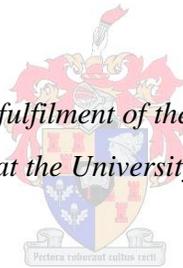


**MARGINALITY IN POST-TRC TEXTS:
STORYTELLING AND
REPRESENTATIONAL ACTS**

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DECLARATION

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

Signature:



Date: 14 February 2011

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ABSTRACT

As a society that is only in its adolescence as a democracy, South Africa faces massive inequalities, both politically and socially. Within this context, Fanie du Toit of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation urges us to remember that “nation-building in our young democracy requires opportunities for South African voices to be heard, particularly those from the margins of society, so often excluded, ignored or forgotten” (1). This thesis thus focuses on story-telling and representational acts of the marginalized in post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) texts.

The term “post-TRC” is an indication of the framework I use to explore the poetics and politics of representation, as well as the past’s impact on contemporary South Africa. In my overview of the TRC, I focus not on actual testimonies, but on the space provided for the marginalized to speak, as well as methodologies and techniques of representation that stem from the TRC process. Antjie Krog’s *Country of My Skull* (1998), which mimics and expands on the TRC’s work, sets the platform for my discussion as Krog incorporates many of the victims’ testimonies into her narrative. In my second chapter, I explore the tension between advocacy and appropriation as various factors influence Krog’s act of representation.

In Chapters Three and Four, the complexities of representation are investigated in four post-TRC texts which feature a protagonist who is either represented as marginalized, or who engages with marginalized individuals. In Chapter 3, I turn to the homeless and the foreigner in Jonathan Morgan and the Great African Spider Writers’ *Finding Mr Madini* (1999), and Phaswane Mpe’s *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2001). In *Finding Mr Madini*, Jonathan Morgan consciously employs a framework for interacting with the homeless that draws on processes of the TRC, and turns away from representing others towards providing a space for self-representation. *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* highlights the power of narrative in effecting marginalization or belonging, while demonstrating the fluidity of the identities of the self and the stranger.

In Chapter Four, I look at novels featuring youth protagonists to investigate how genre and literary form shape representation. Using Patricia Schonstein Pinnock’s *Skyline* (2000) and K. Sello Duiker’s *Thirteen Cents* (2000), texts which evoke and deviate from the *Bildungsroman* form, I explore

the ways in which these protagonists navigate their fragmented urban spaces. I also end with these novels to see what kind of future awaits these young people in which the marginalized have (not) been given a space to speak.

All these protagonists grapple with the complexities of representation in various ways, as they create stories of self and others to restore a sense of home or belonging in contemporary South Africa. Furthermore, the past is shown to be implicated in the present as colonial and apartheid structures of domination and marginalization are shown to still play a significant role in shaping people's interaction with each other. At the same time, the collective indeterminacy of these texts' endings signals openness to the future, as well as the unfinished nature of the past.

OPSOMMING

As demokrasie staan Suid-Afrika nog in sy kinderskoene. Die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing staan daarom omvangryke ongelykhede, beide polities en sosiaal, in die gesig. Met hierdie konteks in gedagte noop Fanie du Toit van die Instituut vir Justisie en Versoening ons om in ag te neem dat “nasie-bou in ons jong demokrasie geleenthede vir Suid-Afrikaanse stemme, veral dié wat deur die samelewing gemarginaliseer, en sodoende dikwels uitgesluit, geïgnoreer en vergeet is, vereis” (1). Hierdie verhandeling fokus dus op vertelling en die voorstellingshandelinge van die gemarginaliseerdes in post-Waarheid en Versoeningskommissie-tekste.

Die term “post-WVK” vorm die basis vanwaar ek die poëtiese en politieke aspekte van voorstelling, maar terselfdertyd ook die verlede se impak op die hedendaagse Suid-Afrika, ondersoek. In my oorsig van die WVK fokus ek nie op getuienisse nie, maar eerder op die ruimte vir seggenskap wat vir die gemarginaliseerdes daargestel is. Ek neem ook metodieke en tegnieke van voorstelling wat vanuit die WVK-verwikkeling spruit in oënskou. Antjie Krog’s *Country of My Skull* (1998) wat die WVK se werk weergee en bepeins, maar ook daarop voortbou, verskaf die basis vir hierdie bespreking aangesien Krog menigte slagoffers se getuienisse in haar boek vervat. Ek ondersoek verder die spanning tussen voorspraak en toe-eiening aangesien verskeie faktore haar voorstellingshandeling beïnvloed.

Die daaropvolgende twee hoofstukke ondersoek die ingewikkeldhede van voorstelling in vier post-WVK-tekste. Hierdie tekste word telkens gekenmerk deur ’n protagonis wat óf self gemarginaliseer is, óf met gemarginaliseerde individue omgaan. In Hoofstuk Drie ondersoek ek die daklose en die buitelander in Jonathan Morgan en The Great African Spider Writers se *Finding Mr Madini* (1999), en Phaswane Mpe’s *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2001). In *Finding Mr Madini* maak Jonathan Morgan doelbewus van ’n benadering, in pas met en beïnvloed deur WVK-werkinge, gebruik om met die daklose om te gaan. Hiermee beweeg hy dan weg van die voorstelling van ander na die skepping van ’n ruimte vir self-voorstelling. *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* plaas weer klem op die mag van vertelling om marginalisering, maar ook samehorigheid te bewerkstellig, terwyl dit ook die onstabiele aard van die identiteite van die self en die vreemdeling illustreer.

In Hoofstuk Vier ondersoek ek romans met jong protagoniste om te toon hoe genre en literêre vorm voorstelling beïnvloed. Deur van Patricia Schonstein Pinnock's *Skyline* (2000) en K. Sello Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* (2000), tekste wat aan die *Bildungsroman*-genre herinner, maar ook daarvan afwyk, gebruik te maak, verken ek die maniere waarop hierdie protagoniste hul stedelike ruimtes reël en betree. Verder sluit ek met hierdie romans af ten einde te sien wat die toekoms, waarin die gemarginaliseerde seggenskap gegun is, al dan nie, vir hierdie jongmense inhou.

Al hierdie protagoniste worstel op uiteenlopende maniere met die ingewikkeldhede van voorstelling. Dit is duidelik aangesien hulle stories van self en ander skep om 'n sin van tuiste en samehorigheid in hedendaagse Suid-Afrika te bewerkstellig. Die verlede blyk verder in die hede verwickel te wees aangesien koloniale- en apartheidstrukture van onderdrukking en marginalisering steeds 'n betekenisvolle rol in die aard van mense se interaksie met mekaar speel. Terselfdertyd dui die kollektiewe onbepaaldheid van hierdie tekste se aflope op 'n oopheid vir die toekoms en die onafgehandelde aard van die verlede.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As a society that is only in its adolescence as a democracy, South Africa faces massive inequalities and numerous developmental challenges. The importance of focussing attention and energy on these socio-economic problems cannot be emphasised enough - many of South Africa's people are illiterate, uneducated, or simply placed into positions of powerlessness.¹ However, if, as the philosopher and novelist Richard Kearney argues, “stories are what make our lives worth living [and] what make our condition *human*”, (3)² effort must also be spent on creating opportunities for people to share and hear one another's stories. Within this context, authors bear an important role to play as they house others' stories in their own voices and present a platform for unheard stories to be heard. The matter of representation is, however, seldom so simple – to represent another is to bear a responsibility to that person's narrative, yet this responsibility is oft tied to the author's need to create a story.

“Marginality in Post-TRC Texts: Storytelling and Representational Acts” explores this tension in five post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) narratives: Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull* (1998), which is Krog's account of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission; Jonathan Morgan and the Great African Spider Writers' *Finding Mr Madini* (1999), which follows a group of homeless and vulnerably accommodated writers' weekly meetings; Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2001), which explores the power of narrative; Patricia Schonstein Pinnock's *Skyline* (2000), and K. Sello Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* (2000), both of which are coming-of-age novels. In relation to each, this thesis explores the politics and poetics of representing the marginalized.

¹ For detailed analyses of the challenges facing South Africa, see Dep. of Government Communication and Information Systems' *South Africa Yearbook 2008/09* and *South Africa Yearbook 2009/10*; Kagwanja and Kondlo's *State of the Nation 2008/09*; United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report 2000* and *Human Development Report 2003*.

² Unless otherwise stated, all italics within quotations can be considered as the author's own.

My interest in this field was sparked by the spate of xenophobic attacks in May/June 2008.³ Since the opening of South Africa's borders in 1994, there has been a worrying trend of xenophobia, and those whom South Africans label "outsiders", "aliens", and "foreigners" have regularly faced ostracism and violence, and, in some cases, death.⁴ The real atrocity of the 2008 attacks, therefore, was not their novelty, but rather what Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad, referred to as their "unprecedented savage[ry]" (qtd. in Crush *Perfect Storm* 11). Numerous people were injured, a number were killed, while homes and livings were plundered and devastated. Many of these foreigners, often displaced from their homes with nothing more than what they were wearing, moved to so-called "safety camps" in fear for their lives.

This show of xenophobia struck a chord inside me. Although I was born in South Korea, I have lived in South Africa since I was two, and have long considered South Africa home. However, my physical appearance is a visible signal of difference, with the result that I have often been on the receiving end of well-meant questions implying that *here is where I do not belong*, or less benevolent "Chinese" comments shouted by puerile teenagers. As the daily newspapers became increasingly filled with accounts of dissonance and violence between strangers, neighbours, and even friends in 2008, I was struck not by fear, but curiosity. These xenophobic acts were apparently perpetuated for economic, political, and social reasons, but also seemed to include an anxiety about citizenship experienced by South Africans, who ameliorated this anxiety by exercising violence on foreigners.⁵

One of the indicators of this anxiety was the contention around housing that led to the initial attacks in Alexandria (a township near Johannesburg). Here, as is the case in many other townships, Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses meant for South African ownership often end up being inhabited by foreigners, who buy them from willing South African sellers. This has led to

³ For an overview of the 2008 events, see *Mail and Guardian's* "Xenophobia: A Special Report" available at <http://www.mg.co.za/specialreport/xenophobia>.

⁴ For example, Mamphela Ramphela notes that in 2006, there were 20 xenophobia-related murders reported in the Western Cape alone (*Laying* 289).

⁵ For detailed discussions on factors in South Africa leading to xenophobia, see Crush (Immigration); and Nyamnjoh, while Crush (*Perfect Storm*); and Hassim, Kupe and Worpe focus on the factors concerning the xenophobic attacks in 2008. A 500-page report recently released by Strategy and Tactics is also insightful, though its primary aim is to examine the role of NGOs during 2008 (available at: <<http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org/learning/report-south-african-civil-society-and-xenophobia>>).

resentment amongst those South Africans who do not have housing, bringing to light a very real link between citizenship and the idea of home. Furthermore, the location of the attacks in “shack settlements, in the vicinity of hostels, and in inner city suburbs, [which are] housing environments that have been neglected by the state” (Silverman and Zack 147) simultaneously highlights the marginality of the perpetrators of these attacks, as well as the tendency of margins to shift depending on who is seen as central. Black South Africans who were previously victims under apartheid rule, and in many cases still inhabit marginal positions, now enact violent and racist attacks on other Africans (Ramphela 162) as the post-apartheid influx of immigrants presents a new target for the category of “foreigner” or “other”. The xenophobic acts thus draw attention to the marginalization of many South Africans, whose use of violence might be a way of asserting their own claims to the nation-state and its resources.

Black foreign nationals were not the only victims during these attacks - a number of South Africans also fell prey to violence.⁶ For this reason, Michael Neocosmos suggests that this “xenophobia”, instead of being limited to “foreigners” in the legally defined sense of the word, is “a form of discrimination closely related to racism and liable to affect anyone or any group which for whatever reason is considered non-indigenous or non-autochthonous” (1). In *From 'Foreign Natives' to 'Native Foreigners': Explaining Xenophobia in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Citizenship and Nationalism, Identity and Politics*, Neocosmos shows a continuous discourse of foreignness that has surrounded the black South African from apartheid times through to contemporary South Africa, highlighting the “centrality of citizenship” (vi) in understanding xenophobia. During apartheid, the phrase “foreign natives” was used to refer to black South Africans, explicitly nullifying their claim to belonging (Neocosmos v). In contemporary South Africa, this sense of foreignness still lingers: Neocosmos explains that he uses the term “native foreigners” to refer to black South Africans “who, because they conform to the stereotypes [...] of ‘illegal foreigners’ today [...], are arrested along with the more genuine ‘foreigners’”, (vi) indicating a slippage between identities of “foreigners” and those who belong.

Surely, I wondered, these acts and anxious tensions were out of place in a South Africa that was *post-apartheid* and *post-TRC*. In coming to such conclusions, however, I had fallen into the problematic thinking Anne McClintock cautions against in her essay “The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls

⁶ Of the 62 people killed during this time, at least a third were South Africans (Verryn n.p.).

of the Term ‘Post-colonialism’”. McClintock argues that the prefix “post” deceptively hides the impact of past events on the present. Discussing another “post” word, i.e. post-colonialism, she alerts readers to the way this prefix carries more than simple chronological implications (i.e. literally meaning “the period after colonialism”), but in fact projects “an entranced suspension of history, as if the definitive historical events have preceded us, and are not now in the making” (McClintock 86). Similarly, the use of the prefix “post” in “post-apartheid” and “post-TRC” suggests that the “problems of the past” are truly that – problems of the *past* – without acknowledging their continuous implication in and complication of democratic South Africa. These xenophobic attacks, rooted in apartheid (and colonial) inequalities are thus perturbing reminders of the “unfinished and contradictory nature” of South Africa’s transition from apartheid to democracy (Hassim, Kupe and Worby 6).

It was fitting, then, that I picked up Theodor Adorno’s “What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?” to read his caution that the past needs to be dealt with in such a way that “the causes of what happened are no longer active” (129). Writing after the atrocities of the Holocaust, Adorno reveals the hidden danger in the phrase “coming to terms with the past”. Instead of proposing a confrontation of the past in order to shatter “its spell through an act of clear consciousness”, this phrase sets forth an avoidance thereof, and “if possible, wiping it from memory” (115). An example of the approach that Adorno cautions against can be seen in Archbishop Tutu’s words at the opening ceremony of the first TRC hearing. Here, Tutu spoke about the TRC’s role in “unearth[ing] the truth about our dark past; to lay the ghosts of that past so that they will not return to haunt us” (qtd. Ramphele 46). The spectres of the apartheid past would be summoned up by the TRC for exorcism, to enable South Africans to carry on with their lives. Adorno explains that this desire to be “free of the past” is understandable, “since one cannot live in its shadow, and since there is no end to terror if guilt and violence are only repaid, again and again, with guilt and violence” (115). Yet, the danger of leaving the past unexamined is that “the continued existence of the same objective conditions” (124) can give rise to similar atrocities in the future. I thus turn to the TRC and literature around its proceedings in order to see how the “ghosts of the past” intrude upon and play a role in shaping the present.

Established through the Promotion of National Reconciliation Act of 1995, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is widely considered to be one of the most crucial instruments of the transition from apartheid South Africa to democratic South Africa. Because of the

function it performed in “hearing” the stories of the past, the TRC has been the focus of much critical scholarship and analysis focussing on, amongst others, memory, reconciliation, nation-building, and narrative therapy.⁷ To fully relate all the critical thought produced around the TRC is beyond the scope of this thesis; I focus, therefore, on the way that the TRC has impacted contemporary South African society, if not through the actual testimonies by the participants, then in the platform it created for narratives to be told and the methodologies and techniques employed at the hearings. Njabulo Ndebele, renowned intellectual and writer, speaks of this function of the TRC in his essay, “Memory, Metaphor and the Triumph of Narrative”, arguing that the TRC provided a space of “legitimacy and authority to previously silenced voices”, (20) and that ordinary people were given the opportunity to share their own stories in what amounted to a “restoration of narrative” (27). In the second chapter of my study, I thus present an overview of the TRC’s successes and shortcomings in providing this space. In this contextualization, I also focus on the way that the TRC shaped the stories of individuals, thereby foregrounding and engaging with the question of representation.

Within this context, I turn to Antjie Krog’s *Country of My Skull* (1998), following prominent South African thinkers and writers who have argued that the arts are essential in elaborating the human impact of the TRC. Jakes Gerwel writes that “[a] society perhaps ultimately remembers, and reconciles itself with the painful aspects of that memory, best and most enduringly, through the long process of the work of its writers and artists” (280). Similarly, Richard Goldstone, an eminent South African judge, agrees that “truth [about the past] will be exposed to us through research, drama, literature, journalism and film” (71). Charles Villa-Vicencio adds that “it may take poets, artists and creative writers of fiction to complete” the task initiated by the TRC (“Limitations” 30). Sam Durrant reinforces this sentiment by arguing that one of most pertinent tasks with which early post-apartheid writers needed to grapple was the production of literature “capable of working through the losses of the apartheid era” (441). The arts thus play the vital role of continuing, extending and deepening the TRC process, rather than merely engaging with the TRC.

In *Country of My Skull*, Krog relates her intimate experiences as a South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) radio journalist commissioned to report on the TRC. Writing in the first-person, she incorporates and enacts many of the processes of the TRC within her account. One of the primary

⁷ For an overview of the range of scholarship available, see James and Van de Vijver; Villa-Vicencio and Verwoerd; Posel and Simpson; Wilson.

concerns Krog highlights is the representation of the “ordinary” South African who had been marginalized in and by the apartheid nation, and who, through the TRC, comes to narrative and national centrality. “To reveal such a margin”, Homi Bhabha argues, is “to contest claims to cultural supremacy” and to “interven[e] into those justifications of modernity” that “rationalize ‘normalizing’ tendencies within cultures” (4). Those on the margins contest, challenge, defy, and fragment national narratives, and for the TRC to prioritize these stories, as Krog’s polyphonic text suggests in its disruption of the main narrative strand, was a way of fracturing apartheid discourses.

By incorporating the stories of many victims’ testimonies in her text, Krog herself performs what Ndebele calls the “restoration of narrative”. Yet, a tension between advocacy and appropriation emerges as she also explicitly reveals how her act of representation is influenced by many other conflicting desires, such as that of quilting herself a story from the landscape of testimonies uncovered by the TRC. In unpacking this paradox, I draw on Gayatri Spivak’s critical untangling of the conflated meanings contained in the term “representation”. To this end, I explore briefly representation as portraiture before turning to focus on representation as proxy, arguing that Krog’s “I”-narrative reminds readers that she performs representation as a speaking on behalf of others.

In Chapters Three and Four, I explore the politics and poetics of representation further by examining four post-TRC texts. Shane Graham’s description of “South African literature after the Truth Commission” was pertinent in guiding my selection: he uses this phrase broadly to include not only texts that deal with the TRC in their content, but also those that engage with the “new narrative and dramatic possibilities generated in part by the Commission’s processes” (*South African* 5). The texts I have chosen do not necessarily grapple with the TRC explicitly, but show a marked investment in thematic or narrative concerns arising from the TRC proceedings. They are self-reflexively concerned with narrative and writing, and how these practices shape and influence life; they engage in and with the representation of the marginalized, and explore new approaches of engaging with each other.

These texts’ focus on the margins of urban centres brings to mind Noel Parker’s words that “[m]argins become privileged sites for observing the formation and re-formation of space” (10). As margins are often dependent upon and defined in relation to centres, they are far more vulnerable to change than centres are, and consequently are prime spaces for reflecting and capturing fluctuations of

change. Similarly, in speaking about /marginalized people, Veena Das and Deborah Poole follow Emily Martin by arguing that those who occupy marginal positions experience most sharply processes of larger change: “certain people who seem to live on the outskirts, in traditional unchanging places, [are] actually the ones ‘inhabiting an exposed cusp... feel[ing] acutely the raw impact of forces of change’” (118). Margins are thus a fruitful site of investigation to examine conditions of change, as “understanding from the margin’s point of view [...] reveals what is otherwise obscured” (Parker 10).

My primary concern, however, is not the geopolitical representation of space and how people negotiate themselves therein, but rather how these marginalized figures negotiate narrative space in contemporary South Africa. The selected texts feature protagonists who are concerned with representing the marginalized, or who are marginalized themselves: the homeless, the foreigner, and the (street)child. The questions addressed in this thesis include: how do the marginalized move from being stereotypes to becoming individuals with unique lives and experiences? How are they represented in escaping and rejecting their marginalized spaces? What kind of representational practices are available to them? In what ways are they allowed to access privileged spaces of narrative, or do they claim agency, wresting away narrative power from the privileged? The chapters in my thesis are therefore laid out to show the diverse forms of marginalization, as well as the variety of representational challenges in post-TRC South Africa.

In Chapter Three, I turn to two texts that present the homeless/vulnerably accommodated and the foreigner: *Finding Mr Madini* (1999) directed by Jonathan Morgan and the Great African Spider Writers, and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2001) by Phaswane Mpe. In *Finding Mr Madini*, Jonathan Morgan consciously employs a framework for interacting with a group of homeless writers that draws on processes of the TRC, namely, narrative therapy. Narrative therapy is based on the sharing of narratives with others, and bearing witness to these stories. This framework not only shows how TRC concerns operate in and influence the lives of these writers, but also helps conceptualize an expanded notion of homelessness. Homelessness is used in its sense as social fact, but also as a metaphor for exiles, refugees and immigrants.

Morgan sets up a writing group wherein the members are able to express their stories, bringing Andre P. Brink’s words to mind: “[t]hrough perceiving the world as a story to be told and endlessly reshaped, [...] the reader is actually encouraged to act upon the world. Once the world is perceived as

story, with an endless capacity for renewal, metamorphosis, and reinvention, literature becomes more, not less, potent” (9). Brink’s words suggest that through an awareness of one’s agency in shaping stories, a sense of possibility and agency is developed, which we see in the positive responses by the project participants about their involvement. However, Phaswane Mpe’s novel *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* includes warnings about the dangers of narrative, for while narrative is shaped by reality, it also has the power to shape. Through the text’s thematic focus on *Makwerekwere*, Mpe draws attention to the way that stereotypes are used to cast people into “Othered” narratives, and how narratives peddling these stereotypes permeate our lives. I argue that Mpe ultimately demonstrates how the notion of “foreigner” is a constructed one, and how we all function as foreigners.

In the last chapter, I turn to another aspect of representation, which I also highlight in Chapter One in relation to Krog’s work: the ways in which genre and literary form shape representation and, thus, represent subjectivity. For this chapter, I have selected texts that have youth protagonists and evoke the *Bildungsroman* form: *Skyline* (2000) by Patricia Schonstein Pinnock and *Thirteen Cents* (2000) by K. Sello Duiker. The *Bildungsroman* form typically compels protagonists to follow a specific path, yet the protagonists in these texts refuse to comply with the classical form, opening up ways that youth act and take up agency. These protagonists, for the most part, function in contexts of parental absenteeism and have to negotiate a new relationship to society. In *Skyline*, the main protagonist, the Girl, is a white South African living with her family in the eponymous block of flats, and seeks to form community and family with immigrants who live in the same apartment block. In contrast, Azure, the protagonist of *Thirteen Cents*, comes to reject completely the society in which he finds himself trapped.

Literary representations of childhood are also reflective and representative of grander socio-political currents. In J. Zornado’s *Inventing the Child: Culture, Ideology, and the Story of Childhood*, he argues that understanding the master narratives concerning childhood and childrearing in Western society is crucial for insight into global power relations - “[t]he *political* text [...] is always already a personal story of family and, as such, an indirect and latent story of the child’s relationship to the adult” (xv). The child, Zornado argues, is thus defined by and dependent on the adult, ultimately placed in a position of domination. This idea is picked up by Miki Flockemann in the South African context, when she notes that much of the emerging youth literature here focuses on “a youthful protagonist’s entry into, exclusion from, or resistance to dominant hegemonies”(qtd. Muponde 114). Following

Flockemann, my focus on these marginalized protagonists and the navigation of their parentless worlds promises to reveal the ways in which these youth engage with power structures, and how the adult world is once accessible (or not) to the marginalized. The manner in which the literary trope of childhood, which reflects “the concern of one generation for the next”, (Bronfeffer qtd. Muponde 107) manifests within a text also sheds light into the future of a nation. I thus end with a focus on childhood in order to see what kind of future is projected for a nation in which the marginalized have (not) been given a space to speak.

CHAPTER 2

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION AND ANTJIE KROG'S *COUNTRY OF MY SKULL: A SPACE FOR OTHERS?*

The Truth Commission microphone with its little red light was the ultimate symbol of the whole process: here the marginalized voice speaks to the public ear; the unspeakable is spoken – and translated – the personal story brought from the innermost depths of the individual binds us anew to the collective

- Antjie Krog (*Country*, 237)

Written by poet and reporter Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull* is a thought-provoking and skilfully crafted text that moves between the personal and the political, the individual and the collective, as it relates Krog's experiences of reporting on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).⁸ Her understanding of the impact of the TRC's work is captured and condensed in the epigraph to this chapter - the "Truth Commission microphone with its little red light" facilitates the movement of participants' testimonies from the personal and individual into the public and collective realm. Unlike in the past, when the voices of black South Africans were often disregarded and, more often than not, oppressed or silenced, Krog imagines the marginalized as now having a receptive audience, the "public ear". This process bears importance not only for the marginalized as their stories are acknowledged for the first time, but for the listeners as well. The narratives that surface in these hearings interpellate an audience, now as the nation, and also shape and constitute belonging to the collective: through these stories, the listeners are "[bound] anew to the collective".

As a symbol, this image of the microphone captures the theoretical concerns I wish to lay out in this chapter. I have also chosen this quote in order to puncture its deceptively simplified presentation of the complex issues surrounding the TRC and the space that it provides for the marginalized. I do so by focusing in this chapter on two key phrases: "the marginalized voice", and the way that this voice is "translated". I understand "translated" in the context established by *Country of My Skull*, in which this term comes to mean more than to render into another language, but also encompasses an act of

⁸ In *Country of My Skull*, Krog and the SABC radio team insist on the use of the phrase "Truth Commission", instead of TRC, in radio broadcasts, so that the Commission's focus on the truth is explicit (32). I will use "TRC" as a reminder that this truth was used for a particular end, i.e. reconciliation.

representation in order to facilitate comprehension. It necessitates incorporation into another's cultural norms and narrative. The key question I seek to explore is: how are the voices of others translated into this collective, and what kind of narrative space is accorded to them therein?

This chapter opens with a brief overview of the TRC to contextualize Krog's text and to highlight concerns arising from the TRC process, which I pick up again when working through *Country of My Skull*. As an official transitional instrument, the TRC sought in many ways to present opportunities for marginalized testimonies to be heard. In an examination of some of the criticisms levelled against the TRC, however, it is clear that this act of simultaneously providing a space for stories and representing others was one fraught with many complexities and pitfalls. This overview concentrates on the limitations of the TRC, and how the space provided for these stories played a role in shaping them into certain forms in order to achieve various aims. In the second section of the chapter, I turn to Krog's *Country of My Skull*, which both re-enacts and departs from the TRC's role and function. In her prolific and promiscuous use of form, she problematizes the nature of representation and foregrounds the struggle to find a medium for the suitable representation of marginality. Further, she complicates the act of representation by moving between advocacy and appropriation as she includes in her text the voices of others who spoke before the TRC.

SPEAKING TO, SPEAKING FOR: THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION, MARGINALITIES AND REPRESENTATION

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was formally constituted under the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995 as a space to “uncover the truth” (*TRC Report* 1:116) in order to “shut the door on the past” (Tutu 22). The TRC's work officially commenced in December 1995, and was carried out by three separate task-groups: the Human Rights Violations Committee, the Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee, and the Amnesty Committee. Their respective functions were to hear the testimonies of victims of gross human rights violations; to recommend suitable reparations for those deemed to be victims; and to extend amnesty to perpetrators who fulfilled a certain set of criteria. The TRC's findings were released in extensive reports, of which the first five were handed to President Mandela in October 1998 and the final two to President Thabo

Mbeki in 2003.⁹ My work will focus on the Human Rights Violation (HRV) hearings, as I am primarily interested in the TRC's first function, that of hearing the stories of the marginalized.

