Migrants, Migration and Migrancy: Migrant experiences of South Africa in contemporary African Literature

by

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Abstract

Recent years have seen a steady increase in mass migration of Africans within and outside the continent. In the African continent, South Africa is among the top immigrant receiving countries. The post-1994 political dispensation's notion of the of the "rainbow nation" created an impression of diversity that attracted inward mobilities. However, in recent years, as the South African economy stuttered and anti-immigrant rhetoric by the media and senior politicians increased, the reception and assimilation of immigrants in South Africa has been less than enthusiastic. In the discourse on migration in South Africa, xenophobic violence has become the single most important manifestation of the relationship between the locals and migrants. It is important, therefore, to explore the literary interventions in the urgent process of re-establishing new knowledges about South Africa's so-called "migrant crisis". This study enters the conversation on migrant experiences of South Africa, by exploring literary representations of the country as a diasporic space. The primary concern of this thesis is to use a literary critical approach to examine the potential contribution of migrant narratives of South Africa in re-discoursing epistemological methods of knowing, seeing, telling, and reading migrants, migration and migrancy in contemporary South Africa. My analysis invokes a triangulation of migration, space, gender, border and identity theories to explore various ways through which such narratives respond, re-imagine and re-constitute the realities of the current social, political, and economic precarity in the country. I demonstrate how literature is a new site of encountering this precarity, which may help us to understand it in new ways. The study uses a variety of literary genres; novels, short stories, poetry, and auto/biographies to offer different representations of the state of social cohesion and the discourse of African (dis)unity in the context of the recent return of radical nationalism and the discourse of borders. I focus on the narrative strategies, form, motifs, and other forms inherent to literature to analyse themes of belonging, (un)home, abjection, precarity, settlement, gender, Othering, and human rights. A key finding of this study is that through modes of representations, most of the texts deconstruct and radically transform some of the subject matters in the (re)construction of South Africa as a trans-African host space.

Keywords: Migrants, Migration, Migrancy, African Literature, South Africa, "migrant crisis", Trans-African, Mobility, Migrant Identities

DECLARATION

I declare that **"Migrants, Migration and Migrancy: Migrant experiences of South Africa in contemporary African Literature"** that I herewith submit at the University of the Free State, is my independent work and that I have not previously submitted it for qualification at another institution of higher education.

Nonki Motahane   **November 2022**

Signed *Motahanens*

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

At a time when global migration figures stand at 3.5% of the world's population (Edmond 2020) – reflecting the scale and speed of migration surpassing some projections for 2050 – African migration, elsewhere referred to as the "age of wondering" within and outside the African continent continues to rise (Muchemwa 2010: 135). Notably, many of these mobilities are within the continent, rather than trans-continental. A large body of existing evidence shows that most African migrants make other African countries their destinations of choice and not Europe (Zeleza 2010; Fasselt 2019; Farley 2019). A key finding of these studies challenges the perception that Africans are eager to move and relocate to other parts of the world. Instead, several of these Africans are moving and settling inside the continent. In their analysis of contemporary migration trends within and from Africa, Mberu and Sidze (2017) conclude that "contrary to the common characterisation in the media of a mass exodus of African migrants to Europe, most African migrants remain on the continent". The motivations for these movements are diverse. Chief among these are studying, employment, economic opportunities, asylum, and business motivations. According to Samers and Collyer (2010: 54), the "[e]xplanation of migration may be different for different [groups of] people over space and time", largely due to the changing nature of migration trends, migrants, and the spaces they occupy. These movements are fluid and take on different courses over time. The movement of Africans to other continents especially is a widely researched area dating back to the transatlantic slave trade. Fields of history, geography, politics, sociology, anthropology, and demographic studies have engaged these transnational movements focusing mainly on the exchange between the African continent and other continents such as Europe and North America. This study enters the conversation on African migrations using the literary lens and aims to examine the potential contribution of migrant narratives set in South Africa in (re)discoursing epistemological methods of seeing, telling, reading, and knowing migrants, migration and migrancy.

The political transformation in South Africa since 1990 has been a harbinger for new linkages and interactions with the world in ways that were impossible in the previous Apartheid political dispensation. Archbishop Desmond Tutu coined the descriptor "Rainbow Nation" to capture not only the euphoria of the moment but to envision 'new' society and nation characterised by inclusivity regardless of race and ethnicity. This 'new' national identity gestured towards the possibility of multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, and social cohesion. While the post-1994

political dispensation hailed a unified 'rainbow nation', social cohesion is proving to be a complex and problematic issue with the rhetoric of insiders/outsiders persisting especially during the migrant crisis period in South Africa (Crush 2000). The national metaphor of the rainbow signifies the different races and rich cultural heritage that characterise South Africa. This sentiment of comprehensive nationalism was reaffirmed by former president Thabo Mbeki in his "I am an African" speech delivered in 1996, in which he calls for an African renaissance proclaiming that "South Africa belongs to all those who live in it" (Mbeki 2005: 17). Gqola (2001: 95) notes how, in South Africa, "rainbowism" is a metaphor and imagery of tolerance and unity in diversity into the "new-South-Africanness". The 'rainbowism' national re-imaging is attributable to the foundations of the Freedom Charter mantra that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it". In "Dissemination", Bhabha argues that

> the narrative and psychological force that nations bring to bear on cultural production and political projection is the effect of the ambivalent of the nation as a narrative strategy. As an apparatus of symbolic power, it produces a continual slippage of categories, like sexuality, class affiliation, territorial paranoia or 'cultural difference' in the act of writing the nation. (1994: 139)

We see these ambivalences in the contradictions of the national discourse on the inclusivity and exclusivity of migration and migrants' statuses in state narratives. The contradictions manifest in government policies on migration and the way government officials report and comment on the state of migration in South Africa. Tagwirei (2016) illustrates this in his article "State narratives of 'foreigner' and 'criminality' in South Africa" wherein he makes an exposé of how media reports and official discourses depict African immigrants as "victims, proxies, criminals, *amakwerekwere*, foreigners, aliens, [and] illegals" (2016: 192). These state descriptions, argues Tagwirei (2016: 192) are "aimed at dehumanizing" specifically the black immigrant and therefore Othering and making them easy targets for xenophobic violence. Elsewhere, Palmary (2016: 51) argues that "this (dis)order should be read as a central point of the making of a migration crisis and therefore as a technique of governance". Evidently, these narratives are not isolated and innocent utterances, but deliberate political machinations aimed at creating and re-enforcing particular narratives of migrant exclusions. Although the notion of "rainbowism" surfacely symbolises racial, cultural and 'inter-national' unity, antithetical public discourses and the recent xenophobic attacks (especially 2008, 2015 and 2019) targeting black African migrants have shown that a section of the South

African society is less than enthusiastic in welcoming immigrants.[1] Immigrants in South Africa experience different forms of "social exclusions" (Room in Samers & Colleyer 2010: 338) in different sociopolitical spheres such as "inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power" (Samers & Colleyer 2010: 338). Thus, the image of the "rainbow nation" is a complicated and contested subject in the rhetoric of migrancy in South Africa.

Migration and immigration into South Africa have historical lineage in the "secular trend of labour migration in West Africa and Southern Africa" (Mberu & Sidze 2017: 89). Moyo and Zanker (2020: 4) allude to historical migration patterns such as the "overseas fortune hunters" immigrating to Johannesburg since the discovery of gold in 1886. They also cite "the Indian indentured labourers who were brought to work in the sugar plantations in the British colony of Natal between 1860 and 1911, and the Chinese indentured labourers who were brought to work in the mines of Johannesburg between 1904 and 1907" (2020: 4). This stream of migrants was racially desirable to the colonial regime which made their entry and settlement into the country malleable. In the same fashion, the 'new' South Africa attracted quite a few migrants who settled in South Africa for diverse reasons. Presently, the topic of South African migration and migrancy has become almost synonymous with xenophobic violence. In scholarly circles, research interests have used disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and cross-disciplinary approaches to discuss the various dimensions of xenophobia, also referred to as "Afrophobic" violence in South Africa (Maphunye & Koenane 2015; Tsheola & Segage 2015; Mbembe 2015; Matsinhe 2011; Crush 2000; McDonald et al 2008; Buxbaum 2017; Zegege 2012; Folkemann et al 2010; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010; Danso & McDonald 2000; Nyamnjoh 2006). However, this seemingly rich discourse has mainly paid attention to the perceived reasons for the violence, the politics, and economics of the attacks (Dodson 2010; Neocosmos 2008), the role of ethnicity as a trigger factor (Nyamnjoh 2010; Siziba 2014) as well as criminality and the experiences of both the attacked and attacker (Siziba 2014; Charman & Piper 2012; Alfaro-Velcamp & Shaw 2016). Elsewhere, Adjai et al (2013: 192) refer to the violence as "new racism" owing to its context and target groups. While these studies have produced critical knowledge about xenophobic attacks in particular, and

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[1] Another recent phenomenon called 'Dudula' has emerged. Dudula means to 'force out' or 'knock down' in isiZulu. It refers to the movement's goal to expel African immigrants living in South Africa. It has been described as a xenophobic vigilante organization. See https://en.m.wikipedia.org

migrants and migration in general, they have not enlightened us on how certain cultural mechanisms of dealing with the experience of migrancy, particularly writing, offer invaluable opportunities for re-theorizing and re-orienting South Africa as a host space. As such, my thesis offers an alternative understanding of the encounters and intricacies of migrant experiences in South Africa. I argue that paying close attention to the modes of representation in selected literary texts can reveal perceptions about migrants in South Africa, and how migrant characters subjectively experience the 'rainbow nation'.

This study makes close reading of literary texts by South African writers as well as texts from elsewhere on the continent with a view to establishing how creative literature explores, represents and imagines South African migration, migrancy and figures of migrants in South Africa. In recent times, there has been a proliferation of creative literature focusing on the relationality of the South African space to migrants. Thus, my study relies on the capacity of texts to represent complex social phenomena to make arguments about literature as an important source of migration discourse in South Africa. Writing from different perspectives and locations, the selected writers, offer both insider-outsider perspectives that are useful in understanding the nuances of migrant experiences in South Africa. This study turns to literature of and about migration to contribute to the discourse of migration in South Africa. Nussbaum (1992) reinforces the belief of literary narratives to shape and reflect society, urging us to seek "the exploration of some important questions about human beings and human life" (1992: 4) in literature. Thus, through the use artistic tools such as symbolism, metaphors, and historical allusions, literature is capable of moving the reader towards certain knowledge by making a "set of claims" (1992: 7) about life. For Nussbaum (1992: 4), literature is so complex that it impacts the reader by imbuing "certain thoughts and ideas, a certain sense of life, reach toward expression in writing that has a certain shape and form that uses certain structures, certain terms". King et al (1995) in their book "Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration", make similar arguments when they aver that literature "emphasises the fragmentation of human experience […] to penetrate what is taken for granted, unifying, underlying, reality, albeit through writing […]". For my study, this 'social function' of literary texts means we can encounter alternative ways of telling, reading, and seeing realities and histories (although defamiliarized) of migration and migrants.

The capacity of literary narratives to illuminate social reality is evident in Simão Kikamba's *Going Home* (2006), one of the texts under study. The autobiographical novel offers expressions of

refugee migrancy not only in its styling as a hybrid form, but more importantly, through its powerful evocations and descriptions of dehumanizing effects of the government's Operation Fiela (sweep out dirt) in Johannesburg.[2] Through autobiographical mode and aesthetics of suffering, the reader gets a sense of the injustice and dehumanization of refugees in South Africa. This speaks to Nussbaum's (1992) claim that:

> [f]orm and style are not incidental features. A view of life is *told* (italics in original). The telling itself – the selection of genre, formal structures, sentences, vocabulary, of the whole manner of addressing the reader's sense of life – all of this expresses a sense of life and value, a sense of what matters and what does not, of what learning and communicating are, of life's relation and connections. (1992: 6)

The sense of 'life and value' created through the structure of the text and "its telling" has the capacity to shift the reader's perception of 'life'. My study relies on the "expressive" function of selected tests to communicate "what matters and what does not" in the discourse of migrants and migration in African literature (Nussbaum 1992: 8).

Drawing on Nussbaum's (1998: 2) argument that "[l]iterature and the literary imagination are subversive", this study understands literature and literary texts as unique sites to encounter alternative ways of seeing, telling, and reading migrant realities and events. Importantly, these interpretations in the texts become significant when considered in relation to the imagined reader and with socio-historical contexts shaping them. Therefore, literary meaning in this study is informed by:

> what sense of life their forms themselves embody; not only how the characters feel and imagine, but what sort of feeling and imagining is enacted in the telling of the story itself, in the shape and texture of the sentences, the pattern of the narrative, the sense of life that animates the text as a whole. (Nussbaum 1998: 4)

For instance, Meg Vandermerwe's novel *Zebra Crossing* (2013) exposes how socio-temporal influences pervading the text betray the complexity of migrancy, migration and the imaging of

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[2] While the official government website claims that "Operation Fiela – Reclaim is a multidisciplinary interdepartmental operation aimed at elimination of criminality and general lawlessness from our communities. As the word "fiela" means to sweep clean, we are ridding communities of crime and criminals so that the people of South Africa can be and feel safe. The ultimate objective of the operation is to create a safe and secure environment for all in South Africa", the reality on the ground was that the operation targeted foreigners and thus created sustained the stereotype of foreigners as the criminals and 'dirt' to be cleaned. www.gov.za Operation Fiela 2015. See also https:www.dailymaverick.co.za 'Operation Fiela: Thousands of arrests, doubtful impact.

migrants in South Africa. Using the backdrop of the FIFA 2010 world cup, the protagonist's focalization and the setting of Cape Town's Long Street, the novel provides a different perspective of what has been said about migrants in South Africa. The novel's focus on and characterization of a group of African migrants deconstructs myths of national unity and orthodoxy. Although limited, recent studies of literature on Africa in general, South Africa in particular, and migrants through literary approaches demonstrate the complexities of this topic. For example, Saayman (2016) reads stereotypes and Othering techniques in *Zebra Crossing*. Canagarajah (2017) focuses on migration and language in the continent. Abodunrin (2018) enters the conversation through the lens of postcolonial mobilities and analyses migrant poetry. Fasselt (2019) in a book chapter titled "Intra-African migration in post 2000" focuses on the multifaced forms of mobility on the continent such as transnationalism and afropolitanism. Thus, my study's niche lies in its focus on multiple genres discoursing this area and the challenges of being a migrant in South Africa.

