the progression of optimism to logically affirm that racial prejudice is wrong – "I intended to rationalize the world and to show the white man that he was mistaken" – to bitter anger – "My cry grew more violent: I am a Negro, I am a Negro, I am a Negro…" (1994:38).

Another interesting similarity between Fanon and Dhlomo is the paramountcy of tradition, or the concept of having a custom for a culture. Fanon writes (1963:128): "Without a Negro past, without a Negro future, it was impossible for me to live my Negrohood. Not yet white, no longer wholly black, I was damned." The African is a prisoner in the paradox of being-in-himself and being in-the-Other. As Fanon states: "Not only must the black man be black, he must be black in relation to the white man" (1967a:110). According to Bhabha (1989), before the interaction, the individual

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in question (the black man) has a distinct ethnic, cultural, or racial identity, rather than being solely defined by skin colour. The transformation that occurred within him during this interaction was not limited to a singular self. His own outer appearance became reliant on the white man's image of him; his knowledge of himself became a reaction to Western episteme. As Fanon (1967a) clarifies:

> This culturally familiar consciousness, this necessary negation of identity, necessitates an inverse, requires a new African that confronts the other, who recognizes himself in this otherness, who recognizes the entire African society as the new race opposed to the European invented Black race. It is because he wants to emphasize the rupture that has now occurred. He is incarnating a new type of man that he imposes on his associates and his family. (36)

The Africans in South Africa were the causalities of structured suppression and racism, and had no political or individual liberties. As also recognised by Dhlomo during the later 1940s, this mode of racism was the institutionalised political jurisdiction established on a group of people who shared the same language, skin colour, history, characteristics and the like, which referred to the regulations and policies of suppression fostered by those entrenched authorities in power. These affirmations allude to Fanon's argument that racism is a "system based on the exploitation of a given race by another, on the contempt in which a given branch of humanity is held by a form of civilization that pretends to superiority" (1967b:174).

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"Anthropologists", maintains Gerard (1971:235) "know that in any mixed society, the weaker group tends to accept and internalize the image of itself, which is offered by the stronger group, with nearly psychopathic self-disparagement as an inevitable result". If this is correct, then the hurdles that artists like Dhlomo and his contemporaries had to surmount, were not only social, or even racial, but were part and parcel of their own reasoning and thoughts.

As the apartheid system began to toughen, a heightened historical experience took root in every South African writer's mind, at least on the black side of the racial impasse primarily because of the coerced eviction of black people to separate settlements. Memmi's description of the colonised resonates with the above comments: "The colonized feels neither responsibility, nor guilty, nor

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skeptical ... he is in no way a subject of history anymore – he carries its burden, often more cruelly than others, but always as an object" (Memmi, 1965:158).

2.14 Foucault and space

One of Foucault's (2002) key contributions lies in his scrutiny of how space is utilised in power; Foucault argues that "space [or rather place] is fundamental in any exercise of power". Physical and psychological regulation over individuals can be attained through commanding manipulative spatial relationships. Societies are constructed through discursive processes that involve the establishment of normative judgements, which are subsequently implemented through mechanisms of differentiation, marginalisation and opposition (Foucault, 2002). Foucault's focus is, therefore, the manner in which place is subdivided to create areas of inclusion or exclusion so that those thought of sick or abnormal are spatially isolated from society's so-called 'normal' sites of social contact (Foucault, 2002).

Foucault describes these areas as "heterotopias of exclusion sites in which people who are deemed abnormal or inferior are segregated" (Rabinow, 1984:131–136). In South Africa, situations like these were implanted in white and even black peoples' minds, after generations of exposure to these pronouncements. This also resonates with Foucault's argument that "racism is inscribed as the basic mechanism of power" of government laws (1997:254).

It was this sort of thinking that Dhlomo tried to oppose with *Because I'm Black*. It was also a good example of the preservation of the African-American link with South Africa, and the inspirational effect Negro literature had on South African Black intelligentsia. As it has been noted, Dhlomo deconstructs the New Negro myth and unmasks it as a contemporary construct for the recently liberated Blacks in America. For Dhlomo, The New African does not apply to majorities or colonised subjects since it supposes a parity of citizens, affirming everyone to be one's own centre. In colonised societies, the total being of the colonised subject is under an external jurisdiction, making it impractical for him/her to locate the centre within /himself/herself. In the realm of the majority, the being is galvanised towards the margins, leaving the core of the world and the centre of power for the master to occupy. Dhlomo illustrates the unequal plights of human beings within their spatial environment, thereby focusing on colonial discourse and "intervene[s] in those

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ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic 'normality' to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities, peoples" (Bhabha, 1994:171). Instead of clarifying the world from the stand of the centre, Dhlomo acknowledges a divergent perspective and proposes a "subaltern history of the margins of modernity" (Bhabha, 1994:175).

2.15 Conclusion

Dhlomo "preserved the force of unforgetting" (Ricoeur, 2004) and returns to the collective memory of communities to constitute a "bridge to the past" (Wambu, 2015). He perceives African values not only as traditional and static but as progressive. As de Sousa Santos advocates: "it is in the nature of the ecology of knowledges to establish itself through constant questioning and incomplete answers" (2007:79). Heterotopias are not restricted to just studies of linguistic spaces. They could also relate to physical spaces, and Dhlomo's writings are noteworthy examples of heterotopic spaces which point to the authoring of new knowledge. As Foucault (1997) avers, a "heterotopia" is a space whose desire is to disrupt the entrenched order of a ubiquitous space, and, as a result, inform the production of knowledge.

I have evaluated how Dhlomo engages himself in a knowledge-making project for South African readers, which offers an acute deviation from the colonial knowledge undertaking, which desired only knowledge of Africans. I contend that Dhlomo's work encompasses analysis of thorough historical processes and voices individual experiences to create knowledge to permit the African masses to make sense of the turbulently developing social world under colonialism and apartheid. By attaching biographical and historical analysis, Dhlomo's works offer a context to understand and answer to the crisis of a changing society.

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CHAPTER 3

MODISANE'S *BLAME ME ON HISTORY*

3.1 Introduction

As noted in this study, in recent debates around Eurocentrism, Afrocentrism and decolonisation, as well as in a long tradition of critique in South African literary studies, there has been a broad agreement on the urgency to turn to African theoretical perspectives. To answer this call, we need more knowledge of the traditions of African literary thought. Towards this end, this chapter turns to the social analysis of William "Bloke" Modisane, an intellectual from the mid-twentieth century who wrote in English. Drawing on his historical and autobiographical writings, I analyse how Modisane participates in a knowledge production exercise for South African readers, which illustrates an acute contrast to the colonial production project. I maintain that Modisane's work encompasses an examination of prevalent historical processes and intimate individual experiences to establish knowledge to assist Africans in making sense of the rapidly changing social world under colonialism and apartheid. By merging autobiographical and historical analysis, it offers a framework to understand and respond to the crisis of a changing society. I argue that Modisane offers a fascinating insight into one moment in a long tradition of African social analysis, which can reinvigorate African literary thought today.

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One of the pivotal claims of this chapter is that social spaces are not neutral, but are instead affected by power dynamics (Rabinow, 1984). Space is no longer perceived as a constant or static category but rather as an intricate and divergent reality. A spatial analysis of a literary text such as an autobiography is crucial since works of literature portray events taking place in spaces—some real, some imaginary. Characters also connect in spaces. Both the spaces and the boundaries illustrate human relations as depicted in the characterisation and the interplay of events represented in the texts. Characters' identities and status are authenticated in relation to existing spaces. In the text, as this chapter demonstrates, space has been utilised by the writers/autobiographers as an instrument to create and develop characters and delve into the themes of power, suffering, identity, inequality, inclusion and exclusion and subalternity.

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As it will be indicated through the scrutiny of Modisane's literary work that, firstly, "heterotopias" are not confined to just studies of linguistic spaces, and could also be referring to physical places and secondly, Modisane's autobiography is an exceptional example of heterotopic spaces which points to the production of new knowledge. As Foucault (1997) holds, a "heterotopia" is a space whose purpose is to disrupt the entrenched order of an existing space, and, as a result, point to the production of knowledge.

Closely connected to Foucault's idea of power as being pervasive, is the concept of resistance. It is clear that in studying human relationships in relation to power, resistance occupies a pronounced position. I would, therefore, encapsulate resistance as a manner in which subordinate characters convert the resources at hand into instruments of control over the inhumane circumstances prevailing in the environments they occupy. Resistance, therefore, comes into this chapter as a manner in which the colonised endeavours to rise against oppressive systems through self-voicing and assertion. That is, as individuals use autobiographies as strategies of resistance, they are involved in acts of subversion against oppressive regimes. This then becomes a means for writers to utilise "weapons of the weak", as Scott (1985) contends.

3.2 Autobiography as discourse

This chapter analyses Modisane's autobiography, *Blame Me on History* (1963), as a discourse of identity, resistance and space. Within the numerous descriptions of his many resistances to any form of authority, Modisane's autobiographical discourse can be interpreted as an act of resistance. An act of resistance in which he formulates his identity through actual historical events of displacement, violence and oppression. He challenges what the stories tell about the ordinary marginalised people who do not belong to the dominant group, but who are shaped by these historical events. *Blame Me on History* can, therefore, be read as an example of the potential of an autobiography as an arena of resistance, a place where the autobiographical subject can become an agent of transformation, a place where the systems of meaning of a society may change. "I stand against the power complex of the white man", states Modisane, "I hate and intend to destroy white supremacy, determined to examine the myth of superiority" (1963:231).

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One of the most crucial contributions of Foucault was his description of power as something that does not reside in a select group of people or a dominant class, but as something that can be used, displayed and exercised by individuals in distinct situations (Foucault, 1980). Individuals are further capable of responding and can defy power at certain moments. This idea of power moves away from the notion that identities are rigid, stable and clearly defined, which enables a conception of individuals as mediums who can channel power (Foucault, 1980:72). Foucault's emphasis on the close relationship that prevails between knowledge and power, has also shed light on many areas of the academic sphere; his assertion that power is discursive and disseminates knowledge, makes us think about the way discourses spreads in our society, especially if we think about his perspective that knowledge produces 'truths', which for him are just patterns of power manifested through discourse (Foucault, 1980:131–132).

From a Foucauldian perspective, it also becomes an effect of different discourses that take place in a distinct historical context, and forms part of an integral network of power relations. The "technologies of the self" that Foucault formulated, would enable individuals to act and think consciously, to design their own identity and which—at least temporarily—can act on their own (Foucault, 1989a:18–19). An autobiography can, therefore, be understood as a component of power, a device that individuals can use to become agents of change, through which they can frame their own discourses.

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An autobiography can then be interpreted as one of the means that the individual can use to infiltrate discourse, reclaim his or herself and thereby achieve autonomy (Watts, 1989). The autobiographical discourse can be analysed in terms of the way it opposes other discourses that have been spread over the identity of the autobiographer, thus becoming a discourse of defiance, and an opportunity that she/he can take advantage of to answer to the power applied on him or her. This is the case of *Blame Me on History*, in which we can see how Modisane, by circulating his own discourse about his identity, confronts the official discourses that the media and the South African government compiled about conditions under which black South Africans lived under apartheid.

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Foucault's (1980) discussion on critical practice that projects space (place), like time, as crucial to the mediation of human survival, is relevant here. In the same vein, Soja (1996) echoes Foucault's position when he argues for a critical practice based on the "triple dialects of space, time and social being" (1996:137). Both Foucault and Soja assist us to grasp that space is a human-made entity. It is equally important that the two scholars emphasise that there are many signs that need to be examined to understand the ways in which people shape places and vice versa. For this objective, it is noticeable that the filling in of space and time is partially accomplished through cultural efforts, such as narratives. Like other cultural undertakings, autobiographies materialise within particular geographic locations (Massey, 1995). In highlighting identity and belonging, autobiographies thus not only metaphorically map and redefine place and identity as with time, but also write and revise our understanding of these places and belonging.

This chapter hopes to find a way to restore Modisane as a writer, scholar and intellectual, especially in terms of his conception of identity, both within South Africa and in exile. Modisane belonged to the group of black writers, critics and journalists commonly known as Drum writers, who attained popularity in the 1950s and who, at some stage in their careers, worked for *Drum* magazine. This group includes Bessie Head, Es'kia Mphahlele, Can Themba, Lewis Nkosi, Casey Motsitsi, Arthur Maimane and Todd Matshikiza. Most of these writers, including Modisane, lived in the dynamic cosmopolitan Sophiatown, and they would certainly have contributed richly to Modisane's developing awareness of identity and belonging:

> These pioneering black journalists rested on a writing tradition dating back to the Lovedale Press of 1926. The younger breed was skittish, kicking the prose medium around, giving it blood and bones. Their ghetto environment was depressing as it sharpened their vigilance and inspired a language that might lift them out of the morass. The pay was goat's droppings, really: an average of 40 pounds. There were no workshops and one had to educate oneself ... and the world knew nothing of what the new 'black' journalism was minting there across the tracks. (Mutloatse, 1980:118)

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3.3 Biography

Modisane was educated in Sophiatown, which presents the background for the story *Blame Me on History*. Modisane became frustrated with the political situation and oppression under the apartheid regime and moved to England in 1959, where his autobiography was published in 1963. This text depicts his despondency over the bulldozing of Sophiatown because of the 1950s Group Areas Act and his frustration and anger with apartheid. As a result, the book was banned in South Africa in 1966. In the early 1960s, Modisane settled in Dortmund, West Germany, where he died in 1986 at the age of 63.

Modisane was uprooted for most of his childhood as his family owned no land. The individual's link to the territory informed and decided both his relationship to the rest of the community and his status within it, formulating a mutual interdependence of individual, family and community. He was, therefore, not raised in a traditional rural African environment, but in the borders of black residential areas. He attended state-supported mission schools and moved from one area to the next. His nascent identity was shaped in places of mixed races under the rule of a white government: "First you have land taken away from the African people. That in itself means that they have been robbed of a site where they could construct an identity. You can't have a culture when you are being moved from one squatter camp to another" (Goddard, 1992:31).

Modisane and Sophiatown are both in a state of disarray at the outset of the book. On the one hand, Modisane has lost his job, and his marriage with his wife Fiki is in tatters. On the other hand, Sophiatown has just been flattened by the apartheid government. The brutalising of the black (collective) body becomes necessary for the appropriation of their land, just as the development of the native as subhuman becomes necessary for colonial extension and territorial appropriation (Fanon, 1967a:45). Fanon regards blackness as associated with relations of dominance, a "direct result of colonialist subjugation" (1963:17) and the accompanying "epiduralization of inferiority" (1963:11). Memmi (1965) argues that the relation between the coloniser and the colonised is initiated by violence. Memmi maintains, "[c]colonialism denies human rights to human beings whom it has subdued by violence and keeps them by force in a state of misery and ignorance that Marx would rightly label a subhuman condition" (1965: xxiv). A method of racism and superiority is part of the colonialist modes, in which human rights do not apply. In addition, Cesaire (1984)

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explains this relation indicating, “whenever there are colonizers and colonized face to face, I see force, brutality, cruelty, sadism, conflict…No human contact, but relation of domination and submission” (1984:21). Modisane’s loss of his job has affected his family. However, it seems petty compared to the ruination of the people of Sophiatown. Families were destroyed, and friends were disjointed (Mandela, 1994:31). Sophiatown became a focal point of activity where everyone lived in tranquillity with others, despite the activities of the tsotsis and gangs who had a free hand in Sophiatown. In fact, the tsotsis and gangs were symbolic of Sophiatown, and they took on the identity of Hollywood stars.

Despite the government’s attempts to make the black residential areas desolated, they, in fact, gave access to coherent, black urban identity development. In this way, the topography of the black areas enacted a challenge to state power and reflected the persistent desire of black people to establish a strong urban experience. Sophiatown is most likely one of the most famous of these examples, others being District Six and Cato Manor. Kruger (1997) describes the early days of this multiracial zone. Sophiatown, a unique amalgamation of urban elements, encompassed characteristics of both a marginalised community and a bustling marketplace. It served as a gathering spot for individuals of diverse backgrounds, including black radicals, individuals embracing bohemian lifestyles regardless of their racial identity, as well as both organised and disorganised criminals. Although Sophiatown existed as a tangible location, its significance transcended its physicality, as it became a symbol of an idealised society characterised by racial harmony and cultural variety. Unfortunately, this vision was ultimately quashed by the oppressive machinery of apartheid, and was later overshadowed by more militant periods in history. Sophiatown, during a certain period, provided what the black populace of Johannesburg was deprived of.

Sophiatown not only facilitated liberation through its diverse composition, but it also facilitated the development of an urban lifestyle in response to the apartheid regime’s attempts to suppress it. Despite being relocated to the outskirts of Johannesburg, Sophiatown emerged as a vibrant urban area where individuals could seek employment in formal and informal sectors, engage with diverse ideas, and cultivate a sense of agency that was officially suppressed within the confines of Johannesburg. Sophiatown functioned autonomously by employing alternative modes of operation

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that were not reliant on the formal structure of Johannesburg. During the mid-1950s, the forced displacement of the population resulted in a significant feeling of deprivation, as it marked the loss of one of the initial locations, symbolising the validation of an autonomous black urban entity in Johannesburg. The establishment of these black residential neighbourhoods evolved into an independent urban entity with the aiming to reclaim the Johannesburg that had been dispossessed. The demolition of the structure was deemed inevitable (Kruger, 1997).

The past and the present blend in the author's consciousness to highlight that the current acquisition of political dominance is only one event in the history of successive setbacks his people have suffered. Modisane's quest for identity is through the use of certain historical facts and real events. Foucault's 'genealogical' approach to the examination of Modisane's writing is apt: 'Genealogy' wants to investigate "processes, procedures and techniques through which truth, knowledge and beliefs are produced" (Foucault, 1989a:86). Modisane's historical contextualisation of the freedom struggle assists the reader to understand the objectives of those fighting for their liberation. The struggle is presented as something more profound than a conflict between blacks and whites. It is a fight for land and a contest for human dignity (Mnthali, 1999:39).

There is no indication in the text to suggest that Modisane abhorred living in the slum, Sophiatown —the 'black spot'. The slum, as it appears in Modisane's autobiography, brings forth a picture of a deteriorating society populated by the good and the bad, the perpetrators and the vulnerable, the morally upright and the corrupt. The general atmosphere is one of grief, decadence and social slump. For this purpose, the slum is portrayed as a wasteland, a place without physical and moral structure and a menace to urbanisation. Ultimately, Modisane's autobiography succeeds in reconfiguring the slum through the ways in which it evokes lived experiences in marginalised spaces as something that is real and has flashes of genius:

> Whatever else Sophiatown was, it was home, we made the desert bloom, made alterations. We established bonds of human relationships which set a pattern of communal living, far richer and satisfying - materially and spiritually - than modern could substitute. The dying of a slum is a community tragedy, anywhere. (1963:27)

Modisane was committed to both the slum and self-improvement, so his room in Sophiatown was embellished with materials considered white and associated with white privilege:

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> My little room in Sophiatown was a fly-over which connected the two worlds, and in it I erected all the symbols of the world which rejected me: on the walls were hanging reproductions of Laufrec, Van Gogh, Chagall, Klee and Miro, there were books and folders of the Impressionists unobtrusively lying about; the cabinet was stocked with cocktail glasses, wine, brandy and beer glasses discreetly paraded, and those of my African friends who came to dinner were meant to be impressed by the ritual of making martinis served in chilled cocktail glasses before meals, wine with meals and after meals drinks in fresh glasses. (1963:254)

3.4 Modisane and race relations

The greatest consideration in relationships between human beings, as Fanon would have it, is "respect for basic values that constitute a human world" (1963:51). Thus, whatever is under examination is the degree to which fundamental human values are (dis)respected in the line of interactions. Even as basic human values are infringed, there is always an attempt on the part of the violated to dissent, in order to take back what has been taken away. This is an affirmation of power, the kind of which is, another strategic concern of this chapter. Foucault sees power as pervasive in society and is in "constant flux and negotiation" (1998:63).

It would not be out of place to propose that Modisane, consciously or unconsciously, wanted to rupture the stereotype that said blacks were inferior to whites. If anything, he believed that all humans are equal and should be given equivalent opportunities and possibilities. Unfortunately, such opportunities were prohibited for blacks in the 1950s. Dealing with it meant they had to be radicalised in various forms: politically, artistically and educationally.

South Africa's history is defined by the unequal organisation and construction of spaces by law. It is characterised by segregation, allocation and especially the organisation of spaces through a carefully designed system of laws. Numerous laws all dealt indelibly with spaces and places in South Africa; therefore, the law can be approached as mapping. The geographical and built environment stories of South Africa are stories of social domination through segregation along racial and linguistic lines. We can start with the Native Land Act of 1913, one of the foundational pieces of law in the design of spatial segmentation. Before 1913, the General Pass Regulations Bill

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of 1905 and the Asiatic Registration Act of 1906 introduced the heinous pass system and entrenched the tone for social control. The journey from 1913 to the victory of the National Party in 1948 includes the following legislations: the Native in Urban Areas Bill of 1918, which enabled forced removals to 'locations'; the 1923 Urban Areas Act, which brought about residential segregation; and the Native Administration Act of 1927, which complemented the Native Lands Act.

The National Party's success in the whites-only 1948 election was the start of deepening steps of racial segregation and spatial determination. The crux of this intensified project was the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act passed in 1950. This era also sanctioned the Separate Amenities Act of 1953, which radically turned public spaces such as beaches and parks into exclusive spaces for 'whites only'. Following the Native Resettlement Act, No. 19 of 1954, the apartheid regime started a treacherous crusade to crush the individual spirit, family, history and fundamental humanity of black and coloured South Africans through the violent annihilation of their houses. With little notice and no opportunity to fight or stop the apartheid machinery, hundreds of thousands of non-white South Africans witnessed the demolition of their homes as bulldozers devastated communities such as District Six in Cape Town, Cato Manor in Durban and Johannesburg's Sophiatown. During the apartheid era, black communities were restricted by African authorities to homelands in rural areas and black residential areas on the margins of cities. It was an effortless and economical way to isolate and monitor them: to use Foucault's words, it is to control the "environment, the milieu in which they live" (1997:245).

Modisane grew up during a volatile period in the history of black South Africans. The Urban Areas Act of 1923, which provided for the compulsory segregation of Africans, was amended in 1937 to the Natives (Urban Areas) Act. This restricted the rights of Africans to acquire property in urban areas, such as Alexandra, Sophiatown, Martindale, Newclare and Pageview, where many Africans had owned land for years. In 1943 and 1944, the Johannesburg municipality, under pressure from white taxpayer organisations in the area, such as the North Eastern District Protection League, decided to locate black residents to the southwest of Johannesburg. One of the biggest threats to this solution was the acute housing scarcity. The Smit Committee indicated in 1942 that total segregation would mean the removal and re-letting of a third of the urban African population.

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Relocation and re-renting were a key game plan for the “manipulation, domination and control” (Robinson, 1992:297) of the black population, establishing their dependence on the state for work and access to the city. Lefebvre (1991:22) maintained that it is through “the regulation of space that people’s social and economic reproductions are limited”. In light of their spatial dispossession and social isolation, African residents were allowed in urban spaces such as Johannesburg, to work in mining towns and black women were employed by white residents for domestic tasks. According to colonial and apartheid legislations, the black miners had to stay in ‘native reserves’ close to the mines that had contributed to Johannesburg’s wealth since the early 1900s (Callinicos, 1987). In this political and historical context, Africans had no legal right to the colonial/apartheid city of Johannesburg (Lemon, 1991).

The Group Areas Act (1950) magnified the pressure exerted on the municipalities by enforcing segregation in urban residential areas. This resonates with Foucault’s perspective that “racism is inscribed as the basic mechanism of power” of government laws (1997:254). All towns were zoned for exclusive ownership and occupancy by particular groups of people. This law meant that disqualified people had to move out of the area within one year of a set date. Failure to do so was a criminal misdemeanour (Ndletyane, 2008:92).

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The Natives Resettlement Act of 1954 was how the government pressured municipalities to nullify African-free areas, such as Sophiatown. People were reallocated to Meadowlands and Diepkloof. Even Africans who spoke different languages were pressurised to live in separate quarters, according to ‘ethnic grouping’ in urban black residential areas (Wilson and Thompson, 1971:241). Africans were compelled to occupy spaces in black residential areas and in the workforce that reinforced their image as subservient to whites (for example, as domestic workers, porters and manual workers). This exclusionary housing policy guaranteed that visible (black) majorities could not challenge the existing socio-economic hierarchies of cities and the nation. The “servile black body” is, therefore, created by a white racist discourse that attempted to keep the “defiling other” aside (Goldberg, 1993:192). According to Goldberg (1993), slum or ghetto spaces are characterised by “dislocation, displacement, and division” and function to distance the social and spatial practices of dominant groups from subordinate groups. Slums are consequently “the

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primary mode by which the space of racial marginality has been articulated and reproduced" (Goldberg, 1993:190). Modisane's autobiography portrays an ongoing and flourishing understanding of the importance of space to explain strategic questions about power, resistance and social organisation, and to contemplate the geopolitics of apartheid and the policy of spatial control. There are various links between Foucault's ideas and the ideological practices of apartheid. When he refers to "government" (2002), a key concept for Foucault, his purpose is to ask how and to what extent populations should be restrained and regulated.

3.5 Knowledge production

The experience of "heterotopia" makes people wonder what world they find themselves in. The concept of space provides the strength for the control and regulation of the movement of people through the space of a colonised country. The concept of heterotopia is probably one of the most interesting concepts developed through the works of Foucault. A 'heterotopia' is a space whose function is to disturb the established order of an existing space and consequently lead to the production of knowledge. The colonised must be prohibited from entering the space of the colonial power. It was indeed the case that the preoccupation and power to monitor movement through the space of others was an essential aspect in the practice of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa. Beningfield depicts the creation of the black residential area as a changing, manufactured 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" (2006:218).

Blame Me on History (1963) is largely psychologically oriented, as it centres on the author's emotional and spiritual battle to define his social role, and in so doing, repudiates the identities and roles enforced on him by the hegemonic ideologies and political policies of his time. Modisane's autobiography includes undertakings by him to interrogate the implications of what he sees as the difference between the kind of person he would have been in a free country and what he was compelled to become in a racially segregated South Africa. Fanon captures Modisane's dilemma in his portrayal of racial relations between the white settlers and the colonised black people:

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> There is a fact: White men consider themselves superior to black men. There is another fact: Black men want to prove to the white men, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect. (1967b:12)

It is important for this analysis that black writers and autobiographers comprehend 'black consciousness' by focusing on issues of race relations. Cornel West reflects on the underlying problem of "race" for blacks: "Our truncated public discussions of race suppress the best of who and what we are as people because they fail to confront the complexity of the issue in a candid and critical manner" (1993:2). He criticises the point that whites see blacks as "problem people" (1993:2), that they are still regarded as the "Other", and that "the burden falls on blacks to do all the 'cultural' and 'moral' work necessary for healthy race relations" (1993:3).

The fundamental focus of *Blame Me on History* is, therefore, the examination of the author's profound awareness of the injustices of the restrictive and stifling laws of apartheid. Modisane constantly foregrounds his emotional and intellectual reactions to the reality of life in a racially segregated country. In the main, it is the author's sensitivity to the psychological implications of political oppression for sensitive and politically aware individuals like himself that grasps the otherwise fractured narrative pattern together.

In 1938, the year his father was beaten to death, Modisane was only fourteen years old. This incident, especially the funeral, was a critical point in his life. On his father's coffin, he saw his name and not his father's — "The shock of seeing my name and not my father's on the coffin confused and frightened me, but it seemed symbolic somehow, I was officially dead" (Modisane, 1963:31). As he takes in some of the demolition while walking the streets of Sophiatown, he psychologically hears the noise of it, and mentally goes to the shebeens, having discussions and generally recalling the Sophiatown of the past. The reader is confronted with the past, which is related to the present. Modisane's internal turmoil, private life and the life of the community that evolved, produced a whole. The silence and loneliness of Sophiatown, for example, brought forth the thought of a community that could not be erased in his mind:

> It was the same loneliness and the same emptiness which surrounded Milner Road as I searched from out of the silence the noise of Sophiatown … at Edwards Road I jumped into the bus … terminus in Victoria Road, a few yards from Nobeni's shebeen, across the

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> street from which was a front for Sophiatown' biggest fhafee, numbers games, pool … a man came out of the shop and removed his hat, returning it. (Modisane, 1963:49)

The Sophiatown community affiliations apparently confirmed that *Drum* magazine's support lay in the communities of the excluded. These people were excluded by the apartheid state and therefore dismissed as ordinary in the plain sense that they were invisible and inconsequential. As Fanon (1994) carefully observes, in the context of the African individual, it is evident that White culture has effectively dismantled their preexisting universe, yet has failed to provide a suitable replacement. Apartheid, by dismantling the traditional tribal roots of individuals' experiences, obstructs the path towards future progress while simultaneously impeding access to historical narratives. Its underlying objective is to exclude those of African descent from actively engaging in contemporary historical events as autonomous and liberated agents.

Fanon (1967a) asserts that, since the Africans' history, culture and identity have been uprooted, disfigured or devastated by colonialism, it is the role of the indigenous historians, intellectuals and artists to illuminate "the truths of the nation" (1967a:225) to corroborate the actuality of the culture of the Africans. To produce "a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature" (1967a:223), Fanon contends that the indigenous intellectual "must realize that the truths of a nation are in the first place its realities. He must go on until he has found the seething pot out of which the learning of the future will emerge" (1967a:225). What Fanon implies here is that simply going back to the past in a narrative is hardly satisfactory for the artist who seeks to arouse a national consciousness in the colonised to embolden them to free themselves from the occupying power. Rather, the artist must scrutinise and interrogate the conflict that colonialism has on the indigenous space and thus not only 'write back' to the colonisers for the sake of the present moment, but also to salvage the past in order to attain a national future (Loomba, 2005:67).

In that way, the literature of the colonised and the oppressed by an illegitimate minority government, also ventured into restoring dignity to Africans by invoking and reconstructing a heroic, meaningful and relevant African history. Attwell (2005) corroborates this by arguing that "The use by black intellectuals of print culture has been crucial to their establishing themselves as modern subjects, in direct opposition to the identities ascribed to them in colonial and apartheid ideology" (2005:2). This affirms that the most important South Africa theme has always been that

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of social conflict since the border wars of the 1700s. Literature cannot be disconnected from the life of a nation, "…the black writer thus assumes a role in the social conflict, he cannot step out of it" (Daymond et al., 1984:42). In other words, life, as exposed by the autobiographer, is in most cases a "social" comment on the experiences of the community, good or bad. I think this is the lens in which *Blame Me on History* should be examined. In fact, the title of the text indicates this relationship as shown by the terms 'me' and 'history'.

3.6 Abjection

Modisane lamented the low wages blacks received, wages intended to deprive them forever, while whites, especially Afrikaners, benefited from the unfair labour policy put in place by the government to assist poor whites. Initially, there was a steady decline in profits from gold mines between 1910 and 1920 and many semi-skilled whites lost their jobs under the Smuts government. The victory of Hertzog's Pact Government (The National Party and the Labour Party) in 1924 refocused its attention from the capitalist class to highlight the white working-class dilemma, specifically on poverty alleviation issues. The Pact government introduced a discriminatory labour law called the "civilized labour policy", which allocated jobs from blacks to white workers at a higher salary, and at the same time, introduced job reservation for white workers (Terreblanche, 2003:273).

These pronouncements allude to Fanon's views that racism is a "system based on the exploitation of a given race by another, on the contempt in which a given branch of humanity is held by a form of civilization that pretends to superiority." (1967b:174). Likewise, Mbembe's argument of racism is that "the ever-present shadow in Western political thought and practice, especially when it comes to imagining the inhumanity of, or rule over, foreign peoples" (2003:17).

Using Kristeva's abjection theory as the analytical framework, this chapter states that the abject is part of one's private archaeology or hidden consciousness. Kristeva further asserts that the abject is concerned with, "what disturbs identity, system and order what does not respect borders, positions, rules" (1982:9). An abjection is defined as something bad experienced or present to the maximum degree—a situation or condition extremely unpleasant and degrading or a person or their behaviour completely without pride or dignity. Abjection is, therefore, about an unpleasant

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human condition. Kristeva (1982) links abjection with three major areas of human experience: food, excrement/human waste and the feminine body. He deals with divergent ranges from the physical to the emotional and even the moral. The existence of debilitating starvation is an initiator of abjection in their lives. Abjection here is presented through a two-pronged approach, the first as the demonstration of lowly and demeaning living conditions and the other as the consequence of such an illustration on the psyche of the reader.

After pointing out a number of shocking statistics that indicated the hardships experienced by blacks, Modisane asserts:

> I do not claim to understand statistics, but I do know that in my family there were six children, two of whom died from malnutrition; I am not asking for charity, but I demand that the fruits of my labour shall not be taken from out of my mouth. (1963:98)

Modisane's point of view was that his autobiography is a vital political strategy that represents black perspectives in the history of the country. The writing of an autobiography offers a way to respond to the prejudice of existing historical narratives by giving voice to his experiences as well as those of his family, community and nation. The essence of personal experience in his autobiography empowers Modisane to foreground this origin of knowledge to make truth claims about the past, and to rectify the erasure of black perspectives from narratives about South African history. Here, the negative effects of the oppressive apartheid landscape are clearly projected as a result of a displaced psyche in its inhabitants, of which Modisane is one. In fact, this link between the state of mind and the socio-economic reality is identified by Foucault:

> Man is a thinking being. The way he thinks is related to society, politics, economics, and history and is also related to very general and universal categories and formal structures. (1980:10)

Fear and memory play a critical role in the development of the psychological displacement of the black township dweller. Most of the residents are overwhelmed with a sense of angst because they visualise themselves being socially excluded or victimised in the apartheid city to such an extent that some end up developing self-hatred and apprehension, as experienced by Modisane:

> And yet all too frequently I am forced to realise that behind the structure of the native wages, the discriminatory poll tax, is the arrogant dirty joke that Africans should be taught

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correct dieting habits, and over this I am confronted with the Christian charity of a Christian government which exposes people to starvation and then boasts a million-pound hospital to treat malnutrition cases. (1963:101)

Modisane made these ironic remarks using words as weapons in his autobiographical discourse and continued to resist and confront power and those who expressed it. The discriminatory and prejudicial identification implies psychological persecution experienced by black workers. This further alludes to Fanon's perception of "mask[ed]" or camouflaged racism and functions as "objective evidence that expresses reality" (1967b:8), and corroborates the invisible murder linked with racism.