Appointed by President Nelson Mandela and led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the seventeen-member Human Rights Violation Commission held 50 nation-wide hearings from April 1996 until August 1998. Of the 20,000 statements given to the Commission, 2000 were selected for public hearings, presenting “a range of detailed ‘window cases’ and selections” into the atrocities of the past (*TRC Report* 1:113).¹⁰ The TRC focused not only on accessing stories of those found in major cities and towns, but also those of individuals in little *dorpiess*, rural villages, and out-of-the-way places, conducting the hearings in “improvised courtrooms fashioned out of town halls and community centres and churches” (Krog *Country* vii). As Tutu wrote in the Foreword to the TRC Report: “dealing with the past means knowing what happened”, (7) and the public nature of much of the TRC processes ensured that the nation was given many opportunities to be made aware of the iniquities of the past.¹¹ Hearings were given extensive national coverage in both print and electronic media, including extensive reporting by SABC radio (for which Krog worked), and a Sunday evening television programme, which summarized the previous week's events and gave a preview of the coming week's events (*TRC Report* 1:20). Transcripts of the hearings were also made publicly available online.¹²

The TRC's concern of surfacing these stories to national awareness worked together with the HRV Commission's adoption of a “victim-centred” (*TRC Report* 1:53) approach, which privileged “personal or narrative truth” (*TRC Report* 1:110) and espoused an open, democratic inclusivity in which the Commission was “said to listen to everyone” (Tutu qtd. *TRC Report* 1:122).¹³ Members of

⁹ These reports are publicly available throughout South Africa, e.g. in libraries, community centres, and can also be found on the official TRC website <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/index.htm>.

¹⁰ In the same way that the TRC Report would be referred to as a “window” into the TRC archive (Tutu 2), these public testimonies provided “windows” into the spectrum of violations. This image of “windows” will be picked up again in the next chapter, when I examine *Finding Mr Madini*.

¹¹ The TRC hearings were initially to be heard *in camera*. This changed after pressure from numerous NGOs and organizations, which felt that secrecy would undermine the openness of the new democracy (Christie 84-85).

¹² Transcripts of the Amnesty, Human Rights Violations, Reparation and Rehabilitation, and Special hearings, as well as media articles and legal documents can be found on the official TRC website <<http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/index.html>>.

¹³ The Report explains that the TRC privileged four different types of truth: “factual or forensic truth; personal or narrative truth; social or ‘dialogue’ truth ... and healing and restorative truth” (*TRC Report* 1:110).

the public who had been subject to violations, or who had family members or loved ones who had been victimized, were thus encouraged to come before the TRC and share their experiences in their own words. This act of story-telling was explicitly linked with “the restoration of dignity and thence with the constitution of the subject in the post-apartheid era” (Ross *Construction* 168). Additionally, the sharing of one’s narrative was a way of incorporating the subject into the nation as “more visible and more valuable *citizens*” (*TRC Report* 1:110). The TRC thus played a valuable role in providing a space where the “voiceless” victims could be “given voice”, (Harris 174) and in so doing regain a sense of personal and national identity.

However, these remarkable achievements have not shielded the TRC from critique. An oft-heard criticism is that the TRC was bound by constitutive and legislative limitations, which restricted the effectiveness and the validity of its work. Though the TRC mandate demanded the investigation of a “past marked by conflict, injustice, oppression, and exploitation”, it was legally bound to the years 1960 to 1994 (James and Van de Vijver “Introduction” 1). This narrow scope presented apartheid as an aberration, rather than a culmination of events built on a colonial foundation of human rights abuse and racial discrimination in South Africa. Structural factors needed to be grappled with in order to develop a sustained, deep understanding of the foundation of apartheid, yet, as Deborah Posel points out, the TRC Report showed little engagement with the “complexities of social causation” (166). Instead, the TRC presented a simplistic contextualization of these violations against the background of the “systemic and all-pervading character of apartheid” (Bundy 17) with an awareness of the TRC’s failings in this area (Bundy 16-19; Posel 162-166).¹⁴

The TRC’s failure to engage with the deep-rooted institutionalized and systematized foundation of apartheid is also symptomatic of the short-comings of its attempt to provide a space that was for “everyone”. Although the TRC presented itself as a space for the “ordinary” and the “voiceless”, Brent Harris argues that those who were allowed to testify were often neither. Firstly, the mandate limited the number of stories heard as only those who had suffered gross human violations, which cover murder,

¹⁴ Ndebele’s words on “spectacular” representation seem apt for the TRC’s approach to the atrocities of the past, as Ndebele describes this type of representation bearing “very little attempt to delve into intricacies of motive or social process” (“Rediscovery” 39). Further, Ndebele notes that the characters in “spectacular” texts are either “very good or very bad” (“Rediscovery” 39), just as Monica Patterson argues that the TRC’s use of the binary categories of perpetrators and victims failed to “accommodate the shades of coercion, force, desperation, and miscommunication that defined many people’s lives during the apartheid era” (167).

torture and serious harm to persons (James and Van de Vijver “Introduction” 1), were allowed to testify. This focus on “spectacular” conflict and aggression meant that the sufferings of most South Africans were marginalized, as the majority of South Africans were subject to systematic injustices, such as land removals, forced displacements, the migrant-labour system, [and] Bantu Education (Fullard 5).¹⁵ Secondly, Harris points out that most of the victims who had faced gross violations were “prominent and leading activists in the struggle against apartheid” (175). Although their stories might have been silenced in official state discourses, Harris argues that they were “not ‘voiceless’” (175) in their own communities. Thus, the TRC seemed to stifle the agency of those who were community heroes and leaders in “fram[ing] [them] ‘voiceless’”, (Harris 175) whereas those who were “ordinary” and “voiceless” even in their own communities were not given opportunities to speak. The narratives that were heard in front of the TRC thus presented a “diminished truth” (Mamdani 61) to which only a few South Africans were allowed to contribute (James and Van de Vijver “Introduction” 1).¹⁶

Furthermore, this “truth” that emerged from the TRC was shaped by the particular sociohistoric moment from which the TRC arose. Kenneth Christie reminds us that truth commissions arise in situations where democratic governments succeed dictatorial or authoritarian regimes, and thus face national pasts marked by struggle, division and oppression (40-41). The South African TRC was no different, stemming from the “politics of negotiated compromise” (Posel and Simpson “Introduction” 2) between the apartheid state and the new ruling party. The task fell to the TRC to “begin to describe and initiate as a possible reality” of the notion of national unity (Garman 1). Krista Blair thus argues that these “private imaginings of self were translated into the public history of a nation”, (19) just as Krog writes about these individual narratives as “bind[ing] us anew into the collective”. The term “translated into”, which literally means “carrying across”, illuminates the role that the TRC played in “carrying across” the stories of the individuals through interpreting, shaping and representing them into a particular national narrative.

¹⁵ Posel and Simpson argue that “the legislative framework [of the TRC] could only accommodate patterns of violence and social conflict that were narrowly defined as ‘political’” (“Introduction” 5), thereby precluding gender- and race-based violence (“Introduction” 6). See Fullard for a more extensive critique of the TRC’s engagement with race; and Goldblatt and Meintjies for their report on gender and the TRC.

¹⁶ Bias was also exercised in the selection of testimonies to be heard in public hearings, according to Posel and Simpson. They argue that “this selection was determined partly by sensitivities to the demography of race and gender, and partly by the magnitude and profile of the cases themselves” (“Introduction” 7).

To better understand this idea, it is important to grapple with the concept of the nation as a constructed one. Bennington writes that “[t]he idea of the nation is inseparable from its narration”, (132) which Ernest Gellner elucidates by suggesting that instead of being a natural, inherent concept as has oft been claimed, the nation is “political fiction” (qtd. Wilson 15). Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities* further argues that it is beyond the capacity of constituent individuals to feel and imagine a community that extends beyond the people with whom they interact daily. He thus concludes that the nation is an “imagined political community” (6). To both construct this identity and hide its constructedness, Anderson argues, “engenders the need for a narrative of ‘identity’” (205). There is a need to constantly re-create a narrative of national identity in order to ensure a continuous collective sentiment. In this construction, Anderson’s work highlights a particular type of textuality in the rise of the nation, i.e. the printing press and the novel, hereby highlighting the essential relationship between the nation and discourse.

The equivalent of Anderson’s print-media in transitional South Africa seems to be captured in Krog’s epigraph: the TRC microphone. Against a past that had been dominated by one cultural group, a past marked by censorship and an oppressive silencing machinery (including kidnapping and murder), various processes linked to the TRC were now binding individual accounts into the national collective, of which the microphone was “the ultimate symbol”. To return to Blair’s use of the term “translated”, in the context of a country with eleven officially recognised languages and an uneducated and illiterate majority, this term thus gestures to the literal translation of the testimonies as it was important that the content of the TRC coverage was accessible to a national audience marked by linguistic and socioeconomic diversity. Translators were provided for those speaking and for those present at the hearings, and while not all media forms were able to provide multi-linguistic translation, SABC radio media coverage disseminated reports in all the official languages. In stark contrast to apartheid strategies, “all these languages [were being used] to unite, rather than dismember, South African society” (Alexander 126). Through this act of simultaneous translation, both at the hearings and afterwards in media reports, a unified collective was thus being produced out of diversity and division.

National identities are often unified in response to an Other, and this was no different for transitional South Africa. Bennington notes that the national identity is based on binaries: “identity against difference, inside against outside” (132). The nation is therefore constructed on the idea of what it is not, an Other against which it can define itself, which under normal circumstances is another

nation: “those who live across some imaginary border” (Andrews 309). In contexts producing truth commissions, however, national identity is often unclearly defined as it “is not clear who or what it is to be considered ‘the outsider’” (309). Molly Andrews points out that in these cases, it is not other nations which are the focus of “othering”, but rather the former national self (309), as is evident in Tutu’s remark in his Foreword to the Final Report that “the past [...] is another country” (4). The new South Africa has been building an identity based on “a site of otherness” (Wilson 16) that is the “old” South Africa. Tutu thus appeals that the South African nation move forward from “a past marked by conflict, injustice, oppression, and exploitation to a new and democratic dispensation characterised by a culture of respect for human rights”, (20) and “[h]aving looked the beast of the past in the eye, having asked and received forgiveness and having made amends, let us shut the door on the past – not in order to forget it but in order not to allow it to imprison us” (91).

These statements not only illuminate the way the past was “othered”, but also highlight the prominent refrain propelling a movement for narrative closure in the form of forgiveness and reconciliation. Jakes Gerwel urges us to remember that the Commission was “charged not with the initiation or conclusion but the *promotion* of national unity and reconciliation”, (280-281) yet Priscilla Hayner argues that “even before its inception, South Africa’s TRC was presented as a way to reconcile a fractured nation and heal the wounds of its troubled soul” (40). As the hearings continued under the chairpersonship of Archbishop Tutu, “an Archbishop of a religion in which forgiveness is the central theme”, (Krog, *Country* 160) Molly Andrews suggests that the TRC’s task of “construct[ing] a grand national narrative of its past” (317) was undertaken with the objective of “reconciling a painfully fragmented society” (317). Thus, individual narratives were written into a history that sought to reconcile a country.

Yet, the messiness of the TRC Report is a reminder that despite the incorporation of these individual narratives into a grand nation narrative, the narratives still carry a life of their own. Apartheid activist, Judge Albie Sachs writes: “I loved [the Report] because it was so uneven, it was rough, it had its seams, you could see the stitching, and it was authentic, it was real, it was not one of these boring, homogenised commission reports that are read only by a few experts. It contained the passion, the variety, and even the contradictions of the process itself” (98). This unevenness and fragmentation, Colin Bundy suggests, captures the “contradictory pulls of the TRC’s mandate” (13) of providing a “single, national account [...] [to] serve as the basis for a shared history”, (Bundy 14) as

well as its commitment to each person who chose to testify. Under the umbrella of the TRC's work of providing a unified account for the nation, the voices of individuals thus seem to be speaking for themselves in a messiness apparent in official narratives.

With this brief overview, I hope to have shown some of the contradictions contained within the TRC, in those "marginalized" and "voiceless" individuals it sought to present, and the turn between privileging these individual narratives and shaping the stories of testifiers. In the constraints laid down by the TRC hearings, we find a re-creation of margins and centres taking place in its focus on the stories of those who fulfilled the requirements of the hearings. The marginalized of apartheid thus found him/herself possibly subject to new discrimination on the basis of not having suffered enough. As Bundy points out, the TRC had the potential "to narrow, to constrain and even distort" the testimonies that came before it (Bundy 16), and its explicit mandate to create a stabilizing national narrative resulted in perpetuating to a degree the very dangers that the TRC's approach sought to avoid.¹⁷

Furthermore, as the voices and narratives of testimony givers circulated within the public domain, they took on lives of their own. Meira Cook observes that "the TRC's attempt to uncover narratives of violence was instrumental in bringing many lost stories back into symbolic currency and social circulation", (74) and as such there are nuances with regard to the movement of these testimonies that we need to be aware of as we turn to other texts. Did these voices and stories merely enter the circuitry? Did they truly bind us to the new collective? Or were they woven in and plaited in, being subsumed by the demands of a greater pattern? I turn now to *Country of My Skull* to explore how these tensions play out.

¹⁷ Krog, along with Nosisi Mpolweni and Kopano Ratele, recently published a book focusing on the TRC testimony of Mrs Konile, mother of one of the Gugulethu Seven. Entitled *There Was This Goat*, this text examines the seeming incoherence of Mrs Konile's testimony against some of the flaws of the TRC, "its rigidity, as an institution, and [...] its insistence on a particular frame that has forgiveness and reconciliation as its end-point" (Young 2).

SHIFTING BETWEEN REPRESENTATION AS PORTRAITURE AND REPRESENTATION AS PROXY: *COUNTRY OF MY SKULL*

Famous as a poet with seven volumes of Afrikaans poetry in print, Antjie Krog, author of *Country of My Skull*, took on the role of journalist when she joined SABC radio in January 1995 (Garman 2). Consequently, she was asked to head up the radio unit overseeing the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings. *Country of My Skull* is a collage of memoir, poetry, reportage and fiction and testimony based primarily on these experiences, and sprang out of a series of articles written for the *Mail and Guardian* (Garman 2).¹⁸ The years spent following the TRC are strenuous and taxing, both physically and mentally, and *Country of My Skull* mirrors this individual and national experience in its fragmented nature. The multigenric and polyphonic text signals, moreover, Krog's struggle to find a suitable form for the testimonies of victimization, violence, and oppression which surface. In the face of the magnitude of atrocity uncovered, she finds herself grappling to find an appropriate response as a journalist who is keenly involved in the act of bearing witness to these marginalized voices. In the context of the TRC's traversal of the country and history in an attempt to "stitch" together a nation out of the fragments of the past, Krog's first-person narration acts as a reminder of her own effort to situate her identity within this landscape of uncovered narratives. The need to negotiate her own selfhood thus results in a dynamic between appropriation and advocacy as her wish to act as a witness on the behalf of others is simultaneously shaped by the need to establish a new identity as a subject of the new nation under construction. This dynamic between her self-interest and her desire to represent others is best understood by a conceptualization of Spivak's categories of representation as portraiture and representation as proxy.

The TRC hearings were set up as a space where "everyone could share their story" and as the hearings unfold, Krog notes that the people who appear are "ordinary people": "[p]eople you meet daily in the street, on the bus and train – people with the signs of poverty and hard work on their bodies and their clothes" (44). The intense suffering and violence heard in the testimonies is thus generalized as ordinary experiences faced by the majority of South Africans, creating a tension with the TRC's focus on gross violations, as well as Harris's critical scepticism of the "ordinary", "voiceless"

¹⁸ *Country of My Skull* was released in 1998 and was an instant success both locally and internationally. Awards included the *Sunday Times* Alan Paton Award; the BookData/South African Booksellers' Book of the Year prize; the Hiroshima Foundation Award and the Olive Schreiner Award for the best work of prose published between 1998 and 2000. An American edition has since come out, as well as a film called *In My Country* (Garman 2-3).

“victims” who came before the TRC. It is the ordinariness of the testimony-givers makes Krog question her right to speak, and at one point in *Country of My Skull*, she confronts a fictional character about the absence of marginalized, oppressed voices in South Africa’s literary history, asking: “[s]houldn’t we give up our privileged position and let the space belong to those who deserve it?” (238). As a writer, Krog recognises “words come more easily” (237) to her, and that her narratives bear a particularly “privileged position” within the social circuitry of stories; yet, as someone who has no comparable story of oppression and victimization, she starts doubting her right to be acknowledged or heard. This position, she believes, belongs to those who have “literally paid blood for every faltering word they utter before the Truth Commission” (237-238).

This act of giving over her “privileged position” is complicated by her desire to act as a witness, which is expressed in *Country of My Skull* in a short preface to a number of testimonies from the first hearings in Eastern Cape. Krog addresses the dead victims, recounting her resolute determination to carry them into the future with her as she bears testimony to their unfinished stories:

Beloved, do not die. Do not dare die! I, the survivor, I wrap you in words so that the future inherits you. I snatch you from the death of forgetfulness. I tell your story, complete the ending – you who once whispered beside me in the dark (27).

Krog addresses the victim intimately as she inhabits the subject-position of a testifier and as the nation-figure. By evoking a personal relationship with her “beloved”, we understand her concern that victims’ stories are carried across into the future and that these uncompleted stories find an ending, in the same way that the TRC presented itself as bringing closure to the unfinished business of the past. She thus mimics and engages with the TRC’s search for closure in the past, invoking the national desire to hear the stories of the marginalized. Further, Krog’s words remind us that she is involved in a process of humanizing and producing a subject out of those who were dehumanized and discriminated against in the apartheid past.

Krog’s turn to poetic imagery emphasises the anxiety surrounding her search for a suitable way of bearing testimony to these narratives. As a journalist, Krog was already acting as witness, but *Country of My Skull’s* development from a series of newspaper articles suggests that she found objective journalistic fact inadequate as a “form for dealing with [the] past” (238). The fragmented structure of *Country of My Skull* acts as metafictional representation of her struggle to find an appropriate form. Composed of different genres, this text makes reference to:

the memoir, the confession, and the autobiography, [...] transcripts, interviews, newspaper reports, oral narratives, folk music, theoretical debates, medical discourse and poetic register, eye-witness accounts, letters (threatening and friendly), poems (elegiac and liturgical), conversations (imagined and overheard), dialogue, words and phrases translated from Afrikaans, reported and direct speech, textual quotations from a wide range of theorists, politicians, and writers, unacknowledged quotations, competing versions of story, and finally, a fable (Cook 84).

Pages jump between genres and as diverse ones as poetry, newspaper accounts, and dramatic transcripts come to inhabit one chapter (c.f. Krog 238).

Krog's struggle to find an adequate form for representation, coupled with her desire to act as witness, necessitates that she finds an alternative to "memorial reconstruction, of being host to [the testifiers'] words" (Sanders "Truth" 14). Mark Sanders argues that, following Krog, "the question of poetry, or literature, after apartheid concerns less an excess of lyricism or beauty, from which its creator stands back, than a writer's facilitation of the utterance of others" ("Truth" 14). He thus suggests that Krog's key concern in *Country of My Skull* is not whether form and aesthetics can carry the horror of apartheid atrocities, although this is a question she does grapple with. Instead, according to Sanders, the main question underlying *Country of My Skull* is shaped by the context of the TRC and its attempts to create a space for the narratives of those which had been oppressed and silenced: how to bring others' testimonies into one's own text? How to provide an adequate space for the narratives of others?

The case of Yazir Henry, one of those whose testimony is included in *Country of My Skull*, is a powerful reminder that incorporating these utterances is a complex act which needs to be considered carefully. A former MK member,¹⁹ Henry testified about his abduction and subsequent torture by the security police, during which he eventually betrayed the whereabouts of some of his fellow MK colleagues. One of the individuals whose hearing was much publicized, Henry objected so strongly to his consequent portrayal in media, particularly by Krog, that he published an article addressing the

¹⁹ MK is the abbreviated title of *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, the military wing of the ANC. The name literally means "Spear of the Nation".

matter of his representation in 2000.²⁰ In his article, Henry states: “I do not only question the intention of these authors, I also draw attention to the context within which my story has been told – and the serious personal consequences that this has had for me” (167). He thus highlights the way that Krog’s representation reduced his “nuanced and complex” life story to caricature (168).²¹ In a later article, he adds that “[t]he dispossession of [his] voice through a continuous recycling of [his] by now unmoored testimony was compounded by the superimposition of other voices and narratives unto [his] own” (Henri 268). Henry’s accusation surfaces concerns of both mis-representation and appropriation – of using his story for other purposes than intended - as well as a caution about the contexts in which stories are told.

In her article “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Gayatri Spivak elucidates the pitfalls of representation in a discussion which focuses on the marginalized in Western academy. She writes about the subaltern who, like those who came forward to testify at the TRC, is “without identity” (qtd. Morton 97). The subaltern exists “outside of the dominant discourses” (Morton 103). Thus, to render the subaltern audible requires representation, or mediation. Spivak points out that representation is particularly fraught with complexity because it is often based on the conflation of two different denotations. This distinction is better elucidated by a turn to German, which distinguishes between these two meanings as *Vertreten* and *Darstellen* (275-276). *Vertreten* (proxy) refers to political representation, when someone is elected to speak and act on the behalf of his constituency, as a substitute for that group (Spivak 276). *Darstellen* (portraiture), on the other hand, refers to aesthetic and philosophical re-presentation (Spivak 276). Simply put, Spivak critiques the interests that such a conflation obscures, asking us to pull apart these two meanings in order to explore what is at stake in the act of representation (279). In order to understand Krog’s grappling with representation, we

²⁰ This article, entitled “Where Healing Begins?”, was followed-up in 2003 by an article entitled “Reconciling Reconciliation: A Personal and Public Journey of Testifying Before the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission”, in which some of Henry’s initial points were expanded. Please note that in *Country of My Skull* he is referred to as Yassir Henry, while in “Where Healing Begins?” he spells his name as Yazir Henry, and in the last article, as Yazir Henri. For clarity of reference, I will refer to him consistently as Yazir Henry (except for in-text citations).

²¹ Frances Lubbe notes a certain irony in this, as Henry chose to present his story at the TRC hearings in a heavily mediated event, where “the rights to interpret the tale cannot be merely said to rest with the testifier any more” (41). In “Reconciling Reconciliation”, Henry defends himself, saying: “[a]t the time of my testimony I had no idea what the public consequences of ‘public’ could have meant in the context of public hearings. The fact that my testimony could be appropriated, interpreted, re-interpreted, re-told and sold was not what I expected” (Henri 266).

similarly need to distinguish between both, and in doing so, I will argue that through Krog's portraiture she is in fact attempting to produce herself as proxy.²²

Krog's act of *Darstellen* seems simple enough as *Country of My Skull* includes many first-person testimonies from testifiers, TRC officials, friends, family, and fellow South Africans in a polyphonic representation of the TRC's victim/testimony centred-approach. However, as we saw in Henry's case, one of the key criticisms against *Country of My Skull* is Krog's inconsistent treatment of these testimonies. Krog more often than not strips many of these narratives of personal identification and context. In some chapters, only a few of the narratives and quotes from victims, perpetrators and other individuals involved in the TRC process are acknowledged, either in sections written transcript style (35), or with a brief contextual referencing point (e.g. "Archbishop Desmond Tutu, after the first day of testimony on East London" 30). An oft-noted example is Chapter 3 (titled "Bereaved and Dumb, the High Southern Air Succumbs"), which is composed of quotes and stories from the first week of the TRC hearings in the Eastern Cape. None of the quotations are attributed, and none are contextualized with information about their owners.²³

This has led to accusations that Krog appropriates the voices of others for her own narrative purposes. Shane Graham argues that by separating stories from their tellers' personal contexts, "the survivors are removed from the centre of their own stories and made into interchangeable metaphors", (*South African* 171) just as Henry speaks of a double injustice, of "being dispossess[ed] of [...] voice", and having other narratives "superimpose[ed]" onto his own (Henri 268). Graham notes that these stories are bereft of identity and thus rendered dependent on the framework of Krog's own narrative, arguing that "Krog's book [...] threatens from the outset to appropriate the stories of victims for her own narrative" (*South African* 171). Sarah Ruden goes further in calling this "ordinary theft", (qtd. Graham *South African* 171) highlighting Krog's inhumane treatment of these stories. However, Mark Sanders contends that Krog's work shows the formation of "'an ethics of advocacy', namely, the task of giving the domain of words over to the other" ("Truth" 17). Krog's objective throughout the text, he thus argues, is to incorporate these narratives into her own in order to allow these voices to speak.

²² I am much indebted to Meg Samuelson's class notes on Spivak in this paragraph.

²³ Shane Graham concedes that this format transfers the sense of horror that must have overwhelmed the original audience. However, he argues that it loses some of the desired effect by being an "anonymous" list ("Truth Commission" 25).

Krog's response to such critiques makes a case that advocacy and appropriation can often be seen in the same act.²⁴ She defends the format of the testimonies, explaining that it had been motivated by readers' comments to pre-publication drafts. Testimonies had been originally printed with dates and names, and were formatted in a different font "as a ways of not appropriating them" ("Fact" 40). Her attempt to make it clear that these narratives were not hers had an unforeseen result: these typographical elements ended up signalling the testimonies' "difference" to readers who already "found it hard to read them" ("Fact" 40). Readers would therefore skip over them. In response, a number of alterations were made to the text in order to "guile readers" ("Fact" 40) into reading the testimonies – of these changes, the most important one was "break[ing] the testimony up via the 'I'" ("Fact" 40). Krog thus justifies her act of appropriation as being crucial to perform the role of advocacy due to the readers' discrimination between different types of voices, namely those marked by authorial authority and those of testifiers. With her "I" hosting others' voices, a slippage is created between the various "I"s, and her "I" "allow[s] the reader to piggyback on the 'I' into the text – safe in the knowledge that the "I" will never abandon the 'I'" (103). The voice of the author, Krog suggests, seems to provide a safety and security that the voice of the victim cannot.

In adapting these voices to be understood in the context of her narrative, Krog seems to be involved in a process of translating. Maria Tymoczko, by drawing attention to the etymological roots of translation, that is, "the activity"; of carrying across, for instance the transportation and relocation of the bones and other remains of saints", (qtd. Samuelson *Remembering* 17) extends this concept beyond its meaning as the literal rendering of words of one language into another language. Instead, this word also holds the meaning of "transported across the borders between [...] one country and another, one culture and another" (Miller qtd. Samuelson *Remembering* 17). Krog can thus said to be translating, carrying these narratives from the past into the present, and from their background of silence and oppression into a space where they are heard.

²⁴ Krog published two articles about *Country of My Skull*, which deal with her use of the "I", and the factual and fictional elements. The first one appeared under the title of "'I, Me, Me, Mine!': Autobiographical Fiction and the 'I'" in 2005, and the other as "Fact Bordering Fiction and the Honesty of the 'I'" in 2007. Although there is considerable overlap between the two versions, the latter contains additional material which elucidates some of her points in the former, such as this explanation about her formatting of the testimonies.

Lawrence Venuti's words, however, caution against being uncritical of this act: by differentiating between "domestication" and "foreignization", he alerts us to the ideological practices that underlie every act of translation (qtd. Tolliver 34). Translated works which are "assimilate[d]" into the target language and its cultural norms are "domesticated", as the difference between the translated work and the source text are erased (qtd. Samuelson *Remembering* 17). This "prevent[s] this difference from impacting on, and even destabilising, the target language and culture" (Samuelson *Remembering* 36). Instead of a domesticating practice, Venuti calls translators to "foreignize" the text in a way that will "retain and lay bare the 'difference' between the source text and the target language" (qtd. Tolliver 36). By erasing this "difference" between the testimonies of others and her own narrative, Krog's act of "assimilating" and normalizing the testimonies as part of her own voice thus suggests a new form of marginalization in the name of advocacy.

Country of My Skull holds the argument, however, that it is precisely for the reason of "impacting on" the target language and culture that Krog makes these changes, as evidenced in her and her SABC team's work of creating sound bites of the TRC proceedings. Krog says that:

[p]art of the team's strategy [...] is to let the victims speak for themselves, and to follow the same ethic that the TRC itself proclaims: 'trust the victim, believe the poorest of the poor, treat the simple and illiterate with the tenderest of respect' (232).

In the same way that the TRC followed a victim-centred approach towards the hearings, the radio broadcasts privilege the voices of the "ordinary". Yet, Krog and her team are aware that there are many in the national audience who will not engage with these testimonies, people who will "deliberately cut themselves off from the Truth Commission process" (31). To ensure that the SABC radio team are able to impact as many people as possible "means that the past has to be put into hard news gripping enough to make bulletin headlines, into reports that the bulletin-writers in Johannesburg cannot ignore" (31). To this end, manipulation of these voices is required: cutting, editing, inserting voices to augment and highlight the newsreaders' broadcasts. Despite an agenda of letting the "victims speak for themselves", in order to ensure that these voices gain as wide an audience as possible, Krog and her team feel a need to present them in a specific way, so that "[s]tories, complete stories with beginnings, middles and (31) ends [...] are told for the first time over the news" (32).