Some perspectives on migration in South Africa

A snap survey of the African continent shows various human mobilities and displacements because of xenophobia. The Ghana Aliens Compliance Order of 1969, saw a large number of Nigerians being violently deported. In 1983, the Nigerian government issued an order for all immigrants with full citizenship to leave the country or face arrest. The majority were Ghanaians who had been attracted by the economic opportunities of the oil sector in Nigeria. This mass eviction of foreign nationals would be popularly achieved through the chant "Ghana Must Go". In 1994, the intolerance of ethnic differences between the Hutus and the Tutsis led to the eruption of mass execution of people in the Rwandan genocide. In South Africa, the constitution, migration policies and nationalistic imagination allude to pride and heterogeneity. For example, the "White Paper on International Migration for South Africa 2017" clearly outlines the government's stance on migration. It states that:

> What South Africa needs in a highly connected world is a robust, progressive vision of the benefits of well-managed international migration. This vision must be based on the crucial contribution of inward and outward migration makes and will make to growing our economy and to the transformation of Africa. [...]Vision 2030 (aligned to the NDP timeframe) for a well-managed international migration is that South Africans should embrace international migration for development while guarding sovereignty, peace and security". (2017: v)

However, the accommodation of immigrants in South Africa remains a complicated issue. The topic of migrancy in South Africa is complicated because of the diverse nature of migration. For example, South Africa has long been a migrant-receiving country, largely due to demand for cheap labour in the mining and agricultural sectors. The mining sector has benefited from migrant labour from neighbouring countries such as Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Botswana since the early 1990s. Today, these migration trends have shifted to include not only economic migrants but also students, tourists, refugees, and asylum seekers. These immigrants include Africans and non-Africans.

The central motif of existing discussions, theorizations, and studies of South Africa as a migrant space is xenophobia. The xenophobic attacks opened crucial questions about the state of South Africa's diversity and attitudes towards African foreigners. Although Solomon and Kosana (2013: 7) argue that "[m]igration is a sign of South Africa's emergence as Africa's preeminent economic, educational and cultural centre; and from an international perspective it is seen as something of a duty to share this prosperity with its African counterparts", the state's grand narrative opposes this stance by scapegoating and criminalizing African migrants. Since the late 1990s, South Africa has made international headlines for its aggressive (dis)interest in African migrants. Literature on these occurrences is predisposed to term these onslaughts as xenophobia. In its etymology, xenophobia is the fear or hatred of foreigners or strangers; it is embodied in discriminatory attitudes and behaviour, and often culminates in violence, abuses of all types, and exhibitions of hatred (Solomon & Kosaka 2013; Landau 2012, 2013). For Landau et al (2005: 4) xenophobia is "[l]iterally an irrational fear of outsiders". As an alternative, scholars have used the term "Afrophobia" (Batisai 2016; Dube 2019; McConnell 2009; Matsinhe 2011; Maphunye & Koenane 2015; Mbembe 2015; Tsheola & Segage 2015), while others refer to it as "Blackophobic" (Vambe 2019; Njee, 2016) to describe the 'them and us' racialization between black Africans in the African continent. These theorizations point towards an imaginary fear or dislike and therefore hostility not directed towards foreigners and foreignness per se, but towards Black Africans from the African continent. In this thesis, I will use xenophobia to encompass all forms of antagonism toward the migrant figure regardless of race and country of origin.

Scholars remain conflicted on the causes, effects, and trajectory of this phenomenon in South Africa. Some scholars locate the 'problem' in the failed post-independence nation. Nyamnjoh (2006) for instance, posits how:

7

With inspiration from the apartheid years, South Africans sometimes subject Makwerekwere [a derogatory term used for a black person who cannot demonstrate mastery of local South African languages and who hails from a country assumed to be economically and culturally backward in relation to South Africa] to the excesses of abuse, exploitation and dehumanising treatment on the basis that they have the 'wrong colour' to invest in citizenship. The rights of undocumented Makwerekwere are particularly severely circumscribed as they are reduced to living clandestinely and being exploited with virtual impunity by locals enjoying the prerogatives of citizenship. (2006: xx)

The official narratives of how migrants and migration affect the country affirm these "anti-foreigner antagonis[tic]" perceptions (Steenkamp 2009: 441) alluded to by Nyamnjoh (2006) above. In the state of the nation's political discourses on migration, African migrants are censured for most of the pitfalls of the government. According to Steenkamp (2009: 443), this political and public discourse on migrants is often deployed in "sensational language" and uses "sweeping generalizations" to uphold the negative rhetoric of a crisis of migration in South Africa. Drawing on Landau's (2005: 5) proposal that "xenophobia can only be understood within specific economic, cultural, and political contexts", I examine the South African public discourse on African migrants to establish the "chronotopic" (Bakhtin 1984: 84) context of the literatures studied in this thesis. Bakhtin (1984: 84) defines "chronotope" as "literally, time-space …the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature". In highlighting the interaction between literature and public discourse, the study engages the actual reality of migration and migrants and the aesthetic realms of seeing, telling and reading migrancy, migration and the migrant figure.

Here, I review a few public discourses such as media statements and public comments to demonstrate how a specific discourse is continuously being created and maintained, to construct an image of a 'migrant crisis' in South Africa. To begin with, in 1997, then Defence Minister, Joe Modise, complained:

[A]s for crime, the army is helping the police get rid of crime and violence in the country. However, what can we do? We have one million illegal immigrants in our country who commit crimes and who are mistaken by some people for South African citizens. That is the real problem. (in Landau et al 2005: 7)

In 2018, the former Mayor of Johannesburg, Herman Mashaba expressed similar discontent claiming that African migrants pose health and social threats to South Africa(ns). He says, "[w]e are [not] going to sit back and allow people like you to bring us Ebolas … [h]ealth of our people first. Our health facilities are already stretched to the limit [sic] (Mashaba in Machiya 2021: 72). When read together, Modise and Mashaba's sentiments, though separated by twenty-four years, portray the migrant group as homogeneous and imposing on South Africa's vision as a utopian country. In both claims, migrants are a "real problem" to the image of the country. Importantly, these statements echo the stereotypical criminality, (il)legality, overpopulation that is often blamed on migrants. In their article, "A Discourse analysis of Ebola in South African newspapers 2014—2015, Moodle and Lesage (2020) demonstrate how the media coverage sensationalised the virus outbreak causing a "globalized hysteria" (2020: 159). For Moodle and Lesage (2020), media framing of Ebola as a "predator and criminal" functioned to create "[p]ublic meanings [which] circulated ethnic and racists discourse, and reinforced notions of Ebola both as a form of terrorism and othering" (2020: 161—162). In this context, Mashaba evokes the "Ebolas" metaphor to portray migrants as health 'terrorists' who suffocate the 'healthy' state of the country. Thus, South Africa is represented as a nation under duress from "migrant diseases".

A popular public conception is that African migrants pose as direct competition for and threat to socio-economic and spatial resources such as jobs, health services, housing, and space (Steinberg 2008). In a newspaper article, Mashaba is cited claiming that migrants "hold [...] our country to ransom [sic]". There is intentionality and functionality of text and language in the deployment of the "ransom" metaphor to express and portray migrants as a "criminal threat" (Dobson 2022; Crush & Dobson 2007; Steenkamp 2009). This migrant criminality debate is also multifaceted. On the one hand, African migrants are perceived as 'criminals' who 'steal' resources from South Africa(ns) (Maharaj 2002). On the other hand, (il)legal migrants are unlawfully residing in the country, thus making them 'criminal' residents (Mawadza 2008). Further claims are that African migrants contribute to the high crime rate in the country (Danso & McDonald 2001; Klaaren & Ramji 2001). During a press briefing in 2017, the then Deputy minister of police, Bongani Mkongi, said, "[s]ome of the issues is because of we can't give shelter to our people because these buildings are being occupied and hijacked by people and lunatics that we don't know [sic]" (Mkongi in Machiya 2021: 73). Mkongi invokes outrageous hyperbole by painting a South Africa wholly taken over by foreigners, with the possibility of a future president of South Africa being a foreign

national when he says these 'unknown' "lunatics" are over-crowding the country where the "whole South Africa could be 80% dominated by foreign nations and the future president of South Africa could be a foreign national [sic]" (Mkongi in Machiya 2021: 73). Mkongi's "lunatics" metaphor is symptomatic of attitudes (official or otherwise) to foreigners. This is discussed in detail in chapter three when I turn to how these metaphors function as a form of Othering and alienating the African migrant in *Bom Boy* and *Zebra Crossing*.

Mangosuthu Buthelezi, a one-time serving Minister of Home Affairs made similar unsubstantiated claims, estimating the undocumented migrant population to between 2.5 million and 5 million. Elsewhere, former President of America, Donald Trump also used the migrant 'crises' to "manipulate" (Greenhill 2018: 1) public perceptions on migrants by pushing the 'America first' mantra. According to Greenhill (2018), Trump deployed the controversial border wall discourse to instil ideas and image of migrants as a national threat in America. Trump employed the "extra-factual information" method to inflate anxiety by presenting 'false' migration information to the public (Greenhill 2018: Lafiandra 2020). Machiya (2022) reads these discourses as "[o]pportunistic [...] anti-immigrant populist discourse" used by politicians at community and national levels to influence public opinion on migrants.

Xenophobia also manifests in subtle forms such as "derogatory language and violence" expressions (Handmaker & Parsley 2001: 44). Social media, through citizen journalism is a ripe site to confront "xenophobic toxicity" (Machiya 2022: 69) in South Africa. Onslow (2021: 4) proposes that social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and TikTok, have "transformed the provision of news and opinions across the country". Consequently, Chenzi (2021) argues that 'fake news' in social media platforms escalates xenophobic tensions. According to Onslow (2021: 5), anti-migrant 'fake news' propagated on social media through hashtags such "#PutSouthAfricansFirst, #ZimbabweansMustFall, #NigeriansMustGo, and #InfluxOfImmigrantsMustStop" perpetuate migrant hatred and surge anti-migrant attitudes and behaviours in off-line real-life settings. This gives rise to a context of right-wing 'neo-nationalism' where pan- Africanism is shunned and South African exceptionalism is encouraged – very much like Trumpism and the 'America First' call. The emergence of conservative political parties such as the Patriotic Alliance with the slogan of "Ons Baiza NIE/The last Hope" invokes the metaphor of a country being annihilated by foreigners, and positions the party as the 'last hope' for retaining a state of 'order' aimed at maintaining the imaginary social order of the country.

In a clear case of xenophobic politics playing out in public, a recent video of Dr Phophi Ramathuba, Minister of Health in the Limpopo province trended on social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. The theatricality of the moment shows Minister Ramathuba addressing a patient awaiting surgery saying, "you are supposed to be with Mnangagwa, he doesn't give me money to operate you guys … you are killing my health system". While Ramathuba's utterances are not far from the truth, they not only sparked public debate on the place and space of foreigners in South Africa but represent instances of how elitist discourse can function to "stimulat[e] xenophobic feelings" (Onslow 2021: 5). The Minister's evocation of the health system being "killed" by "you guys" (migrants) is as paradoxical as it is ironic in showing the destructive nature of migrants who – to all intent and purposes – behave like lice that suck the very host carrying it. The underlying impression is that South Africa(ns) is at the mercy of a crisis created by migrants. Potentially, this discourse creates a "polarising effect on social attitudes" (Onslow 2021: 5) towards migrants.

Furthermore, the dynamics of migrancy in South Africa is complicated by political and social discourses that construct "an imagined […] nationalism" (Anderson 1983: 1) of South Africa(ns) on conservative ideas. There is no doubting that the utterances have "a direct implication for South African social stability and development, as well as impacting on South African relations with other African states" (Onslow 2021: 2). Hence, Crush and Williams (2003: 95) argue that "South Africa is a highly xenophobic society, which out of fear of foreigners, does not naturally value the human rights of non-nationals". Similar observations are made by Landau et al (2005: 2) who aver that "there is strong evidence that non-nationals living and/or working in South Africa face discrimination at the hands of citizens, government officials, the police, and private organizations contracted to manage their detention and deportation". However, these perspectives are somewhat silen(ced) in the public imagination. As such, my study takes a literary approach to explore how certain forms of migrant identity (re)formations reflect on the state of social cohesion and the discourse of African (dis)unity in the face of the rebirth of radical nationalism and the discourse of borders.

Method and Theoretical Departures

The study is a qualitative inquiry that uses literary texts as the unit of analysis. From a theoretical perspective, I will draw from diaspora and migration theories. While the most held understanding

of diaspora is the dispersal or movement of people from a homeland (Bulter 1998), Brah (2005:14) theorises it as "an interpretive frame for analysing the economic, political and cultural modalities of historically specific forms of migrancy". My study draws heavily on Vertovec (1999: 3)'s three-dimensional theorization "'diaspora' as *social form:* history and geography of the immigrants, 'diaspora' as *type of consciousness,* state of mind and sense of identity and 'diaspora' as *mode of cultural production.:* production and reproduction of transnational, social and cultural phenomena." This model is relevant in examining contemporary connections and re-connections of migrant lives. Danso and McDonald (in Tagwirei 2016) caution against using the phrase "African migrants" to refer to the different migrant identities. They argue that the term categorises the individuals as an "indistinguishable group" (Tagwirei 2016: 194). Consequently, my use of the term in this study acknowledges that the group is not monolithic. Instead, I use it here to frame my reading of how the selected literary texts engage with the politics of the conditions and processes of migrancy in South Africa. The slipperiness and fluidity of migrant identities and the trajectory of migrant lives means that they cannot be analysed using a one-size-fits-all model. I, therefore, make use of this three-dimensional model to read how particular situations, circumstances and events in South Africa contribute to the re-making of migrant identities.

Considering the clear gap in knowledge of migrants and migrancy in South Africa, my study uses a literary critical approach to examine the potential contribution of imaginative migrant narratives of South Africa in re-discoursing epistemological methods of knowing, reading, and telling migrants, migration and migrancy in contemporary South Africa. The study focuses on the literary representations of the figures of migrants, their experiences and situations, and circumstances of being and existing in South Africa. The clear disconnect between the state policy, migration policies and a 'crises' of social cohesion in South Africa presents a new avenue for studying the diasporic space from a literary perspective. I read different genres; fictional narratives and personal narratives to offer a more nuanced analysis of the time-space that reveal a wide range of processes, ideas, and perceptions about migrants. My focal texts include Novuyo Tshuma's *Shadows* (2012), *Crossroads* (2012) Sue Nyathi's *Gold Diggers* (2018), Meg Vandermerwe's *Zebra Crossing* (2013), Yewande Omotoso's *Bom Boy* (2011), *I want to go home Forever* (2019) edited by Loren Landau and Tanya Pampalone, *Splinters of a Mirage Dawn, Anthology of Migrant Poetry of South Africa* (2013*)* edited by Amitabh Mitra and Naomi Nkealah, *London Cape Town Joburg* (2014) by Zukiswa Wanner, *A Man of Good Hope* (2015) by Jonny Steinberg, Simao Kikamba's *Going*

Home (2005), "The Ghosts of Sofina" (2019) by Keketso Mashego and *Agringanda: Like a Gringa like a foreigner* (2019) by Tariro Ndoro. The rich diversity of the genres gives this study the eclecticism and "polyphonic" (Bhaktin 1981) capacity to illuminate multiple experiences and 'voices' of migrants in South Africa. The personal narratives, *Going Home*, *I want to go Home Forever*, and *A man of Good Hope* give this study a critical engagement with anesthetized personal experiences. The analysis of these texts focuses on how modes of narrating, plot structure and certain uses of description, symbolisms, metaphors, and character create imaginative life-worlds that relate with and reflect on the real world of the migrant experience in South Africa. The aim is to illustrate how certain ontological aspects of textualizing and/or narrativizing South Africa as a host space reflect the migrants' deep negotiations of new spaces, difference, economic, socio-political, and psychological conditions informing the experience of being a migrant in South Africa.

