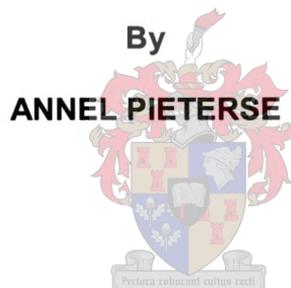


**ISLANDS UNDER THREAT:
HETEROTOPIA AND THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE IDEAL
IN
JOSEPH CONRAD'S *HEART OF DARKNESS*
ANTJIE KROG'S *COUNTRY OF MY SKULL*
AND IRVINE WELSH'S *MARABOU STORK NIGHTMARES***



Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree of Master
of Arts at the University of Stellenbosch

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Declaration:

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Abstract

The stories and histories of the human race are littered with the remnants of utopia. These utopias always exist in some “far away” place, whether this place be removed in terms of time (either as a nostalgically remembered past, or an idealistically projected future), or in terms of space (as a place that one must arrive at). In our attempts to attain these utopias, we construct our world-definitions in accordance with our projections of these ideal places and ways of “being”. Our discourses come to embody and perpetuate these ideals, which are maintained by excluding any definitions of the world that run counter to these ideals. The continued existence of utopia relies on the subjects of that utopia continuing their belief in its ideals, and not questioning its construction.

Counter-discourse to utopia manifests in the same space as the original utopia and gives rise to questions that threaten the stability of the ideal. Questions challenge belief, and therefore the discourse of the ideal must neutralise those who question and challenge it. This process of neutralisation requires that more definitions be constructed within utopian discourse – definitions that allow the subjects of the discourse to objectify the questioner. However, as these new definitions arise, they create yet more counter-definitions, thereby increasing the fragmentation of the aforementioned space.

A subject of any “dominant” discourse, removed from that discourse, is exposed to the questions inherent in counter-discourse. In such circumstances, the definitions of the questioner - the “other” - that have previously enabled the subject to disregard the questioner’s existence and/or point of view are no longer reinforced, and the subject begins to question those definitions. Once this questioning process starts, the utopia of the subject is re-defined as dystopia, for the questioning highlights the (often violent) methods of exclusion needed to maintain that utopia.

Foucault’s theory of heterotopia, used as the basis for the analysis of the three texts in question, suggests a space in which several conflicting and contradictory discourses which seemingly bear no relation to each other are found grouped together. Whereas utopia sustains myth in discourse, running with the grain of language, heterotopias run against the grain, undermining the order that we create through language, because they destroy the syntax that holds words and things together.

The narrators in the three texts dealt with are all subjects of dominant discourses sustained by exclusive definitions and informed by ideals that require this exclusion in order to exist. Displaced into spaces that subvert the definitions within their discourses, the narrators experience a sense of “madness”, resulting from the disintegration of their perception of “order”. However, through embracing and perpetuating that which challenged their established sense of identity, the

narrators can regain their sense of agency, and so their narratives become vehicles for the reconstitution of the subject-status of the narrators, as well as a means of perpetuating the counter-discourse.

Opsomming

Utopias spikkel die landskap van menseheugenis as plekke in “lank lank gelede” of “eendag”, in “‘n land baie ver van hier”, en is dus altyd verwyderd van die huidige, óf in ruimte, óf in tyd. In ons strewe na die ideale, skep ons definisies van die wêreld wat in voeling is met hierdie idealistiese plekke en bestaanswyses. Sulke definisies sypel deur die diskoers, of taal, waarmee ons ons omgewing beskryf. Die ideale wat dan in die diskoers omvat word, word onderhou deur die uitsluiting van enige definisie wat teenstrydig is met dié in die idealistiese diskoers. Die volgehoue bestaan van utopie berus daarop dat die subjekte van daardie utopie voortdurend glo in die ideale voorgehou in en onderhou deur die diskoers, en dus nie die diskoers se konstruksie bevraagteken nie.

Die manifestering van teen-diskoers in dieselfde ruimte as die utopie, gee aanleiding tot vrae wat die bestaan van die ideaal bedreig omdat geloof in die ideaal noodsaaklik is vir die ideaal se voortbestaan. Aangesien bevraagtekening dikwels geloof uitdaag en ontwig, lei dit daartoe dat die diskoers wat die ideaal onderhou, diegene wat dit bevraagteken, neutraliseer. Hierdie neutraliseringsproses behels die vorming van nog definisies binne die diskoers wat die vraagsteller objektiveer. Die vorming van nuwe definisies loop op sy beurt uit op die vorming van teen-definisies wat bloot verdere verbrokkeling van die voorgenoemde ruimte veroorsaak.

'n Subjek van die "dominante" diskoers van die utopie wat hom- /haarself buite die sfergebiede van sy/haar diskoers bevind, word blootgestel aan vrae wat in teen-diskoers omvat word. In sulke omstandighede is die subjek verwyder van die versterking van daardie definisies wat die vraagsteller – die "ander" – se opinies of bestaan as nietig voorgestel het, en die subjek mag dan hierdie definisies bevraagteken. Sodra hierdie proses begin, vind 'n herdefinisie van ruimte plaas, en utopie word distopie soos die vrae (soms geweldadige) uitsluitingsmetodes wat die onderhoud van die ideaal behels, aan die lig bring en, in sommige gevalle, aan die kaak stel.

Hierdie tesis gebruik Foucault se teorie van "heterotopia" om die drie tekste te analiseer. Dié teorie veronderstel 'n ruimte waarin die oorvleueling van verskeie teenstrydighede (diskoerse) plaasvind. Waar utopie die bestaan van fabels en diskoerse akkommodeer, ondermyn heterotopia die orde wat ons deur taal en definisie skep omdat dit die sintaks vernietig wat woorde aan konsepte koppel.

Die drie vertellers is elkeen 'n subjek van 'n "dominante diskoers" wat onderhou word deur uitsluitende definisies in 'n utopia waar die voortgesette bestaan van die ideale wat in die diskoers omvat word op eksklusiwiteit staatmaak. Omdat die vertellers verplaas is na ruimtes wat hulle eksklusiewe definisies omverwerp, vind hulle dat hulle aan 'n soort waansin grens wat veroorsaak is deur die verbokkeling van hul sin van "orde". Deur die teen-diskoers in hul stories in te

bou as verteltaal, of te implementeer as die meganisme van oordrag, kan die vertellers hul "selfsin" herwin. Deur vertelling hervestig die vertellers dus hul status as subjek, en verseker hulle hul plek in die opkomende diskoers deur middel van hulle voortsetting daarvan.

I would like to thank my family and friends who supported and encouraged me with greatest optimism in all the growing pains that were an inevitable part of this writing project.

A very special thanks to my supervisor, Doctor Ralph Goodman, who was endlessly patient and without whose valued advice I would certainly have floundered in chaos.

...the second law of thermodynamics....says that in any closed system disorder,
or entropy, always increases with time. (Hawking, 1988: 153)

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Introduction

This thesis uses Foucault's theory of utopia and heterotopia to examine the literary phenomenon of the confessing narrator in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (*Heart*), Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull* (*Country*) and Irvine Welsh's *Marabou Stork Nightmares* (*Marabou*). Although the texts differ vastly in terms of time, setting and style, there is an underlying theme connecting all three. Each reflects a different phase in the disintegration of an individual's belief in the utopian ideals that sustain the dominant discourse of which he/she is an agent and in doing so, highlights the cyclical nature of violent and oppressive discourses. The narrators - Marlow, Krog, and Roy – are each confronted with the subjective nature of "truth" as they come into contact with definitions and representations of the truth that run counter to those in their own respective societies. Through contact with these counter-definitions and representations, an awareness of the fragmented nature of the space in which they find themselves is awakened in the narrators. No longer able to resort to the insulation of fixed definitions, the narrators are compelled to redefine the world around them, or risk losing all sense of agency within that world.

In *Heart*, we find Marlow questioning the so-called "civilising" missions of Europeans in Africa. He first draws a parallel between the colonising of Britain by the Romans and the colonising of Africa by Europeans. He then relates how he came into contact with the reality of the colonial endeavour in the Congo, which

proved to have far more sinister effects than the ideals of imperialism espoused at the start of the novel would have its subjects believe. *Country* similarly starts with the narrator, Krog, first making a distinct reference to British colonisation of South Africa, suggesting that it is this cycle of oppression that led to a system like apartheid. Krog then gives an account of an entire nation faced with a counter-discourse in the form of the testimonies of victims at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings, as well as the confessions of the perpetrators. Suddenly, those who had lived a sheltered, “utopian” life under the Apartheid regime were faced with the atrocities committed by their own people against another group. *Marabou* makes several references to “systems control”, referring to the continuous oppression of the working classes. Furthermore, Roy’s narrative represents him as within the context of a powerful patriarchal society, stratified by class distinctions and sustained by a dominant discourse that protects the wealthy and the male members of that society. Roy, although discriminated against because of his class, is nonetheless still protected by the discourse because he is male.

The term “discourse” in this thesis signifies the process whereby individual and group identity is constructed, and social power relations are sustained. Foucault (1994: 31) notes that

basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot

themselves be established, consolidated or implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse.

Discourse analysis conceives of language “as a communicative set of interactions, through which social and cultural beliefs and understandings are shaped and circulated....This connects discourse analysis to questions of identity” (Freedon, 2003: 103 – 104). In for example, the workings of the discourse of colonialism, as explained by Jolly (1996: 124) “there is no recognition on the part of the colonialist that the native has a subjectivity independent of the one that the colonialist has constructed for him or her. For the colonialist recognises the native only as a ‘recipient of the negative elements of the self that the European projects onto him’.” As JanMohamed (1983: 3) explains (referring specifically to the colonisation of Africa),

the coloniser’s efforts toward absolute political, economic and spiritual domination create...a feudal spirit, supported by a series of familiar rationalisations...designed to rationalise and perpetuate the coloniser’s dominant position....These projections are self-contained fantasies that are entirely indifferent to reality.

Discourse therefore may enable the agents of the “dominant” or “colonising” discourse to ignore the diverse and fluctuating reality of what *is* and instead construct a world according to the static ideals of what they think *should* be. The “dominant discourse” is the specific system of signs and interpretation of power employed by a certain group to gain and maintain a form of power which allows

their notion of the “truth” or “norm” to nullify that of another individual or group. This is reflected in what Heyns terms “the myth of the empty landscape” (2000: 51), the notion (also acting as justification) that an “empty” space is there for the taking and consequently it is the right of the coloniser to possess that space. This “taking possession” of space is made possible through the structure of the coloniser’s discourse, as it devalues any other discourse that might have existed in that space before, making it by definition “empty”.

Whereas “[d]iscourse analysts abandon the representation of reality and plump conclusively for the construction of reality” (Freeden, 2003: 106), ideologies engage in both the representation and construction of reality. Ideologies interact with historical and political events whilst retaining some representative value, and they do so while “emphasising some features of that reality and de-emphasising others” (Freeden, 2003: 106). Ideology should be recognised “as a powerful indicator of the ways in which people actually construe the world”, as “ideology (wrongly) presents discourse as objective fact” (Freeden, 2003: 112).

Thus, discourses are linguistic mechanisms that create spaces in which the adherents of certain ideologies can operate. Within a certain space, certain “rules” apply to certain groups or individuals, and therefore the discourse allows for the sustaining of the ideals of some groups, but not of others. Oppressive discourses share a tendency to distribute power in accordance with their definition of others. This is specifically true for the discourses of sexual and racial

difference, which take bodies as their referent and guarantee, and continue to be implicated in “relations of power which both assume and produce structural relations of privilege and disadvantage” (Weedon, 1999: 13). The three texts in question illustrate the way in which the utopian ideals of Western patriarchal systems are maintained through an intricate process of representation in society and show the disintegration of these ideals when confronted with powerful alternative representations in the form of counter-discourse.

These alternative representations introduce new and often previously silenced or misrepresented perspectives on the world. This in turn requires the subjects of the dominant discourse to acknowledge and respond to that which has been previously ignored, thereby challenging the individual or group to re-assess their own understanding of the world. In the texts, this change is marked by the narrator’s displacement into unfamiliar, fluctuating spaces, fragmented by the presence of two or more conflicting discourses. Faced with counter-discourse, the subjects of a discourse are compelled to question the fixedness of ideals and identities constructed on these ideals.