McDowell claims that the body is "the most immediate place" (1999:34) as the physical entity with which we live and connect in social spaces; therefore, it is also involved in social processes and the creation of power dynamics. McDowell further claims that "like ideas about gender, ideas about place, boundaries and membership are social constructs" (1999:31). These 'social constructs' frame the way different people live their lives, and the things they can or cannot do in their lives. According to this explanation of being 'social', these ideas are not created in a neutral context, but are framed by the surrounding systems of power relations. Therefore, the examination of bodies and social spaces within the postcolonial framework is meaningful and useful.

Modisane pictures himself as symbolically and literally cornered in his blackness. This is clear from the incident in which he outlines his reaction to witnessing his mother disgraced and humiliated by white policemen:

> I was helpless in the coffin of my skin and began to resent the black of my skin, it offered no protection to my mother from the delinquency of the police constables who saw only the mask representative of a despised race; but Ma-Willie was not black, she was my mother, and if I had been white the whiteness of my skin would have protected her honour. I wished I was white. (1963:36)

3.7 Alienation, the subaltern and prejudice

Modisane's skin colour epitomises black people's condition of alienation and hopelessness. His voice opposes the rulers who dehumanise blacks daily based on race. This brings to mind Fanon's

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conceptualisation of black people as objects at the hands of Western colonisers. "This object man, without means of existing, […] is broken in the very depth of his substance. The desire to live, to continue, becomes more and more indecisive, more and more phantom-like" (Fanon, 1967b:35). As Spivak (1988) also argues, imperialist ideology was the fundamental element permitting dominant powers to successfully subjugate people who were passive and silent. Spivak's point is to grant the silenced Other a voice. To achieve this, she outlines how the coloniser disfigured the history and culture of the colonised, and she portrays the silencing of the subaltern by the Eurocentric hegemonic ideologists. Spivak raises a challenge that accentuates the position of intellectuals as she advocates that they should not disavow any legitimacy when portraying the subaltern.

Modisane uses his position within his community as a lens through which he can represent the experiences of black South Africans, using his experiential voice to construct a history of everyday black life under apartheid. An indifferent, hypocritical minority government using the invisible presence of acts of 'Christianity', is exposed. The ritual and religious principles are "act[s] of conducting, directing, leading, guiding, taking in hand, and manipulating men…collectively and individually throughout their life at each moment of their existence" (Rabinow, 1984:165).

The ability to empower oneself depends largely on individual aspiration. Modisane creates his narrative by focusing on the individual as he highlights private aspects of individual identity through his wit, intelligence, assertion and responsibility, among others. He applies attributes such as wit, commitment and tenacity to surmount barriers erected by social and racial structures.

It would be incorrect to even propose that what Modisane was pointing out, was only his individual experience. It was rather the experience of the larger black society of which he was an integral part of. Modisane's relationship with the community was not an easy one. Modisane tried to harmonise his individuality with society. The struggle in this respect revealed a tension that remained unresolved by the end of the book. In other words, the text revolves around the narrator, 'I' and later 'us', who tried to fit into the black community, but found it to be a difficult undertaking to achieve:

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> There is a resentment - almost as deep-rooted as the prejudice itself - against the educated African, not so much because he is allegedly cheeky, but that he fails to conform to the stereotype image of the black sanctified and cherished with jealous intensity by the white man; such a native must – as desperate necessity be humiliated into submission. The educated black is resented equally by the blacks because he speaks English, which is one of the symbols of white supremacy, he is resentfully called a situation, something between white supremacy and black rebellion. (Modisane, 1963:94)

For the black man, justifying his worth means, at a very basic level, mastering the language of the coloniser and the culture associated with it. With respect to the question of mastering the English language, we turn to Fanon (1967b:17): "To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization."

3.8 The English tradition

While English literature was utilised to advocate imperialist ideology, Modisane engages it to confront that ideology. Instead of disengaging himself from the English tradition, Modisane presented textual possibilities through an autobiography for cultural and ideological innovations informed by the behest of the free world. Modisane's approach to English literature resonates with what Simon Gikandi (1996) asserts as "Claiming a space in the culture that colonialism built and acknowledging [their] alienation in this category" (Gikandi, 1996:231).

Gikandi affirms that Englishness is "a cultural and literary phenomenon produced in the ambivalent space that separated, but also conjoined, metropolis and colony" (1996:xii). Gikandi gives prominence to the fact that English literature may have exposed colonised subjects to imperialist ideologies, but it also presented a footing for postcolonial writers for decolonising practices (Gikandi, 1996). Therefore, *Blame Me on History* celebrates this ability of Western culture and appropriates this platform to campaign for the re-appropriation of spaces.

What is vital in African literature is not language in its conventional sense, but language "in the sense of all avenues of cultural communication for revolutionary purposes," thus presenting a

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united force in contemporary African nations and negating the English language as "an instrument of colonization" (Owomoyela, 1996:5). What must be included here is that African writers who elected to write in English, are ultimately confronted with the undertaking of reclaiming an Africa that has been disciplined and dominated by a power discourse of Europe and America, a discourse that until recently prohibited African voices.

Modisane found himself in a socially marginalised position where language decided social status to a large degree. Culturally disempowered and stigmatised based on his race, he associates with a Western conversation:

> Since power is associated with unmarkedness, members of the subordinate groups feel pressurized to breach the boundary between them and the in-group, for doing so constitutes their only hope for obtaining advancement and acquiring a share in power. (Owomoyela, 1996:7)

In that frame of mind, writing in English prepared Modisane in a sense to appropriate this discourse to deconstruct his apartheid identity.

3.9 Empowerment and tensions

A recent phenomenon in the field of social sciences is empowerment. It is a means of confronting unfavourable power relations, a process of change by which the powerless gain control over the circumstances of their lives. It indicates not only extrinsic restraints but also flourishing intrinsic capability, greater self-confidence and an inner transformation of one's consciousness (Batliwala, 1994:127).

Empowerment entails the capacity to make choices. To be disempowered, therefore, means to be denied choice. The ability to exercise choice can be thought of in terms of three inter-related dimensions: resources, which form the conditions under which choices are made; agency, which is the capability to define one's goals and act upon them; and accomplishments, which are the results of choices (Kabeer, 2005:13). Empowerment thus points to the extension of one's ability to make strategic life decisions in a context where this capability was previously denied.

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It is the tension between 'individuality' and the 'community' that gives credibility to Modisane's text. It seems as if Modisane's identity was located between individuality and community. This continual movement was informed by his conscious ability to tell the story of black people through his autobiography. At the heart of the text, Modisane tried to transmit a transformative message to the reader. There is a sense that Modisane confided in the readers, who happened to be white and cosmopolitan, with an intention to transforming them, thereby indicating distinctly his prowess as an empowered individual of his time.

Modisane's autobiography focuses on the endeavours of the black urban working class of Sophiatown to define its identity as a group and to confront ideological, political and material forces that undermined its integrity and status. His repeated references to the annihilation of Sophiatown accentuate both the literal and symbolic dissipation of a tight-knit community and the memories and values it represents:

> We took the ugliness of life in a slum and wove a kind of beauty; we established bonds of human relationships which set a pattern of communal living, far richer and more satisfying - materially and spiritually - than any model housing could substitute. (1963:16)

The repeated use of the collective pronoun 'we' instead of the standard autobiographical 'I' points out to the reader that the narrator is a member of a broad social group and that his experience is, therefore, not entirely unique. The resilience and cohesion that characterises the community of Sophiatown stand in stark contrast to the ongoing conflict against forces of history that seek to impose lifestyles, patterns of behaviour and the identity on the group as a whole. Like the protagonist of *Blame Me on History*, the community of Sophiatown was a product of unjust legislation that they were helpless to change. It is acknowledged that during the 1930s–1950s, there were gross internal social dynamics within the black community.

Tension, disagreements and differences existed between different social classes, intellectuals, professionals, traditionalists, urban elites, etc. I argue that the oppression meted out to black people has had the opposite repercussions. Rather, it consolidated that fragmented black opposition, notwithstanding the internal political differences that existed, for example, between Oliver Tambo of the African National Congress and Robert Sobukwe of the Pan Africanist Congress. The divide and rule policies of the regime not only failed, but also made black people grasp the importance of

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speaking in a concerted voice to be heeded. Ultimately, the regime could not use ethnicity to realise its sinister objectives. Both blacks and the regime knew the vital part ethnicity could play in their numerous political and social goals.

Modisane's decision to leave South Africa in 1959 was partly guided by his failure to find a purposeful role for himself within the major political organisations involved in defiance during this period. While he was a product of history, he was also an active agent in the production of that history, as this chapter reveals. It is clear that Modisane was trapped between two influences: to embrace politics or leave the country. After the ANC failed to stop the demolition of Sophiatown, Modisane was so shattered that he burned his youth league membership card and withdrew into a political wilderness. He interrogates the fate of being 'handicapped' by one's skin colour, and strategies to grapple with this 'deformity'. For Modisane, there was no way to withdraw from the reality of being black in a society where people were judged by their skin colour. Foucault's argument that people are exposed to death and fatal environments through political circumstances, is supported here, because all black people were subjected to political legislations. In Foucault's terminology, they are "pre-condition[ed]" to become subjects because of their skin colour (1997:256).

Important here is the fact that the workings of power within relations may be physical or psychological, internal or external. This relates closely to the plight of the human relationships depicted in the autobiography of Modisane—the powerlessness displayed by some of the characters and their ever-evident resignation to their fate. Modisane's autobiography is an example of a text which demonstrates a shifting sense of power relations in different private and public spaces. Family relations are constrained as the different structures come into being. There was a strong desire in Modisane to leave the country, especially after the birth of his child. This desire was not fueled by unhappiness or apathy, but by the difficulty of facing discrimination. The basis of this was the safety of his child:

> South Africa shall not have her, I will take my family out of Sophiatown, out of South Africa, to a place where Chris shall start out as a human being. I refused to commit her to slavery. Chris made me realise more sharply how urgently I hated South Africa, I saw us all, black and white, entrapped in this disgusting putridity. (1963:75)

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In Sophiatown, Modisane contemplated a home on the cultural margins, a place that fosters "varied and ever-changing perspectives" on his family's personal history of anguish, and by extension, the collective South African history of trauma and loss due to racial legislation. His resistance can be seen as keeping alive the consciousness of acceptance in South Africa against forces that tend to discard and displace him. In a way, he says that, if he is displaced or disowned by the state, he refuses being disowned by the place and land, and therefore, he still holds dear memories to resist 'forgetting'. This resonates with hooks' idea that "[o]ur struggle is the struggle of memory against forgetting" (hooks, 1990). His endeavour is seen as insisting that place and memory stand alongside hooks' cultural resistance to marginalisation. Modisane's perspectives of history in his life story have ramifications for the way he presents his identity as a social being and as a unique person with an individualised identity. Foucault's work on power thus indicates that power is supreme when it is able to mask itself: "Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (1980:86). The manipulation of desire is one instrument by which power masks itself—by making that which is constraining appear positive and desirable. Moreover, when power meets with resistance, it is not ineffectual; it simply asserts itself and responds by finding new ways of manifesting itself: "… power can retreat here, re-organize its forces, invest itself elsewhere (…) and so the battle continues" (1980:56).

3.10 Modisane and aesthetics

His description of craving for his aesthetic-intellectual sensibility indicates that he is probing for spiritual liberation from an environment that suppresses his talents:

> And as true South African I am tempted to blame the emptiness of my life on history, and pretend a reason for the loneliness, the need for love and companionship; but these are diversions. I want acceptance in the country of my birth, and in some corner of the darkened room I whisper the real desire: I want to be accepted into white society. I want to listen to Rachmaninov, to Beethoven, Bartok and Stravinski; I want to talk about drama, philosophy and social psychology; I want to look at the paintings and feel my soul touched by Lautrec, Klee and Miro; I want to find a nobler design, a larger truth of living in literature. These things are important for me; they are the enjoyment of a pleasure I want to share. (1963:218).

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It is possible that Modisane, with the portrait of self-denial stamped on his psyche by the dominant cultural discourse and the ideology of apartheid, saw interracial relationships as a step that would enable him to enhance his dire economic and social position, and perhaps reinforce his self-representation as an artist and writer. Fanon delves into this very issue from a socio-cultural perspective: "The black man wants to be white... black men want to prove to white men, at all costs, the richness of their thoughts, the equal value of their intellect" (Fanon, 1963:12). The presence of interracial friendships in Modisane's life can be understood within the framework presented by Fanon regarding the dynamics between colonial individuals and those of other racial backgrounds—to what degree does the aforementioned individual's subjective commitment to eradicating within himself and his own consciousness the bias based on skin colour, which he has endured for an extended period, enable him to attain full parity with the esteemed race that governs individuals of diverse ethnic backgrounds? (Fanon, 1963).

Wa Thiong'o asserts that the estrangement of culture is due to:

> The destruction or deliberate under developing of people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature, and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizer. (1986:16)

Mudimbe explores how Africa has been defined historically, especially since contact in the late 1400s. He explicitly sets out "to study the theme of the foundations of discourse about Africa" (1988:xi), in the same vein as Foucault's theory about discourse and power. Discourse is a way of composing knowledge, and it formulates systems of meaning, in this case, that of the West. These meaning systems may digress for each society and Foucault (1980) acknowledges that "[e]ach society has its regime of truth." The 'general politics of truth' is the type of discourse that accepts it and makes it function as true, the mechanism and cases that enable one "to distinguish true and false statements" (1980:131). According to Foucault, discourse influences how ideas are used to regulate the behaviour of others. In short, the West's discourse is, therefore, used to discipline and enslave others and classify them as backward and subordinate.

Mudimbe's (1988) concern then consists of the "complex questions about knowledge and power in and on Africa" (1988:xi). Therefore, he centres mainly on art, discussions of African crafts,

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travel writings and finally anthropology. Therein lies an idea that the West has for the first time collectively classified 'Africans' in a racially driven sense in art, science and elsewhere—and that such racialisation has explained their mindsets towards each other— to be precise, "the inferiority of Africans to the West" (1988:9). "The African", explains Mudimbe, "has become not only the Other who is everyone else except me, but rather the key which, in its abnormal differences, specifies the identity of the same" (1988:12). By the 1700s, patronising or negative views of Africans, according to him, were already well entrenched: "The distinction between 'savage Negro' and 'civil Mohometan', and the commentaries on the Africans' indolence, their unbridled passions, and their cruelty or mental retardation were already there" (1988:13).

Modisane's grasp of art in the broadest sense of the term is shown in his various quotations from and allusions to canonical texts such as Shakespeare and the works of acclaimed composers and painters. Modisane contends that he does not fit the stereotype of a primitive and barbaric savage and, therefore, wants to be permitted to enjoy the fruits of Western culture, which includes visiting art galleries, theaters, listening to classical music and reading literature and philosophy. For Modisane, this lifestyle and all it encompasses in terms of material and spiritual privileges, is a complete and gratifying existence. Modisane went out of his way to find white friends whom he hoped to thrill with his erudition and 'intelligence'. His narration of his closeness with Roy Carter indicates that he thoroughly enjoyed these experiences:

> … this friendship never ceased to amaze and stimulate his interest, and that evening he was to find himself exposed to another shock. We discovered that we both liked Dylan Thomas and poor Roy was constrained to shake his head in disbelief, he was excited to discover that 'Do not go gentle into that good night' was also my favourite Dylan Thomas poem. (1963:253)

To contend that Modisane enjoyed relationships with whites 'to show off' would perhaps be a distortion of his intentions. It seems as if he deliberately manipulated South African racial stereotypes in a sincere endeavour to affirm his dignity as a 'member of the enormous human family'. Those of his white friends who responded with surprise and incredulity to his knowledge of Western art, thus betrayed their own racial bias. Modisane, however, reserved an apprehension towards the majority of white liberals of 1957 with whom he frequently socialised, and was particularly bitter about it. His chief criticism was that "the liberals talked about these principles

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of equality, but did not do anything about it and were actually pretty unreliable when it came down to the real situation" (Rogosin, 2004:37). This distrust never left him, as he foresaw that liberals would mostly align themselves with the victorious side. Modisane believed that, although the most vocal critics of apartheid were the liberals, it was them "that showed a gloomy picture of the poverty of the Africans, [yet] in their own backyards their house servants were not paid much better" (1963:163).

3.11 Politics

Twenty-six years later, Steve Biko would sharply reveal that white liberals had an interest in sustaining the basic social framework of apartheid, which guaranteed their dominant position so that the politics and values of white liberals as they related to the racial struggle of black South Africans appeared quite disempowered and paradoxical:

> First the black-white circles are almost always a creation of white liberals. As a testimony to their claim of complete identification with the blacks, they call a few "intelligent and articulate" blacks to "come around for tea at home", where all present ask each other the same old hackneyed question, "How can we bring about change in South Africa?" Hence, he moves around his white circles - whites-only hotels, beaches, restaurants and cinemas - with a lighter load, feeling that he is not like the rest of the others. Yet at the back of his mind is a constant reminder that he is quite comfortable as things stand and therefore should not bother about change. Although he does not vote for the Nats (now that they are in the majority anyway), he feels quite secure under the protection offered by the Nats and subconsciously shuns the idea of a change. … This is why blacks speak with a greater sense of urgency than whites. (Biko, 1978:23–24)

After Modisane's break with the African National Congress due to what he interpreted as the hypocrisy and self-centeredness of its leadership, he became convinced that only revolutionary violence of the colonised and exploited could free black people from racial oppression. As he puts it: "I had reasoned myself that only in blood will I see an end to my oppression or be myself destroyed. This was the harsh reality" (1963:231).

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In his accentuation of a united, militant response, Modisane mirrors Fanon's (1963) view of the necessity of violence in decolonisation as a means of ensuring solidarity—that the "practice of violence binds them together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain" (1963:73) in protest against the original violence of settler invasion. Such collective violence can also illustrate the nascent coherence of a national identity based on a nation that can possibly be united by "a national destiny and… a collective history" (1963:73). However, it also enlightens the individual about the meaning of his/her own part in the liberation struggle, because, as Fanon affirms, "The people have the time to see that the liberation has been the business of each and all and that the leader has no special merit" (1963:74).

Modisane subsequently became a detached adherent of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC):

> The Africanists never failed to excite my mind and to disturb the friends of the Africans, especially by the assertion that the Africans have reached that time in history when African liberation can no longer be entrusted to left-wing or right-wing groups of the privileged and powered white minorities. (1963:233).

Modisane must be seen as a modernist who refused to be associated with the 'coffin of his blackness'. His relationships with whites and his inspiration 'to be white' were, in many ways, his way of displaying the humiliation of being black in South Africa. He desired the whiteness that was denotative of privileges denied to blacks. That Modisane realised the inhumanity of South African whites is certain. He knew that 'the white world rejected him' and would not estrange him from the black world, although this world also had its shortcomings. I contend that the generation of the 1950s endeavoured self-improvement, and not for the change of pigmentation as such. There was a huge discrepancy between the culture of the 'West', to which Modisane and his contemporaries craved for, and the Afrikaner's state-prescribed whiteness, which was repulsive to blacks.

3.12 Local and world cultures

According to Foucault (1989b), the past is known at the level of its representation, which is continuously and pervasively redesigned in celebratory forms under the formative influence of power, such as the apartheid state as 'equal' but separately in advancement. In the course of forming collective representations of a racist society with divisions, the dominant discourse indeed

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sanctions certain impressions of the past as memories and thereby bars alternative formulations (Foucault, 1989b:28).

The 1950s were, ironically, the most productive in literature, theater and music. The names of personalities such as Can Themba and Mariam Makeba and productions such as 'King Kong' were synonymous with the Sophiatown of the 1950s. In light of this, it would be no fabrication to suggest that Modisane was a man of letters. The fact that the 1950s were productive in literature, is indisputable from the void left when black intellectual writers were pressurised into exile in the 1960s. The lean years of the 1960s would first be arrested by the black consciousness of the 1970s. In his sickbed, Motsitsi, Modisane's contemporary, paid tribute to the greats of the 1950s in the following utterances:

> Ou! Patience, Hazel, Mumsie, Lewis, Zeke, Bloke and all the rest of you. Life gets pretty dull around Old Burg sometimes now. Life gets pretty colourless without the goings on and the gossip and gaiety you gave it… I hope these characters in London and the USA appreciate what they've got that's all. (Mutloatse, 1980:129)

A noteworthy point about Modisane was his wide enthusiasm for world culture. It seems that, when he became mindful that black cultural development was handicapped by the repression of the regime, he selected and embraced international culture—in an endeavour to free himself from the grasp of South Africa. I am not implying that he wanted to free himself from black identity, but rather that he could not identify with South Africa as a community. To achieve his objective of belonging to the international community, he transferred himself psychologically and materially to other nations.

Modisane's self-identification became problematic due to the political realities on the ground, which made it difficult for him to identify with his 'country'. Although he tried to find a place to be accommodated in politics, he was disenchanted and resolved to be apolitical. Modisane had to find another way of identification, and he did so by writing. Foucault (1979:189) claims that "the power of writing was constituted as an essential mechanism of power". On disciplinary power, he notes:

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It is thus directed towards the body and mind and in so doing "reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions, attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives. (Foucault, 1989b:3)

3.13 The writer

Modisane reveals himself as an assertive and innovative man who survives in the white world, where he loved writing. By sharing all these memories with his readers, Modisane points out how he refused to live in the traditional role of the black man undermined by racist and dehumanising policies of the government—a refusal to become the uneducated and servile person, which the dominant culture of the day insisted on, through oppressive laws. In writing, Modisane created his own unreal, fictional community, self and nation:

> I directed my energy to my writing, determined to use it as weapon for gate-crashing into the worlds which rejected me, my writing showed a studied omission of commitment, that histrionics of tight-fisted protest, and in my first published short story. *The Dignity of Begging*, I created a satirical situation in which I sat back and laughed at the worlds which rejected me. (1963:88)

JanMohamed (2005) avers that when a subject is exposed to systematic and sustained injustices by society and its laws, she/he suffers a social death. There is, therefore, a need for a symbolic resurrection. Growth and waking up to race consciousness ultimately take the form of a self-search. Being in a condition of dispossession and dislocation, the character's priority is to invent a sense of homeliness and belonging, no matter where. There is then a collective effort to engage in what Bhabha has described as:

> A meditation on the experience of dispossession and dislocation – psychic and social – which speaks to the condition of the marginalized, the alienated, those who live under the surveillance of a sign of identity and fantasy that denies their difference. (2015:112)

Although Modisane laughed at the real world, one feels the agony and despondency he went through because of his rejection by white South Africa. One of the strong features of Modisane's text is that he interpreted the 'Apartheid South African Constitution' and how it impacted on black people. He notes this without necessarily relaxing or forgetting his project of his life story, as is clear from the postscript of the text:

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> The standard of law is white, its legislative authority is white, its executive authority is white, and as a black I had to adjust myself to it though I accepted it as unjust. The discriminations are written into the law, to protest against the discriminations is to be produced against the authority of law. I see South African Law as the basis and the instrument of my oppression. I am black, the law is white. (Modisane, 1963:51)

It was in this context that whiteness was entrenched as a norm. As Kincheloe argues whiteness entails:

> an authoritative, delimited, and hierarchical mode of thought. In the emerging colonial contexts in which whites would increasingly find themselves in the decades and centuries in contact with blacks, this would be framed in rationalistic terms – whiteness representing orderliness, rationality, and self–control, and non–whiteness as chaos, irrationality, violence, and the breakdown of self–regulation. As inferior beings, the 'others' had no claim to the same rights as Europeans – hence, white racism and colonialism were morally justified around the conflation of whiteness and reason. In order for whiteness to place itself in the privileged seat of rationality and superiority, it would have to construct pervasive portraits of non–whites, Africans in particular, as irrational, disorderly, and prone to uncivilized behaviour. (1999:165)

The numerous masks that Modisane wore throughout the text, only gave him a temporary respite from the severe realities on the ground. Rosenblatt concurs that:

> Every autobiographer must find a guise or voice with which to come to terms with himself and his world. If he is candid, he will admit to a number of voices and guises that he will adopt as his mind and his world enlarges, "We were the masks… and the mouths with myriad subtleties. (Rosenblatt, 1980:176)

Like many other black people, these guises assisted Modisane to survive in the country, but he never settled down. He was constantly searching for a stable life, community as well as national identity, which were continually shifting. Even the intellectual community with which he needed to identify, collapsed as his counterparts left the country. Urbanised blacks like Modisane had to come to the realisation that the injustices and contradictions that existed between blacks and whites

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required an endless challenge and struggle. They knew that, to ease their quandary and gain their rightful acceptance, they had to conduct a multifaceted struggle, both as individuals and as a collective. However, that recognition was to meet resistance from the Afrikaners, because a black man who sought recognition in the white world must be dehumanised to such an extent that when recognition comes, it will be for him as an animal (Rosenblatt, 1980:173). It was such perspectives of white South Africa that compelled Modisane to leave the country than to capitulate to the pressure or become white. By 'living white', I want to assert, he was just trying to survive the state's attack on black people.

Blame Me on History has outlined how the major drive behind all the characters is survival, and how spatial impositions repress every possibility of an ordinary life. Whether through its prejudicial political nature, racial discrimination or its stifling, restrictive forces, space constantly disrupts everyday routine and forces the characters to fight for their identity in their country of birth. To achieve his goal of firstly finding a community to belong to, and secondly realising his true potential as part of humanity, Modisane had to go overseas and turn his back on his motherland.

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter explored the portrayal of space in human existence and how space is an element in people's well-being. Space is conceptualised in its various manifestations. In Modisane's autobiography, space operates as the sphere through which characters co-exist within the domestic, community and national spaces. Furthermore, Modisane's autobiography presents space as the product of inter-relationships. In all the spaces we experience, among other things, proximity, exclusion, marginality and disruption. Displacement, for example, is related to identity and geographical spaces, which also points to spiritual, psychological and ideological spaces. It is worth remembering that Modisane grew up in various places with different people and other members of the dispossessed community. His work can be seen as an illustration of the multidimensional nature of space.

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CHAPTER 4

BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS IDEOLOGY AND PROTEST POETS

4.1 Introduction

As it is the foundational premise for this thesis, it is worth restating that scholars have pointed to the predominant attention to "Western theory" over African intellectual conventions as a pivotal challenge. Bongani Nyoke encapsulates these challenges:

> The major problem in South Africa is that it is characterised by West-centred frameworks. To the extent that these theories explain South Africa, so it is argued, they only succeed in presenting it from the perspective of western scholars. The problem is that of 'academic dependence' on western categories. (2013:19)

Given these established criticisms, we need more work which turns to the long convention of inventive social and political thought created by African social thinkers who sought to conceptualise the social world of their era. This tradition remains largely unexplored in social science analysis, yet these intellectuals offer authoritative social wisdom to questions which have been partially disregarded (Magubane, 2000). Such African thinkers react to questions crucial to those who lived through the social tumult of colonialism and apartheid and may offer a theoretical aperture into areas of society which the academy has hitherto been unable to envision as areas of social examination when using only foreign theoretical paradigms.

From the lens of Foucault's philosophy of power, this chapter utilises textual evidence to comprehensively investigate the operational system of power in the case of Afrikaner whites, during apartheid. It investigates how, as the ruling class, they manipulated discourse to make blacks accede to 'established rules' through a myriad of oppressive and dehumanising laws, such as the Group Areas Act (1950). In other words, the chapter reflects on: (1) how a hegemonic group explicitly and implicitly dislodges its subordinate counterpart to the status of 'the other' through the discourse of racial prejudice and rationality; (2) how the dehumanised resist being outsiders of mainstream society; and (3) wherein, in a society, a fossilised power structure exists, where all blacks are at the bottom and whites at the apex. The power design is deeply ingrained in socioeconomic status, judicial system and social life. In the eyes of white people, blacks are

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doomed to be servants for them, forever (Biko, 1978). Power is political or national tenacity, possession of control or command over others. Power for Foucault is not a tool of coercion but is everywhere, diffused and manifested in everyday interactions within interpersonal relationships. Foucault contends in this regard:

> We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production. (1979: 194)

This is not to say that power for Foucault is completely innocent and not dangerous or destructive but rather that it is possible for it to engage in a backward pattern, moving from the subaltern towards the super-ordinate. Usually, power is interpreted as the capacity of a subject to enforce his will over the disenfranchised, or the capability to force them to do things they do not wish to do. In this manner, power is perceived as possession. It is taken as something retained by those in power. However, in Foucault's view, power is not something that can be owned. It is instead something that acts and manifests itself in a particular way. It is more a strategy than a possession. Foucault further maintains:

> Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or as something which only functions in the form of a chain . . . Power is employed and exercised through a netlike organization . . . Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (1979: 98)

The suggestion of the shifting power relations is an indication to part of the investigation of this chapter. Closely linked to Foucault's idea of power as being pervasive, is the concept of resistance. Resistance, therefore, presents itself in this chapter as a way in which the subordinated endeavours to rise against oppressive structures through self-voicing and assertion. Resistance on the part of the oppressed means whenever they are subjugated, they fight back to challenge the power imposed on them. This means that the power relations between individuals cannot be lessened only to master-slave or oppressor-victim relations. They are productive relations because they signify resistance without which no power relation can be conceived: "where is power, there is always someone who resists it" (Foucault, 1980:4).

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For Foucault, there is a strong affinity between knowledge and power. Foucault contends that in the constitution of a field of knowledge, the existence of power is a prerequisite. It is "power [that] produces knowledge" (1989b:27). Knowledge, by gaining power, establishes the truth. He argues that the human subject is equally placed within power relations. Giving examples regarding power encounters from everyday life, such as resistance to the power of administration over the manner people live, he maintains that "this form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize… It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects" (1980:331), subject to someone else by control and dependence and secondly tied to one's own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge.

Memmi (1956) contends that "colonialism denies human rights to human beings whom it has subdued by violence and keeps them by force in a state of misery and ignorance that Marx would rightly call a subhuman condition" (xxiv). A mode of racism and superiority is part of the colonialist schemes in which human rights do not apply. In addition, Cesaire (1984) depicts this relation stating that "whenever there are colonizers and colonized face to face, I see force, brutality, cruelty, sadism, conflict…No human contact, but relation of domination and submission" (184:21).

Human interconnectedness, as a key focus of this chapter, encompasses multiple issues which include but are not restricted to: social interactions within and between groups of people, power and dominance over subjects, social, physical and emotional borders and racial prejudice. However, the greatest consideration in relationships between human beings, as Fanon (1963) argues, is "respect for basic values that constitute a human world" thus whatever is under examination is the intensity to which essential human values are (dis)respected in the course of interactions. Even as basic human values are transgressed, there is always an endeavour on the part of the violated to challenge in order to take back what has been taken away. This is an affirmation of power, the kind of which is another central concern of this chapter. Foucault sees power as omnipresent in society and is in "constant flux and negotiation" (1998:63). Power comes into play in this chapter not mainly as a tool of coercion but rather as a manner in which depersonalised subjects aim to regain a sense of selfhood, a restoration of fundamental human values.

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4.2 Biko and power/knowledge

Using the ideology of Black Consciousness both to deny the 'truths' of normalising discourses and to pursue subversive identity formations, Biko indicates how power both produces and imposes self-identity and how the human subject can find within the exercise of power a site of resistance. Biko illustrates how this ideology can be used to translate and reinvent one's identity within the workings of ever-present power relations. Although power spreads in normalising discourses which subsequently frame one's identity, it can also permit one's liberation through resistant practices. It emancipates the subject from passive positions, where stringent oppressive forces can determine one's existence; instead of being diminished to a victim of power, one can place a source of control from one's participatory position, whether through capitulation or resistance to it.

Instead of the conservative view of power as being 'on top,' Foucault stresses the understanding of power as existing in various forms of relationships and can rise from the bottom. This is confirmed by the view expressed by Foucault stating that "power is all around us and is manifested in our daily social interactions through people's ideologies and actions" (1980:3). Foucault demands an understanding of power that is "everywhere, diffused and encapsulated in discourse, knowledge and regimes of truth" (1980:2).

Thus, this compelling need for critical self-awareness is so that the practices of our lives can become processes by which we reinvent ourselves. It is in this understanding that we can establish processes of liberation. hooks describes this need:

> Yearning is the word that best describes a common psychological state shared by many of us, cutting across boundaries of race, class, gender, and sexual practice. Specifically, in relation to the postmodernist deconstruction of 'master' narratives, the yearning that wells in the hearts and minds of those whom such narratives have silenced is the longing for critical voice. (1990:27)

The critical examination of how power and knowledge work in master narratives and oppressive societies to silence, dehumanise, and shape individuals leads to a liberating position, where freedom resides in the ability to speak, resist, reshape, or as John Rajchman notes, to make "a constant attempt at self-disengagement and self-invention" (1985:38). There is an affirmation that

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Foucault also sees critical thought as necessary for the political emancipation of the individual. In a 1981 interview, Foucault recognised the possibility of personal transformation in criticism:

> Criticism is a matter of flushing out...thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such. Practicing criticism is a matter of making facile gesture difficult. In these circumstances, criticism (and radical criticism) is absolutely indispensable for any transformation…as soon as one can no longer think things as one formerly thought them, transformation becomes both very urgent, very difficult, and quite possible. (1988:155)

Biko's ideology is an instrument for self-reflexive analysis and agency as it critically examines the many perspectives and circumstances that lead to one's perception of self. This self-criticism consists of telling and paying attention to stories as well as giving and recording testimonies, which lends itself to active cooperation in determining what amounts to one's self-truth. This desire is not so much about comprehending the true story as it is about pursuing various angles, revealing the many gaps, and, ultimately, placing liberation in a reinvention of the self within vacillating reverse discourses that simultaneously agitate against existing notions of dominant and normalising ones. Biko's ideology of Black Consciousness is an example of this work. As Biko disengages from self-evident truths and pursues a critical examination of how power constitutes his identity and engages in processes of self-analysis, he seeks self-reinvention as a strategy of resistance. In other words, awareness and liberation are simultaneous. In making self-identity and the life that informs it a continual strategy of resistance, one can claim one's identity as a site of freedom where, as Foucault claims, "the work of deep transformation can be carried out in a free atmosphere, one constantly agitated by permanent criticism" (1988:155). In this way, critical self-analysis becomes a political mode of self-representation with tremendous potential for social and political changes.