Through close analysing of narrative strategies, symbols, setting, descriptions, characterisation, and tone, the study explores how these elements of style, discourse the issues of migration, migrancy, of (un)home, ethnicity, and space (geographical and imagined) – identity – fall within the diasporic scope of South Africa. Noxolo (2014) acknowledges the capacity of literature to express experience and offer meanings of lived experience. She argues that "the novel [is] an active substance, in which both writer and reader have agency in making meaning" (2014: 297). However, this analogue transcends novels and applies to other forms of literature such as poetry, films, drama and self-writing. In this way, forms of literature become a creative site of migrant experiences and the meanings attached to those experiences. Similarly, Pourjafari and Vahidpour (2014: 1) claim that "imaginative literature has the power to reflect complex and ambiguous realities". Nyambi (2013: 12,) in his conception of literature asserts that "narratives are [...] complex modes of communicating [...] distinct identity (re)constructions". This utilitarian and "performative interpretations" (Noxolo 2014: 296) of literature have the power to express and discourse transnational identity formations. To answer my research question(s), I will focus on the aspects of the texts that attend to (re)construction of space and migrants in South Africa.

Literary representations complicate conceptions of migrancy and migration. Through what some scholars call "mirroring", literature becomes a site for the representation and expression of "knowledge" (Bakhtin 1981: 353) and experience. This capacity of literature to represent

knowledge and life in artistic images shows the dialectical relationship of content, form and context. In their conceptualisation of the nature of creative literature, Misrahi-Barak and Raynaud (in Coullie 2017) argue that "literary texts display not only the mirror of the contemporary world but also elements for an understanding of the consciousness and elusive 'identity' of the diasporic subject". Relatedly, Noxolo (2014: 295) argues that literary works "challenge [...] and express the dynamic experiences of living in postcolonial states". Thus, it can be argued that African novels of migration depict versions of the African transnational experience which contribute in various ways to knowledge about transnational identities. This argument is deliberately linked to the study's objective of unmasking how the selected works of literature portray the traumas of post-migration in South Africa.

The selected texts illustrate the social and cultural precariousness in the negotiation of space and place for the migrant. For example, in *Bom Boy*, Leke suffers alienation. In a series of letters, we learn that Leke is a multi-located multi-cultural character with a paternal history pointing to Nigeria. This 'situatedness' of his identity isolates him in almost all aspects of his life. An interesting element I explore in chapter 2, is how migrant alienation is represented as a physical and psychological ailment. Similarly, in *Going Home,* Mpanda effectively narrates his refugee migrancy in South Africa as a state of confinement. Facssinel and Watson (2013: 3) in their analysis of *Welcome to Our Hilbrow* (2001) call this a "cosmopolitan crisis" concerning the precarity of migrancy in Johannesburg, South Africa. The same argument extends to stories in *I want to go Home Forever* in which migrants in South Africa narrate their experiences of fleeing an economic, political, and social crisis in their African countries. However, most of these stories reveal to the reader that the characters have partly escaped a crisis and find themselves in a different kind of 'crisis'. Therefore, the precarious situations require reconstructions for social survival. As my study demonstrates, this is a thematic concern in African migrant literature where the writing of the migrant aesthetically and metaphorically engages with precarity as a constant state of the migrant. I use African migrant literature throughout this study for literary imaginations that imagines African migrants in South Africa. These texts are written by African writers and the stories are set in South Africa.

Texts considered in this thesis reflect new and different subjectivities of precarious livelihoods, drawing the reader into the private and public domains of migrancy. Most migrants in the selected

texts experience economic insecurity, working mostly in the informal labour sector such as agriculture, domestic work, and service work. While the economic prospect is a major pull factor for African migrants in South Africa, the situational irony arises upon arrival when migrants realize that the anticipated greener pastures in the "city of Gold" (*The Gold diggers*), "the land of plenty" (*Zebra Crossing*) are fallacies that come true for a selected few. Hence, migrant characters navigate these ambivalences through "memories of the past […] and the present that is anticipated" (Vambe 2019: 2). The speaker in Makombe's "Crossing the Limpopo*"* (in *Splinters of a Mirage Dawn* 2012) captures this ambivalent sentiment when he is caught between the thoughts and memories of the home he "can't return to" and "the milk and honey ahead" in South Africa. The situations of economic depravity often relegate the migrant to abject statuses. Therefore, my study attends to the representations of abjection. I primarily draw from Kristeva's (1982a) formulation of abjection as a "reaction people would have due to defenseless breakdown in meaning caused by their ability to distinguish themselves and others". Nyers (2003:1074) expands this understanding to include a "degraded, writhed and displaced condition". In chapter 6 of this thesis, I apply these ideas for comparative analysis of "The Ghost of Sofina" and *London Cape Town Joburg*. My reading of "The Ghosts of Sofina" reveals the complexities of migration as an abject condition and experience. Nyers (2003) also argues that abjection can be a "condition". Drawing on Nyers' argument, I explore the implications of this formulation in "abject spaces" (McGregor 2008: 469), dystopia and abject bodies.

Zeleza's (2005) conceptualization provides a useful approach to thinking and analyzing diasporic (and migrant) experiences as paradoxical processes that do more harm than good to the migrant by creating a state of entanglement. For Zeleza (2005):

> Simultaneously refer[ing] to a process, a condition, a space and a discourse; the continuous processes by which a diaspora is made, unmade, remade, the changing conditions in which it lives and expresses itself, the places where it is molded and imagined, and the contentious ways in which it is studied and discussed. It entails a culture and consciousness, sometimes diffuse and sometimes concentrated, of a 'here' and separated from a 'there', a 'here' that is often characterized by a regime of marginalization and a 'there' that is invoked as a rhetoric of self-affirmation, of belonging to 'here' differently. The emotional and experiential investment to the shifting material, mental and moral orders of social existence. Diaspora is simultaneously a state of being and a process of becoming a kind of voyage that encompasses the possibility of never arriving or returning, a navigation of multiple belongings. (p. 32)

For Mishra (2006: 3), "new diaspora" is one "characterized by greater mobility and a tendency to see one's exile as negotiable semi-permanent or even merely temporary". Brettell (2006: 331) argues instead that diasporans can be "the multiple loyalties to places and diverse occupied spaces that it describes". Creative literature brings these nuances in interesting ways. In *I want to go Home Forever*, for instance, many of the characters express the desire to return "home" because of the violent state of the South African space and some placing the psychological need for attachment to the place of origin. For example, Chichi Ngozi expresses the dilemma of home in South Africa 'home' home in Nigeria. She says although she has experienced threads of violence in Pretoria where she is a hairdresser, she "still love[s] South Africa and still love[s] to stay here. Even if I go back to Nigeria I can only go to visit. I'll come back to this South Africa" (2019: 122). Here, the narrator expresses a state of multiple belongings as noted by Zeleza (2005) above. A Rwandan refugee named Alphose Nahimana articulates the conundrum of staying and returning 'home' home, saying "no one would wish to be in a foreign country when your country is peaceful and stable, and you can do whatever you do in your country. You can be poor, but you are poor in your own country, in your homeland, in your house" (2019: 166). It is clear from these notions of homeland that the diasporic experience in South Africa is lived and known in different ways. I explore this point further in chapter three of this thesis where I analyze the evocations of home and homing in the selected poems.

The study is informed majorly by Bhabha's concept of the "third space" in *The Location of Culture* (1994), particularly because it explains some of the most critical factors and forces impacting processes of identity formation in the postcolony. Bhabha (1994: 4) claims that when people move, there is a space "in between the designations of identity" that emerges and for him, this space is a "third space". In other words, mobility enables conditions where identities and cultures meet. The interaction produces a form of cultural (dif)fusion that creates a third space. This interface is often ambivalent and uncertain. Therefore, precarity becomes a useful concept in the analysis of complex relationships between space and migrants. Precarity is characterised by a status that is uncertain, temporary and in some ways restrictive. Elsewhere, Anderson (2010: 301) argues that "global inequalities" affect the conditions of precarity for migrants. Key features of a precarious status are social, economic, and political insecurities (Standing 2011; Hira-Friesen 2018; Strauss and McGrath 2017). Migrant precarity can also result in exploitative employment conditions (Butler 2012). According to Butler (2014) precariousness is a general human condition from the

16

fact that all humans are interdependent. The vulnerability or the state of precariousness is experienced mostly by marginalized groups such as African migrants in South Africa. The nature of the migrancy (especially for illegal, undocumented, and forced migrants) is that it is liminal, pushing the migrant to the margins. My conception is that *Going Home*, *I want to go Home Forever* and *A man of Good Hope* are texts that comment on this condition in South Africa. The politics of human rights and precarity are interwoven in migration discourse, revealing complex bits of knowledge on the structural upholds and denials of human rights. As such, my study attends to the "ethics and aesthetics" (Dawes 2010: 150) of the self-narratives in highlighting the broader issues on the treatment of humans (migrants) and preservation of human rights.

Noting the inherent complexities and diversities of immigrants as human subjects, and how these cannot be essentialized, I also draw on Bhabha's concept of hybridity and its various reconceptualization by the likes of Salgado (1999), Wade (2005) and Young (2005), to understand the various phases of the metamorphosis of subjectivity as migrants negotiate South Africa as a space that informs and requires new identities. Added to this is the geographical and "social fluidity" (Lefebvre 1991) of identities, cultures, and sensibilities when different people and nationalities make South Africa their new collective space. Therefore, I invoke Spivak (1997)'s notion of the (dis)pleasures of migrant hybridity to conceptualise migrant identities in South Africa as neither homogenous nor monolithic. My reading of focal texts centres on how these identities are continuously re-fashioned in changing South African spaces depicted in the narratives. Acknowledging this slipperiness of migrant subjectivities and how different aspects of South African space impact their tastes and sense of being and belonging, puts paid to Bhabha's concept of negotiation in analyzing how migrants navigate and negotiate different social pressures, from those of their co-ethnics in the country of origin or immigration to those of citizens in a variety of different settings.

In my reading of the entanglements of identity categories and their points of intersection in the socio-political spaces as represented in the selected texts, I make use of Crenshaw's (1991) ground-breaking concept of intersectionality. Over the years, the concept of intersectionality has developed in a variety of ways as a theory and analytical tool (Carastathis 2016). Nash (2017: 118) argues how "nearly everything about intersectionality is disputed: its histories and origins, its methodologies, its efficiency, its politics, its relationship to identity and identity politics, its central metaphor [...]". Despite the politics around the concept of intersectionality, in their book

"Intersectionality" Collins and Bilge (2020: 3) offer a useful entry point for my application of the concept describing intersectionality as a *heuristic;* "meaning it can assume many different forms". They maintain that it is a useful analytical tool in studying the relationships in "interpersonal power, power relations are about people's lives, how people relate to one another, and who is advantaged and disadvantaged within social interaction". This is the focal point of my study of the migrant in South Africa. Grosfoguel (2015: 649) add his voice when he says intersectionality, is "innovative [in] assessing layers of oppression and privilege simultaneously". Similarly, Gopaldas (2013: 90) formulates how "intersectionality is that every person in society is positioned at the intersection of multiple social identity structures and is thus subject to multiple social advantages and disadvantages". It is this generativity of intersectionality that I draw on to consider the interplays of identities in "contested spaces" (Collins and Bilge 2020: 118) and "[…] context[s], meaning[s] and contradictory locations" (Anthias 2012: 104). Thus, using intersectionality as an analytical tool in my reading of migrant spaces highlights the fluidity of individual identities and how varying combinations of ethnicity, class, gender, race and sexuality, and citizenships categories produce "[a]xes of social division" (Collins & Bilge 2020:16) (dis)advantaging the immigrant on different levels. For marginalized groups such as African migrants, these divisions present a multi-layered process constituted against the past, the present and the future with the potential of revealing nuanced understandings of life experiences. Writing in relation to the widespread xenophobic attitudes in Southern Africa, Nyamnjoh (2006: 17) argues that "anti-immigrant sentiment is both strong and widespread, cutting across virtually every socio-economic and demographic group". It becomes inevitable then, to add to this discussion, an exploration of how literary characters experience and negotiate these intersections of marginality in a country that has been termed anti-immigrant (Nyamnjoh 2000, 2006; Crush 2000).

In my endeavour to read the selected literature as "voicing" multiple truths and aestheticizing particular spaces in relation to the social and cultural categories that impact the livelihood of the African immigrant, I analyse the stories as recordings of actual realities as the narrators draw from their lived experiences, memory and hopes for the future. A text such *I want to go Home Forever* in both title and subject matter, gives an indication of the real issues on migration as it reflects on the condition, desires, dreams, and wishful thinking associated with migrancy. Multiple identities, inclusive of a sex worker from Zimbabwe, a priest from Malawi, a political refugee from

Democratic Republic of Congo, and an economic migrant from Mozambique are explored in the text. Equipped and empowered with own voices and the power of expression, the narrators recount their experiences and motivations for departure, and importantly, the difficulties of assimilation and settling in South Africa. In this context, intersectionality offers my study a vantage point on the complexities of migrant lives. An intersectional paradigm allows me to explore how spaces at the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and nationality inform new forms of knowing and telling the self and (in relation to) the other. I use the intersectional lens to explore the impact of intersecting systems of power on the experiences of the African migrant.