Displacement into spaces marked by contradiction causes a sense of loss in the individual narrators, as “it is almost impossible to acknowledge that the central truth around which your life has been built is a lie. At the risk of the disintegration of your self-image, you would rather keep on denying any wrongdoing” (Krog, 2002: 95). The process of accepting this change in perception is characterised by

psychological or physical symptoms of trauma. These symptoms include loss of language, and reflect the breakdown of the reality constructed through the dominant discourse of which the narrators are subjects. This disintegration takes place as the awareness grows that there is more than one “truth” operating within a specific space at a specific time. By integrating these new or counter-truths into their definition of the world and relaying these new definitions through their narratives, the narrators can reclaim their subjectivity, as their narratives become perpetuations of counter-discourse.

Although the reader encounters the narrators at a point where they seem to be more sensitive to the construction of power that has led to the atrocities and violations of which they tell, the same process of power is still at work, in that the reader’s impression of events is mediated through an agent, namely the narrator. Therefore, the narrator is the only true agent of the discourse of the novel, and

[o]ur agent is thus, in a sense, an agent of evil...Much of world literature has done the same. Even Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, finds himself as “of the devil’s party”, so to speak. Narrative depends upon agency; the stories of those who “do” are generally more compelling than those who are “done to”. (Taylor, 1998: v)

Those who write or tell the story, are inevitably more authoritative than those being written about and consequently, those who are agents of the discourse within which history and law are constructed, control the power of “telling the story” within the context of that discourse. The discourse of history is itself

reflective of the manner in which history is interpreted and recorded by those with the resources and power to impose their ideology on a given situation. Hence, only the dominant group's interpretation of what is "true" and "right" is integrated into the official historical records of a specific time or event. As history produces "a 'concord fiction', a sense of consonance between past, present and future" (Kermode in Atwell, 1993: 77), it can be seen as a form of substitute for authority and tradition. Therefore,

[i]mplicit in the need for historical continuity is the need to preserve the sovereignty and transcendence of the subject. Foucault makes this need explicit: historical continuity is both a 'guarantee that everything that has eluded [the subject] may be restored' and a promise 'that one day the subject – in the form of historical consciousness – will once again be able to appropriate, to bring back under his sway, all those things that are kept at a distance by difference'. (Atwell, 1993: 78)

In constructing power relations according to definitions of others based on the *absence* of certain qualities (take for example terms like "non-white" and "penis-envy") rather than *similarities*, the subjects define their superiority over those others according to difference. This difference becomes something that the subject can never own as long as he/she bases his/her subjectivity in contexts created by discourses that distribute power according to definitions based on binary oppositions. However, mediation or possession of this difference would consolidate an individual's subject-position and through their narratives, the narrators can re-contextualise themselves in accordance with the counter-

discourse. A direct analogy can therefore be drawn between the subject-constitution implicit in the desire for historical continuity, and the subject-constitution promised by the construction of narrative.

The construction of history becomes a way for the subject to construct and maintain his/her identity, not only at the present time, but also at some point in the future as well as in the past, thereby consolidating identity. However, if history is recorded in a discourse that leaves out or glosses over certain aspects of reality in order to maintain its power, then “identities forged out of half-remembered things and false memories easily commit transgressions” (Krog, 2002: 24). Consequently, a person or group can justify oppressive and violent actions to themselves as long as they function within the parameters of their discourse. Even those who regard themselves as “liberal” and more humane tend to use the victim-status of the oppressed as a means to validate their own subject-position within the discourse and in so doing make themselves complicit in the oppression.

Heyns (2000: 42), in trying to ascertain whether and to what extent South African confessional fiction “comes to terms with white, South African culpability” highlights the ambivalence of confessional fiction. He quotes Mark Behr as saying of his novel, *The Smell of Apples*, that

as an act of creation *The Smell of Apples* represents, for me, the beginnings of a showdown with myself for my support of a system like apartheid.[...]f the book's

publication has assisted white people in coming to terms with their own culpability for what is wrong in South Africa, then it has been worthwhile. (Heyns, 2000: 42)

Heyns points out the ambivalence in Behr's phrase "coming to terms with their own culpability", noting that Behr presumably means "*confronting* that culpability; but his phrase could equally mean *accommodating*, establishing a comfortable relationship with it" (Heyns, 2000: 42). A subject need not relinquish their position within the dominant discourse if they displace moral responsibility and accountability to their context, thereby accommodating their culpability. Although Heyns questions culpability as it pertains specifically to South African fiction, one can similarly question the motives of our narrators in "confessing" their part in the events of their narratives, and moreover, in the distortion of the "facts" of their narratives. Marlow, Krog and Roy each create their own narrative spaces in their respective attempts to consolidate their subject positions within new contexts.

Understanding the concept of "space" and the creation of spaces through discourse is pertinent to understanding the effect of displacement engendered in the narrator by his/her exposure to any counter-discourse. Notably, each narrator's sense of awareness of the constructed nature of his/her discourse, and specifically of the shortcomings or distortions within each discourse is awakened and amplified as he/she finds him/herself in unfamiliar and transient spaces. These spaces subvert discursive boundaries, and the narrators become more aware of the "other" voice – the discourses of those who have been silenced by dominant discourse.

Confronted with the risk of losing his/her agency as a subject within a space redefined by an emerging counter-discourse, Marlow, Krog and Roy attempt reclamation of that position by casting themselves as mediators between the events they describe and the audiences they address. However, the effect of counter-discourse is to make the narrators aware of their own selective construction of narrative, and the self-reflexive styles of the narratives indicate this awareness. Thus, faultlines and ruptures in the narratives become apparent as the reader realises that there are other edited or untold “truths” present in the space of the narratives. The resulting narratives are fragmented, indicating the pervasive effect of Foucault’s heterotopias that contest “the certainty engendered by the conventional utopia/dystopia opposition” (Goodman, 2003: 11). The reader, like the narrators, is thus lead to seek the virtues of “instability and shifting meaning instead of static spaces irrevocably inscribed with unambiguous significance” (Goodman, 2003: 11).

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

The word “utopia” derives from Thomas More’s “witty conflation of two Greek words”, namely eutopos, meaning “good place” and outopos, meaning “no place” (Kumar, 1987: 24). According to Goodman (2003: 1), this pun suggests “a somewhat precarious ontological status – a liminality which threatens to blur the boundaries between utopia and dystopia”. Consequently, rather than being a single alternative world, “many utopias/dystopias can be seen as offering multiple, implicitly unstable discourses which seem very far from the traditional view of utopias/dystopias as closed and fixed language worlds, offering dependable, if limiting, refuge from uncertainty” (Goodman, 2003: 1).

Nozick (1968: 312), also arguing the case for a utopia of multiple discourses, states that

there will not be *one* [original emphasis] kind of community existing and one kind of life led in utopia. Utopia will consist of utopias, of many different and divergent communities in which people lead different kinds of lives under different institutions....Utopia is a framework for utopias.

He goes on to examine the validity of supposing that “*one* kind of society *is* best for all [original emphasis]” (1968: 312) by applying two methods which he calls “design devices and filter devices” (Nozick, 1968: 313).

Design devices

construct something (or its description) by some procedure which does not essentially involve constructing descriptions of others of its type. The result of the process is one object. In the case of societies, the result of the design process is a description of one society, obtained by people (or a person) sitting down and thinking about what the best society is. After deciding, they set about to pattern everything on this one model. (Nozick, 1968: 313)

Filter devices, on the other hand,

involve a process which eliminates (filters out) many from a large set of alternatives. The two key determinants of the end result(s) are the particular nature of the filtering out process (and what qualities it selects against) and the particular nature of the set of alternatives it operates upon (and how this set is generated)...The operation of the framework for utopia...present[ed] here thus realises the advantages of a filtering process incorporating mutually improving interaction between the filter and the surviving products of the generating process, so that the quality of generated and nonrejected products improves. (Nozick, 1968: 316 – 317)

Nozick rejects the claim of one kind of society being best for all, concluding that filtering “enables [the designers of utopia] to utilize their knowledge of specific conditions they don’t want violated in judiciously building a filter to reject the violators” (Nozick, 1968: 314). For Nozick, the filtering process involves people experimenting with living in various communities. Each community must win and hold the voluntary adherence of its members, with no pattern being imposed on

everyone, “and the result will be one pattern if and only if everyone voluntarily chooses to live in accordance with that pattern of community” (Nozick: 1968: 316).

The notion of a filtering process as a means towards defining utopia implies that the framework of the proposed utopia needs to be flexible enough to change and adapt if necessary. Nozick’s theory for a means of achieving utopia therefore relies on a process of progress – a movement away from the traditional static nature of utopia. For utopia to exist, it needs to progress, though as Goodman points out “utopias...continually disappoint us because they are subjective and unstable creations” (2003: 1). Quoting Oscar Wilde as saying that “Progress is the realization of Utopia”, Goodman (2003: 1) argues that, although the word “progress” implies a forward movement, “for many utopian theorists, utopias arise from a nostalgic longing to recreate, magically, past utopian spaces or experiences while ignoring any seeds of disillusion inherent in the situation.”

Utopian ideologies allow for the creation of static discourses that enable the agents of a dominant discourse to exploit another group in order to sustain their “ideal society”. In Plato’s *Republic*, the

communism of the ideal life is restricted in the *Republic* to the Guardians. The auxiliaries and artisans lead the ordinary life of lesser mortals, brainwashed by the ‘noble’ or ‘golden lie’ to devote themselves to the maintenance of their rulers, the Guardians. (Kumar, 1987: 26-27)

The relative nature of utopia is highlighted in the example of *Republic*, for the “self-enclosed, insulated elite” of the Republic is “separated from the masses whose life they do not share and on whose labour they depend” (Kumar, 1987: 27). This example confirms Nozick’s assertion that utopia cannot exist if only one pattern is regarded as the ideal, for it will inevitably not be a utopia for everyone. The construction of boundaries between discourses results in opposing notions of utopia, where the utopia of one group is the dystopia of another.

Although Nozick uses the concept of filter devices to illustrate how utopia is attained, one needs to bear in mind that the filter devices are as subjective as the concept of utopia and utopian ideals. If a group – namely, agents of a dominant discourse – lives in a society that allows them benefits at the expense of another group, then the dominant group is likely to continue perpetuating that discourse in an attempt to maintain their elitist existence. The fact that this ideal is sustained at the cost of the ideals of others is irrelevant to those in the elitist position, as their “filter devices” merely “filter out” those discourses that could possibly “violate” their own.

The utopian ideal is therefore very powerful in its ability to maintain and perpetuate certain values, opinions, knowledge and images that allow the individual to believe the very best of their society by merely filtering out that which contradicts their world view. “*Utopias* [original emphasis] afford

consolation...there is a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold" (Foucault, 1970: xviii), and within the safety of utopian ideals, there is no need to "unlearn our privilege as our loss" (Spivak in Goodman, 2004: 1). However, the inflexible nature of utopia makes it a fragile ideal to maintain when individuals are categorically faced with "abnormal" definitions that oppose the static definitions in the discourses that sustain utopian ideals.

In *Heart, Country* and *Marabou* the fragile structure of utopia is disrupted, and the reader perceives the effects of this disruption through the respective narrators. Instead of the safe consolation afforded by the utopian ideals perpetuated in the dominant discourse, the narrators are faced with the disruptive effects of being in a space where they are exposed to several simultaneously active discourses. The narrators encounter the disorder of the heteroclite, in which

fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension...in such a state, things are 'laid', 'placed', 'arranged' in sites so very different from one another that it is impossible to find a place of reference for them, to define a *common locus* [original emphasis] beneath them all. (Foucault, 1970: xviii)

These sites are heterotopias, disturbing in their ability to "secretly undermine language", shattering and tangling common names because they "destroy 'syntax' in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things to 'hold

together” (Foucault, 1970: xviii). Heterotopia therefore has the ability to completely undermine discourse, for whereas utopias “run with the very grain of language”, heterotopias “desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks...they dissolve our myths” (Foucault, 1970: xviii). The reactions of Marlow, Krog and Roy when faced with a counter-discourse are related to the “profound distress of those whose language has been destroyed: loss of what is ‘common’ to place and name” (Foucault, 1970: xviii – xix).