Krog thus parallels the reasons for cutting and editing in her broadcasts with her reasons for stripping away testimonies of their individual contexts in *Country of My Skull*, recognising that one of

the key factors shaping the representation of a story is its “need to entertain – to make the listener hang on your lips” (171). While reflecting on the TRC case of the murder of Richard Mutase and his wife, Krog further represents herself as realizing that there are two “stories” in interplay as a narrative is related: the one story is the facts, the events, the key elements that unfold, while the underlying story is the “propelling force determining what is left out, what is used, how it is used”, in other words, the motives which shape and influence the story’s telling (85). Krog concludes that “[t]elling is [...]never neutral, and the selection and ordering try to determine the interpretation” (85). In this statement, Krog comes upon a vital point: it is not so much the act of providing a space for the voices to speak that is important, but also the need to ensure that when they do speak, that there will be an audience who listens.

Krog’s reflection once again highlights the importance of the audience in influencing the way a story is told, raising questions about the intended audience of *Country of My Skull*. Who are the readers, the listeners for whom Krog wishes to “translate” these testimonies? The answer is tied up in the importance of listening to these stories: Krog recognizes that “if you cut yourself off from the [TRC] process, you will wake up in a foreign country – a country that you don’t know and that you will never understand” (131). The narratives and the stories coming forth at the TRC hearings had the potential to not only change the nation’s understanding of itself, but also the identities of individuals as their “worlds” were “reshaped”. Susan Spearey argues:

[a]ny engagement with the TRC [...] is necessarily bound up with ways of reconstituting selfhood, with renegotiating the boundaries of what Salman Rushdie has elsewhere termed ‘imaginary homelands’ [...]. How these stories reshape our worlds is every bit as important as how they begin to reshape those of the victim and teller, and this is even more urgently the case when the trauma in question is collective (qtd. Garman 21).

The TRC works to creating a common memory and a shared narrative history as the basis of the new national identity, yet Krog shows a fear that she will be excluded from this. This fear is especially heightened as the victims, who have “literally paid blood for every faltering word they utter before the Truth Commission”, (237-238) are primarily black. Krog thus feels a distancing from the “new” South Africa “on account of her whiteness”, (Coetzee 686) and it is this experience, as well as her awareness of how other white people, especially Afrikaners, are distancing themselves from the TRC project, that compel her to open up the white ear.

Carli Coetzee therefore argues that *Country of My Skull* is not so much a text that works for “the ‘voices of the voiceless’ to be heard”, but opens up an “ear that was lacking” to the “voice of the “Black South Africans” (693). Krog herself reiterates this notion, explaining that “*Country of My Skull* in 1998 was a specific *response* to the specific black voice of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission” (“Autobiographical” 103, italics my own). *Country of My Skull* thus seems to exhibit a deeply invested effort to draw not so much the marginalized as the previously privileged into the new collective. However, this focus on the white ear does not necessarily exclude other audiences. The book’s dedication reads: “for every victim who had an Afrikaner surname on her lips”, which leads Coetzee to note that it seems “[a] black woman, a ‘victim’, is addressed, and the text seems to be directed to a black audience” (688). Furthermore, in “Fact Bordering Fiction and the Honesty of the “I”, Krog asks: “[h]ow do I give black readers access to the changed and changing voices of whites that I hear? How do I do justice to the other kinds of changes that are taking place on personal levels? How do I open up different readings of actions and words? How do I signify hidden transformations?” (38). I argue that both audiences are drawn into this text: she acts as proxy not only for a white audience, but also incorporates her own experience as proxy for the ignored black voice, to bring these two groups into conversation. This we will see in a more careful examination of her act as witness.

Dori Laub explains in *Testimony: the Crisis of Witnessing in Psychoanalysis, Literature and History* that the witness, in being exposed to traumatic narratives, often develops a strong case of identification with the victim, “com[ing] to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself” (57). An interview of a young Tswana interpreter, which is included in *Country of My Skull*, highlights this process of identification: “[i]t is difficult to interpret victim hearings [...] because you use the first person all the time. I have no distance when I say ‘I’.... it runs through me with I” (Krog, 129). Further, Laub argues that it is necessary to retain a sense of self as separate from the trauma and victim when witnessing: “[i]t is only in this way, through his simultaneous awareness of the continuous flow of those inner hazards both in the trauma witness and in himself, that he can become the enabler of the testimony – the one who triggers its initiation, as well as the guardian of its process and of its momentum” (58). It is thus the responsibility of the witness, even as he or she comes to share in the stories of the victim, to maintain a self-aware distance in order to be an Other who listens.

Whereas the interpreter explains the difficulty of separating the “I”s, Krog demonstrates her affinity with the victims through the development of trauma-related symptoms. At one point, Krog describes how “reporting on the Truth Commission indeed leaves most of us physically exhausted and mentally frayed. Because of language. [...] One cannot get rid of it. Ever. To have the voices of ordinary people dominate the news. To have no one escape the process” (37). Her broadcasting self is in a state of anxiety about “sound bites” (bytes) which enter her language – and her body – in a destructive way. She ends up developing both somatic and psychological manifestations of trauma symptoms. She finds herself alienated from loved ones and from known spaces. She expresses feelings of barrenness, as though these incomplete stories strip her of a future. Lastly, she finds herself bereft of words, and caught in a dilemma between writing and not writing. Krog thus represents herself being “wounded” in some way like those for whom she wishes to bear witness, and the privileging of her “I”-narrative serves as an implicit justification and elaboration of her own representational choices.

Ashleigh Harris points out, however, that witnessing is not an end in itself, but part of a process involving the victim, the witness, and another potential listener. In light of the testifier’s inability to articulate his own experience of trauma, it falls to the witness to formulate a coherent narrative (35). Lebohand Matibela, a TRC translator, speaks of his role as “bring[ing] the pieces” (Krog *Country* 220) of the testimony together. As such, he not only literally translated the testifier’s account, but also created a coherent narrative structure out of the “instalments” (220) of the testifier’s narrative for those who are listening. In this process, the witness/ translator acts as both mediator and as proxy – as proxy for the victim who is unable to express his/her story of trauma, and as mediator between the victim and another listener, leading Ross to assert that “Krog effectively narrows the distance between those who suffer and those who watch pain unfold” (qtd. Cook 79).

However, Krog does more than “translate” others’ stories - she actively creates a new narrative for herself and those she addresses. Krog explains how she is “quilting” her own narrative with “hundreds of stories that we’ve experienced or heard about in the past two years” (170). Meg Samuelson notes how the image of quilting serves as a “metaphor [...] of becoming rather than of being”, “favour[ing] process and creative reworking over completion and complacency”, (“Cracked”

67)²⁵ and it is this act of “becoming” that pushes Krog to turn towards fictional and factual elements in order to re-construct a sense of selfhood. In conversation with one of her colleagues, Krog explicitly draws attention to her act of construction in *Country*, openly admitting to creating a “new story [...] from all the other information I picked up over the months [...]. I’m not reporting or keeping minutes. I’m telling” (171). Her acknowledgements at the end of the book draw the reader’s attention further to the fictiveness in this act of “telling”, as she reveals that she has “told many lies in this book about the truth” (295).

In “I, me, me, mine!” Krog links this mix of fact and fiction to the project of creating a selfhood. She explains that the process of “re-integrat[ion] so that the self is no longer the stranger” (107) necessitates that the “self [...] imaginatively disregard the borders between fact and fiction” (107) in order that one can “write life as a narrative within a narrative that is filled with the liberation of imagination and truth” (107). If life incorporates both fact and fiction, playing on elements of imagination and truth, Krog suggests that the narrative of self must similarly contain elements of fact and fiction. Moreover, her construction of self is linked to the inclusion of many different voices and perspectives within the text. Mark Freeman and Jens Brockmeier argue that “narrative integrity comes about through an open and de-centred, multiple self whose many possible voices nevertheless remain highly individuated and self-defined, whose narrated life embodies the adamant refusal of binding and substantialised character ideals” (qtd. Krog “Autobiographical” 105).

In the same way that the narrative of self opens itself up beyond the binary of truth versus fiction, Freeman and Brockmeier argue that the multiplicity of narrative perspectives and the polyphony of a text heightens narrative integrity, rather than diminishes it. A meta-fictional device such as the four different “Antjie” selves - there is Antjie, Antjie Krog (her maiden surname, which she publishes under), Antjie Samuel (her married surname), and Antjie Somers (a reference to a traditional Afrikaans character with the same surname) (Moss 91) - allow Krog to engage in this ‘narrative integrity’, as these selves allow her to “argue with [her]self. [She] compare[s] versions of the truth”, (112) working to find a narrative that is truly authentic.

²⁵ For a more detailed analysis of the metaphors of quilting, weaving, and plaiting as used in post-TRC fictional texts, see Samuelson “Cracked Vases and Untidy Seams: Narrative Structure and Closure in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and South African Fiction”.

Krog thus seems to be openly admitting to appropriation as she talks about the reconstitution of herself. However, we need to remember that Krog's text brings together different voices so that audiences can be brought into conversation: the use of the "I" "call[s] forth the word 'you'" (Krog "Autobiographical" 103). Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson remind us that because an "I" is "split, fragmented, provisional, a sign with multiple referents", it allows address to "disparate addressees or audiences" (357). This is even more the case in a text that privileges what Freeman and Brockmeier call an "open and de-centred, multiple self". This paradox of identifying and addressing "disparate audiences" can be seen in the dedication of the book, which reads: "for every victim / who had an Afrikaner surname on her lips". As a female, she is placed in a position of identification with the victims; yet, as someone with an Afrikaner surname, she also occupies a position as perpetrator. She thus attempts to call all of them to listen.

The importance of drawing all these audiences into the text is that "if the 'you' who is not 'I', responds, then [...] and I can at last start trying to find 'us' as well as 'he' or 'she' or 'they'" (Krog "Autobiographical" 103). Similarly, Leon de Kock suggests it is necessary to first understand the tenuousness of the "I" and the "you" in order to reach the "we":

doubleness and representational crisis have been endemic [...] to the most everyday acts of identity formation, (286)

and concludes:

my only recourse to the first-person plural, my only path from 'I' to 'we' or 'us', is via this knowledge. 'We' is a tenuously created category, stitched together with deep ambivalences of signification (qtd. Garman 22).

In order to create a collective, and bring together diverse groups of people, the most personal and intimate pronouns need to be used, so that "people can no longer indulge in their separate dynasties of denial" (89). It is as she is constructing a selfhood out of the testimonies, on the behalf of the black oppressed and in order to engage the white Afrikaners that Krog mimics the construction of a nation. As much as she does provide space for some of the voices in her text, it is primarily through her act of presenting herself as proxy that she pulls together the pieces of the disparate narratives that are spoken and that need listeners.

Despite her ability to construct "beginnings, middles, ends" to other people's stories, however, Krog seems to realize that she ultimately cannot construct the ending of her own story, and of the

nation. She is left to “hop[e] like all the others that the Truth Commission will provide this end” (129). Yet, she seems to have come to some sort of peace about her place as writer, as she expresses a desire to engage in the future of South Africa through writing. In contrast to her sense of overwhelmed helplessness and inability to articulate her experiences and the words of others, and in contrast to her quest to find a way to give over her “privileged position”, she recognises that she must maintain this space in order to write for others. The beginning of her last poem expresses her movement from a listening witness to one who speaks on the behalf of others:

I want this hand of mine to write it. For us all; all voices, all victims:

Because of you

This country no longer lies

Between us but within (279)

Furthermore, the poem unpacks itself as an unveiling of the project of the self inhabiting the pages of *Country of My Skull*. “This country” now lives inside her body, causing her to speak in a new language of “clicks and gutturals” and indicating her belonging, as she shows an intimate knowledge of the indigenous languages spoken by many black people. She speaks of being “scorched by a thousand stories” and given “a new skin”. She thus seems to present herself as new and changed by the TRC process, speaking and engaging with the “New” South Africa. Yet, the poem ends with uncertainty, as she seems to doubt whether her new self will be accepted by those she addresses, and she pleads with those victims to “take [her] with”, to include her in the future of South Africa:

I am changed for ever. I want to say:

Forgive me

Forgive me

Forgive me

You whom I have wronged, please

Take me

With you (279).

Although Krog suggests that she has found a new self, it is not yet certain whether this new self will be accepted by others. Meira Cook therefore suggests that the title of Krog's text "Country of My Skull" undermines the developments, thoughts and themes of the book by suggesting that "what occurs between the covers of this book has taken place primarily within the confines of the narrator's skull" (79). I, in contrast, would suggest that the title can be read as a gesture of embeddedness – Krog shows how the stories that have been offered a platform through the TRC have also taken up residence in her. This country no "longer lies/ between us / but within" (278). Yet, I hesitate to pin a concrete interpretation onto the ending of *Country of My Skull*, as Krog herself leaves the ending open-ended and ambiguous, suggesting that the "beginning, middle, end" that she produces for the broadcasts are not so easily replicable in her construction of selfhood within this landscape of uncovered narratives.

CONCLUSION

The TRC sought to provide a space where the stories of the marginalized could be shared so that the South African nation could learn about the "truth" of the past, and move on. To this end, the TRC proceedings and various testimonies were made as accessible as possible to a nation characterized by linguistic diversity. Furthermore, the hearings were based on a "victim-centred" approach, where "everyone" was urged to come forward to share their testimony. However, the TRC processes were not without its flaws. The TRC mandate included restrictions that only allowed a certain number of South Africans to recount their testimonies of oppression and victimization, thus marginalizing the "ordinary" experiences of standardized discrimination and dehumanization in favour of more spectacular, brutal violence. Furthermore, while the TRC had a responsibility to the victims who presented testimonies, because of the unique sociohistoric moment of its establishment, it also had the task of bringing together a divided country. Individual narratives were thus taken up into the national narrative, shaped and framed by a drive for reconciliation and forgiveness for the sake of leaving the past behind.

These aspects of the TRC raise questions about the interplay between the individual and the collective narrative, the ways in which representational spaces are affected by external factors, as well as the question of who the marginalized are. In *Country of My Skull*, Krog picks up some of these

issues as she incorporates others' stories into her own narrative. The examination of the representational framework of these testimonies, Krog's "I"-narrative, is thus crucial in understanding fully the voices of the marginalized engaged within the text. Krog's own underlying narrative project is multiplicitous: on the one hand, she is grappling as a writer to understand her place and function as a story-teller – should she give up her "privileged position"? If she does not give it up, what are her responsibilities as a witness? On the other hand, against the context of the TRC providing a space for selves to reconstruct themselves and become citizens, Krog carries out her own project of discovering a "narrative unity of life" (MacIntyre qtd. Kearney 151). Her concerns thus seems duplicitous against the framework of her "victim"-centred approach, as her efforts to provide a space for victims' voices is bound up in the project of discovering her own selfhood.

The complexity of interpreting *Country of My Skull* is signalled by the various interpretations one can read into the messy use of genres. This messiness is a metafictional representation of the fractured nature of the traumatized testimonies heard at the hearings, while reflecting Krog's own struggle to find an appropriate form for her act of bearing witness. The messiness also draws explicit attention to her construction of self from various sources and texts. I thus suggest that it is this very complexity that we need to take into account when reading *Country of My Skull* through the constantly interchanging fluctuation between representation as portraiture and representation as proxy, which offers a way into reading the ambiguities and paradoxes caught and presented.

In many ways it is this personal investment in the TRC hearings that leads Krog to open up her narrative to include many different voices. She presents herself as a proxy in order to seek accommodation for whites in the New South Africa, but also to enter into dialogue with the black victims whose voices she seeks to represent. If these voices were only primarily to be used as material for Krog to demonstrate theoretical concerns, then the positions of the victims' testimonies is a tenuous one. Similarly, if these voices are only used to justify her own need to find a place within the emerging narrative landscape of the TRC, then her desire to act as witness is cast into doubt. Yet, these motives seem to work hand in hand. Using these voices to stitch together her own narrative, she also serves as host to these voices and brings them into conversation with each other. These different and shifting motives move her to appropriate the voices of the marginalized, and to provide a space for mediation.

This act of construction is explicitly brought to the reader's attention by Krog's metafictional awareness of the techniques of storytelling in her work as a broadcaster, as well as a poet and writer. Furthermore, she includes several discussions about specific story-telling techniques – how a story is not an account of the exact facts and details, but rather a mix of fiction, fact and construction; and the way in which the shape of the story is often formed by a need to be compelling. It seems that Krog uses this discussion to defend her assimilation of these narratives, as it is suggested that to gain the best audience for the testimonies, and for her own personal narrative, necessitates the construction of an aesthetic representation that can entertain and compel the audience into listening.

The ending of *Country of My Skull* mimics this concern with its own act of listening. In many ways, Krog's text illustrates Charles Villa-Vicencio's argument that the TRC initiated a "national conversation. It was about words spoken – there to be heard, begging for response, waiting for action" (*Walk* 91). Similarly, Mark Sanders argues that Krog's book "listen[s], declaring what one has heard, and awaiting a response in return from those one has heard and whose stories one has relayed" (*Ambiguities* 140). The ending thus carries no sense of closure, nor of having come to terms with the past in the way that the TRC had hoped. In opening up this ending to the continued presence of the past, *Country of My Skull* suggests, however, a willingness to engage in dialogue, an act that is necessary of incorporating the marginalized. Fanie du Toit of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation urges us to remember that opportunities are required for "South African voices to be heard, particularly those from the margins of society, so often excluded, ignored or forgotten" (1). In the next chapter, I therefore turn to two texts figuring the homeless and the vulnerably accommodated in order to see what kind of representational spaces and opportunities for dialogue are offered.

CHAPTER 3

SLIPPING IN AND OUT OF NARRATIVE – HOMELESSNESS AND FOREIGNNESS IN *FINDING MR MADINI* AND *WELCOME TO OUR HILLBROW*

As Yazir Henry draws to a close in “Where Healing Begins?”, an article which relates his experience of testifying at the TRC and his anger about his subsequent portrayal in media reports and texts like *Country of My Skull*, he acknowledges the positive work of the TRC in providing a space for people to share their accounts of “atrocities and abuse of their past” (173). He urges that similar “safe spaces” are provided in the future so that “people can continue to tell their stories and [...] dialogue can continue - or begin to take place” (173). A few years later, in a follow-up article, he is far more distressed by his continued representation in media. To contest this appropriation, which he feels has “disembodi[ed]” (268) his testimony, Henry turned to writing. He reveals that “t]aking up [his] pen, and in so doing, taking back [his] right to comment on and explain [his] own testimony has become an important way to intervene in the continuous dismemberment of [his] testimony and self” (Henri 269). His sense of estrangement from his narrative, as it was appropriated and represented by others, is ameliorated by “taking up his pen”, as this allows him to represent himself. I wish to highlight the crucial role that writing, i.e. actively sharing his narrative, plays in Henry regaining a sense of agency and of identity, and I relate this incident to raise a number of questions: what kind of belonging and representational space is open to the marginalized, like the homeless and the foreign, who do not necessarily have recourse to actively sharing their own narratives to regain a sense of identity? Are they to wait for “safe spaces” to be set up? What does “taking up [one’s] pen” entail?

It is in exploration of these questions that I turn to two post-apartheid texts set in Johannesburg: *Finding Mr Madini* and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*. I place these texts in relation to *Country of My Skull* to pick up on the processes of advocacy, appropriation and narrative with which Krog grapples, as evident in the case of Yazir Henry. This chapter begins with *Finding Mr Madini*, which sets itself up as an explicit re-enactment of many of the TRC processes. In an appendix to the text, Jonathan Morgan

(the main writer and originator of the book project) explains how *Finding Mr Madini* is based on an understanding of narrative therapy, which is inspired by the proceedings of the TRC:

Following on the type of work carried out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in a national but decentralised way, a group of us are interested in pursuing a narrative means to therapeutic ends, and in popularising story-telling (and documentation) outside of judicial and clinical settings (np).

This text thus picks up on the TRC's theme of "revealing is healing", and within the smaller, more intimate setting of writing classes for homeless, vulnerably accommodated and/or foreign writers, *Finding Mr Madini* both critiques and expands the therapeutic notions of narrative that informed the TRC.

While *Finding Mr Madini* suggests that there is healing potential in allowing marginalized voices to enter narrative, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* issues a word of caution, by exploring the ways in which individuals and groups do (not) find agency in narrative. This text picks up on concerns about narrative and its functions through the unusual use of second-person narration to relay the lives of a Tiragalong migrant to Hillbrow, and his friends, associates, and family members. Revealing the consequences of stereotypes, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* tempers the uncritical consumption of narratives by showing lives being affected, constrained, and limited by words. Othered individuals, such as *Makwerekwere*, are particularly subject to marginalization within narrative. Before turning to the primary texts, I map out the marginal positions of the migrant and the homeless in order to explore the notions of homelessness and foreignness.

MIGRANTS AND THE HOMELESS: A SOUTH AFRICAN OVERVIEW

1994 marked apartheid South Africa's official transition into a democratic nation, and with the opening of its borders, South Africa saw an increase in the numbers of migrants, particularly from other African countries. Various industries, such as South Africa's mining industry, had long acted as a magnet for labourers from Mozambique, Zimbabwe and other parts of Africa (Morris 118), leading Aderanti Adepoju to describe labour migration as a "dominant feature of the [apartheid] economy" (7). However, the new floods of migrants have resulted in a display of xenophobic responses, forming a stark contrast to the warm welcome professed in former Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki's "I am an

African” speech, which expressed “an inclusive redefinition of African identity”, (Frankental and Sichone 272) as well as the commitment to human rights in a Constitution lauded as one of the most progressive in the world.²⁶ Individuals considered to be “foreign” have been subject to discrimination, prejudice, hostility, theft, and even death.²⁷

The intense spate of xenophobic incidents in 2008 reinvigorated scholarship to find answers for South Africa’s xenophobia, and four major theories were posited by media commentators: one historical, one material, one political, and one managerial (Crush *Perfect Storm* 12). Factors included antagonism against outsiders carried over from the colonial and apartheid past; frustration stemming from an ever-persisting inequality and poverty for the majority of South Africa’s people; poor service delivery by the ruling party, the ANC; and the failure of the state to monitor borders (Crush *Perfect Storm* 12-14). These theories can be further elucidated. For example, in their introduction to *Go Home or Die Here*, Worby, Hassim and Kupe suggest that antagonism arises from citizens’ frustration at a post-apartheid state that “has been unable to provide even basic entitlements of safety, health and the right to secure the means of life” (7). Furthermore, citizens and immigrants have to compete for “scarce resources and public services such as schools and medical care, infrastructure and land, housing and informal trading opportunities”, as well as “insufficient job opportunities” (Nyamnjoh 41).²⁸

Another strong thesis put forward by scholars and intellectuals is that xenophobia arises as a reaction to the blurring boundaries of exclusion and inclusion in an increasingly globalized world (Geschiere 1). This deepening anxiety about citizenship and belonging is manifested in a need to distinguish between “‘locals’, ‘nationals’, ‘citizens’ ‘autochthons’, or ‘insiders’, on the one hand, and ‘foreigners’, ‘immigrants’, ‘strangers’, or ‘outsiders’ on the other” (Nyamnjoh 3). In the South African context, many have noted how a need to affirm and assert one’s belonging has played a role in

²⁶ The preamble of the Constitution also captures the inclusivity expressed in Mbeki’s speech: “[w]e, the people of South Africa [...] believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it” (qtd. Adepoju 4).

²⁷ A 1999 National Plan of Action called *Roll Back Xenophobia* published jointly by the South African Human Rights Commission, the National Consortium on Refugee Affairs, the United Nations Human Rights Commission, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, defined *xenophobia* as a “deep dislike for non-nationals by nationals” (Reilly 7).

²⁸ Investigation of these assumptions on several instances, notably by the Southern African Migration Project at the Institute for Democracy in South Africa, has shown that “African migrants do not take jobs away from South Africans and that in many cases their entrepreneurial skills result in the creation of new jobs” (Frankental and Sichone 231). However, this has not led to the demise of these fears.

motivating the attacks. Janet Reilly links them with “an understanding of the process of nation building and national identity construction”, (4) explaining that expectations on South Africa to follow up on its establishment as a democratic and liberal state and as a country participating in the well-being and development of Africa, has resulted in the need to create what Anthony Marx calls “collective sentiment” (107). This need to generate a sense of national identity and legitimacy is consequently finding expression in the “exclusion of and the denial of rights to those perceived as ‘foreigners’” (Reilly 4) in the “demarcation of the boundaries between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’” (Klotz 834).²⁹

Acts targeting foreigners are thus a way of “reaffirm[ing] [...] claims to belong, which in practice are not quite new and not yet that stable” (Geschiere 123). Scott Calvert expands upon these tensions arising from the unfinished business of apartheid by noting that post-1994 attempts to “build social cohesion among ethnic groups that historically had been kept apart and at odds with one another” (n.p.) has resulted in an intolerance toward those considered as outsiders. During apartheid, a homeland system was implemented where the country was divided into various states - each of which was assigned to a specific ethnic group. Rhoda Kadalie notes how this separation in terms of space and identities is still embedded in structural remnants, and there has subsequently been an “ironic return” of ethnic identities in post-apartheid South Africa (qtd. Nuttall and Michael 114). Despite the “New” South Africa’s national narrative of “othering” the “old” South Africa, as shown in Chapter 2, divisions stemming from the apartheid past have come to produce new post-border others.

As the recipients of such xenophobic attitudes, migrants, such as these in the South African context, can be likened to “human waste”, Zygmunt Bauman argues in *Wasted Lives: Modernity and Its Outcasts*. Bauman explains the term “human waste” as beings who either “do not fit into the designated form [of human togetherness] nor can be fitted into it. Or as such adulterate its purity and so becloud its transparency” (3). Bauman’s definition is based on an understanding that collectivities function through the creation of an identity of homogeneity, and any individuals who dilute this homogeneity are excluded. Further, by examining the experiences of transnational figures, Bauman draws parallels between different types of migrants. Reactions to the migrant figure, despite the variety of possible reasons for migrancy (e.g. whether someone is an “economic migrant” or “asylum seeker”),

²⁹ A 2004 survey conducted by the Southern African Migration Project note alarming statistics, such as: “[o]ne in five South Africans wants a ban on new immigrants and two-thirds back strict limits” (Calvert n.d.), which, the authors warn, is an “extremely restrictive view by international standards” (qtd. Calvert n.d.).

manifest in similar ways: “whichever of the two figures is used to arouse resentment and anger, the object of the resentment and the target on which the anger is to be unloaded remains much the same” (58). Having left their homes, whether voluntarily or out of necessity, migrants face rejection and ostracization in their new country.

Yet, these reactions are not limited to the transnational figure, but also play out against legitimate South Africans. I think here of unwanted marginalized figures like the homeless, for whom Bauman’s words (originally said about the refugee) seem to ring equally true: “‘outsiders incarnate’, the absolute outsiders, outsiders everywhere and *out of place* everywhere except in places that are themselves out of place” (80; my emphasis). In the influential *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Pollution and Taboo*, which forms an interesting parallel to Bauman’s work, Mary Douglas draws analogies between dirt, which is “matter out of place”, (35) and marginalized figures “who are placeless” (97). In acknowledging “dirt” essentially as “matter” that is “out of place”, Douglas draws attention to the way context shapes perception of the “marginalized” – “dirt” has no inherent “dirt”-like qualities, but rather becomes “dirt” when placed in unexpected contexts. As an identity that is defined by being “out of place”, the homeless, like the migrant, is thus marked by a literal and metaphoric homelessness.

Douglas cautions that being seen as “placeless” affects social standing, and individuals (or groups) consequently face marginalization at the risk of being “left out in the patterning of society” (97). As Kathleen Arnold points out, both the homeless and migrants face systematic political and social exclusion, and are “subject to disenfranchisement, [and] the exercise of prerogative power” (3). Just as the “noncitizen”, the “foreigner”, or the “alien” is limited in agency, Arnold argues that the homeless, even as nominal citizens, can never be “political equals of full citizens” (46). Like migrants, the homeless are often criminalized, regarded with suspicion, and their movement within public areas is regulated or often denied. The conditions and state of being homeless and a migrant are thus similar in terms of the ways that they are perceived and allowed to participate in civil life.

The consequences of being “human waste” can thus be defined relationally, highlighting the ways in which personal agency and identity are constrained and limited in terms of others’ perceptions. The term “human waste” also suggests a further aspect of being excluded - people are stripped of particularities and individuality, and reduced to stereotype; more specifically, to objects, things without

use – “waste”. Bauman notes that these are individuals “who have had their ‘bios’ (that is, the life of a socially recognized subject) reduced to ‘zoe’ (purely animal life, with all its recognizably human offshoots trimmed or annulled)” (qtd. Da Silva 58). Dehumanizing processes reduce the complexity of human life, as Henry said in his complaint about Krog’s treatment of his story. Iain Chambers adds that this reduction is “the stereotyped immobilism of an essential ‘authenticity’ in which [migrants] are expected to play out roles, designated by others... forever” (38). These stereotypes and categories thus present a particular position and role that the migrant and the vagrant are expected to perpetuate.