The overarching aim of my study is to explore literary textual preoccupations with migrant experiences, human mobilities and settlements, and how these are closely intertwined with place and space. Therefore, this calls for serious considerations of spatiality in the exploration of migrants, migrant perspectives, experiences, and perceptions of South Africa(ns). Space and place are important reflections of migration and key elements of migrants' perceptions about inherent migration encounters like arrival, belonging, settlement, and home. Because a migrant is neither here nor there, settled nor unsettled, they view, space as a contested terrain as they cannot not lay claim to the place and space they left behind nor can they call home to the new place and space of arrival. Gieseking et al (2014: xx) argue that "[s]pace and place are not fixed or innate but rather created and re-created through actions and meanings of peoples". Confirmed here is the importance of understanding the reconfigurations that occur in space and in turn, transformations in migrant subjectivities as they negotiate the 'new' space and peoples. This makes Lefebvre's (1991: 288) theorization of "social space" critical to my understanding of the complexity of negotiations of migrant identity in South Africa as a host space. Lefebvre (1991: 289) delineates how space is socially produced and posits that "space is a means of production, it is also a means of control, and hence of domination; of power […] it escapes in part from those who could make use of it". Thus, power and the hierarchies of power impact on how space is socially experienced and conceived. In my focal texts, space is contested along the lines of nationality, citizenship, race, ethnicity, gender, and class. As such, Lefebvre (1991) is deployed to analyse the imagined social environment of South Africa, and how meanings of migrancy are created and negotiated therein. The focus of study borders closely on Lefebvre's argumentation on the contestations of space, as evoked in the statement 'who could (not) make use of it'. Therefore, my reading concerns itself

19

with how intersections of different identities interconnect with space to "form different situations" (Ruddick 2014: 2). Additionally, power relations in the social space implicate 'who could (not) make use of' such spaces. Raised here are elements and impression of exclusion, inclusion, and Othering, where those not perceived as belonging to a space are cast out and suffer marginalisation. Ruddick (2014: 2) shows the functions of power in spaces when he says, "public space is not simply by-product of other structures of inequality; it is deeply constitutive of our sense of community-who is allowed in, who is excluded and what roles should be ascribed to 'insiders' and 'outsiders'". This means that the experiences of space and being in a space are informed by social structures, practices and power dynamics within the space.

Scholars such as Gieseking et al (2014), Hannam et al (2014) and Brenner (2004) add their voices to the notion of social space arguing for a "dialectical" (Hannam et al 2014: 340) conceptualisation of space. This implies that space embraces a myriad intersection, where there is relationality of space and people. For Lefebvre (1991: 290), however, "[s]ocial space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather it subsumes things produced and encompasses their interrelationship in their coexistence". Drawing on Lefebvre argument, I view migrant identities as products of a dialectical relation among other things, social space. This view speaks to Chang's (2011) argument that migrants are in search of "a self that is transpersonal and includes a society, a past and a place" (Chang 2011: 135). As will become clear later in my discussion of the texts, South Africa's social space is a tricky factor in the migrant's attempts to establish belonging and home and attempts to attach certain identities to that space are usual much ado about nothing – to borrow from William Shakespeare. For example, in my analysis of *Bom B*oy, I demonstrate how Leke's walking patterns and the literary spaces he occupies are pellucid reflections of a strong sense of alienation and expressions of deracination. Walking and walking patterns are thus evaluated with specific emphasis on inquiring how they are representing alienation and the affirmation of individual identity. Through walking the Cape Town spaces such as the mall, Leke attempts to forge spatial belonging. In "The Ghost of Sofina", place is an ambiguous trope of migrancy. The story uses metaphors of abjection to complicate migrant inclusions and exclusions and as a way of negotiating location and belonging in South Africa. In my analysis, *The Gold Diggers* is preoccupied with spatial boundaries and transgressions. Consequently, I follow closely on Portia's upward social mobility in Johannesburg, to show how

space is central to a migrant's aspirations, hopes and dreams as depicted in the novel. I also consider the cruciality of the representation of journeys in time, out of time, as well as across contemporary space in relating to South Africa(ns).

Literary engagements of migration, migrants and migrancy in South Africa

The study of migration, migrants and migrancy in African literature is by no means a novel area. My study acknowledges and hinges upon a large body of multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary research on the state, nature and consequences of migration flows in South Africa. The study of migrants' experiences and migration has enjoyed scholarly attention across many disciplines. Studies of African migrants tend to be focused heavily on national histories and belonging. The place of leaving and the place of arriving have been given much attention when studying migration and diasporic trends (Boehmer 2005; Crush 2011; Segatti & Landau 2011). In his timely book titled *Globalization, Mobility, Citizenship and Xenophobia in Southern Africa*, Nyamnjoh (2006: 11) calls for scholarly attention and commitment to "the growing importance of boundaries in a world pregnant with rhetoric on free flows and boundless opportunities". Although this has been a focus area for creatives and academics alike, it remains a grey area in literary studies. A survey of recent studies in literary representations of migrations also points to an academic tendency to focus on movements from the African continent to the global North or rather the "European imperial axis" (Flockemann 2017: 2). This center of attention owes much to the long-standing relation between the African continent and the West, and has been an obsession of postcolonial studies. Hamilton (in Nuttall 2009: 30) refers to this relationship as a "historical entanglement of indigenous and colonial concepts". By focusing on these complicated relationships, scholars illustrate how these relationships continue to complicate the present (on the continent and outside). The focus for literary critics and scholars has been on the experiences of inter-continental migration and migrants (Idowu-Faith 2011; Kaboré 2016; Nwanyanwu 2017; Mangena 2018; Manase 2014; Moji 2016; Nyambi, Makombe & Motahane 2020). Many of these studies have grappled with the question of writing mobility and migrant identities involving African migrants (Moudouma 2013; Toivanen 2020, 2021; Fasselt 2019, 2021, 2022; Nyman 2017; Maritim 2020).

Moudouma (2013) undertakes an examination of intra- and intercontinental migrations in contemporary African writing. By reading both outward and return migration on the continent,

Moudouma's study demonstrates that the negotiating belonging cannot be separated from the crossing of borders. In a recent study, Toivanen (2021) takes a similar but refreshing approach by reading literary representations of mobility and travel in contemporary Francophone and Anglophone African and Afrodiasporic literatures. Toivanen structures her study thematically, exploring "how mobility is a deferentially accessed resource" (2021: 5). Although my study is structurally different, my reading concurs with Toivanen's idea of "three different categories reflecti[ing] the differences in accessibility of the mobility resource" (2021: 6). For Toivanen, mobilities and travellers can be categorized into "affluent travellers, subjects who do not have unrestricted access to the socio-cultural and economic capital of the privileged classes [and] underprivileged mobilities […]" (2021: 5). A survey of migration texts in South Africa, affirms this categorization of different travellers. However, I hazard to add a fourth group of forced migrations in the figure of the refugee. It is tempting to classify the refugee as an "underprivileged" traveller; however, my analysis of refugee narratives shows us that not only are refugees 'underprivileged' travellers, but they are also conceived of as below the status of the 'human' because they are stripped of basic human rights. Thus, not only does my study add to this critical topic of mobilities and migrations, but also potentially enhances our understanding of the relationship between contemporary South Africa and the factors contributing to the different experiences of travel and travellers as categorized and stratified by Toivanen (2021).

Drawing from the above scholarship, this study shifts the nexus from "colonial politics" (Nuttall 2009: 2) by focusing on 'local politics' as facilitated and influenced by migration in South Africa. South Africa has been described, discussed, and studied in banality to the West due to its history of separationist violence. My study acknowledges the effects and legacies of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa. However, it focuses, instead, on the post-apartheid period to explore the adaptability, receptivity and lack thereof, of the 'new' South African space as a migrant-receiving space. Scholars such as Crush et al (2008); Strauss (2011); Nyman (2017); argue that South Africa and some South Africans are anti-immigrant. Ndebele (in Jacobs 2016: 8) outlines this paradox saying, "South Africans have an intriguing capacity to be disarmingly kind and hospitable at the same time as being capable of the most horrifying brutality and cruelty". This inconsistency is explored in the selected texts in complex and multi-layered ways. The texts' effective portrayal of South African migrancy highlight the African migrants' existence in flux and a state of constant fear.

Recently, there has been an interest on the Zimbabwean diaspora in South Africa (Fasselt 2020, 2021; Wilkinson 2016; Ndlovu 2022). Although these studies make important contributions to literary migration discourses between Zimbabwe and South Africa, there is a marked absence of studies that focus on representations of migrant experiences of contemporary South Africa as a host space. This dearth of research prevails despite the burgeoning of migration literature by African migrants in South Africa. Art has long been a source of information and knowledge about the South African migrancy experience. Johnson (1973), for example, turns to songs to reflect on the Tsonga people's exodus into the then Northern Transvaal in the second half of the 19th century. My study, therefore, bridges this research gap, by turning attention to contemporary African literature's reflection on notions of migrancy in the South Africa.

Apart from the novels and short stories mentioned in the preceding discussion, a major contribution to representations of migrants and migrancy in South Africa has been by the Filmmakers Against Racism (FAR). FAR was formed to produce films that "call for compassion and solidarity with all Africans seeking refuge and a better life in SA" (2008). The films contribute to the ongoing debates of xenophobia in South Africa and in the African continent through "practices of production and distribution that the collective has committed itself to" (2008). Strauss (2011) analyses one of the films from FAR titled *Burning Man* (2008). According to Strauss (2011: 104) *Burning Man* "challenges the violently parochial national imagination by engaging in vivid detail with the life narrative and bodily experience of a migrant excluded from citizenship in contemporary South Africa". In this way, the documentary departs from popularized migrant narratives in films such as *District 9* (2009), which perpetuate the ongoing stereotypical view of the African migrant as 'aliens' from out of the realm of human life set out to cause fear and havoc in the inner city of Johannesburg. Strauss's argument above informs my own study of how literature, especially life narratives in the form of autobiographies effectively express the life and times of an African migrant in South Africa.

Alongside film and cinematic productions, creatives opt for innovative ways of depicting migration and migrancy in South Africa. For instance, in a short film titled "Surviving in South Africa" Ray Vines pays close attention to the geographical and social boundaries that migrants encounter in South Africa. In this one-minute film, Vines deploys humor to critique the (un)belonging between a black African migrant and a black South African. In the film, a young migrant from an unnamed African country enters the scene which depicts a new space in South

Africa. As the migrant approaches, he encounters two South African men speaking isiZulu, carrying weapons and 'hunting' for migrants. Fearing for his life, the migrant performs theatrical assimilation by altering his mannerisms and identity. He wears his cap backward, tucks out his shirt and walks in a 'tsotsi' style. Bhabha's concept of negotiating space and place applies here, where "migrants navigate or negotiate different social pressures, from those of their co-ethnics in the country of origin or immigration to those of citizens in a variety of different settings" (1994: 5). We see this when the South African men ask the migrant his name, and he replies, "Sbu", which is a popular nickname in the isiZulu language. Mangena (2018: 279) observes how migrant characters must frame and "forge an insider's identity" in host spaces. In this case, Sbu is a strategic name borrowing to disguise his 'outsider' status by assuming a new name and identity. Sbu's theatrics are inadequate as the South African men call him a kwerekwere and instruct him to 'prove' his identity by "performing a South African identity" (Mangena, 2018: 280) by dancing a popular South African dance called gwaragwara, which 'Sbu' fails. The South African men then physically attack Sbu. The humor, language, and bodily expressions not only convey the performativity and theatricality of South African identity and South Africanness by portraying South Africa as a dancing nation but also is complex commentary about (un)belonging in South Africa through the lens of migration and the precarity of migrants.

In *Diaspora and Identity in South African Fiction* (2016), Jacobs analyses twenty South African fictional texts to demonstrate the interlocking, fluidity, precarity, and slipperiness of migrancy as a way of life and motif in South African fiction of migration. Throughout the book, Jacobs maintains the argument that South African writing has always been diasporic owing to the mass migrations across the continent. Taking Sol Platjie's 19th century novel titled *Mhudi* (1930) as a starting point and reference, to a contemporary reading of the character called Winnie Mandela in Njabulo Ndebele's *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* (2003), the book illustrates how different forms of displacements, dislocation and diaspora makings share similarities across space and time. Moreover, Jacobs (2016) illustrates how legacies of diasporic dislocation have endured in South African fiction. Jacobs' research on the trajectory of migration literature in South African is an endeavour closely related to my study. My study follows Jacobs' path in dealing with diasporic African texts. However, Jacobs' study varies in ambit and scope from mine. The scholar's study is broader in scope and reads literary texts between 1930 and 2003, separated historically and geographically, and covering different temporal periods of pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial

periods. In apparent contradistinction to Jacobs, my study focuses on contemporary post-2000 publications and privileges inter-country migrations. Further, my study problematizes the South African migration discourse by focusing on different genres; poetry, life-narratives, novels, and short stories. While Jacobs emphasizes ethnic and racial differences in the South African diasporic spaces, my study investigates these issues and more from the perspective of migration.

Texts selection and choices also differ. Jacobs focuses on Afrikaner, Dutch and German identities and settlers. For instance, one chapter focuses on Karel Schoeman's *Another Country* (1991), with particular interest on the development of white colonial identity of Dutch and German settlers in Bloemfontein, Free State in the 1870s. To extends the understanding of diasporic identities of the Afrikaner, Jacobs analyses Isobelle's *Journey* (2002). Furthermore, Jacobs analyses white South African identities in the works of white writers such as Ivan Vladisvic and Nadime Gordimer, connecting themes of intra-African and local migration. In what might be literary and scholarly complementarity, my study takes Jacobs' discussion forward and analyses contemporary African literature's reflection on the conditions, factors, situations, circumstances, and people making up the black migrant experience. Jacobs (2016) argues that South African identities as represented in the novels are "fractured and have arisen directly or indirectly, from the experience of diasporic migration" (2016: 1). On the other hand, I privilege the diasporic spaces of South Africa and explore the relationship between identities and traumas of migration. In a review of the same book, Annie Gagiano (2017) observes how this book "extends the customary understanding of "diaspora" as referring to intercontinental movements to include population shifts within national borders" (2017: 119). Informed by Jacobs' study, my study focuses on how the 'shifts' described by Gagiano (2017) reflect on the discourse of borders in South Africa.

Fasselt (2021), in an article titled "Appeals to shared Africanness: Negotiating precarious childhoods and intra-African migration in two coming-of-age narratives in contemporary South Africa" focuses on coming-of-age young migrant characters in the novel *Zebra Crossing* and a refugee memoir *The Lost Boy* (2009) to attend to the gap in migration studies on child narrators. The essay argues that its focus on children's narratives, offers "new vocabularies and alternative imaginaries for the study of contemporary migration narratives" (2021: 481). In a relatively new study, "Ghostly national imaginings and the (il)logic of capitalism in Meg Vandermerwe's *Zebra Crossing*", Ndlovu (2022) analyses the novel's depiction of the interaction between the global economy and the attendant migrant challenges of crossing boundaries. In the same vein, my study

shares some concerns with Ndlovu's interests in precariousness and the capitalist heightening of migrant vulnerabilities. In my reading of *Zebra Crossing*, I consider how Chipo's experiences are shaped by the intersections of her 'in-between' age (she embarks on her journey to South Africa on the eve of her eighteenth birthday), (il)legal migrancy, albinism and relations with the other migrants, and South Africans.