However, through the construction of new narrative, the narrators can appropriate counter-discourse, thereby re-instating themselves in language. Identity disrupted by the effect of heterotopia can only be recuperated if the subject acknowledges and, ideally, embraces the multiplicity of discourses within a given space. If the subject insists on constructing boundaries by which to define others, and in turn him/herself, heterotopian disruption will continue, thereby increasing the sense of chaos within the subject and leading to further fragmentation of identity, as is the case with *Marabou's* Roy, discussed in chapter four.

Experience of heterotopia exposes the nightmare existence of those who are not subjects of the dominant discourse and on whose objectification the subjectivity of the narrators relies. Foucault (1970: xxiv), dealing with the term “madness” as a form of objectification, investigates the way in which a culture writes the history of those it wishes to marginalise. This history would be the history “of the Other –

of that which, for a given culture, is at once interior and foreign, therefore to be excluded (so as to exorcize the interior danger) but by being shut away (in order to reduce its otherness)" (Foucault, 1970: xxiv).

Marlow, Krog and Roy are drawn into the heart of that darkness which is simultaneously "interior and foreign". They are faced with the similarities between themselves and those victimised by the discourses of which the narrators are agents. In the three texts, this victimisation is based largely on definitions of others according to their physical appearance. By acknowledging sameness, by "becoming" the body, and metaphorically "getting into the skull" of the other, the narrators gain a sense of order within the fluctuating space of heterotopia. The nightmare of disintegrating identity, of madness, can be avoided only by resisting the temptation of constructing opposing definitions of oneself and Other.

Chapter Two: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

Conrad's story is situated at the height of colonial enterprise, and the ideals of "humanising, improving [and] instructing" (Conrad, 1993: 1782), are regarded by Hawthorn as "symbiotic" with trade. The "era of great industrial development and imperialist success was also the era of idealism in philosophy and politics" (Hawthorn, 1990: 172). In *Heart*, "trade and idealism are portrayed as depending upon each other...but at the same time their relationship is not perceived as a genuine collaboration....Thus imperialism thrives on an idealism that is ignorant of what the imperialism actually involves" (Hawthorn, 1990: 173). It is natural that this idealism would have become incorporated into the trade discourse of the time, since it acts as a moral justification for colonial endeavours. The tension that results from the practical implementation of this "symbiosis" between trade and idealism becomes apparent through Marlow's narrative as he relates how he came into contact with the counter-discourse of greed and oppression that is the reality of the colonial presence in the Congo.

The text presents the reader with two narrators, the anonymous narrator and Marlow. The anonymous narrator is an adherent of the ideals of colonialism, whilst Marlow's account is a challenge to the validity of these ideals, based on his experience of their futility within a different context. Thus, the reader is confronted by two mediators, representing two different worlds: the anonymous narrator mediates the utopian world view encapsulated on the deck of the

"Nellie", and Marlow mediates the dystopia of the deck of the steamer in the Congo. Through the use of two narrators representing opposing views the narrative reflects the fragmented nature of heterotopia.

Both ship decks (that of the "Nellie" and that of the steamer on the Congo) in *Heart* are heterotopias. The boat is a "floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time given over to the infinity of the sea...the boat has not only been the great object of economic development [for our civilization], but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination" (Foucault, 1986: 27). The boat is integral to the perpetuation of ideals, for it is the vessel that has carried many settlers to a supposed utopia. The heterotopian nature of the boat is emphasised in the anonymous narrator's description of seamen:

their home is always with them...one ship is very much like another, and the sea is always the same. In the immutability of their surroundings the foreign shores, the foreign faces, the changing immensity of life, glide past, veiled not by a sense of mystery but by a slightly disdainful ignorance. (Conrad, 1993: 1761)

Enclosed in the space of the ship's deck is a world as fragmented by a variety of discourses as the world gliding past the insulated space of the ship. Complex hierarchies of power can be discerned on the deck of a ship if one considers the multiplicity of interactions between crew-members, captain and crew, passengers, passengers and crew and passengers and captain. The boat

therefore becomes a microcosm of society, its deck a space on which the power play between groups and individuals are represented. In the text, the heterotopia of the ship's deck causes a disruption of the utopian ideals of colonialism, both for Marlow as well as for the anonymous narrator. A heterotopic reading highlights the underlying irony in this effect on the narrators, for the boat is the vessel that has enabled the perpetuation and implementation of colonial ideals, yet the breakdown of the belief in the validity of these ideals occurs on a boat's deck.

The text opens on the deck of the "Nellie", where the anonymous narrator sits with "The Director of Companies...The Lawyer...The Accountant...[and] Marlow" (Conrad, 1993: 1760). Here, the idealistic values that prove so futile to Kurtz are espoused by Marlow's fellow passengers. These passengers, through their vocations, represent the pillars of trade-based society: the Director – their "captain and [their] host" – is presumably involved in the operations of companies, and the anonymous narrator finds it "difficult to realise that his [the Director's] work was not out there in the luminous estuary, but behind him, within the brooding gloom" (Conrad, 1993: 1760). This image is interesting in its implication – even before Marlow's tale commences – that the work of those involved in the perpetuation of imperialism lies in "gloom" and darkness, that they are not guided by the light that imperialism supposedly bears into the darkness of the colonies. The Lawyer is one who reads and enforces the law that props up the current construct of society, and the Accountant works with the capital

produced and needed by the society. Marlow is the fifth passenger, and has been involved in colonial endeavour, as a seaman. The story of his journey into the Congo is relayed to the reader as a first-hand account, unmediated by the anonymous narrator, except in those instances where the other passengers on the deck of the “Nellie” react to Marlow’s words.

Marlow is an ambiguous narrator – “[t]he worst that could be said of him was that he did not represent his class” (Conrad, 1993: 1761). The anonymous narrator claims that Marlow “was a seaman, but he was a wanderer too, while most seamen lead, if one may so express it, a sedentary life” (Conrad, 1993: 1761). Marlow therefore defies conventional definition, for he is not an average seaman, content to remain insulated in the space of the ship as the world glides past. He also has the urge to wander, to move between boundaries. As Marlow begins his tale, the anonymous narrator notes (with a certain aversion, it seems) that they (the other passengers) knew they “were fated...to hear about one of Marlow’s inconclusive experiences” (Conrad, 1993: 1763). The anonymous narrator’s description of Marlow’s tales as “inconclusive” is further evidence of Marlow’s ambiguity, as well as an indication of the narrator’s own need for closure and structure – for definitions of the world that compound his own views and validate his own identity.

The anonymous narrator contemplates the timelessness of the Thames, “not in the vivid flush of a short day that comes and departs for ever, but in the august

light of abiding memories" (Conrad, 1993: 1760). His accounts of the history of the Thames are marked by the significance he attributes to the river as a symbol of the might and power of the country. He claims that "nothing is easier for a man who has... 'followed the sea'... than to evoke the great spirit of the past upon the lower reaches of the Thames" (Conrad, 1993: 1760). He then goes on to list "all the men of whom the nation is proud" (Conrad, 1993: 1761), "from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin" who had been served by the Thames. He speaks of "[h]unters for gold or pursuers of fame,... bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire" (Conrad, 1993: 1761), betraying in his idealistic images his faith in and support of the "noble" cause of imperialism. His focus is myopic, limited as it is by a discourse that has no definition of colonialism as anything but an ideal, unable to consider the "other" history of oppression and exploitation existing parallel to his own version. This "utopia" of imperialism and its "noble" ideals, is re-inscribed as dystopia when placed in the context of the history exposed by Marlow's counter-discourse.

Marlow breaks in upon the anonymous narrator's musings, commenting that "this also [England] has been one of the dark places of the earth" (Conrad, 1993: 1761). He goes on to draw uncomfortable parallels between the Roman conquest of Britain and the current colonisation by Britain (White, 1993: 189). Seen in this way, the "light-bearing" imperialists are equated with their historical oppressors. Furthermore, Marlow's presentation of a hypothetical Roman implies a self-

serving, opportunistic character, typifying the colonialists that emerge in his narrative. For example, the members of the Eldorado Exploring Expedition are described as men whose desire was to “tear treasure out of the bowels of the land...with no more purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe” (Conrad, 1993: 1781). The morally corrupt manager of the Inner Station serves as another example of a character who had embarked on the imperialist venture, not to “spread the light of civilisation”, but to gain promotion in the state machinery. Marlow thus draws a comparison between the modern Europeans, considered the messengers of civilisation, and the Roman conquerors of Britain. The distinctions between the coloniser and the previously colonised become blurred as one realises that the Romans must have motivated their empire building in much the same way that the Europeans in Marlow’s tale do.

Marlow concludes the introduction to his tale by noting, somewhat ironically, that whereas the Romans were “conquerors, and for that you want only brute force”, the British, by contrast, are “colonists” saved by “the devotion to efficiency” (Conrad, 1993: 1762). This comment proves to be a mocking jibe at the manner in which the discourse of colonialism allows for a distinction between a “colonist” and a “conqueror”. According to these definitions, the colonist is protected by virtue of his efficiency from “grabb[ing] what they could get for the sake of what was to be got” (Conrad, 1993: 1763). However, as Marlow’s account unfolds, he relates incidents (to be discussed shortly) of specific *inefficiency* on the part of

the European colonisers. Marlow is familiar with the workings of colonialist discourse. Cleverly, he first lulls his audience into a sense of comfort by using definitions with which they are familiar, and then he subverts those definitions with his account of the actions of colonists that resemble those ignoble actions of the Roman “conquerors”.

His analogy of the Romans in Britain sets a new discursive framework for both Marlow’s audience as well as for the reader. The idealism inherent in the colonial endeavour is now set against the oppressive, cyclical nature of colonialism. The “utopia” (created in the minds of the coloniser) that supposedly exists in the colonies, where wealth can be gained by those spreading the “light of civilisation”, is presented by the musings of the anonymous narrator. Marlow’s more sombre depiction of what he encountered in the reality of the colonies re-inscribes the utopia as a dystopia, where the high ideals of “civilisation” become a farce behind which the coloniser can exploit the very land they have come to “save”. Marlow challenges his audience to re-evaluate their ideals, claiming that

[t]he conquest of the earth, which mostly means taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea. (Conrad, 1993: 1763)

As Marlow travels into the interior of the Congo on the steamer that he skips, he becomes aware of the irrelevance and impracticality of ideals if they cannot be successfully implemented. He notes that “when you have to attend to...the mere incidents of the surface, the reality...fades. The inner truth is hidden” (Conrad, 1993: 1784). “All the same”, he felt the “stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention” (Conrad, 1993: 1783). Marlow reiterates the notion that his previously held beliefs were broken in upon, that there “were moments when one’s past came back to one...but it came in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream, remembered with wonder amongst the overwhelming realities of this strange world” (Conrad, 1993: 1783).

Displacement into this new and strange world results in the fragmentation typical of heterotopia, and Marlow and his passengers on the steamer feel

cut off from the comprehension of [their] surroundings...[they] glided past like phantoms...[They] could not understand because [they] were too far and could not remember, because [they] were traveling in the night of...those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign – and no memory. (Conrad, 1993: 1785)

Exposure to heterotopia breaks down their understanding of the world as they had previously defined it. They no longer feel substantial - they are “phantoms”, leaving no sign or memory of their presence. This sense of being forgotten or simply not noticed challenges Marlow’s sense of his own identity. He claims that, looking at the (black) men howling, spinning and leaping on the shore, he was

thrilled by “the thought of their humanity – like [his] – the thought of [his] remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar” (Conrad, 1993: 1785). Within the space in which he finds himself, he cannot hide behind his definitions of “civilisation” and admits that there was a meaning in the “wild and passionate uproar” of the men on the shore, a meaning which “you so remote from the night of first ages – could comprehend” (Conrad, 1993: 1785). His claim that the “mind of man is capable of anything – because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future” (Conrad, 1993: 1785) indicates the effect of heterotopia on Marlow, as it clearly rejects the notion of constructing boundaries between times or people that would limit or prevent one from interaction with those times or people.