My investigation of *Finding Mr Madini* and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* looks at the way in which these marginalized subject positions are presented with a form of agency, primarily through occupying central narrative space and regaining identities as individuals. To make migrants and vagrants key subjects in these texts is a way of granting these “zoe” a “bio”. As *Finding Mr Madini* demonstrates, there is a need for creating narrative space for the marginalized. Speaking about his experience in the writing project that later formed the basis of *Finding Mr Madini*, Valentine mentions how “[p]enning down stories of ourselves in a certain sense takes this fight to another level, the human and not the political level. In the process of doing so, we reveal our identities” (Cascarino and Morgan 439). These words are particularly poignant in light of the fact that nearly all the participants of this writing project are homeless, and therefore face dehumanization and stereotyping on a daily basis. Writing, Valentine suggests, allows them to be identified as individuals, as human.

However, a question to keep in mind is whether this “penning down of stories” actually offers a way of dealing with the political and socioeconomic realities faced by the homeless and the migrant. In her essay, “Walking Through the Door and Inhabiting the House: South African Literary Culture and Criticism After The Transition”, Meg Samuelson asks the critical question of how “the metaphor of the national home resonate[s] for those who live within corrugated iron, between cardboard, or huddled under bridges or on doorsteps? Can such homes also become spaces of the imagination?” (130). What link is there between narrative and reality? What possible avenues of agency can be granted to those who remain in impoverished conditions, and are often denied performative citizenship rights?

FROM APPROPRIATION TO ADVOCACY AND SELF-REPRESENTATION: *FINDING MR MADINI* AND THE GREAT AFRICAN SPIDER PROJECT

Based on a writing project initiated by full-time clinical psychologist and part-time writer, Jonathan Morgan, *Finding Mr Madini* focuses on aspects of narrative therapy, issues of representation, and the act of providing a space for the marginalized to speak. Opening with an autobiographical narrative, Morgan presents himself as a character in order to dramatise questions of representation rather than in a quest to present autobiographical truth.³⁰ Before he initiates the writing group project, Jonathan's initial plan is to write a novel that is a "description of Jo'burg-Africa, from the margins" (6). Dissatisfied with his cast of characters, he sets off to find a homeless person to act as a model for one of his characters, and ends up giving writing classes to a group of homeless writers. In this engagement with the narratives of the marginalized, Morgan seems to be expanding and introducing radical alternatives to the processes of representation that Krog utilizes in *Country of My Skull*, moving from notions of representing the other to self-representation.

The characters for Jonathan's initial novel range from criminals, internationals and nationals, and from different ethnicities and localities: Ike, a Nigerian crack dealer, Kingsley, a Ghanaian street barber, Shadrack, a Venda gardener, and a Boksburg teenager called Kriek (5). AbdouMaliq Simone notes how the city, the "arena of national belonging", has become "increasingly fragmented", ("Right" 322) and the array of characters that Jonathan selects to represent life in the "margins" of the city suggest that the boundaries of the city are opening up to citizens and non-citizens. The "compaction and reterritorialization of so many different kinds of groups within" (Holston and Appadurai 9) thus start breaking down notions of exclusion and inclusion carried in the apartheid city.

Jonathan's choice of character to play the main protagonist promises to break down these boundaries further. He decides on a homeless "dude", as "his point of view is the angle from which this shit-hole looks most potent" (12). The marginalized, such as the homeless person, are far more vulnerable to fluctuations of change, as argued in Chapter 1. Thus this character should be able to provide a perspective on the relationship between the "visible and invisible", which Sarah Nuttall argues provides the African city with its "identity and presence": "the interplay between what can be seen and what can be surmised, between a first and a second city, that reveals itself and one which

³⁰ After this point, I will refer to the writer as Morgan, and his character as Jonathan.

bathes itself in shadow” (83). Furthermore, Jonathan’s disdainful, off-hand way he talks about Johannesburg as a “shit-hole”, as a space of “dirt”, suggests a liminality and negativity about post-apartheid Johannesburg that only the marginalized will truly understand - as Bauman reminds us: “absolute outsiders” are “outsiders everywhere and out of place everywhere except in *places that are themselves out of place*” (80; my emphasis). This character would therefore allow Jonathan to represent the marginal experience and the marginality of place and being in Johannesburg.

Realizing that the perspective of the homeless is one that he cannot portray authentically, Jonathan sets off on a search for real-life figures to act as models for this protagonist. He ends up volunteering to give classes to a group of homeless people who write for the *Homeless Talk* newsletter.³¹ Under the auspices of training them to write, he starts interacting with them without revealing his ulterior motives. He expresses no quandaries about the ethics of the project, thinking: “these okes can serve me for once. Fuck knows I’ve handed out enough one and two rand coins” (12). Their life-stories seem an equal exchange for the money he has handed out in the past. Morgan thus stages Jonathan’s initial interactions with the group within his desire to appropriate their stories as material for his novel.

Unlike Krog’s text which invokes the voices of others in the midst of an emotionally charged struggle of finding her place in the new South Africa, Jonathan’s initial aim expresses no such sentiments. However, on his way to the first *Homeless Talk* meeting, he experiences a strange sense of homelessness. Just as he is about to drive off from a red light, a navy BMW starts blasting the popular South African music genre Kwaito. As he looks at the car with its inhabitants, a “feeling of not belonging in Africa wells up” (20). In this moment, we see what Chambers explains as a “displacement of self”:

in the recognition of the other, or radical alterity, lies the acknowledgement that we are no longer at the centre of the world. Our sense of centre and being is displaced (24).

As a white South African, who at that moment is listening to Classic FM, his sense of belonging is unsettled by the recognition of the other, whose music choice of a local genre seems to signify

³¹ This search for the stories of others is the theme of the film documentary *Conversations on a Sunday Afternoon*. Keniloe, the South African protagonist, sets off to find a Somali refugee in the streets of Johannesburg to hear more of her story. The majority of the film is taken up by his interaction with a number of refugees and foreigners he meets, who share their stories with him (See Kim 1).

autochthony. For Jonathan, like Krog, homelessness becomes a metaphor as he tries to renegotiate his whiteness in the new South Africa.

Jonathan's first meeting with the homeless writers is thus marked by a sense of his own homelessness. As his own sense of "centre" is displaced, he realizes that the category of "homeless" can no longer be represented for him by the stereotypical homeless "dude". The homeless people he comes across include the internally migrant and homeless, as well as cross-border migrants and refugees. They include Virginia, and her young boy, Prince; Fresew from Ethiopia, a "tall man with [a] Semitic face" (21); Valentine from Cameroon, who used to work as an investigative journalist; Steven from Ciskei; Eddie from Soweto; and Patrick, who is the cartoonist/illustrator for *Homeless Talk*. Everyone has a different story relating how they ended up on the streets, and as Jonathan starts interacting with them, they become distinguishable individuals who transcend the uniform category of "homeless".³²

As they move from being "zoe" to "bio", or from objects to lives with stories, Jonathan comes to realize that "[t]hrough these okes [he's] got access to stuff most South African writers can only dream of" (21-22). He decides not to use them as material for his book, instead inviting them to participate in a book-writing project. Unlike in *Country of My Skull* where the included marginalized voices are mediated by Krog, Jonathan opens up the pages of his planned novel to the writers to represent themselves and "how they all got here, one from every country on the continent" (50). This project he terms the Great African Spider Writing Project (GASP), and the group he names the Great African Spider Writers. With "[a]ll the story lines from all the different places in Africa [...] be[ing] the legs of the spider", GASP ties all the disparate stories together, leading Valentine to remark: "[o]ne moment we're in Venda, the next in Cameroon, and the next in Israel, this is what I love" (50, 149). These stories are all tied the "head" of the Spider, to South Africa, where they all occupy spaces of marginality as the homeless.

As the writing project unfolds, the group's position as social outsiders without identity and agency is somewhat ameliorated by the exercise of writing narratives. Each participant needs to write

³² As if this interaction suddenly opens up Jonathan's eyes to the immigrants around him, the week after the first meeting with the *Homeless Talk* writers, he suddenly realizes that a number of people he interacts with daily are from other countries (49-50).

seven “windows” offering vantage points on “1) where and when in Africa [their story] began, a family history story; 2) an early childhood story; 3) a teenage/rite of passage/definitive movement story; 4) some of [their] life before hitting the road and becoming homeless; 5) hitting the road; 6) homeless living; 7) signing off” (28). The term “windows” is particularly apt, Jonathan thinks, as it is “a license to just glimpse and to be incoherent” (28). Within these “windows”, the writers are in control over what is included, and they are interpreters of their own experience rather than material to be processed by others. “Windows” thus allow limited insight into the writers’ lives, presenting enough for the reader to engage with, but not revealing everything. This is emphasised by a quick sketch of the writer that accompanies every “window” in the text. Without the representational realism of a photograph, for instance, these images manifest the representational capacity of the “window” - capturing an aspect or defining characteristic, a “glimpse”, but not presuming to reveal the full subject.

Moreover, Jonathan’s definition of a “window” as “incoherent” highlights the therapeutic nature of the project. In an interview with Sam Raditlhalo, Morgan explains “madness [to be] the inability to get your lived experiences into a coherent form, into a story” (Cascarino and Morgan 439). The condition of madness is also linked by Virginia to the state of homelessness - upon finding some of her things have been stolen from her temporary accommodation, she remarks: “[p]erhaps this feeling of not feeling safe, and of not being able to call my home a home, can drive me mad” (240). The act of constructing a narrative about self thus performs a vital role in maintaining a psychological stability. To place pieces of one’s life together is to house one’s identity within a narrative with “beginning, middle, end”, like Krog seeks to do with her broadcasts, and these constructed narratives provide an alternative home.

As the writers construct their own individual narratives, and share their narratives with each other, “[t]ying knots in our tales, this one to that one, my one to your one”, (4) they are also busy restoring to a measure “the network of relations that makes up an individual’s identity” (Arnold 12) that are lost as a result of being homeless. Jonathan reminds the group that “[they] were not always homeless” and these stories “can be partly about how this happened” (28). These “windows” provide outlets for the writers to share their ‘unspeakable’ stories of subjectivity”, (Hall qtd. Chambers 25) currently overshadowed by their identities as “homeless”, in a reclamation of identity, as Stuart Hall suggests that “[i]dentity is formed at the unstable point where the “‘unspeakable’ stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture” (qtd. Chambers 25). These “windows” thus

present a space where these individuals regain a sense of home, a sense of narrative stability in the face of their homelessness, and by carefully tying the legs of the spider to the head, the marginalized gain identities as they connect to each other.

The author credentials are a clear indication of the collaboration underlying this writing project: “*Finding Mr Madini* - directed by Jonathan Morgan *and other* Great African Spider Writers, i.e. Virginia Maubane, Robert Buys, Valentine Cascarino, Siphon Madini, David Majoka, Steven Kannetjie, Gert, Patrick Nemahunguni, Pinky Siphamele, and Fresew Feleke” (n.p.).³³ This acknowledgement draws attention to how Morgan’s individual authorship and ownership is given over to a collective effort, thus radically changing the practices of representation. Unlike Krog, who “domesticates” the stories she translates as she quilts together her own narrative, Jonathan’s project opens up spaces of “foreignness” within the text and within the national project by providing a space for others to share their stories.

The importance of including these writers as individuals who are responsible for their own work are signalled by typographical markers: giant quotation marks are used to distinguish between sections as writers change. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan reminds us that “quotation [is] the maximum freedom given to the voice of the other”, (405) and these marks acknowledge that what is contained within the chapters is the authentic words of others. This is emphasised in an incident when Jonathan reads one of Gert’s stories. At one point, he reminds his listeners that “‘I’ here is Gert and not [Jonathan]” (166) while “moving his fingers into inverted commas” (166). To use quotation marks in such a way draws attention both to the way that the “I” can be deceptive in hiding the actual speaker when using other’s words, and to *Finding Mr Madini’s* concern of acknowledging each person’s contribution. In contrast to Krog who hides others’ “I”s within her own authorial voice, *Finding Mr Madini* makes it explicitly clear when there is a shift from “I” to “I”.

The quotation marks gain an added meaning in an incident where a group of the writers are busy talking about Steve, while he is standing nearby. Steve tries to interrupt, saying “[y]ou are all

³³ When Jonathan announces his intentions to co-author a book with the group, he describes how they all take a few moments to imagine the completed product “hang[ing] in the space above [their] heads. A big fat hard cover: OVER 1,000,000 COPIES SOLD, TRANSLATED INTO 11 LANGUAGES” (28). The imagined translation of the book into all of South Africa’s official languages is a gesture towards the inclusive and democratic nature of the project.

talking as if I'm not here" while "politely waving and bending two fingers from each hand in the air" (220). Valentine, the main narrator of this section, explains that he understands these finger signals as "inverted commas, but to [Steve] it must mean he wants to insert his own comment" (220). As the others are busy conducting a conversation about Steve without allowing him to participate, Steve, as the focus of the conversation, feels a need to interrupt and regain a space for himself in the discussion, rather than remain represented by others. Inverted commas, which usually indicate the usage, or rather, appropriation of someone else's words in a new context, are thus used to indicate a desire to be given narrative agency, rather than remain in a state of being spoken for.

In giving so many "I"s the opportunity to take up narrative agency, *Finding Mr Madini* exercises a de-centring of the reader's sense of self. Iain Chambers talks about the way that the reader is forced to engage with a new "I" in the act of reading:

[i]t forces a confrontation with the effects of instability. It calls upon me to live in fluctuations between a displaced sense of centre, of the 'I', under the gaze of those other eyes/'I's, and to subscribe to a subsequent weakening and uncertainty within the limits of *my* thoughts and actions (19).

As the reader inhabits another "I" in the act of reading, the centre-margin dichotomy becomes weakened. Hierarchies of power and of othering are destabilized, and boundaries between self and other become more porous and fluid. This act is perhaps even more confrontational in a novel like *Finding Mr Madini*, where the "I" is continuously shifting from one individual to another, and there is no single voice, like Krog's voice, which acts as a "host" for the reader. In a text concerned with marginality, this shift thus opens up the reader to engage with the marginalized.

However, in another context, Spivak warns us against mis-identifying the act of de-centring: "[t]he trick or turn is not to assume the representation of de-centring to *be* de-centring" (qtd. Chambers 19). Although Jonathan represents himself as giving over his pen, the pieces of written work, and subsequently the voices of the writers, are bound together by his narrative, bringing into question the authenticity of the de-centring process. The required content of the "windows" set out by Jonathan, also suggests that he is shaping their stories, just like the TRC shaped testimonies. Can it be said that Jonathan is truly providing space for the other voices to speak if they are ultimately framed and hemmed-in by his voice, or is he merely presenting them in this way and using these voices for his own narrative project? Iain Chambers argues that if "[t]he observed, the other, is once again spoken for and

positioned”, then “the other has no voice, is not allowed to speak and *define* her or his own sense of being (or authenticity)” (81, my italics; 82, my italics).

Having a voice thus necessitates more than the act of speaking – it also demands the agency to “define” and “position” oneself in the world, to craft the narrative, and the ordering of “beginning, middle, and end”. The act of presenting one’s contributions must be set within one’s own framework, and within one’s own set of limitations and demands. This is a necessity that Jonathan represents himself being aware of, and once the project has gathered momentum, he passes on the responsibility of being facilitator and the “main point of view character” (107) to Valentine and Virginia. As a directive main narrator, their responsibility would be to “pay attention and take detailed notes, capturing what goes on in the room and what is happening in [their] li[ves] between sessions”, (106-107) therefore sandwiching the written pieces shared at the sessions within the first-person narration of a particular individual’s life and viewpoint. Jonathan, in other words, represents his role as merely initiating the writing process, rather than playing the role of narrator or writer throughout.

This division of roles is visually enunciated throughout the text as the sections are each marked with a unique numeration system. The first part is narrated by Jonathan, and the type for this is Roman Numerals (Chapter I - IX). The second part is written from Valentine’s part of view, and the type for this is Arabic numerals (Chapters 10 - 13). Part three gives Virginia’s perspective, and here the numbers are written out as words. These serve as visual markers of the way that the different composite stories come under one umbrella, not only in terms of the windows collectively building a representation of one life, but also in the way that all the lives together form the Great African Spider Writing Project. Though the various chapters remain part of the same main narrative, and form part of the collective whole, each directive narrator’s section retains unique and varied perspectives and life-circumstances.

I am not, however, reading *Finding Mr Madini* as an argument that the author must remove himself from a text and give up his “privileged position”. It is vital that Jonathan also participates as a writer. Virginia comments that Jonathan “become[s] a sort of Baas” (223) when he stops sharing his “windows” with them. In using the term “Baas”, with its apartheid connotations of *baaskap*, Virginia suggests that when he does not participate, he becomes an oppressive, dominating figure whom they are expected to obey. In an interview, Morgan adds that “it helped a lot in the whole mood and politics of the project when I began to offer glimpses of myself via the windows and stopped acting so much

like *Herr Director/baas*” (Cascarino and Morgan 438). His participation in the narrative project, writing with them, thus underscores the sense of equality underlying the project.

Despite the narrative equality that is evidently achieved, *Finding Mr Madini* includes reminders that these writers are homeless people, and, as such, are in positions of “permanent precariousness” (Arnold 12). As the group carries on meeting regularly, there are striking episodes that reveal how “precarious” the lives of foreigners are. Kathleen Arnold argues that the marginalized are often subject to “processes that either demand assimilation or attempt to extinguish their presence”, (3) and a stark example of the latter is related by Jonathan: one morning, a Mozambican and two Senegalese men are surrounded by angry crowds on a train, and thrown off. Jonathan mentions that the “only paper who carried the story on the front page was the *Sowetan*”, (77) while all the other media attention is focussed on “Viagra, or Clinton and Monica Lewinsky” (76). The lack of interest in a violent, illegal event leading to the death of three men highlights the apathetic attitude of the national media towards non-citizens, as well as their position as “zoe”. “Extinguished” physically, the representations of these marginalized figures are also “extinguished” by the lack of media interest.

The foreigners are not the only ones who face hostility and antagonism. The morning after this xenophobic incident Jonathan asks Ted, the Zimbabwean editor of *Homeless Talk*, whether he has seen Sipho, one of the group members who has not been in attendance for a while. At this, Ted responds: “[m]aybe he won’t come today. As foreigners, *we* are all standing low” (78). By conflating Sipho, a homeless South African, with himself, a Zimbabwean immigrant, Ted presents an interesting parallel between the social position accorded to the homeless and that of the foreigner. Although Sipho is a South African, and therefore a representative of those who have carried out attacks on foreigners, Ted suggests that he himself is a possible target of this kind of violent behaviour. Ted thus considers Sipho’s position of marginality to be analogous to his, as Sipho too faces assimilation or extinguishing.

Sipho’s absence for the majority of the text seems to suggest that he has been “extinguished”, while being a further reminder that there are social conditions that narrative cannot resolve.³⁴ Sipho Madini, whose articles and poems Jonathan had read in previous editions of *Homeless Talk*, is the first writer he meets, and someone with whom Jonathan develops a close relationship. Therefore, when he disappears in November, Jonathan grows concerned, and it is his search for Madini that Morgan uses

³⁴ I use Sipho to refer to the character of Sipho, and Madini to refer to him otherwise.

ultimately to frame the novel, titling it *Finding Mr Madini*. On the first page of the book is a MISSING ad, with a photo of Siphos Madini's face, while almost every chapter opens up with a piece of Siphos writing, ranging from poems to extracts from his monthly columns called "Tips to Survive on the Streets". During the second half of the book, Jonathan and some of the other group members conduct searches for him, even going to Sun City - Diepkloof Prison, Johannesburg's largest prison. The book ends with Jonathan and Valentine deciding to carry on with the search for Siphos, but readers never find out what happens to him within the pages of *Finding Mr Madini*.

In 2000 the *Mail and Guardian*, a national weekly newspaper, announced that Siphos Madini had been discovered. In Siphos's article written especially for this edition, we see an example of the marginalization of the homeless and the silencing of their voices. All the while, since his disappearance in November 1998, he had been imprisoned in Diepkloof Prison after being arrested at a crime scene. Using a false name, he'd decided not to reveal his identity so as to avoid a permanent criminal record. Madini explained how he had been advised to ultimately plead guilty for a crime of which he was innocent, even though he had proclaimed his innocence to the police officers, the lawyers, and the court on numerous occasions (26). The voice of one homeless person was thus powerless against the criminal justice system.

The silencing of his story in real life contrasts with the way that his disappearance from the text magnified his story. In his accompanying article in the *Mail and Guardian*, Morgan writes that "[w]hen [Madini] disappeared, of course [he] was sad, but [he] also recognized that it provided [them] with the perfect plot [...] which would tie together all of [their] stories" (27). Morgan reveals that, despite *Finding Mr Madini's* preoccupation with providing the marginalized with an opportunity to speak for themselves, he ultimately played a role in shaping and ordering the chronology of the text, and Siphos's story had been appropriated to frame the narrative.³⁵ Yet, using Siphos's case in this way served a double purpose, for while it acted as a framing narrative, it also drew attention to Madini's disappearance. The ways that stories change and extend beyond themselves in the public domain is shown in the irony of this situation – ordinarily, the disappearance of a homeless South African would not have been considered newsworthy; indeed, the nature of being homeless often demands a constant migration, and consists of disappearance and appearance in a number of places. However, with of the

³⁵ A newspaper article released a few weeks before the book's official launch in 1999 relays how the title had been changed to *Finding Mr Madini* in order to bring more attention to the campaign of finding him (Mkhwanazi 10).

publication of a book centring his disappearance, Sipho was brought to national attention after his case was ignored by the criminal justice system.

Unlike Yazir Henry, for example, who reacted in anger after his story was taken up by media and he lost control over the representation of his story, Madini celebrates the fact that “[his] own story has grown beyond [himself]” (26). Because of Morgan’s decision to use his story to frame the novel, Madini has been given many more opportunities within the public domain, and uses the generated publicity to help others. Recognising the possibilities of writing as was his experience in GASP, he started a writing group in prison, with the end result being a new book “document[ing] the life of his fellow prisoners during his incarceration at ‘Sun City’” (Rappetti 2). This incident thus articulates the point that appropriation can lead to or become advocacy.

Within the pages of *Finding Mr Madini*, however, we find a careful articulation of the need to allow subjects to represent themselves and an understanding of the ethics of representation. *Finding Mr Madini* also suggests that an important requirement of story-telling is an audience that responds to these representations of self. Again, the word “windows” contains within it the seeds of understanding this movement from an ethics of representation to an ethics of listening. In addition to allowing readers glimpses of the writers’ lives, “windows” allow for their owners to gain a perspective of the world outside. In a visit to Virginia’s place, Pinky acknowledges that: “[y]ou want to get out and find a place you can raise your child. A window for a view of life” (52).³⁶ Windows thus become a way of not only looking in, but also looking out; a way for outsiders not only to look into, but for insiders to look out.

This concern about reciprocity is seen in the way the writers react to the absence of a fellow writer, Gert. Jonathan reads his story in his stead, and when the group applauds at the end, his absence leads to awkwardness. Virginia explains that “[c]lapping, without having Gert to hear [them], is unique. So [she] clap[s] louder. [They] all look around for him but end up looking at each other’s faces” (168). Without having Gert there to acknowledge their response, responding to his story becomes pointless. Virginia later remarks that “[she] wish[es] Gert would come. [She] feel[s] like [she] know[s] him but not that he knows [them]. He has never heard [their] stories” (248). Her remarks thus emphasise how story-telling necessitates a reciprocal sharing and listening for it to be a real

³⁶ Pinky’s poignant suggestion to Virginia upon finding out that her room is windowless is that she “[p]ut up a curtain and pretend” (52).

engagement with stories of others. Morgan highlights this need: “in order to begin to explore and enact the counterplot to the victim one, it needs someone or a group who can act as outsider witnesses to acknowledge the story and the struggle in fresh ways. As GASPers, we performed this function for each other” (Cascarino and Morgan 445). The necessity of the listener is further emphasised by Laub who argues: “[t]he absence of an empathetic listener, or more radically, the absence of an *addressable other*, and other who can hear the anguish of one’s memories and thus affirm and recognize their realness, annihilates the story” (68). The role that the listener plays is so vital that Laub suggests that without the other, there is no story.

Finding Mr Madini thus suggests that there is not only a need to create a space for others to tell their own stories, but also to ensure that these stories will be witnessed by others. The movement from self-representational monologues in the body of the text to an epilogue consisting of interviews highlights this progression to dialogical relationships. These interviews are conducted by two members of the writing group without the mediation of a main narrator. Whereas Krog’s last poem calls for the victim, for the other to “forgive me/ take me with you”, and her final prose words express an insistence that together “I” and “you” must work towards a better future, the ending of *Finding Mr Madini* shows this collaboration in practice, with dialogue and community being exercised and created.

These interviews also give the writers room to reflect upon the process and the effects of their participation in the writing group in allowing them to claim ownership over their lives and to become part of a broader community. Whereas Krog is accused of taking up the stories of others, in *Finding Mr Madini* the writing group expresses their willingness to participate, and a deep joy that comes from having participated. Steven says that “it gives me hope and strength as a writer” (256). Patrick talks about the potential of the project: “I always wanted to be [a very great writer], and I sensed it was my very best chance” (264). The group is accredited with life-changing results - at least one participant develops a more nuanced and humane attitude towards people as a result. Robbie, the most criminally inclined and violent member of the group comments on how previously “I wasn’t a guy who worried about others. I was more interested in friends and nice times. Now [...] I know the difference between good and evil more [...] I never sat with people like this before” (270). In fact, Robbie now wants to: “be somewhere between rich and poor and to help the underprivileged” (271).

Many of the writers also hope that their writing will change how they are perceived. Steven has the hope that the book will catalyze awareness of their trials, and how “through determination, even the lowest of the low can succeed” (257). Patrick acknowledges that their writing will open up other worlds, allowing the reader to “explore some things that didn’t happen to him” (266). Virginia says that “[she] [is] praying to God for people to read this book we are writing. [She] would like people to understand how we got homeless and jobless. It is not always laziness or inability” (251). She adds later that she is “[h]oping that reader get to know that homelessness is not brainlessness and is not a chosen career” (258). These pleas are aimed at the reader, to move beyond the stereotype just as Jonathan Morgan has, and to acknowledge them as human beings.

Finding Mr Madini shows how Morgan toys with appropriation and then abandons it, leaving the text in a state of tension between advocacy and self-representation. To responsibly represent another seems to necessitate more than the accommodation of words in a text. It demands the provision of a space which accommodates individual needs. Although, we cannot disregard Morgan’s work in editing and crafting the final work, within the pages of the novel itself the voices of the homeless come fully to the fore as individuals and participants in their own right. The participants’ responses also serve as a reminder of the power of narrative, a theme to which Morgan draws consistent attention. In the opening pages, Jonathan is fooled into helping a beggar, and afterwards, he tells his wife that “[e]ven kak stories are powerful” (7). Later, Jonathan adds that “the more [he] write[s] and live[s] part of [his] life as a writer, the more [he] see[s] how powerfully we shape our worlds through the language and the stories we choose for ourselves” (277). Words, language, stories are posited as being not only reflective and descriptive of reality, but as such are shown to be part of a process that shapes reality.

Welcome to Our Hillbrow picks up on this theme of the power of narrative, but cautions against Jonathan’s optimism, by focusing predominantly on the narratives that circulate in South Africa about foreigners, or *Makwerekwere*. While Jonathan suggests that we ultimately have agency within these narratives, that “we can choose to resist these [shit stories], and write and be in new ones that we prefer”, (278) the *Makwerekwere* are not able to “write and be in new ones” due to their marginalization. Furthermore, by paralleling the experiences of these marginalized individuals with the experiences of South Africans, Mpe expands the definition of homeless and marginalized, revealing the stereotyped prejudices evident in the trope of foreignness.