In the article titled "Clandestine crossings: Narrating Zimbabwe's precarious diaspora in South Africa in Sue Nyathi's *The Gold-Diggers*", Fasselt (2018) discusses how the novel "reconfigures diaspora discourse in relation to class and community" (p. 813). Fasselt notes that "clandestine Zimbabwean migrants … contribute to the formation and consolidation of the Zimbabwean diaspora in South Africa" (p. 815). Fasselt's article destabilizes notions of the Zimbabwean diaspora as "remodelled in relation to regional specificities" (p. 814). My reading of the same novel together with "Shadows" builds on Fasselt's arguments to demonstrate how both writers represent the ways in which African migrants present and shape South African communities. My approach to *The Gold Diggers* and *Shadows* is the representations of border poetics and the strategies of border transgressions. This is an important perspective for my thesis because of the way it illuminates the discursive and political practices of bordering and borders in South Africa. The complexity of the (il)legality of border crossings between South Africa and Zimbabwe has received sparse attention in literary scholarship. I expand on this trope of "migrant importing" (Samers & Colleyer 2010: 158) or what Salt (2000) and Kyle and Dole (2001) call "smuggling" with a view to understanding the multi-dimensionality of (il)legality, the border and bordering.

Chapter outline

This study is divided into seven chapters, including the introduction and the conclusion. This introductory chapter has situated the study in the current discourses on migrants and migration in South Africa. It also provided an overview of how the phenomenon of migration and the figure of the migrant has been perceived and studied in South Africa. I have outlined the theoretical and methodological points on which this study hinges. I have also demonstrated the potential value addition of this study to literary studies and to the broader academic discourse on migration in Africa. Furthermore, my study fills the gap I have established in the literary representation studies by focusing on contemporary migrant narratives in South Africa and reflecting on social cohesion in South Africa, thereby bringing migration studies in South Africa to the present.

In Chapter 2, I explore the multifaceted concept of borders drawing on the theory of border poetics. I read short stories; *Crossroads*, *Shadows* and a novel titled *The Gold Diggers* as explorations of how a variety of borders are imagined and experienced in migration and migrancy processes. This chapter considers a novel, short story and novella with the aim of exploring the themes of borders and bordering. On a methodological level, analysing the different genres alongside one another offers my study the opportunity to inquiring how the representation of borders transverse genres. I go beyond the consideration of physical borders, to demonstrate how the novels present the social, symbolic, epistemological, and aesthetic borders. In the three texts, the theme of border transgressions is explored as a mechanism and strategy for subverting restrictive immigration laws in South Africa. I then investigate the effectiveness of stylistic features of the texts in portraying border subversions.

Chapter 3 analyses the varied processes and effects of Othering in *Bom Boy and Zebra Crossing*. Both novels problematize and challenge how migrants grapple with their circumstances and relationships with others in new spaces. The novels offer my study a vantage point to confront certain conditions of migrancy through lengthy plots, prose and charecterisation. With special focus on the psychological and emotional expressions of Othering, estrangement, alienation, relationships, and (in)visibility, I demonstrate the effects and dangers of stereotypes about migrants. Although the protagonists' characterizations in the stories differ (in nationalities and gender), their similar experiences of Cape Town help us to understand some of the consequences of Othering as chattered by hostile peoples and host spaces. For example, In *Zebra Crossing*, the protagonist, Chipo, narrates the story as a ghost. In my analysis, this metaphysical position as a mystical 'Other' becomes an important aesthetic site on which to confront the widely (and complex) discourse phenomenon of xenophobia as a ghost is believed to possess super or extra human powers.

Chapter 4 extends the notion of reflection and representation by focusing on (auto)biographies by migrants living in South Africa, to explore the concept of human rights and to question notions of humanity in strange and violent spaces. The genre of (auto)biographies, especially the styling of the selected stories enables my study to encounter 'firsthand' experiences of migrancy. As such, the chapter examines the text's critical engagement with issues of the human, human rights and human rights violations in South Africa. Although South Africa is among the countries with liberal and democratic constitutions in the world, the experiences of some migrants in the country point

to a constant state of precarity and lack of state protection. In this chapter, I read Mpanda's *Going Home*, Steinberg's *A Man of Good Hope* and selected stories from *I want to go Home Forever*. Among the many challenges faced by migrants in South Africa, is dehumanization in its different forms and lack of structural support. My analysis of *A Man of Good Hope* demonstrates how the text participates in the human rights discourse in its complex framing and affective language, which questions and challenges the principles of human rights. Mpanda's semi-autobiographical novel, centres on the political, legal, and social precarity of refugees. The text's styling as a testimony compels us to witness how South Africa is structurally and socio-politically an anti-migrant space. Esther's story in *I want to go Home Forever* illuminates women's perspective on undocumented migrant identities. Through vivid descriptions and emotive tone, Esther influences the reader toward awareness of the dangers, vulnerabilities, and challenges facing undocumented migrant women in South Africa.

The fifth chapter shifts genres to read migrant poems. I analyse selected poems from *Splinters of a Mirage Dawn, Anthology of Migrant Poetry of South Africa* and Ndoro's *Agringada: Like a Gringa like a foreigner*. The chapter considers poetry as the art of making invisibility visible, an overflow of powerful emotions and a subjective expressive form to encounter the migrant experience. I focus on the themes of journeys, home(lessness), nostalgia and dislocation, and fear as socially produced experiences. I place special focus on how the poems deploy aesthetic structures and poetic devices to reflect the conditions and experiences of migrancy and being a migrant in South Africa.

Through a comparative analysis of "The Ghosts of Sofina" and *London Cape Town Joburg*, chapter six examines the complexity of integration, settlement and belonging by exploring how the migrant becomes (in)human in South Africa. Reading a short story and a novel in this chapter affords my study to cut across genres in exploration of issues of (re)settlement. The chapter discusses how issues of gender, race, and class complicate and/or prepare for migrant integration in South Africa. The texts show how migrants identities (and in subtle ways, place of origin) predetermine the conditions and circumstances of settlement. I read *London Cape Town Joburg* as a cosmopolitan novel that portrays characters with 'world citizen' sensibilities. "The Ghosts of Sofina" deploys the theme of invisibility through the metaphors of ghosts, peripheralization and abject spaces to represent the 'unwanted' migrant figure. The story also demonstrates how migrants strategically subvert abject statuses and existences to reveal the dangers of stereotypes

formed and circulating against African migrants. Chapter seven is the concluding chapter of the study where I synthesize arguments, explain my findings and give recommendations for future research in the field.

Chapter 2: Border Poetics in *Crossroads* (2012), *Shadows* (2012) and *The Gold Diggers* (2018)

Introduction

The previous chapter provided background to the study and situated it among other existing scholarly literature on migration patterns to South Africa and the diverse nature of migrants currently living in the country. Further, it identified a few gaps in the literature, such as the absence of literature on narrative representations of South Africa as a space of migrancy. The chapter also identified a distinct gap in literary analyses of migrant narratives in South Africa from the prism of diasporic space. One of the glaring gaps is the neglect of the border and borderscape in existing scholarship (Jacobs 2006; Flockemann 2017; Vambe 2019. Studies already in existence have tended to focus on black migrants in the city space, in which migrant experiences are analysed in terms of their relationality to the city space (Hlongwane 2006; Nuttall 2009). Much of the critical analysis in these studies is inclined towards South African novels such as Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2001), and a recent publication, *Period Pain* (2016) by Kopano Matlwa.

In this chapter, I analyse two African migration texts – *The Gold Diggers* (2018) by Sue Nyathi, a Zimbabwean currently living and working in South Africa, and the novella *Shadows* and a short story entitled 'Crossroads' from a collection of short stories titled *Shadows* (2012) written by Novuyo Rosa Tshuma. Tshuma is a Zimbabwean novelist, essayist and assistant professor of Creative Writing at Emerson College in Boston, USA. She previously lived and was educated in South Africa, where she obtained a Bachelor of Commerce in Economics and Finance from the University of Witwatersrand. The authors' individual experiences of migrancy have the potential to contribute to their creative writing processes of migration and migrancy. The current chapter focuses on the literary representations of borders as social and physical constructs. I, especially, focus on how the borders are imagined, and the ways in which they influence the lives of migrant characters as they encounter and cross different borders. Borders are ambiguous in nature. At the level of mapping and geophysical survey, they represent country lines and/or boundaries on the map of national categorization which can be crossed to enter a new space. In the metaphysical realm, they signify imaginary borders which play a role in the identities of those who wish to cross borders and those within them. Moreover, there needs to be consideration of how migrant identities are transformed by the crossings, and in turn how migrants reconfigure the borders through

crossings. The selected texts focus on the border between South Africa and Zimbabwe. Thus, my discussion focuses on how the texts engage aesthetically with different border categories. As such, I will demonstrate the specific connections between poetics of the border and the imaginative diasporic contexts provided by the texts.

To understand the mass immigration of Zimbabweans to South Africa, it is useful to give a brief overview of the recent immigration patterns from Zimbabwe to South Africa. Flahaux and De Hass (2016: 5) note that there is an "overwhelming ignorance or a weak theorization of the role of African states in the migration process". For this reason, this chapter provides a brief indication of the state of Zimbabwe to gain an understanding of the nature, causes and patterns of migration to South Africa. The push factors from Zimbabwe are varied and depend on the demographic data of the Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. The deterioration of Zimbabwe's social, political, and economic infrastructure in the post-2000 period is referred to by scholars as the "Zimbabwean crisis" (Crush & Tevera 2010; de Jager & Musuva 2016; Mangena 2018; Mangena & Nyambi 2021; Nyambi 2013; Nyambi & Mangena 2020; Raftopoulos 2006). In this crisis-ridden period, the livelihoods of Zimbabweans deteriorated, impelling Zimbabweans to "rush for the exits" (Crush & Tevera 2010: 2), in search of better lives outside of the country. South Africa is among the favoured destinations due to pull factors such as economic opportunities and the convenience of its geographical proximity to Zimbabwe. In their study of the diverse forms of mobilities in Southern Africa, Flahaux and De Haas (2016: 21), in an article titled "African Migration: trends, patterns, drivers" observe that "[t]he general increase in visa restrictiveness towards African citizens can be a partial driver towards an increasing spatial diversification of migration patterns …". The selected texts represent the heterogeneousness of the patterns and the demographics of the border crossers. Thus, my reading engages with the nuances of these diverse migrations from the viewpoint of border poetics.

In the introduction of *The Making of Zimbabwe's New Diaspora*, McGregor (2010) argues that in the recent period of "mass migration" in Zimbabwe, Zimbabweans have left in droves, seeking new homes and opportunities elsewhere. The (re)imagination of an 'elsewhere' is poignantly imagined in Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013), in chapter 13 "How They Left". Importantly, McGregor (2010) notes how most of these migrants comprise the middle class that have some educational and professional qualifications, and that these migrants mostly opt for trans-continental migration in "Europe, USA, Canada and New Zealand" (2010: 3). However, the

scholar goes on to note that there are several Zimbabweans scattered through the SADC region with "South Africa [being] an important destination" (2010: 3). Migration between Zimbabwe and South Africa is mostly transnational. Zimbabweans keep ties with those left behind, mostly through sending remittances back home. This is a system of survival for those who remain in Zimbabwe as noted by Crush and Tevera (2010), and Segatti and Landau (2011). Zimbabwean immigrants maintain some form of connection with the homeland. This runs contrary to Charles Mungoshi's Lucifer in *Waiting for the Rain* (1975), in which the protagonist sees his home as a geographical mistake and vows 'never' to come back when he leaves for England. A detailed examination of these transnational links follows later in this thesis. Here, I wish to highlight the complications of the patterns of Zimbabwean migration in South Africa, more importantly, how these patterns cannot be accounted for from one perspective.

Flahaux and De Hass (2016) note that the differences in migration patterns are sometimes influenced by economic, class and financial affordability to migrate. The scholars argue that "poor people migrate less often [and] overall small distances" (2016: 3). This category of destitute or what Toivanen (2021: 120) calls "clandestine" immigrants are the focus of this chapter. The texts under study reveal that some migrants often travel impecuniously, which affects their experiences of cross-country borders and survival. The characters in the stories are forced to use unconventional methods of border crossings because of lack of resources. For example, using a method that is called 'border jumping', and swimming across the crocodile infested Limpopo River into South Africa. A detailed analysis of these crossings follows in a section later in this chapter. Furthermore, Flahaux and De Hass (2016: 4) hold that "this also seems to explain why the skilled and relatively wealthy are overrepresented among long-distance international migrants". Recent Zimbabwean creative literature also represents a concoction of contemporary migrants who can afford the luxury of international travel and boast the skills and educational qualifications to seek and find employment in the receiving countries abroad. While some represent austere mobilities, a number of these texts reveal the challenges that are faced by Zimbabwean transnational migrants in the diaspora. For example, stories such as Gappah's *My Cousin Sister Rambanai* (2009), Nkala's *The Crossing* (2009), Mlalazi's *The Border Jumper* (2009), Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009), Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013), Huchu's *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Magistrate* (2014) and *Hunting in Foreign Lands and Other Stories* (2010) edited by Nyota, Manyarara and Moyana foreground, in different ways, characters

that have either illegally entered the receiving country or unlawfully remain in the host countries. Mangena (2018) explores these challenges in "(Re)negotiating illegal migrant identities in selected Zimbabwean fiction" and concludes that Zimbabwean migrants, resort to illegality in crossing borders and residing unlawfully in host countries because of a combination of elements such as strict migration policies in receiving countries and an "inhospitable homeland that is undergoing a socio-economic crisis" (2018: 283). These challenges and strategies for circumventing migration laws are commonly reflected in the texts that focus on migration between Zimbabwe and South Africa.

The literature on the policies of migration in South Africa reveals stringent policies and systems of handling illegal immigration in the country. Flauhaux and De Hass (2016) note that:

> [p]rocesses of state formation may also have increased the urge among leaders of newly established states to assert national sovereignty by introducing immigration restrictions and border controls and to portray immigrants as a threat to sovereignty, security and ethnic homogeneity or stability in a bid to rally political support. In this context, African governments have frequently resorted to deportations. (p. 5)

South Africa has, in the recent past, tightened its border control, especially in the wake of xenophobic attacks against Black African migrants. The rhetoric on migrant assimilation has been largely negative, bordering on stigmatisation and stereotyping of African migrants. With a focus on the Zimbabwe-South Africa border, Moyo (2021: 61) argues that "the progressively selective and restrictive South African immigration policies, which are manifest at the border, lead to undocumented migration". Hence, my study incorporates representations of the borders in the discussion of diasporic migrancy to explore borders as key dynamics of the migration process.