Throughout his narrative, Marlow constantly reminds his listeners – the other passengers on the “Nellie” - that their sense of the “real” is a construct of their society. He tells them that he often felt the “mysterious stillness watching [him] at [his] monkey tricks” just as it watches them “performing on [their] respective tightropes for...half a crown a tumble...” at which a voice growls “try to be civil Marlow” (Conrad, 1993: 1784). These “tricks” refer, presumably, to their respective duties that seem so important in the context of their discourse, but once removed into a new space they become ridiculous. When he reaches the point in his story where he finally meets Kurtz, Marlow tells his listeners that Kurtz eventually believed everything belonged to him – “[his] Intended, [his] ivory, [his] station, [his] river...but that was a trifle.

The thing was to know what he belonged to, how many powers of darkness claimed him for their own. That was the reflection that made you creepy all over. It was impossible – it was not good for one either – trying to imagine....You can't understand. How could you? – with solid pavement under your feet, surrounded by kind neighbours ready to cheer you or to fall on you, stepping delicately between the butcher and the policeman, in the holy terror of scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums – how can you imagine what particular region of the first ages a man's untrammelled feet may take him into by way of solitude – utter solitude without a policeman – by the way of silence – utter silence, where no warning voice of kind neighbour can be heard whispering of public opinion? These little things make all the great difference. When they are gone you must fall back upon your own innate strength, upon your own capacity for faithfulness. (Conrad, 1993: 1795)

Marlow's statement implies that the beliefs and ideals on which we build our societies are relative and context bound. A discourse that fails to recognize its own constructed nature cannot sustain a belief system within a situation where that discourse is proven to be meaningless. In *Heart*, there are several examples of this failure. When Marlow tells of the French man-of-war, anchored off the coast, shelling the empty bush (Conrad, 1993: 1768), he describes the scene as "incomprehensible" in the "empty immensity of earth, sky and water....There was a touch of insanity in the proceeding, a sense of lugubrious drollery in the sight" not dissipated by one of the crew earnestly assuring Marlow that "there was a camp of natives – he called them enemies! – hidden out of sight somewhere" (Conrad, 1993: 1768). This image of the French aimlessly shelling the empty bush in the firm belief against all contrary evidence that there are "enemies"

lurking, is symbolic of the ideologically myopic attitude that characterises oppressive discourses.

This point is further compounded by the image of the chief accountant at the Outer Station. His “high starched collar, white cuffs, a light alpaca jacket, snowy trousers, a clear necktie and varnished boots” (Conrad, 1993: 1771) seem utterly unnecessary in the climate described by Marlow. In fact, his general description of the Outer Station leaves the distinct impression that everything being done there is without reason or aim. Marlow uses terms such as “objectless blasting”, “purpose...impossible to divine” and “wanton smash-up” (Conrad, 1993: 1769 – 1770), all of which serve to illustrate the colonialists’ lack of “efficiency” in the country that they are exploiting. The accountant’s insistence on wearing the costume of a “civilised gentleman” is thrown into stark relief and shown to be a futile exercise in “upholding standards” which are of no use in a situation demanding a more practical approach.

As has been mentioned, the utopian ideals that are the backbone of a dominant discourse – in this case that of the colonialist enterprise – are used by the agents of that discourse to justify their enterprises. In *Heart*, we encounter several characters exemplifying the “greater society”, whose complicity in the atrocities committed lies in their belief in the ideal. These individuals sustain the oppressive discourse because they have no knowledge of what its implementation really entails, and consequently they continue to perpetuate misleading definitions of

coloniser and colonised. Amongst these individuals are the members of Marlow's audience; his aunt, who arranged to "get [him] appointed skipper of a river steamboat" (Conrad, 1993: 1764), in her effort to help "wean[] those ignorant millions from their horrid ways" (Conrad, 1993: 1767); and Kurtz's Intended, who firmly believed that she "knew [Kurtz] best", and that "[m]en looked up to him – his goodness shone in every act" (Conrad, 1993: 1816).

The innocence and fervour with which the Intended claims Kurtz's "goodness" indicates that she has no knowledge of the Kurtz who impaled the severed heads of "rebels" on stakes under his windows (Conrad, 1993: 1802). Her awe of Kurtz is inspired by the ideals of "humanizing and improving" that he held before setting out for the Congo. Her awe is echoed by the chief accountant at the Outer Station, albeit that his awe is inspired by Kurtz's talents in trade – the other binary of the trade/idealism symbiosis. The chief accountant claims that Kurtz is a "very remarkable person", who sends in "as much ivory as all the others put together" (Conrad, 1993: 1772). In addition to this, the young brick-maker at the Central Station, upon being probed by Marlow, describes Kurtz as "a prodigy...He is an emissary of pity, and science, and progress, and devil knows what else" (Conrad, 1993: 1777).

Kurtz therefore appears to embody the values of trade and idealism. He provides ivory, the means for sustaining trade, whilst maintaining a reputation as one of the "gang of virtue" (Conrad, 1993: 1777), believing that each station "should be

like a beacon on the road towards better things, a centre for trade of course, but also for humanising, improving, instructing” (Conrad, 1993: 1782). Although Kurtz does produce more ivory than all the other agents put together, from Marlow’s account it appears that Kurtz’s power and authority with Europeans lies not in his deeds, but in his ability to convince with words. As the possibility of Kurtz being dead becomes more of a probability, Marlow realises that he “had never imagined [Kurtz] as doing...but as discoursing” (Conrad, 1993: 1793). Of all Kurtz’s gifts, the one that stands out most prominently for Marlow is his “gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness” (Conrad, 1993: 1794).

Marlow learns that Kurtz had been entrusted by the “International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs” to compile a report for its future guidance (Conrad, 1993: 1795). He describes the report as “vibrating with eloquence” (Conrad, 1993: 1796). In this report, Kurtz began with the argument that whites, from the point of development they had arrived at “must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of supernatural beings” and by the simple exercise of their will, whites can “exert a power for good practically unbounded” (Conrad, 1993: 1796). These words confirm Kurtz’s belief in the superiority of the coloniser, and reflect the discourse that allows Kurtz to regard himself as some form of deity, causing him to “preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites, which...were offered up to...Mr. Kurtz himself” (Conrad, 1993:

1796). The words of Kurtz's report are "burning" and "noble", with "no practical hints to interrupt the magic current of phrases" (Conrad, 1993: 1796). However, at the end of this "altruistic appeal", "scrawled evidently much later, in an unsteady hand", are the words "Exterminate all the brutes" (Conrad, 1993: 1796), indicating that his sustained exposure to heterotopia left Kurtz with no discourse of "humanising and improving" to revert to. At a loss for any definition of his surroundings that would sustain what he had believed to be true, Kurtz resorts to a tactic by which he could rid himself of that which challenged his views, namely extermination of "all the brutes".

Kurtz's powers of persuasion are evident in the awe with which the young Russian regards him. Marlow notes that he "did not envy him [the Russian] his devotion to Kurtz....He had not meditated over it" (Conrad, 1993: 1800). The Russian is described by Marlow as representing "the glamour of youth enveloped in his particoloured rags...[ruled by the] absolutely pure, uncalculating, unpractical spirit of adventure" (Conrad, 1993: 1799). His "unreflecting" mind is consumed by Kurtz's rhetoric, leading him to unreservedly defend Kurtz's brutal actions – the heads on the poles, the attack on the steamer, even the threat of violence and death to himself in order to obtain some ivory (Hawthorn, 1990: 193).

"The Russian stands for a sort of romantic male delusion peculiar to imperialism, testimony to the fact that physical danger and adventure along with elevated

ideas and culture combine to make a very potent and morally destructive mixture” (Hawthorn, 1990: 193). It is curious that the Russian embraces a construct not even intended for the Russian mind, implying that the allure of the ideals of the discourses of trade and colonialism are strong enough to draw in subjects from other discourses.

Before Marlow meets the Russian, he finds a book on seamanship (which he later finds out belonged to the Russian) at an abandoned hut. The presence of the book, which is sixty years old and implies yet again the historical might of Britain, serves to highlight the relativity of history. The book is completely useless and out of place in the jungle, and yet Marlow describes its discovery as “a delicious sensation of having come upon something unmistakably real” (Conrad, 1993: 1786). This shows once again the relativity of “reality”, for the reason the book seems “real” to Marlow is because it is a throwback to the dominant discourse of which he is an agent, which justifies his being there.

This discourse is the same one that had shaped Kurtz’s ideals, and so Marlow and Kurtz are represented as products of the same system. However, whereas Kurtz becomes disillusioned by the tension between the ideal and the reality (the heterotopic rupture) to the point of madness, Marlow manages to escape with his sanity intact, but with a new cynicism regarding “high ideals”. As Kurtz lies dying, Marlow watches him, seeing an expression come over his face “as though a veil had been rent” (Conrad, 1993: 1810). This image implies that, for Kurtz, a new

reality became apparent “beyond the veil” in the moment of his death and Kurtz dies murmuring “The horror! The horror!” leaving Marlow to muse: “Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge?” (Conrad, 1993: 1811). Death was the last boundary for Kurtz to cross, and the reference to “complete knowledge” indicates the possibility that death’s space is utopian, in that it allows for a completeness and finality not found in heterotopia. However, this idea of death as a final utopia is subverted by Marlow’s account of his own illness. Marlow becomes very ill shortly after Kurtz’s death. He “wrestled with death”, a contest that takes place in “an impalpable greyness, with nothing underfoot, with nothing around, without spectators...in a sickly atmosphere of tepid skepticism, without much belief in your own right, and still less in that of your adversary” (Conrad, 1993: 1811).

The landscape described by Marlow is clearly heterotopian in nature, allowing him no context by which to define himself. Marlow, “within a hair’s breadth of the last opportunity for pronouncement...found with humiliation that probably [he] would have nothing to say” (Conrad, 1993: 1811). Finding himself in the ultimate heterotopian landscape, Marlow is stripped of all knowledge and all beliefs, and therefore has no language through which he could express anything he knew. His narrative therefore becomes a vehicle for him to say “something”, to regain his sense of agency by confessing what he knows to be true – by “meeting that truth with his own true stuff” (Conrad, 1993: 1785).

Marlow admits that, subsequent to his return from the Congo, he did not tell the truth about Kurtz to either the journalist or Kurtz's Intended, thereby protecting and perpetuating the system that created Kurtz. His tale is a confession, a warning against the dangers of static definitions and ideals within discourse. In telling his story to these specific listeners, whose roles in the system have previously been discussed, Marlow seems to be trying to atone for his earlier complicity. By voicing the "reality" of the effects of their blind adherence to and perpetuation of the dominant discourse, he is trying to break his earlier silence to allow for an awareness of counter-discourse to effectively take root in the consciousness of his listeners. Marlow becomes an agent of counter-discourse, and the final words of the anonymous narrator indicate that Marlow has achieved some kind of effect. The Thames no longer flows into a "luminous estuary", but instead, "the offing was barred by a black bank of clouds, and the tranquil waterway leading to the utmost ends of the earth flowed sombre under an overcast sky – seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness" (Conrad, 1993: 1817). Marlow's words have changed the anonymous narrator's perception of the world around him. The narrative as a whole – in other words, that which is narrated by the anonymous narrator and includes Marlow's narrative – becomes a vehicle for the perpetuation of Marlow's counter-discourse thereby creating further disruptions, and in effect transforming spaces previously regarded as static into heterotopias.

Chapter Three: Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull*

Country of My Skull is Antjie Krog's account of the years she spent as a journalist, reporting on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings for SABC radio. Her role as a journalist allowed her access to the heterotopian spaces of the TRC hearings, where the discourse of reconciliation (mainly between black and white) was most prominently centred. Her exposure to these spaces resulted in a disruption of her sense of agency, as she learned of the extreme brutalities that sustained the white utopia of apartheid for so long. The utopian world that she, as a white South African knew, was redefined as a dystopia of violent oppression and this realisation left Krog, to some extent feeling wordless and lost. Krog claims that "[t]he land belongs to the voices of those who live in it. My own bleak voice among them" (Krog, 2002: 210). Through her narrative, which is based on the narratives that emerged from the TRC hearings, Krog could perpetuate the counter-discourse of reconciliation, thereby inscribing herself as a subject of a new emerging discourse.