MAKWEREKWERE, METAFICTION, AND YOU: WELCOME TO OUR HILLBROW

Phaswane Mpe, up-and-coming scholar and writer, published *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* in 2001 to critical acclaim, three years before tragically passing away at the age of 34. Originally from the village of Ga-Mogano, Mpe took up residence in Hillbrow, one of Johannesburg's most notorious inner city residential areas, when he became a student at the University of the Witwatersrand (McGregor "Phaswane" n.p.). His time in Hillbrow had such an impact on him that, when caught in a bout of depression, he ended up writing the "first [text] to record the huge changes that have transformed [South Africa's] inner cities over the past 10 years [since democratization]" (McGregor "Phaswane" n.p.). While *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* explores various topical issues such as suicide, HIV/AIDS and witchcraft through the lives of its two main protagonists, Refentše and Refilwe, its focus falls predominantly on xenophobia and migration. Through a multi-layered narrative form, *Welcome* problematizes the distinction between reality and fiction, and in doing so, encourages us to re-examine the trope of the foreigner, pace Julia Kristeva, blurring the line between the self and the stranger by showing how we are all strangers.

Originally from the rural village of Tiragalong, Refentše, the main protagonist of the first three sections of *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, moves to Hillbrow to commence his studies at the University of Johannesburg in 1990. Here, he stays with his cousin, as he completes his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, eventually obtaining a position as lecturer in English literature. Motivated by his realization that there is a "scarcity of written Hillbrow fictions in English and Sepedi", (29) as well as the other nine of the eleven official South African languages, Refentše starts a writing project in English. He does not produce the books and poetry anthologies he has planned, but has one short story published about a HIV-positive young woman (who is referred to as the "scarecrow" heroine). Initially written to alleviate his feelings of loneliness in Hillbrow, it eventually becomes an attempt to grapple with pertinent social phenomena in Hillbrow and Tiragalong: euphemism, prejudice, xenophobia and AIDS.

Although he has a promising future as an academic, Refentše commits suicide after discovering his lover, Lerato, in bed with his best friend. After these events are relayed to us, the narrative focus shifts to Refilwe, one of his former lovers from Tiragalong, who has also moved to Hillbrow. The last three sections of the text outline Refilwe's work as a Sepedi commissioning editor, followed by a trip

to England for further studies. She originally endorses stereotypes of biased prejudices against foreigners in Hillbrow, but after Refentše's death she starts developing a more compassionate attitude towards immigrants and foreigners, which is catalysed by her reading of his short story. Her journey to England, where she falls in love with a Nigerian and develops AIDS, further opens her eyes to the effects of stereotype and prejudice.

Many of the incidents from Mpe's life form the basis for Refentše and Refilwe's lives, and elements of their lives in turn are reflected in Refentše's short story. Mpe and Refentše both studied at universities in Johannesburg, staying in Hillbrow for the duration of their studies. Both turn to writing to counter depression, and both of them share a love for Sepedi, but wrote in English (Art Smart, n.p.). Refilwe is also a mother tongue Sepedi speaker, and, like Mpe did, travels to Oxford to read for an MA in Publishing and Media Studies (Gaylard 184). Similarly, the story of the "scarecrow" heroine acts as a point of intersection for Refentše and Refilwe's life. Like Refentše, this fictional character writes a novel, and the ostracization and rejection that the HIV-positive woman faces from her local community foreshadows the response that Refilwe will receive when she develops AIDS. The structure of *Welcome* is therefore analogous to a "series of mirrors or reflections, or stories within stories", (Gaylard 184) where narrative layers not only share similar concerns, but are also entangled in each other.

This Chinese box structure serves to "problematise and subvert the familiar distinction between fiction and reality (or art and life)", (Gaylard 185) a concern to which an epigraph draws attention: "Reader, be assured this narrative is no fiction" (n.p.). This quote from W. E. B. Du Bois highlights this book's preoccupation of revealing the slipperiness of fiction and reality in order to "promote an awareness of the role that stories and storytelling play in the constructions of social reality", (Gaylard 181) while the personal address of the epigraph calls the reader to engage actively within the text's realm of fact and fiction. This call is implicitly repeated in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* itself by an unnamed omniscient narrator who uses second-person narration. This narrative voice, which interweaves and "synthesiz[es] [the] disparate events", (Gaylard 181)³⁷ is explicitly addressed at

³⁷ Gaylard notes how this narrative function finds an important precedent in Zakes Mda's *Ways of Dying* (181), which also shares *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*'s preoccupation with stories and story-telling. Mda's work is included in an intertextual reference in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, as Refilwe recommends this work to an Irish barman in England (Mpe 106).

Refentše (and later Refilwe, of course), while he sits in Heaven, and the narrator guides him through the events of his past life on earth, and those that are transpiring in the living on earth.

This text's concern in drawing the reader's attention to the relationship between fact and fiction is made clearer by the text's awareness of the power of narrative. In showing how news of Refentše's death spreads all over the country, carried by "minibus taxis and migrants' cars" (30) as well as telecommunication and cellular service providers, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* reminds us of the range of narrative's impact. Furthermore, as Refentše sits in Heaven, the narrator explains how Heaven is not a physical place in fact, but rather the space one inhabits within memories:

Heaven is the world of our continuing existence, located in the memory and consciousness of those who live with us and after us. It is the archive that those we left behind keep visiting and revisiting; digging this out, suppressing or burying that. Continually reconfiguring the stories of our lives, as if they alone hold the real and true version. [...] Heaven can also be Hell, depending on the nature of our continuing existence in the memories and consciousness of the living (25).³⁸

While in *Country of My Skull*, Krog realizes that the TRC testimonies have the power to produce a "foreign country" around her, in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, the power of these narratives is extended. Narratives not only affect lives, but they persist on earth after death, forming a past, an "archive", in which people are remembered, and which determines the quality of their "continuing existence".³⁹

³⁸ Meg Samuelson recounts that shortly before his death, Phaswane Mpe inscribed her copy of *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* with the following words: "Meg: No need to worry! It is the Heaven of Our Fictions" ("Crossing" 197).

³⁹ As the narrative voice shifts between "the worlds of the living and the dead" (Hoad 123) in a text that Neville Hoad argues is best described as an "elegy or an eulogy" (114), fiction is represented as "a way of never laying the dead to rest" (115). *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* also seems to suggest a blurring of the past and the present that opens up the "archive", forming a contrast to Harris' analysis of the TRC archive as a "closing off" (162) of knowledge as "the parts of the Past that were not consigned to the past by the TRC cannot be visited, read, interpreted, let alone revisited, reread, reinterpreted" (177). Mpe's opening up of the archive, thus suggests a "turn towards the subject" (Adorno 115), particularly as *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* works through ways in which the apartheid past is still implicated in the post-apartheid present.

From his vantage point in Heaven, Refentše is shown how his own story becomes an “archive” as his story is “appropriated and told and retold, used or misused, by others for their own purposes” (Gaylard 183).⁴⁰ One example of this is Refilwe’s “rewrit[ing]” (42) of Refentše’s death. The villagers insist that his suicide is linked to his bewitching by his mother; however, in Refilwe’s version of his death he had been bewitched by a “loose-thighed Hillbrowan” (43). Refilwe’s words are so powerfully destructive, that they lead to “[his] second death”, the “death of [his] reputation” (44). Alarming incidents in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* also highlight the potentially dangerous or deathly consequences of narratives in the physical world, of which the reader is cautioned by a second epigraph: “[a] human being is a beast that when cornered throws away weapons and fights with the tongue” (n.p.). Stories, narratives, the tongue, are compared to weapons, emphasising their destructive and protective function. Within the text, however, we are shown predominantly destructive functions, one example of which is the villagers’ reactions towards Refentše’s mother after Refentše’s suicide. As rumours spread that she has bewitched her son, some of the villagers turn on her and kill her.

Welcome to Our Hillbrow’s exploration of the power of narrative lends weight to the tropes of foreignness, the immigrant and xenophobia with which this text grapples. Hillbrowan locals are represented as bearing animosity and antagonism against the migrant foreigners, and many hold these “outsiders” responsible for the violence and decay that characterises Hillbrow. Refentše’s white superintendent tells him that that “Hillbrow had been just fine, until those Nigerians came in here with all their drug dealing (17). Refentše’s Cousin is less discriminatory about who he blames, holding all foreigners responsible for crime and grime in Hillbrow (17). Moreover, the average Hillbrowan possesses the view that these African foreigners are the originator of the most taboo of diseases: HIV/AIDS. Some local newspapers go so far as to “attribute[...] the source of the virus that caused AIDS to a species called the Green Monkey, which people in some parts of West Africa were said to eat as meat, thereby contracting the disease” (4). Just like “dirt”, the foreigners are a “threat to good order”, (Douglas 160) and are seen as the reason for the disorder of the city.

This antagonism is encapsulated in the pejorative term which the locals use to refer to these foreigners: *Makwerekwere*. The narrator explains that this word is based on the *Kwere kwere* sounds

⁴⁰ The reader is also reminded of Refentše’s lack of agency through the use of the second-person address. The repetitive “you”, the pronoun implied in imperative commands (“Imperative” n.p.), seems to dictate the actions of Refentše, like an “actor in the drama, so designated by the author” (Burroway qtd. Green 9).

that the locals heard coming out of the mouths of the foreigners (20). Bouillon highlights the inherent marginalization in this term, paralleling it to the “Boers’ naming of local black communities as ‘hottentots’ to denote ‘stutterers’” (qtd. Nyamnjoh 39). The term *Makwerekwere*, like the word “Hottentots”, caricatures the unintelligibility of these foreigners, drawing attention to their difference, and from the outset denies a common humanity to those who are foreign. Furthermore, as individuals whose language is rejected, and whose unintelligibility is also a marker of their inability to “master[...] [any] of the local South African languages”, (Nyamnjoh 39)⁴¹ there is no possible means of communication or dialogue between them and local individuals. The *Makwerekwere* are consequently stripped of entry into narrative discourse, and robbed of recognition of their humanity (Nyamnjoh 14).

This marginalization on the basis of language is metafictionally represented by the lack of dialogue from the *Makwerekwere*. Osita Ezeliora points out that it is primarily through the narrator’s words that the reader engages with the characters in the text, who only “*tells* us; he does not *show* any action, or reveal incidents through dialogue” (174). None of the voices of the *Makwerekwere* are included, unlike in *Country of My Skull* or in *Finding Mr Madini* where the marginalized are included through quotations or through their own pieces of writing. Ezeliora argues that migrancy is thus robbed of a representational rhythm it should invoke as a “contemporary global phenomenon [...] made easier by the modern modes of transportation”, (101) concluding that “*Welcome* does not achieve the approximation it struggles to attain” (174). I would argue, however, that it is precisely this “near-total absence of dialogue” (174) that represents the experiences of the *Makwerekwere*. In a text concerned with highlighting their marginalization in South African society, the “extinguishing”, to use Arnold’s term, of their voices by the narrator’s thoughts and narration is a reflection of the silencing of their voices in real life. Whereas in previous texts, the voices of the marginalized were included in representation, in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* they are represented through absence, in a metafictional re-enactment of their inability to speak.

Furthermore, these *Makwerekwere* are not only subject to discrimination and hostility from ordinary South Africans, but also from institutional and governmental instruments such as media and policemen. *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* includes an incident where policemen pick up some *Makwerekwere* and threaten them with imprisonment or deportation. The *Makwerekwere* pay out

⁴¹ It is probably because of this perceived stereotype that, during the May 2008 xenophobia attacks, individuals were purportedly asked for the isiZulu word for “elbow” as proof of their South African identity (Gqola 214).

bribes with what money they have, as the reality is that they “knew they had no recourse to legal defence if they were ever caught”:

[t]he police could detain them or deport them without allowing them any trial at all. Even the Department of Home Affairs was not sympathetic to their cause. No one seemed to care that the treatment of *Makwerekwere* by the police, and the lack of sympathy from the influential Department of Home Affairs, ran contrary to the human rights clauses detailed in the new constitution of the country. Ambiguities, paradoxes, ironies... the stuff of our South African and *Makwerekwere* lives (24).

Makwerekwere thus face very real exclusion and marginalization despite the human rights upheld in the Constitution.⁴² Their position within the new South Africa is shown to be precarious, with their powerlessness placing them at the mercy of those in charge.

If we look closer at the “ambiguities, paradoxes, ironies” that link “our South African and *Makwerekwere*”, the “human rights clauses detailed in the new Constitution” also fail to protect the rights of all South Africans, and the crime and victimization that the *Makwerekwere* face is shown to be typical of the South African’s experience. A moment which highlights this discrepancy between the promised future and the stark reality is when Refentše and his friends are held at gunpoint as the South African national rugby team win the Rugby World Cup in June 1995. Images would later flash around the world of the white team captain, Francois Pienaar, and the black president, Nelson Mandela, standing together with the trophy as proof of South Africa’s smooth and successful transition in to a unified and democratic country. Yet, it is at this positive moment of nation-building, that Refentše and his friends face violence.⁴³ Nation-building thus seems to incorporate certain groups into the nation, while others are still placed in positions of powerlessness.

⁴² Cathi Albertyn argues that the rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights extend to “everyone” including foreigners, as it is later explained that citizens are entitled to only two unique sets of rights: political rights, and the right of choice, in trade, occupation and profession (178).

⁴³ This ironic scene is heightened by the meaning of Refentše’s name, which is Sepedi for “we have won” (Green 6).

Similarly, just as the *Makwerekwere* face linguistic marginalization, the limited agency of some South Africans is illuminated by their linguistic exclusion. South Africa's official language policy recognises eleven languages, and this is often seen as a sign of South Africa's democratic nature. However, Michael Green points out that this policy is based on one "first introduced in 1961 as part of the social engineering of apartheid, with a view to making provision for the official languages of the Bantustans" (4). Indigenous languages were consequently marginalized during apartheid, and vestiges of marginalization are shown to be persistent in post-apartheid South Africa. Though Sepedi is an official South African language, Refentše, his scarecrow heroine, and Refilwe, who are all native Sepedi speakers, come to realize that it command as much respect as English does. In recognition of the unlikelihood of being published in Sepedi, Refentše decides to publish his work in English, but maintains the hope that if he has enough short stories published, he can combine them into a novel to be translated into Sepedi. His scarecrow heroine is brave enough to write a novel in Sepedi, but this is rejected because of her refusal to translate her work into another language (56-57). Refilwe, as a "fairly open-minded Commissioning editor in Sepedi", (95) becomes one of the people who ends up rejecting Sepedi manuscripts, not because she wishes to do so, but because her publishing house deems there to be no interest in these texts.⁴⁴ Citizens, like foreigners, find themselves "stifled by the repressive forces of democratisation" (61).⁴⁵

The similarities between the experiences of South Africans and the *Makwerekwere* suggest that the characters are perhaps too quick in judging others as stranger. In *Strangers to Ourselves*, Julia Kristeva explores the position of the stranger and the foreigner in various cultures and communities, advancing her thesis that we all contain an inherent strangeness:

⁴⁴ Although Mpe was a native Sepedi speaker, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* is written in English, and the Sepedi characters' dialogue is conducted in English. He explains to Lizzy Attree that, after the disappointing reception of his proposed Sepedi translation of a collection of short stories, he decided not to translate *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (Mpe "Healing" 194). The English translation of these short stories was published posthumously, along with a collection of poetry in Sepedi and English, in a collection entitled *Brooding Clouds*.

⁴⁵ *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* seeks to raise awareness about the marginalized, as shown in attempts to incorporate the Sepedi language. The two epigraphs (which include one quotation from W.E.B. du Bois, a black American civil rights leader, and another from OK Matsepe, a Sepedi poet) are translated in English and Sepedi (Green 8). The use of English is also marked with a Sepedi flavour, such as the repeated phrase "Bone of my heart" which is a direct translation from Sepedi (Mpe "Interview" 47). Further, Green argues that the roughness of some lines read like a badly edited and awkwardly translated work (13), yet I would argue that this is an example of the translation being "foreignized".

the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder (1).

Instead of seeing the foreigner as an Other, Kristeva suggests that underneath the face of belonging, we all hide a sense of foreignness. It is our unwilling acceptance of this internal state that forces us to project and recognise foreignness in others.

A closer examination, for instance, of examples of moral degeneracy attributed to the *Makwerekwere* show that they have been falsely accused. *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* includes a list of the “examples of the many cases of crime not caused by *Makwerekwere*”, (22) including rape, murder, and robbery. Furthermore, although the pages of this text are marked by death (all of the main characters die, including Lerato; Refentše’s best friend, Sammy; Sammy’s lover, Bohlale; Refentše’s mentor, Tshepo; Refentše’s mother; Lerato and Tshepo’s father; and Refilwe), these deaths are rarely the results of the murderous intent of Hillbrowan or *Makwerekwere* strangers, but, when attributed to a human cause, are the results of grudges carried from Tiragalong. Refentše thus remarks to his Cousin: “hadn’t we better [...] admit that quite a large percentage of our home relatives who get killed in Hillbrow, are in fact killed by other relatives and friends – people who bring their home grudges with them to Jo’burg?” (18). It is thus not the “strangers outside”, the *Makwerekwere*, who are responsible for “wreck[ing] the space of our abode”, but the “strangers within”, the locals, are shown to be the source of much of the decay of Hillbrow.⁴⁶

A xenophobic incident after Refentše’s death furthermore highlights the blurring between the stranger within and the stranger outsider. Jealous of Refentše’s Johannesburg lover, Lerato, Refilwe is able to create negative sentiment against her by inciting the villagers’ bias against the foreigners. She spreads the news that Lerato’s father was a Nigerian (44), implying that Lerato was a hated *Makwerekwere*. Ironically, the villagers later discover that Lerato is the daughter of one of their own villagers, and consequently the sister of Tshepo, “the first person in Tiragalong to go and study at the University of Witwatersrand” (45). Tiragalong was understandably “shocked to learn that the despised Lerato and the beloved Tshepo were, in fact, sister and brother”, (45) as Tshepo was not only a much-admired person in Tiragalong, but also Refentše’s close friend and mentor. Lerato, who is ostracised

⁴⁶ Another example: Piet, the father of Lerato, Refentše’s lover, is killed in Alexandria, and the villagers back home attribute this to the general moral decay that marks life in Hillbrow. From the retrospective view that is afforded to him in Heaven, Refentše ironically discovers that Piet’s killers were in fact hired by his very own cousin.

and othered as a hated foreigner, is thus revealed to the sister of one of Tiragalong's most-beloved sons, a local. This mis-identification serves to highlight the fluidity of these binary identities, as well as deconstruct the rigidity of their application.

The fluidity of these categories is underscored by Kristeva's suggestion that the foreigner "disappears when we all acknowledge ourselves as foreigners, unamenable to bonds and communities" (1). The foreigner only exists when we hold on to our "bonds and communities", allowing our communal relationships to influence our perceptions of who is foreign, as we see in the shifting perceptions of foreignness held by different groups. For the Tiragalong villagers, strangers include "both black non-South Africans and Johannesburgers" (54); for Johannesburgers/South Africans, strangers are *Makwerekwere*. While the Hillbrowans consider *Makwerekwere* to be carriers of AIDS, some Tiragalong villagers view both *Makwerekwere* and Hillbrowans as practitioners of deviant sexual behaviour which leads to AIDS (4). Similarly, while some of the villagers react strongly to the news that Lerato is in fact *Makwerekwere*, and not a Johannesburger, many of the villagers are ambivalent, asking whether the two were "not equally dangerous?" (46). Xenophobia aimed at *Makwerekwere* and other South Africans is thus contextualized within a natural tendency to form exclusive collectivities at the cost of foreignizing others.

Despite this blurry line between the stranger within and the stranger outside, Refentše is the only local who seems to be open-minded to the foreigners. "Acknowledging his own foreignness", (Kristeva 1) he is aware that he is also a migrant to Hillbrow. Refentše thus reacts with compassion towards the *Makwerekwere*, bringing to mind Julia Kristeva's thesis that to be "spared detesting [the foreigner] in himself", one must recognise him "within ourselves" (1). Instead of falling prey to prejudice and stereotype, he advises other characters, such as Cousin, to hold a more temperate, compassionate attitude towards these migrants. Placing their needs in parallel to his, he argues that:

[t]hey are lecturers and students of Wits, Rand Afrikaans University and Technikon around Jo'burg; professionals taking up posts that locals are hardly qualified to fill. A number of them can be found selling fruit and vegetables in the streets, along with many locals- so how can they take our jobs? (18).

Refentše thus highlights the ways that the foreigners, instead of depriving locals of the fruits of freedom, actually complement and serve the locals in many ways. Instead of presenting a threat to South Africans and their jobs, the foreigners, he argues, are actually fulfilling a lack that the locals are

not able or qualified to fill. Furthermore, they are working alongside locals, and thereby introducing more economic opportunities and jobs. Migrants are humanized by showing how their needs and desires are the same as those who are South African.

After Refentše's death, Refilwe also comes to recognise that *Makwerekwere* are people just like her, "who entered [...] Hillbrow with all sorts of good and evil intentions" (96). This change in stance is set off by her reading of Refentše's short story, and as she re-reads the story, the heroine's stigmatization comes to haunt her, as well as the prejudices of the villagers towards the girl. It is particularly his "scarecrow heroine" (95) which "made her see herself and her own prejudices in a different light", (96) as she identifies with the character's humanity. The reader is thus shown the power of narrative to defeat stereotypical understandings of the other, and its power to produce new orientations towards the foreign other, along with recognition of one's own otherness.

Furthermore, travel, like narrative, is instrumental in bringing about this new orientation, as her move to England catalyses her change in perception. In writing about migrancy as a way of moving between binary categories, Iain Chambers posits that:

[m]igrancy [...] involves a movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation (5).⁴⁷

In migrancy, a displacement occurs not only of body, but of history and identity, and those identities and histories which were perceived as stable and coherent are revealed to be changing and fluid. As Refilwe moves across national borders, she comes to realize that identities are constantly in flux. At Heathrow, she is exposed to xenophobic reactions directed at her fellow Africans, and is confronted with her new identity as "foreigner". Observing the different ways that the English officials treat nationalities, Refilwe is reminded of "the xenophobia [Hillbrow] engendered" (102). Here, however, foreigners are not called *Makwerekwere*, but rather "*Africans*" (102). As the terms for "foreigner" shift from *Makwerekwere* to *Africans*, we see a movement from an inherently pejorative word imbued with local meaning, to a neutral, globally recognised term, emphasising the slipperiness of the concept of "foreigner".

⁴⁷ Chambers distinguishes between travel and migrancy, by presenting travel as temporary and without lasting effect on identity. I thus use his thoughts on migrancy here, as Refentše's trip to England culminates in a permanent shift in identity perception.

This reconceptualization is further emphasised by the villagers' reactions to her when she return home from England with AIDS.⁴⁸ On her departure overseas, she had been lauded by an "impressed" (93) Tiragalong, but on her return, she faces a shocked community who would bring out their "linguistic chisels", (122) gossiping and maligning someone who, because of her Nigerian lover, was now "by association, one of the hated *Makwerekwere*" (118). She thus finds herself occupying the position of foreigner within her own country. Yet, as she does so, she finally comes to recognise that we are all truly foreigners, and it is at this point that the narrator welcomes her into the "World of our Humanity" (113) as "an Alexandran. A Johannesburger. An Oxfordian. A *Lekwerekwere*"(122). By listing the places that she has inhabited and belonged to, the narrator makes the point that her identity is not set on any specific place, but rather that it is shifting and fluid.

In drawing the community of "our Hillbrow" into the "World of our Humanity", (113) *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* also acts as a call to the reader to engage with the same journey of discovery as Refilwe. Rob Gaylard argues that Refilwe's response to Refentše's short story is a metafictional "statement about the power of works of fiction to influence and later alter people's lives", (Gaylard 185) and the reader is invited to participate in this process through the use of the second-person, which establishes "the[ir] ethical engagement" (Clarkson 456) with the text. The "you" calls the reader intimately into engaging with the "implied community signalled by the 'our' of the novel's title", (Clarkson 452) thus interpellating the reader to enter this "narrative space" (Attree 193). Lizzy Attree notes that although the characters in the text might never interact with those in their community whom they hold to be pariahs (whether it be because they are migrants, or because they have AIDS), the reader is compelled to interact with them (193).

Furthermore, this call to community also urges the reader to realize that we too are foreigners. Carol Clarkson argues that the phrase "Our Hillbrow" suggests that the text will focus on a location-specific community, but these expectations are undercut by revelations that there is no "locatable [Hillbrow] community premised on a shared set of beliefs and recognised obligations" (452). Similarly, as the phrase "Welcome to our Hillbrow" is repeated throughout the text with different place names replacing Hillbrow, with the result that the reader is welcomed to Our Heathrow, Our Oxford, Our Lagos, Clarkson argues that this phrase serves to imbue "our" with "notions of dispossession" (452).

⁴⁸ The villagers mistakenly blame her Nigerian lover for her status, yet the narrator reveals to us that she and her lover had acquired HIV before meeting. Again, the stranger is revealed not to be outside, but within.

This sense of dispossession is a way of opening up Hillbrow and the world to all who live there. Mpe himself notes this double-edgedness about living in Hillbrow: “as long as you are there you can rightly claim that you are the owner of Hillbrow but in a context where everyone is in transit. Then who owns it? It’s ours and it’s not ours” (“Interview” 51). In *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, Mpe thus untangles the conditions for xenophobia, by showing that identity is fluid and relative, and to be woven into community is not dependent on location, but rather bound upon a reflexive, relative connection to others.

CONCLUSION:

Finding Mr Madini and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* deal with issues that have been long pertinent for the South African - home and homelessness, foreignness and belonging. Njabulo Ndebele speaks of how the apartheid project led to the physical “loss of homes [and the] demise of intimacy”, pointing to the need to “restore national domiciles” (qtd. Samuelson “Walking” 130). Michael Neocosmos expands this idea of homelessness metaphorically by discussing how in contemporary South Africa, black South Africans are often marked as foreigners and are thus rendered homeless at home (51).⁴⁹ Similarly, *Finding Mr Madini* grapples with the notion of home, suggesting that homelessness extends further than social fact as a metaphor for the sense of alienation that many feel in post-apartheid South Africa. Whereas *Finding Mr Madini* focuses more on conditions of “homelessness”, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* picks up on the notion of alienation in order to illustrate Julia Kristeva’s thesis that we are all “foreigners”.

In broadening the notion of “foreigners” to encompass all, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* illustrates the shifting, open-endedness of identity. Travelling, as this text illustrates through Refilwe’s example, is a way of opening up an alternative orientation to the other. Iyonawan Masade thus argues that “[n]owhere is the juggling of identities more apparent than in the mind of the traveler”, (95) and as Refilwe crosses national boundaries, she becomes aware that in other countries, *she* is the “foreigner”. Similarly, Jonathan’s reminder to his fellow writers that they were not always homeless illustrates how identity is not unitary or consistent, but ever-changing. These figures, in various contexts considered

⁴⁹ Nyamnjoh notes in some areas up to 20% of the “foreigners” arrested are South African citizens or lawful residents (51).

“dirt”, are thus shown to have occupied other social identities. In fracturing the concept of a true and coherent self, these texts highlight Zygmunt Bauman’s insight into “human waste”, that:

no objects *are* ‘waste’ by their intrinsic qualities, and no objects can *become* waste through their inner logic. It is by being assigned to waste by human designs that material objects, whether human or inhuman, acquire all the mysterious, awe-inspiring, fearsome and repulsive qualities (22).

“Strangers”, “human waste”, “homeless”, *Makwerekwere* or Africans are all constructed as “foreign” by others, and having been designated as such, are imbued with “foreign” characteristics through stereotypes and generalizations. Stereotypes are broken down, however, when protagonists engage with these “foreign” individuals, such as the “homeless dude” in *Finding Mr Madini*, or Refilwe and her engagement with the “scarecrow” heroine, and other foreigners in England.

By revealing the identities of foreigners and selves to be contingent, not on place, but on others’ perceptions, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* also fractures the link between “identity and space or place” that makes the illusion of “‘imagined communities’ seem[...] real” (Masade 108). The link between identity and space signalled in the repeated phrase “Welcome to Our Hillbrow” is destabilised, as this phrase is shown to lose its sense of fixedness – the word “our” accrues a sense of dispossession, and “Hillbrow” is continuously replaced by the names of other places. By deconstructing the limitations of community, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* also fractures the nation-state’s boundaries of inclusion and exclusion within the framework of the apartheid city. *Finding Mr Madini*’s focus on a group of extra-national and national homeless and vulnerably accommodated individuals also blurs these lines. These two texts’ emphasis on the “margins of Jo-burg” and life in the inner-city of Hillbrow demonstrate the new types of communities forming in the shifting margins and centres of the city.