Writing from the perspective of geography and geopolitics, Newman (2006) theorizes that contrary to the widely held discourse of globalization as a 'borderless world', borders are reinvented in new ways. According to Newman (2006) borders are not only constructs we observe in the physical world, they:

> [d]etermine the extent to which we are included, or excluded, from membership in groups, they reflect the existence of inter-group and inter-societal differences with the 'us' and the 'here' being located inside the border while the 'other' and the 'there' is everything beyond the border. (p. 172)

This dichotomy of "us/them", and "here/there" in separatist thought, privileges binaries between people and cultures making it insufficient to account for the in-between differences. The official

nation narrative of migrancy in South Africa is characterized by discernible exclusionary rhetoric. This leads to essentialist and exclusionary narratives, especially on the experiences of the border-crossers. Thus, scholarship must not ignore the grey areas between differences. Furthermore, Newman (2006) makes an important observation that "geographers have difficulty coming to grips with more abstract, intangible, notions of bordering" (2006: 173). The narratives of the border such as the two under study, are responses to this dilemma in scholarly circles. They tackle otherwise intangible aspects of the border processes illustrated through literary imaginations. Literary theorists, Schimanski and Wolfe (2007a) propose the framework of border poetics to read these expressions of border processes as imagined in literature. In this regard, they note how "Literary studies …lead to attempts of a *border poetics* in which borders as forms of representation can be accounted for" (Schimanski & Wolfe 2007a: 10). This comprises all forms in which borders can be projected, namely "topographical, symbolic, temporal, epistemological, and textual" (Schimanski & Wolfe 2007b: 217). These planes are sometimes represented as intersections and juxtapositions, demonstrating the potential to interrogate boundary formation and spaces of (un)belonging. My discussion here draws on this framework of border poetics to illustrate what and how borders and bordering processes can illuminate the migrancy conditions in South Africa.

Border studies provide us with the rich literature on conceptualizing what constitutes a border. The theorizations are diverse and at times multidisciplinary. While research on the conceptual tools and insights of border studies are ongoing, there are two strands. On one hand, borders are theorized as boundaries, and on the other hand, borders as passageways. Over three decades ago, Anzaldua (1987: 3) argued that "borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge". This approach to understanding borders is changing, wherein borders are not conceptualized as barriers but as thresholds. Rumford (2006b: 155) urges scholars to "rethink the nature and role of borders" and place them at the center of studying societies. Similarly, Brambilla (2015: 18) proposes that we "need to think about …novel approaches to borders [and] transnational flows". Although Rumford (2006) is writing from a sociological perspective, and Brambila (2015) uses a geopolitical lens, their arguments inform my study of fictionalized communities of migrants outside of their national borders, through the prism offered by border poetics. Thus, my chapter hinges on the proposition by Rumford (2006b: 159) that "[b]orders have human and experiential dimensions" which literary analysis can reveal. Subsequently, narratives provide scholarship with

a valuable site of contestation and challenging metanarratives of 'us/them', and 'insider/outsider' in migrant experiences. Using varied literary strategies, the selected texts "function to authorize "found" and then specify "show" spaces that the … contemporary subjects act upon or within" (Schimanski & Wolfe 2007: 10). In this chapter, I focus on how the selected texts represent migrants at the border spaces, and their potential to adapt to changing and changed circumstances in which "different social and political contexts, [and] where various strategies of adaptation, accommodation, and contestation take place" (Brambilla 2015: 20). Borders are imaginatively located and this demands the reconfigurations of migrant identities in the processes of interaction with border planes and spaces.

Schimanski (2015: 102) proposes "entry points" toward reading and analysis of border texts as expressions of "various figures or configurations: spatial figures of folds and pockets, participation without belonging, the internalization of the outside, suspension and immersion, borderlines and borderspaces, walls and bridges, negotiations and sometimes splitting of the self, third spaces, dislocation and disorientation" (2015: 112). These are the notions upon which I pivot my analysis in this chapter. I am not only interested in the representations of *where* and *how* the border is experienced, but also in conditions, situations, and circumstances that result from border contact. Brambilla (2010), in the article titled "Borders Still Exist! What Are Borders?" proposes a move from one dimensional practice in theorizing about borders, to "a new perspective…as well as methodological devices that reveal the urgency … of borders by regarding them as creative and analytical categories…" (2010: 77). This chapter responds to this call by Brambilla (2010), by deploying the methodologies of border poetics in reading the selected texts. Adding to our understanding of borders in the context of African migration processes, Brambilla (2010: 80) advances the concept of "borderscapes", as "spaces that are represented and lived-in as a fluid terrain of a multitude of political negotiations, claims and counterclaims that reveal the hidden geographies that are often excluded by institutional 'visible' narratives". The concept of borderscape becomes useful in analyzing border tropes in my selected texts. Thus, borderscapes allow my reading of *The Gold Diggers* and *Shadows* to demonstrate how the (in)visible spaces that represent borders illustrate the fluidity of borders beyond their topographical structures.

The Gold Diggers and *Shadows* have been selected for this chapter because of their literary reconfigurations of borders and border politics. I draw from the literary theory of border poetics in my analysis, which "[i]n broad terms, […] is the study of how territorial borders are given form

through narrative and symbolic presentations" (Schimanski & Wolfe 2010: 41). My reading goes further to explore multiple forms of borders in the context of intra-continental migration processes. Dell'Agnese and Amilhat Szary (2015: 7) argue that these literary representations "must be accepted as a signifying practice". It is, therefore, through the signified forms of borders that this chapter focuses. Tshuma and Nyathi skillfully focus on bordering and border processes in their stories. Using realism, allegory, third-person narrative, and semi-travel writing techniques, the authors re-imagine the processes of the border institution as a political and social instrument of exclusion and inclusion. As the chapter illustrates, the authors go further than mere writing about emigration and migration to using border and bordering aesthetics to challenge the rhetoric on the making of immigrants in South Africa. Writing about the transition of national borders, the texts subvert categorical "textual borders" (Schimanski 2006) to re-imagine the fluidity of state borders. Using tropes of the topographical border, embassy, and the river, the texts re-imagine intra-continental migration and forms of mobilities between South Africa and Zimbabwe. Thus, my reading traces the link that the texts establish between figures of the border, bordering and undocumented migrants through images of the border, waiting, and border transgressions.

Of Reading and Crossings

The selected stories for this chapter share thematic interconnectedness. Apart from the dual settings of Zimbabwe and South Africa, the stories explore the psychological transitions of migration through characterization. The overarching motif of the topographical Beitbridge border, how it is crossed, blurred and sometimes erased illuminate issues of migration, migrant identities and migrancy. In the stories, the crossings are motivated by diverse factors and are in and of themselves different. Most characters in *The Gold Diggers* are motivated by the possibility of "gold" (p. 17), a metaphor for a better life in South Africa. For the protagonist in *Shadows* the motive for crossing to South Africa is to win the love of his girlfriend Mpho, who fled Zimbabwe and currently lives and works in Johannesburg. *Crossroads* examines the literal state, anxieties, and metaphors of migrant life as a condition of being at a crossroads. In this section, I focus my discussion on the act of reading the border and the boundaries that the characters cross from Zimbabwe to South Africa in the selected stories.

By focusing on the representations of different borders in the texts, my departure point is the text itself. In their chapter titled "Imperial Tides: A border Poetics reading of *Heart of Darkness*" Schimanski and Wolfe (2007b: 217) put forward the argument that "the connection between the

borders in the presented world of the text and the border which mark the text itself as a spatial form of presentation is at the heart of border poetics". Taking this into considering, I begin with a focus on the textual borders of *The Gold Diggers* and *Crossroads*. The bordering of the novel and the short story as spaces representing the border are points of interest here. Firstly, *The Gold Diggers*, stylistically uses paratexts to border and divide the story. Genette and Maclean (1991: 261) state that paratexts reveal "innermost and overdetermined limits of the text itself". They argue further that paratexts such as the book cover, title, author name and design need to be understood as "more than boundar[ies] or a sealer border…rather as a *threshold* or a world" (italics in original). Apart from the traditional paratexts of novels such as the title, author name and so on, *The Gold Diggers* uses epigraphs to divide the novel by following the trajectory of the character's migration processes. The novel is framed and bordered by four plot demarcations. Part 1 focuses on the moments of departure for the characters from Zimbabwe to South Africa. Part 2 centers on the arrival of the immigrant characters in Johannesburg. Part 3 concentrates on the encounters of social, political, and economic identities of the immigrants as they navigate their "new" lives in new spaces in Johannesburg. Part 4 "The Homecoming" offers some resolutions to the migrant lives. The title of the novel, therefore, refers to these diverse forms of border crossings in which the characters are metaphorically and literally 'digging for gold'. In the opening of the novel, the biblical epigraph has resonance of mass migration:

> The Exodus
> 'Then the Lord said to Moses. "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. Because of my nighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country".
> Exodus 6: Verse 1 (p. 3)

This biblical reference evokes a desire for mobility to the 'promised land'', much like the Israelites in the Bible. Thus, it is not only a textual border in that it sets the tone for the section and the novel. It presents a "zone … of transition … also of transaction" (Genette & Maclean 1991: 261) for the characters who are desperate to exit the country. Outside of the world of the text, it serves as a reference to Zimbabweans' "rush for the exits" (Crush & Tevera 2010: 1) from the turn of millennium onwards, in which several Zimbabweans emigrated to other parts of the world such as South Africa, the United Kingdom and Australia. The novel foregrounds the exodus and journeying as the central motif to justify the migrations as "predictable responses" to a country that is in a "terminal decline" (Crush & Tevera 2010: 3-4). In analysing the same novel, Fasselt (2021) argues that the exodus motif "hints at parallels between the rule of the Pharaohs and that of

Mugabe…." (2021b: 816). Although there is no mention of President Mugabe in the novel, the exodus is aesthetically portrayed as a survival strategy from oppression, social, economic and political slump. Thus, the exodus alludes to a "crisis-driven" (Crush & Tevera 2010: 3) migration out of Zimbabwe. My analysis draws on the border adaptations to elucidate the novel's' representations of borders and journeying in the context of the Zimbabwean 'migration crisis' as reflections of a nation in crises. For example, in the novel, Zimbabwe is in "quandary" (p. 4), a "blanket of heat" (p. 18), a "godforsaken place" (p. 37), a place "plunged in darkness" (p. 57) and a "place of desperation" (p. 153). Thus, the characters exit Zimbabwe "to find refuge in the arms of their South African neighbour" (p. 4), to escape the unhospitable country of 'darkness' and 'heat'. Another work of literature, *We Need New Names* similarly styles the Zimbabwean migration as an exodus. The omnipresent narrator comments that "when things fall apart, the children of the land scurry and scatter like birds escaping a burning sky" (p. 145). Hence, *The Gold Diggers'* representation of mass migration suggests the character's emigration as rooted in the 'dark, burning' failed postcolonial state.

Crossroads operates at a different level of the textual border. It punctuates the plot and themes, using the strategy of time. Schimanski (2006: 51) explains that border poetics, "is any approach to texts which connect borders on the levels of *histoire*, the world the text presents to the reader, and of *récit*, the text itself, a weave of rhetorical figures and narrative structure". Histoire and récit translate loosely as a story, an account and history. The concepts propose multiple occurrences of the narrative time. That is of the time in the story (histoire), and the time in which the reading occurs (récit). It further suggests two folds of spaces of representation. The actual space that is represented and the space of representation in the story. These suggest a crossing of borders, which is at the core of border poetics. According to Schimanski (2006), a border poetics reading occurs on two levels, that of reading and reading as a crossing act. Implied here is reading as some form of journeying into the imaginaire. Apart from its thematic of the borders, *Crossroads* is a story that is framed on borders and bordering. The narrative deploys the temporal breaks to develop the plot. Also, it is an aesthetic mechanism, breaking the reading processes, thereby creating folds in the story. The story opens with the protagonist at the border, it is 19:23. The protagonist is at the national border in Zimbabwe, about to make the journey into South Africa. The character is a first-time border crosser. This means she is experiencing two border crossings. The first is the topographical border, which is the boundary between Zimbabwe and South Africa. At the second

level, she is confronted with an epistemological border, "a border between the known and the unknown" (Schimanski 2006: 98). Not only is she confronted with the other side of the border, but also the personal transformation and character metamorphosis because of the crossing. At 00:06, she and other travellers arrive at the South African border side. A third border is set at 05:07 when the narrator arrives at Johannesburg Park Station. At a symbolic level, the topographical border in Zimbabwe has been successfully crossed. In other words, the arrival at Johannesburg Park Station means the narrator is encountering the 'unknown'. Her naivety begins to experience and encounter the new place. As she proclaims, "being in this space feels like being in a different place altogether" (p. 181). Thus, time constitutes a "bordering" (Schimanski & Wolfe 2007b: 218) poetic. These time intervals not only develop the plot but also contribute to what Schimanski (2015: 100) refers to as "movement through textual space", which in turn borders the narrative as we have noticed how movement and time are entwined to mark moments of crossings.

"DENIED"[3]: Unsuccessful border crossings in *The Gold Diggers*, *Crossroads* and *Shadows*

In this section of the chapter, I discuss representations of unsuccessful border crossings in the selected texts. A common interpretation of the border is that it is a dividing line. However, border studies also reveal that it can be a joint between one space and the next (Brambilla 2010; Houtum 2010; Montoya 1998). In discourses on borders, the concept of unsuccessful border crossing is central. Borders, especially topographical borders, are set to prevent access against travellers who are conceived as (un)belonging or Other across the border. In *The Gold Diggers* and *Crossroads*, the ambiguity and complexity of borders are aestheticized in fascinating ways. The migration offices, the Limpopo River and the amagumaguma thugs assume the symbolic role of antagonizing borders to the travelling characters. The 'migrant crisis' in the Mediterranean Sea has shown the idea of sea borders as porous, often discoursed with "images of overloaded migrants' boats, accounts of shipwreck tragedies and endless lists of death tolls ... shifting its common representation from a civilization crossroad to an invisible fence" (Kassar & Dourgnon 2014: 11). These imageries populate cross-border literary texts, highlighting the precarious nature of

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[3] *Crossroads,* 2012. p. 175

economically disenfranchised migrants. My reading reveals that for some characters in the novel, South Africa remains a destination of non-arrival.

In the discourse and practice of migration, it is common for potential migrants to be denied entry into the host country. One of the ways in which the stories represent the border poetic of failed border crossing is through denial of entry. Unsuccessful border crossing begins with the trope of rejection by the immigration offices/officers. In *Crossroads*, we find a more overt form of border entry denial. The immigration office as an institution of the border and as a transition space, is represented as relentless in rejecting potential crossers. Moreover, it is a space where the literal rejection of potential border crossers is explored even before physically crossing into the host country. In the story, the emigration office and officer are fictionalized as borders. While at the Zimbabwean border, the narrator observes a young pregnant woman in the queue. When the young woman reaches the immigration office, the scene unfolds, "No" the immigration woman says", "Denied", the immigration woman repeats, banging the stamp on her passport. "Go back. Next!" …DENIED- the word runs diagonally across the page" (p. 175). The young woman pleads and "begs" (p. 175) for entry. However, because she does not have valid visa days to be in South Africa, she cannot make it past the immigration office. Although the rejection is within the law, I highlight how the novel articulates this as aesthetics of border crossing denial. According to Turner (in Kurki 2014: 1061) "social borders, which are otherwise invisible in society, become perceivable and understandable only through rituals and symbols and performances". Hence, I argue that the performance (in staging and scripting) forms part of the rituals of border rejection. The word 'denied' is repeated in the extract, demonstrating its agency to the reader. In the second instance, it is capitalized for emphasis to indicate the strong impression of denial. Adjunct to this, Laine (2016) writes that not only do borders act as mere "political state-led creations", they are "multiscalar entities" (2016: 466). The complexities of the immigration law are reflected in the statement by other characters who are witness to the theatricality of the unfolding scene and advise that "[she] needs to talk to someone, grease a few palms" (p. 175). This suggestion is testament that bribery and corruption can lead to access being granted even to unlawful and undeserving crossers such as the young lady. It is impossible to ignore the exaggerated animosity of the immigration officer in this scene. As a political and symbolic construction, the immigration officer metaphorically points to the machinations of the South African state in 'denying entry' to immigrants.