As a white liberal from an Afrikaans background, Krog was a subject of the dominant discourse of apartheid ideology. The ideals of apartheid were sustained on the basis of what T.D Moodie (1975: 1) terms "the Afrikaner civil religion", in which "God imbues all history with ultimate meaning. He rules sovereign over the world and works his will in the affairs of nations – most visibly of Afrikanerdom." Moodie (1975: 1) further quotes Dr D.F Malan as saying that "Our history is the

greatest masterpiece of the centuries. We hold this nationhood as our due for it was given us by the Architect of the universe. [His] aim was the formation of a new nation among the nations of the world.”

This self-definition of Afrikaners as the “chosen people” allowed for the creation of a utopian discourse in which all action and decisions taken by these “people” were condoned by the grace of the “Architect of the universe”. Such a definition of a group automatically excludes other “nations of the world”, thereby creating an enclosed, static world in which this chosen group can exist. The utopia of apartheid survived for the better part of forty years, alongside the dystopia of the oppressed and exploited blacks. The very term “separate development” implies the existence of more than one “world”, indicating the inherently heterotopian nature of the space in which apartheid discourse was sustained. As a member of the dominant group, Krog lived a protected life at the expense of those oppressed for their difference of race and culture.

The privileged existence afforded to whites could no longer be sustained after the first democratic elections, and the effects of heterotopia were felt in the disintegration of their utopia. In the novel, her brother, Andries, tells Krog how the previously peaceful existence on their farm has come under threat in recent years. With the increased frequency of incidents such as farm-killings, theft and violence, his mother “cannot cope with the fact that this farm, this lifelong haven, this place that has always been the safest place [they] know, has turned into an

island under threat...[b]ut to a certain extent...this is more real. This is more in step with the country than the paradise of [their] youth. What [they] had could not last" (Krog, 2002: 273).

The reference to the "island under threat", the "paradise of [their] youth" suggests a parallel between white existence under apartheid and Shakespeare's island utopia in *The Tempest*. Prospero regards the island as his domain, defining Caliban as a savage and thereby justifying the use of his power in his enslavement of Caliban. Prospero, "takes no account of Caliban's markedly different view of his own history" (Goodman, 2003: 7), as he entirely ignores the "complex nature of history as a ['dialogical'] exchange both with the past and with others" (La Capra in Goodman, 2003: 7). By imprisoning both himself and Caliban within the utopian/dystopian dichotomy "Prospero shows his fear of transgressive discourses which...utopia can become if its traditional boundaries are challenged" (Goodman 2003: 7).

Thus, in response to a heterotopic reading, the space of the island in *The Tempest* becomes a "hypothetical space, full of lapses and ruptures....It is an 'other space' and it is the island 'without an owner', the so-called *terra nulla* which is the classical justification employed by the colonial occupier" (Goodman, 2003: 10). The justification of "terra nulla" embodies the "myth of the empty landscape" – the colonialists' belief that they were the first and only civilised presence in the land, and therefore the land rightfully belonged to them to divide and develop as they pleased.

The cyclical nature of colonialism's utopian ideology is established at the start of the novel, with specific reference to the oppression of Afrikaners under British rule. Krog's account of the Queen's visit refers to the Queen's speech, which is "delivered in the Accent that has intimidated half the earth for centuries" (Krog, 2002: 8). Also, the taxi driver's reference to "*our* diamond in her crown" (Krog, 2002: 8) refers to the exploitation of colonies under British rule. Lastly, Krog notes that "General Constand Viljoen of the Freedom Front requests the Queen to visit the Women's Memorial in Bloemfontein and to apologize to Afrikaners for what was done to them in the name of the British. But her schedule is already full" (Krog, 2002: 9). The ironies highlighted in the Queen's visit serve to illustrate the similarities between the discourses that allowed the oppression of Afrikaners under British rule and the oppression of blacks in South Africa under white rule. The parallel thus drawn between the workings of British colonialism and apartheid ideology implicates both Afrikaans and English whites in the crime of black oppression and indicates the fragmented nature of transitional South Africa.

The spaces where this fragmentation is most prominently experienced are the town and school halls in which the TRC hearings took place. These are heterotopias "not oriented toward the eternal, they are rather absolutely temporal" (Foucault, 1986: 26). These spaces are linked to time "in its most fleeting, transitory, precarious aspect" (Foucault, 1986: 26), as opposed to

spaces such as museums and libraries, which are heterotopias of “indefinitely accumulating time...in which time never stops building up and topping its own summit” (Foucault, 1986: 26). As an example of temporal heterotopias, Foucault names fairgrounds, explaining that temporal heterotopias are “empty sites on the outskirts of cities that teem once or twice a year with stands, displays...and so forth” (Foucault, 1986: 26).

The venues for the TRC hearings are temporal heterotopias, in that they are specifically intended as spaces for hosting different functions. The heterotopian nature of the venues enables the original meaning of these spaces to be subverted by the inclusion of and prominence given to previously oppressed groups within these spaces. Not only are these new spaces physical, they are also symbolic:

We're talking about...different social spaces: one in which violence was justified in the past. And the other, in the present, where abuses of human rights are condemned as immoral and wrong. By choosing [for example], the city hall in the centre of town and not a community centre in the township, the Truth Commission wants to portray a symbolic break with the institutional frameworks of the past. This city hall is no longer the official domain of whites and perpetrators: it now belongs to all of us. (Krog: 2002: 38-39)

Another example of the subversion of meaning caused by such spaces is the problem encountered during the amnesty hearings. “[I]t seems...that you make a Statement with your seating arrangement...you impact on the psychological disposition of the entire audience...the site of a seat can influence amnesty”

(Krog, 2002: 59). The judges are used to such matters being resolved by the architecture of the courtroom, but in an ordinary hall the seating of the perpetrators, judges, victims, audience, Amnesty Committee members and Truth Commission members could potentially influence the outcome of the hearing. Such venues disturb subjects of the legal system, who are used to the strictly structured nature of a courtroom.

Within the subversive spaces of the TRC, the testimonies of the witnesses and the confessions of the perpetrators are recorded and documented. "Because of these narratives, people can no longer indulge in their separate dynasties of denial" (Krog, 2002: 89). The legitimacy constructed in the past around extreme forms of violence had created a normative structure in which there was space for the justification of the atrocities committed by the perpetrators. In the utopia created by apartheid ideology, "legislation was launched that would keep the brutal enforcement of [a]partheid out of sight" (Krog, 2002: 45). The majority of perpetrators in the text are representatives of the professions that sustained the utopian ideal on a practical level: "[t]he lawgivers [who] made the laws [and] the lawyers [who] executed them" (Krog, 2002: 93), as well as "[t]he politicians[,] [who] have prostituted the police" (Krog, 2002: 3).

These perpetrators find themselves suddenly part of a new discourse, in which the norms they had always followed no longer apply and they are called upon to explain their actions within a totally different framework. "They are no longer

buffered by an Afrikaner culture in power” (Krog, 2002: 93), and thus it has been speculated that perpetrator Roelf Venter “made a very difficult and crucial leap”, saying at his amnesty hearings about his actions: “Then I was not sorry because I thought it was right. Now I know that it was wrong and I regret my deeds” (Krog, 2002: 95). With this statement, he allows for a “space where change was possible: then it was right, now it is wrong” (Krog, 2002: 95).

In an attempt to establish a new discourse that would facilitate this space of change, the existing dominant discourse is flooded with accounts of the brutality involved in maintaining the utopia of white dominance. As Archbishop Tutu, Chairperson of the TRC says, the “greater task” of the TRC is “to listen to the unknown victims – those who have never received any attention from the authorities or the media – and to provide a forum for the exposure of their experiences” (Krog, 2002: 23). This exposure produces the counter-discourse that leaves Krog “stunned by the knowledge of the price people have paid for their words” (Krog, 2002: 49). She further says of these words: “If I write this, I exploit and betray. If I don’t, I die” (Krog, 2002: 49). By writing of the victims’ testimonies, she “exploits and betrays”, in that she assumes agency over these stories, thereby speaking for the oppressed, using the words for which they have paid so dearly.

Krog explains that, although initially she felt that she didn’t want to, and couldn’t, write the book, she eventually realised that she “[had] to write a book, otherwise

[she'd] go crazy" (Krog, 2002: 294). She admits to having "told many lies in this book about the truth. [She has] exploited many lives and many texts – not least those of [her] mother and [her] family on the farm" (Krog, 2002: 295). The narrator is therefore guilty of exploiting not only the victims, but also her own people, in her attempt to regain her sense of agency within the new emerging discourse of reconciliation. As to her claim that, if she doesn't write "this" she dies, one can take it to mean that if she does not re-inscribe herself in the new discourse, she cannot regain her sense of agency, resulting in further fragmentation of her identity and causing her to "go crazy".

As discussed in the introduction, the construction of history becomes a way for a subject to manufacture and maintain his/her identity. In telling a story, one becomes the active subject of the narrative, and "you bring your own version of the truth to the merciless arena of the past – only in this way does the past become thinkable, the world become habitable" (Krog, 2002: 89). In the case of the discourses that emerge at the TRC hearings, the journalists realise that many people might deliberately distance themselves from the TRC process. However, "very few people escape news bulletins" and even people "who do no more than listen to the news should be given a full understanding of the essence of the Commission, and hear quite a few of its stories" (Krog, 2002: 31). Thus, selectively edited sequences of narrative become representative of the new discourse, with these fragments breaking in upon the static perceptions of those who heard and still do hear them.

Experiencing the effect of heterotopia leaves the journalists, black and white alike, feeling “physically exhausted and mentally frayed” (Krog, 2002: 37). Initially, the black journalists claim that “they are actually fine. The Commission’s work doesn’t affect them because they grew up with human rights abuses all around them” (Krog, 2002: 168). Upon being probed by a psychologist, the black journalists admit to unusual episodes of crying or violence, which are symptoms similar to those of the white journalists. The psychologist tells Krog that he finds more white journalists covering the TRC hearings than any other group, which he interprets as an attempt to compensate for the guilt they carry (Krog, 2002: 170). By being part of the construction of the new history of the country, the white journalists can to some extent vindicate their complicity in the oppressive system of the past, whilst reconstituting themselves as subjects of a new discourse.

The manifestation of these symptoms in both white and black implies that both subject and object of the dominant discourse show similar signs of trauma in dealing with the subversion of old structures. The rigidity of the apartheid system is marked by the strict policies of racial segregation that characterised the system, which not only ensured an elitist, utopian existence for whites, but also a dystopian existence for blacks. The creation of a new discourse is disturbing for all, as it involves a process of major social change, in which power and language structures are abolished and redefined.

The hybrid nature of post-apartheid, transitional discourse is illustrated in Krog's account of the Louis Trichardt TRC hearings. One can identify at least three different discourses grouped together within two temporal spaces:

While the Commission listens to testimony of human rights violations, cheerful white families with their Tupperware, their sunhats and their small-town familiarity spend the day picnicking on the grass outside....The white policemen loll about watching cricket, while their black colleagues stand solemnly in the doorways of the hall listening to the testimony....Caught between the field and the hall, we in the media sit listening to bitter crying and choked words, interspersed with cheering and applause from an enthusiastic cricket crowd. (Krog, 2002: 195)

In this instance, the discourses of the white families, the white policemen, the black policemen and the media are concentrated together and the two temporal spaces became one, leaving Krog in a space of contradiction. She is caught between two worlds, identifying with both sides. On the one hand is the "new world" in which Krog finds herself, the world of the victims. The journalists were warned that they "will experience the same symptoms as the victims. [They] will find [themselves] powerless – without help, without words" (Krog, 2002: 37). And indeed, as the process of the hearings draws out indefinitely Krog finds herself siding with the victims, receiving threats of violence to herself and her family from members of the previously dominant discourse and feeling "[n]aturally and unnaturally without words" (Krog, 2002: 49).