AbdouMaliq Simone thus argues that the city has become “largely disjointed”, and the fracturing of the city’s unity has led to the absence of “an overarching institutional logic or public discourse capable of tying its heterogeneous residents together in some conviction of common belonging or reference” (“Right” 323). Instead of a larger “public discourse”, these texts show how smaller community narratives and discourses are constructed to bring these “heterogenous residents” together. In *Finding Mr Madini*, the psychological effects of homelessness are alleviated by the Great African Spider Project as Jonathan and his fellow homeless writers firstly construct their own life narratives out of vignettes, and secondly tie their narratives to each other’s. In this act of “tying stories

together”, and writing “windows” of their lives, Jonathan and the Great African Spider Writers use stories to create a metaphorical home for themselves; one that is connected to others, rather than a site of exclusion. Narrative is thus employed to create an individual, as well as a communal, sense of identity. *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* illustrates, however, that narrative can be used to create divides between different groups. Divisive narratives like stereotypes and myths are shown to proliferate about *Makwerekwere*, thus excluding those perceived as others. However, Refilwe’s response to Refentše’s short story shows us that narrative is able to break down these divides, by presenting an alternative orientation towards the other.

Representing others is shown to be highly complex as these texts grapple with various elements of representation from appropriation and advocacy to self-representation, as well as an absence of self-representational space. Whereas Krog sought to create a space for the marginalized through mediation, Jonathan quickly discards this representational technique, and suggests that each of the writers include their own stories in “windows”. He also gives two of the writers the opportunity to be directive narrator, hereby sharing the responsibility of providing the framework of these narratives. *Finding Mr Madini* thus privileges a representational practice marked not by dependence, but by equality, which is emphasised by the text’s stylistic elements. This text is demarcated into three different sections, each with a unique numbering system and presented by a different directive narrator’s point of view. Within these sections, different “windows” are clearly delineated, titled, and accompanied by an illustration of the writer. Unlike *Country of My Skull*, where Krog’s “I” often shifts into the “I” of the other without warning or acknowledgement, *Finding Mr Madini*’s stylistic elements clearly emphasise any shift of the “I” to highlight the writers’ agency in speaking for themselves.

Welcome to Our Hillbrow, however, has no “I”. Instead it adopts the “you”, and guides protagonists through their lives. This text also adopts a different representational technique in which the voices of the *Makwerekwere* are stifled by the “you”, thus preventing them from entering into dialogue with the South African characters, as well as the reader. Unlike *Finding Mr Madini* and *Country of My Skull* which, in many ways, privilege, or at least include, the voices of the other or the marginalized, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* exercises exclusion. Yet, this representational technique serves another purpose by evoking and highlighting the stifling of the migrants’ voices in real life. This metafictional mimicking of real-life marginalization is also an indication of the text’s preoccupation with blurring fact and fiction in order to highlight the blurriness of identity (often taken as ‘fact’, or

true and coherent). Based on the Chinese box structure with multiple layers of narrative - all dealing with elements of xenophobia, prejudice and narrative - the mirroring and interweaving of narrative strands not only blurs the lines between fact and fiction, but also between the “stranger within” and the “stranger outside”.

The second-person narration of *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* also interpellates the reader to enter this world of blurred identities. Through the use of the “you” address, the reader is compelled to engage in the created world, observing the development of the various characters who come to recognize a common humanity. The role of the listener is thus enunciated as crucial, a theme which is also picked up in *Finding Mr Madini*. As this text shifts to a self-representational technique, there is a parallel concern to have people respond to these stories and act as witnesses, and the ending of *Finding Mr Madini* culminates in a number of interviews which mark the text’s development of the ethical listener/reader. The writers’ reflections on their hopes and dreams for the project further express this desire to be acknowledged and have their stories heard by the general public.

In an interview, K. Sello Duiker comments on the general public and the homeless, arguing that “street culture says a lot about where we are and homeless people are the lowest common denominator. They tell us a lot about ourselves” (“Interview” 20). These texts show that in many ways individuals are struggling to make a home, in the physical and metaphoric sense, while demonstrating an investment of writers in the act of “restoration of the narrative” (Ndebele “Memory” 27). Siphon Madini, however, suggests that there is still much to be changed in society’s treatment to the homeless and the vulnerably accommodated. Madini links the state of being homeless to a situation of being without parents, without guidance, saying: “I consider the homeless to be the orphans of society” (qtd. Rappetti 2). In the next chapter I turn to two texts that feature child protagonists, in order to investigate how being guideless affect’s one’s place in society.

CHAPTER 4

FORM(ATIVE) REPRESENTATIONS: CHILDHOOD AND THE *BILDUNGSROMAN*

It could be that in the city in many ways all the characters are children, trying to understand it
- Phaswane Mpe, on his adult characters

They think they are God. They think they know it all – the score
- Azure, on adults

In an interview, Phaswane Mpe is questioned about the repeated mention of Stimela's song "See the World through the Eyes of a Child" in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*.⁵⁰ Intrigued by the inclusion of the song, which asks listeners to adopt the perspective of a homeless child, the interviewer asks why *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* is marked by an absence of children with the exception of a brief mention of street kids, "drunk with glue and brandy" (Mpe "Interview" 49). Mpe's answer, quoted above, hints at a curious relationship between the city and the adult – "it could be that in the city in many ways all the characters are children, trying to understand it" ("Interview" 49). In the tumultuous, busy, and chaotic space of the city, the adult, Mpe suggests, becomes uninitiated, naïve, and guideless, inhabiting a state of innocence. Later, Mpe links this perspective specifically to Refentše, explaining that he is "having difficulty looking at the world through the eyes of adults and the adults are having difficulty in looking at the world through the eyes of children. And perhaps if they did that there could be a compromise" ("Interview" 50).

In this chapter I turn to *Skyline* by Patricia Schonstein Pinnock and *Thirteen Cents* by K. Sello Duiker, two texts which feature child/youth protagonists to "see the world through [their] eyes". In my approach to child protagonists, I follow Alcinda Honwana's broad definition of children as "people in

⁵⁰ This is Refentše's favourite song, and forms the backdrop for a number of important scenes, such as his death (Mpe *Welcome* 61).

the process of becoming rather than being” (qtd. De Boeck and Honwana 3).⁵¹ This perception of incompleteness is illustrated in the difference between children’s status as citizens and their restriction from exercising certain rights until they are of legal age. As such, like the homeless, they at once belong to the nation, but, at the same time, are limited in their capacity to act therein. The phrase “in the process of becoming” also has interesting implications for the conceptualization of children’s identities, suggesting that they are not static or closed-off, but rather, like the notion of identity in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, fluid and open. Yet, despite the positive possibilities offered by this notion of identity in Chapter 3, the *Bildungsroman*, a literary form featuring youth protagonists, calls for a move away from fluidity and openness as it maps the development of the becoming subject to his/her state of “being”. If, as Schwarz suggests, “forms are the abstract of specific social relations”, (qtd. Slaughter “Enabling” 1408) then the *Bildungsroman* highlights societal pressures and limitations exercised on children. It is no wonder that at one point in K. Sello Duiker’s novel *Thirteen Cents*, the street child protagonist Azure, in bitterness about the adults who have placed him in positions of subjection and dependence, reflects: “they think they are God. They think they know it all – the score” (141).

If we are to take Azure’s complaint seriously and consider the voices of children/youth as mediated by these young adult writers, what can we discover? How do they represent their individual narratives being woven into the collective? What kind of concerns are they represented as having as they interact with other marginalized groups, or as the marginalized themselves? In the two primary texts discussed in this chapter, we see extremely different responses of these young protagonists to the world around them. *Skyline* explores life in Cape Town through the eyes of a white teenage girl who lives in the eponymous block of apartments. As she interacts with other South Africans and African immigrants who reside in the flats, she develops a desire to present a humanized, personalized account of their stories in the creative representation of a new world order that can accommodate them. *Thirteen Cents*, in contrast, presents a much darker and more negative representation of the future that awaits youth who are homeless, bereft of family and trapped in violent cycles of becoming. Featuring Azure, an orphan child on the cusp of becoming a teenager, *Thirteen Cents* explores his life in Cape Town, where he “works” the streets as a prostitute. Initially marginalized and voiceless, he reclaims

⁵¹ The South African Constitution, following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, defines a child as “any person under the age of 18 years” (National Programme of Action for Children in South Africa 22). I follow Honwana’s definition, however, as it is far more theoretically productive.

some sense of agency by the end of the text as he rejects his society. Seeking to map the development of these protagonists, my analysis begins with an overview of the form(ative) representations of children in the *Bildungsroman*, while touching briefly on the TRC as an example how the pressures of society have shaped and limited children's agency in South Africa.

CHILDREN, THE *BILDUNGSROMAN*, AND THE TRC

Many theorists have noted how children have often been “constructed from the outside and from above as a ‘problem’ or a ‘lost generation’ (Cruise O’Brien 1996) in ‘crisis’ (Everatt and Sisulu, 1992)” (De Boeck and Honwana 2). In society, they form a “muted group”, “unperceived and elusive” (Burman 2). Children, like the homeless and migrants, are often reduced to stereotype, stripped of identity and independence. When children do appear as literary characters, moreover, they have long been silenced as subjects in themselves. Children are always “relentlessly mediated”, “spoken through and spoken for, and are constantly being ventriloquized”, (Patterson n.p.)⁵² functioning as vehicles to carry across other societal issues in “allegorical embodiment[s] of societal norms and values” (Smit 21). J. Gorup concludes that the child character “serves as an expression of the adult world, thus becoming a ‘frame of other issues’” (72-73).⁵³

Research conducted by Edwin Ardener, and later Charlotte Hardman, suggests that the cause for this societal silencing is not because children are “uninfluential”, but because they are “socialized to be deferential and submissive, in conformity with male attitudes” (Burman 2). Children are thus under pressure to follow a specific type of societal development, as is evident in the classical *Bildungsroman*. Developed in Germany during the late-eighteenth century (Karafilis 63), the *Bildungsroman*, loosely translated, is a “novel of formation” or “novel of education” (Abrams 119). The first example, generally acknowledged to be Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Lehr- und Wanderjahre* (*The Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister*), was published in 1796. It illustrates how the focus of the classical

⁵² These citations come from Monica Patterson's paper entitled “Talking about Things That Hurt Us: Constructions of Childhood in the TRC” presented at the University Western Cape South African Contemporary History and Humanities Seminar, 24 August 2010. The author requested that I cite her dissertation in reference to this paper, which I have done in cases where there is a direct overlap. Unique extracts from the paper have been cited with n.p.

⁵³ This theoretical framework draws on Edgar Nabutanyi's DPhil proposal, presented at Stellenbosch University 2009. I am indebted to Edgar Nabutanyi in particular for pointing me to Gorup.

Bildungsroman is the male European subject, and his development from “outsider childhood” (Smith and Watson 363) into adult selfhood (Smit 16). This development is usually catalysed through a rift opening up between the protagonist and his family or society. Thus, the marker of the protagonist’s development is not his growth as an independent being; instead, it is his assimilation and conformity within “normative social identities” (Smith and Watson 363) as he integrates into his society as “a simple *part of a whole*” (Moretti 16). The *Bildungsroman*, then, provides a space for the child/youth to speak, but on condition that he becomes a voice acceptable to society in both age, as he attains adulthood, and being, by expressing thoughts and ideals that are in tune with the society around him.

The *Bildungsroman* itself has undergone a development in the ensuing centuries. No longer necessarily limited to following the progress of the male European subject in Western society, this form has come to accommodate different types of protagonists, societies, and endings. All texts claiming the *Bildungsroman* name, however, still share the key characteristic of focussing on a young individual and his/her integration within society. As Maria Karafilis elucidates, the discussion of the *Bildungsroman* has persisted to this day because scholarship is primarily concerned “in how texts negotiate the development/ education of their protagonists and how these protagonists negotiate themselves in a larger social context” (63).

Because of this focus on the individual and his/her growth in society, Marianne Hirsch has noted the possibilities that this form offers for the figure of the marginalized, calling it the “most salient genre for the literature of social outsiders” (qtd. Slaughter “Enabling” 1411). The *Bildungsroman* allows for a personalized exploration of the effects of marginalization, as well as the structural systems in which the individual is placed. Willem Smit speaks of “the intimate nature of [the protagonist’s] journeys of self-discovery and development” (20) allowed by the *Bildungsroman*, as well as the “highly individualised nature of the persons [the protagonists] become” (20). Joseph Slaughter thus argues that this form allows the marginalized to be heard “narrat[ing] affirmative claims for inclusion in the franchise of the nation-state”, (“Enabling” 1411) leading him to describe the *Bildungsroman* as the “story form of incorporation through which the historically marginalized individual is capacitated as a citizen-subject” (“Enabling” 1411).

Due to its focus on development, this form has often been linked with nation-building. In South Africa’s case, the TRC Final Report can arguably be seen as the *Bildungsroman* of a nation entering its

fledgling years as a democracy. Capturing the TRC's narrative move towards reconciliation, forgiveness and closure, the Report is the primary document accounting for a trajectory from sharp societal disrupture to harmonization as the "New" South Africa.⁵⁴ Yet, I also turn to this link with nation-building as a caution against the uncritical adoption of the *Bildungsroman* form. The criticism of the TRC in Chapter 2 reminds how, for the sake of national reconciliation and development, individual stories were shaped as they were woven into the new collective narrative. The TRC's representation of children has raised similar critique: Rosemary Jolly argues that the TRC is "complicit in producing children as instruments of post-apartheid nation-building", (53) and that narratives of the apartheid struggle "render[ed] children and adolescents instrumental to adult visions" (53).⁵⁵ Thus, although Slaughter describes the *Bildungsroman* as "affirmative" and "de-marginalizing" (*Human* 137), the case study of the TRC is a caution that its demands on assimilation within the surrounding society might further marginalize the subject.

Vasquez reminds us, however, that the predictability of the expected development allows for subversion, for example, by postcolonial writers who "have often found opportunity to sabotage imperialist codes within the form" (86).⁵⁶ When I suggest that *Skyline* and *Thirteen Cents* deviate from the *Bildungsroman* form, I mean that these texts bring into question the key aspects of the *Bildungsroman* as highlighted by Slaughter: the assimilation of the individual into the society within which s/he finds her/himself. In my exploration of the two primary texts I focus on the types of spaces that children inhabit, how they navigate the fragmented urban spaces in which they are situated, and the ways that they engage with the society around them. Following Venuti's useful distinctions between "domestication" and "foreignization" in translation, I ask whether these protagonists conform to societal norms, or if they retain individuality and agency in ways that unsettle societal expectations? If the latter, what meanings are imbued through various departures from its conventions? My analysis of both texts will unfold in two parts: the first part looking at the society they currently inhabit, and the second part exploring the type of future they are heading towards within the *Bildungsroman* form.

⁵⁴ E.g. in Desmond Tutu's overview of South African history in his Foreword to the Report, he talks about South Africa's "contemporary history" which "began in 1960 when the Sharpeville disaster took place and ended with the wonderful inauguration of Nelson Mandela as the first democratically-elected President of the Republic of South Africa" (2).

⁵⁵ The TRC conducted one-day Special Hearings on Children and Youth in Durban, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Pietersburg, but Patterson notes that these were "rushed and markedly under-attended" (170).

⁵⁶ Smith and Watson, however, warn that occupation of the *Bildungsroman* form is potentially risky, as the "formerly colonized subject [...] can become complicit with colonialism's asymmetries of power and projects of othering" (363).

FROM *BILDUNGSROMAN* TO *KÜNSTLERROMAN*: *SKYLINE*

Patricia Schonstein Pinnock is an internationally published poet and writer who grew up in Zimbabwe and now lives in South Africa. Having written a number of children's books, her entry into the world of adult fiction was marked by the successful reception of her first novel *Skyline*.⁵⁷ Named after a block of apartments situated at the top of Long Street in the heart of Cape Town, *Skyline* is concerned with pertinent issues of foreignness, home, and writing. Inhabited mostly by "illegal immigrants and refugees from the rest of Africa", (7)⁵⁸ *Skyline* is also home to a young white girl (who remains nameless and who I will refer to as the Girl) and her sister, Mossie. While focusing on issues of prejudice, Pinnock says that her texts advocate love and peace, which we see in the Girl and her sister's burgeoning friendships with other residents in the flats ("Patricia Pinnock" n.p.). Although *Skyline* evokes the form of a *Bildungsroman*, the Girl's first-person narrative highlights the trajectory of assimilation not into the national society, but into a newly created society of national and extra-national misfits within *Skyline*. Furthermore, as this interaction develops in a conscious and burgeoning desire to write this more inclusive type of society into being, the *Bildungsroman* converges into the *Künstlerroman* form.⁵⁹

As previously noted, the catalyst for the protagonist's development is often a rupture between the protagonist and her/his family/society, which, in *Skyline*, is the loss of a family member. The Girl's father leaves home, and she "realize[s] he's gone for good because there is an emptiness in the air which was not there before" (1). This loss is a culmination of the brokenness and unhomeliness that characterized their home life even while the father was still there, with "fighting" and "arguments" (1) as the norm. The Girl's mother shows no care or concern for her children, and after the father leaves, spends her days drinking. Though it seems that the departure of the father marks the moment where the Girl becomes guideless and is left without any supervision or direction from adults, she reminds us that

⁵⁷ *Skyline* has received a number of prizes, incl. Winner of the *Prix du Marais 2005*, Winner of the *Percy FitzPatrick Award 2002*, Second place in *Sunday Times Fiction Award 2001* ("Patricia Pinnock" n.p.).

⁵⁸ This apartment block exists in real life (although with another name) and it is/was inhabited largely by foreigners. A fellow student recounts that he lived there on his arrival in CT as a refugee from Cameroon, and that it is widely known as a first port of call for those newly arrived in the city.

⁵⁹ The *Künstlerroman* form is a sub-type of the *Bildungsroman*, which features the development of a "novelist or artist from childhood" (Abrams 193).

life has long been like that – and that she has long fulfilled the role of care-taker to her younger, mentally-challenged sister, Mossie.

Skyline thus starts with the Girl's assertion that she is no ordinary teenager, nor a child. The role of being a child or a young person is belied by the responsibilities and stresses that fall upon young people in fragmented societies. Children/youth are often represented as dependent and naïve, yet the Girl has had to assume the role of being a parent to her younger sister. In a form that follows the development of a young person into adulthood, this positioning presents an intriguing platform – what kind of maturation will the Girl undertake? If her nuclear family is so fragmented that the parents are no longer present (physically, in the father's case; emotionally or psychologically, in the mother's case), and traditional family roles have disintegrated, leaving her responsible for the only remaining family member, what kind of society will she eventually integrate into?

In light of this loss, the Girl consciously rejects the adult figures in her society as guides. When the Girl hears Mossie mourning for the father, she reacts furiously, telling Mossie that he is for all purposes dead to them. Furthermore, she avoids any external expression of mourning, instead projecting her emotions onto her surroundings. As she lies in the dark in the aftermath of her father's departure, she listens to the sounds of the city outside, and they become anthropomorphized in a reflection of her own emotions: “[t]he traffic is crying now and its sorrow pours onto the veranda and in through the windows, splashing everything with tears. The traffic is the wail of a Madonna stripped and bleeding” (2). In her imaginative rendering of the city noises as a reflection of her mourning, she compares them to the Madonna, the mother, who is wailing. The city itself becomes her substitute mother, the “adult guide”.

This imaginative recreation of city sounds is a process that heals her and fills the “emptiness in the air” (1) left by the father: “[t]he traffic is a song which plays my feelings as though they were a string instrument or distant drum. It erases all silences within me” (5). The silence can be read as being filled in two ways. Firstly, and most obviously, the loudness of the traffic overpowers the silence. Secondly, her imaging of the traffic as song is a way of expressing her repressed emotions creatively. Unable or unwilling to express her own words of mourning and loss, she projects her feelings onto the cityscape, imaging that:

[s]ometimes the wind howls like many splintered words around me. And the words call out: *Make of us poems and ballads, make of us sweet stories of delight.* And sometimes the concrete masonry and verandas of Skyline line up like lonely letterings and they cry to me: *Form us, form us into song; fashion of us tales and telling that we may have some meaning. Weave of us literature so that we may become something worthy* (49).

The Girl imagines the words calling her to take them and weave them into relational contexts in which they can bear meaning. They ask her to take them from being single units to community. The awareness of the loss of her own nuclear collective thus sensitizes her to lonely words and the fragments of stories around her.

In this incident, we see what Henri Bergson would describe as a release of creativity. Creativity, Bergson argues, is ordinarily stifled by the pressure of routine and habits, but freed through an intense expression of emotion (qtd. White 52). What occurs is a “profound and fundamental break” resulting in an “openness towards movement and change that provokes us to dispense with habitual modes of thinking and to embrace profoundly new insights and ideas” (qtd. White 52). The Girl’s emotional loss of her father, which leads to her rejection of the adults she knows, results in a newfound “openness” towards the immigrants who stay in Skyline:

[t]heir worlds cry through the stairwell like egrets flying home. Their worlds are like the traffic outside weaving into plaited reeds and palm-frond rope. They flow over me with the glitterings of wind chimes trembling in the wind: chips of bronze, chips of copper, slithers of flattened tin, tinkling (7).

In the foreign space of the South African city, the Girl visualizes the worlds the immigrants have left, enveloping them in familiar contexts in her mind. The Girl also shows awareness of the stories that they carry: “stories written on the parchment of their hearts which they don’t recite easily” (10). She is able to “read the words in their eyes, stained by despair; in their mouths, silenced and tightened by horror”, even in “their torn and weary clothes” (10). She therefore sees their inability to share their stories, just as she is unable to speak her own loss.

Strikingly, the emotional needs of the Girl also lead her to imagine a specific type of refugee, one escaping from the horror of war. She imagines that, throughout Africa, South Africa is represented as a utopic space, and that the national narrative of democratization becomes an aspirational story for the imagined continent. Those who arrive at Skyline from across the border have heard that “[t]his is

Mr Mandela's country [...] so everything must be good" (8).⁶⁰ South Africa is thus presented as a space of new beginnings, and although many of the immigrants are not legally allowed to be in the country, depending on forged documents or bribes to remain, they come anyway. Here, Skyline serves as a port of call, a place of safety, and often, immigrants who arrive in South Africa have nothing but Skyline's address, like Cameron and Liberty Chizano who had "driven from Zimbabwe to nobody in particular, just to [the] address" (106).

The apartment block that is known as Skyline is thus represented as a space of belonging. However, it is shown to be a transitory and liminal haven. Inhabitants move in and out so frequently that the Girl says: "[t]here always seems to be someone new in the block. I might see someone just once and never again"; they "blend in or disappear so I need never know where [they] come[...] from, where [they] go[...]". Skyline is merely an initial stopping point in the "network which runs from the border to Skyline to refugee communities in Muizenberg and Melkbosstrand", (10) where, for the majority, people come and go without anyone else caring. Furthermore, even though they might find safety within Skyline, the immigrants need to leave their apartments to find work, where they come into contact with other South African locals, who are not as compassionate as the Girl.

The locals are resentful at the waves of immigrants, and, without differentiating between different types of immigrants, they imagine that all of them have come across for economic gain. Local workers at a nearby petrol station mutter against Skyline residents, blaming them for taking away their jobs and their women: "[y]ou see, the whole of Africa is running into the country and to here at the top of Long Street. Do they think Cape Town is the big hotel with the free jobs, or what they thinking?" (9). One character even expresses the opinion: "[the foreigners] just got to come down from Africa and take over our country. The country's just gone to shit. It belongs to illegals now, not us [...]. South Africa belongs to Africa, not us" (45). The local workers thus assert a claim to the space of South Africa, one that rejects and excludes other individuals from the continent as "foreigners" and "illegals". The locals place the African immigrants in an antagonistic relationship between "us" and "Africa", disregarding South Africa's location on the African continent.

⁶⁰ The disjuncture between immigrants' hopes and dreams of a better life and the actual harshness of life in South Africa is captured in *We Came for Mandela: The Cultural Life of the Refugee Community in South Africa* (Adams).

José Da Silva argues that *Skyline* highlights the way that “when Africa came calling South Africa was neither ready nor willing to enter into a dialogue” (65). The attitudes expressed by the locals suggest that they are completely closed to the viewpoints of the immigrants and, as *Finding Mr Madini* illustrated, the act of engaging in a dialogue is essential in order to humanize the other. In contrast, the Girl and Mossie come to know immigrants from other countries who are willing to share their lives with them. There is Princess from Rwanda, who plays a mothering role for all who come to Skyline; she “rents out sleeping space to people who arrive in Cape Town with nowhere to go” (10). Cameron and Liberty Chizano befriend her and Mossie. Mrs Rowinsky, originally from Germany, where she helped shelter Jewish people during the Nazi regime as a child, is a representative of earlier waves of European refugees.

Mrs Rowinsky extends and expands the notion of fugitive both through her character and through her opinions. White and wealthy, Mrs Rowinsky has moved to Skyline because it is closer to the Christian Science church of which she is a member. She thus presents a distinct contrast to other refugees who come to Skyline out of necessity, often penniless, and most of them African. She voices a more expansive interpretation of the act of being a fugitive, when she talks to the Girl about her experience of sheltering Jews in Nazi Germany:

[w]hat this stimulated in me was the whole question of shelter: the sheltering of the fugitive, the sheltering of the refugee from whatever circumstance but particularly from war and destabilisation. My father had sheltered Jews and later I was sheltered by Russian soldiers and later still by nuns. And when I met my late husband I suppose he too sheltered me. Then coming here, to this new country, as a young bride, that was shelter, for I was still a fugitive, really (93).

Within the context of her experiences as a refugee, Mrs Rowinsky expands the notion of shelter by including marriage and migration. Being sheltered is thus not necessarily a physical act, i.e. moving from a place of danger and vulnerability to a place of safety, but also encompasses mental and psychological states of moving from spaces of danger and vulnerability to spaces of refuge. Mrs Rowinsky also suggests that the fugitive is a person who carries an awareness of the brutality of humankind:

[t]he fugitive from war is a broken person, and you imagine that person arrives with nothing except what he can carry on his back or what he wears. But there is also what is inside him.

What is inside him is the realisation, conscious or not, of the barbarism which hovers at the edges of our reality, all the time (93-94).

What defines the fugitive is the story of oppression and the acts of horror and violence that have forced him/her to flee, and a sharpened awareness of human atrocity and barbarity. The fugitive experience is thus marked by movement to find new welcoming spaces of belonging, in light of barbaric experiences.

In this more inclusive understanding, many of the South Africans living in Skyline, who would have been considered “illegals” in apartheid South Africa, can be said to be fugitives. Living on the floor below the Girl and Mossie is a blind multi-racial couple, Gracie and Cliff. Although they met before the fall of apartheid, they had to wait until 1990 with the release of Nelson Mandela before they could “do anything about” their love for each other (21). There are Alice and Bluebell, the cross-dressers known as the Spice Girls (57), whose deviant gender performances trouble the gender binary, which was perhaps as fundamental to apartheid as its racial binary. It is clear that they still face ostracization in post-apartheid South Africa, as they are routinely taunted in the shops. Furthermore, despite the voiced resentment against the African immigrants, one of the more prominent incidents of violence in *Skyline* is enacted on the Spice Girls - they are found one morning beaten up at the bottom of the staircase.⁶¹

Within Skyline, both foreigners and South Africans are thus sheltered by the welcome they find there from the other inhabitants. This is illustrated by the Girl and Mossie’s relationship with Bernard, an immigrant from war-stricken Mozambique. He tells them that he will never go back, as his home has been destroyed and he has no knowledge of the whereabouts of his wife and children. With his bought South African ID showing a new place of birth and an altered name, he has become someone else, and having broken bonds with his past, Bernard does not want to be bound to any relationships. However, he gradually becomes to Mossie and the Girl what they had lost: a father figure who is involved in their lives. His presence reveals that despite the Girl’s angry and defiant rejection of adults, she clearly needs an adult figure in her life.

⁶¹ This incident also highlights the vulnerability of the Skyline inhabitants. Although Skyline might be perceived as a refuge, it is not closed off from the outside world, and is vulnerable to forced entry by others, as is shown in a police raid, as well as this violent incident.

As Bernard fulfils the role of father in their lives, the Girl and Mossie perform a reciprocal function in his life, and he shares with them that “the first time I see your face, before I even to know your name, I see in your face these stars of my wife and childrens [sic], they shining in your eyes” (163). Bernard explains that his wife “throw her beads into the sky for when we far away we can look at those beads and still remember each other” (162). By linking the Girl and Mossie with the stars, he symbolically entrusts them with his family memories. Family is thus reconstituted, not through biological or genetic lines, but through memory and narrative, through creating shared histories. Similarly to the way that home becomes more tangible and real to Jonathan in *Finding Mr Madini* through writing and sharing his story, affiliation is created in and passed on through the stories.