Adjunct to this, are the strategies deployed by 'rejected' immigrants to navigate and negotiate their way through topographical borders. These strategies are the focus of the ensuing section. Here, I want to give an indication of some of the reasons Zimbabwean travellers seek unconventional and unorthodox methods of traversing the border. In *The Gold Diggers* (2018), much like other stories of Zimbabwe-South Africa border crossings, the characters resort to using alternative means of crossing the border through the Limpopo River. The Limpopo River is, therefore, transformed from a topographical feature to a border space. The characters are transported to the Limpopo River to cross over to South Africa. The river is portrayed as a "literal threshold" (Schimanski 2013: 186), more like the modern day underground railroad and passage way that takes the characters from Zimbabwe to South Africa. On a symbolic plane, the unorthodox crossing of limpopo river is, for the travelers, a point of transition and identity transformation to undocumented migrant status across the river. At the level of reading as some form of structured journeying, the point of river crossing in the novel marks a change in the narrative, not only in place and time setting but also, on a temporal level. This crossing scene marks the end of events being narrated from the space of Zimbabwe. Any other instances of reading about events in Zimbabwe are through analepses. Malume, a potential border-crosser who is also part of the group serves as an image of failed border crossing both metaphorically and literally. The *malayitsha* (transporter) Melusi drops off his passengers on the outskirts of the Beitbridge town in the Dulibadzimu Township for the crossing:

> he would leave his cargo here for the merciless crossing and hopefully find them again on the other side. The onus was on Givemore to marshal the cargo across the mighty Limpopo, also known as the River of Death. Those murky waters were home to scaly, menacing crocodiles. As ominous as these creatures were, they were not a deterrent for hungry Zimbabweans who traversed the river in search of the bright lights of Egoli. The great expanse of water, that spanned a kilometer, stood between them and their dreams. A dream that had swallowed and swept away countless others only to spit out their souls into the depths of the Indian Ocean. (p. 18)

The diction of 'swallowed', 'swept away', 'depths', 'murky' and 'mighty' is expressive of the dangers lurking beneath the surface, and which make border crossing a risky and dangerous enterprise. The river is "merciless". On the one hand, it is an enabling passage, and on the other; it is a zone of myriad dangers and a death-trap. As a geophysical feature, the river has limitations to what it allows and who/what can cross. It also rejects by swallowing and spit[ing] "unwanted souls into the Indian Ocean". In migration lingo, the river is both a topographical and an

epistemological border, since "it maps directly onto the limitations of the human sensory apparatus" (Schimanski & Wolfe 2007b: 221). The symbolism of the river as a character that makes crossing a safe/unsafe space highlights the complications that come with migration and migrancy. Epistemologically, the characters "disembarking from the safety of the van into darkness" (p. 27), signifies lack of familiarity with the new space. The narrator describes the cohort as "ghosts, shadowy figures" (p. 27), placing them outside of the realm of human beings as an analogy to their vulnerabilities and uncertain futures. The treacherous crossing is embedded in the metaphor of the crisis exodus. The characters are described as "hungry" and "in search of bright lights" from the "place of darkness" (p. 57) – a metaphor synonymous with Zimbabwe in the decade of crisis. Consequently, by acting as a border, the river can veto persons and goods.

The paradox of the river is that it is at once enabling as it is a disabling space. The disabling metaphor of "the River of Death" finds expression in the character of Malume who drowns in the river:

> "Help me! Help me! Screamed Malume. Help me!
>
> His hands were flailing in the air. He seemed to be fighting an unknown force. His body broke into spasms as though he was possessed by some unknown spirit. There in a flash, his body disappeared beneath the water. Still piercing screams resounded through the night. (p. 29)

It is evident that Malume never makes it across the river as he is "swallowed" by it. This potential of geophysical spaces to 'swallow' is a recurring metaphor used in another unsuccessful border crossing trope in the migrant discourse where the subjects fail to return to their home country. The common phrase is "usedliwe yiGoli (he has been swallowed by the City of Gold)" (p. 161). Malume's crossing is, therefore, a fatal one, with a tragic end to his life and the cross-border journey. More importantly, this is a border poetic demonstrating literal failed crossing. On the epistemological level, the river is described as 'an unknown force' transforming the scene from a realistic to a supernatural genre. In this instance, the novel crosses an aesthetic boundary, oscillating between writing styles. The confusion of being in the river is defamiliarized as a "possession", thus, allowing the reader a new perspective on the river as synonymously a border and a passageway. The symbolic and allegorical significance of his death foregrounds the hostile environment that the travellers will experience in the text across the border in South Africa. Therefore, the death here foregrounds meanings of the development of the rest of the narrative that

takes place in Johannesburg. As the novel progresses, Chamunorwa is also murdered in the xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

In his analysis of illegal migrant identities in the play *The Crossing* (2009), Mangena (2018) argues that the numerous deaths in the Limpopo River, such as that of Malume, transform it (the river) into a "kind of death riverscape which has many unmarked graves" (p. 279). This means there are many others, such as Khumbu's friend in *The Crossing* and Malume who are 'swallowed and possessed' by the river. The fact that the novel does not resolve this incident further buttresses the image, perception, and considerations of illegal immigrants as an invisible spectre. By living the reader in suspension of what happens to Malume's body, this scene reflects what Schimanski and Wolfe (2007b: 223) refer to as the "ambiguity in the notion of the border", where the river is neither a passage nor a barrier but an end. In the context of migration, this is because of Malume's illegal and undocumented status. Citizenship and belonging are brought into question here through the lens of illegal migrant status. The narrator scornfully and callously calls Malume "just another statistic" (p. 29), a descriptor that informs Mangena's (2018) view of "unmarked graves" in Limpopo River, and Kassar and Dourgnon's (2014: 11) idea of a "cemetery for illegal migrants", of those Africans who get swallowed by the belly of the sea while attempting to cross the Mediterranean border into Europe. Moreover, this recalls Bhabha's (1994: 1) idea of the "disturbance of direction, in the 'beyond'". Malume is an (il)legal border crosser. Hence, the river subjects him to a condition of "indefinite temporariness" (Farrier 2020: 122). He is displaced on the border between land and water. In this way, the river presents the "double status of … suspension and immersion (Schimanski 2015: 112). The ambivalence corresponds to what Bhabha (1994) terms a "third space". In the imaginaire, Malume's terse epitaph would read, 'he never exits the border (the river), and he never makes it back home' or to his desired destination across the border. The river disrupts his trajectory, and we are not told whether the same river "spits" him out.

In the politics and dynamics of border crossing, women suffer multiple burdens because of female vulnerabilities. Thulisiwe is the female representation of a failed crossing. The irony of her situation is that she, like other passengers crosses the river, but that, for a woman is not enough as there still many rivers to cross. Surviving the crocodile infested Limpopo River provides temporary relief as the group is confronted by yet another border in the form of amagumaguma (robbers). The amagumagumas, elsewhere refers to as a "part of the law enforcement network"

(Mangena 2018: 279), demand valuables and money and "some female arse" (p. 42). That women are identified by their physiology "female arse" speaks to their objectification and subjection to forms of abuse. Thus, Thulisiwe is "grabbed … and dissaper[s] into the thicket of the trees" (p. 43) with the bandits. Like Malume's drowning, Thulisiwe's kidnapping is a form of drowning, albeit to human crocodile on land, and demonstrates a botched border crossing. Here, the amagumaguma takes on the role of the border "law enforcement" by disrupting Thulisile's endeavour to cross the border. When the story ends Malume's body and Thulisiwe's whereabouts are mere punctuations hidden in the middle of a text and long forgotten. Across the border in South Africa, young Gugulethu is smuggled by Melusi and Givemore, into a human trafficking syndicate. Her mother fails to welcome her at Park Station, and the two men traffic her for 10 000 ZAR (p. 104). Thus, Gugulethu is a failed border crosser, because, for her, the border represented a reunion with her mother. The border denial through the topoi of death, smuggling and abduction, potential rape, and trafficking manifest the precariousness of migrant lives as they encounter borders.

In addition, Rosello and Wolfe (2017: 2) suggest that borders can:

> have a life of their own, producing border effects after their original installation or statement; they can reinforce the symbolic differences that create them, or even cause changes in these symbolic differences; they can continue to have effects after the symbolic differences that caused them to have disappeared or lessened. (p. 2)

Border formation has an element of unpredictability and uncanny effects from the border itself. Following on Laine's (2016) theorization of borders as multiscalar entities, I examine the ways in which the concept of border denial moves beyond topographical borders. Although I focus more on the experiences of hostility and violence in South Africa, here, I am also desirous to discuss how the border repudiates the border crosser after the border line has been crossed.

In *Crossroads* the narrator legally crosses the border by bus, and on arrival to the South African side of the border, she enters a public bathroom. On the wall, there is a notice posted. It reads:

> TOILET PAPER ONLY
> TO BE USED IN THIS TOILET
> NO CARDBOARD
> NO CLOTH
> NO ZIM DOLLARS
> NO NEWSPAPER (p. 180)

The juxtaposition of the moment of crossing and wall notice after the crossing is important in demonstrating my reading of the scene as a failed border crossing. Although the narrator has crossed the topographical border, she is denied entry on a symbolic plane of the border poetics. This notice, in its satirical styling, stands as a border sign. This image that is significantly placed at a crucial moment after border crossing, reinforces a sense of abnegation of immigrants. The notice is a work of art, designed along ideological lines to mask the aversion of foreigners through humour. Although it might be a literal notice to the travellers not to use inappropriate materials in the bathroom, it is a symbolic repudiation of (un)desirable identities in the space. The allusive metaphor here is that Zimbabweans are unwelcome. Zimbabweans unwelcomed. Their 'useless' "Zim Dollar" currency is rejected, even for toilet use, making it a border sign that symbolises rejection of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa (Schimanski 2006: 43). The narrator is also experiencing an epistemological border. In the bathroom, she "engages in interpretation" (Schimanski 2015: 96) of the unfamiliar that is synonymous with the negotiation of border crossings. We notice how she reads her crossing by "tak[ing] a picture" (p. 180) of the notice cited above. As Schimanski and Wolfe (2007a: 22) argue, "memories and saved objects […] retain traces of the time before the border crossing, and simultaneously recreate the time of the border crossing". The narrator takes a picture as a memorial that she can take and keep to later retrieve and be reminded of the moment of crossing the border. Here, the narrator is engaged in a triple interpretation. On the epistemic level, she learns that crossing a border may be bittersweet, she says "humiliation [is] perhaps funny only after the event" (p. 180).

In Tshuma's novella *Shadows*, Tari "jumps" the Zimbabwean border to South Africa to reconnect with his lover Nomsa. Upon arrival in South Africa, he realizes that his dream of convincing his lover to return to him is a dream. Nomsa is an (il)legal immigrant; It is not made clear in the story which method of transgressing the border she used. Therefore, she has limited work opportunities in Johannesburg. Albeit she has successfully transgressed her way through the physical border, the risk of deportation is always hanging. Mountz (in Toivanen 2019: 120) argues that "one of the key functions of the border is to link the regulation of mobility to identity and territory: to link who one is to location, and in so doing policing national borders around identities". Therefore, as representatives of the border, the state, the "big white police trucks… cart away illegals" (p. 102) from the streets of Johannesburg. Nomsa is the only immigrant in the texts under study to represent the draconian deportation system in South Africa. The Lindela deportation centre and the police

are expressions of hostile power and extensions of border patrols and border zones. There is clear transcendency of the Beitbridge border beyond its topographical manifestation. This speaks to Moyo's (2020: 63) argument on the securitization of borders extending beyond the actual border, wherein he says, "in effect, the securitized border follows [migrants] everywhere". The effect of this constant policing and (il)legal status monitoring is a social and emotional paralysis to the characters. In an emotive monologue, Nomsa reflects the insecurities that come from being in a state of constant police scrutiny when she says:

> The feeling that sudden movement could lead to death is very real. Where can you run to, where the vultures will not find you? … you know what it feels like to be a nobody in this hellhole. Amidst this shit, all this shit, you need *something* to hold on to. Otherwise, you will lose yourself. So, you have been told to run and not to run. The result: immobility. (Italics in original p. 97)

Here, we notice the juxtaposition of the self and the border concerning movement. The state of immobility even after crossing the border, shows permanence of borders and their omniscient existence to the point where there is nowhere to run to. The migrant is a form of prey to be feasted upon by 'vultures' in Johannesburg. Nomsa refers to Johannesburg as a "hellhole", a place of extreme misery. This image of liminality is aptly explained as a state of "immobility" showing entrapment of the immigrant. This is further perpetuated by the scatological images through which the narrator describes Johannesburg. Hence, the anxieties of the border and border crossing have followed Nomsa across the border, where she experiences immobility due to border securitization. This makes border crossing a continual and ongoing process with no end, thus the migrant who has arrived in the host nation, remains in a state of ambivalence.

"Waiting. Waiting. More waiting"[4]: Of Border Waiting in *Crossroads* (2012)

This section of the chapter focuses on the processes of waiting at borders as a thematic and narrative trope in the selected stories. In their book chapter titled "Waiting" van Houtum and Wolfe (2017: 129) argue that to "a large extent a border can be considered a waiting act". As the foregoing discussion demonstrates, waiting is a border and to be at the border is to wait, thus border crossing is a waiting game, full of uncertainties and anxieties. *Crossroads* opens with the trope of the border as a setting and a starting point of different mobilities and significantly for my analysis, as a place

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[4] *Crossroads*, 2012: 178

of waiting. In a study focusing on the liminality of undocumented Zimbabweans in South Africa, Moyo (2020: 63) advances the idea of "technologies of border securitization" in migration processes. I adopt this line of thinking to illustrate how waiting is a subtle strategy deployed as a technology of social bordering. In what one might delineate as the Orwellian kind of big brother watching you , the opening line of the story tantalizes the reader with a motif of invisibility with the statement: "[t]here are shadows that lurk within the evening shadows at the border" (p. 172). Here, this border location is a border poetic where border-crossing desires are negotiated and mediated. The border is not presented as a literal line between two separate nation-states that are significantly different from each other. Rather, it is presented as both creations of space and an interpretation of space (van Houtum 2016).