On the other hand, there is the world she inhabits as an Afrikaans white liberal. While not a perpetrator, she still regards herself as complicit in the perpetuation of the previously dominant discourse. The fact that she is white and that she has benefited from the dominant discourse whilst others suffered violence because of it makes her as much a subject of that discourse as the actual perpetrators. The world that she is automatically part of due to her race is that of the white families who continue their lives unhindered by the disturbing history that is unfolding alongside them. Krog is familiar with this world:

From the accents [she] can guess where they buy their clothes, where they go on holiday, what car they drive, what music they listen to. What [she has] in common with them is a culture – and part of that culture over decades hatched the abominations for which [the perpetrators] are responsible. In a sense, it is not [the perpetrators] but a culture that is asking for amnesty. (Krog, 2002: 96)

Caught between the worlds of the victim and the perpetrator, Krog no longer has a central reference point around which to base her sense of identity. She struggles to find words, to write. Her “hands on the laptop keyboard are numb with contradiction” (Krog, 2002: 195) as she finds herself stuck between discourses, having no language with which to redefine her sense of self. Her inability to express herself results from the tendency of heterotopia to “dessicate speech, stop words in their tracks...dissolve our myths and sterilise the lyricism of our sentences” (Foucault, 1970: xviii).

At the last hearing, in Ladybrand, the proceedings are concluded with the anthem, and Krog is

caught unawares by the Sesotho version and the knowledge that [she is] white, that [she has] to reacquaint [her]self with this land, that [her] language carries violence as a voice, that [she] can do nothing about it, that after so many years [she] still feel[s] uneasy with what is [hers] (Krog, 2002: 216).

The disruptive effect of heterotopia has led to the knowledge that “the central truth around which [her] life has been built is a lie” (Krog, 2002: 95), resulting in her sense that she does not belong anywhere. Her black friend, Eddy, tells her that she should not deny her white skin, but the mindset, the outlook of “whiteness” (Krog, 2002: 288). Written on her forehead, he tells her, “is the global sanctity of the white body. It doesn’t matter where you are, what you do, the white western world will look after you and protect you” (Krog, 2002: 288).

Eddy’s statement highlights the basis of racist utopian ideals – namely, the expectation that your racial status will ensure you a protected life. The fact that this statement is made by a black man confirms the pervasive nature of the binary subject/object definitions in the dominant discourse of Western patriarchal society. A reconciliation of the two positions is only possible in the event of a breakdown of the existing structure that defines those two positions. What this implies is a renunciation of the subject position, the “possessive pronoun that refuses to change” (Krog, 2002: 293). If the context is to change, the definition of

the individual first has to change. As long as the individual defines him/herself and his/her group as “us” and the rest of the world as “them”, the construction of oppressive discourses will continue, for “[r]econciliation is a cycle whose initial step is redefining the self” (Krog, 2002: 292).

By means of her narrative, Krog attempts this redefinition of self. She also illustrates the effect of counter-discourse on the identity of a group that has “become frozen in a permanent quest for identity”, a quest that expresses itself in “rigid and aggressive forms of ethnicity [and] nationalism” (Krog, 2002: 292). She warns against a repetition of this, saying that a new relationship has been made possible by the TRC’s forcing the country to redefine itself through the testimonies of victims and perpetrators. However, this cycle of redefinition needs to be repeated for the relationship to be lasting. She goes on to criticise the new discourse of the ANC government, pointing out that the inability of the TRC and the ANC to interact successfully has blocked the growth of something important, allowing the “healthy stream of accountability that was starting to flow through the country, to dry up” (Krog, 2002: 293).

By accepting accountability for one’s own personal action (or inaction), a redefinition of self can begin. Although Krog’s narrative is yet another form of contextualisation, her self-reflexive technique indicates her awareness of this dilemma. She realises that the “goal is not to avoid pain or reality, but to deal with the never-ending quest for self-definition and, through negotiation, to transform

differences into assets” (Krog, 2002: 292). Krog’s narrative allows her the opportunity to add her own voice to those of the rest of the country and at the same time to adopt the experience of others as her own, for it is only by “becom[ing] each other” that we can be “released into understanding” (Krog, 2002: 293).

Chapter Four: Irvine Welsh's *Marabou Stork Nightmares*

In *Marabou*, the reader is drawn into the fragmented spaces of the mind of the comatose narrator and protagonist, Roy Strang. Roy's vegetative state is the result of his attempted suicide, which happened when he lost control over his sense of reality after experiencing the disruptive impact of the "Zero Tolerance" campaign against the abuse of women and children. The campaign challenges the dominant discourse of Western patriarchy, which not merely protects Roy and his friends after their gang-rape of a girl, but also allows for their "top lawyer" to dictate "the whole emphasis of the trial. It became like she [the victim] was the one on trial" (Welsh, 1996: 208).

Roy's subjectivity within this dominant discourse is the basis for his sense of belonging. When this subjectivity is challenged by the claim that "NO MAN HAS THE RIGHT" to abuse women and children (Welsh, 1996: 198), Roy immediately tries to defend himself by referring to his context and claiming that "THEY DINNAE KEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES!" (Welsh, 1996: 198). He reverts to his self-definition (victim of class discrimination, family violence and sexual abuse) within the context of the dominant discourse of Western patriarchy. However, the counter-discourse of the Zero Tolerance campaign does not allow him to use his context as an excuse for abusive actions, as the campaign posters re-affirm that "THERE IS NO EXCUSE" (Welsh, 1996: 227).

Roy's confusion is exacerbated by his ambivalent status as both an object and a subject of the dominant discourse. As a victim of class discrimination, he is objectified by the definitions imposed on the working classes. However, he is also a subject of the dominant discourse of Western patriarchy, which ratifies his violent actions against women, but paradoxically also objectifies him as a victim of child abuse. The sexual abuse he was subjected to is validated by the dominant discourse, and, as Gordon says, "if [Roy] told anyone [he] would get the blame; John, [Roy's] father, would believe [Gordon] and not [Roy]" (Welsh, 1996: 75). The Zero Tolerance campaign draws the comparison between child abuse and rape, "making out that what [the rapists] had done wis like what they sick cunts that touch up bairns dae...like wi Gordon n South Africa..." (Welsh, 1996: 199).

According to these parallels, Roy is defined as both a perpetrator and a victim. This realisation disturbs Roy, and he tries to escape it by going into a pub, "perspiring heavily...temples throbbing...too much in a world of [his] own to notice the voices around [him]" (Welsh, 1996: 200). Through Roy's choice of words, it is clear that he is experiencing a fragmentation of reality, as he is forced to distinguish between his "own" world and the world around him. As the implications of the Zero Tolerance counter-discourse take root, Roy's sense of disorientation grows. He breaks down crying, claiming that he "wasn't Roy Strang", that he "didn't know who... [he] was and it didn't matter" (Welsh, 1996: 205). The foundations of his identity, based on definitions within the dominant

discourse, are ruptured by the effect of heterotopia, resulting in a need for Roy to redefine himself within the emerging counter-discourse.

The autobiographical structure of Roy's narrative is reflective of his struggle to assume agency. "The very act of writing an autobiography...[places] the author squarely at the center of his own 'self-discovery and self-creation'" (Obee, 1999: 79). Roy casts himself as the subject of his narrative, but his inability to address the reality of his situation impedes his attempt to regain control of his sense of identity. Although Roy's comatose state restricts him to the space of his bed in the hospital, his narrative creates the illusion of free movement through the spaces of his mind, even though this world is enclosed "deep in the realms of [his] own consciousness" (Welsh, 1996: 7). Roy continuously tries to escape the impact of the Zero Tolerance counter-discourse and the stimuli from the hospital room by going deeper into these "realms of consciousness" which are themselves defined by boundaries and therefore prone to the disruption of heterotopia.

Roy's narrative is set in three spaces of consciousness: a subconscious "dream" space; an autobiographical "memory" space; and a "reality" space relating those accounts that occur in "real time", as he is lying in his hospital bed. His narrative is oblique, as hindsight informs much of what Roy tells the reader, and his memories are subject to his selective editing. Roy admits that his "memory is practically non-existent", that he has "great difficulty recalling" and that he is

“averse to [his] past; it is an unsavoury blur which [he] [has] no wish to attempt to pull into focus” (Welsh, 1995: 4). The inconsistencies in Roy’s narrative are important, as they strategically reflect his refusal to recognise what he must redefine in himself.

For instance, he tells the reader that he “felt a sense of power...during those sessions in the garage” (Welsh, 1996: 72) when he was sexually abused by his uncle Gordon. Later, as the last of Roy’s resistance to the truth of his past breaks down and his memories flood into his dream-space, the reader learns that “wi that cunt Gordon it wisnae how ah told it, it wisnae like that at aw, that wis oan the surface, thir wis another part ay ays...” (Welsh, 1996: 199). The ‘power’ that Roy claims to have felt during these “sessions” is pathetically lacking in Roy’s final description of “GORDON WITHDRAWING HIS BLOODSTAINED COCK FROM A FRIGHTENED YOUNG BOY BENT OVER A WORKBENCH ...” (Welsh, 1996: 255).

The first of the narrative spaces, Roy’s ‘dream world’, is at least initially a kind of utopia, an enclosed space in which Roy feels safe from the disruptive effect of the reality outside himself. He does not want to “remember where [he] was before...Here and now, Africa and Sandy are [his] present and [his] future” (Welsh, 1996: 4). The disjunctive narration, as well as Roy’s intonation of “deeper, deeper...” signifies the dream space as a construct of Roy’s subconscious. The narration is “dreamlike” in nature, a “crazy high-speed journey

through this strange land in this strange vehicle” (Welsh, 1996: 3). In this world – an exaggerated representation of colonial Africa – Roy and Sandy Jamieson, his ‘guide’, are involved in a hunt for the Marabou Stork. These sequences are characterised by both Roy and Sandy’s pseudo-colonial jargon, as they banter about the great predators (lions and sharks) which they have effortlessly slain, using such terms as “wizard” and “positively yucky” (Welsh, 1996: 4) and “gosh and golly” (Welsh, 1996: 9), reminiscent of the traditional boys’ adventure story.

Furthermore, Sandy’s “demand to be treated in a sporting manner”, as he is “a seasoned explorer and professional footballer” (Welsh, 1996: 8 – 9) indicates again the pervasiveness of Western patriarchal dominant discourse as it manifests in Roy’s dreams. Both exploration and soccer are traditionally exclusively male pursuits, the former also having an undeniable link to the legacy of colonialism. Sandy’s reference to a “sporting manner” also echoes colonialism’s adherence to static rules and norms that may be irrelevant within a new context. The redundancy of old ways is introduced by the symbolic “old stone colonial building which had no roof” (Welsh, 1996: 8), in which their vehicle initially touches down. The grandeur of the building hints “at more affluent times and its poor state of maintenance [is] indicative of a more sordid and less civic present” (Welsh, 1996: 8). This image is also representative of the unsustainable nature of Roy’s imaginary utopias as his final encounter with the Stork draws near.

The representation of Africa as Roy's utopia results from the Strangs' brief stay in the "City of Gold", Johannesburg. John Strang, Roy's father, believes that in "Sooth Efrikay, it'll aw be different" (Welsh, 1996: 35), as it is "a white man's country...[w]hite is right oot thair" (Welsh, 1996: 24). John is soon disillusioned, however, as his job as a security guard is not what he had envisaged, and he becomes restless with the repetitive nature of social life in South Africa, taking no interest in South African culture. Exposure to the reality of the situation, and an inability to adapt, transforms utopia into dystopia for John. Moreover, Gordon's sudden death is the result of terrorist action. Terrorism is, by definition, disruptive of the political status quo. These terrorist attacks are part of the anti-apartheid struggle, and indicate that the dominant discourse is being challenged by an emerging counter-discourse. It is clear that the South Africa Roy knew was already affected by heterotopia and that the disintegration process had commenced, and Africa is therefore an ironic site for his utopia.