4.3 The rationale of Black Consciousness

The main idea of Black Consciousness centres around the relationship between consciousness and new possibility, or as Biko (1970) examines, the correlation between self-awareness and the programme aimed at achieving liberation. A system of power can only be brought down when its

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dishonesty and unfairness are made evident (i.e., when the oppressed see it as wrong and thereby refuse to accept the system's laws, values and manners) and when there are chances to replace and reconstruct its damage. To make this possible, the oppressed must have the right psychological approach, and they must see themselves as people who can ask for freedom and fight against unfairness—which can only come from a mature political appraisal of one's reality and situation.

The Black Consciousness Movement emerged after a long period of political inactivity in black political circles, where political activities were put to an end with the ban on the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress, as well as the state of emergency that was forced by the apartheid government in 1960 after the Sharpeville massacre. It was the rage for what had happened at Sharpeville that gave Mandela the courage to move from a non-violent protest to an armed one with the formation of the military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (The Spear of the Nation) (Mandela, 1994:344).

Biko (1978) was critical of educated blacks who, in their imitation of white liberals, downplayed African culture and failed to understand the elements of resistance in these cultures. Biko's call for a relinking with the people's elemental resistance is, like Fanon's, a critical piece of the interaction of national consciousness. For Biko, the mechanism of nation-building had to be part of the modern conversation that attempted for the freedom of the previously left out and degraded masses, who are now emboldened to hear themselves speak and be part of creating a new nation. Inspired by the Black Consciousness beliefs, radical black poets, such as Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali and Sipho Sepamla, chose to express their statements against state oppression and the exclusion of blacks as equals in the South African political landscape in numerous forums, chiefly through their writings. They wanted to be part of the dialogue, and for Biko in particular, the process of nation-building had to be part of the modern discussion that strove for the liberty of the dehumanised who are now encouraged to hear themselves speak and be part of creating a new nation that would open up new spaces for divergent political beliefs.

The way in which members of a specific class or group see the structure of a society is filed under the sphere of ideologies. Literature is focused on the production of meanings and ideas within specific social structures and can hardly escape ideology, which informs literature even with its

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independence as a social practice. According to Eagleton (1976:16), "ideology is not in the first place a set of doctrines; it signifies the way people live out their roles in a class society, the values, ideas, images which tie them to their social functions and so prevent them from a true knowledge of society". These "values, ideas and images" have a socio-historical basis because they are framed by social developments in various historical eras.

It is during this specific historical period in South African history that Biko writes the following about the Black Consciousness philosophy:

> Briefly defined therefore, Black Consciousness is, in essence, the realization by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression – the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude … It seeks to infuse the black community with a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life (1978:49).

Couched in the statement is the idea that blackness is the basis on which the oppressed may obtain their identity as an equal group (a uniqueness of purpose). This kind of perception among Black Consciousness fans blurred over the main class differences in the name of black unity and, referring to the Eagleton phrase, is therefore not a true reflection of South African society. Black Consciousness prevents people from getting a 'true knowledge of society' by understating or hiding the challenges of class within society. It is in this regard that Black Consciousness can be seen as an ideology.

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Considering these overwhelming forms of racist oppression of the colonial/apartheid power structures together with brutal violence against the masses, the first battle gained by those who would lead blacks to freedom, will be to annihilate the intellectual and cultural signs of inferiority/superiority, "[to] make the black man come to himself; to pump back life into [the] empty shell," and to remind black people of "complicity in the crime" (1978:29) of their oppression. From the very outset, Biko has perceived the Black Consciousness ideology as an "inward-looking process". "The intent of Black Consciousness was to produce at the output end of its own processes, 'real' black people who do not regard themselves as inferior to white society, or as appendages of that society" (1978:79).

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The fundamental undertaking that the Black Consciousness Movement set for itself was the elevation of awareness of black communities so that they could understand their own condition, face their involvement in and inactivity towards white power and internalised racism, and begin working on the progress of self-recovery and freedom. Biko explained the Black Consciousness idea as:

> The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. Once the latter has been so effectively manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the white man, then there will be nothing the oppressed can do that will really scare the powerful masters. Hence thinking along lines of Black Consciousness makes the black man see himself as a being, entire in himself. (1978:74)

Biko's vision, like Fanon's, was a comprehensive review, a repudiation of white values, and a statement that the pursuit for a new humankind needed important change. The strategic reason for Biko's view on non-cooperation with white liberals has to do with the fact that Biko perceived them as a small group in the white community that was irrelevant to the broader struggle. In any case, the simple presence of white liberals in the political affairs of blacks may perhaps restrict the development of a self-ruling self-awareness among blacks.

After Sharpeville 1960, black South African literature was dealt a heavy blow: many black writers were persecuted, while Afrikaans literature thrived with the help of the government's support. Due to the censorship of writers and their work, restrictive laws, and arrests and imprisonments, many writers such as Bessie Head, Can Themba, Nat Nakasa, Bloke Modisane and Lewis Nkosi, went into exile. Those who stayed, including Serote, Sepamla and Mtshali, were forced to find new ways to voice themselves. South African writers, whether inside South Africa or in exile, were silenced by the government. The writers who were still in South Africa, therefore, had to find a way to articulate their anger openly towards the government while still being able to tell the world about the cruelty taking place in the country in order to get the needed support for changes. Poetry became the most viable genre for writers inside because it empowered them to carry out their undertaking of awakening the consciousness of the masses while avoiding quick and immediate detection by government censors (Gordimer, 1973:52).

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During this period, it became very difficult for writers to use fiction and autobiography as genres for fear of censorship and imprisonment. These writers then resorted to poetry as a short and straight form of writing. Poetry was presented as a more direct way to challenge the state because poetry's language could be hidden and unassuming. Shava writes the following about Mtshali, one of the first poets to use this technique in *Sounds of a Cowhide Drum* (1971):

> Mtshali's cynical and sarcastic attitude, his oblique and ironic use of vivid, suggestive similes and images, and the profound meaning that lies beneath the apparent simplicity of his poetry all contribute towards their total effect. (1989:72)

The literary interpretation of poets is just one of a few potential levels and methods of study of South African protest poetry which had its roots in the Black Consciousness ideology. Chapman (1989:183) also points out that the Black Consciousness poetry was helpful not only in rehabilitating a convention of black South African writing, but in invoking serious, often uncomfortable questioning by writers, and critics alike, as to the value and appropriate response to literature in a racially turbulent society. According to Watts (1989:37), South African writers began to produce a genuine literature of the people—a literature that was perhaps unparalleled in the history of South Africa—a literature which echoed to its readers their struggle for freedom, and simultaneously aroused in them a literature for the downtrodden masses, the enlightened and whites which could be regarded as a whirlwind in South African cultural production.

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Mzamane (1984) maintains that the writings of the Black Consciousness generation were inscribed directly and principally to the downtrodden and oppressed. On the other hand, he contends that the purpose of the Black Consciousness writers was to free them from white cruelty as much as from their own selves, and to free their people from the agony they caused on themselves and the suffering and destructive violence in the townships. Chapman's *Soweto Poetry* (1982:23) contends that the poems are only about uprisings in the Soweto township. However, Gwala (1988) rejects the label of Soweto Poetry and declines to be identified as a poet from Soweto. There was a collective disagreement among all of us over the act of labelling, an exemplary illustration of condescension within liberal discourse. The experience of residing in a state of perpetual apprehension and deep-seated resentment within this nation extends beyond the confines of Soweto only. Gwala (1988) was steadfast that blacks do not just want things; they want to be seen

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as human equals. Their struggle for freedom, justice and the right to a fair society is a struggle that primarily challenges the creation of place. In other words, they are challenging a society characterised by the middle-class values of regular growth and what Fanon defines as "white liberty and white justice" (1967a:221). This middle-class society, he argues, "is a closed society where it's not good to be alive, where the air is rotten and ideas and people putrefying. And I believe that a man who takes a stand against this living death is in a way a revolutionary" (1967a:224).

4.4 Ideology and protest poets

The freedom struggle was not only fought with military armaments. During the almost fifty years of apartheid, a similar line of resistance was followed which was mostly characterised by artistic expression, such as poetry. Paul Ricoeur (2004) exalts poetry for the sake of keeping memories, while incidents of power would often silence and delete it for political interests:

> … only poetry preserves the force of unforgetting. Poetry knows that the political rests on forgetting the unforgettable […] the voice of the unforgetting memory, excluded from the arena of power by the forgetful memory bound to the prosaic refounding of the political. The fortifying use of dissensus, the echo of the unforgetting memory of discord. (2004:501)

Ricoeur (2004) argues that poets fight the "censure of memory". It is the interpretation of their commitment to the people, against the power structure and its indifference, the only way they find to support the possibility of an opposing voice. Through Ricoeur, we are guaranteed that this voice is "the echo of the unforgetting memory of discord" and that "poetry preserves the force of unforgetting" (2004:501).

Mtshali's poetry collection, *Sounds of a Cowhide Drum* (1971), became the best-selling poetry collection in South African history. With the Soweto uprising of 1976, a mass battle was launched, and black writers came up with more literary creations, as seen in Mtshali's second poetry collection, *Fireflames* (1980). With the realisation of the anger and cruelty committed by government forces against the dissenting black people and going unreported, African writers had to change their way of writing and explore other means (like praise poem recitals, to be discussed later on) exposing the atrocities that were committed by the regime. Rebellious militancy was later accepted and supported by African writers, especially since Sharpeville. Insurrection was the only

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hope left in the minds of black people, and African poets supported a rebellious attitude towards the apartheid government. Poetry was used as an expression of anger and protest against the reactionary forces of neo-colonialism.

These poets exposed the social problems which black people experienced daily. Suffering, hardship and separation of black people combined the rebellious forces from different parts of society in order to fight the inhumanity of racial discrimination. The false awareness created by the power and belief of colonialism was overpowered by a new conviction of Black Consciousness in which a black person identified himself or herself with the African continent and its cultural values and beliefs whose relics lived beyond thousands of years ago and followed by their forefathers.

Poems written by Mtshali and Sepamla challenged how the old apartheid period was perceived through dubious publicity of separate but equal rights and other racist stories. The protest poets argued that there was a heavy emphasis on the role and value of traditional knowledge and Africa's indigenous cultures. In a 'counter-hegemonic strategy', the protest poets were well aware that knowledge was power, which could and had to be opposed by other forms of knowledge—embedded centuries-long and in traditional forms, e.g., in oral forms.

These poems refer to challenges faced by black people and overcome centuries ago, usually absent from official stories. They also reveal the stories of the ordinary people affected by these historical events, but do not belong to the dominant group and, therefore, have no voice or representation. The poems also set up opposing memories against the dominant stories, in which memories challenged and reclaimed the histories of dehumanised people that the apartheid state erased. Both Mtshali and Sepamla present new ways to enact their identities. In their common pursuit of close identification with their people, they combined folk traditions, heroes, legends, and the innovative use of language to identify with a bigger community of oppressed people by using the language isiXhosa in their artworks as an act of cultural rehabilitation.

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4.5 Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali

Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali was working as a messenger in Soweto when he published his first poetry collection, *Sounds of a Cowhide Drum*, in 1971. Mtshali studied creative writing and education at Columbia University, and in 1980, he published *Fire Flames* (1980), a collection of militant poems that was prohibited and then accepted in 1986.

For Ashcroft et al. (2001), the black body, whether male or female, was the obvious basis for viewing the colonised as inferior, and in this respect, Ashcroft et al. contend:

> The 'difference' of the post-colonial subject by which she/he can be 'othered' is felt most directly and immediately in the way in which the superficial differences of the body and voice (skin colour, eye shape, hair texture, body shape, language, dialect or accent) are read as indelible signs of the 'natural' inferiority of their possessors. (2001:321)

Scarry (1985) has described the complication of expressing pain—physical or mental—in language, because pain is expressed by its "unsharability, and it ensures this unsharability through its resistance to language; that is, pain's resistance to language is essential to what it [pain] is, because pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it" (1985:8). Scarry has expounded on the struggle to create a language that can effectively describe pain, finding that such language emerges when "the human voice only become visible" (1985:8).

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In 'The Washerwoman,' we observe that the black woman is not treated in a neutral and unbiased way. Her physical appearance as black in apartheid South Africa influences the way in which she is presented. By analysing the body and the processes of exclusion and inclusion, it is, therefore, possible to uncover and question the legacy and vestiges of apartheid thoughts and hidden atrocities against the powerless and weak. The consequences of this abuse are traumatic for the body of a black woman. Foucault (1977) writes that bodies are texts that can be written on and that can be used to discipline. According to Foucault, "[is] the body a technology of power," and this disciplining comes through a "normalising gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish" bodies (1977:184). "Within this normalising gaze, it is the subjects who have to be seen, their visibility assures the hold of power that is exercised over them" (1977:187).

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Who they are and what they represent, in relation to what is believed normal, is organised, sorted and placed in an order, of the unknown, until the uncovering is achieved through subalternity.

In poems and stories, the pain and horror to which female subaltern bodies are uncovered, are shown as important symbols for the structure of subalternity and represented as such. On the one hand, these bodies are delineated as spaces exploited for the exercise of power. On the other hand, they are spaces for resistance to gender and class violence, abuse and exploitation. Borrowing Scarry's (1985) argument about physical agony as a possible part of prejudice, the female characters in Mtshali's poem are an 'embodied subject' whose agency (voice) is represented by their suffering, tormented body. Mtshali represents the gendered subaltern voice through realistic portrayals of a bloodied and painful female body—a body rendered as such as a result of a discriminatory racial, economic and dehumanising system that cares nothing for the oppressed and abused female worker.

Mtshali reminds his readers to notice the particular body parts of the washerwoman. He translates the painful experience of the washerwoman into poignant gestures and images, the clinging and the stubborn hands, altogether arousing visually the painful experience this woman has endured; dejection is depicted on her face. No wonder then, the landscape itself infers a visual capacity for a discerning threat, indifference, and pain. This is obvious in the following lines:

> Look at her hands
> Raw, knobbly and calloused.
> Look at her face
> Like a bean skin soaked in brine. (Mtshali, 1971)

African women were invisible and thus muted during the apartheid era. During those times, domestic African women were humiliated to stay silent. They were detached from their humanity and, therefore, also their right to demand equality or to get simple acknowledgement that an atrocity had been committed against them. 'The Washerwoman' has adopted the subject position given to her by the unfair, unequal economic and political systems. She is fearful of the power of her white master and is unwilling to resist the master's power. The speaker addresses others: both inside and outside the boundaries of society and also herself. In this way, she establishes a

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collectivity of others who can claim an identity and face joys or sorrows. She indicates her own existence in the last line when she asks, "Why am I so tormented?" Instead of allowing others to name and classify her, the speaker proves that she holds the power to name her own sentiments and experiences (Foucault, 1988).

Marginalised individuals, like the speaker in Mtshali's poem, are socially placed in a manner that enables them to observe and highlight the hegemonic ideologies and social forces that permeate their culture. By being aware of her social situation, the speaker uses her position as an "outsider within" to indicate the unfair powers that restrict her language and identity. By composing her own language and identity, she challenges the hegemonic ideologies. She acquires an identity that is set in the framework of all other marginalised voices: the lonely, the oppressed, the disgraced, the abused, the exploited and the downtrodden. This subaltern, the Washerwoman, can speak, and what she has to say unravels the discrimination and indifferences that women face. The religious utterances and practices can be construed as a disciplinary technique to create a 'docile body' (Foucault, 1977:135).

> 'Good Lord! Dear Lord! She shouted
> 'Why am I so tormented?
> How long have I lamented?
> Tell me Lord, tell me O Lord' (Mtshali, 1971)

These rituals and religious practices are examples of "pastoral power" (Foucault, 1980:126). For Mtshali, the washerwoman's role was expressed by what Foucault (1980:125) identifies as "care" and "beneficence": The need to ask the Lord for rescue and redemption. The rituals and practises encompass various actions that involve the organisation, direction, guidance, and manipulation of individuals, both collectively and individually, during their whole lifespan and at every instant of their existence (Foucault, 2002). By participating in these rituals and practices the oppressed, like the washerwoman, are disciplined, just as they learned to "respect God": an invisible presence.

Biko (1978:84) argues that black people needed to reconsider the message in the Bible and make it more pertinent to the struggling masses. For Biko, the Bible should not be seen as announcing that all authority is divine. It should rather state that it is a sin to let oneself be oppressed. Malcolm X said, "Christianity is the white man's religion and that the "white devil" exploited Christianity

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to perpetuate the enslavement of the people of African descent" (Breitman, 1965:246). Right through his autobiography, one can see the criticism of the European oppression of black people and the rationale of African slavery endorsed by the Christian belief that the Divine is made in the image of white. He tried to bring to the black people's attention "the enormity, the horrors of the so-called Christian white man's crime, i.e., slavery" (Breitman, 1965:216). The 'washerwoman' in this poem is sinning by allowing herself to be abused. The reaction of God towards this "washerwoman" is interesting as it highlights the specific thought that Biko is trying to break down:

> 'My child! Dear child', she heard,
> 'Suffer for those who live in gilded sin,
> Toil for those who swim in a bowl of pink gin.

The washerwoman sees her plight as unfair and upsetting with no salvation in sight, as she has adopted it as the norm. The acquisition of the black body was an important factor in the unfair domestic system in apartheid South Africa—an extension of the Euro-centric system of colonisation and capitalistic expansion in which "the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body" (Foucault, 1977:464). 'The Washerwoman' epitomises the operation of disciplinary power, in which the legitimate exercise of power is unnecessary since the punished dependents have adopted the pervasive gaze of the surveillant, so that they themselves become possessors of the power over themselves: "[T]he exercise of power is not added on from the outside, like a rigid, heavy constraint, […] but is so subtly present in them as to increase their efficiency by itself increasing its own point of contact" (Foucault, 1977:471). "Spaces" can be real and unreal. Spaces can reveal stories and unfold history. Spaces can be disrupted, taken and changed through artistic and literary means […] "The appropriation and use of space are political acts" (hooks, 1984:152). hooks' theory about the revival of the past through one's memory presents a helpful lens through which to understand the washerwoman's odyssey and her need to retrieve lost voices. It is a journey born from a need to recoup the legacies of women's pain, suffering, struggle and triumph. It is a journey to recognise women as individuals and not simply as mute subjects of history.

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In the poem, 'The Birth of Shaka', Mtshali (1971:12) reminds the readers that the blacks once had a mighty king whom they should be appreciative of. This poem and others by Mtshali are affirmations of the identity and self-worth of black people. By retelling the stories, like the successes of past heroes, Mtshali uses the stories of the heroic as a cardinal point to trace the growth of anti-apartheid resistance in South Africa. Mtshali shows how apartheid rule shaped people's lives by bringing their strengths and weaknesses to the surface. Shaka is shown as an individual with unique characteristics and stories, but he was also symbolic of the larger social and historical situation. The history of South Africa confirms what Fanon says. Colonial rule—that is, the history of colonialism from its beginning to apartheid—was to some extent developed as a counter-measure against rebellion, resistance and daily violations of spatial boundaries by black leaders such as Shaka. The message here is that, since black people once had powerful leaders, like King Shaka, they had every reason to believe that they could win the struggle for liberty:

> …coming across the sea.
> His cry to two assassin brothers:
> "Lo! you can kill me
> but you'll never rule this land!" (Mtshali, 1971)

Mtshali uses the portrait of an animal throughout this praise poem. The reader is immediately drawn to the dynamic flow of energy in the blood of the young Shaka. The reference to a "cub" shows that Shaka was already mighty at a young age, someone who tore the neck of the "lioness". Likewise, the struggle to provide for the wellbeing of their young families became not only a financial need, but also the catalyst for the African women's political involvement in a number of resistance organisations in the 1950s, such as the "Defiance Campaign of 1952, the Anti-Pass campaign in 1955 and the Women's Resistance Movement in the 1960s", which led to Sharpeville.

The symbolism of "gods" alludes to the spirits of the ancestors. The readers are reminded that black people believed in the presence of the spirits of their ancestors and that these spirits play a major role in the everyday lives of the living. The ancestors were responsible for preparing young Shaka for the challenges he would have to face in his life. King Shaka is often shown in pictures carrying an assegai and bull shield as a descript looter and barbarian—as he was projected in the prejudiced apartheid history books.

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WaThiong'o (1993) argues that modern Africans were likely to ignore the successes and talents of their ancestors. It is, therefore, interesting to note that the speaker in 'The Birth of Shaka' suggests that Shaka's heart was in the shape of an ox shield. This emblem aimed to remind the readers that Shaka was a symbol of hope and the protector of black people against alien forces that threatened their existence as natives of the land. Mtshali brings to mind the past in a sentimental way and reminds the reader of communalism in African society. He refers to ancestors as a medium of guiding spirits towards the future against intruders on their land. The symbolism throughout the poem is mostly rural, and the past is seen in a different view than one is used to in biased history books—the Black Consciousness protest poets were determined to drive pride into the positive values of the past and rekindle its glories and successes.

4.6 Sydney Sipho Sepamla

Sepamla lived in Soweto most of his life and studied Education at the Pretoria Normal College. In 1975, his first poetry collection called *Hurry Up to it!* was published. During this period, he was an active member of the Black Consciousness Movement and was inspired by Biko. In 1977, a collection of poems called *Soweto I love you*, was published. It was possible that this collection was a partial response to the Soweto riots and was, therefore, banned by the apartheid government.

Sepamla's usage of the English language is related to the method of 'hybridity and assimilation'. His use of language expresses a specific, well-formed and artistic application. Sepamla uses creative language with respect expressing aspects of his people's culture. He owns English by combining with a different cultural code, for example, by using 'African-isiXhosa phrases'. Furthermore, he undermines the English language rules as well as the standard use of English and "subverts its meaning, since postcolonial writing abrogates the privileged centrality of 'English' by using language to represents difference while engaging a sameness which allows it to be understood" (Ashcroft et al., 1989:51). Sepamla assesses the genuineness of a standard English by modifying the language of imperialist power. Since for him "language is a material practice and as such is determined by a complex weave of social conditions and experience" (Ashcroft et al., 1989:41). In fact, Sepamla, in transforming the language, uses it in a particular way to make it 'bear the burden' of their [postcolonial] experience" (Ashcroft et al., 1989:10).

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Sepamla's use of English embodies the postcolonial voice that evaluates an old method of colonial power and represents a deed of resistance against the way in which English has been formed. Sepamla tells his readers that African people had rich and meaningful cultures before European colonisers came to their continent. African people were labelled as primitive, barbaric and cruel, as if they were waiting to be subdued and reformed. Thus, Sepamla opposes the imperialists' view that Africa was a 'dark continent' populated by people without a culture and history. The use of language in the struggle allows the natives to affirm their culture, the most important of which is the language itself, in order to establish a shared identity that strengthens, as well legitimises their resistance. Everything cultural becomes a weapon of resistance. The concept of culture itself as resistance was highlighted by writers such as Fanon who considered the search for a pre-colonial identity as one of the weapons of the natives against the risk of being overcome or absorbed by the ruling Western culture. Cabral underlines that:

> In culture there lies a capacity (or the responsibility) for forming and fertilizing the seeding which will assure the continuity of history, at the same time assuring the prospects for evolution and progress of the society in question. Thus, it is … imperialist domination, by denying the historical development of the dominated people necessarily also denies their cultural development. It is also … why imperialist domination like all other foreign domination, for its own security requires cultural oppression. (1980:55)

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What is implied is that to speak of culture, therefore, means to defy the colonial cultural hegemony. The native builds an identity that depends on a pre-colonial image to bolster independence and important differences from the coloniser. Following Biko's views, Sepamla (1981:104), in his striking solo poem called 'Words, Words, Words' points at the power of language. He also shows that language was used astutely by the apartheid government to define and secure the logic behind the existence of the Bantustan governments. Language has been contorted to destroy the existence of tribes in favour of nations. The whole poem is illustrated by sarcasm, as the speaker questions the way in which the apartheid system justifies the existence of the Bantustan states.

The speaker uses a powerful tone to warn the reader that there are words that are composed by people in power. The speaker also underlines that there are words that some people renounce and

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do not want to use or hear. The speaker finds it interesting that, even though some words are rejected by some people, there were some who took the same words and modified and twisted them to suit their context and political plans. Sepamla reminds the readers that people in South Africa are divided into different groups that the apartheid government deviously listed as nations, and he, therefore, makes a farce of it:

> there are no tribes around here
> only nations
> it makes sense you see
> ‘cause from there
> one moves to multinational

Sepamla contends that only when the basic layout of the black world is recognised, one will realise the crucial commitment for a reawakening of the sleeping masses. On a deeper level, Sepamla (1984:66–68) critically looks at the socio-political circumstances: this poem is a classical illustration of protest poetry because it clearly instructs the readers to study and recognise issues that are not quite visible or discernible.

The readers are advised to make an authentic judgement of the socio-political situation. They are instructed not to jump to conclusions, because then they might omit the important ‘discoveries’:

> discover the many nations of our land
> for ours is the land of tribes
> the African
> the English
> the Afrikaner
> the Coloured
> the Indian

As Biko posits, “we are oppressed not as individuals, not as Zulus, Xhosa, Vendas or Indians. We are oppressed because we are black” (1978:97). African cultural values, which centre on the appreciation of “man himself”, are not only crucial in the “quest for a true humanity”, but also stand in contrast to white liberal culture:

> Ours is a true man-centered society whose sacred tradition is sharing. We must reject, as we have been doing, the individualistic cold approach to life that is the cornerstone of

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> Anglo-Boer culture. We must seek to restore to the black man the great importance we used to give human relations … to reduce the triumph of technology over man and the materialistic element that is slowly creeping into our society. (Biko, 1978:96)

There is no doubt that Biko was influenced by Malcolm X. As Malcolm X stated, the imperialist and colonialist designs of the white race demonstrated to him that the core issue of colour on which white society debased 'African Americans' had no historical or religious foundation. He realised that America had disowned her black population and then taught them to resent themselves. He maintains that blacks "believed that their race had no history and thus considered themselves inferior" (Breitman, 1965:185). He came to the understanding that what African Americans needed to do was to re-establish their identity, and acknowledge and recognise the culture and language of both their African and African American ancestors.

Rather than just a "multi-ethnic or multiracial" nation, the Black Consciousness slogan "One Azania, One Nation" reiterates Fanon's double warning that if social recognition is achieved without a solid national awareness, it may "ironically" fragment into regionalism, tribalism and ethnic racism. At the same time, Fanon was concerned that if the "one nation" is not clear and "enriched", it could advance to a "consciousness of social and political needs, in other words, humanism, it leads up a blind alley" (1967a:204).

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Within and outside the one-party system, the 'native' according to Fanon, is somehow always violating the spatial limits. The history of South Africa bears out what Fanon (1963) argues. In fact, colonial rule—from its inception to apartheid—was somewhat created as a counter-measure against rebellion, resistance and daily violations of spatial boundaries. Segregation and the Group Areas Act—tribal homelands, Bantustans and urban removals—were all constantly challenged and in turn, were all white responses to anti-colonial insurrection and ongoing contraventions of the apartheid spatial order.

De Certeau (1984) explains how people utilise different forms of communication, such as poetry, to indicate spatial borders, describing those who belong within a geographical space and those who do not. He suggests that these patterns of communication are used to mark out spaces where:

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> The narration is 'established' on the basis of 'primary' stories … stories that already have the function of spatial legislation since they determine rights and divide up lands by 'acts' or discourses about actions … from the home … to the journey … from the functioning of the urban network to that of the rural landscape, there is no spatiality that is not organized by the determination of frontiers. In this organization, the story plays a decisive role. It 'describes', to be sure. But … 'a culturally creative act'. It even has a distributive power and performative force (it does what it says … it founds spaces. (1984:122)

In "this communication", De Certeau comments that language through poetry is an important aspect of the political space. In 'Ezi Piece – piece of Land', Sepamla (1984) highlights the adverse effects that the Bantustan law had on the everyday life of black people. Sepamla frustrates the important "Eurocentric critic" through the inaccessibility of his language in all the poems that are appropriate to an understanding of the 'black experience'. He presents unique opportunities to the reader for the recovery and restoration of the subaltern and insurgent voice, through for example, the use of a fast and acceptable more straightforward hybrid of English and township isiXhosa. Sepamla mixes isiXhosa and English to express the feelings of black people pertaining to the separate development theory (the different homelands according to each ethnic group as suggested by the apartheid architects). He indicates that English can be manipulated to voice the African experience sincerely and effectively. Sepamla, therefore, gives a voice to the voiceless through a collection of language forms, such as working-class English prevalent in township and rural life.

The readers are told that Bantustan institutions have created unnecessary problems and misery for black people. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), Fanon notes that the starving 'natives' do not need to determine the truth, because they are already the truth, seeing that they experience the truth of the colonial system— "its violence and dehumanisation" —and that they understand the truth of the anti-colonial rebellion as one of bread and self-respect. The speaker points out to oppression, food scarcity, a lack of work and the denial of basic human rights such as access to proper education. It is thought-provoking to note that the speaker daringly refers to homelands as "countries"! This was, in fact, one of the means by which the crafty apartheid regime tried to fool the international community that there was a united and happy South Africa without any disputes and discrimination: "separate but equal".

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The speaker assigns passivity to the inactivity of the black people and urges that they face the Bantustan law, daring black people to openly renounce the Bantustan institutions. Biko (1978:92) argued that Bantustans were created to offer a new but false direction in the struggle of blacks; it divided the black people's struggle into eight different struggles for eight misleading freedoms that had been determined long ago. This is made clear in the following lines:

> Man I don't like le nto bayi-perpetrata on me
> ngoba over the years ndazi i-oppression
> plus ne- scarcity of food and work
> ke why nge-one morning ndithi wake up to freedom

For Foucault, resistance calls into question what is accepted as correct and centres on what has been declared off-limits by society, religion, education, government, etc., as inappropriate, unacceptable, wrong, abnormal or false (Pickett, 2006). In other words, satire and sarcasm is a form of resistance. Within Foucault's framework, resistance seeks to subvert power, which is the overall purpose of satire and sarcasm (Pickett, 2006).

Sepamla uses stinging sarcasm when the speaker points to the Bantustan law as 'le law-ndini', which can be translated into English as 'the so-called law'. This symbolism highlights the high degree of contempt the speaker has for the Bantustan law. There is an applicable phrase that says, "give the devil his long rope" because it suggests that some black people were not inclined to resist the Bantustan law in the hope that the apartheid state would one day suffer because of its own actions.

According to Biko (1978:34), the Black Consciousness Movement tried to speak to the black people in a language that was their own. The power of isiXhosa as a language in Sepamla's poems intended to reach a large black and white audience and is one of the tenets of the expressed views of the Black Consciousness movement regarding conscientisation:

> Xa uthi look and tell yourself
> what are they doing kule psychology yam
> ngale philosophy ye-separation

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you cannot plan ahead

The power of isiXhosa, therefore, functioned as a set of disciplinary technologies "to set up and preserve an increasingly differentiated set of anomalies, which is the very way it extends its knowledge and power into wider and wider domains" (Foucault, 1980:198).

The emphasis on the term 'psychology' suggests that the Bantustan law affects the psychological well-being of black people. According to Biko (1978:95), the Black Consciousness Movement urged blacks to come up with their own ideas and act at their own pace, instead of that which was established for them by the system. Sepamla confirms this idea when he alludes to an uprising that was forced upon him and the black community. However, Sepamla wants to grab the opportunities and start a rebellion of his own at his own chosen time. This is apparent in the following lines:

I don't like le revolution
abayithi thrust upon me
I want to choose my own time
ukuthi grab i-opportunities
and then stage i-revolution in my life

Sepamla's privileging of the black voice on the matter of the black subject, points out the status given to blackness in this environment and backs Foucault's (2002) claim that disparities between understanding and competency identify and define relationships of power. This practice also underscores Toni Morrison's worry about the power dynamics that allow certain individuals to define both others and themselves, leaving others without an avenue to express their own perspectives. This behaviour exemplifies a dichotomy between individuals who possess knowledge and the ability to shape the world, and those who are subject to being represented by others (Morrison, 1995).

Biko's 'genealogical' quest for setting his mind free from the bondage of Eurocentric/ colonial/apartheid discourse has relevance here. His intense quest can be construed in the light of Foucault's observations on the stance of the 'dominant' and the 'dominated' in power relations. He contends that as power "exerts pressure upon" those who are under its control, they in turn "in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them" (1980:27).

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4.7 Conclusion

Hill (2015) admits that descriptions of Black Consciousness and Biko in art and visible culture express what she calls "an aesthetics of Black Consciousness" (2015:xiii). She identified the aesthetics of Black Consciousness as something that promotes black unity, African ancestry and revolutionary political action as central concepts in politics and ideology. By relating the aesthetic of Black Consciousness to the "culture of resistance" that it inspired from the 1970s into the present" (2015:xx), she reports on Black Consciousness as a "counter-aesthetics". In applying Foucault's theory to Biko's ideology of Black Consciousness, Foucault reminds us that certain regimes, such as apartheid South Africa, had disciplinary mechanisms that brought about injustices and inequality under its power discourse, but everyone should try their best to improve the social system by appealing and upholding justice, and more importantly, to share the conviction that all humans are born equal.