One way of interpreting the Girl’s *bildung*, then, is to consider it as incorporation into a new kind of family in which the basis is not filial, but affilial; as well as development into a new community that is being forged in Skyline. In marginalizing societies, marginalized individuals do not have an easily accessible community to assimilate into, and as an alternative create a new community with other marginalized minorities that exceeds the categories of the nation-state suggested by Anderson (unlike the traditional *Bildungsroman*). In suggesting a type of community that is not delimited by a boundary between “insider” and “outsider”, *Skyline* thus breaks divisions of exclusion and inclusion within the nation-state.

The ending of *Skyline*, however, casts a dark shadow over the Girl’s development, when Bernard is killed by a jealous Italian shop-owner, who is convinced that he has been flirting with his wife. The Girl seems bound for the same fate as the protagonists investigated by Willem Smit in the Nigerian *Bildungsroman* – he concludes that “their attempts to remake societal norms and values often do not succeed, as the closing chapters of the focal texts evidence (23). Despite the closely knit community that a handful of the Skyline inhabitants have forged, an illustration of an alternative way of engaging with the marginalized, the broader society itself seems to be unchanged. With the circular and repeated loss of the father marking the beginning and the ending of the book, the efforts of the Girl to bring about new ways of engaging with different types of characters in society seem futile. There is even a progression from mere mutterings of xenophobia to fatal actions committed on a foreigner. This violence is fueled by social stereotypes and a binary logic – citizen versus foreigner - marking the limits of the community they try to forge.

However, the Girl's growing desire to capture and weave together the stories of the foreigners suggests the need to write the new society, to reproduce it, before she can integrate into it. The first time this desire is mentioned is after the local 7-Eleven supermarket owner's murder. Upon hearing this news, Sylvester, one of the locals, releases a tirade of words aimed at African immigrants, linking this act of violence and crime to their movement into South Africa. In contrast to the money-hungry and arrogant Africans Sylvester describes, the Girl humanely imagines the weary, traumatized foreigners fleeing from their war-wrecked countries with their stories. Importantly, she pictures them asking her to capture their stories: "the newly arrived, the sad and broken people will line up in front of me, looking out from behind torn garments and the dusty dreams of Africa and whisper: *Turn our desolation into something memorable. That it may not have been in vain to lose what little we owned. Make for our lost children a chime of gentle sound that they might follow it and escape, one day, from the plateau of war*" (49). The Girl's concern for writing stories thus stems from her active engagement with maligned foreigners and an awareness of the stereotyping to which foreigners are subject. Unlike Jonathan, she does not engage with the foreigners initially out of a need to find a story, but is compelled to write a story as a result of being actively involved with the lives of others. Her *bildung* thus leads to the emergence of the writer, the *Künstler*.

With this aim of creating new narrative worlds in which to accommodate the other, the Girl's namelessness seems to suggest an effacement of self, and a renunciation of her "privileged position" to represent others' stories. As is the case with Jonathan and Krog, the stories of the foreigners are mediated through her voice, but her narrative voice, unlike the narrative voice in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, allows for dialogue and conversation. Furthermore, unlike the words of the testifiers in *Country of My Skull*, which were typographically "domesticated", the words of others are *italicized*, showing their "foreignization", and emphasising their difference from the narrative voice whose remarks and thoughts are kept in a normal font. The Girl thus seems to be acting as a host to these words without assimilating them.

However, the nuances of the Girl's relationship with Mossie, for whom she acts as a proxy, serve as a caution about the complexities of telling stories on the behalf of others. Unable to communicate meaningfully with most people, Mossie is oft marginalized and perceived as retarded. It falls upon the Girl not only to take care of her physically, but also to act as her spokesperson. Mossie thus occupies a space of social vulnerability as the absolute other, as her social presence is thus

dependent on her sister. The Girl, however, is aware that Mossie's real handicap is not her mental capacity, but rather her inability to speak: "[w]ords are tangled up in her throat, they won't untwine, they won't undo, they stay tied up" (135).

Although Mossie is apparently bereft of language and incapable of speech, there are ways and means through which she is able to interact and communicate, such as body language. When Mossie wakes her up out of a nightmare, the Girl is able to "read" her gestures: "[s]he squeezes my face in her hands, forces my eyes open with her fingers to look at her: *I am here! I am here!*" (135). Mossie also resorts to the creation of a figurative language, and beads become her medium of speech. The dagga traders, who also trade in beads, explain to Mossie how in the Xhosa culture, beads "speak with a language of their own" based on colour combinations (137). As the beads function in a way she understands, with her love of "patterns and symmetry", (61) Mossie falls eagerly in love with them, and uses this "silent speech" (137) to communicate. Mossie thus represents someone who might be silent, but does speak, emphasizing the need to engage with and listen to those who are in marginal positions.

Pinnock's abundant use of ecphrasis acts as a further reminder of the complexities of representation: *Skyline* is written in 40 short chapters, and almost all the chapters end with a description of an art painting based on an Old Masters' work, and linked in some way to the content of that chapter. For instance, at the end of a chapter focussing predominantly on Mossie, a description is included of a painting called "She is the Little Sister". Based on Amedeo Modigliani's "Little Girl in Blue", the painting is a tender and compassionate representation of Mossie, concluding a chapter in which she has been the source of much worry and anxiety. With phrases such as "the staccato brushstrokes are carefree" (24) and the "colours are wistful" (24) the description is imbued with much tenderness and sensitivity. This painting is also framed by beads and by bird feathers, which are objects that Mossie loves.

It is only towards the end of *Skyline* that we find out that these are Bernard's paintings. His use of Old Masters' paintings as a basis for his work suggests that he, as a marginalized Mozambican, can only speak through dominant Western forms. In the same way that the *Bildungsroman* has normative structures for its protagonist to follow, it appears Bernard's paintings are forced to comply to specific norms. Bernard's portraiture is thus limited and shaped by these Old Masters' pictures. Similarly,

Bernard's inclusion in *Skyline* as an independent voice seems shaped and limited by others, as these paintings are only accessible through layers of mediation. There are no visual copies of the paintings – only literary descriptions. Moreover, throughout *Skyline* the Girl is associated with writing and words, while Bernard is associated with song and with art. Does the transliteration of his images thus suggest that Bernard can only speak through the Girl's mediation? Is his story being appropriated by her?

Johan Jacobs argues that Bernard's paintings should be read as an act of agency. Although Bernard tells the Girl at one point that his writing capabilities are limited to copying what he sees around him, his artistic skills show innovation and creativity. Bernard's paintings are not facsimiles of the originals, but render localized interpretations of local people and objects. Some paintings feature the narrator and other principal characters, while others capture events from his life in Mozambique – these paintings thus provide him with a way of “com[ing] to terms with aspects of his [...] own life” (Jacobs 112). They are also given unique titles and often framed with atypical objects, “all of them recognisable contemporary African artefacts”, (Jacobs 111) such as flattened Coke tin-can, and twisted wire threaded with bottle tops. In using the Western form as a guideline, Bernard subverts the prerequisites of the form to open it up to accommodate the marginalized, just as the Western form of the *Bildungsroman* is being opened up to accommodate the Girl.

Furthermore, Jacobs notes how the artworks “have an expressive, aesthetic logic of their own, and do not simply reproduce [...] the fictional narrative” (111). The paintings use the chapter's narrative and the original painting as a reference point, but can stand independently from them; thus the inclusion of the artwork adds to the meaning of the text, rather than merely copying or reflecting it. Jacobs thus argues that *Skyline* is an example of an iconotext, in which “image and text is mutually interdependent on each other” (111). This form breaks down the traditional “barriers between literature and visual art”, (Jacobs 111) necessitating a collaboration between these two genres in the establishment of meaning. Bernard's paintings and the Girl's narrative thus work together to create a text in which both the stories of the South African and the immigrant can be shared.

Even while highlighting possibilities of self-representation and agency for the marginalized, *Skyline* suggests that there is still a role for the writer to play in representing those unable to access this representational medium. Bernard, unlike the homeless in *Finding Mr Madini* who are all writers, cannot write eloquently and has to rely on “copy[ing] the words from somewhere” (143). He thus

encourages the Girl to keep on writing so that she can one day share his story with others. His very last painting, the description of which concludes *Skyline*, emphasises his approval of her acting as his proxy. Titled “It is the Portrait of the Artist with his Good Friends”, (170-171) the painting shows the Girl, Mossie, and the Girl’s boyfriend posing, while Bernard is included in a framed portrait in the background. His absence from the painting as a living person seems to indicate his trust in the three’s capacity to keep his memories alive. The frame is decorated with small cut tin stars, reminding us of his request to the Girl and to Mossie to keep alive his wife and children’s “stars”.

Bernard’s death spurs the Girl on to fulfil his wishes of acting as “guardians” (170) of his family’s stories, as well as to fulfil her dreams of becoming a writer: the stars will “never go out, for we will keep them alight forever” (170). Although, she is currently unable to “gather up the words which [she] find[s] spewn across the tar of Long Street and at the foot of the wind and [...] turn them into poetry”, (50) she projects a future where she is able to use the writing skills for which she so longs:

And sometimes, when the caress of Long Street traffic becomes that of the Madonna of the Dispossessed, affirming the dreams and hopes of those who have walked down Africa, I might hear Bernard’s song at the intersection [...]

And I might turn towards where his song is coming from [...], and call out from the traffic island in the middle of Long Street:

Bernard! Bernard, look at me! I can spin my words, my many gathered words, into finecoir and threads of raw cotton, as you always said I should, so as to weave from them all manner of finery.

Bernard! I can weave from my words histories and songs of love, rhyming sculptures and pictures of every sort! They fly in the wind for you! Do you see them? Not concrete, not traffic fumes! They are no longer vagrant and wandering words. They are tales, Bernard, telling which the wind will always carry for you! (169-170).

Skyline thus ends with a sense that there is an artist, with the responsibility of telling the stories of the marginalized, waiting to emerge from the shadows. Representation is productive here, as the Girl looks forward to creating a future societal order in which the other is accommodated. The community that forms in *Skyline* is an altruistic oasis in a hostile world, while at the same time providing a model for an alternative social world. Hope thus lies in writing: in writing marginalised stories into the urban

narrative; writing horror into beauty; recreating the world around her rather than just finding accommodation as adult; creating communities of words, just like she has created communities of marginalized meanings. She first needs to leave her current society, however, and imagines one day “liv[ing] with Mossie in a nice house up on the side of the mountain”, where she will “find words in places other than wind and war and traffic. [She] will find beauty and words of a new order” (51).

Rejecting the city and turning to the mountain also seems to be the only option available to our last protagonist, Azure, in K. Sello Duiker’s novel *Thirteen Cents*. In this short novel, Duiker circumvents the traditional ending of the *Bildungsroman* completely, suggesting a dark and ominous future for those who do not comply with society’s norms. As De Boeck and Honwana note, “whole groups of young people no longer fit in any of the common sites of youth self-realization. More often than not, these youngsters seem literally ‘out of place’” (9). As a child in a rapaciously capitalistic and fragmented society, he is a particularly “out of place” character, and resorts to prostitution to survive in a world of oppression and violence. However, through his walking, he inscribes a path out of that society, turning towards the mountain in an effort to re-symbolise his existence.

WALKING AWAY FROM SOCIETY, WRITING A NEW FUTURE: *THIRTEEN CENTS*

Before tragically committing suicide at the age of 30, K. Sello Duiker had two novels published to critical acclaim.⁶² Lauded for his ability to graphically portray the gritty underground of a cruel urban Cape Town, Duiker received prestigious awards for both *Thirteen Cents* and *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*.⁶³ I focus on Duiker’s debut novel, *Thirteen Cents*, which follows the life of a streetchild orphan named Azure. Through Azure, the novel’s male protagonist, we see how truly powerless children are when caught in the trappings of a capitalist hierarchy. Yet, Azure is not content to stay in his disempowered position and we follow his escape from his violent and exploitative context in this novel that both evokes and subverts the conventions of the *Bildungsroman*. Duiker suggests an alternative to this entrapment by unsettling the power of the city through Azure’s developing awareness of an animist unconsciousness. With this awareness, Azure comes to write his own future

⁶² A third, *The Hidden Star*, was published posthumously.

⁶³ *Thirteen Cents* won the 2001 Commonwealth Writer’s Prize for Best First Book, Africa region, while the Herman Charles Bosman Prize was awarded to *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*.

metaphorically, yet this is a tentative and uncertain future which is undercut by the dystopic end for the city and for our protagonist.⁶⁴

“My name is Azure. *Ah-zoo-ray*. That’s how you say it. My mother gave me that name. It’s the only thing I have left from her” (1) are the opening words of *Thirteen Cents*. As his first-person narration continues, Azure’s life and world comes alive for us: orphaned from a young age, he has moved to Cape Town from Johannesburg and currently “live[s] alone”, (1) except for the occasional company of a younger street child called Bafana to whom the not-yet-thirteen Azure sometimes deigns to play father.⁶⁵ Once again, as in *Skyline*, we find the child protagonist bereft of any adult guidance. Yet, unlike the Girl who rejects any memory of or attachment to her parents, Azure firmly attaches himself to the relationships that have been taken away from him, and an emphatic reminder of his loss is reiterated through the text with the repeated phrase: “My father is dead. My mother is dead.”

In light of his loss, Azure, like the Girl, asserts his independence, and considers himself to be “almost a man [who] can take care of [himself]” (2). He shows a maturity and insight into his society, which serves as a contrast to the innocent naivety of the traditional *Bildungsroman* hero. He already understands that assimilation into this society is a matter of urgency; a matter of survival. He has no time, unlike the *Bildungsroman* hero, to develop slowly over the pages of the *Bildungsroman*; instead he acknowledges to himself that “[he] must understand what it means to be a grown-up if [he’s] going to survive. That’s what they all keep on telling me. Grow up. Fast. Very fast” (66). His solution is to adopt adult characteristics, such as speaking with confidence (3), and ensuring that he is always “neat” (24) and presentable. Part of “always act[ing] like a grown-up” (3) is manifested in a cleansing ritual every morning at the beach with seawater, as “grown-ups are always clean” (3). Assimilation within this society thus necessitates the enactment of certain performative behaviours.

Azure’s desire to grow up as quickly as possible becomes understandable as adults are shown to be all too ready to exploit any signs of weakness in his performance of adult agency and self-

⁶⁴ *Thirteen Cents* is often compared to Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road*, a magic realist text that inhabits the *Bildungsroman* form to tell the first-person narrative of a young male protagonist.

⁶⁵ Bafana literally means “the boys” in Xhosa and Zulu, and it is possible that Duiker uses the figure of Bafana as a more typical representative of a street child. Although he makes an appearance in the first section of the novel, Bafana remains a marginalised literary character, who eventually drifts out of the narrative.

sufficiency (6; 25). In a Cape Town where there is a constant struggle for dominance and power, there is no respite for the innocent or vulnerable. Furthermore, in this Cape Town where power is racially determined, Azure, with his “blue eyes and a dark skin”, (1) inhabits a tenuous position between black and white. Apartheid binaries of inclusion and exclusion based on the perceived colour of one’s skin still structure life in post-apartheid Cape Town, and to be white is to have a power that those who are black are shown to aspire. His appearance thus blurs and confuses racial boundaries with the result that he is often beaten by those who are anxious about their own positions of power, such as the gangster boss, Gerald. In a telling incident, Azure has to flee for his life after mistakenly calling Gerald by the name of one of his black lackeys, Sealy. Confused as to why Gerald has reacted in such an aggressive manner, he turns to Vincent, the only adult he trusts in Cape Town, who explains that “[Gerald] hates black people. You insulted him” (24). Gerald, Vincent explains, not only aspires to a whiteness that his “straight hair and [...] light skin” (35) gestures towards, but he is also envious of Azure’s blue eyes (35). Although Azure’s skin colour displays a darkness “not far from *makwerekweres*”, (35) in light of Gerald’s racial anxiety there is no alternative but for Azure to be “more black ... like more black than all of us” (35).

Azure’s marginality is further demonstrated by the way his physical body is possessed by others. Although Azure tells the reader that he survives by working as a car guard and by scavenging food from rubbish dumps, it becomes clear that he sells sexual services and “turns trick[s]” (8) for wealthy white males. The most extended portrayal of Azure’s prostitution is a description of his interaction with a Mr Lebowitz, an investment banker. When Azure learns that he “works with lots of money”, (87) he is reminded of Joyce, an older woman whom he’d entrusted with his savings, only to later find out that she had been stealing his money. He conflates her greed with Mr Lebowitz’s occupation, blaming Mr Lebowitz “as the bastard who took [his] money” (87). A further indication of the totality of Azure’s marginalization is the way that he is often de-masculinized as a result of this commodification - at times, he allows clients to pay him for anal penetration, an act which leads Gerald to later tell him that he “understands what it means to be a woman already” (71).

It is at Gerald’s hands that Azure’s physical and sexual oppression culminates in his development as the ultimate commodity. On returning to face Gerald after the name-calling incident, Azure is so badly beaten up by his thugs that he needs medical attention. Even after he is imprisoned and sexually abused under Gerald’s orders, Gerald is not satisfied and declares that he has “bought”

Azure, having paid for his hospital bills. Azure is thus no longer someone who is occasionally dependent on Gerald for objects and protection, but someone “own[ed]” (65). It is no wonder that Vincent compares Gerald to an urban predator, T-Rex, the “king of dinosaurs”, (60) to whom “even the devil can’t compare” (61). Demonstrating his power over Azure, Gerald renames Azure as Blue, as a reference to his blue eyes, a reminder of his difference. This act also severs Azure’s connection with his parents, with his past, and strips him of his identity.⁶⁶

As a final display of his power, Gerald places restrictions on Azure’s movement. For Azure, this is to be placed in a position of complete marginalization, as he is separated from the areas of the city that he knows and has learnt how to navigate. Michel de Certeau’s work on the city and understanding urban text sheds some light on the relationship that Azure has with the city. According to De Certeau, the “ordinary practitioners of the city” are “walkers [...] whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban “text” they write without being able to read it” (93). In walking the city, individuals are able to write their own understanding of the city, possessing the city to some degree. However, Azure is no ordinary practitioner of the city - he is someone who walks every day and whose survival depends on understanding the text that he lives in. His body thus has intimate knowledge of the space around him. For example, the local residential area of Sea Point, which he is no longer allowed to visit, is a place he knows particularly well - by punning on the word “sea” in Sea Point, he explains that this is “where [his] eyes are ... where [he] can see the best”, (65) for this is where he “hides out” (65) from those who seek to exploit him. To be placed under Gerald’s control, Azure comes to realize, means that his movements are restricted to a Cape Town in which “[he’s] always lost”, (65)⁶⁷ placing him in an urban text he is unable to read.

⁶⁶ When explaining what T-Rex is, Vincent makes explicit reference to the movie *Jurassic Park*. In the eponymous and original book by Michael Crichton, an interesting link is made between dinosaurs and parents:

[Grant, the palaeontologist] finally decided that children liked dinosaurs because these giant creatures personified the uncontrollable force of looming authority. They were symbolic parents. Fascinating and frightening, like parents. And kids loved them, as they loved their parents. Grant also suspected that was why even young children learned the names of dinosaurs. It never failed to amuse him when a three-year-old shrieked ‘*Stegosaurus!*’ Saying these complicated names was a way of exerting power over the giants, a way of being in control (117).

With this reference then, a more complex relationship emerges out the seemingly simple relation of power and powerlessness between Gerald and Azure, for Azure draws attention to the deaths of his parents repeatedly.

⁶⁷ Azure’s comment is an intertextual reference to Zoë Wicomb’s short story collection *You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town*, which, like Azure’s own tale, is a disrupted *Bildungsroman*.

Additionally, De Certeau, without referring specifically to the homeless, writes that to walk in the city is to essentially exist in a state of unbelonging that resonates with the experience of homelessness: “[t]o walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper [sic]. The moving about that the city multiplies and concentrates makes the city itself an immense social experience of lacking a place” (103). To walk is to inhabit a space of liminality, a space of not quite belonging. Yet, as we can see from Azure’s frustration about being limited to specific place, the condition of “lack[ing] a place” is not a negative thing. As someone whose lifestyle is marked by a sense of “lack” of place, walking allows him to possess all the places he encounters, in the same way that the connection between identity and place are opened up in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*. Furthermore, as Azure walks around he comes to realize, in an echo of Refilwe’s own revelations when she travels overseas, that despite the binary categories that his society wishes to impose upon him, he possesses a fluid and shifting identity: “[i]n everyone [he] pass[es] [he] can see a little of [him] self. [He] carr[ies] a little of everyone [he] know[s] in [himself]” (102). Gerald’s orders firmly affix him to a specific location and to specific identity and behavioural categories, thus limiting his possibilities of being.

In his commodification by Gerald, Azure comes to bear a relationship with the city that is comparable to the prototype city-walker - the *flâneur*, who was generally rich, wealthy and a walker for the sake of leisure.⁶⁸ Yet, even with his wealth and seeming detachment, the *flâneur* was not exempt from the web of power spun by the city. Keith Tester argues that “the rationality of capitalism and, especially, commodification and the circulation of commodities itself defined the meaning of existence in the city [...]. Capital imposed its own order on the metropolis as if from outside, like a natural force” (13). Although the original flâneur was wealthy in his own right, and therefore retained some measure of independence, the capitalist city started defining the way that individuals interacted with each other. Elsewhere, Simon Ward draws out these implications further, explaining that the *flâneur* is “both an observer of that modernity and a commodified participant in its market place, and as such remains in a liminal position” (413). Like the *flâneur*, Azure finds himself in a “liminal position” in this world mapped by money.

⁶⁸ Although street children in South Africa are generally referred to as “homeless children”, in the Western Cape they prefer the name “strollers” (National Programme of Action for Children in South Africa 125). There is an interesting link in terminology here with the French *flâneur*, which means stroller, or loungeur.

Azure's entrapment within this capitalist world (or, what Vincent refers to as the "fucked-up" (37) city of Cape Town) also urges us to read his commodification against the background of the Cape's past as a slave colony, with its history of the "slave-holding household" (Samuelson *Remembering* 91). Individuals caught in the "economy of slavery" (Samuelson *Remembering* 92) were dehumanized and objectified, just as Azure is trapped within a city that preys upon him. Gerald's re-naming of Azure gestures back to this time when slave-owners and slave-traders gave slaves new names in order to separate them from their identities and pasts of agency, while his prostitution is a stark reminder of the sexual exploitation and abuse slaves faced. Furthermore, Gerald's obsession with whiteness and power illustrates Adhikari's argument that "the legacy of slavery was significant in shaping white domination in modern South Africa" (qtd. Samuelson *Remembering* 156, 25n). Cape Town thus still bears vestiges of an apartheid past built on the colonial foundations of slavery, and its context of commodification allows Duiker to return to and engage with a colonial heritage that is still a strong influence in shaping interactions and relationships.

It is not only Azure's subjugation by Gerald that recalls this past, but also his actions in reclaiming agency. Following the action of slaves who ran away to Table Mountain, he escapes from his life of oppression and commodification in his predatory society. Moving up the mountain, he is "lifted out of the city's grasp", (De Certeau 92) as "[his] body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law; nor is it possessed, whether as player or played" (De Certeau 92). Azure's new distance not only removes him from being "possessed" by the city, but also transforms this "bewitching world" (De Certeau 92) into a "text" that "allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god" (De Certeau 92). Azure thus escapes his position of marginality physically by hiding out in the mountain, and gains a new perspective which allows him to better understand his possession by the city.

Retreat to the mountain provides more than mere perspective or height – it marks entry into a power which is represented as an opposing force to the city's "bewitching world". This becomes clearer in dreams that manifest on the mountain, in which Azure beholds visions of release from powerlessness and from his abusers, particularly Gerald, in strongly symbolic images. The first detailed dream starts in the city, where he "meet[s] everyone [he] know[s]" (119). They do not say anything to him, however, for they are stripped of agency and voice, with "their lips [...] sewn together with wire" (119). He eventually makes his way to the top of the mountain, where he encounters Saartjie Baartman,

a Khoi woman, who set sail from the Cape to England and France, where she was “denigrated and displayed” (Samuelson *Remembering* 5) because of her steatopygous features (Samuelson *Remembering* 86).⁶⁹ It is from her that Azure learns that he is the next T-Rex, and watches a powerless Gerald, who also appears with his lips sewn together, being consumed by the current T-Rex. In the next dream, which presents an even more extensive sequence of events, Saartjie shows him an old wound under her breast, which is full of maggots. He adopts a nurturing role, cleaning them out, and also protects her from the anger of her father,⁷⁰ the evil Mantis.

Azure’s dreams thus express a wish-fulfillment through an indication of role reversal, and a desire for autonomy and freedom from his abusers. In contrast to the powerless role he plays in the city, on the mountain he gains a symbolic power to destroy his predators, and to protect and nurture others. Moreover, Saartjie’s corrupted presence, a symbolic representation of her sexual exploitation and marginalization in the colonial past that serves as a parallel to Azure’s experience, foreshadows his act of reclaiming agency. Her presence in his dream counters the suppression of her history - her story of degradation, along with the stories of the Khoi people, was silenced for decades. Furthermore, the location of her appearance, in Cape Town on top of Table Mountain, also bears significance, for Saartjie died overseas, and only her remnants were returned.⁷¹ She is thus represented as being at home.⁷² Yet, her presence and the introduction of the Mantis (which was worshipped as a god by the Khoi),⁷³ suggest that Azure turns in his dreams to a Khoi past. The mountain thus presents itself as a place of potential where Azure is able to access his inmost longings through an alternative historic-mythical knowledge system, which presents itself for Azure to draw on as an alternative past to the city’s history of domination and oppression.

⁶⁹ See Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully’s *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography*.

⁷⁰ This tension between the mother and father figure also speaks towards the abusive relationship between Azure’s father and mother.

⁷¹ This only happened in May 2002. After her death, Saartjie’s skeleton, bottled genitals and brain, and the plaster cast of her body were displayed in Musée de l’Homme, until they were moved to storage in the late nineteenth century (Samuelson *Remembering* 87).

⁷² Saartjie’s concern with home and roots is emphasised when she asks Azure where he comes from. Unable to tell her, she responds that “that is a very hard thing, not to know where you come from” (120).

⁷³ In fact, the Afrikaans word for “praying mantis” is *hottentotsgod*.

Although it is easier to consider these dreams to be the product of a “kid” become “delusional and dreamy”, (Ezeliora 166) these visions have been foregrounded by unusual events and imagery in the city. In his struggle against contamination by the city, Azure becomes associated with water, sun/light/fire and their related colours of orange/yellow and blue.⁷⁴ To pinpoint one example of this: he has a constant thirst for water and thinks often about washing himself. It is light and fire, however, which ultimately cleanse and give him power.⁷⁵ As he goes up the mountain, Azure describes the feeling of the sun’s warmth on his back, and “[he] get[s] excited when [he] think[s] of this ball of fire growing bigger and destroying everything in its path” (105). As the heat causes him to sweat, he tells himself that “[he] is cleaning [him]self” (105). As “objects acquire a social and spiritual meaning [...] far in excess of their natural properties and their use value”, (Garuba 267) an animist unconscious is shown to operate in this world.

Harry Garuba suggests that in literature containing this “continual re-enchantment of the world”, (265) i.e. “animist realism”, “animist logic subverts this binarism” between tradition and modernity, and destabilizes the “secularist narrative of modernity by reabsorbing historical time into the matrices of myth and magic” (270).⁷⁶ Azure’s dreams and the magical properties that imbue the city unsettle the control exerted by the capitalism. Garuba suggests, furthermore, that “[a]n animistic understanding of the world applied to the practice of everyday life has often provided avenues of agency for the dispossessed in colonial and postcolonial Africa”, (285) and in the final scenes of *Thirteen Cents*, Azure is initiated into this power. After entering the city again, only to find that it is as corrupt as ever, he returns to the mountain. Reaching the top, he builds himself a fire and starts to

⁷⁴ Animals also carry strong symbolic significance, for example pigeons, which like people, will “take you out for a few crumbs of bread” (28). Furthermore, Vincent warns Azure that the pigeons are under Gerald’s control and act as his spies (63). Pigeons are thus associated with the greed and filth of the city, of which Azure constantly wants to cleanse himself. However, Azure associates himself with seagulls, as they have “pride, they always wash at sea with cold water. Like me. [...] [Seagulls] [are] not stupid like pigeons. Pigeons are stupid because they let themselves get used. Where did anyone ever see a seagull being used as a messenger bird? Never” (51).

⁷⁵ Vincent seems to recognise this ability, as his parting advice to Azure is “to always go towards the light” (97) when in trouble.

⁷⁶ This genre bears much similarity to magic(al) realism, which is probably a more familiar concept to the reader. However, Garuba argues that an “animist conception of the world is much larger in scope and dimension than the concept of magical realism could possibly describe” (274). He adds that “magical realism possesses an urban, cosmopolitan aspect and an ironizing attitude” (274), whereas animist realism is a “much more encompassing concept, of which magical realism may be said to be a subgenre” (275).