As he is in his "Africa" dream, he "los[es] control again...and...feel[s] the stabbing beak in [his] arm, it can only be the Marabou Stork but it's [his] injection, it's the chemicals, not the ones that dull and chill [his] brain, not ones that make [him] forget because with these [he] can remember" (Welsh, 1996: 9). The word "again" indicates that this is not the first time Roy has "lost control" in the dream-world of his subconscious. He feels the beak of the stork stabbing him in the arm, but then the beak suddenly becomes a needle injecting him. Clearly, the two spaces of his dreams and the reality outside him are overlapping here, and the

disjunction between the two reflects Roy's inability to maintain control over the boundaries between these spaces. His "two worlds are coming together" (Welsh, 1996: 122) and the run-on sentence structure reflects the lack of pause or boundary.

The dream sequences are allegorical of several themes and incidents in the "real world", which Roy so desperately wants to escape from. He admits that "*this* [dream] world is real enough to [him]" and that recently "characters and events have been intruding into [his] mind" (Welsh, 1996: 17). These intrusions come from both Roy's memory and his surroundings in the hospital. His doctors, nurses and visitors "[are] trying to disturb [him], trying to wake [him]; the way they always did....When [they] start this shite it makes things get aw distorted and [he has] to try to go deeper" (Welsh, 1996: 3). Going "deeper" no longer seems to have the desired effect of escape, as Roy's thoughts on this level take him "back - - up to some other world" (Welsh, 1996: 191).

The second space of his autobiographical narrative is this "other world", the dystopia of his memories. Here, the reader learns of Roy's childhood, growing up in a low cost Scottish housing scheme. He describes the scheme as "systems built" (Welsh, 1996: 19), and notes that the "newspaper articles on the scheme...tended to focus on how deprived it was" (Welsh, 1996: 19). The term "systems built" echoes the notion of "system control" introduced later in the narrative. Roy is employed as a "Systems Analyst" (Welsh, 1996: 201), in a

building retaining its “Georgian façade and opulent reception area with marble pillars, and the original oak-panelled rooms and corridors” where “the high-up cunts had their offices” (Welsh, 1996: 113). The older part of the building led into the newer part, which housed a series of “bland, identical offices” (Welsh, 1996: 113). Roy works in one of these offices, marked “SYSTEMS CONTROL” (Welsh, 1996: 113), a term that represents for him the oppressive class discrimination that objectifies him.

Class discourse is inherent in the architecture and office allocation of the building, where managers have their offices in the old, colonial part of the building, while the systems analysts are housed in the compartmentalised, new part of the building. Emphasis on the compartmentalisation of the lower classes can also be found in Roy’s description of the scheme as a dystopian place, “less characterised by poverty than by boredom” (Welsh, 1996: 19), where the possession of “the key consumer goods...define[s] [the Strangs] as prototype schemies” (Welsh, 1996: 27).

Roy tells of an incident where he stabbed a boy with a compass, for laughing at him. The teachers and the headmaster

expected [Roy] to feel guilty for what [he] had done. They expected [him] to fear them. [He] didn’t fear them. [He] lived in a houseful of sociopaths so the disapproving threats of middle-class teachers...didn’t bother [him], they just lowered [his] self-esteem further, became a set of terms of reference for [him] to embrace. (Welsh, 1996: 36)

Roy presents the reader with a definition of himself that serves to contextualise him according to his place in the dominant discourse. He realises that “behaviour always has a context and precedents, it’s what you do rather than what you are, although we often never recognise that context or understand what these precedents are” (Welsh, 1996: 134). During a dream space account, he refers to the Marabous as being “purely a product of their environment, and this scabrous environment totally supported them” (Welsh, 1996: 55). The Storks are “BEASTS...KILLERS. THEY ARE INTERESTED ONLY IN MAYHEM. THEY CARE NOTHING FOR THE GAME” (Welsh, 1995; 15).

The Storks are clearly meant to represent Roy and his friends on some level. As Roy finds himself in his memory space, he recounts how he got involved with a soccer hooligan gang of “casuals”. He describes the violence of their “swedging”, as they attended soccer games and started fights with supporters of the opposing teams. The relationship between the Storks and the casuals is compounded here by Roy’s description of the casuals echoing that of the storks. He says of the casuals that “we had nae colours; we wir here tae dae real business. No for the fitba, the bigotry, the posturing, the pageantry. That was just shite to us” (Welsh, 1995: 171). However, Roy finds that his recourse to violence is only possible when he has “[his] mates to give [him] a context” (Welsh, 1996: 201). He struggles to define himself as anything but a product of his environment.

The account of his personal history is therefore the most subjective narrative space of the three, as it is Roy's attempt at contextualising himself. At the same time, and perhaps for the very reason that it is subjective, this is the level from which the reader gains the most critical information regarding the sequence of events preceding Roy's coma. As this account unfolds, the "stork nightmares" become more intense. It seems that, even if Roy is choosing to avoid certain aspects of his past throughout his narrative, his subconscious forces him to "hunt the stork" – to face that which he fears, or has suppressed. If the autobiographical structure of his narrative reflects Roy's search for identity, then his hunt for the stork can be regarded as a hunt for himself. Roy is convinced that the "Stork's the personification of all this badness. If [he] kill[s] the Stork [he'll] kill the badness in [him]" (Welsh, 1996: 9). At the climax of the novel, as Roy wakes up in the hospital, he can no longer draw any distinction between himself and the stork.

The third space of his narrative takes place in "real time", in other words, as Roy is lying in his hospital bed in a coma. Although he chooses not to respond to external stimuli, he is nonetheless aware of what is happening outside himself, although the reader cannot be sure that this is a consistent level of awareness. As the narrative proceeds, the reader finds that stimuli from outside Roy are incorporated into his consciousness in both the dream and the memory spaces. Even this "reality" is filtered to us through Roy, so there is no guarantee that we

are being given an accurate or chronological representation of what happens.

For example, after a visit from his parents, Roy muses to himself:

Did I really hear my parents or was it all my imagination? I know not and care less. All I have is the data I get. I don't care whether it's produced by my senses or my memory or my imagination. Where it comes from is less important than the fact that it *is*. The only reality is the images and the texts. (Welsh, 1996: 16)

What Roy presumably means by this is that it is not the events themselves, but the arbitrary meanings assigned to them by the subject that give them any relevance. In other words, it is once again a question of definition. As Roy learns, however, his "reality" of images and texts does not exist in isolation from the rest of his consciousness. The events in the hospital room happen regardless of whether he cares to pay attention to them or not. Consequently, he is compelled to acknowledge this reality as his narrative nears its end and he is at Kirsty's mercy, with nowhere left to escape to.

As in both *Heart* and *Country*, the physical space in which the narrator finds himself at the time of his narrative – here a hospital – is heterotopian in nature, stressing Roy's sense of disruption. The hospital is a "heterotopia of deviation", where "individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed" (Foucault, 1986: 25). Roy's vegetative state is a deviation from the norm and throughout the narrative the reader witnesses attempts by the doctors to bring Roy out of his coma, with Roy constantly being encouraged "to

get better” (Welsh, 1996: 57). Furthermore, Roy’s hospital room is a space where different stories and realities are presented one after another. Roy is taken into the confidence of Nurse Patricia; his sister, Kim; his brothers Bernard and Tony; his mother, Vet and his father, John; and lastly, his rape victim, Kirsty, whose presence in the room is hinted at throughout the narrative. She is always present as a peripheral figure in the spaces of Roy’s consciousness, but her voice is only recognised at the end of the novel, when Roy can no longer deny her presence.

The grouping together of several stories in one space, as is the case in the hospital room, meets Foucault’s criteria for heterotopia (Foucault, 1986: 25): “heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place...several sites that are in themselves incompatible”. The intrusion of these other stories into Roy’s narrative further confuses his sense of self, a confusion depicted in the typography of the novel. Roy’s discussions with the characters in his subconscious mind are often interrupted by stimuli from the “real world” outside him, around his hospital bed. The following extract is an example of the typographical technique used to show Roy’s sense of disruption, with the ascending structure of the “up” indicating Roy’s sense of coming out of his dream-world. The smaller font size indicates the voices of the doctors from outside Roy’s mind. As can be seen in this example, the doctor’s phrase “time will tell” is initially incorporated into Roy’s subconscious and attributed to Sandy:

– You don’t have any concerns about us not being up to the task do you, Sandy? I enquired.

Up - - - - time will tell.

- Time will tell, he said up
grimly, time will tell. - - - - - - - - - - up

What the fuck is this?

- But I think he's going to come out of it. There's definitely increased signs of brain activity. I wouldn't be surprised if he could hear us. Take a look at this, Dr Goss... (Welsh, 1996: 56)

The subversive thrust of the heterotopia of the hospital is further illustrated by its effect on power roles. For instance, a completely helpless Roy is sexually stimulated by Nurse Patricia who, ironically, uses the term "it'll be our little secret" (Welsh, 1996: 202). Roy's silent pleas of "please don't...ah dinnae want any..." (Welsh, 1996: 202), go unheard serving to further highlight the role reversal experienced by Roy. He is now, as he was with Gordon, the victim of unwanted sexual attention, and he cannot do or say anything about it. The hospital room is also the space in which Kirsty's dismembering of Roy takes place. He is helpless to prevent his castration, and the symbolic relevance of his penis being cut off and stuffed in his mouth indicates the subversion of Western patriarchal power. The phallus, symbol of that power, is removed, and used to silence those who have benefited from their subject positions within the dominant discourse.

Another indication of the disruptive power of heterotopia can be found in the character of Roy's homosexual brother, Bernard. As homosexuality subverts normative definitions of sexuality and, by extension, gender, it runs counter to the

dominant discourse. Roy suspects that Bernard knows Roy can hear him, noting that “[w]hen the others talk to me their tones are strained, forced; full of self-obsessed pity, confessional and self-justifying. Bernard is the only one who seems completely at ease” (Welsh, 1996: 127). Perhaps Bernard’s ease is the result of his ability to address the realities in a situation, rather than seek protection and escape into the dominant discourse. Thus it is that he accepts his HIV positive status, embracing “the quality thing in life” (Welsh, 1996: 251), rather than trying to blame others for the disease, as his mother does. She claims that “Ye nivir see Japs with AIDS....Cause they inventit it!” (Welsh, 1996: 10).

Of all Roy’s visitors, Bernard’s voice is also the only one critical of the Strangs’ stay in the supposed utopia of South Africa. When Bernard visits Roy, he recites a poem he wrote, inspired by their stay at Sun City. Roy describes this stay as “a wonderful few days...it was paradise” (Welsh, 1996: 128). The utopian implications of the name “Sun City” are highlighted by the name’s similarity to Campanella’s utopian *City of the Sun* (Kumar, 1987: 5). The idea of Sun City as “paradise” is further emphasised by Roy’s description of their stay. He reminisces about the landscaped gardens that “were like the promised land” (Welsh, 1996: 128). The gardens of the Cascades Hotel are a “microcosm of the whole of Sun City” (Welsh, 1996: 128), and, playing here, Roy and Kim could momentarily escape into utopia, and “pretend [they] never had to go home” (Welsh, 1996: 128).

Bernard's opinion of this "paradise" is quite different, as he speaks of the "sickening greed and avarice, the front-line of South African exploitation, the playground where the settlers enjoyed the fruit they'd ripped off" (Welsh, 1996: 128). Roy, in his mind, screams at Bernard to "SHUT UP YOU FUCKING POOF, IT WISNAE LIKE THAT, IT WAS BRILLIANT" (Welsh, 1996: 128). He hates the counter-reality of Bernard's description of South Africa that breaks in upon the ideal Africa of his imaginings. Bernard also knows about Gordon's sexual abuse of Roy, as Gordon had "tried it on [him] too" (Welsh, 1996: 127), but Bernard was "too choosy" to "take Uncle Gordon into [his] gob" (Welsh, 1996: 127). Addressing Roy directly he goes on: "But you did, didn't you, eh Roy? What else did that sick low-life do to you, Roy?" (Welsh, 1996: 127). Roy has never told anyone of his abuse and has been left to deal with his disempowerment on his own, creating a definition of the situation where he invests himself with "a sense of affirmation" (Welsh, 1996: 72).