Black Consciousness adherents, poets, artists and other creative workers, as a result, are shown as working to counter dominant aesthetic practices. Thus, a desire for another way of thinking and being, is initiated in the black and popular South African imagination.

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CHAPTER 5

SEROTE'S *TO EVERY BIRTH ITS BLOOD*

5.1 Introduction

hooks (1993) and Bhabha (1990) contend that, when space develops into a site of resistance, it is no longer imagined, but evolves into a Third Space. For hooks (1993) being at the margin does not become an issue of choice because it is disempowering—people are marginalised and have no preference but to adopt the margin as a space of defiance. This space is the conscious, lived space of the people and carries their present and past history. Foucault (1980) interprets townships such as Alexandra, as a heterotopia, a site in which the multiplicities of power and knowledge, as well as the lived experiences and histories of the people related to them, are attained. In examining power, Foucault (1980) argues that the human subject is uniformly located within power relations. Giving examples with regard to power struggles from everyday life, such as resistance to the administration (e.g., of a government) over the ways people live, Foucault maintains that "this form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize… It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects" (1980:331). Soja (1989) argues that this spatial knowledge is converted into spatial action, in a field of unevenly-constructed spatial power (centre/margin).

The Third Space is not only a medium through which the marginalised aim to exert power, it is also the totality of their actions. (Third) Space is both a tool and a result of defiance. This points to the contest over the right to a space and the right to be different, to be on the margins. Thus, when people do not prefer marginality, both margin and core are displaced and deconstructed. Third Space is, therefore, vital for the survival of the suppressed. The concept allows us to recognise how they are observed at the centre and the margin simultaneously and understand both. The notion of Third Space is thus meaningful here because it unravels the duality of outside/inside, centre/margin and imagined/real (Lefebvre, 1991:72).

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5.2 Heterotopias, education and power

Tsietsi (Tsi) Malope, one of the central characters and also the storyteller in the novel *To Every Birth Its Blood* (1981), outlines the tortured memories of his childhood and his mental attitude through the creation and annihilation of black spaces in and around the city of Johannesburg. One of Foucault's (1989b) chief foci lies in his analysis of how space is utilised in power; Foucault argues that "space [or rather place] is fundamental in any exercise of power" (1989b:168). Foucault contends that domination over individuals, both physically and psychologically, can be attained by manipulating spatial relations: "societies are discursively constituted through a series of normalizing judgments that are put into effect by a system of divisions, exclusions and oppositions" (Foucault, 1989b:314). Under the racially segregationist and apartheid management of geographical space, metropolitan centres were white spaces, and Africans were confined to townships. Under such arrangements, black people's presence in towns and cities was only transitory and closely governed and regulated.

Foucault's (1979) interest is, therefore, about how place is separated to form spheres of inclusion or exclusion, so that those considered sick or abnormal are spatially detached from society's so-called 'normal' areas of social contact. Foucault (1979:86) refers to the exclusionary realms as 'heterotopias of exclusion' in which people considered abnormal or inferior are separated. Alexandra can be considered a heterotopia of exclusion, where the African populace, considered inferior by the apartheid laws, was placed. *To Every Birth Its Blood* (1981) covers an expansive historical era of the conflict against the apartheid state and its inhumane laws. Serote's novel analyses how people embrace new strategies to counter the stubbornness of the apartheid state. The most crucial of these is the armed struggle. He goes beyond the ambit of "Black Consciousness ideology" by designating his characters in the long tradition of defiance symbolised by the banned 'movement' (which represents the African National Congress). Tsi is a resident of the township of Alexandra, where he becomes an ardent supporter of the 'movement' even though he was born in Natal.

Tsi landed a job with an educational organisation, McLean College, and later as a journalist. Education is a motif that runs throughout Part I of the novel, conveyed mainly in reference to the

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disparity between his parent's education and Tsi's own. From his father's point of view, Tsi's education caused his estrangement:

> Education had fucked my mind up, he would say. His heroes were old men like him, who knew the law, who had respect, who were not like me, reading what white people said and believing it, and then walking the streets at night, hardly having time for God, cursing him for creating day and night instead of a long, endless day. 'You shame us, you young people," my father would say. (1981:86)

Education divides the generations. One of the crucial tasks postcolonial theorists promote is de-colonising the mind through intensely rooted practices of unlearning hegemonic means of being and knowing and reclaiming suppressed knowledges. Foucault (1977) argues that "it is through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work" (1977:82). Only after Tsi joins the staff at McLean's College does he realise the authenticity in his father's statement. In the final chapter of Part I, as Serote prepares the matters at stake in Part II, Tsi notes:

> Education is a socialising agency; in South Africa, black children are subjected to an education which is instrumental in imparting the dominant ideology of apartheid or separate development, a system which the black people in general abhor… History is taught, in both white and black schools, to distort the reality of South Africa; enforced segregation in schools entrenches the segregation system as a whole. (1981:129)

These aforementioned ideals propelled the Soweto uprisings, conclusively giving rise to protest literature.

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5.3 Identities and memories

The narrative then moves to third-person narration, with Tsi returning at the end of the story, just before he has to leave for exile in Botswana. Serote writes an identity for himself by mindfully aligning the contents to a symbolically remembered South African landscape. The narrative operates as a discourse on apartheid South Africa by attaching his present identity to a particular moment in history. He also endeavours to rehabilitate a social and cultural memory. Tsi is the lens through which we understand and experience the hardships, joys, struggles, pain, anguish, fears, hopes and relationships of black South Africans in the late 70s and early 80s. Tsi's journey is projected through flashbacks, memories of his childhood, dreams and nightmares, which makes it

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problematic to follow the horizontal trajectory of his story. A tremendous pain encases every memory, and as Tsi constructs his life story and that of the community by analogy, the mood is melancholic.

Serote became interested in the Black Consciousness Movement promoted by Biko and was motivated by the poetry related to black identity, humanity, self-respect, resistance and rebellion. In 1969, he was arrested and detained in solitary confinement for nine months under the Terrorism Act. During the 1970s, South Africa was a productive environment for a literary resurgence of the suppressed black voices that faded under state oppression. This was a decisive era for transforming political consciousness among black South Africans, and Black Consciousness that endorsed and advocated black cultural values, which helped entrench racial solidarity in the face of relentless state oppression.

The annihilation of Sophiatown was an atrocious example of the defenceless position of the oppressed who were not authorised to own land and who could, therefore, be torn away from their land at the desire of a government for whom the black presence was intolerant:

> First you have land taken away from the African people. That in itself means that they have been robbed of a site where they could construct an identity. You can't have a culture when you are being moved from one squatter camp to another. (Goddard, 1992:31)

Land is the site where the heart and soul of identity, longing and belonging are developed. Indigenous people make their place by relating both personal and communal experiences, life stories and histories with certain regions and landscapes—maintaining these spatial relationships is one of the most crucial aspects of identity. Interrelationships between land and people are manifold and subtle and are shaped by personal interactions with the environment as well as through a combination and collection of shared memories. People are socialised about their communities' intimate relationship with and to land, and they operate as a mnemonic mechanism in which a story of the past, memory or communal memories are brought to mind, which stories and memories are vital for political formations. Citing the land from tribal collective memories is one of the most important political and social instruments for linking people in a communal story (hooks, 1990:45). Land at this juncture is a living and layered memory. Indigenous people still consider space or the purpose of land as more than a site on which people make history or as a

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place where history is accumulated. For Foucault (Rabinow, 1984:22), histories retrieve and strengthen this power because of “themes of development and suspension, of crisis and cycles, themes of ever-accumulating past.”

5.4 Townships, ghetto and exclusionary spaces

A distinctive element of Afrikaner nationalist identity was principally an ideological construct that guaranteed power to the Afrikaner state, especially during Johannesburg’s expansion in the early to mid-twentieth century. At this time, there was great rivalry to share in Johannesburg’s spoils, especially because all ‘races’ contested for the same opportunities and spaces. Even Afrikaners, writes Beningfield, are “forced to compete with black workers” (2006:180). Preserving the city of Johannesburg for the whites meant that the black population’s right to legitimately settle in the city and to create a modernised urban identity was turned aside. The apartheid labour system meant black South Africans relied on the city for their subsistence. Together with the fundamentally prejudiced and divisive urban legislations that outlined the complicated terms of blacks’ urban engagement, this inconsistency distanced the black South African from the city.

After the state-sanctioned forced relocations and enforced separate development for black people, tension arose between the desire to be in the city versus being repelled by the city. This tension is inherently related to the figure of the unsettled labourer who did not have continued access or rights to the city, but whose (and family’s) survival was reliant on the city and the state (Ramphele, 1993). To be a black subject in the city during the height of apartheid was like being a migrant who still longed for access to urban modernity.

The construction of townships away from the city, such as Alexandra with all its attendant problems, augmented this tense relationship, as well as the geographical and political space from the townships to the metropolis. Alexandra, where most of the first part of the story takes place, and where Tsi’s family is relocated, is depicted as follows:

> Alexandra was pitch dark at night in those days... There were the police. They came on horseback ... in huge trucks, and shot for real; they came in Saracens and with machine guns and banged on doors, shouting ‘Afrika, Afrika’. Alexandra met them in song, rallies and demonstrations. There were beer raids. The pass raids. (1981:26)

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Foucault (1977) examines how human behaviour can be determined by seeing and being seen, and how the power of looking/staring projects itself in surveillance. Furthermore, the novel centres on the roles that surveillance and the spectacle play in the production of docile bodies to suit the desire of the dominant government. Foucault's scrutiny of power in surveillance is noteworthy to better comprehend apartheid's townships. He explores the power of sight as a mode of social discipline. He follows the progression of the modern prison system and finds that a more efficient manner to subordinate people is not through corporal punishment, but rather through the production of docile bodies. Foucault contends that docile bodies can be "subjected, used, transformed and improved" (1977:136).

Without the possibility to move willingly, the impression of being supervised and watched is experienced as disempowering for black subjects. Their privileges and sense of personal control are lessened, and they are rendered objects of the regime's intrusive gaze. A docile body is "seen but does not see; he is always the object of information, but never a subject of communication" (Foucault, 1977:200). Perhaps the most conspicuous indication of the perpetual surveillance is the apartheid police force positioned at entrances to townships. The police regularly monitor black bodies who develop a feeling of limitation. For the public, the police are the perception of the power of the government. As a result, citizens in Alexandra are sheer objects for the regime's penetrating gaze.

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In Foucault's schema of surveillance, he suggests that "with the police, one is in the indefinite world of a supervision that seeks ideally to reach the most elementary particle, the most passing phenomenon of the social body" (1977:213–214). However, in order to cover every single particle in the communities, Foucault states that "this power had to be given the instrument of permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance, capable of making all visible, as long as it could itself remain invisible" (1977:214). They seem to epitomise the "faceless gaze" (1977:214), which was considered by Foucault as fundamental so that they could reconstruct "the whole social body into a field of perception: thousands of eyes posted everywhere, mobile attentions ever on the alert" (1977:214). The police would impulsively start firing in the streets and claim the lives of many innocent black people at will, in the name of 'justice and safety'.

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Goldberg has noted that slum or ghetto spaces were delineated by "dislocation, displacement, division" (1993:187) and that it thrives in keeping the social and spatial practices of dominant groups apart from those of the subordinate groups. Slums are, therefore, the "primary mode by which the space of racial marginality has been articulated and reproduced" (Goldberg, 1993:190). Likewise, Kristeva (1982) points out how humans frequently voice a dread of the abject throughout their lives and that the abject can emerge in many forms, all of which threaten the human's sensitivity to cleanliness and harmony. While this is also relevant in terms of class, it is particularly unwelcoming in the case of the noticeable minorities in urban spaces, as the negative economic domain of the ghetto and its general condition of neglect, destitution and poverty is associated with hegemonic public discourse, to the 'degeneracy' of the residents:

> The racial slum is doubly determined, for the metaphorical stigma of a black botch on the cityscape bears the added connotations of moral degeneracy, natural inferiority and repulsiveness. (Goldberg, 1993:191)

Heavily armed police often turned every onslaught on the oppressed in townships that were unlit, disorderly, littered and with overflowing sewers, into a public spectacle and the private space of the dominant race of the house was presented as a theatre of the abject. Hence, the private place became a space for public and private defiance. Thus, the discrepancy between the public and private spaces belonged only to those white citizens who could affirm a private space at all, sheltered from the state, and a public space, where they could candidly engage with the state safeguarded by a set of civil rights that mediated the contact between the 'private' individual and the 'public' state" (Mbembe, 2001:62). The comparison between Alexandra and Johannesburg illuminates the disparity between the two places and presents a sense of the uneven position of blacks:

> The difference between the two is like day and night the Golden City says it well; the Dark City, by contrast, is dirty and deathly. The Golden City belongs to the white people of South Africa, and the Dark City to the black people. (Serote, 1981:25)

The apartheid regime constructed the spaces of black life, places of planned terrain (townships and Bantustans) where black people would forever long for better lives and where they would experience alienation and resistance when their desires were discouraged by the constraints imposed on them. Not only is one space constructed against the other, but the lives lived in each

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marked-off space spoke of the level at which oppression permeated the essence of social lives and interrelationships. The engineering of apartheid space was structural, legal, social, economical, political and personal in all of these planned terrains:

> The Saturdays and Sundays of Alexandra roar, groan and rumble, like a troubled stomach. The same days in Johannesburg are as silent as the stomach of a dead person. The weekdays of Alexandra are those of a place which has been erased; in Johannesburg, weekdays are like a time when thousands of people arrive in a place at the end of their pilgrimage – nothing is still, the streets buzz. (1981:25)

This was the fractured space where Tsi lived as a young person, an inexplicable world where any endeavour to demand equal rights was considered a punishable transgression. The practice of separate development affected all aspects of daily life in South Africa, from discriminatory education to separate toilets. Memmi's depiction of the colonised resonates with the above comments:

> The colonised feels neither responsibility, nor guilty, nor sceptical ... he is in no way a subject of history anymore – he carries its burden, often more cruelly than others, but always as an object. (1965:158)

Massey agrees with the notion that the spatial arrangement of social connections compels us to acknowledge our interdependence. She emphasises that our individual identities, as well as the identities of the spaces and time periods that encompass and separate us, are formed through this interdependence (1993:139–145). Gilroy recognises a decisive consequence of what he labels an "exclusionary identity":

> Taking pride or finding sanctuary in an exclusive identity affords a means to acquire certainty about who one is and where one fits, about the claims of community and the limits of social obligation. (2000:107)

According to Gilroy, it can be helpful if one considers oneself associating with a close community, even if it also points to the exclusion of those who do not. There are no easy explanations or simple characters in *To Every Birth Its Blood*; instead, the novel illustrates the complicated processes of social interaction and identity development in the social spaces as well as the strains and dynamics that emerge from them, first in Sophiatown and then in Alexandra.

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In one of Tsi's earliest memories, he outlines the anguish his family was exposed to during their forced removal from Sophiatown:

> The police were there, with guns, dogs, saracens, trucks, bulldozers, everything that predicted the downfall of the people. This after those people realized that Sophiatown was their only choice where they could build a house, raise children and where they could go when they were tired, and where they built on it with all their might. The bulldozers came, and swept their houses off the face of the earth. (1981:51)

5.5 Domestic space and collective remembering

The domestic space of the home as a framework is deconstructed to mirror its position as a contested site of social realities. The spaces of the domestic interior paradoxically amplify the meaning and power of the 'home' signified by the township house. It brings into the spotlight the notion of safety, security and stability linked with the 'home'. When seen in their private spaces, the reader sees a snapshot of the characters' lives that is uncommon: an observation into their 'domestic space' that informs us about their everyday 'signifying practices', their lived space (De Certeau, 1984:145). Beyond the place, we detect a lot more than just appearances; we see the multiplicity of "functions and practices of which private space is at once the effective decor and the theatre of operation" (Ibid). In other words, their individual space becomes part of the public sphere, which makes possible the interaction of divergent fiction depictive of local life. hooks has illustrated the home as a site of resistance:

> Despite the brutal reality of racial apartheid, of domination, one's home place was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist. Black women resisted by making homes where all black people could strive to be subjects, not objects, where we could be affirmed in our minds and hearts despite poverty, hardship, and deprivation, where we could restore to ourselves the dignity denied us on the outside in the public world. (1990:42)

Tsi matures in a tiny township home with numerous fears, hardships and anxieties that derive from his life with his mother and father in Sophiatown. As a child, he says:

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> I used to sit next to the stove, on the floor, dreaming, looking at my mother as she was preparing food for us, listening to my father as he talked to her; I had feared, cried, and wondered with them about all that was happening. (1981:51)

These emotions and memories embody part of his everyday family life. After the Sharpeville carnage of 1960, the family spent hours every day probing the daily paper for names of people lost or injured in the shooting. David Middleton and Derek Edwards note that collective remembering is fundamental to the identity and integrity of the community (1990:10). Memory is an essential component of who we are, "we preserve memories of each epoch of our lives ... and through them ... a sense of identity is perpetuated'" (Halbwachs, 1992:167).

Boykie (an activist) concedes that history has been ripped from their memory. Boykie admits, "we have been beaten into submission" (1981:66), and later, "...but that's because we are a defeated people" (1981:68). Serote argues that:

> When fictional characters, or actual black South Africans, look at their past, they only see the history of the white conquest. The rest has been re-written, "beaten" out of black memory. Until texts are written about characters that are able to actively reverse the trend of defeat, and re-write the history of South Africa, the process of remembering is worthless. It holds only false memories that tell of the white government's perpetual supremacy. (Lockwood 2008:44)

For WaThiong'o, the position of the African writer consists first and foremost in rectifying the images of her world delineated by European languages and delivering it from the comprehensive grip of hegemonic imperialist ideology. The task can be done chiefly by recovering previous indigenous history found in oral traditions and the memories of older people (WaThiong'o, 1993:22). The benefits of elements from oral traditions become a mechanism for African writers to restore their lost legacies and traditions through the relevant use of the cultural and linguistic tools available to them. In the novel, Dikeledi concedes that an old woman named Ma-Maria "[is] still a fighter" (1981:228). By using the word 'still', Serote affirms Ma-Maria's age; she has been resisting apartheid for a long time. The relevance of their oral heritage, as disclosed by Ma-Maria, serves as a motif for the whole of South Africa to rehabilitate the history of their oppressed lives. If people regulate time, Serote contends, they will understand it. If they recognise time, they control history. If they determine history, they have the potential to take their land back from the

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apartheid state. Like Boykie, Dikeledi knows her people grieve and pine for historical memories of their past. Consequently, she resolves to ask the old woman about her life and her story "for record, for history, for memory" (1981:228). By understanding this history, the people of Alexandra are allowed to recover their long train of events, successes and failures through memories.

The interconnectedness with the roots and places of the ancestors is vital in constructing a sense of identity. As a result of hegemonic historiography, these genealogical roots can only be produced in the form of stories, or of fictional creations of memories, so it's the obligation of the storyteller to devise and preserve them:

> The figurative power of stories holds out the possibility of reconstructing our relationship to place, of connecting us not only to past and future places but to lost ones, or ones never had to begin with. (Su, 2005:597)

Serote argues that the people would relinquish their history if one generation failed to teach the next to secure the black history of South Africa before it could be lost. This missing past would then have provided the excuse for the apartheid regime to capture their own interpretation of the black man's story.

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5.6 White and Black spaces

In the novel, the aspect of racism is not only depicted at the state level, but the propaganda also penetrates the language of ordinary black subjects who take on the roles prescribed by the regime. Tsi critically questions the justification of the Group Areas Act of 1950, which circumscribed racial groups based on skin colour to distinctive residential areas and business sections in urban areas. This also resonates with Foucault's argument that "racism is inscribed as the basic mechanism of power" of government laws (1997:254).

Fanon's declaration on the aspects of identity and blackness raised by Serote is relevant to the actions of the central character, Tsi:

> From the moment that the Negro accepts the separation imposed on the European he has no further respite, and it is understandable that henceforward he will try and elevate himself

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> to the white man's level. To elevate himself in the range of colours to which he attributes a kind of hierarchy. (Fanon 1967a:81)

Serote addresses the issue of racism, framed differently by many other names the world over, arguing its objective is always the subjugation, dehumanisation and disenfranchisement of the black individual. When Tsi and the lift porter, "an insane racist" (1981:105), share the lift, the racial encounter between them is replete with emotion and hatred:

> His job, as a white South African, was to remind me that I am a kaffir, and I had taken it upon myself to remind him he was a settler. (1981:103)

There is a resemblance between disparaging terms used in South Africa and America in the way people of colour are addressed. Malcolm X regularly attacked such utterances in speeches by exposing the concealed racism and the communication networks propagated terms such as 'negro' and 'race riots' (Tyner, 2007). The imperialistic ideologies of the white race convinced Malcolm X that the primary aspect of colour on which white society desecrated African Americans had no historical or religious grounds. He realised that African Americans required knowledge about the culture, history, heritage and language of their African and African American ancestors to reconstruct their identity. Tsi's encounter in the elevator demonstrated the oppressiveness of most white spaces that define black bodies. This mirrors Fanon's description of the classical encounter between the black and white person in *Black Skins, White Masks* (1965). Fanon (1967a) contends that white people have created the aspect of blackness in such a way that when a white person looks at black bodies, the white man's gaze is fixed on the black person's body, race, and descendants. The black person is not observed as a particular individual, but as a black man/woman in a white space:

> I am given no chance; I am over-determined from without ... I am the slave, not of the 'idea' that others have of me but of my own appearance ... And already I am being dissected under white eyes, the only real eyes. I am fixed. (1967a:87)

Sara Ahmed contends that "spaces acquire the skin of the bodies that inhabit them" (2006:132). In wider Western societies, universal public spaces are generally "oriented around whiteness," which tends to make "non-white bodies uncomfortable and feel exposed, visible and different when they

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take up this space" (2006:133). Black bodies can be diminished by discrimination, whereas "white bodies are comfortable as they inhabit spaces that extend their shape" (2006:134).

The master-subordinate relationship resulted in the binary of the civilised and the barbaric. Racism can, therefore, be inferred as, "a direct extension of colonial policy which "continued to receive both overt and covert support from the ex-colonial powers" (Ashcroft et al., 1995:50). As early as 1952, Fanon drew the attention of the readers to the aspects of race and colour—that even the black and white division bore much symbolism which was later adapted into biases and assumptions. Whiteness symbolised purity, wisdom, justice, whereas blackness was mostly related to sin, evil and ugliness. Boehmer maintains that "racial and cultural supremacy obviously played a key role in validating imperial rule" (1995:36), but that it is no coincidence that the supreme jurisdiction is mostly in consensus with European concepts and dominant discourses of power. It is quite tempting to concur with Fanon, who contended that a, "white man [is] enslaved by his superiority (1967a:12) and is not able to situate himself in any other manner than an authoritative position.

5.7 Regimes of representation and the subaltern

The spat goes beyond the incident between Tsi and the lift porter; it turns into a discussion with the porter's white colleague who is also in the lift. To Tsi's aversion, the colleague gets tangled in a heated altercation with the lift porter on his behalf, "perhaps thinking I was speechless, as kaffirs should be" (1981:130); "they went on, like fire and grass in rage and destruction, talking about me, about what one should say about or to me" (1981:130). Hall (1997) cites racist regimes of representation, and Siapera (2010) in an endeavour to expand Hall's racist regimes of representation, constructs additional means to recognise the representations of the subordinates, especially people of colour. Siapera positions her work within Foucault's (1970) term of "regimes of truth", which illustrates that images and representations are part of a bigger nexus of power that practically translates them into true portrayals of who or what they represent. Just like Hall, she substantiates that there is always a multiplicity of regimes of representation operating at once, and that no regime of representation is equivalent in power; thus, she maintains that specific regimes of representation are greater than others in announcing and defining establishments and groups of people. Within a discriminatory regime of representation, coloured people are typically essentialised as part of a culture that is prejudicially related to race as lazy, uneducated, stupid,

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incapable, sexually irresponsible and dirty. They are also heaped by gender in such a way that we are selected as a group that must be educated, spoken for and suppressed (Hall, 1997).

Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2010) argues that the ‘subaltern’ can be recognised within the background of anti-hegemonic practices, movements, resistances and encounters against distinct social exclusion. From the perspective of the subaltern theory, individuals who are considered the “other” are perceived as lacking agency or the ability to express themselves, mostly due to factors such as race, class, or gender. This statement asserts the notion that norms are established and reinforced by individuals in positions of power and are imposed upon marginalised groups. In the essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, Spivak (1988) studies the condition of the subaltern subject and how it can be transgressed by the politics of representation. Since only powerful and privileged people in the communities can be represented, the successful representation of the subaltern subject can be an ineffectual venture. It will always place the subaltern in the marginal domain, the mute core, the centre of voicelessness. Thus, subalterns are diminished people who have no vocalisation, and find it challenging to speak. In short, Spivak contends that the subalterns are not people who can be represented by the powerful and privileged people. They are subjects, not objects who must express themselves. They are pioneers and subjects of their own voices (Spivak, 1988).

Agency (recognition of speech and action) is attained through concerted involvement in actions permitted by mainstream institutions. Since there is no space for the association of the subaltern to fully participate in any political involvement, there is no way to voice their consciousness in a language intelligible to the mainstream. It is evident that the subaltern, such as Tsi’s father and mother in Serote’s story, do not have the recognition of power and active resistance, which makes them susceptible to the state’s onslaught and leaves them with no space for resistance against the inhumanity directed at their minds and bodies.

5.8 Trauma of the apartheid landscape

According to hooks (1993), the enduring impact of the apartheid landscape continues to shape the experiences of black individuals, with manifestations of whiteness in everyday life instilling anxiety inside the psyche of black individuals. This fear influences their perspectives of the world

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and social interactions, ultimately moulding and changing their conduct. The grim realities face Tsi and his family members when his brother, Fix, who was involved in clandestine matters against the apartheid state, disappears, and when the Malope family cannot locate him, apprehension and disorientation ensue.

The discussion of an all-powerful apartheid regime plays a pivotal role throughout the novel. The regime is portrayed as constantly observing, imposing discipline, dealing with insurrection, possessing the capability of instantly responding with force, and informing people what to believe as 'true'. In the novel, the discourse of an all-powerful regime consists of a binary pair that contrasts orderliness and lawlessness. Order is presented as correct, safe, and good, while chaos is portrayed as wrong, dangerous and bad. Within Foucault's discourse, power can specify the way in which a government pressures people to comply (Pennycook, 2007). As summarised by Bertens (2001), what is regarded as truth or knowledge is decided by discourses which were also selected by other people over time to mirror the inclination to preserve order in society. Foucault contends that the time of disciplining is also a time of postponement, of lives deferred where the liberty but also the rights of the subject are put on hold (1979:269). The role of the prison is to retain "the person and his body as security […] breaking communications, suspending time" (Foucault, 1979: 209). The perilous conditions of the oppressed, who face state-sanctioned onslaughts by the police, are the material with which black people's lives are constantly interwoven. In our first meeting with Tsi, he is distressed because of the disappearance of a beloved member of the family. His brother, Fix, is in prison after the police apprehended him during one of their usual relentless searches for people suspected of being associated with the 'movement'. Tsi struggles with the state's stubbornness and informs the family of Fix's incarceration under the Terrorism Act of 1967. He says to Kgoli, the shebeen queen's daughter, who is bewildered by Tsi's inability to explain a series of questions about Fix's detention: "I have no way of knowing, no one can ask, see, or talk to anybody about him. That is the law he is arrested under" (1981:32). With the recognition of the totalitarian character of the state and its affiliates, notably the dreaded "Special Branch", Tsi's train of thought causes him to experience panic attacks:

> Fix, shit, what was happening to him. All the stories I read, all the tragic stories about political detainees falling from stairs, jumping out of the windows, committing suicide

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under strange circumstances, were unleashed, they flashed past me and I wondered where Fix was. (1981:32)

One of the apartheid regime's cruellest weapons against activists was that they refused to make information accessible to where people were detained, what they were charged with, under what circumstances they were held, and what had befallen them. This resulted in family members and loved ones to be in a perpetual state of anxiety with questions that distressed their imaginations about whether a "picked up" (1981:77) member was still living. It, therefore, became even more painful for the Malope family who did not know what the truth was, especially for the mother who somehow remained optimistic:

> All of us, in conversation whipped up by the glimmer in my mother's eyes, had come to accept that Fix's name was a way of refreshing an unhealing wound [...] The only hopeful news about Fix we read from the eyes and faces of the Special Branch ... who now and then came to ask for a pair of trousers, or to say: 'Your son got mixed up with communists; punishment for that is severe.' That meant that Fix was still alive. (1981:112)

Laura Di Prete (2006) contends that a traumatic story can only be told if we rethink our understanding of the notion of 'voice'. First, we must recognise that testimonial voice—like trauma—acts separately from time and space. Furthermore, we must isolate voice from an exclusive relationship with language and instead broaden its domain to include verbal, nonverbal, physical, and written signs. Most importantly, we must recognise voice as related to an extended notion of 'body' that is "tongued and in touch with what the mind cannot know" (Di Prete, 2006:88). "The appropriation and use of space comes down to political acts" (hooks, 1990:152). Serote's novel illustrates a particular interest in the "retrieval of black history" (Sole, 1988:70). His handling of history centres on the rehabilitation of his culture based on a reconstructed past. To attain his goal, the author constructs a story of courageous deeds of an illustrious past. The positive recollection of the past, with the intention of putting the present into context (which embodies Black Consciousness), is still there.

5.9 The elderly and disillusionment

Tsi regards his grandmother with respect. Respect for the elderly is a motif that arises throughout African literature and history and refers to the heritage of various indigenous societies. Linked to

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protest literature, it holds another value: the relationship between the forebears, as well as between the central subject and the elderly strengthens the recognition of political inequalities of the past. During Tsi's detention, while he was exposed to harsh "spiritual, psychological torture" and "physical brutality", he draws on the courage he picked up from his grandmother. He recalls the lessons she taught him about solidarity and allegiance—that one that must "be made with and among other people" (1981:73). He remembers that his grandmother stated that he "was the only one who would know which people [he] could make the journey with" (1981:73). He relives lessons about the history and struggle of his people:

> Child, you must know, in the darkness of your past, where you come from ... that your past is so scattered, nothing could hold it, that you have a future to build" (1981:73).

Education divides generations. Serote relates, through the storyteller, the issues with respect to education and history. Tsi states:

> Education is a socialising agency; in South Africa, black children are subjected to an education which is instrumental in imparting the dominant ideology of apartheid or separate development, a system which the black people in general abhor ... History is taught, in both white and black schools, to distort the reality of South Africa; enforced segregation in schools entrenches the segregation system as a whole. (1981:129)

The manner in which Tsi's father diminishes through the years suggests the value of history to individual and cultural recuperation, as Memmi (1965) emphasised. Memmi contends that colonised natives are dislodged from their past by colonialism's disruption of national history: "The history which is taught [to the colonised] is not his own" (Memmi, 1965:105). At the same time, the natives are generally removed from the creation of their own autonomy, so that "planning and building his future are forbidden. They must therefore limit themselves to the present, and even that present is cut off and abstract" (Memmi, 1965:102). With his independence rendered obsolete by apartheid politics, Tsi's father is detached from his cultural heritage. Powerless to oppose the impediments, his father slips into apathy, disillusionment and depression.

Because he is not linked to his family and being out of prison and at home, Tsi is powerless to gain from his father. He seems fully conscious of both the battles they struggled in and the reasons for their capitulation, but ultimately, he does not seem to bother about their past. He reminisces:

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> Many townships have gone and many people have gone down with them. … Long ago, [my father] used to walk fast, wake up early in the morning, work late into the night. Now something has happened to his movements. His back bends forward, he walks slowly, almost dragging his left leg. … Every time I see my father, I think about the stories he used to tell us. About what happened to him as a little boy. As a young man, when he began to work for the white people, and when he realized he had to rely on himself. … Then suddenly, as if the clouds had gathered and covered the sun, a gloom hung on his face, eyes, and even in the house. … Something had snapped. Nothing was visible. No words meant anything. … These old people had, with all their strength, with all their lives, tried to build a future for us, but everything was against it. The eyes of the old people, their voices, their movement, even the way they chose their words to talk to us, or the way they would now and then hold our hands, had an end, an admonishment about it. Nothing seemed to be alive anymore. … Yes, the old people had no more strength, there had not been any battles won, every one of them was worn out. (1981:51–53)

5.11 Black Consciousness, resistance and solidarity

This is the time when Tsi resolved to terminate his journalistic profession, which had left him with little to no political voice, and take accountability for his own life. Urged by his grandmother, Tsi finally decides to manage his own life. Serote's historical framing of the struggle for liberty helps the reader to grasp the intensity of the intentions of those fighting for their emancipation. The struggle is illustrated as something much deeper than a conflict between black and white. It is a struggle for human dignity, freedom and equality (Mnthali, 1999:40). The comments of Onni (a freedom fighter) at the Alexandra Créche and Welfare Centre (1981:176) illustrate and are reminiscent of previous resistance campaigns such as the Sharpeville Anti-Pass campaign, the Cato Manor resistance against beer raids and resettlement, and the peasant uprisings in Sekhukhuniland and Pondoland. hook's (1992) treatise about the awakening of the past through one's memory produces a helpful lens to understand Onni's journey and her inclination to reclaim lost voices. It is a campaign born from a desire to regain the legacies of women and men's pain, suffering, struggle, triumph and pride.