“walk in a circle [around the fire], driven by a strange sensation to move” (157). He then “take[s] ashes from the edge of the fire and draw[s] shapes on [his] body”, (158) while “a strange feeling fills [him]. [He] feels like [he’s] done this before” (158). Through these shamanistic rituals we see him accessing an alternative source of power, rejecting his urban past and the identity that Gerald and the city have accorded him, by enacting the re-symbolization of his own body into an alternative past.

Not only do Azure’s actions indicate his move into shamanistic rituals, showing his acceptance of an alternative world order, but by inscribing himself, he is arguably claiming his body back from prostitution and the exploitation of the city. De Boeck and Honwana argue that the body is a site in and through which “[y]oung people [can] exercise their creative power discursively”, (11) concluding that “[j]uvenile bodies [can] appear as subversive sites” (11). In the absence of avenues of agency, Azure’s body becomes a crucial site for reclaiming agency. Azure is writing a new future for himself by rejecting his past and inscribing the same body that has been used and taken up by the adult men. Whereas the release of blood from his anus had been a sign of his domination and commodification, here a release of blood from his nose highlights his complete entry into the shamanist trance state (158), thus signalling Azure’s emergence into power.

It is at this moment of re-presenting his body as a subversive site that a scene of apocalyptic proportions unfolds before Azure’s eyes, “all happen[ing] very fast and look[ing] strange, like a magic trick” (160). A huge tsunami envelops Cape Town in waves, and the sky rains not only showers of water, but also balls of fire, elements which are all linked with Azure. With these cataclysmic events, we are reminded of Azure’s contact with the Khoi world: the Khoi name for Table Mountain is *hoerikwaggo*, which means “mountain in the sea”. Azure returns the city to this prior state as he summons the sea to flood the city, and Table Mountain becomes an island. Azure is shown to renounce the values that have been presented to him in the capitalistic urban city, rejecting assimilation into his society, as he grasps the power that he so dearly wished for in this complete destruction and cleansing of Cape Town.

However, in his act of rejection and destruction he takes up the same type of power that he had resented in adults. One of Azure’s last complaints about adults before returning to the mountain for the last scenes is that “they think they are God. They think they know it all – the score” (141). With his destruction of the city, he adopts their power (to an extent that they were not even able to) and plays

God. His *bildung* might result in him escaping the oppression of his society, but it comes at the cost of adopting the violence that was used against him in this destructive act. Furthermore, Azure is no triumphant victor at the end, but rather a fearful adolescent hiding under a “fallen rock” (163).

There is no clear sign of Azure gaining empowerment, thus suggesting not only an uncertain future for him, but also for the city he inhabits. Azure’s *bildung* is cast into further doubt by his age: Franco Moretti suggests that “[a] *Bildung* is truly such only if, at a certain point, it can be seen as *concluded*: only if youth passes into maturity, and comes there to a stop there” (26). The “thirteen” in the book’s title seems to signal his arrest in permanent adolescence, always between adult and childhood. The phrase “thirteen cents” also indicates his worthlessness, as well as his commodification within this capitalistic city – the South African currency is based on the rand, which is subdivided into cents. The “cent” is the smallest monetary unit, and one cannot buy anything with thirteen cents. He thus seems forever trapped in this commodified and worthless position.

Coulter argues that children and youth seem to occupy a paradoxical position which makes it hard to define their roles: “[t]hey are at once an ‘emerging influence’ and ‘submerged by power’” (qtd. De Boeck and Honwana 3). Azure appears on one hand to have reached a place of empowerment, yet at the same time finds himself bound to the city and its expression of power. Duiker thus seems to suggest a return to the past in rejection of the colonial structures that have resulted in such marginalizing structures, yet suggests that doing so is not as simple as it seems – Azure remains influenced by the capitalistic city as indicated by the destructive power he unleashes, despite his turn to a Khoi past. *Thirteen Cents* thus appears to be an *Entbildungsroman*, where, instead of being a novel of education, it shows the “failure or impossibility of education” (Besnick 824). It seems that in a similar way to the bewilderment surrounding Duiker’s death, coming as it did in the context of his last work (posthumously published) which “articulate[d] the most hopeful vision of [his] oeuvre”, (Samuelson “The City” 256) *Thirteen Cents* holds many jarring disparities which do not allow for a single, uncomplicated reading. Yet this seems to be deliberate: the only future for a young, vulnerable street child who has to grow up too fast in a cruel urban Cape Town seems to be an uncertain one.

CONCLUSION:

Lost without parental guidance in the world, the youth in these two texts are left to act and decide for themselves, and, in one case, on behalf of others. In *Skyline*, the Girl is left responsible for her sister, Mossie, as her father leaves them with their apathetic mother, whereas Azure's parents are killed, and he is left to fend for himself. Without parents,⁷⁷ these protagonists are outside the "conventional process of socialization", (Schärf, Powell and Thomas 263) as well as from the "customary sources of guidance and moral inculcation" (Schärf, Powell and Thomas 265). In both texts, the striking absence of the *Bildungsroman* instructor, whose role it is to guide the protagonist in her/his societal assimilation, is an indication of the fragmentation of these protagonists' societies – the Girl lives in a society marked by xenophobic antagonism, and Azure is trapped in a capitalistic society with predatory adults. By inhabiting texts that evoke the *Bildungsroman* form, these protagonists are expected to engage and assimilate with the demands of the society in which they find themselves. However, they reject their expected assimilation, and assume agency in navigating society through acts of creativity.

Describing a South Africa cut across by continental migratory networks from all over Africa to Skyline, *Skyline* suggests ways of living together with the influx of others. Old frameworks of interacting with others, as exemplified in the boundaries of the nation-state, no longer seem pertinent, and De Boeck and Honwana point out "young people are in a perfect position to navigate and control the new geographies and chronologies of globalization", and that they are often "at the frontier of the reconfiguration of geographies of exclusion and inclusion" (6, 1). In contrast to a South Africa refusing to enter in dialogue with the rest of the continent, the Girl creates a new ethics of relating as she engages with the African immigrants living in Skyline. She rejects traditional forms of family, and forms a new family with those around her, one based on affiliation rather than filiation and blood. Furthermore, just as *Finding Mr Madini* and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* expand concepts of homelessness and the foreigner beyond social conditions to more philosophical concepts, *Skyline* shows how the concept of the refugee is one that extends beyond physical characteristics. With this new expanded definition, a number of extra-national, as well as national characters, living inside the block of apartments, can be considered refugees. The community that she becomes part of thus extends

⁷⁷ The absence of the father figure and the fragmented family structure in both texts suggest a possible reading against the detrimental effect that the migrant labour system had on black families by "separat[ing] men from their families" (Ramphela *Steering* 11).

beyond traditional boundaries of the nation-state as she engages with extra-nationals, as well as nationals who trouble gender and race binaries.

On the other hand, *Thirteen Cents* illustrates the powerlessness faced by many young people in a society that has neglected them and failed to recognize them as individuals. Field, Meyer and Swanson caution that “more than 300 years of colonialism, slavery, segregation and apartheid social engineering will not be undone through a few years of democracy”, (vii) and in a Cape Town that is still informed by histories of commodification that reach back to its slave past, Azure finds himself forced into a position of marginalization. He ends up rejecting his contemporary society by moving up the mountain, where he turns to a Khoi past, which, as a substitute to the city’s slavery history, offers him an alternative way of being. Yet, the power and agency he adopts is still heavily influenced by the rapaciousness of the city. These two texts therefore present two divergent possibilities in line with Simone’s understanding of the city as a “work in progress, at the same time exceedingly creative and extremely stalled” (“Introduction” 1). Possibilities are thus opened up to the Girl to find new ways of forming new communities, seeking to write on the behalf of the individuals in the society of which she has become part, but Azure’s world shows a stalling within the domination of the past, and a consequent desire to destroy his society. As marginalized figures, both the Girl and Azure thus represent the ability of the silenced to reject and recreate new understandings of society.

Skyline also draws our attention to the question that Antjie Krog tackles in *Country of My Skull* – the ethics of representing others. As she comes to know Bernard and the other immigrants, the Girl develops a desire to create a society that can accommodate their voices. Similarly, as Bernard comes to know the Girl and Mossie, he is represented as being willing to entrust his narrative (and the stories of his wife and their children) to her. As a text which incorporates both narrative and ecphrasis, thus depending on the collaboration of Bernard and the Girl’s voices to create meaning, *Skyline* draws on conclusions by Jonathan that there is a necessity for equal representation, with marginalized voices entering the public domain to speak for themselves. However, in the case of the Great Spider African group, the homeless people who engage in the project are all already writers before Jonathan joins them. In Bernard’s case, he is not a proficient language-user, and has no creative capacities in English. He is therefore shown turning over his story to the responsibility of the Girl who has become substitute family.

Tom Odhiambo reminds us that ultimately for the young to be “stakeholders in their own education and acculturation [...] they have to be storytellers of their sense of the society around them and the world at large” (88). Although the Girl and Azure are focus points of each of these texts, they never fully grasp the possibilities of sharing their stories. The Girl seeks to write the stories of foreigners, but does not do so within the pages of the novel. The thought of sharing his story never crosses Azure’s mind, and he is completely ostracized from the act of forming narrative. Yet, the Girl projects a future where she will write, and Azure falls back on creating texts of his present and his future in other ways than reading and writing – by turning to walking, he comes to rewrite the cityspace and himself. His *bildung* also takes him out of the city into the mountain where he reinscribes his body with Khoi symbolism.

The measured agency demonstrated by these two protagonists highlights De Boeck and Honwana’s argument that “[y]oung people’s ability to mediate, positively or negatively, between the manifold oppositions, ruptures, and contradictions that seem to characterize African worlds today unfolds in a double dynamic: the perceived marginality and liminality of youth places them squarely in the centre and generates tremendous power” (10). The complexity of the world today necessitates identities of fluidity and openness, which are characteristic of identities that are in processes of “becoming”, particularly in the city, which, Simone argues, “is the conjunction of seemingly endless possibilities of remaking” (“Introduction” 9). As these two protagonists shift through these changing spaces and have to develop their own agency, it seems that they formulate new ways of being that challenge the traditional viewpoint of children as powerless and naive.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Before I start drawing conclusions together, I would like to narrate two stories of my own – stories that made me realize the power of narrative. The first story recounts my initial contact with *Thirteen Cents* as a first year English tutor. I'd never read the story before, but older, more experienced tutors were quick to warn me about its graphic content and about the reactions it usually raised. They added, however, that of all the texts we'd do with our classes, *Thirteen Cents* was the one the students would enjoy most, as it was the most *real*. I came to understand what they meant as, after initial reactions of shock and disgust (just as predicted), my students, like many others in the first year group, opened up their imaginations to Azure. One incident stands out: at one of our weekly tutor meetings, another tutor shared that her students had asked to go to Cape Town for a class outing. Why? "So that we can find and help some street children." Perplexed by this, she'd replied: "But why go all the way to Cape Town? There're plenty here in Stellenbosch!" Later, a few of her students told her that it was only after reading *Thirteen Cents* that they'd become aware of the street children in Stellenbosch.

The second story concerns a more personal episode. In my third year at Stellenbosch University, I became involved in a weekly Bible study at our local Night Shelter. A group of my friends and I would share Bible passages with the homeless people who would temporarily call that place home, and share out supper. Every week, we would end up talking to a room packed with interested individuals. Every week, they'd bid us thanks, farewell, and ask when we'd be coming again. During the weeks we weren't able to make it (due to study pressures, or other typical concerns), we'd occasionally bump into a familiar face on campus, who'd ask eagerly when we'd be back. Yet, it wasn't necessarily our message or a concern for Bible study that kept bringing them back every week – it was because during these study groups these *bergies*, homeless people, vagrants, hobos became people with lives and interests who could share their stories with a group of people who listened.

These two incidents made me aware of the power that narrative has in shaping our perspectives, and in helping us function relationally. In the first, narrative bridged a gap between the worlds of the marginalized and the students; Azure's representation in text making the students aware of what had always been there, but what they had previously failed to see. The second incident stresses the

importance of narrative in validating identity and existence. Often possessing only what could fit into a couple of plastic bags, these individuals were left with only stories to share – but it was through story-telling that they became human.

Motivated by these realizations, I chose to devote myself to scholarship that explored the complexities of story-telling and representational acts concerning the marginalized. Categorising the texts analysed in this study as “post-TRC” might seem to imply a distancing from the past. On the contrary - I employed this category as a selection criterion to follow threads from the TRC into post-TRC South Africa. Recalling the words of Njabulo Ndebele - that South Africa is one of the “few countries in the contemporary world [...] [with] a living example of people reinventing themselves through narrative” (“Memory” 27) - I argue that the TRC had a prominent role in providing a forum for these (individual) narratives/ this (national) narrative to arise. While *Country of My Skull* and *Finding Mr Madini* might be the only texts that make their links to the TRC explicit, all the others selected for analysis are engaged with the story of self and the stories of others. These texts thus foreground the relation between the individual and the collective, and the national and the extra-national collective. Furthermore, just as the TRC, particularly the HRV Commission, sought to open up a space for “ordinary” South Africans to voice their silenced stories, these texts share a drive either on the part of the author-protagonist, or the external author, to provide a space for the stories of the marginalized, thus humanizing them and allowing the “voiceless” a voice. Keeping in mind, however, that storytelling is “never neutral”, (Kearney 55) a key focus of my thesis concerns the politics and poetics of such acts of representation.

Another reason why I chose “post-TRC” texts was to underscore the influence of the past on the present in a country that has tried to “lay the ghosts of the past to rest”. Even though in name “post-TRC” and “post-apartheid”, many of my selected texts grapple implicitly with what Adorno calls the “continued existence of [past] objective conditions” (124). Colonial and apartheid structures of domination and marginalization are shown to be significantly influential in shaping experience in the urban city. One indication of this is the way that geographical locations came to accrue meaning in my selection of texts. As evidenced in this study, various urban pasts shape the lives of those who live in South Africa’s cities. Johannesburg’s long history of being the economic centre of South Africa, with its past marked by labour migrancy, both internal and external to the borders of modern South Africa, came to produce certain forms of marginality in *Finding Mr Madini* and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*.

Similarly, Cape Town's past as a port of call for colonial transnational movement resurfaces in a new context, now as the port of call for many immigrants in *Skyline*, while its long history of slavery, exploitation and commodification shapes and orders Azure's world in *Thirteen Cents*.

The past, in which the majority of South Africa's people found themselves being "foreignized", has also passed on colonial and apartheid anxieties about belonging and home. All the protagonists express a longing to belong, to find a home within the "New South Africa" heralded by the TRC hearings, yet the notion of home manifests in numerous ways. Antjie Krog, who sets the stage for the exploration of home and belonging with her fragmented account of the TRC hearings, comes to realize that the emerging testimonies are re-shaping the nation and creating a future from which she, as a white South African, faces the danger of being excluded. Home is thus expressed as a metaphor. In *Finding Mr Madini* and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, which feature the homeless/vulnerably accommodated, homelessness is represented as physical fact. In *Skyline*, the idea of home, of belonging, is troubled by the unstable social environment of the protagonist's home. Rather than trying to recreate the exclusionary home, the protagonist engages with immigrants and other South Africans who stay in *Skyline*, forming a new community that extends beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. *Thirteen Cents* presents the dilemma of a child protagonist who is without home and without family, and remains so through the entire text. Homelessness thus expands in meaning, not only as a physical state of being, but also as a metaphor for unsettlement within the family, the broader community, or the nation.

In talking about the nation, Elleke Boehmer, following Richard Kearney, argues that stories "embody nations, inscribing a national destiny into time and injecting new life into its myths of the past" (*Stories* 11). What kind of body have these stories brought to South Africa? What kind of future do they project? In grappling with home as experience and metaphor, these texts suggest an expansion of the nation-state, one that is able to accommodate citizens, marginalized and the extra-national. Krog grapples with feelings of exclusion and marginalization that echo the apartheid experiences of those who present testimonies at the TRC hearings. Jonathan, another white protagonist, represents himself enacting a similar experience of homelessness to his fellow writers who are either physically homeless or vulnerably accommodated. *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* shows how the "stranger outsider" is the "stranger within", and so breaks down distinctions of self and other that are affixed to certain locations. All are therefore rendered "homeless", and as the phrase "Welcome to" recurs throughout the novel's

pages, it welcomes not only Refilwe but all readers to the World of our Humanity. In *Skyline* the identity of the fugitive crosses national, gender, racial lines; in so doing, the novel breaks the division that mandate and manage exclusion and inclusion within the nation-state.

These protagonists turn to writing to tell their own stories, as well as to tell the stories of others, in an attempt to restore relations that are lost in their state of “homelessness”. Most of the protagonists are author-figures self-reflexively concerned with the writing process: three of the five texts feature adult writers, while another includes a child who discovers within her a desire to write (I will discuss Azure’s contribution later). *Country of My Skull* highlights how in the face of collective trauma, writing becomes a way of bearing witness to the testimonies that emerge. This process of writing also allows Krog to quilt her own narrative into and from the new landscape of narratives unleashed by the TRC. For marginalized individuals who have lost their homes and families, and left their societies, such as in *Finding Mr Madini* and *Skyline*, stories are presented as a way to fill this loss. As Jonathan starts interacting with homeless people, he and the Great African Spider Writers demonstrate how their search for home is facilitated by the act of writing as they turn to each other to forge a new, inclusive home against the background of an increasingly xenophobic South Africa. The Girl in *Skyline* uses writing to project and produce a society that can accommodate her voice and the voices of the foreigners she befriends. She is also woven into Bernard’s family as he shares his stories with her. In Mpe’s *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, Refentše’s desire to act as a “witness” (6) about Hillbrow through writing is underscored by the revelation that Heaven and Hell are narrative representations of life, and that everlasting home can be found within narrative. Thus, in one sense, we are all continuously writing and re-writing texts.

Narratives, Rosemary Jolly reminds us, contain “the expectation, the structure, of reciprocity: a listener; a reader”, (23) which is a concern evident in these texts. The protagonists seek to act as, or to find, listeners, either for their own stories or those of others. Krog’s audience includes both white Afrikaners who seek to distance themselves from the processes of the TRC, as well as black victims of Apartheid. As Krog enacts the role of witness, she also performs the role of listener so as to be able to pass on these testimonies to others. Jonathan and his Great African Spider Writers perform the role of listening to each other, as they share various narratives offering “windows” into their past. *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, with its second-person narrative voice, uses the “you” address as a self-reflexive technique to make the reader aware of her/his act of reading and responding, as exemplified in

Refilwe's response to Refentše's short story. In *Skyline*, the act of listening to the stories of the marginalized immigrants around her produces in the Girl a desire to write into being a world that will be able to accommodate them. We thus see that it is not just the act of providing a space for the "voiceless" that gives the marginalized a voice – it is equally crucial to ensure that these stories will be *heard* by receptive listeners.

However, this concern raises the question of the author's role in shaping stories so that they are *heard*. Lawrence Venuti highlights the politics underlying representation, and the necessity of examining the extent to which these stories are mediated by the story-teller. Are the stories "domesticated"? Are these voices assimilated within the texts in a way that they lose their sense of individuality? Or, are they allowed to bring across their own uniqueness, to carry their own sense of identity, and to unsettle the host text? As seen in the selected texts, there is a spectrum of factors to be considered in dealing with representation.

Country of My Skull moves between representation as proxy and representation as portraiture, and between appropriation and advocacy. Acting as witness to the stories of others, Krog is reluctant to give up her "privileged position" completely, creating rather a first-person narrative that absorbs and/or accommodates the testimonies of the others. I use the distinction "and/or" deliberately, as Krog reveals that the act of appropriation does not exclude the possibilities of advocacy – she explains how she felt compelled to absorb others' testimonies into her own narrative so that the audience would be fooled into reading them. *Finding Mr Madini* demonstrates a turn from the complexity of representing the voices of others in one's own narrative to providing a space where the marginalized speak for themselves. Jonathan comes to realize that it is not so much a question about whether his authorial voice is sufficient to carry the voices of others, as a case of allowing the marginalized speak for themselves. The group thus writes "windows" of their lives, and he also hands over the role of directing narrator to two others in the group. In *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, the narrator stifles the voices of the *Makwerekwere* as stereotyped and biased narratives about immigrants circulate in the text. Mpe uses this metafictional representational technique not to provide a space for these immigrants to speak, but rather to highlight real exclusion from narrative and nation. In *Skyline*, Bernard seems to grant the Girl permission to recount his story, as he is shown to have an inability of writing and sharing his own story verbally. Yet, the interplay between narrative and ecphrasis suggests an interdependence between the marginalized and the storyteller.

The texts also present different formal representational techniques as they grapple with the question of representing the marginalised. Antjie Krog moves through a number of forms in *Country of My Skull*, never quite settling on a generic approach. In this way, she represents her inability to find an adequate form for the traumatic narratives she hears, as well as the unsettlement she experiences. The messiness of this construction provides a mimetic representation of the recreation of her narrative, and of the nation-under-construction, out of others' testimonies. In comparison, *Finding Mr Madini*'s structure has clear divisions - various "windows" are demarcated within chapters, as well as sections narrated by the three organising narrators - that present clear indications of shifts between various "I"s or "voices". The Chinese-box form of *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* lends itself to blurring the line between reality and fiction, as various narratives and narratives-within-narratives engage, mimic and reflect each other. In the last chapter, form has been emphasised in plotting the development of two child protagonists. The *Bildungsroman* calls for the integration of the individual within certain societal structures. Rather than following this formal demand, the Girl and Azure move beyond the boundaries of their societies as they articulate their desires to write their own futures.

Thirteen Cents is, in many instances, the exception in the cluster of texts analysed in this thesis. Azure appears to be completely marginalized - as an orphan, as a homeless person, as a child male-on-male prostitute, as someone who has "blue eyes" and a "dark skin". As the epitome of the homeless figure, Azure is an example of the "lowest denominator" that K. Sello Duiker describes, thus exemplifying to the extreme the issues engaged in the other texts. Whereas the other protagonists are able to lay claim to writing or an alternative means of communication, he has no such recourse. Unlike the other protagonists who come to develop a concern for the other marginalized as they become increasingly aware of their own state, Azure remains steadfastly focussed on breaking out of his marginalization. He finally reclaims agency by writing through the body, through walking and through symbolism, but in a perversion of the *Bildungsroman* form which generally leads to the assimilation of the child within his society, destroys the society that has created him.

Thirteen Cents is, however, not the only text that seems to conclude in a state of ambiguous open-endedness. Although the Girl develops her *Künstler* abilities, by the close of the book we are left with a sense of the artist ready to emerge, instead of being shown how she uses these capabilities. Furthermore, she recognises that her writing skills will only arise once she is living up on the mountain slopes, again putting off the moment of realization. *Finding Mr Madini* ends with Jonathan and

Valentine deciding to continue their search for Siphon Madini. The sense of loss and homelessness that has marked the text thus continues into the future – the fate of Mr Madini remaining a mystery within the pages of the text. This indeterminacy is also suggested in the ambiguity of *Country of My Skull's* ending, which is concluded with Krog's tentative wish to be included in the national project. The "open-endedness" of these endings contrast with the endings of apartheid texts, which signalled an entrapment within a "difficult and frozen now" ("Endings" 52, 48). Elleke Boehmer suggests that if we "accept that endings in narrative can be pictured as opening the storyline on to the real-life action that will follow", then apartheid endings indicated a "closing down or narrowing of possibility" ("Endings" 46, 48, 45). These endings, however, are marked by "greater complexity, more exploration, more cross connections, more doubt", allowing for "new and various ways of thinking about the future" ("Endings" 54, 52). It is precisely in the indeterminacy of their endings that these texts signal a greater openness to the future.

I, too, would like suggest "new and various ways of thinking about the future" by concluding my thesis with a few remarks highlighting possibilities for further research. The majority of the selected texts seem to be arguing for a more inclusive understanding of citizenship and national belonging, both through the negative and positive incorporation of others into groups, societies and the nation. This thus raises questions about the sustainability and the pertinence of the notion of the nation-state. In his work on xenophobia, Francis Nyamnjoh argues that "as an 'imagined community' (Anderson), the nation-state has turned out to be a fictitious contrivance that marginalizes its heterogeneous fragments (Chatterjee 1993)" (9). South Africa faces many complexities as an increasingly globalized society, not least finding a way to cope with the influx of migrants and diversity of cultures and racialised groups that lie within its borders. In the face of dramatic global changes and processes of globalization, these texts seem to be suggesting new forms of affiliation that are open, rather than closed. What then is to become of the concept of the nation-state? Has it, as a concept, become redundant? If so, how is belonging to a greater community to be determined?

Ndebele Njabulo has argued that to develop a society that offers a safe space of belonging to all, several ways of being need to be "recovered and even redefined": "the family; the sense of autonomous and secure neighbourhoods rebuilding the concept of a community; the sense of nationhood and, beyond that, the sense of being part of a larger world" ("Recovering" 43). In this process of rebuilding communal units of being, he points towards the essential "process of rediscovery

in the child” (Njabulo “Recovering” 43). To initiate this process, we need to engage with children as individuals in their own right, and listen to the stories that they tell us without the “patronizing gesture that acknowledges them as at best quasi-subjects” (Jolly 54). How will we undertake this, and find ways of acknowledging their agency and listening to their voices?

I also think it necessary to critically reassess the ever-broadening concepts of “marginalization” and “the marginalized”. Led by my texts, I have used these notions very broadly, as they shifted and changed in different contexts. The danger of expanding a concept ever inclusively, however, is that it comes to mean nothing at all, thus becoming theoretically unproductive. As my overview of the TRC showed, those who were allowed to testify at public hearings were not necessarily “voiceless” and “ordinary”. This begs the question: who is truly marginalized? Are we to understand marginalization in terms of the socioeconomic and political context? Should we rather see access to narrative, and particularly self-narration, as a criterion? Or, should marginalization be seen as a combination of all these factors? *Finding Mr Madini*, for example, illustrates how the homeless and vulnerably accommodated are marginalized daily, but as writers, they are able to “grasp the pen and write back” against stereotypes. What then becomes of someone like Azure who is unable to claim this type of access? Is he the ultimate figure of the marginalized, situated within both the lowest socioeconomic bracket, without any recourse to narrative independence?

Finally, as much as I have placed these texts in the context of the past, we need to be cognisant that the present has brought with it its own anxieties. There is a danger in being so transfixed by the past that we fail to engage with the present. We should therefore be wary of ending up like Walter Benjamin’s “Angel of History”, whose face is “turned towards the past”, and consequently thrust uncontrollably “into the future to which his back is turned” (392).⁷⁸ In the South African context,

⁷⁸ In his ninth thesis in the essay “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” Walter Benjamin describes the Paul Klee painting “Angelus Novellus” in what has become one of his most oft-cited quotations:

A Klee painting named Angelus Novus shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm

Bhekizizwe Peterson urges us to remember that “[t]he future, arguably is more under threat by the weight of the present rather than by the ‘burdens of the past’” (18). Scholarship should be directed not only at an examination of how the past is still entangled in the present, but how the present, with its narratives of “unity and forgiveness”, and “new strategies of containment and the reproduction of abuse, poverty, injustice and alienation” (Peterson 1) build on past iniquities, shape present ones, and provide a foundation for future injustices.

There is still much work to be done in South Africa – even now the marginalized are subject to much socioeconomic and political discrimination. English literary studies, like many other disciplines that fall under the umbrella of the human sciences, is generally perceived as inferior to science degrees, as its outcomes and research seem to lack relevancy and practical implementation. It risks being a self-indulgent discipline, shying away from pressing social circumstances.⁷⁹ Yet, this should not undermine the potential this discipline offers in grappling and engaging with matters of social urgency. People function in and understand the world and themselves through the stories that they tell. Stories, in being able to open up possibilities and explore alternatives, play a prominent role in shaping imaginations and understandings. Stories also allow us insight into human predicaments as these are captured and portrayed in narrative. Therefore, as literary critics, we should be aware that much work awaits us in looking critically at the narratives people are telling each other to reflect on the past, engage with the present, and to imagine the future to see how our people are “creating new thoughts and worlds”. We need to be challenged to think as humanely as possible about ourselves and others. I believe that *this* is the calling of socially-concerned intellectuals in South Africa, and elsewhere: to ensure that the stories that circulate are thoughtfully and critically *heard* in the academe. We need to make sure that we can, truly, ala Mpe, welcome others and be welcomed ourselves into the World of our Humanity.

irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress (392).

⁷⁹ These points arose in personal conversation with Carina Venter, and I am very grateful for her permission to include them here.

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