By redefining Roy as a victim, Bernard unwittingly challenges Roy's perception of himself. Bernard's reference to Roy's abuse, as well as his criticism of South Africa, is too much truth for Roy to bear. Referring to Bernard by the derogatory term "poof", Roy distances himself from the impact of Bernard's words. Within the dominant discourse that Roy vainly clings to for contextualisation, the definitions of Bernard as a "poof", a "fuckin queen" or a "hideous queer" (Welsh, 1996: 127) are all terms denoting homosexuality. By defining homosexuality as aberrant, the

dominant discourse can neutralise its subversive effect and successfully avoid having to redefine sexuality.

This same process of defining another in such a manner as to neutralise the validity of their challenge to the dominant discourse can be observed in Roy's account of Kirsty's horrific rape. As Roy introduces this memory, he states: "It's coming back to me. It's all coming back to me. I wish it wasn't but it is" (Welsh, 1996: 177). His next statement, is that "[i]t was her own fault; she...asked for it". Roy does not want to think about this event, but even if he can no longer avoid these memories, he is not willing to accept accountability for his actions, which is why he places the blame for the rape on her. The terms used by Roy and his friends when Kirsty is referred to in this chapter further serve to illustrate the way in which, through definition, they were able to subvert her humanity, treating her as an object. They called her "a sow", "a cow", "a slag" (Welsh, 1996: 177); a "lovely piece ay meat...the choicest cut" (Welsh, 1996: 182). Lexo constructed a make-shift noose for her, to prevent her from leaving while they went out, and to Dempsey's objection that "If she faws over and hangs, we're fucked", Lexo replied "If it faws n chokes, wi jist take it doon the coast and dump it" (Welsh, 1996: 185). Lexo's use of the pronoun "it" when referring to Kirsty indicates her complete objectification at this point.

From Roy's account of the rape trial it becomes apparent that the objectification of the rape victim described above is inherent in the dominant discourse, and

supported by the legal system. Conrad Donaldson, their defence attorney, tells the rapists that if they put themselves in his hands, they could “give her a damn good shafting” (Welsh, 1996: 207). This image draws a parallel between the process of the trial and the rape, indicating a similar, inherent violence in the proceedings of both. Furthermore, Donaldson claims that the judge’s attitude was very much in their favour, influenced as it was by the Freudian model of sexuality. This model defines female sexuality as masochistic by nature, implying that “all women want it anyway” (Welsh, 1996: 207).

In order to prove the innocence of his clients, Donaldson “hammered out and established some key propositions” (Welsh, 1996: 208), namely:

She danced with several men at the party....She wore provocative clothing....She had sexual experience....She was intoxicated and showed flirtatious affection towards several men....She claimed that she was drugged, but...took drugs regularly....She voluntarily went into the bedroom... (Welsh, 208-210)

As Roy names each “key proposition”, he emphasises that these propositions take Kirsty’s behaviour out of context, thereby representing the victim as a villain. For example, in response to the claim that the victim “voluntarily went into the bedroom” Roy points out that “[s]he was out of her face after [they] slipped her the acid. She’d have gone anywhere with anyone” (Welsh, 1996: 211). As uncle Gordon had predicted, the victim is blamed for the villain’s action. In this case the

dominant discourse protects the male through the perpetuation of the myth of masochistic female sexuality.

During their final encounter in the hospital, Kirsty remarks to Roy: “[y]ou raped me once, and with the help of the judge and the courts you raped me again” (Welsh, 1996: 259). Implicit in this remark, is the fact that the discourse allowing her objectification was sustained and perpetuated by the legal system which was supposed to protect her. She says to Roy that she “saw...those Zero Tolerance campaign posters. NO MAN HAS THE RIGHT they said, but they were wrong” (Welsh, 1996: 259). They were wrong, because Roy and his friends did have the right, protected as they were by a discourse which defined her in such a way that their actions were justified. Kirsty goes on to note that the “posters were prescriptive, they were talking about a world as it should be rather than as it is” (Welsh, 1996: 260). To this, Roy gives his unspoken reply: “But there’s another world, Kirsty, it disnae huv tae be this wey” (Welsh, 1996: 260).

The posters are an indication of the emergence of a counter-discourse which challenges the definitions inscribed in the dominant discourse. What Kirsty does not seem to recognise is that, although exposure to the counter-discourse of these posters has made her aware of the uneven distribution of power within the dominant discourse, the manner in which she avenges herself on her rapists does not neutralise and disable the dominant discourse, but perpetuates it instead. She is using her victim status as a justification for her violent actions,

and thereby simply affirming the principles of a dominant discourse of violence and vengeance. She tells Roy: "Might is right. You *take* the right. I'm taking the right...to fuck you off" (Welsh, 1996: 260). What she wants is revenge, not reconciliation.

At the end of Roy's narrative, Kirsty cuts off his eyelids, symbolically forcing him to look at her, to acknowledge her. It is only at this point, as Roy lies staring up at her, his dismembered penis in his mouth, with no context left to protect him, that he claims "I understand her" (Welsh, 1996: 264). He realises that they share the same hurt and pain, and that it is her objectification within the dominant discourse that has led her to these acts of vengeance. For her, as it was for him, these acts are an attempt at establishing agency. The result of this is that the hurt "just goes round and round....It takes an exceptionally strong person to just say: no more" (Welsh, 1996: 264), and neither he nor Kirsty are "exceptionally strong" people.

Recognition of their shared pain allows Roy to finally acknowledge those things in himself that he has been avoiding throughout his narrative. By recognising that which is the same in the other, the boundaries caused by subject/object definition are eliminated. As this occurs, Roy experiences a blurring between the spaces of his consciousness – he can no longer escape into or out of the spaces of his mind, they have all become one integrated, albeit incoherent whole.

Ironically, Roy's redefinition of himself that could potentially grant him agency takes place as he is dying. His narrative ends on a big "Z", leaving the reader with a final ambiguity, as the "Z" represents several possible interpretations. Firstly, the "Z" could represent "zero" or "nothing", indicating that there is nothing else left to say. Secondly, "z's" often indicate sleep, and therefore the big "Z" could represent the "big sleep" of death. Thirdly, "Z" is the last letter of the alphabet, in this case possibly denoting an end of language, as the effect of heterotopia is the final breakdown of Roy's language.

Lastly, the Z represents the Zero Tolerance campaign. It is the counter-discourse of this campaign that set Roy on his path to redefinition. By ending his narrative on the Z that has characterised the campaign throughout the novel, Roy seems to have finally inscribed himself as subject of the campaign's counter-discourse. For Roy, it is only at the end of all structure, in the death of language, that he can let go of his dependence on the contextualisation of the dominant discourse, and embrace a new definition of himself.

Conclusion

As more and more individuals strive towards utopia, the ideals represented by that utopia are incorporated into their discourse and they structure their beliefs and actions around the definitions informed by the ideal, rather than by the reality of the world around them. Although the creation and sustaining of utopian ideals is an attempt to impose order within a specific space, their implementation inevitably results in the formation of heterotopia. When definitions are assigned according to “that which should be”, a counter-world defined by “that which is” will exist alongside it, like a phantom on the periphery of vision. Individuals refusing to acknowledge this counter-world will eventually experience fragmentation of their structures of identity based on these ideals.

Within discourse – the language that the subject uses to define his/her boundaries – an individual maintains subject status as long as the ideals underlying that discourse are the ideals by which he/she defines his/her world. The maintenance of these boundaries requires an effort of illusion on the part of the subject, in that he/she must ignore and exclude again and again those aspects of his/her reality that subvert the ideal. Each exclusion gives rise to counter-reality which further destabilises the already fragmented space in which the adherents of the elitist reality – the dominant discourse – are attempting to construct their order.

Foucault, in his study of the “Order of Things”, speaks of “the history of the Same” (1970: xxiv), suggesting that the study of order is the study of the way in which we define similarities between things, and consequently assign value to them. Therefore, when our definitions of those things we believe to belong together are challenged, our sense of order is challenged. Sanders (2000: 32), quoting from Derrida’s seminar on the “Question of the Stranger”, points out that “questions are at the foundation of Socratic irony (*eironeia*); the questioner is an *eiron*, one who dissembles ignorance – specifically, the remedial ignorance of the stranger”:

[I]n several of Plato’s dialogues it is the Stranger (*xenos*) who questions....Sometimes the stranger is Socrates himself, Socrates the man who disrupts with the question and with the irony (that is to say, with the question, which is another meaning of the word “irony”), the man of the maieutic question. Socrates himself has the traits of the stranger; he represents, he figures the stranger, he *plays* the stranger that he is not.

Furthermore, Sanders analyses the “pragmatics of questioning”:

A question to an other presupposes foreignness, or dissimulated foreignness, and thus the projection of a possible world, either of the other or of an alternative to that of the other. Projecting either world involves the question in a movement of counterfactuality, or in a movement counter to the facts as presented (Sanders, 2000: 33)

Through exposure to the questions inherent in the challenge of counter-discourse, the discourses of the narrators as discussed in this thesis are

disrupted as alternative definitions of reality emerge. No longer convinced of the validity of their own ideals, the narrators experience disintegration of their identities, caused by the heterotopia in which they find themselves. Thus, they lose their sense of subjectivity, of belonging in a space where they have power and autonomy. However, by respectively casting themselves as an “I” addressing a “you”, the narrators can reclaim subjectivity in the process of story-telling. Émile Benveniste (in Sanders, 2000: 26) claims that the first- and second-person pronouns

I and *you* [...] do not constitute a class of reference since there is no “object” definable as *I* to which these instances can refer in identical fashion. [...] What then is the reality to which *you* or *I* refers? It is solely a “reality of discourse,” and this is a very strange thing. *I* cannot be defined except in terms of “locution,” not in terms of objects as a nominal sign is. *I* signifies “the person who is uttering the present instance of the discourse containing *I*.”

The interdependency of the places of “I” and “you” in language makes story-telling an excellent vehicle for the perpetuation of counter-discourse, for testimony “depends on an address to an other...for whom one’s story will cohere” (Sanders, 2000: 29). One needs an audience, a “you” before whom “I” can speak of that which “I” have experienced. However, “I use *I* only when I am speaking to someone who will be a *you* in my address. It is this condition of dialogue that is constitutive of *person*, for it implies that reciprocally *I* becomes *you* in the address of the one who in turn designates himself as *I*” (Benveniste in Sanders, 2000: 26).

As soon as one is compelled to tell a story, relaying events in order to expand or change the addressee's perception of the world, one becomes an agent of heterotopia, for then one is creating an alternative possibility of what the world is like. In calling forth their stories, the narrators "enter a vein of counterfactuality" (Sanders, 2000: 30). Inherent in their accounts is the underlying urge to question what they know, and for their audience to do the same, and in so doing the narrators become agents of disruption. Discourses arising from the disruptive force of heterotopia are of a questioning nature, and they also have the tendency to be self-perpetuating. This is probably because, as discussed, the disintegration of belief systems results in a need within an individual to re-establish their subjectivity, and an effective way to do this is by casting oneself as the active story-teller. An interesting example of the self-perpetuating nature of counter-discourse is the fact that both *Heart* and *Country* have been adapted as films. Consequently, the counter-discourses contained within these narratives are being perpetuated through a new medium of story-telling, affecting those who come into contact with these accounts.

What we learn from the narrators in the three texts discussed, a lesson verbalised specifically by both Krog and Roy, is that exposure to heterotopia results in the realisation that the only way in which to rectify the perpetuation of oppression and violence, is to change the definition of "sameness". As long as the referents for similarity are physical, oppressive definitions of others will

continue. Seen in this light, Foucault's "order of things" as a "history of the Same" becomes the order that arises when difference is no longer regarded as "madness" – a deviation that should be shut away "in order to reduce its otherness" (Foucault, 1970: xxiv). By acknowledging the similarities between self and all others, the subjects of heterotopia avoid establishing static identities based on definitions shaped by elitist ideals. As individuals and groups continue to cross new boundaries, the illusions of utopia are stripped away, revealing not "the truth", but multiple truths that continue to challenge and subvert any static order that one attempts to impose upon them.

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