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Onni literally expresses the symptoms that Fanon outlines, specifically when she denounces the hegemony of the apartheid system: "We are the people, who have struggled a long time, now we have to use the lessons of our struggle" (1981:172–173). Within this context, 'struggle' suggests the toppling of an unjust system, whereby it carries out orders of massive carnage on the regime by using bombs to annihilate government targets that epitomise this hegemony: "When the native is confronted with the colonial order of things, he finds he is in a state of permanent tension and impatience" (Fanon, 1963:52). Serote acknowledges a continuous storyline here, namely that the presentation of the earlier resistance operations that have given shape to the present-day conflict. He does not refer to the pre-colonial period as a model of non-exploitative relationships within society. He also evades defining the prevailing state of oppression as something that emerges solely from white penetration and enslavement in South Africa. He offers an expansive perspective that attributes oppression on the continent to "imperialism" (1981:328) and by implication enslavement and exploitation.

Resistance in the novel leads to the reintegration and resurgence of political activities in the 'movement', and it is this organisation that is perceived as the embodiment of the tradition of resistance against oppression and intransigence against the regime in South Africa:

> For those young people who have acknowledged our history of struggle as very old and of our very experienced organisation, the ANC, I think there is a point of departure. (Wilkinson, 1988:105)

Biko's ideology of Black Consciousness exemplifies the anguish of Fanon's (1963) decolonised man/woman: "In the colonial context the settler only ends his work of breaking in the native when the latter admits loudly and intelligibly the supremacy of the white man's values. In the period of decolonisation, the colonised masses mock at these very values, insult them, and vomit them up" (Fanon, 1963:43). Biko's refusal to capitulate to the forces of racial oppression that work to dehumanise and hold the black masses in perpetual mental and physical enslavement illustrates the third phase of Fanon's (1963) native intellectual, noted as the "fighting phase" where "the native, after having tried to lose himself in the people and with the people, will on the contrary shake the people...an awakener of the people…a revolutionary figure" (Fanon, 1963:222).

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For Biko (1972), it is only by discarding all the conditions of oppression and maltreatment that one can begin to talk about mutual respect, humanity and a non-racial society. In this, Biko directly echoes Fanon, who clarified that freedom could not be given but must be consciously seized by subjective action (1967a:220–221). For Biko, solidarity will defeat fragmentation and disunity that breeds distrust and despair (and therefore division). In addition, for Biko, as for Fanon, solidarity is based on a direct response against the oppressor: an "alterity of rupture, of conflict, of battle" (Fanon, 1967a:222). Biko contended that the intellectuals had to rethink concepts of collectivity and what it meant "to return to the source" (Cabral, 1973:62) and that such a return would desire mental emancipation from all the inferiority complexes coming from years of living with artefacts of colonialism and apartheid. Moreover, especially for Biko, this means liberation embedded in the African cultural concepts of unity, collectivity, compassion and sharing, which puts the human being at the centre.

While the novel partly centres on the Soweto upheavals, it is considered the trigger factor that consolidated black unison by overcoming class disparities. This is apparent in a conversation between Oupa and John, when Oupa remarks: "... for the first time, we were one; school children, father, mother, teacher, shopkeeper, rich and poor, we stood as one and fought" (1981:193). Oupa cherishes the solidarity that arose as a result of the development of the collective identity that characterised the oppressive past. The consolidation of black unity is implicitly related to the awareness campaign of Black Consciousness: "People have realised, have discovered who they are and what they can do" (1981:193). This statement implies that black awareness was finally realised, and that the major upheaval of 1976 was a clear expression of black solidarity—the issue at hand was to pursue new strategies to confront the regime. However, there was a profound political reason why the Black Consciousness Movement maintained a political distance from white liberals, namely that whites had sole access to the exclusive privileges of racial capitalism, and that this was ensured by the subordination and exploitation of blacks. Their sympathy with the struggle of blacks could not —because of their privileges due to their race —alter their position as 'white'. It came down to the fact that the criticism against the white liberal could only go so far that whites' own interests and resources at all levels were not threatened. It required the preservation and assurance of the 'right of conquest', which formed the basis of white presence in

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South Africa. Biko expressed his criticism of white liberals as an inconsistency in a common political vision as impossible:

> They might be genuinely motivated in thinking they are fighting for freedom, but we do not believe that their freedom is our freedom, and that the type of freedom they are fighting for is not necessarily the same as what we are fighting for. (Biko and Lanning, 2014:142)

There is a connection between Biko's theory of black political consciousness and his repudiation of white liberal involvement in the black freedom struggle, since blacks could not come to their own consciousness and could not be fully politicised if their struggle at all was to be directed, influenced or controlled by whites (who, according to the Black Consciousness theory, characterised the "oppressor group" without exception). The pedagogy of Black Consciousness achieves its pivotal clues —independence, unity and liberation —from Freire:

> No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption. (1970:40)

Tsi's rapport towards his reporter colleague, Anne, is one of distrust towards the liberals, despite the amicable relationship Anne offers him as her colleague. Under the facade of mutual trust, there is largely (according to Tsi) the sense that Anne, a white liberal, has a stake in the status quo. As Tsi avers, "She knew that I had contempt for her, for her symbolic self, for her having been born into that world whose dreams were my nightmares, whose nightmares challenged my life, luring it to death" (1981:123).

When Tsi later declares that Maclean's College is an inadequate solution to the educational issues of black children (1981:159), he is in fact denouncing the entire liberal approach to the South African political state of affairs. For example, Mr Maclean is exposed when he tries to depoliticise education: "We have nothing to do with politics. We are educators" (1981:161). At this time of the political struggle, the majority of Africans saw black education, in particular, as being inextricably linked to racial capitalist ideology that provided, meaningless, unequal and inferior education in the interest of furthering white supremacy, whether one was an English white or an Afrikaner white. The estrangement and antipathy that blacks experienced in white and English

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political spaces got through to Biko and alienated him and the adherents of the Black Consciousness movement.

Biko also contended that the dominance of English culture and language disempowered many blacks and blocked them from vocalising their own experience or thinking from their own point of view (Wilson, 2011:23). This culminated in whites becoming scholarly about a reality (racial oppression) of which they had no genuine experience, and just because they were intellectually literate, native English speakers. The admission that English language mastery went hand in hand with superior intelligence left a deep impression of inadequacy among blacks. Biko would later pronounce this 'inferiority complex' that he witnessed as one of the fundamental social and psychological conditions that prevented the effective struggle against white superiority. It was, therefore, necessary for Biko that blacks should break away from this white-induced thinking and take sole ownership of the struggle to restore their humanity. This was what Biko was referring to when he stated that:

> The blacks are tired of standing at the touchlines to witness a game they should be playing. They want to do things for themselves and by themselves. (1978:17)

However, this does not stop Mr Maclean from denouncing the 'boers' for "ruining the country" (1981:160). It is specifically because of this kind of contradictory attitude towards the regime's political system that the Black Consciousness ideology rejected white liberal paternalism with, on the one hand, their denouncement of apartheid and, on the other, their determined efforts to decelerate the tide of black radicalism.

In the novel, black people are presented as benevolent and sympathetic towards the predicament of their fellow people who suffer under apartheid. For example, Malope protects Tsi from the police who attempted to arrest him in response to his failure to pay for his permit. The neighbour's lie, which arises from her assumption that a common spirit must be prevalent, prevents Tsi from being detained. As she says, "We live together, we must help each other" (1981:52). There is also the incident between Tsi and Old Man Zola at the graveyard, in which the old man expresses concern about Fix's incarceration and even intends to visit Tsi's parents, simply to pledge his support for them. Watts encapsulates the encounter in the cemetery:

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> There is the symbolism of communing with the ancestors, not only reassurance, for authority, but also in search of roots, of identity, but there is also the conversation with Old Man Zola that catches onto this symbolism and draws it into the realm of life. The old man's rambling greeting, inquiries and information about their respective families serve to reinstate Tsi within the security of the community in the way every such meeting and greeting does in traditional society (1989:239).

Foucault contends that, "we need to listen to the voices of the excluded and marginalised, particularly because this is a spur to struggle. Furthermore, these voices, the events described by them, and the struggle they engender are all vital for critical reflection about our current situation" (1980:457). Therefore, observing and listening to funeral and burial sites as sites of resistance helps us recognise how individuals engage in discourse and how they collectively formulate thoughts and how they wield power to narrate or to block a narrative —from which a national story within which they can understand themselves as part of a community (Foucault, 1978) emerges. Foucault talks about occurrences of resistance as "hindrances, a stumbling block" and "a starting point for an opposing strategy" that can "allow individuals to find within power relations a space to resist the negative effects of governmentality" (1978:101).

The song sung at Willy's funeral illustrates the masses of Alexandra residents arriving in their funeral clothes and closing businesses for the day out of respect. The huge group then moves together in unison to the cemetery while they sing: "Go well, go well, young fighter, we will always remember you, Willy" (1981:245). The life to be laid to rest makes it desirable for the community to come together as one. The funeral procession is enveloped in by police and soldiers and is "shut in from both sides by Hippos" (1981:246).

Funerals were the only occasions where black people were authorised to converge, while all other meetings in public spaces were forbidden. However, the atmosphere at mass funerals was very tense and poignant and feelings were a combination of deep bereavement and anger. Lefifi Tladi, a young poet, was often part of funeral arrangements, fully supported by the residents who were enthralled by his hard-hitting oratory skills and became restless and emboldened to fight for freedom. While he stood next to the fresh graves, he would rehearse this poem: "Our spears are

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immersed in blood", while the choir sang 'Hamba, hamba kahle' – Farewell, farewell" (Bonner et al., 1993:91). Funerals were used to form a basis for a "political theatre out of political tragedy and to translate the varied emotions of grief, anger, revolutionary passion or even apathy into public and theatrical means of communicating power" (Bozzoli, 2004:211). The youth were generally recognised as "children of the township as a whole. When they died, no private funerals were allowed for they were not only children of their families. All funerals of the youths killed because of the turmoil were communal, for all children were seen as soldiers who should be buried together with other soldiers" (2004:214).

5.10 Draconian clampdown by the regime

As a result of draconian laws and dubiously low records of the official death toll of activists being released, contentions arose in the black communities. The controversy regarding the death toll might have been aggravated by the fact that the regime prohibited the publication of names of those who had died and that hospitals were sworn to secrecy (Bonner et al., 1993:89). This uncertainty is expressed in the novel:

> Fear grips the family as they wonder where Morolong is. Without consulting her husband, Grace looks for him "in jails, morgues, hospitals, at all the garbage places of South Africa. (1981:197)

Seated with her daughters on either side of her, despairing over the absence of these men, Grace contemplates how "[...] both had been snatched from her, from them" (1981:197).

During the apartheid period, numerous activists disappeared, and families worried and tormented about the whereabouts of their loved ones. Furthermore, the regime did not reveal anything about the whereabouts of the activists who were considered sympathisers, covert supporters of the prohibited organisations. The regime kept everything secret and unknown, leaving many mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, grandparents and the like in despondency. The apartheid state could, if they suspected that someone wanted to challenge the state and pose a threat, then they could keep that person in solitary incarceration without the person being granted access to legal assistance or family visits. Foucault (Rabinow, 1984) holds that "[e]ach society has its regime of truth. Its 'general politics of truth – that is the types of discourse it accepts and makes, function as true, the mechanism and instances that enable one to distinguish true and false statements" (131). The

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regime of truth is actually about what counts as truth. Foucault maintains that "discourse informs people's way of thinking because 'discourse' constructs the topic" (Hall, 2001:72). Additionally, it also "defines and produces the objects of our knowledge" (2001:72).

One of the means by which the apartheid regime attempted to regulate its citizens was by totally manipulating the discourse of justice and the rule of law. The regime fabricated new laws and associated constraints that were despotic, such as holding a suspected activist indefinitely in the name of a government being threatened and possibly overthrown by 'terrorists'. Because of these limitations and inaccessibility of information regarding the free flow of information about the state of affairs (amongst others, who is alive or dead) in the domestic space of the country, the private burial space that is attended by thousands of the community is transformed and serves as a multifunctional platform (burial and gathering of the masses, which was prohibited in official public spaces as per the regime's legislations). In essence, the burial space mirrored two fundamental moments of human existence: life and death. As outlined in the novel, while the crowd moves to the beat of the music, the young members of the 'movement', who we have been following from the beginning to the end, carry out their biggest mission yet, by ambushing the leading police team that is driving a blue Granada around the township and targeting the ringleaders in the 'movement', but to no avail.

With the initial song, the memories of Willy are made a part of the liberation narrative; the second song, "went in a rumble, held and led by a young voice which seemed to be carried by the momentum of older voices" (1981:245). The words that are sung are: "Vorster, Vorster is a dog, Vorster you own guns, we own history, Vorster, Vorster is a dog" (1981:246). They recognise that their history was unofficially recorded by the regime's propaganda machinery, omitting black presence and voices, but that history ultimately belongs to those who remember and have memories of it, as a result of the platforms offered at funerals to inform and share stories and conscientising the masses. (Vorster was one of the Prime Ministers during the 1970s). Individual activists such as Boykie and Dikeledi focus on the injustice committed against the black people of South Africa; they unmask the white man's crimes and atrocities committed against the people and raise awareness of a history that was taken away from the black bodies. It was important for

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the masses to understand the facts of the past and the state of their oppression. Understanding and relating to this history allowed the people of Alexandra to recover and reclaim their memories.

With Willy's death, the community moves into a space they had created at these burials, since that space did not exist. This is the space of resistance. The last song we hear sounds like this: "This is a heavy load, this is a heavy load, it needs strong men and women. This is a heavy load" (1981:247). The crowd at Willy's funeral is agitated, and they start singing spontaneously, which keeps each member united and allows others to break away to take on the task of the "strong men and women" (by joining the 'Movement').

The Ramonos (active community activists) are not only prominent in their community, they are also energetic. Mike Ramono, the husband, is described as "a tough landlord" (1981:179), but someone "who got on well with people who understood him" (1981:179). Mike's wife is also an example of guardianship; she takes care of the children in the neighbourhood when they are sick, gives advice to "women in the yard" (1981:179), and organises the household chores of the women who stay in the house with her. Thus, despite being the landowner and presumably wealthier than his tenants—a fact that could probably lead to a strain in the poor black townships—the residents trust and respect Mike.

5.11 Communal solidarity and the gendered subaltern voice

The storyteller, in turn, reveals the respect that Mike had for the residents: "But whatever he did, he consulted his other tenants: and whatever decision was taken was a collective decision" (1981:179). From this initial description of the Ramonos, the reader gathers that they are politically affiliated and progressive members of the 'movement'. This involvement is the logic for their prominence as leaders of the community. The Ramonos function as a strong network to history, reminding the generation of dwellers that their people once owned the land, which the white regime now possesses, illegally. These generations consist of families that play crucial roles in the politicisation and conscientising of the township dwellers, encouraging successful participation in the 'movement'.

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The communal comradeship is further highlighted when people, after the trial, congregate at Michael Ramono's house to give moral support to the family:

> That night, many people came and went. They talked about the boers, about the country, about the jails, about trials, about the Power days. They left, each knowing that he or she had to help each other. (1981:239)

The common spirit is closely linked to the notion of a black ethos which is sustained in the 'Black Consciousness ideology'. It obscures the class differences within the community—for example, the storyteller makes us understand that Alexandra is "a very close-knit township, where almost everyone is related to everyone else, related through the skin" (1981:236).

Serote represents the gendered subaltern voice through illustrations of pain and suffering, doubly oppressed female African bodies—bodies rendered as such due to their repression within the patriarchal and apartheid society. Like Scarry's (1985) idea of the radical subject of pain where "the knowledge of pain is based upon the universal experience of pain", Serote tries to utilise pain as a shared knowledge and experience that the sufferers, torturers, and helpers experience (1981:20). Pain, as presented by Serote, can be interpreted as, "a stage rather than a state [in order] to regard the subject in pain as a dynamic being rather than a passive victim" (Scarry, 1985:23). Tsi's mother thus bears the hardship of her husband's almost absence which is signified by his silence. This silence is a heavy burden that she carries on her pained leg. Tsi tells us, "she too had a heavy step, as if her body was too big for her leg" (1981:52). It is a statement of her willpower and determination that reflects how ready she is to take control of her body, mind, her inner world and her identity.

Tsi's mother is a medium through which the author expresses the horror of prejudice. It is clear that the subaltern in Serote's novel marks the woman as vulnerable, with no room to thwart the brutality aimed at their minds and bodies. However, there are moments in his narratives when articulation of pain takes over the voice of the exploited female subjects. Serote utilises the female body, not to dehumanise it, but to represent the circumstances of 'gendered subalternity' under apartheid. Through this means of subject formation, Serote politicises the subaltern body as a lexus

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for power, exploitation and resistance. Foucault (1977) contends that “the body becomes a useful force if it is both a productive body and a subjected body.

This subjection is not only obtained by the instruments of violence — “there may be a ‘knowledge’ of the body”, and “this knowledge and this mastery constitute what might be called the political technology of the body” (1977:26). Serote describes the power/knowledge relationship and “the political technology of the body” of Zola’s wife: “Two weeks after I came back, when they brought my banning order, she died” (1981:14). The absence of Zola, the old man, from his home caused great apprehension and suffering which was unbearable to his wife, so much so that “it was only her heart that kept her”, faith in his return, and when he did arrive, did she let go of the life she had been holding on to, while waiting for him. We hear about the remorse and hardship that her death causes for the old man, Zola and in his admission, he utters: “to be defeated is a very painful thing” (1981:16). In her examination of motherhood, gender and nationalism in Serote’s fiction, Boehmer (1995) contends that “where women tell of their own experience, they map their own geography, their own history and so, necessarily, contest official representations of nationalist reality” (1995:10). By foregrounding Tsi’s mother’s subjectivity, Serote is thus engaged in the task of “interrupting the language of official nationalist discourse and literature with a woman’s vocality” (1985:19).

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5.12 The armed struggle

The underground military offensive in Serote’s novel is closely linked to the portrayal of women in the struggle. This is another issue where Serote distinctly moves beyond the confines of the Black Consciousness ideology. Serote, like Wa Thiong’o (1986), presents women as revolutionaries who fight side by side with men to topple the regime. For example, Mmaphefo (a freedom fighter) is busy with the underground work of the ‘movement,’ and she gives a safe place to the cadres and coordinates their activities for the offensives against the regime. There are also Onni and Dikeledi, revolutionary women, who are involved in some of the riskiest undertaking of the military operations— such as “planting a bomb in a parking lot in the centre of Johannesburg” (1981:271).

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Serote's central aim in this novel is to portray a different version of African women's history—a version that diverges from the one constructed by apartheid discourses. Thus, to validate African women's contribution as participants in the national struggle for independence, Serote relates to credible narratives of various incidents (such as bombings during the freedom struggle), and thereby introduces the readers to the authentic voices of anti-apartheid African women by giving them a voice. By combining two important elements in the same novel—the unknown history of South Africa, and those who fought for the liberation of their country and, in this case, African women—Serote disrupts the idea of a one-dimensional history as illustrated in biased South African textbooks and literature during the colonial and apartheid eras.

In his insistence on a unified, militant response, Wa Thiong'o mirrors Fanon's (1963) view of the urgency of violence in decolonisation as a means of assuring solidarity: "the practice of violence binds them together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain" (1963:73) in dissent against the original violence of settler intrusion. Such collective violence can also signify the emerging solidarity of a national identity based on a people potentially consolidated by a national future and ... a collective history (1963:73). However, it also informs the individual about the importance of the role they play in the freedom struggle, as Fanon (1963) argues that individuals possess the capacity to recognise that the pursuit of freedom is a collective endeavour that concerns every member of society.

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Foucault (1989b) contends that resistance is not detached from power, "one is always inside 'power', there is no 'escaping' it" (1989b:95). Foucault not only maintains that resistance exists, but he argues that it is in fact necessary for resistance to exist, because otherwise there is no power relationship:

> [Power relationships'] existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead, there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, ... they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. (1989a:95)

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5.13 Criticism of Black Consciousness

Criticism of the 'Black Consciousness ideology' is indicated in some of Boykie's comments:

> You see for now the Black Students' Organisation is not even dealing with the people. No, the issue is still to get it straight to the settlers, to define what they have done, to draw the lines, and then make a move. (1981:78)

The direct criticism against Black Consciousness, and indeed the most compelling to the political direction of the novel, comes from Michael Ramono. At a time when Ramono's daughter Dikeledi, who is a dedicated Black Consciousness adherent, fights for the need of the term 'black' instead of 'non-white' in her articles (1981:250), Ramono contends that although the determination of the young generation as represented in Black Consciousness has something to say for it, there are reservations to the ideology: "understand that colour here must not be an issue. Once we get to understand that, then we can talk on, but I am afraid that you have put too much emphasis on the colour question" (1981:250). Ramano's utterances are in accordance with the philosophy of the ANC, when Tambo, President of the ANC (1967–1991), indicated:

> There must be a difference. That is why we say non-racial. We could have said multi-racial if we wanted to. There is a difference. We mean non-racial, rather than multi-racial. We mean non-racial – there is no racism. Multi-racial does not address the question of racism. Non-racial does. There will be no racism of any kind and therefore no discrimination that proceeds from the fact that people happen to be members of different races. This is what we understood by non-racial. (Callinicos, 1987:89)

Ramono is obviously critical of Black Consciousness because of its racial undertones. As Barbourne (1984) argues, "For Ramono, as for Serote, the struggle should not be defined in racial terms but rather be seen as the struggle against a determinate social and economic system" (1986:175). Criticism is also made of the intellectual direction approved by students in the Black Students' Organisation. Boykie sees the repudiation of white frames of reference and the recognition of whites as a problem in the black person's craving for freedom, as a fabricated theoretical approach to suppression. Biko was of the view that any real and substantial change in South Africa would be the outcome of autonomous black political thought and activism, and would emanate from the historical and cultural inventiveness of blacks themselves. After all, the central

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purpose of Black Consciousness was for "black people to articulate their own struggle" (Biko, 1978:23).

5.14 Conclusion

Due to Serote's commitment to an understanding of non-racialism, the struggle shifts from an eradication of oppression purely on a racial level to the portrayal of a humanised South Africa. This corroborates Ngara's (1985) argument that literature must be observed in relation to the nature of political struggles and the divergent ideologies that result from the socio-economic and cultural circumstances in particular countries (1985:29).

To Every Birth Its Blood was written when Serote adapted his ideological affirmation of Black Consciousness to the non-racialism of the ANC—the non-racial stand that Ramono took is evidence of Serote's most recent point of reference. Serote's novel can, therefore, be seen as a transformation from fiction produced under conditions in which Black Consciousness was the prevalent oppositional ideology in the struggle against apartheid, to fiction that anchored itself within the non-racial ideology of the ANC.

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CHAPTER 6

NGCOBO'S *AND THEY DIDN'T DIE*

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the relationship between space and power in Ngcobo's book, *And They Didn't Die* in the light of Foucault's theory of space, power and resistance. As strategies of power, Foucault's theory has been used by postcolonial critics such as Bhabha, Said, Mudimbe, Spivak and Lefebvre to examine colonialism as a discourse. These critics offer different viewpoints for re-interpreting and subverting the colonial/apartheid discourse that suppressed the subaltern subject.

The chapter first introduces Ngcobo and the concept of apartheid. I then discuss Foucault's key concept of heterotopias (other spaces) and its relation to apartheid. I then interrogate how Ngcobo's book shows an ongoing and developing understanding of the importance of space as a way of clarifying crucial questions of power, social organisation and resistance and reflect on the geopolitics of apartheid and its policy of spatial control in South Africa. Generally, women are on the fringes in the narrative of patriarchal male writers or do not exist at all. If they exist, women's representation in such writings portrays only a segment of 'their reality'. In *And They Didn't Die* Ngcobo puts women at the centre. Hence, one may recognise a female point of view through the characters about the days of old, of both the colonised and the coloniser. It is through such a female approach, that the challenge of speech, which had been dominated by men for a long time, is embraced (Cixous, 2000: 165). Ngcobo demands that black women should be represented as subjects, that is, as creative agents of change, rather than as objects, or sufferers of hegemonic forces. In *And They Did Not Die*, black women are portrayed as having their own voices and renounce the ideologies of oppression, dispossession and patriarchy. Women's liberation and political independence are intimately associated. Both have in common an interest with emancipation, freedom (personal and civic), human rights, integrity, equality, independence, power-sharing and liberation. Colonialism and apartheid had a dehumanising and catastrophic effect on the lives of the characters and the

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whole society by expanding the suffering of women and by depriving them and many others in their community from exercising their human potential.

Drawing from postcolonial theories, I explore Ngcobo's counter-hegemonic discourse as an example of the interconnected network of spatial oppression that works to reclaim an arena for the subaltern voice. I investigate how heterotopias as sites of social struggle and defiance challenged apartheid. The technique of discipline and dominance, by means of resistance in spaces, is also examined. In the light of growing gender violence in South Africa, this text can educate South Africans about beliefs and attitudes-the knowledge that women and girls are worthy of an education; that their bodies are their own; their thoughts matter; that their voices must be heeded; and that women should have positions and status outside their homes. Although the book is not in the spotlight for scholarly attention, it is hardly read through Foucauldian lenses, especially regarding Foucault and Fanon's perspectives of power, racism, oppression, degradation and resistance, which refers to its significance for contemporary society, especially in South Africa. This is where this chapter diverges from the existing scholarship.

Ngcobo was born in 1932 in Ixopo, Kwazulu Natal to a Zulu mother and Xhosa father. She was sent to an American missionary school, Inanda Seminary, and thereafter attended the University of Fort Hare, where she obtained her BA and teaching certificate. She taught in Durban, Pietermaritzburg, and eventually Johannesburg. She married an ANC political leader (A. B. Ngcobo), who was among the accused at the 1956 Treason Trial. Ngcobo avoided being arrested by escaping to Swaziland in 1963, and later lived in Zambia. In 1969 she and her family moved to London, where she worked as a teacher, principal, and active political exile. In 1981 she published her first novel *Cross of Gold*, followed by *And They Didn't Die* (1990), She has also edited a collection of women's writings, *Let It Be Told: Black Women Writers in Britain* (1987). She returned to South Africa and worked as secretary of the Inkatha Freedom Party- in Durban. Her association with the IFP is perplexing because her husband was one of the African National Congress treason trialists and in 1997 she joined a party that was an ally of the former apartheid regime and was involved in the murders of numerous human rights activists (including Victoria Mxenge and Chief Mhalabunzima Maphumulo) as revealed in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

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In 1948 the National Party came to power, which led to the advancement of apartheid in South Africa and the creation of black residential areas and homelands to curb the movement of the colonised 'others' in areas reserved for whites. The actual confinement of blacks under the directly oppressive measures of apartheid correlates with Foucault's idea of social and spatial control of the population. The consequence was the production of a disciplinary practice intended to produce 'normalised' and 'docile' people. Foucault also argues that "space is fundamental in any exercise of power" (Rabinow, 1984: 252). The disciplinary space, of the black residential areas, which were designed by the apartheid regime to control black peoples, became the pivotal locus of resistance in the anti-apartheid struggle. While the administration of space within apartheid was intended to keep the worlds of whites and non-whites disconnected, characters crossed this spatial divide, as can be seen in Ngcobo's book. Black workers (men and women) provided "a source of cheap labour for white people's agriculture, mining and industry" (1990: 42), and the women due to starvation had to leave the reserves to work in white households as servants for a pittance. Many authors are drawn to the theme about women, their lives and their work. As a black writer, she was not only able to reach out to black women's hearts, she was also able to bring forth their psychological anguish, emotions, feelings, thoughts, desires and hardships.

Jezile Majola, the chief protagonist's movement through space despite the limitations placed upon her by apartheid and patriarchal culture becomes an enduring motif throughout the novel. Jezile serves as one sector of such women, and Ngcobo develops her as a vehicle for examining the experience of young rural women during a particular stage of South African history. Ngcobo's interplay of the personal and the communal is a fascinating one. *And They Didn't Die* centres on the political, economic, and traditional struggle of rural women in Natal at the end of the 1950s, but unlike her other novels, it also puts the spotlight on the sexual identities of rural women. It is ascertained from the first chapter that, the African woman is confined to a particular pattern of behaviour and her primary identity is created from this pattern, where procreation is at the centre of her interests. She is brought up in a traditional environment where her ability to procreate predisposes her role in the community. This role is restrained through the matriarchy and patriarchy representing 'homeliness'. Motherhood represents 'freedom' and respect for the African woman in this homeliness. She suffers from these traditional mores, and to worsen matters is the

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role of a patriarchal agent (the husband) to transmit and perpetuate them. If she does not fit the norms, she is ostracised by her community. It is in her position of mother that the female character is respected and considered as a 'complete' woman in her traditional community. Her social position is compensated by the image of a strong and courageous father, husband or son. This male figure develops and justifies at the same time the patriarchal system in the African community. Ngcobo presents a character (Jezile) who is regarded as a victim of enslavement, alienation and patriarchy to denounce the psychological oppression the colonised people endure. When the marginalised and silenced group is depicted in literature and speaks, it could be seen as revolutionary. Spivak (1999) acknowledges imperialism, colonisation, and apartheid as forms of epistemic inhumanity that suppress the indigenous subject. In the realm of colonial production, it may be argued that the subaltern, lacking a historical narrative and the ability to articulate their experiences, is further marginalised. This marginalisation is more pronounced when considering the subaltern as a feminine being, as their voice is much more obscured and silenced.

The discourse revealed thus becomes a discourse of power, challenging and threatening that of the sovereign regimes of supremacy and power (Spivak, 1999). Foucault (1979) alludes to 'carceral network' (1995:298) referring to the control structures in society. It is through this that the individual is manipulated. "Thus, discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (1995: 138). In the African community especially in Sigageni, women were expected to live, work, and act according to traditional norms. According to Foucault (1979), it is power that creates the subjects in a society. Notions of normal and abnormal thus dictate whether actions or behaviour of the individuals are suitable or not for the society. "In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (1979:194). Jezile's patriarchal society has institutionalised the duties and role of women e.g., obeying the husband in spite of whatever he does, doing all jobs apt for women that they are confined to do.

The novel explores political, economic, traditional, sexual, and communal aspects of rural life, all of which form part of what makes it an excellent origin of vision into the psyche of rural women. Ngcobo uses Jezile, a young woman from Sigageni, to highlight how all these aspects embody parts of the mediation of the individual's personal identity and simultaneously her political identity. Ngcobo foregrounds the communal, political, economic, and traditional issues by creating

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Jezile, as the wife of the migrant worker, Siyalo. During one of the women's various anti-apartheid protests, Jezile is jailed for six months. She has to leave her husband and malnourished daughter in the arms of her mother-in-law. Distressed and guilty about his starving daughter, Siyalo begins to loot milk from a white farmer's cows, in an attempt to keep his daughter alive. After Jezile comes back, and their second daughter, Ndondo is born, a still unemployed Siyalo is arrested and jailed for ten years for stealing milk. Jezile is compelled to take a stint as a domestic servant for a white family in the city of Bloemfontein, thousands of kilometres from where she lives, where her white employer rapes her.

Ngcobo also examines the impact of apartheid as a geographical system of regulation on daily activities, such as the operation of authority through spatial mechanisms related to segregation, bantustans, independent homelands, permits, and prisons. In Ngcobo's novels, black women are perceived as breeding women, domestics and housemaids and are also treated as commodities to be managed by white masters. They had no human rights whatsoever; their white masters had all rights over them. Their living circumstances were laden with racism and sexism which led to alienation and disillusionment. The exploring of human relationships and black women's roles within their communities was considered to be Ngcobo's fervour, with her novels tackling racism in twentieth-century South Africa:

> There are times I feel that many of us suffer and fight back without the full understanding of what is going on, why it is going on, and where it is taking us to. We, the women in the rural areas, need to know why we are here when our husbands are there; why we starve when South Africa is such a large and wealthy country, and what might happen to us if we keep on asking these questions. (1990: 42)

6.2 Beginnings

Ngcobo begins her novel by announcing Sigageni as a gendered space, with a community of women who work together to confront apartheid and all its vestiges and consistently revolutionalise the space in which they live. It was an effortless and economical way to isolate and monitor them: to use Foucault's words it is to control the "environment, the milieu in which they live" (1997: 245). Boehmer describes these types of jurisdictions as the "lower-rung or secondary colonisers in 'their' new lands, local oppressors of the indigenous inhabitants" (1995:178). Rural

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life during apartheid was documented in the autobiographical, or semi-autobiographical works of writers such as Ellen Kuzwayo, Bessie Head, Miriam Tlali and Phyllis Naidoo. Yet texts about rural experience are not extensively accessible, especially documents that discuss the rural experience during apartheid. Apartheid tends to be seen as an urban experience, while rural life is informed by traditional values, away from urban tendencies. The portrayal of the countryside is used instead to serve as background for many authors' urban experiences of apartheid. Jezile unlike her childhood friend, Zenzile, is determined to transform her own life. Transformation can be accomplished through appropriating that system and allowing it to work for you, the way Jezile does. Jezile utilises her 'barrenness' to organise herself within a system that is restraining. Zenzile is unable to maneuver outside of her circumstances, she has too many children and is restricted because she depends completely on her husband in the city. There is the irony that is commonplace in Ngcobo's novel; Jezile is able to organise herself because she is barren, while simultaneously she is considered useless, because of it. Her community on the other hand unquestionably regards Zenzile as an honourable wife because she is able to deliver many children, and yet she is helpless to mobilise herself against a lecherous partner. In such a circumstance, dictated by patriarchy, her only real means of escape is through death. Jezile is not restricted by caring for children and she uses this to her convenience to embark on a trip to Durban.

This movement from the rural area to the metropolis is symbolic because Jezile is set to experience a completely new life in an urban space in contrast to the rural life. According to Lefebvre (1991), the routine of urban life is where the stakes of a revolutionary struggle are prevalent. These battles for and in the urban space are significant given that the space is what numerous social groups and classes are vying for. Jezile appropriates what she can in order to expand her own advancement. According to Foucault (1978), power owes its presence to resistance. "Where there is power, there is resistance…" (1978: 95). It is power that results in marginalisation and it is power again that is subverted to be used to its own ends. Ngcobo (1990) records: "nobody would take that power away from her…" She regards herself the owner of what she produces, which challenges the constructed character of women in the community she lives in. Her defiance subverts the power that marginalises and demeans women. Jezile's standpoint is the model of a woman who defies the traditionally entrenched gender roles in the African community.

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Jezile is steadfast in plotting the trajectory of her own life: "nobody would take that power away from her, not [Siyalo's] mother, not her own mother, not anyone" (1990:11). This is contrasted with Zenzile who is incapable to move from her situation through obvious restraints. The expression 'give her babies' suggests an entire reversal of the assumptions of women's position in society. Jezile elects to go to Durban: she wants Siyalo to accomplish her own maternal wants, so she can construct her own identity. She wants to have babies out of an informed understanding. She once again in hindsight thinks of Zenzile's situation: "Jezile wanted babies, Zenzile had more than she wanted" (1990: 16). Thereby lamenting the situation of the rural women caught in the web of patriarchy and matriarchy. In terms of the rural lived experiences concerning all forms of oppression and inequalities, Ngcobo does not ignore the urban experience of apartheid; this becomes certain through how she presents the living plight and conditions in the Durban hostels and the urban defiance campaigns which Jezile joins.

6.3. Urban spaces and heterotopia

Jezile's first encounter with the space of the city is overpowering, imploring contradictory sentiments. Durban, with its "hotch-potch of human experience, that patchwork of human endeavour" is "at once elevating and shattering; vast yet constricting" (Ngcobo, 1990: 22). Ngcobo depicts a comprehensive presentation of the single-sex hostels where African men who labour in the city are compelled to live, conveying Jezile's consternation at the conditions in which she finds Siyalo. The interior of the hostel is even worse. The depiction of this space makes dead clear the object of apartheid spatial scheme of hostels: to demean the men who live there by affording them no privacy, leading to dehumanisation. Beds are stuffed into the long hostel passages, expressing the transience of the bodies meant to take up these spaces. The migrant workers who are crammed into this space are clearly temporary cogs in the wheel of capitalism, easily allocated with and immediately replaceable with other black male bodies, in the event of an illness leading to death or through attrition (Callinicos, 1987).

McDowell argues that the body is "the most immediate place" (1999:34) as the physical being with which we exist and connect in social spaces; therefore, it is also implicated in social processes and the production of power dynamics. McDowell further avers that "like ideas about gender, ideas about place, boundaries and membership are social constructs" (1999:31). These 'social

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constructs' frame the way diverse people live their lives, and the things they can or cannot do in their lives. By definition of being 'social', these ideas are not created in a neutral situation, but are framed by the surrounding systems of power relations.

The hostel, "honeycombed with a thousand windows", registers an unpalatable surprise for Jezile:

> Except for the free flow of the people, in and out of the gate, the place was so austere and grim it could have been a prison. It gave the feeling of prohibition, and a feeling of trespassing that made Jezile's heart beat faster. (1990: 24)

In Durban Jezile meets the urban women who induce her to recognise real political developments, in the sense that they are able to challenge their own men, something that is particularly unfamiliar to Jezile. Ngcobo relies on a historical setting, once again in her novel. Her lucid accounts of the pass law struggle, and the beer hall protests, accentuates an authenticity to the novel that grants the reader a look into both the rural and urban experience of the battle against apartheid and all its manifestations in the daily lives of the disenfranchised. The proximity of the countryside and the small packed spaces of the urban milieu is interesting, considering how the protagonist shifts between these geographical environments and negotiates with her own identity within these contexts. Ngcobo not only considers the consequences of apartheid on rural communities, but also on the individual.

There are various connections between Foucault's (2002) ideas and the ideological practices of apartheid. When he refers to "government", his objective is to ask how and to what extent populations should be governed and regulated. A notable spatial term connected to Foucault is "heterotopias" or different spaces. Foucault's conception of 'heterotopia' clearly comes to the fore in the clash of cultures in colonial and postcolonial contexts. "Heterotopia" relates to the manner in which different spaces come into contact with each other, seemingly disconnected, spaces. The experience of 'heterotopia' makes people wonder in which world they find themselves in. The mechanism of space presents the thrust for the surveillance and regulation of the movement of people throughout the space of a colonised country. The colonised people must be discouraged from converging into the space of the colonial power. It was indeed the situation that the power to monitor movement through the space of others was an essential component in the administration of colonialism. Beningfield depicts the creation of the black residential area as a varying, fabricated

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space: in addition to serving as a geographical strategy aimed at segregating black individuals from white communities, the establishment of townships effectively confined the potential for violence into a manageable and controllable region (2006:231-234). The novel is narrated entirely from the viewpoint of a rural inhabitant, who mediates an identity within it. Ngcobo interrogates the rural woman's identity within two somewhat opposing contexts: apartheid and tradition, and she describes these two systems through the discourses of dispossession and labour exploitation such as migrant labour, and traditional versus urban struggles experienced by the powerless.

6.4 Human dignity and repression

The perplexing wave of racial prejudice makes one wonder where the hatred and inconsistencies come from. "Hatred", Fanon contended, "is not inborn; it has to be cultivated, to be brought into being, in conflict with more or less recognised guilt complexes" (1967a:53). Postcolonial protagonists experience fear and uneasiness when they face discrimination and prejudice. Sometimes they stay apathetic, periodically they fight for their liberty and dignity. Ngcobo presents a white racist society in which black women are persecuted because they were women of colour. The painstaking repressive depictions are brought forth as a result of external violence, such as verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and violence. The basic precepts of human dignity relate to the regulation of space which is constructed and perpetuated by apartheid and sanctioned through non-significant measures:

> 'Your pass', he barked without raising his eyes. At first, she did not think she had heard him properly. 'My pass?' She repeated, trying to grasp the meaning of the question. 'Yes, your pass. Haven't you got a pass yet? How can you travel to Durban without a pass? Every woman in this district should have a pass by now or are you one of those who won't have one …' How could she, when one of the most burning issues at Sigageni was the fight against the passes. She was sworn not to take the pass, like all the women. (Ngcobo, 1990:13).

This recalls Fanon's conceptualisation of black people within Western colonisation as an object. "This object man, without means of existing, […] is broken in the very depth of his substance. The desire to live, to continue, becomes more and more indecisive, more and more phantom-like (Fanon, 1967b: 35). According to hooks, "The reality is that many black people fear they will be hurt if they let down their guard, that they will be the targets of racist assault since most white

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people have not unlearned racism" (1992: 16) but the black women in *And They Didn't Die* are not apprehensive of taking on new roles in the discursive social-political contexts facing them.

It is Lefebvre's (1991:141) perspective that any representation of space usually indicates the motives of its creators and those who live it -the so-called 'representational space'. These are then linked with the images, figures and symbols of their creators. The oppressed and racialised identities that were proscribed to some of Durban's residents, such as Jezile, can thus be detailed as something that was produced by the structuring of the city under the leadership of the apartheid policy makers and implementers, as well as the racist agents of the apartheid state, in this case the civil servant. Lefebvre contends that the 'panopticon' (1991:140), which is the architecture of constant inspection and supervision, that enables the dominant power to consistently remind the subordinates of their subjugation and to maintain control over them, regardless of the cost, while human rights are ranked last.

Ngcobo clearly underscores the diverse experiences and scenarios that illustrated repression. She portrays how black women were regarded as the lowest individuals within the social hierarchy of the community they belonged to. The white official's dismissal of African women, explicitly exemplified by his utterances "senseless, unthinking creatures" (1990:1), is suggestive of apartheid ideological discourse. Ngcobo created a clearer account of the real injustices and dehumanisation that contributed to the uninterrupted existence of racism, abuse and oppression in black communities. No matter how hard they tried, they could not get out of the prejudices that had been forced upon them. Nomama (one of the women in the community) confides in Jezile "(if) women can't go and work in the cities it stands to reason that they've got to depend on some man that can" (1990:182).

6.5. The domestic worker

Foucault's discourse on heterotopic spaces is very pertinent in understanding and reimagining the home as the site of paid domestic work. Foucault talks about those 'sacralized' spaces that still engage on extensively accepted binaries: public/private, family/social, leisure/work: exactly like domestic spaces (2007:16). He also mentions heterogeneous spaces that have this characteristic "of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspend, neutralise, or invert

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the set of relations designated, mirrored, or reflected by them". Those relations "cannot be equated or in any way superimposed" (2007:16). The domestic worker's 'otherness' is profoundly linked to and produced by her being distinct (race, class, gender). Her dwelling/being in the house is a 'counter-emplacement' that is in contention and reverses real employment. This transforms in its turn the domestic space she takes up and maintains through her work into a heterotopia. And as a heterotopia the home is both a realm and outside all realms (2007:17). Finally, a heterotopia is constructed for a specific objective (2007:21), like any control and capture apparatus. That is why I contend that the home is a heterotopic space of representation.

Domestic labour, whether it is done by a house worker, is in general exceedingly undervalued, and under capitalism it is perceived as a form of concealed labor exploitation. In the discourse of the domestic worker, the live-in domestic worker (identity) resides with the families she takes care of, raising the children, caring for the aged and frail, and fulfilling what is usually called second nature labor (Lee, 2006). Her role in the house is created as that of the 'other' and that comprises inequality. Even though domestic labor plays an important role in upholding and sustaining human life within the home, it is recognised and expressed as a demeaning job. Jezile provides a clear example of how this discourse of the domestic worker is used to label, isolate, and structure conformity, again epitomising Foucault's concepts of dividing practices, scientific classification, and subjectification (Rabinow,1984: 62). By classifying Jezile as a 'black servant' with an English name 'Annie' the novel constructs the ideal of the 'normal' woman working in a white Afrikaner home during apartheid in which Jezile is duty bound to relent in the stifling, demoralising environment. In the space of two juxtaposed lived spaces (the domestic and the madam/ wife/mother or mistress) each one's experiences is different, by their different lived bodies, where roles and statuses are constructed. For example, the mother/wife and the domestic worker execute the same functions in the role they represent, however the domestic worker's position in the home is created on the premises of gender, class, race, and familial status and not gender only. The maid is the 'other', the other woman in an 'other space'; individuality is 'altered' by her employers and then recreated as the 'other'.

The domestic worker has always been an important player in some aspects of inter–racial dynamics of employment in South Africa. Jaclyn Cock (1980: 231) argues, in her ethnography of domestic

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work that the conception of domestic service is “in a very real sense a microcosm of the exploitation and inequality on which the entire social order is based. Situated at the pivotal point of convergence of race, class and gender, three axes of variation along which social inequality is arranged, domestic workers in historically have been individualised by their “ultra–exploitability” (Cock, 1980:232). As the network of the apartheid machinery became stricter and the legal paradigm more regulating in the 1970s, increasing attention was placed on the repression of black women, and more coercive laws monitoring their movement and rights were proscribed. The migrant–labour system illuminated and highlighted rural women’s reliance on low wages as it disadvantaged them of their traditional means of subsistence and domestic work became one of very few choices (Wolpe, 1980).

6.6 Epistemic and verbal abuse

Cecil Lockett (1990) contends that sexism and racism tend to make certain groups transparent. Lockett also alerts us to the issue of white women and their role in gender and racial oppression. Even though white women are often repressed by their own men, and find themselves in the same gender oppressive spaces like black women, they are still regarded as agents of oppression (Lockett, 1990). From the minute Jezile enters the white household in Bloemfontein, she is treated extremely despicably. It should be stressed here that the repression of female domestic workers presents itself, not only because of their gender – as that would not differentiate them from their female employer – but also from their position lying at the centre of several otherness: gender-other, racial-other, class-other. The domestic space is the small private domain where repression and resistance co-exist.

Mrs Potgieter refers to Jezile as ‘Annie’, because she cannot or does not want to pronounce ‘Jezile’. This is a typical example of epistemic violence. Her name, although obviously known by her madam, was not unused, thus signifying a symbolic invisibility:

> ‘Annie … Me?’ Jezile felt emptied of herself. ‘What’s wrong with Jezile, I wonder?’ she thought to herself. Later that afternoon, Mrs Potgieter told Jezile to call her ‘Nonna’. ‘Nonna’ was the generic name for most Afrikaner women employers; just like’ Annie’ was one of several names for female black servants. They were fast erecting barriers to map their relationship. (Ngcobo, 1990:200)

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Jezile begins to decolonise her mind when she claims: “Annie … Me?”. Jezile renames herself ‘Jezile’, which signifies an endeavour to recreate herself and subvert the colonialist/apartheid ideology that has marked her body and mind. Removing Jezile of her name gives the white employer control and domination over their worker(s). The new names in themselves illustrates a person’s locus in relation to the person who represses them. This mechanism of renaming was frequent with the intention of erasing identity. However, the renaming of native workers did not only function as a manner to erase the past; it also served as a tool of dehumanisation (Callinicos, 1987).

The various prejudical theories, notes Fanon (1967a:180), “are racist and are put daily into practice by the white man.” The black man is unquestionably classified, incarcerated, portrayed as an animal and considered barbaric to be the “subject in a frame, fixing him as the picture frame does to a picture” (Fanon 1967a:32). The outcome of all this leads to the predicament it presents for the black man: “turn white or disappear” (1967a:100).

Fanon investigates the extreme alienation of the subjected. He makes it explicit that mainly the colonialists’ repression and violence contributed to this alienation. He contends that alienation emanates from the theories of colonisation. One theory is that the colonised are brutally dehumanised and denied their dignity by refusing them pathway to the coloniser’s world of luxury. While they are immersed in extreme starvation, they are precluded and pushed onto the peripheral (Fanon, 1967a).

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6.7 Violence and dehumanisation

Violence is acknowledged as a contravention of human rights. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women describes violence against women as any gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological abuse or anguish to women, including threats of such acts, or enforced or arbitrary denial of freedom, whether it occurs in public or private life (United Nations, 1993). Gender-based violence incorporates three types of violence: physical, emotional, and sexual malpractice which are anchored in gender inequality.

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The marginalised black woman cannot expect justice if the political and economic systems are biased in favour of the rich and the powerful. In Jezile's case it was her status as a domestic worker that made her vulnerable to labour exploitation and sexual abuse and her lack of security that led to her vicious rape by her white employer with substantial material and political power than she did. It was her defencelessness to labor exploitation and her constrained access to power and wealth that crushed her character as a black subject, the most. Rape and sexual assault are not only about sexual contentment, but about the power one commands over another human being (Stevens, 2002).

The domestic worker's situation exposes the following: Firstly, it silences the fact that a domestic worker often has her labor exploited and her being placed in very vulnerable situations, sometimes due to her own choice to work in wealthy powerful homes, where there are towering power dynamics including increased racism (hidden, overt and subtle), just to secure the living and working conditions that many of us deem standard (Bush-Baskett, 2010). It also silences the very real truth that power is not merely determined by how distinguished one is or what type of upbringing, creed, or hegemonic race an individual symbolises, but rather what identities and influences a person has access to, and the resources and duplicity that are affixed to them (Lee, 2006).

A set of 'tacit rules' (Hansen, 1989:9) regulates the relationship between the white employer and the domestic worker and included the terminology of address. The domestic worker was initially introduced by her Western first name. White employers hardly knew the full, original name of their domestic employee (Cock, 1980:137). Alternatively, she was referred to as 'the girl', while the employer was courteously addressed as 'madam', thereby imposing the supremacy of the employer over the domestic worker (Whisson and Weil, 1971:38). These strategies of oppression were not always conspicuous. In fact, much of the research affirms a lack of realisation of the structural ramifications of these components of the domestic worker paradigm. So pervasive was the apartheid state and its tentacles of intimidation and dehumanisation, its ubiquitous structures of repression and the discursive creation of its subjects, that the servant–employer relationship was

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never ever imagined by its administrators externally of the particular class–race dialectic upon which such discernible social inequities rested (Hansen, 1989).

The domestic worker was repeatedly caught up in the tumultuous family set- up. If the family had an issue(s) she would be a silent victim and observer, without any power to intervene. Ngcobo singles out the problems that a woman like Jezile has to encounter. Mrs Potgieter and Jezile are both victims of Mr Potgieter's degradation. Mrs Potgieter is degraded by her husband, and Jezile is raped by him. There are occasions within the narrative where it is possible to recover the female subalterns' autonomous voice through their utterances of pain and circumstances that lead to the infliction of pain:

> God, I'm weak. This is an impossible choice. Only last Thursday I talked heatedly against the passes – how can I face the other women this Thursday, tomorrow. While my friends are talking and swearing against the pass at the weekly meeting, I will be queuing for the same pass – God, why are women so trapped? – are there ever any choices? (Ngcobo, 1990:14)

Fanon (1967a) drew attention to the fact that even black (in all its variations) and white binaries transmitted much symbolism which was later transformed into biases and assumptions. Whiteness symbolised purity, intelligence, wisdom, justice, whereas blackness was mostly associated with savagery, sin, evil, darkness and ugliness. "I am the slave not of the 'idea' that others have of me but of my own appearance" wrote Fanon (1967a:36). When Jezile goes to the Bantu Affairs Department (BAD), which she cites as 'the burial ground of all human dignity' (1990:34), to present them with the fraudulent letters to permit her to see her husband, she is humiliated by the white official. His language is crude and demeaning. He addresses her as part of a common group, 'these people' (1990:36).

This dehumanisation by the white official is one that is typical throughout the novel. From the opening of the novel Jezile and the other women of the novel are disrespected and described in animal imagery, by the white dipping tank official, the white BAD official, and the white guards at the jail in Pietermaritzburg. Interesting schisms are on display here, where in one second, she is able to mislead the official, in another she is completely silenced by the offensive white man's degradation of her. During these times, African women were humiliated into remaining silent, or

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compelled to see their pain and victimisation as marginal to the pain visited upon African men who were pained when the migrancy experience meant leaving their loved ones in the rural space and living in unbearable conditions in hostels. They were often victimised and mocked simply for the tribe they belonged to, brutally attacked at times in so called 'faction fights' (men belonging to different tribes from Lesotho, the various homelands) and no one outside of these hostels knew exactly what was going on, apart from calling it minor faction fights (Callinicos, 1987). In all of these cases, rendering the affected ones invisible and also separating them from their humanity.

Jezile is a prey of the worst kind of abuse/degradation. The sexual utterances of the white man are repulsive, and she is unable to react; firstly, because she cannot counter what he utters, and secondly because she knows that she has to rely on his consent to allow her access into the city:

> So when you people want a fuck you pretend you're ill. Why can't these people think up something original? Why do they all say the same thing? Turning to her at last he asked, "are there no men around your village; must you leave everything and lie your way to Durban? She trembled in humiliation. Her eyes dropped, she felt her anger hissing out through her ears, making them unbearably hot. Silence …. "You want a fuck; you look for a man here." (Ngcobo, 1990:13)

The colonial encounter did not only retard the colonial subjects of their human dignity and morality but most significantly, through what Said (1994) calls epistemic violence (the repression of the "colonial other's" means of knowing), retarded subject populace of their voice. In the case of Jezile as the subject regarding her identity as the subaltern and the conditions that she is confronted with, she is compelled to accede and passively engage in her own erasure and that she is not adept of posing any epistemic disobedience and subverting the superiority of dominating discourses (Mignolo, 2011).

6.8 Silences and disempowerment

Silence acts as a narrative technique to narrate migrant and transversal movements of men and women's experiences especially through what cannot and has not been conveyed verbally. Ngcobo uses silence as a pragmatic act of individual defiance. Benita Parry, interprets the application of silence in colonial and post- colonial discourse as, "an accented signifier of disempowerment and resistance of the denial of subject position and its appropriation" (1994:152). Parry (2004) also

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concedes that silence is fitting in cases of self- empowerment and defiance by an individual character. Silence engages in numerous ways and has diverse consequences on people and relationships in divergent contexts. Glenn identifies silence "[a]s a constellation of symbolic strategies that serve many functions" (2004:xi). For her, one purpose that silence serves, is to illustrate power within relationships. In instances where so-called powerless persons, are repressed and prevented from articulating themselves, silence becomes a representation of the repressed. Silence is then a manifestation of the hierarchies of power.

Foucault (1979) regards silence as a means to hold back the truth. He equates silence with untruths which is in contrast to the debates in this analysis. We need to examine silence from a discourse viewpoint, silence as statement:

> Silence itself-the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers-is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies. (Foucault, 1979:27)

Bhabha (1994), while describing the representation of the other and the self, contends that "what is interrogated is not simply the image of the person, but the discursive and disciplinary place from which questions of identity are strategically and institutionally posed" (1994:68). In the light of Bhabha's statement, the question is how can the main protagonist (Jezile) who led the village women in the emptying of the dipping tanks in the full view of white officials become so silent in the space of the matriarch: MaBiyela? This domestic space permits her to interrogate her own identity as a female but that simultaneously disempowers her to make her own decisions. Bhabha argues about the relevance of the confrontation with the divergent discourse to challenge representation and the image of the subject (1994:63–66). Therefore, the domestic space Jezile now occupies forbids her to interrogate her own representation as an autonomous African woman.

Jezile's usefulness is appreciated in terms of reproduction, especially by MaBiyela who is a spokesperson for both the absent male characters and the community's traditional ideas and opinions on women issues and motherhood. In one instance Jezile is the 'centre of the excitement'

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because she is the main agitator in the emptying of the dipping tanks, in the next she is the infertile daughter-in-law.

Sinclair (2012) examines the disempowerment of women in selected African novels of the twentieth century that centres on the conditions of women in these areas as exemplified in the oppression, victimisation and violence meted on them by their patriarchal societies and entrenched traditions, "women are shown as occupying secondary roles in their patriarchal societies" (2012: iv). There is a constant manoeuvre between what is circumscribed by Jezile's community, by the apartheid system, and her own personal ambitions, and this represents a part of one of the central issues of the novel- the negotiation of identity within different contexts. In the following passage we are made cognisant of Jezile's plight:

> MaBiyela [fixed] her eyes below Jezile's waist and had repeated, "Anything?" Jezile had stared back at her mother–in-law and had shook her head silently. That almost silent exchange was to mark the nature of their relationship for a long time. That day Jezile had cried and cried. The episode was the start of a relentless persecution. MaBiyela would not stop. (Ngcobo, 1990:4)

The family space which is traditionally characterised largely as domestic space is deconstructed and its conception laid bare for all to view. By impelling private family space into the public sphere, the aforementioned paragraph indicates that the family is no longer hidden from the world but is a component of public space closely tied up with its larger environmental space.

The big question is: Can these women speak? In fact, they communicate, but nobody takes heed of them. The subaltern cannot speak because their words cannot be appropriately (or will not be) interpreted. Therefore, the silence of the female in the novel is not the result of her inadequacy of vocalisation but the result of the disapproval of a traditionally bound society and dominant agencies refusing to listen to her and her desires and interpret her words meaningfully, in the knowledge that their dominance would be weakened (Spivak, 1988).

6.9 Resistance

Resistance is a result of oppression. It is an individual's conscious or unconscious defiance against unjust power or repression. Jezile brazenly rebels, opposing matriarchal characters, demonstrating

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her indignation and exerting herself in male-dominated spaces. Jezile initially cannot understand her dislike for her husband's mother, but at the same time she is unable to restrain her outbursts. This draws our attention to the fact that there are also opposing ideals within the traditional/communal structures, and that the rural experience, like any experience, is not rooted on a shared set of homogeneous conventions. We locate that strain between her inner rationality and her community reasoning. While some of the rural women are politically progressive, they do not oppose tradition outright. But throughout the novel Ngcobo exposes subtle actions that the women manipulate in order to transform their own communal plight. Although their energies are more centred on political aspects, women like Jezile endeavour to oppose the traditional system as well. Where apartheid oppresses them through repressive policies, the community itself restrains them through the customary foundations of patriarchy. People are entangled in the system: "it was if they did not know why they were there, as though they had always stood there, half their lives in that queue" (Ngcobo, 1990:12). Jezile considers herself of an autonomous and progressive mind, which negates the constructed image of females in the society she lives in. It is through her battle, steadfastness and rationality that she reinforces her female identity against all these repressive systems. Jezile is a forthright, individualistic, and a fearless woman who fights to be equal to her counterpart male figure and the urban African women and thereby becomes involved in the beer hall defiance to uphold the national rights of her people. The intensity displayed in Jezile's craving to fight, further epitomises her as a fiery, emboldened and a free-spirited character.

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Ngcobo explores how power engenders Jezile's identity and thus engages in means of self-analysis, which in the novel points to how Jezile pursues self-reinvention as a strategy of resistance. Through this process, traditional ways of subject-centered knowing are denied validity as power relations are recognised in the production of truth, and, simultaneously, the subject is seen to participate in her identity formation (Foucault,1988a). While Ngcobo is critical of how power relations affect identity discourses, she also reclaims a sense of identity as a way of resistance within those same power relations. This is also apparent in her intimate and compassionate portrayal of Siyalo's family. It is obvious that Jezile considers every one of them as significant who warrant to be heard because they have a vital story to tell and a self-truth to be shared. Through her analytical examination of her family's conditions, practices and positions,

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Jezile temporarily disengages from power relations, interprets their role in her self-identity and revitalises her subjectivity through her understanding of and cooperation within those relations. Jezile comes to the understanding that the older women are generational victims of black patriarchy, white supremacy, migrancy and poverty in the community. MaBiyela is depicted in the following passage:

> MaBiyela had so much power. She was permanently vigilant, armed with authority and custom. Her vigilance was born of her own embittered life, soured by her own outgrown relationship with her own mother–in-law in her own past. It was the way she perceived her role, the guardian of morality in the absence of the men. Embittered by her own lonely life when she was younger she had to cope with the long absences of her husband. So she often exercised her new -found power with an element of retaliation against some malignant social order. (Ngcobo, 1990:16)

Foucault's exploration of power in relation to the feminist subject exposes the crucial need for critical self-awareness so that the practices of our lives can become processes by which we reinvent ourselves. Jana Sawicki contends that if we give up our connection to a stable sense of self and core identity, then we can mobilise multiple points of resistance within the acknowledgement of the discursive affects that assists to constitute us (1991:65). For her, the Foucauldian feminist subject is answerable for the ideas and practices of the self that are in opposition to one's liberation, which in turn exposes various locations and instruments to circumvent those contradictions. For example, instead of affirming identity practices such as the dominant discussion of how a mother or wife are supposed to act and engage within the institution of the family, marriage or relationship as genuine to the self, Sawicki concludes that the decentered subject is useful in negotiating how one's identity is formed. As she perceives it, a Foucauldian feminist will "stress the sheer variety of ways in which effects of male domination are produced and gendered identities constituted" (1991:63), which advances one's liberation from the dominating discourses that asserts one's identity.

Fundamental to Foucault's theory was the assertion that "power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (1980:93), and that power is both confining and productive. Individuals are therefore immersed in non-equal and evolving power relations, in which they occupy shifting positional dynamics that make them both subject to and

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able to utilise power (Foucault, 1980). Foucault's examination of how actors can be associated in an active negotiation of their subjectivity proceeds through the conceptualisation of technologies of the self:

> Technologies of the self-permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and a way of being, so as to transform themselves to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (1989a:19)

There is a notable recognition of individual power within Jezile as she pursues agency within the dominant ideological nexus of custom and tradition. The people in town are so transfixed by a set of ideologies that they automatically suspect she is having an affair, because a young woman has no 'business in town' without her spouse. Where Jezile and the younger women of the town are much more mindful of political events, the earlier generations, such as MaBiyela, are not. This is however not to say that they are not part of the defiance campaigns, the political mobility comes from the younger women who, in a sense, have taken the lead.

6.10 Protests

Jezile is astonished at her self-development and transformation, when it dawns on her that it is the first time in her life that her grievances are 'so well-articulated' (Ngcobo, 1990:33) that she can engage critically and highlight alternative approaches for the 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1989a). According to Foucault, it is only feasible to engage in what he expresses as 'ethical conduct' (1979) after you have argued your own position within contemporary discourses and regimes of truth (Foucault, 1980). Initially Jezile is very hesitant to join the campaign in the city, but it is her participation that makes her recognise that the women of Sigageni, just like the urban women, are part of the same battle. Jezile's realisation is strengthened when she goes to prison and associates with other urban women who are members of the same struggle. Here Ngcobo focuses on a complex issue: because the rural women perceive the urban women as threats to their matrimonies and family institutions, they are from the onset unable to reconcile in the prison space:

> The city women were their traditional rivals. They were the women who took their men when they went to work in the cities, or so they thought. Jezile, who had spent time with the city women in Durban, is really no different. (Ngcobo, 1990:102)

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Ngcobo proposes the possible solution for reestablishing the black women's self-recovery. They must rely on other women in the community for self-fulfillment in order to identify their own self. Friendships between women not only assist black women grapple with the dehumanising consequences of patriarchy, it also helps them heal emotionally and spiritually. Mutual understanding, benevolence and affection between black women can assist them withstand the discursive systems of repression, to fight against it, and to enhance the conditions of their communities and society at large (Ngcobo, 1990).

The campaign of defiance by the African communities is grounded on the reasoning of the poor who, according to Fanon (1967a:224), "cannot conceive of life otherwise than in the form of a battle against exploitation, misery, and hunger"; it is through this struggle that a fighting culture and principles of liberty emanated. Here African women were set up in contention to their own men and white authority. First and foremost, they are perturbed about what their husbands will think, but they recognised that it is their obligation to try and stop the detrimental consequences that apartheid and the pass laws have on their lives. Even Siyalo comes to acknowledge that the women protesters are valuable and relevant for the long struggle ahead of them. Ngcobo situates the beer hall events on authentic demonstrations during this time.

As Lefebvre contends, space is an "instrument and object of struggles and conflict" (1991:35–36) and the novel is portrayed as a battlefield because the marginalisation of women across various African societies throughout history has been perpetuated by the hierarchical convention, resulting in the masculinization of space (Massey, 1993:141). This concealment of women's aspirations pressured female characters like Jezile to aggressively and relentlessly fight for their space in spheres of male-dominated influences. Thus, the transformation of the female figure takes place in large signifying spaces, such as the change of the public space, which proposes a new and emerging cultural and political consciousness. By doing so, spaces and power structures are reassigned and the advancement of roles of women is prioritised.

The beer hall demonstrations are indicative of this urgency for mobilisation against apartheid. The women can no longer wait for the men to assist them make a transition. It is their endeavour to resist the 'white intruders' and negotiate their own political destiny. During this time, the first of

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these beer hall demonstrations took place in June 1959, when women blockaded a beer hall in Cato Manor, ejected the male customers, and wrecked several beer barrels and machinery. For two weeks, these women expressed their annoyance by means of protests, raids of beer halls and confrontation with the police. They also grappled with the police and set fire to the beer hall. In 1960, the female protesters assailed and killed nine policemen (La Hausse, 1988:63). This was one of the events that led to the state of emergency of 1960. After this, the resistance to the deportation of residents in Mkhumbane decreased and people were coercively moved to KwaMashu and Umlazi (La Hausse, 1988).

In many instances, a merger of anger, obscene and sexual behavior was conducted in the following ways:

> These women were very powerful. Some came half-dressed with their breasts exposed, and when they got near the place [municipal building] the Blackjacks [municipal police] tried to block the women. But when they saw this, the women turned and pulled up their skirts. The police closed their eyes and the women passed by and went in … the women took off their panties, filled them with beer and said, "Look, this is what happens," as they squeezed them out. (Lodge, 1982:304)

Dorothy Driver, in 'Ma'-Ngoana oTsoare Thipa Ka Bohaleng', maintains that:

> The search for a self–constituting community is important because of the damage done to black South Africans in an apartheid culture. But it is a process of extraordinary complexity. If "self" is constructed in the terms provided by the symbolic system into which one is born, then South Africans are called upon to define themselves in terms offered by the symbolic repertoire of apartheid, a repertoire which includes the marks of imperialism and colonialism, of class exploitation, racial oppression, and gender stereotyped expectations. (1990:232)

6.11 National demonstration

In 1948, with the emergence of the new Nationalist government, there was an urgency for curbing of the black woman. Pass laws would determine labour procedures, thereby curbing the move from the rural to the urban space. By doing so the government could control the inflow into the cities, and secure jobs for the unemployed white working class. In 1956, 20 000 women marched to the

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Union Buildings in Pretoria, South Africa, singing struggle songs to remonstrate against apartheid legislations such as the discriminatory pass law that ended up in a submission of a petition to the apartheid prime minister J. G. Strijdom on 9 August. The march was headed by Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Albertina Sisulu and Rahima Moosa. But with the impending application of these pass laws that would degrade the women even more and subsequently there was a surge in defiance throughout the country (Lodge, 1982:304). Rural women were part of this resistance campaign once again, and Ngcobo uses this point of entry to explore the protagonist's identity in relation to the national identity of women demonstrators, as well as the role of defiance in the creation of traditional or communal identity, and the individual's sense of self within and outside these spaces. Jezile points to a new struggle that she must engage in. This is the first of her individual decisions. For Jezile there are no real options, and she has to appropriate what she can in order to get through life. She is restless and unable to wait for anything to be given to her; she has to be self-confident and quick in any decision she makes. Ngcobo uses Jezile to foreground the hybrid demeanour of the rural woman. Rural women, like all other individuals, had to negotiate within a plethora of subject positions. Grant Farred avers that:

> The rural black women must forge subjectivity in relation to historically changing black and white patriarchies; they must respond to and engage patriarchally defined sexual codes and their own (female) experience of sexuality. Likewise, they have to confront racial codes and their own encounters with the black and white communities. In both instances, of race and sex, they must question how their experiences are governed by such codes. (1993:91)

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6.12 New awareness and reclaiming identity

hooks writes that cultural and social marginality of oppressed people is crucial "for the production of counter-hegemonic discourse" (1990:149) and marginalised women can utilise their point of standing at the margin "as a site of resistance – as location of radical openness and possibility" (1990:204). The home space, cut off from the public eye, can be such a space:

> The very meaning of home changes with experience of decolonisation, of radicalisation. Home is that place which enables and advocates varied and ever-changing viewpoints, a position where one finds new means of sighting reality, frontiers of difference. (hooks, 1990:149).

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At their prayer meetings at home in the evenings Ngcobo has imagined such a home at the margin, an area that encourages "varied and ever-changing perspectives" on their history of trauma, dehumanisation and oppression, and by extension, the collective African women's planning of strategies against the apartheid machinery that will result in the nation's liberation and freedom. And it is then at this juncture we introduced to another strong female character in the novel, who is Doctor Noziswe Morena. Dr Morena spearheads the Sabelweni women into a new awareness of yearning and life. She educates the women who come to live with her how to practice a way of life that could enhance their mental and physical contentment. Dr Morena is determined to awaken the black women so that they would not only resist the injustices of racist domination, inequality and dehumanisation, but be so moved that they would focus on anti-racist struggles.

It is through Dr Morena that the prayer groups become part of the political programme of the community. Women, by being courageous enough to risk persecution, is the author's depiction of women's awakening to fight against all odds to demand a just and egalitarian society. It is here where Dr Morena connects the women with other women across the country. The Thursday afternoon groupings provide a platform for political issues rather than for religious matters. Ngcobo's most worthwhile commitment to South African literature is by far the 'feminist reconfiguring of space.' The women in her novel invariably cause the spaces they take up to be disrupted and thus revolutionise the spaces into secure feminist safe havens from which they could defy apartheid and its structures. Numerous scenes in the novel bear testimony to this spatial transformation.

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In hooks' understanding, the Sabelweni women turn their 'marginality' into "a site of resistance, as location of radical openness and possibility" (1990:22). The women utilise the seemingly virtuous space of the prayer meeting and, before the eyes of their enemies, transform it into an instrument to challenge their political repression. These are the normal day to day chores that are part of their daily existence, behind which stands a subversive space within which they regularly design strategies against the apartheid hegemony:

> To the casual observer the women of Sabelweni (the larger district) were at home looking after their livestock. But beneath the surface, within the community, they formed a network of messengers relaying messages from one group to another. And whenever the police or

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> soldiers came round, the women gave warning cries as signals to others in hiding. (Ngcobo, 1990:180)

The African women's ideology of resistance can be perceived as an endeavour to keep alive the sense of belonging to the South African land against elements that displace them. In a way they bring forth the message that, if they are uprooted by the regime, they will defy the land being confiscated from them, so they remain alert through their memories by talking about it formally and informally to the young members of the family and in expressing that they do not have access to their land. hooks' idea that "our struggle is the struggle of memory against forgetting" (1990:21) is directly linked to Ngcobo's novel. Ngcobo's struggle through her female protagonists is seen as a perseverance on keeping the historical "'cord' with her milieu, which can be seen as parallel to hooks' cultural resistance against marginalisation" (1990:56).

hooks contends that in much of the fiction of contemporary black women writers, the battle of black female characters for subjectivity, "usually takes the form of black women breaking free from boundaries imposed by others, only to practice their newfound 'freedom' by setting limits for themselves. Hence although black women may make themselves 'subjects' they do not become radical subjects. Often, they simply conform to existing norms, even ones they once resisted'' (1992:47). This chapter contends that the women of And They Didn't Die become partial radical subjects and agents in Sigageni, and that *And They Didn't Die* chronicles the efforts of black women that create radical black female subjectivity. The women of Sigageni contest every constraint that is imposed on them, however they do not exceed all boundaries, such as patriarchy which is rooted in decades of practice. However, they have replaced antipathy in themselves with a determination for themselves and thus reclaim the African female identity.

6.13 Conclusion

Ngcobo's main intention in this novel is to afford a different interpretation of African women's history that varies from the history constructed by apartheid discourses. To demonstrate the legacy of African women as contributors in the national struggle for freedom, Ngcobo relates to genuine accounts of the events (beer hall demonstrations of 1959 in Cato Manor; and Pass Law demonstrations in Pretoria of 1956) and introduces the readers to the real voices of the African

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women “you strike the woman; you strike a rock” (1990:98). This signified the long history of struggle as discernible by their voices which “pierced the prison air and shattered the silence” (1990:101). By bringing together two important components in the same novel - the hidden history of South Africa, and those who fought for the liberation of their country and in this case African women – Ngcobo opposes the idea of a one-dimensional history. Oppressing others is a contravention of human rights. Everyone has an opportunity to live and be treated equally. The wisdom documented in Ngcobo’s novel could serve as an encouraging factor in helping South African men and women reevaluate their lives and values. Furthermore, because Ngcobo’s work examines philosophy and unique women’s experiences, it can also embolden all in the transformation of South African society that allows for equal opportunities and respect for each other. Her work also contributes to the social advancement of South African society and promotes nation-building. Ngcobo seeks unity of all African people in their struggle for human rights by professing: “We South Africans need each other not as a horse and master, but as a pair of hands” (1990:192).

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CHAPTER 7

MPE'S *WELCOME TO OUR HILLBROW*

7.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to understand how human relationships as a site of undertaking between politics of everyday life and the broader collective experiences unfolds. As humans link with one another, there are sites of the dominant and the subordinate. But these binaries are not rigid, sometimes the positions change so that those that are led become leaders and the hitherto powerful are considered powerless. The manner in which human beings link to each other in the process of their day-to-day interactions, may be termed by or defined by a higher level of power structures such as political leadership or bureaucratic institutions. As these agencies wield their power on groups and individuals, the individuals in turn assert their identities and defy the repressive effects of the power wielding agencies through numerous strategies and tactics.

My central concern here is to position power within the typical everyday interactions of subjects. Power here is posited, firstly as a form of assertion of the self in the face of confrontation. Secondly, most of Mpe's characters have to grapple with dislocation, exclusion and displacement, dealing in the process with homelessness and restoration of the idea of identity and belonging. Power is seen to be apparent in the cases when they have to prevail over barriers to come to their own in the hostile receiving domains as they affirm their sense of selfhood.

The chapter interrogates how social space is portrayed, exploiting the notion that space is a social construct and that it is in a constant process of formation and modification (Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 1993). Within this recognition of space, the chapter covers two divergent levels on which the body-identity-space engages in: the nation as a space and the individual space. The collapse of apartheid is the key historical event that operates as the foreground against which the plot of the novel unfolds. This development disrupted and challenged the rooted social order for decades. The discovery of gold and diamonds in South Africa, in the 1800s led to an extensive industrial and urban development in southern Africa. Settlements were secured on the Rand and the Reef mining

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areas; these later evolved into major colonial urban centers such as Johannesburg. The colonial urban city became a European–monopolised space which prohibited the colonised. The space was divided along racial lines and profiled the colonised as the inferior other. The construction of racially segregated and controlled townships had fundamental social and political ramifications on the racially excluded Africans (Mabin, 1992).

Fanon recognised that liberation remains fragmented when the colonial or apartheid city is not transformed but simply glossed over. This is one of the drawbacks of national liberation movements, where nationalist elites, pursuing economic and social betterment, not only scramble for vacated political opportunities, but also embrace the colonial mind-set, leaving the lines of force undivided and reproducing urban spaces where the rationale and power of money and the political state, not human obligations, are revered and highly valued. For Fanon, this is the real world of the neo-colonial city. To conceal the fact that the city is, in fact, not really accessible to all, and that the perception of the liberated nation (established in the struggle for freedom) is declining, the nationalist bourgeoisie in its state of grandeur and euphoria reassures itself by constructing "grandiose buildings in the capital"; instead of motivating the creation of sustainable communities, it lays out "money on what are called prestige expenses" (Fanon,1967a:165).

Biko's remark that "South Africa could succeed in putting across to the world a pretty convincing, integrated picture, with still 70 per cent of the population being underdogs", while a small Black middle class emerges in an intermediary position, is profoundly prophetic (More, 2008). Today South Africa's white and black elite enjoy liberty and an accumulation of richness, possession of wealth and properties that they could have never envisaged before, while the masses of the country's population is wallowing in poverty.

Poor, mostly black people, are located in areas secluded from the rich and especially the middle-class suburbs. This residue of apartheid, has now become a capitalist phenomenon, and is still a decisive component in terms of the living space of the black poor. Soja (1989) affirms this as "the spatialisation of history, the making of history entwined with the social production of space, the structuring of a historical geography" (18). The post-1994 newly liberated were free to belong and engage in the negotiated geopolitical community, to go wherever they wanted, to locate to cities,

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work and study like everyone else, without bias. This was instantly followed by massive human movements into and out places like Hillbrow leading to an intensified abandonment and decay and dereliction of city centres like Johannesburg by white people. Hillbrow also witnessed the arrival of African migrants such as Nigerians, Cameroonians, Zimbabweans, Zambians and other nationalities (Morris, 1999).

7.2 The rural versus the inner city

Welcome to our Hillbrow focuses on the story of Refentse who comes to the inner city to study at the University of the Witwatersrand. Mpe utilises strong imagery of the past and the future, memory, remembering, and yearning. In numerous ways, Mpe's Tiragalong, a fictitious rural settlement in Limpopo, is indicative of the old South Africa. This location is supposed to be, of community, homogeneity and harmony. However, Mpe does not attempt to depict such a place as one that does not have its irrationalities and fractures. Hillbrow represents the post-apartheid city as complex as it symbolises the triple misfortune of being a colonial artefact, an apartheid space and a post-apartheid space of conflict and inconsistency. As a model for imaginative impression the city is presented as a site of real and imagined spaces, and holds the possibility of new and vigorous means of perceiving urban space. In this context has been characterised as a city of dreams, hopes, promises, cosmopolitanism, multicultural ethnicity as well as hybridity, failure, disappointment, decay, violence and crime. In relation to spatial scarcity, Hillbrow has been both an inclusive and exclusive space that encompasses all who come to the city to pursue their fortunes, but fails to afford the necessary spatial arrangements for their sustainability.

Welcome to Our Hillbrow makes definitive reference to the hardships that emerges with the presence of the outsiders from both the foreign immigrant communities and the indigenous one. Aspects of racial discrimination exist in the text but are masked with amusement and irony. Individuals in this chapter under scrutiny are heterogeneous and divergent; they are "those who are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (Hall, 1990:235).

Tiragalong is a community where nobody takes responsibility for the social ills, witchcraft and makwerekwere (the 'makwerekwere' was a degrading term for the African migrant who

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articulated unintelligible accents of their languages), are "convenient scapegoats" (2001:118) for everything that goes wrong in that space. As stated by Nuttall (2004), the anti-apartheid movement did not foster a sense of Pan-Africanist awareness, immediate commitment to worldwide solidarity, or appreciation for diversity. Therefore, the xenophobia that occurs is highly ironic and exposes one of the failings of the anti-apartheid struggle, which is a paradox of the post-apartheid state. Rumours are rife in the Tiragalong community. Identity is largely moulded by the communities' memories of their values and belief systems and the psychological relatedness between physical happenings and mental maps. Perhaps this is the best mode to substantiate the affirmation that the past inhabits the present, that Tiragalong memory was in Hillbrow. It is through the consciousness of the people that there is succession between the past and the now, and as we observe Refentse, he "always took Tiragalong with him whenever he went, to Hillbrow or any other place" (2001:49). It is here that a fundamental message about memory is shared. This is the Tiragalong that moulded Refentse, and if the fractured community that shaped and continues to shape who he is, how would Mpe construct Refentse's identity under such demanding challenges?

7.3 Biography and Mpe as narrator

Mpe's debut novel, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, was published in 2001. Mpe's works have been published in *Imprint* (1995), *Staff Rider* (1980) and *Drum* Magazine (2008). A collection of short stories and poems, *Brooding Clouds* was published posthumously in 2008. Mpe was born in the northern city of Polokwane in Tiragalong, and located to Johannesburg at the age of 19 to register at the university. Due to inadequate funding, he ended up living in the inner urban city area of Hillbrow, a place where he later set his first novel. *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* was a significant literary work as it was the first novel to deal with the transitions of inner-city life in South Africa since apartheid's demise. Mpe died suddenly at the age of 34, at the time he was about to commence training as a traditional healer.

Mpe is part of a group of people who lived in hitherto repressed geographical locations, mainly townships and, in Mpe's case, in an economically and culturally repressed terrain such as the fictional Tiragalong. Mpe embodies in his text existential questions of self-realisation in the nascent democracy – what implications for black people, how their township/rural experience moulds them, the ramifications of growing up under apartheid, their apprehension of the new

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dispensation at the time of its inception, a critical recognition of its promises, failures and hopes of the 'new' South Africa, and the aspect of memory in composing identities. As Foucault argues:

> The work of an intellectual is not to shape others' political will; it is, through the analyses that he carries out in his own field, to question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident, to disturb people's mental habits, the way they do and think things. (1988b: 265)

The Black Consciousness Movement's influence is critical in this novel. As Biko contends:

> By describing yourself as black you have started on a road towards emancipation, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as a subservient being. (1978:48)

In the conception of this chapter, this informs us that we can expect resistance against a subservient position etched on blackness. Closely connected to Foucault's idea of power as being pervasive, is the concept of resistance. His understanding of power is not restricted to repression of the powerless by the powerful, but extends to recognise the power play in everyday interactions between people and institutions and within institutions as well. Foucault (1982) suggests that a study of power needs to evolve around questions pertaining to the various modes by which human beings are created into subjects. He further states that "the subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others" (1982:778). It is clear that when studying human relationships in relation to power, resistance occupies a pronounced position. I would therefore encapsulate resistance as a manner in which certain persona, like a narrator convert the resources at hand into instruments of control over the inhumane circumstances prevailing in the environments he/she occupies. Resistance is a manner in which the powerless endeavour to rise against oppressive systems through self-voicing and assertion. That is as individuals use narration as strategies of resistance, they are involved in acts of subversion against repressive and exclusionary spaces that are claimed to be spaces of the powerful.

Mpe elects to fight using his narrative prowess, perhaps the only thing that cannot be taken away from him. The sheer act of narrating defies the state laws and inner-city bureaucracies, and is an act of resistance. Narrating presents a serious threat to the state and its institutions, as it provides

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personal voice, self-reflection, and authority — things that empower people and alert them to reason critically. Not only does narrating invite an investigative thought that can question and confront the authority of the state, it also permits investigative thought to move and spread, posing a formidable threat to the state's stability. Narrating favours Mpe to acquire a new language, different from the one of the traditional ideologies, which gives authority to his new self. Althusser (1984) argues that one becomes 'steeped' in ideology and subsequently recognises and relates reality in the terms, language and practices authorised by the 'ruling ideology'. Althusser contends that "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices" (1984:40). Ideology constructs control mechanisms and develops an elusive reality, which supports the statement "man is an ideological animal by nature" (1984:45). All individuals are moulded within an ideological domain and their choices are determined within this paradigm.

In the case of *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, narration acts as a space to remember and recollect things from the past that allows Mpe self-autonomy and gives him the bravery and intrepidity to resist the dominant ideology. What types of weapons can one 'sharpen' to oppose decades of institutionalised racism, exclusionary ideologies of places like the cities, urban inner spaces and hundreds of years of colonisation of the mind? As Fanon asserts:

> The colonial world is a Manichean world ... At times this Manicheanism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly, it turns him into an animal ... The native knows all this, and laughs to himself every time he spots an allusion to the animal world in the other's words. For he knows that he is not an animal; and it is precisely at the moment he realizes his humanity that he begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure his victory. (1963:31)

Althusser maintains that, "ideology has no history" and "is conceived as a pure illusion, a pure dream" that inculcates the dominant ideas of the ruling regime on people therefore recalling one's individual history becomes critical in society (1984:150). For most citizens in transitory societies that encompass mass migrations to global cities, as Tyner argues, "resistance was not to 'acquire' power, but instead to retain a semblance of humanity, of individuality" (2004:129). Mpe finds such resistance in using his weapon of narration, which grants him an opportunity to reconstruct reality and remain human "within a de-humanising environment" (2004:142). This ties in with Fanon's assertion:

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> Come brothers, we have far too much work on our hands to revel in outmoded games. Europe has done what it had to do and all things considered, it has done a good job; let us stop accusing it, but let us say to it firmly it must stop putting on such a show. We no longer have reason to fear it, let us stop then envying it. (1963:238)

Fanon was of the opinion that African and other non-European philosophers should embark on a new beginning, move away from Europe, and establish an autonomous discourse and not a counter-discourse. According to Fanon (1963; 1994), in order to meet the expectations of contemporary societies, it is imperative to seek alternative sources of inspiration beyond Europe. Furthermore, in order to meet the expectations of Europeans, it is imperative that we refrain from presenting them with a mere reflection, although an ideal one, of their culture and their philosophy, which they themselves occasionally find disheartening. In the context of Europe, it is imperative that we, as individuals, prioritise the collective welfare of our society and the broader human community. To achieve this, it is essential that we go on a transformative journey, reevaluating our existing paradigms and striving to cultivate a novel mindset. Moreover, our efforts should be directed towards the cultivation of a renewed human being, one that embodies progressive ideals and contributes positively to the advancement of our shared goals.

In the perspective of Biko, WaThiong'o and Fanon, the solution to freedom is more in the mind. Mpe proposes that 'weapons' that are implicitly extrinsic cannot even begin the initiation of decolonisation. There is an urgent need for black South Africans themselves to engage in the reconstruction of the new society, failing which they will get written into narratives instead of writing themselves into narratives. Fanon's remark "pitfalls of a national consciousness" (1967b) surfaces here, where the drawbacks occur in the midst of cracks that are residual from the nonexistence of agency in the advancement of national rebuilding. Mpe insists on driving authority and agency, thereby writing himself into this long narrative of a nascent democracy that is born out of dispossession, trauma, dehumanisation and homelessness. He utilises the narration to speak truth to power because his narrative is a synecdoche for his language which embodies culture, recognition, oneness, diversity, legitimacy and autonomy, which is in keeping with Tyner's comments of remaining human "within a dehumanising environment" (2004:142).

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7.4 The contested city: Hillbrow

The opening chapter of *Welcome to our Hillbrow* is to be perceived as a microcosm of post-1994 South Africa, one that purportedly basked in a placid rainbow-country affinity, the reader is 'welcomed to our Hillbrow' in an unwelcoming derisive manner. The 'our' here perhaps perceived from the viewpoint of the disowned masses displaced to the wretchedness of Hillbrow — an "African Renaissance that threatened the future of the locals" (2001:26). The stories, discriminations and hardships of the dominant history of the past still persists in people's memories and form a continuity in their consciousness: "Welcome to our Hillbrow of milk and honey and bile, all brewing in the depths of our collective consciousness" (2001:41). Even though the collective consciousness is of eventual relevance in the narration, specific individual accountability and personal identity are essential to negotiate the new South Africa.

Mpe mobilises Refentse to illuminate some very real matters that accosts newcomers to the city. Although the character of the migrant brings with it certain pledges of liberty and movement, we see in Refentse's life a struggle with some of the restraints that confronts anyone in the inner urban city:

> Your applications for bursaries have not been successful, for although you passed Matric with the necessary exemption to be admitted to read for the degree of Bachelor of Arts, the organizers you applied to for financial assistance required that the applicants' Matric results should be more than sparkling. So it was that you had to stay with Cousin at Vickers Place for the whole of 1991, and subsequently. (Mpe, 2001:15)

Refentse's motivation to obtain an education is necessitated by the notion of reconsidering the hardships of the past and is encapsulated by the enticement of an urban modernity that was refused to the black masses. The urban space entices the rural youth and promises the attainment of these dreams of radical spin offs. Refentse is fortunate in that, although he is initially met with numerous hurdles in the process of securing his degree, however he surmounts these. He does well enough over time to be granted a scholarship. This grants him an opportunity to pursue his studies and then later he is afforded a position at the university. Via him we understand that although a gradual process, there is the prospect of surmounting obstacles. Refentse's exceptionality, although by virtue of his own competencies, makes the failings of others all the more evident. We understand that regardless of the socio-political reforms of South Africa's changeover to a non-racial

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democracy, the passages needed to empower the previously repressed have not really become reachable. What happened during the first two decades of liberty and autonomy tends to affirm Loomba's view that:

> The race relations that are put into place during colonialism survive long after many of the economic structures underlying them have changed. ... the racial stereotypes that we identified earlier still circulate. A complex amalgam of economic and racial factors operates in anchoring the present to the colonial past. (2005:129)

Although South Africa embraced a new constitution which rescinded racial prejudice, the disparate socio-economic structure remained unchanged. Mandela's new regime spent much of its energy in the initial part of the country's freedom years in revising all the signifiers of black degradation and white dominance but doing little to transform the lives of the masses, mainly of the impoverished and the landless. The city, and all that is linked with it, like the university, although it may tempt with the assurance of a better life, does not always materialise on those promises. Refentse's life unfolds amongst numerous other characters pursuing a new life in the city. The rest of the world considers post-1994 South Africa as a 'miracle' because during the changeover there was 'no violence' (Mpe, 2001:100). The greater part of the novel does not conform with this international perspective as we are informed of all kinds of violence: symbolic violence, physical, psychological and cultural. The irony is that since the early 70's, Biko envisaged a decolonised South Africa and an African-centred country where African culture and the democratic will of the African majority were recognised and favoured:

> … strangely enough in this country, you, know, you find that there is an extension of Europe into Africa, where indigenous people are expected to live according to values and attitudes as determined back home in Europe … By rejecting white values and opting for a revival of a black, a real black approach, what you are really doing is to offset a wrong which has been in operation for a long time … We believe that we have to reject their economic system, their political system, and values that govern human relationships, in order to establish the kind of society that we as indigenous people want here. And that kind of society is not exclusively for us. It is for everybody who is here – but it has trappings which (sic) are obviously indigenous. To get to that stage we have to be properly orientated, to being ourselves, into a proper force to know what the alternative is about, to live it within ourselves. (Biko and Lanning, 2014:147)

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It is also one in which African experiences and knowledges control and define the organisation of society and its national culture. Biko's "vision of decolonisation" boils down to the wish to change the focus positions of blacks and whites by ending colonial identities and power relations:

> So, as a prelude, whites must be made to realise that they are only human, not superior. Same with blacks. They must be made to realise that they are also human, not inferior. For all of us this means that South Africa is not European, but African. (1978:61)

Fanon's philosophy of liberation emerges from a specific geographical space; his argument is that: "Every human problem must be considered from the standpoint of time" (1967a:14). This novel is detailed by paradoxes, which Fanon (1967b) contends is an element of the post independent state. Mpe informs us from the very outset that the novel comprises of "ambiguities, paradoxes, ironies [are] the stuff of our South African lives" (Mpe, 2001:23). These ironies and contradictions permeate Mpe's style of writing, for example, the portrayal of the African immigrant in the inner urban city, unmasks more inconsistencies and disparities in South Africa's democratic transformation period and after:

> No one seemed to care that the treatment of Makwerekwere by the police, and the lack of sympathy from the influential Department of Home Affairs, ran contrary to the human rights clauses detailed in the new constitution of the country. Ambiguities, paradoxes, ironies" [are] the stuff of our South African and Makwerekwere lives. (2001:23)

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The rules of writing are disrupted; in the tirade below there is no punctuation. The numerous names of African countries are not parted by commas but run into each other and construct one lengthy name. This is a device of subversion by Mpe because it engenders discomfort in meaning-creation whilst detailing crucial issues: why do the boundaries that were created as a result of the Berlin conference linger on to taunt and divide African nationals presently? Mpe alludes to this irregular colonial construct of boundaries by using the discourse of colonialism, such as 'barbarians':

> The streets are overflowing with Makwerekwere come to pursue green pastures after hearing that the new president Rolihlahla Mandela welcomes guests and visitors unlike his predecessors who erected deadly electric wire fences around the boundaries of South Africa trying to keep out the barbarians from Mozambique Zaire Nigeria Congo Ivory

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> Coast Zimbabwe Angola Zambia from all over Africa fleeing their war-torn countries populated with starvation like Ethiopia flashing across Cousin's TV screen every now and then and Makwerekwere stretching their legs and spreading like pumpkin plants filling every corner of our city. (2001:26)

There is perpetuity between the apartheid past and the present. This is manifested in the form of the migrant, a character anchored in the history of Johannesburg, particularly with reference to the "transnational culture of the mines" (Nuttall, 2004:736) and the cross-cultural collaboration that led to a creation of an urban indigenous culture. The spatial politics of a city such as Johannesburg are apprised by divergence, "city form ... is the most conducive space to the remaking of culture and identity, because it is the place of most difference" (2004:748). This transformation of identity in a culture expressed by divergence is testimony in Mpe's novel, and it is this challenge that impels the narrative forward.

Early in the novel, Refentse directs us into the city space of Hillbrow, where the market economy nurtures unamenable ethnic biases which amplifies the atmosphere of alienation that the reader gleans from Refentse's walk through these public paths. Fundamentally, it's a topographical space that pledges a better life, great education, excitement, intercultural reciprocation, urban life and a glorified door into a fulfilling future–what the new South Africa assured its citizens and African immigrants. However, we are instantly confronted with ironies and, perhaps mainly failures to live up to the undertakings that were pledged by the new government. According to Green (2005), Hillbrow in the 1990s was perceived as either a diverse hub of culture, class, and ethnicity, or a deteriorating urban landscape plagued by high levels of crime, drug use, prostitution, and the spread of AIDS.

The theory of residual space notes that all cultural practices include an element of destruction. The creation of any social space requires the destruction of preexisting spaces, as well as potentially destructive competition with alternative spaces. We witness such destruction concomitant with original spaces when driving through present–day Hillbrow with its historic landmarks built in the early 1900s like the Jewish synagogues and the Greek orthodox church. Residual spaces are left over after a process of social transformation. Lefebvre (1991) notes how urban space is produced

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and re-produced within the power-ridden relations in societies in his concept of 'the right to the city'. The new citizens shape their urban environment in a way that meets their needs.

Mpe's Hillbrow gives us entry into the psyche of Refentse as he is 'mapping' his way through the neighbourhood, one that is conscious of the previous government and has residues of its erstwhile colonisers and exploiters through street names such as Caroline, Esselen, Goldreich, and signifiers of colonial contact and rules such as the Bible Centred Church of Christ and Da Gama court (Mpe, 2001:6).

7.5 Walking the city and suburbs

Walking the city is making it as much as its stroller; footsteps are equivalent to words that make the city intelligible, as De Certeau (1984) sets out to remind us. For De Certeau, the "ordinary practitioners of the city" are "walkers whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it" (1984:93). For the narrator, the aspect of walking heightens a new experience of the city, for it centres on the liberty of motion and the cessation of apartheid politics of segregation and restrictions on movement:

> If you are coming from the city centre, the best way to get to cousin's place is by driving or walking through Twist Street, a one-way takes you to the north of the city. You cross Wolmarans and three obscure streets, Kapteijn, Ockerse, Pieterse, and before you drive or walk past Esselen, Kotze and Pretoria Streets. You will then cross Van der Merwe and Goldreich Streets. Your next port of call is Caroline Street. Just cross to the other side of Caroline. (Mpe, 2001:6)

For the suburban white in the post-apartheid space, accessibility to poor black spaces is probable but unsafe due to its scarcity of infrastructure and the peril it presents. Therefore, the space of the black poor is fully existent for themselves, but access for them is inhibited and even undesirable to the suburban white areas. The reverse is true as regards the space of the suburban white. That space is available to the black poor for access, but only in a restricted means and by implication in the dutiful role of a menial worker, such as a domestic worker or in the position of a security guard. Moreover, in select dwelling areas, and contingent on context and time, colour and class operate as a signifier of access, with only whites being admitted in select areas, and only blacks being welcomed in others. Hook and Vrdoljak's (2002) study highlighted how these kinds of residential

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areas are heterotopias: the regulated accessibility is much like the 'influx control' of apartheid South Africa where black subjects had their movement curtailed by numerous measures, such as "signing registers, requiring the permission of empowered parties, possessing the correct 'documents' to obtain right of access" (2002:212) .The discrepancy in this scenario is that the new modes of control are not grounded only on race but also on class, thereby adding a "liberal politics of admission" (Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002:211). In many pockets of the city, in other words, the residue of apartheid vestiges endures.

Illustrations of space instilled with discourse and power intends to (re)create spatial identities as well as borders between those that belong and those who don't. Memory is linked to space and signified by the name given to that space. In the course of memorialisation, names transmit symbolic value contributing to spatial identity and meaning. Place naming operates as a mode of territorialisation that contributes to the identity of locations at numerous stages in history (Ndetylane, 2012).

De Certeau (1984) proposes that narratives are often mentioned in order to sketch spatial borders; to demarcate who rightfully belongs in a geographical space and who belongs externally:

> The narrative plays a decisive role. It 'describes', to be sure. But 'every is more than a fixation,' it is 'a culturally creative act'. It even has a distributive power and performative force (it does what it says ... it founds spaces. (1984:123)

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7.6 Not rags to riches tale for all

When a citizen from Tiralong wants to thrive professionally or in any way get ahead in life, it is usually through determination and hurdles, and others perceive that subject as someone gallant, so that their tale is an influential rags-to-riches story. In the situation of subjects from more distinguished backgrounds, achievement and monetary stability are commonplace. This underscores the fact that the people from destitute areas do not have the same capabilities, and just by trying to accomplish those possibilities, they have to put in an added endeavour. This is true of Refilwe (the other protagonist in the novel):

> Refilwe appeared in your life. She came to Hillbrow at the dawn of 1996, having just completed her Bachelor of Arts in Sepedi and English. She came to Johannesburg to seek

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greener pastures for herself and those she loved...beside two testimonials from her lecturers, she explained to you, her prospective employers required a third one from someone who knew her as a member of the same community. (Mpe, 2001:31)

Relocating out of townships and rural areas was a means for the black migrant to register their middle-class identity and to oppose the 'black working class' identity prescribed on them by distancing themselves from spaces and places linked to that identity. Upward class motion became interwoven with a symbolic 'upward' spatial motion where residing in inner urban city spaces became linked with one's sense of improvement and liberty in a city space. Living in cities became a symbolic feature of the fledgling black middle class (Ndletyane, 2012). The need to disassociate oneself from the space and identity related to the ills of apartheid was and continues to be important and stand strong in memories of the citizens. To relocate to inner urban cities was seen as a signifier of power and independence, that symbolised the political history of the spatial position in the culture of black people. As with other opportunities, black South Africans were refused access into urban spaces, and as such to relocate from villages and townships into cities became synonymous with liberty, opportunity seeking, autonomy and social advancement (Gilroy, 2000).

Although the migrant character is typically male, in Refilwe, Mpe engages with some of the concerns encompassing gender the capacity of women to participate in the experience and challenges of the city and understand its dynamics to make it work for them. Refilwe is a success in most respects in the story. Her exit from the inner urban city in South Africa is because she wins a scholarship at Oxford Brookes University, in London. Although she departs the inner city to advance her dreams, it is the very stay in the inner urban space that gives her the upper hand in many respects to apply and be successful.

However, like Refentse, Refilwe's journey is complicated by biases and uncertainties when she first settles in Johannesburg. Refilwe suffers from what Daphne Spain (1992) has labelled "spatial segregation" because she does not have accessibility to all spaces when she arrives in Johannesburg. For Spain, space has been utilised as a means of preserving a spatial separation that authorises an asymmetrical affinity between women and space, and men and space: "spatial arrangements between the sexes are socially created, and when they provide access to valued knowledge for men while reducing access to that knowledge for women, the organisation of space

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may perpetuate status differences" (1992:3). These biases come from Tiralong. As with her preference to live in central Johannesburg, Refilwe's ambitions are met with contempt by her home community. Although her purpose to study included the intention to assist her family financially, they are not supportive of her:

> When she told her mother of her determination to apply to Oxford Brookes University, the news was not welcomed. Her mother was quick to remind her of the need for her to be the financial support of the family...'Besides, daughter', she said, 'how can you leave me in such a poor state of health?' (Mpe, 2001:96)

This magnifies the challenge to the young adults from rural domains as they search for an urban life to be successful but also is indicative of some of the restraints placed upon the female subjects in this society. During the initial period Refilwe departs the private space, and walks down the street into the public space, in Oxford. She is entirely disorientated both literally and metaphorically speaking. The practice of walking, discovering, observing and experiencing the city makes it a space of intertwined enclaves of meaning, grounded on individual acts of exploration. The link between identity and location brings to the fore the recognition that the latter can only be malleable and fluid. Refilwe's walk in the city, akin to that of Refentse, reveals an outlook of unbelonging, for in De Certeau's words, "to walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper place. The moving about in the city multiplies … and makes the city itself an immense social experience of lacking a place" (1984:103). Urban space becomes like a maze to her. She feels doubly dislocated. On the one hand she does not possess the specific spatial competence and strategy that she requires to walk about in the city of Johannesburg. Refilwe's social practice is deficient for the unfamiliar environment and she is helpless to incorporate the space that envelopes her, for as Lefebvre argues: "the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space" (1991:38). On the other hand, urban spaces have been traditionally created as masculine:

> Both the external and internal design and layout of the city symbolize male power and authority and men's legitimate occupation of these spaces. … the spaces between them, the facades of buildings and the internal layout …. and reinforce the idealization of a city worker as masculine. In these spaces, feminine bodies are 'out of place'. (McDowell, 1999: 145)

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An enormous space of opportunities and synergy is opened up for her in the city space. The urban space has been depicted as a precarious place for women (McDowell, 1999). However, as in the case of Refilwe, cities can become tremendous spaces of possibilities and opportunities for women. But, as Refilwe follows her dreams, in doing so she stands out as an example of a re–connection of her potential in a patriarchal society and as a rural woman in the city. This justifies Refilwe's evolving views of space and the fact that she establishes a place for herself in the urban scheme of things. This becomes noticeable in Refilwe's case because she generates confidence in herself and power simultaneously in that she builds social relations with divergent people within diverse spatial contexts. The more she is able to enter varying spaces, the more authoritative she feels. Space both empowers and disempowers her. This fact has a repercussion on her attitude and by the end of the novel Refilwe no longer counts on fate but recognises that she has much to say in the decisions she takes in her life and that by ways of her conduct she can exercise major changes in her life and decide her future to a considerable extent.

Hall (1996:4) contends that, identities are not 'unified', unchanging constructs, but 'increasingly fractured.' There are multiplicity of levels and interchanges that are available, and that this fragmentation is also evident in Mpe's novel. According to Hall (1996:4), identities are structured in discursive contexts, and are influenced by and contingent on power relations, diversity, and exclusion. Earlier on in the novel Refilwe engenders a restless and xenophobic identity by projecting a rural-based, biased recognition of Johannesburg women and the associated discriminatory disdain of African immigrants as the 'makwerekwere', whom she accuses like many South Africans as the origin of all the social, safety and economic woes in the country.

7.7 Refilwe's London and return home

Refilwe observes that African immigrants were prejudiced against at Heathrow Airport and that all non-English foreigners were ostracised and snubbed at in England. Black identity has been vilified for centuries by discursive forms of repression. This was propagated by representative acts such as the socially constructed binaries between black and white aesthetics: where black was automatically attached to darkness, evil and the devil. It has furthermore been so psychologically ingested and deeply internalised by the subjects that people like Refilwe and the rest of black people, as Mpe tends to allude, will take those symbolic acts in their hearts randomly wherever

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they go. Refilwe notes that the subject can become an abject other, very quickly. Her engagement with the city of Oxford and its dwellers generates a diseased, abhorrent and undesirable other who embodies the abject. It is in this space sketched by bias and discrimination that engenders a new sense of identity. Refilwe's tale is endowed with an ironic shift as bias turns against her and she becomes the abjected other, she has abhorred for so long. Her trip from Africa to Britain, similar to that of Refentse, grants her a re-definition of herself and a re-consideration of her erstwhile bias. Refilwe's eventual maturation in consciousness is perhaps indicated in her getting into a liaison with a Nigerian, a people generally subjected to xenophobic stereotyping in South Africa. Cousins, for instance, considers foreigners liable for the physical and moral degeneration of the city, for 'the crime and grime in Hillbrow'; believing that "Hillbrow had been just fine until those Nigerians came in here with all their drug dealing" (2001:17).

Once the other is created in the state of degradation, abjection and the wicked, then not only are they precluded from the terrain of human values, civic rights and moral commitments, but the borders that separates 'us' from 'them,' becomes even more critical (Hall, 1996). Hence an urban dweller's alignment within the global perspective is recognised as having a competency to promote the advancement of a new consciousness within the generally disarticulated community. Refilwe could part company from Tiragalong and Hillbrow, to London, but the repercussions do not automatically revolutionise the mind. There is spatial division between setting and psychology. Refilwe has managed to progress in life by studying overseas, but because her mind is still haunted by the perpetual memories that is complexly interwoven with her identity, she is powerless to meet the demands that Oxford's sociocultural life presents. Oxford is in Hillbrow and Hillbrow is in Oxford unless one fractures psychological and innate patterns. It is not about where you reside, it is about who you are because, as Mpe writes, "God, gods and the Devil — that horned, black monster holding his large fork in his hideous hands — lived in the skulls and hearts of the people taking their unplanned and haphazard journeys through our world" (2001:111). This is in line with Mpe's critique of the new South Africa: things have to be clarified by their names in order to achieve ownership over them and voiced openly. Thus, Black South Africans of the democratic dispensation, according to Mpe, have to author their own stories and histories instead of letting the past author theirs. As Foucault argues:

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> The work of an intellectual is not to shape others' political will; it is, through the analyses that he carries out in his own field, to question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident, to disturb people's mental habits. (1988a:265)

The woman subject in the novel becomes a metaphor for each and every rural black South African arriving in the city and confronting certain challenges:

> An HIV positive woman from Tiralong, who was ostracised by her fellow villagers when she learnt about her health status. The Tiralong of your fiction said she deserved what she got ...So in your story, as in real life, Tiralong danced because its xenophobia … its fear and hatred for both black non-South Africans and Johannesburgers was vindicated. (Mpe, 2001:54)

Refilwe is shunned by her traditional community because of her HIV status and the fact that she has chosen a 'foreign' African lover, a makwerekwere. As with Refentse's girlfriend, Lerato, who originates in Hillbrow, Refilwe's Nigerian boyfriend and all the 'foreign' Africans in the novel are recognised by Tiralong to be accountable for the subject's demise. For Refentse, his demise is a psychological one, for Refilwe and the woman with the HIV virus theirs is a physical one - induced by their illness. Like Refilwe this woman becomes the target of malicious defamation and demeaning stereotyping about what the inner urban city symbolises, how it puts at risk those who seek it out and how people from all parts of Africa are to blame for transmitting the HIV virus. But, while Refilwe's narrative empowers and while her story is an allegory for some degree of resolution of these biases, for the HIV woman in the novel, she remains shunned and is perceived as the loose woman in the city urban space, by her home community.

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Refentse, despite his literary accomplishment and material gains, becomes entrapped by the inner city. He is not exempt to the consequences of his surroundings and the ramifications of the decisions he makes within it. Simultaneously through him, the narrative also indicates what still needs to be resolved in this space. Refentse comes to terms with specific 'imponderables' as he grieves at the hand of them. And in this also, the narrator proposes that these imponderables can be reconfigured:

> Euphemism. Xenophobia. Prejudice. Aids...You became aware that no matter what other stories you might write, none of them would ever be sufficient to answer such imponderables. For those to have these answers was to know the secrets of life itself.

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There will always be another story of love, betrayal, friendship, joy and pain to add to your narrative granary. (Mpe, 2001:61)

7.8 The Other and stereotyping

The Other is a frequently used term in postcolonial theory (Ashcroft et al., 1995) because it illustrates an imagined boundary between us and them, which becomes a rationale for discrimination. One of the most prevalent concepts in the practice of othering is the construction of a stereotype that is usually negative and perceived to be inferior and in which one is subjected to demonisation. According to Hall (1990:230–237), the act of stereotyping serves to diminish, simplify, normalise, and perpetuate the notion of "otherness." The process involves aggregating several discrete, uncomplicated, and readily identifiable characteristics of an individual, afterwards reducing that individual to an "exaggerated" and "simplified" representation.

Bhabha (1989) asserts that the stereotype is grounded on a familiar preconception, but that it never has to be endorsed by factual testimony. The stereotype's value, therefore, is completely reliant on its repetition and its repeatability depends on its ambivalence. Bhabha further contends that the concept of stereotypes is inherently intricate and multifaceted, as it encompasses a variety of dimensions. Consequently, stereotypes can be broadly applicable to individuals within a particular group across various historical periods. Furthermore, it is argued that stereotypes retain a degree of validity, even if societal circumstances evolve over time (1989:236). This deed of stereotyping also comes through the existence of another key migrant figure: the makwerekwere. Social space is disrupted by the emergence of 'foreign' African immigrants after the dismantling of the apartheid state. This space is portrayed in the novel as in a process of transition and adjustments. In this 'chaotic' zonal space of the city of Hillbrow both the native and the 'foreign' African population have to negotiate new versions of identity, belonging and home. Therefore, post-apartheid Hillbrow presents the characters' new possibilities of cooperation that would symbolise a turning point in the history of a desegregated, multicultural South Africa.

Xenophobia and bias towards 'foreign' African migrants by numerous South Africans are motifs that regulates much of the narrative. The majority of the people in the narrative, from the residents of Tiralong, to the heterogonous masses in Hillbrow strongly voice or epitomise these prejudices:

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> Cousin would always take the opportunity...to complain about the crime and grime in Hillbrow, for which he held foreigners responsible: not just for the physical decay of the place, but the moral decay. His words were echoed by many others. (Mpe, 2001:16–17)

Butler's (1997) theory of performativity proposes that persons are not simply described as subjects, but are also produced and shaped by naming practices. Butler contends that language has power "not only to name, but also in some sense to perform", where "the word enacts what it names" (1997:43). When Cousins remarks that the African foreigners are liable for the "physical decay of the place" (2001:16), he performatively places the African foreigners outside of what it means to be a 'real' black South African, thus projecting them as 'different' in the urban space. Hall (1994) affirms that stereotyping functions through the mechanisms of "closure and exclusion." Symbolic boundary fixing is a process that establishes demarcations and selectively excludes elements that are deemed to be outside the designated boundaries.

The dispossession, homelessness and exclusion of the 'foreign' African migrant is grounded on class, race, gender and nationalist discourses (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). Their degraded status means that they experience a distinct form of discrimination, and are also unequally affected by the politics of the post-apartheid economic terrain. Mpe's matter-of-fact statement, "Many of the Makwerekwere you accuse of this and that are no different to us - sojourners here in search of green pastures" (2001:18), highlights the fragility and uncertainties of their marginal position in the post-apartheid city.

The migrant and the refugee exhibit the capacity to create alternative and innovative modes of being in the city. There is a spatial hierarchy in Hillbrow where those who are achievers who are on top and the ill-fated or the poor or less fortunate are 'below'. Another example is presented when the narrator is detailing encounters between the police and the illegal immigrants:

> When the poor souls pleaded, the uniformed men would ask if they could make their pleas more visible. They did. Some of the womenfolk brought their temporary freedom to roam the Hillbrow streets by dispensing under waist bliss. They were ostracised, then agreed: but when the policeman left them in peace, they could gather a thing or two to send back to their families at home. The foreign exchange rate really did favour them. (Mpe, 2001:21)

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The ‘foreign’ African migrant is exercising what Foucault (1988b) terms ‘technologies of the self’, which permits enable individuals to independently undertake a certain set of actions on their bodies as well as lives, ideas, and conduct, so facilitating personal transformation. Gilroy affirms a positive consequence of what he labels an “exclusionary identity”:

> Taking pride or finding a sanctuary in an exclusive identity affords a means to acquire certainty about who one is and where one fits, about the claims of community and the limits of social obligation. (2000:107)

There can be gains in perceiving oneself as affiliated to a tight-knit community, even if it does also result in the ostracising of those who do not. There are no clear answers or simple characters in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*; instead, the novel portrays the complex processes of social interaction and identity construction in the social spaces of contemporary Hillbrow, as well as the stresses, feelings of uncertainties and dynamics that emanate from those.

7.9 The subaltern and spatial dynamics

The majority of African inhabitants in Hillbrow are divided between a rural and urban life experience and a manner way of perceiving life. This is illustrated by the way the narrator describes Refentse, Tsepo and Refilwe’s displaced identity by calling them both the children of Hillbrow, the city, and Tiragalong. Refilwe’s interaction with space is described by a set of other aspects, such as race, class, ethnicity, capitalism and patriarchy. It could be affirmed then that, in Spivak’s (1988) view, she has to weather these restraints and recognise her situation of subalternity in order to generate a change in her life. As Spivak contends, this is more difficult for women:

> Within the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject, the track of sexual difference is doubly effaced. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow. (1988:287)

This chapter has taken micro-identities (Hillbrow) out of globalising processes (black student – Refilwe in Oxford, London) in order to reincorporate them to macro-regional narratives and vice versa. Essentially, it has awarded a space for ‘subaltern’ voices of a micro dimension to be heard, and be better incorporated into a macro-narrative. It has presented a space for unknown subalterns living in the shadows, to use Spivak’s terminology, to be illuminated in Western discourse for what they are (1988:312).

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Space became and continues to be one of the most symbolic ways in which individuals attain a sense of agency over their lives. In affirming this class identity, however, blacks themselves have been recognised as propagating the colonial and apartheid gaze (hooks, 2000) of perceiving poor and working-class blacks as the abject other. From a Fanonian viewpoint, this has been created as an inferiority complex where blacks in the form of Refentse's mother denounces the relationship between Lerato the Johannesburg woman and her son to the degree that the two break apart leading to the sexual encounter between Sammy and Lerato and the consequent suicides and demise.

As the narrator notifies us, "the lure of the monster was, however, hard to resist: Hillbrow has swallowed a number of the children of Tiralong, who thought that the City of Gold was full of career opportunities for them" (2001:3). What surfaces from the novel is how the apartheid state corrupted the everyday creative tension between the dwellers departing and returning by constructing a geopolitical and spatial dislocation between 'home' in the villages and homelands in 'the city'. This unstable character of domestic space I relate with Bhabha's 'unhomely'. The concept of the unhomely refers to a state in which the inner spaces of the home are transformed into locations for complex incursions of history. Within this state of dislocation, the boundaries between the domestic sphere and the external world get blurred. Remarkably, the distinction between the personal and the communal intertwines, resulting in a perception that is both fragmented and bewildering (Bhabha, 1991:210).

7.10 Third space and rural space affinity

Mpe's novel emboldens the reader to move away from contrasting binaries and to consider South African society through pluralistic lenses; a "third-space" (Soja, 1996; Bhabha, 1991) of opportunities, negotiation and challenges that is projected in the narrative. The novel constructs the representation of the divergent ethnic communities in positive or negative terminology; furthermore, Mpe does not characterise any particular community in disagreement with another. His novel does not react to a 'burden of representation' directly (Hall, 1989) and accordingly, he portrays characters who are neither 'bad' nor 'good', neither 'outsiders' nor 'insiders' but individuals who are both and more than that, who have complicated identities and who are battling

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to construct their own lawful spaces of action, synergy, presence and (re)presentation in the city of Hillbrow.

They are “lecturers and students...a number of them can be found selling fruit and vegetables in the streets, along with many locals-so how can they take our jobs?” (Mpe, 2001 :18). This example expresses how daily reality is arranged following a different recognition of space and spatial reality. They are examples of the co-existence of diversified “Third Space(s)”, that are both real and imagined, spaces that have as some of their delineating characteristics:

> Knowable and unknowable, real and imagined lifeworld of experiences, emotions, events, and political choices that [are] existentially shaped by the generative and problematic interplay between centres and peripheries, the abstract and the concrete, the impassioned spaces of the conceptual and the lived, marked out materially and metaphorically in spatial praxis, the transformation of (spatial) knowledge into (spatial) action in a field of unevenly developed (spatial) power. (Soja, 1996:31)

These innovative spaces are summarised by the fact that they challenge and disrupt past binary oppositions but, at the same time integrate and conceive some of the features of the previous parts but are constantly moving on to “expand the production of knowledge beyond what is presently known” (Soja, 1996:61). This is what occurs in the everyday spaces of synergy that the novel symbolises. Furthermore, African urbanism constructs space and human geography around awareness of difference and multiplicity (Soja, 1996). This idea has been evolving amongst social and historical philosophers since time immemorial. Foucault (1989a:28) proposed that new means of reading space - politically, socially and geographically - have been promoted by a world defined increasingly by its “diversity and difference”:

> The present epoch will perhaps be above all epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of near and far of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and interstices with its own. One could perhaps say that ideological conflicts animating present- day polemics oppose the pious descendants of time and the determined inhabitants of space. (1989a:238)

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As Foucault proposes above, space is described as something inconclusive. Certainly, in the postcolonial setting the stress has been on difference and as a way of 'answering back' to the histories and pasts of hegemonic discourses of power, exclusion, racism, and other modes of domination that were evaluated around binary oppositions. We are not inspired to look past or overlook the restraints of the environment. In fact, by revealing a panoramic side to the inner city and to the biases that prevail both towards this space and within the rural domain, Mpe reveals the nature of the hurdles facing many South Africans today. In deciding not to mask them, and by making them transparent and detectable through the use of the spectacular, Mpe makes it convincingly clear what these hurdles are and how they can be resolved.

Moreover, by contrasting the adversities of the inner urban space with subjects or dialogues that represent a fleeting movement - as symbolised by the migrant figure or the weak shadows of the rural/urban binary - Mpe contends that there is still potentiality for the character to negotiate claim to the city and acquire agency within it. In stressing an atmosphere of leniency along with this, Mpe hints at intensifying these transformations in the city space and in South African society. In the city, discrimination is often incited-because of an assortment of divergent elements fusing and moving within it. But on the contrary, a space like Hillbrow produces the opportunity for this discrimination to be met with more flexibility and tolerance than that of the rural domain.

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The rural place-affinity obliges us to think of the rural-urban-city motion as more than just binding relations on the grounds of familial relations but to acknowledge the importance of these places to black lives and experiences in creating their identities. Being in the rural domain, apart from visiting families and friends, thus speaks to a kind of remembering of things linked with those spaces and places. Having grown up and resided in these spaces for most of their lives, black people created spaces in what were meant to be labour camps during apartheid. Despite the surveillance of the oppressive regime and its repressive agencies, these rural and township spaces became symbolic sites of socialisation imbued with divergent nuances for different people. As such, those spaces have come to represent the post-apartheid domain, not only as a legacy but perhaps more importantly as spaces that speak to black lived histories, recollections and memories that humanised black history and identity formation of black lives (Ndetylane, 2012).

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7.11 Conclusion

Hillbrow is depicted as displaying all the signifiers of a post-apartheid terrain formulated by colonial modernity, commercialisation and capitalism. In post-apartheid Hillbrow, space has transitioned into a democratic and metropolitan space. The inner urban city has been democratised socially, culturally, ethnically and politically to a large degree that it has become multi-ethnic and divergent. Simultaneously, there are signifiers of the links between Johannesburg and the global cities as indicated by the siting of companies and representatives of foreign capital such as Starbucks and numerous national and international banks, as disclosed by Tshepo in his depiction of the map of Hillbrow in chapter one of the novel. Johannesburg is growing larger than it was during the era of disenfranchisement, and is being influenced by the local, regional and global ideas which are symbols of the complexities emblematic of the transition taking place in most major world cities.

The presence of the "foreign" African immigrants to the overall narrative framework is vital for a number of reasons. On the one hand, and most obviously, it is utilised to interrogate the positioning of cultural barriers and the demarcation of divergence, whether they be ethnic, regional and so on. Even if the commonplace xenophobia itself is not completely solved, Mpe's novel points to some sort of optimism for the future. We see this in the ending to Refilwe's story as well as the resolutions that culminates in Heaven. At the close of the novel, most of the characters have come to terms with the impact of their biases. With the journeys of the chief characters, the foreign African figures exhibit the capability for certain geo-political borders to be transgressed.

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The novel advances the documentation of the city through multiple illustrations to sketch the diverse ramifications of the city, not just on grounds of history, but on grounds of everyday urban spatialities. Mpe's Hillbrow is a compromise of the city of collective memory, where formal and informal narratives that seek to clarify, represent or draw out the meanings suppressed in urban space. Mpe seeks to disrupt the conception of the city as a unitary phenomenon and, instead, amplify spatial practices that symbolise the city as multiplicitous in nature. His techniques of interrogating Hillbrow as an inner city foregrounds his own tactic of creating spatial meanings.

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CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The literary works of writers examined in this thesis are presented by visions of colonial, apartheid and post-apartheid societies that evoked fluid notions of identity and space. These writers were effective members of forward looking and radical movements of their periods. Each of the writers whose fiction and non-fiction I analysed perceived her or his writing as a voice of dissent to social norms and the machinery of racist and capitalist power systems. Their illustrations of place showcase their enhanced consciousness of the inseparability of space, race, identity and politics. This gives plausibility to Hall's (1996) perspective that "we possess a myriad of different cultural identity positions resulting from the multiplicity of sources so that identity stems from nationality, ethnicity, race, social class, language, gender, and sexuality. Different identity positions, including national and cultural identities, have become fragmented or dislocated" (1996:2).

In Dhlomo's plays and poems, Modisane's autobiography, Mtshali and Sepamla's protest poems, and the novels of Serote, Ngcobo and Mpe, space and identity are regarded as adaptable categories that, as I have indicated in the analyses of these works, are illustrated to be in continuous processes of revision, redefinition and change. Within all these literary writings, the characters are distinct elements uniform to all of them to varying degrees. They are sentiments of spatial dislocation, dis/encounters with their most immediate community or their kin, and the obligation to negotiate a divergent sense of identity within their own spatial situations. Moreover, these varied characters are obliged to acquire their own spaces in a geographical and national framework that has for a long time been created only in 'white' terms.

Characters in the writings discussed are heterogeneous and diverse; they are "those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (Hall, 1997:235). Race, ethnicity and class differences are attendant in all the works but they were not depicted as the only central issues. These differences are juxtaposed alongside problems of tribal and nationalist identity in Dhlomo's *The Girl* and 'South Africa'; individual identity in

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Modisane's *Blame Me on History*; Black Consciousness identity in the protest poetry of Mtshali and Sepamla; nationalist and non-racial identity in Serote's *To Every Birth Its Blood*; gendered identity in Ngcobo's *And They Didn't Die*; and multicultural identity in Mpe's *Welcome to our Hillbrow.*

One of the pivotal themes that has emanated from this research is that of space and identity. Spaces are not neutral or equal, but their constructions are rooted in varying interests and power relations. Space has and continues to be fundamental to the question of race, status and class identities in respect of educational and occupational situations. Racial separation guaranteed that one's race dictated one's spectrum of class positions, leading to ghettoisation where blacks resided in reserves and townships with least infrastructure in light of them as interim visitors in 'white' South Africa and would return to their township and rural areas in stipulated times regulated by apartheid legislations (Ballard, 2002:3). As a consequence, rural areas and townships became 'othered', characterised as geographies of pessimism and disaster. Subsequently, space and class identity became essential to black people in how they distinguished themselves and others, where residing in the township or in a village became synonymous with living in a ceaseless condition of underdevelopment and lawlessness.

Themes of subalternity and women's voices feature distinctly in this study. Spivak's (1988) post-colonial theory of voice has been utilised to interrogate the texts with a spotlight on black people's subjugation under racial discrimination. This study has validated Spivak's (1988) perspective that subalterns desist to be subalterns when they speak. Furthermore, she contends that the subalterns cannot be represented by advantaged and powerful people; they are subjects who should voice their thoughts and sentiments.

Other associated themes that emerged is the matter of power which is driven towards inclusion and exclusion of bodies in space. Those who have expansive passage to spaces have power not only over themselves but over others as well. The less liberty a person has, and the more ostracised they are, the less power they have in their spaces. This issue of power is why demonstrating the invisible boundaries is crucial. As Young (2012) avers, "the politics of invisibility involves not

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actual invisibility, but a refusal of those in power to see who or what is there. The responsibility of the postcolonial is to make the invisible, in this sense, visible" (2012:23).

Dhlomo's literary works examined the role of space in human relations as depicted in the texts by the interactions and synergy among characters and within the minds of individual characters. By expressing his literary works directly in calibration with Locke whose spatial viewpoint was adapted to a free idealisation of the New Negro, Dhlomo began to envisage and document through his writings new "sites and spaces of resistance" (Soja, 1996:107–108). Hence, Dhlomo's words in his literary works in the colonial space and for the future, does not remain muted but speaks to the suppressed black masses. In writings such as 'Because I am Black' (1955), Dhlomo surfaces as a noted figure in the South African literary nationalist movement by accommodating the ideas of African–Americans, and Locke in particular, to the South African context in the construction of an embodiment of black, African thought.

In Modisane's autobiography, *Blame Me on History*, space operates as the realms through which characters interact within the domestic-, community- and national space. Furthermore, his text depicts space as the product of interrelations. Utilising Julia Kristeva's abjection theory as the informative guideline, Chapter 3 explained how everyday interactions between family members convey and encourage abjection. Kristeva argues that the abject is part of one's hidden consciousness. She writes that the abject is related to, "what disturbs identity, system and order what does not respect borders, positions, rules" (1982:9). This chapter further examined what disturbed the system and order within Modisane's family in the autobiography. In all of the spaces we experience proximity, exclusion, marginality, and dislocation, among others. By voicing their feelings and indicating their suffering, anguish and displacement, the black autobiographers such as Modisane bring to light histories that would not draw the mainstream audiences, and that if it was not by this medium of literature, histories that would be buried. This chapter was an examination of the role of space in human existence and how space is a factor in people's contentment and security in society, which was never the case in Modisane's life narrative.

Literary works of Mtshali and Sepamla are distinct products of Black Consciousness ideology as advocated by Steve Biko. In terms of the colonial perspective, African people mimicked Western

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life experiences and this served to popularise western philosophy which finally dispossessed them of their national identity as true Africans. The Black Consciousness Movement was an ideology that desired to unify black South Africans and to reinvigorate African cultural heritage. It declared that Africans should be proud of their own culture, love their own country and regard their identity as honourable and distinct from others. The Black Consciousness Movement became the political voice of the people who were suppressed, was banned in 1977 by the government in order to mute black voices. African poets advocated a militant standpoint towards the apartheid regime. Poetry was utilised as a statement of anger and protest.

The poems of Mtshali and Sepamla revealed the social evils of the political situation in which black people had been exposed to excesses of racial prejudice. Suffering, deprivation and alienation of black people cemented the revolutionary forces from diverse sectors of society to withstand the cruelty of racial prejudice. Thus, poets such as Mtshali and Sepamla in issues of voice and representation of society are in a better position to speak for the silent core and the subordinated. This is due to the fact that they are subaltern poets who write distinctly to the centre.

Serote's novel *To Every Birth its Blood* examined the post–Soweto history of resistance as denoting a revolution in political ideology from Black Consciousness to the emergence of non–racialism. Bhabha (1991) and hooks (1993) contend that when space becomes a space of opposition, it no longer merely envisaged, but becomes a Third Space. According to hooks, being at the margin does not become a matter of option because it is disempowering; people are edged out, they also have no choice but to select the margin as a space of opposition. Serote is acknowledged in presenting another version of African and women's history different from the one propagated by apartheid discourses. The manifestation of African women's commitment to the national struggle for independence, at the end of the novel, points to the authentic voices of women. By bringing together in the same novel two crucial components - the untold history of South Africa, and those fighting for freedom and in this case African women - Serote opposes the notion of one-dimensional history. This chapter adopted Elaine Scarry's ideas about the unsharability of pain through its opposition to language, by which pain not only repels language but also actively eradicates it, and that pain can only be productively depicted when the human voice becomes audible. Scarry's (1985) study on pain has been foundational in addressing extreme

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pain's political use; it strives to give a coherent account of pain's opaque structure. Scarry argues that pain is difficult to put into language because it has no language. *To Every Birth Its Blood* is therefore perceived as a critical literary thrust in South African history to institute and rehabilitate the silenced voice of women during the apartheid era. The narrative presents women as the agency of self-representation in the tumultuous history of the period.

Ngcobo's characters in *And They Didn't Die*, in particular Jezile, exhibits how the central protagonists in the novel, negotiate their identities within divergent suppressive and patriachical structures. Ngcobo robustly censures the unjust treatment of women by the entrenched patriarchal order through an examination of the marginal position of her matriarchal mother-in-law. Not only does she inform the reader of the ways in which women are discriminated against by men, but she also gives account of a history of female opposition against patriarchal suppression. Through the tenacious and rebellious characterisation of Jezile, Ngcobo indicates how the battle for female freedom can become reality. In doing so, women like Jezile become heroic figures who propose possible leadership directions for social change. In narrating from the standpoint of Black women and in innovatively commissioning the spatiality of apartheid, Ngcobo presents fresh ways of reading the nation, valuable for exemplifying ways in which the national space engenders Black women, and how Black women, in turn frame and reframe that space.

Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* is depicted as representing all the signifiers of a post-apartheid landscape produced by colonial modernity and apartheid capitalism. Despite the African national bourgeoisie's pronouncements at the commencement of the advent of democracy that it's the land of liberty for all, it is a land of huge disparities after almost three decades of democracy. In the context of a new era with the arrival of democracy and a promise for a better life for all in terms of employment, homes and security, Johannesburg has been both an inclusive and exclusive space that embraces all who come to the city to pursue their dreams and their fortunes, but flounders to provide the necessary spatial arrangements for their survival. Fanon's (1963) prediction of the African bourgeoisie that takes over the state at independence, in this case after the collapse of apartheid, is absolved in the South African situation where, "far from embodying in concrete form the needs of the people in what touches bread, land and the restoration of the country to the sacred

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hands of the people", the nationalist leadership proves too eager and content to put into its own hands the same unfair privileges ,"which are a legacy of the colonial period" (Fanon, 1963:122). Hillbrow is populated by the majority of the residents whose identity is in tension with the rural area in which apartheid hegemony located their permanent homes. In Mpe's text we learn that most urban dwellers assume numerous identities which mutate with each specific situation, but are mostly linked with predominantly individual, social and psychological displacement. This chapter also established how social space is described, drawing on the notion that space is a social construct and that it is in a constant process of production and modification. Within this consideration of space, the chapter encompassed two distinct levels on which the body-identity-space functions. They are: the nation as a space and the individual space.

One of the major aims of this study was investigating the notions of identity and space in the texts studied. The study has reflected on how people's identities, grounded in a history of colonialism and apartheid, influenced the way they imagine and utilise space and, further, how the advent of those considered as other, exposed the emblematic meanings and boundaries that have been affixed to space. The research affirmed that, even in contexts where spatial integration has been realised, the use and imagination of space and the relationship to others are grounded within historical configurations of race and class identities. All writers of the works examined were actively committed to assert genuine and autonomous identities for their characters. However, these endeavours were impeded by racist regulations of discrimination. As the narratives described for each work, there was an apprehensible relationship to urbanity and urban modernity that can be linked to former generations of black migrant workers and their historical dependency on the city. Townships and shanty locations on the margins of 'white' cities deliberately monitored Africans' access to the urban hub and to a modern, urban identity. Robinson argued that, relocations were a key strategy for the "manipulation, domination and control" of the black population but also safeguarded their dependency on the apartheid state for work and access to the city (1992:297).

In line with aim two of this study i.e., to delineate how the writers, write about the subaltern subjects and demonstrate how pain is wreaked on the female subaltern bodies I leaned on the theories of Spivak (1988). Poets such as Mtshali and Sepamla, in matters of voice and

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representation of society, are better positioned to speak for the muted core. Effectively, this study problematises Spivak's (1988) argument that the subaltern cannot be authentically represented.

The third aim of the study was to express the significance of the spatial component of identity and to highlight how the process of identity formulation is represented in the literary works under discussion, is portrayed. This study was an endeavour at re-establishing an acknowledgement of spatiality and invigoration of innovative methods of reasoning with regard to the spaces experienced in the texts. In no way is this an attempt at presenting a substitute for or alternative to alertness to literary discourses. On the contrary, it's a need to magnify and broaden spatial appreciation and practices in critical literary studies. The study holds out the feasible prospect of an assertive spatial viewpoint utilising approaches that have been generally neglected, that could very well open up new avenues of insights and revolutionary theoretical applications.

The contributions of the spatial theorists such as Foucault was valuable for the study, in that it presented a clear tangent upon which the study was anchored and permitted the examination of space as a site where interpretations and meanings are produced, maintained, and/or contested; thereby creating possibilities and limits for subjects as examined in the texts. The context furthermore presented an alternative notion of power in which the self takes action against spatial practices which represses it and it is perceived as actively involved in the process of becoming a detectable and an apprehensible subject in certain spatial setups. This study therefore acknowledges the significance of the spatial element of identity. Although Foucault and other post-structural theorists disrupt Western thought and structures, it is vital to understand how this is in sync with decolonial theorists such as Fanon, Cesaire, and others who "survived conquest, colonisation, and slavery in order to develop insurgent theories and methods for outlasting domination" (Sandoval, 2000:7). It was the combined attempts of bringing these theorists together that assisted in understanding the formation of subjects within the framework of neo-colonial and neo-liberal rationale and ramifications. The conspicuous absence of decolonisation since 'independence' indicates the need for re-energising the call from writers such as Fanon (1967b:63), who recommended alternative "restructuring" of the world that permits a full and burgeoning humanity.

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One of the crucial tasks postcolonial theorists promote is decolonising the mind through deeply grounded practices of reversal of hegemonic ways of being and knowing and rehabilitating discredited indigenous knowledges. Foucault (1977) maintains that "it is through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work" (1977:82). Producing a decolonial space in which people are able to create and apply their own cultural, spiritual and political knowledge presents a podium for re-envisaging citizenship external to hegemonic and Eurocentric narratives of being and knowing.

Fanon (1963) has indicated in numerous ways the complicated issue of how the coloniality of knowing becomes malleable and still manages to extend its 'spirit' when the African national bourgeoisie becomes the ruling party of the state at independence, making the liberatory promise of decolonisation frivolous (Mamdani, 1996:48). Although South Africa embraced a new constitution which revoked racial discrimination at independence, the disparate socio-economic structure remained untouched. The African National Congress government devoted much of its attempts early at the advent of democracy to revising all the signifiers of black subservience and debasement and white dominance but doing little to transform the lives of the poor. Mbeki noted that:

> Nationalism in Africa has always paraded itself as a movement of the people fighting for their liberation. The reality is, in fact, rather different. African nationalism was a movement of the small, westernized black elite that emerged under colonialism. Its fight was always for inclusion in the colonial system so that it, too, could benefit from the spoils of colonialism. (2009:6)

South Africa prevails as a highly politicised nation, with ceaseless so-called service-delivery insurrections becoming sporadically political. The countrywide insurrections of 2014–2020 represented a new level of anarchy. These social rebellions were products of the broken assurances of freedom. There is an increasing chasm between rich and poor, conveyed spatially via gated communities in suburbs and informal settlements. This creation of gated communities has practically led to the privatisation of the apartheid machinery, with the line of surveillance now in the suburbs instead of the borders of the country. hooks refers to this as "privatised governance," where the significance of responsibility moves from citizens to taxpayers (1992:191–192).

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Mbembe (2001) labels it the "privatisation of political sovereignty" to explain the resulting special interaction that emanates between government and business (2001:78).

Finally, my research has interpreted space as an influential, politically charged domain of interplay between lived bodies, physical terrains, and imaginative situations — inclusive of the formal characteristics of fiction. Employing these critical lenses, I have brought to the fore how these authors examine issues of predominantly African identity and belonging by epitomising their characters making and their reaction to 'demands' for space. These demands happen through geographically related claims — claims to move uninhabited, singled out locations, creating one's surroundings — as well as symbolic attempts to make room for new subjectivities and reorient marginal locations. By focusing on these multilayered spaces in an assortment of texts written in the 1930s to the post-apartheid era but never before situated in dialogue, I hoped to shed new light on the politics of African identity, representation and consequences of exclusion and inclusion. Moreover, the pronounced question facing the idealised new South Africa prevails, not only what describes the post-apartheid nation, but who is excluded and who belongs.

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