The existence of invisible borders ordering and bordering our lives is a time old motif, hence literature in general, and poetry in particular, is the art of making invisibility visible. Though invisible to the human eye, these borders, nevertheless, impact strongly on our daily life practices. Thus, the border can be read at multiple levels. In the Foucauldian principle of heterotopia, we find what he calls "heterochronies" (1984: 46). According to Foucault (1984: 46) a heterotopic place is "linked to slices in time" where the heterotopia begins "to function at full capacity…[where there is] absolute break with traditional time". The narrator expresses this ambiguity of time when she says, "it is a long way to the border – much, much longer than the road distance. It is a distance measured not in kilometers, but sweat and tears and ingenuity, in beguiling smiles and the tallest of tales. And begging, begging and more begging" (p. 176). In the introduction to their edited book *Border Aesthetics: Concepts and Intersections*, Rosello and Wolfe (2017: 7) suggest that when studying borders, scholars need to acknowledge fewer concrete forms as "signs and versions" of the bordering process. Drawing on Rosello and Wolfe's analogue, this discussion shifts focus from the traditional topographical borders to in/visible borders in the representations of waiting as a bordering process.

van Houtum (2010: 295) notes the paradox of border waiting as "an act of liberation as it is an act of containment". In *Crossroads*, the "sign" (Rosello & Wolfe 2017) of the border is a ticket, a gateway for physical crossing and arrival at another place. At the same time, the border is represented as a repressive space where little or no movement is taking place with queues that move at a "snail's pace" (p. 179). van Houtum and Wolfe (2017: 129) distinguish between two kinds of waiting practices in border poetics. Firstly, "waiting in terms of waiting for the 'final

border', which involves degrees of subjectification and internalization of the state by those who are based in the given territorial order, through which citizens are included and being made ('citizens')". In *Crossroads* both acts of waiting run throughout the story. Although *Crossroads* focuses on legal migration, as opposed to *The Gold Diggers* and *Shadows*, it portrays the processes of border crossings as waiting acts. In the story, Tari tells the narrator that from his experirnces as a frequent traveler between Zimbabwe and South Africa, waiting is a common experience at the border. According to Tari, the time spent on each side of the border differs. The borders are reconstructed as spaces of waiting. He says "[y]ou go through the South African border with no problem, but when you get to the Zim side, hokoyo, five, six, seven, eight hours of waiting" (p. 172). In heterotopic style, the "accumulation of time" (Foucault 1984: 46) at the border resonates here. The flow of time while waiting at the border, renders it (the border) a heterotopic site. We notice in Tari's explanation above how time is manifested differently on the different sides of the border. The images of waiting are further perpetuated by "queues that outrun […] vision (p. 172) at the South African embassy in Zimbabwe. This image alludes to the border as having 'no end'. Moreover, it symbolically signals the possibility of the characters never making it to, and ultimately crossing the border into South Africa. This is further illustrated by the fact that the narrator cannot make it inside the embassy on the same day to apply for a visa. They must return the following day and only make it inside the embassy after paying a bribe. Although she has all the necessary documents needed by the embassy to apply and be approved for a visa, the process is a "waiting game" (p. 174). While the narrator performs the acts of waiting, she at the same time has the persistent desire to cross the border. Houtum (2010: 295) calls this a "paranoid desire" which he describes as "the desire for order, easiness, nihilism, control, security, comfort…". The narrator expresses this desire with the obsession she has to be on the other side of the border. As the title of the story suggests, she is at crossroads, the longing to be somewhere else while still stuck in the home country Zimbabwe.

van Houtum and Wolfe (2017: 129) note the "exclusionary waiting practices as authorized by a border guard b/ordering and 'statization' of territory and people in terms of the 'law'), which goes hand in hand with the Othering for others who wish to enter". Although van Houtum and Wolfe (2017) use the phrase "enter into the Law" in reference to the portrayals of waiting in Kafka's *Waiting before the Law* (1915), I wish to take the concept of 'entering the Law' a step further and

claim that this Law is representative of (in)visible borders where the processes of waiting unfold. As noted earlier, the characters in this story wish to enter South Africa. Some barriers exist and represent the "Law" posing as an obstacle to the character who run the risk of not entering into the "Law". The South African embassy is a symbolic border that the characters have to subvert. Drawing on van Houtum and Wolfe's (2017) theorization above, I argue that the South African embassy is a border guard, and it "serves the border" (van Houtum, 2010: 287). It represents the "Law" and guards against "Others" that wish to enter the country such as the gatekeeper in Kafka's *Before the Law*. The embassy "performs the Law" (van Houtum 2010: 287) by deciding who enters the country and for how long. Although the embassy is not located at the actual physical space of the border, it is the first port of 'no' entry, a "borderscape" (Brambilla 2015, Dell'Agnese & Amilhat Szary 2015), which among other duties handles and regulates immigration into the country. This draws attention to what Brambilla (2015: 15) refers to as the "multiplication of border forms" in which the functions and processes of the topographical border are dynamic and constantly shifting. The narrator reveals the location and the distance to the South African embassy thus:

> [y]ou catch a kombi, two kombis, to the South African Embassy depending on where you have been staying. The embassy is in an area awash with embassies, a discreet, quiet neighborhood with wide roads and houses with large gardens. Diplomatic. (p. 176)

What is particularly revealing here is the distance it takes the narrator to reach the embassy. Notable is the territorial boundary of rural and urban spaces signified by the traveling distance of "two kombis". The use of sarcasm in the word "Diplomatic", further illustrates the dichotomy of an embassy's role in servicing potential travellers and being situated in "a discreet" urban space away from the people it serves. It takes the narrator two taxi rides to get to the embassy. The time spent in transit translates to time waiting. Waiting to reach the embassy and, therefore, not taking part in any other activity other than to wait.

van Houtum and Wolfe (2017: 129) note the complexities of border waiting as "both an inclusion and an exclusion at the same time". Although the narrator has crossed the topographical border to South Africa physically, she is psychologically and emotionally in a state of limbo. On arrival in Johannesburg, the narrator meets with aunt Mi, who is also from Zimbabwe. The narrator has moved to Johannesburg with "a pocketful of dreams" (p. 185) and a mission to find a "new self" (p. 185). However, as Mi tells her, it is impossible to reinvent herself because "things are hard" (p.

185). The narrator refuses to believe this new reality signalling a symbolic failed border crossing. She thought that by crossing into South Africa, her life would take a dramatic turn for the better. On the epistemological plane, the narrator learns that life across the border is not as easy going as gold tales have put it.

Markedly, the story ends in the act of postponement. Mi and the narrator are in a conversation in which the narrator fails to accept the reality that she must work instead of getting the education she had hoped for. The story ends at a suspension; "I keep smiling. She keeps staring" (p. 185). This ending recalls Schimanski's (2006: 46) theorization of the reading of border poetics that it can illuminate "whether or not the border has been crossed". Although Tshuma's character physically and legally crosses the border, she remains suspended. Hence, waiting is symbolic of a bleak future. The concept of being in waiting is juxtaposed with the plot to allude to the ambiguities of cross-border mobility. In the opening of the story, the narrator and other "shadows [are] waiting at the border" (p. 172) and ends with the narrator "staring" (p. 185) into space. Thus, metaphorically the narrator is still 'waiting' and expecting a dramatic turn. This reveals that the narrator does not 'enter into the Law', illustrated by the crossing of the border as an illusion. The waiting and suspension of the narrator is, by extension, the waiting and suspension of the reader. Border waiting is both an experience of characters in the text and of readers outside the text. Hence, the motif and textual stylistic is in and outside of the text, just like the borders are inside and outside the characters.

Jumping the border: border transgressions

One key feature of borders is their permeability. This applies to all borders – land, water, air, real or imagined. When migrants cannot cross borders through the legal route, they explore alternative methods of crossing. In "Borders and Bordering", Newman (2006: 186) writes that, "if a border exists, there is always someone who wants to cross it to get to the other side". My discussion in previous sections has demonstrated that the topographical border can be re-imagined and therefore relocated. We observed how the characters recreate and demarcate their border by crossing the Limpopo River. This suggests alternative ways of crossing the border. In this section, attention is given to the migrants' negotiation of the topographical borders through varied acts of transgressions. In the stories, migrants formulate novel methods of transgressing the border space by creating what Brambilla (2010: 77) calls "alternative border imaginaries". The characters fall

in the base category of the "abject migrants" to draw from Toivanen (2015)'s idea of "abject mobilities" in the context of postcolonial transnational migrations, because they do not use elite methods of travel such as flights or trains. The stories engage in what Brambilla (2015: 20) calls "counter-hegemonic boderscapes" in that they challenge elitist conceptions of conventional border crossing methods. Furthermore, they challenge the political rhetoric of the Zimbabwe-South Africa border as discussed in the introductory chapter. In their handling of the border and border politics, they illuminate the "consideration that borders involve struggles that consists of multiple strategies of resistance" (Brambilla 2015: 20). The characters actively engage in the process of making and re-making borders.

In *The Gold Diggers*, besides the Beitbridge border, we are presented with a visible landscape, the Limpopo River as a boundary between South Africa and Zimbabwe. The Limpopo River functions as a border and a bordering process. In the context and discourse of the makeability of borders, Limpopo River is representative of a border de-limited. It has become a metaphorical and literal space of 'border jumping' offering a passageway from Zimbabwe to South Africa. "Jumping" is a metaphor for illegal crossing, including physically swimming through rivers, jumping fences, corrupt practices, and bribery. *The Gold Diggers* follows Rosello and Wolfe's (2017: 14) argument that "aesthetic representations are now produced through a refusal to confine the border to a knowable location or form". This means that the novel challenges epistemological formulations about the border and its representation. Firstly, it produces alternative images of what the borders 'should' look like. Secondly, it goes further to challenge the notion that for the border-crosser to cross, there must be permission from "border gatekeepers" (Newman 2006: 186). Moreover, the novel re-imagines the acts and processes of border crossing. I thus, argue that the novel engages in a process of de-bordering, engaging our understanding of border crossing using different border poetic planes.

One of the benefits of analyzing literary narratives through poetic border theory is the realization that borders are everywhere and that this reading offers different vantage points of investigation. *The Gold Diggers*, through its setting and plot, transforms the Limpopo River into a topographical, epistemological, and metaphorical border. In the novel, since the migrants lack passports and the required visas, they opt to transgress the borders. They travel from Bulawayo to Dulibadzimu Township next to the Limpopo River where they can cross by swimming. Montoya (1998: 642) reminds us that "crossing borders is not cognitive or rhetorical; border crossing can be life-risking

and life-losing endeavors". This is especially reflected in the current fictional context where the border is a river. This crossing is and of itself a "life-risking" and a life-promising passageway at the same time, reminiscent of the underground railroad phenomenon. In Bhabha's (1994) formulation, the Limpopo River is in this way transformed into a "third space" between survival and death. The novel defamiliarizes the location of the border and the act of crossing. On one hand, the text destabilizes the 'order' of emigration, as we know it by foregrounding illegal routes. On the other hand, the performance of swimming operates on a stylistic level to center the migrant experiences during the crossing. In this way, my reading reveals the river as space and scape of "or translation and encounter" (Rosello & Wolfe 2017: 4) by undermining its role as a divider.

In the opening of the novel, we are introduced to Melusi reflecting on the history and the present times of Zimbabwe. He is reminiscing of times when his grandfather would tell him stories about the time, he (the grandfather) worked in the South African mines. This makes borders, bordering and border crossing, an act of memory that Melusi must navigate in the present. He possesses what I call a 'bordering consciousness' in how he accumulates vivid metaphors of dividing lines. This is explored through his stream of consciousness when he hears passengers conversing with Shona in his car. This forces him to tap into the history of the country, specifically a series of massacres of the Gukurahundi in early 1983 in which an estimated 20000 Ndebele-speaking people were murdered (Ngwenya 2017). He, therefore, believes that the country should be "divide[d] along tribal lines. Matabeleland. Manicaland. Mashonaland. Those who did not belong into these categories would have to squeeze into Otherland" (p. 4). Moreover, this traumatic memory uncovers the prejudice and contempt towards Shona-speaking people he has been socialized into and therefore internalized. This is clear when he declares to his passengers "in my car we *only* speak Ndebele" (Italics in original p. 5). In this way, he marks a linguistic and ethnic border for the passengers using the Ndebele language as a tool for inclusion and exclusion. Strikingly, Melusi raises questions of belonging and "Othering" on the basis of language and tribal lines. That he is conflicted manifest in the existential irony where he is in the professional business of defying borders and boundaries. He is a *malayitsha* (p. 5), he "ferr[ies] [passengers and goods] across the border illegally" (p. 6). He, therefore, facilitates "human smuggling" (Moyo 2020: 64). This operation of transborder interactions implies that, on a symbolic level, Melusi and his car are passageways to the border. Melusi's complicated relationships with (b)orders indicate to us the artificiality of demarcation lines, which can easily be negotiated and subverted.

Instead of approaching the river as a fixed border that separates, the characters transform it into a space where it serves as a literal transition space rather than a barrier. The result is a disruption of the intended articulation of separateness of the two countries (geographically and culturally). Through the focalization of young Gugulethu, border crossing is an ambiguous activity of "wading through the murky waters" (p. 28). This account illuminates the concurrent crossing of borders. On the epistemological plane, it challenges the crossers to 'walk' through the water rather than swim, which is a common performance in water. Thus, the cohort successfully crosses the topographical border.

Indeed, the river scene is located in the trope of "in-between" (Bhabha 1994). While the river stands as a symbol of the national border demarcations, its geographical position is in-between the countries. The narration provides a dichotomous view of South Africa and Zimbabwe as oppositions. The idiom of "murky waters" sets a threatening and dark terrain. The descriptors "scaly, menacing and ominous" add to the threatening life-risking attempt. On the other hand, we have images of a potentially fulfilled life in South Africa characterized by the words "bright and light". These signify a successful life across the river contrary to the crises-ridden life in Zimbabwe. Gugulethu is the youngest among the group. She is physically and emotionally immature to navigate swimming in this "great expanse of water" (p. 28). Hence, she subverts this challenge by "floating" (p. 28) her body to shore. In this way, she occupies a third space in crossing the river. However, we also see a juxtaposition of the border and the limitless; the characters successfully erase the border by wading through it to the other side.

We observe how after successfully crossing the river, the migrants are confronted by another spatial barrier. There are fences that "reinforce the actual border", constructed to serve as national securitization of South Africa (Moyo 2016: 61). In Schimanski's (2015: 102) formulation in the article "Reading borders and reading as crossing borders", these fences depict "spatial figures and folds". The characters are not informed upon embarking on the journey that there will be fences to subvert. They have been under the illusion that the river is the only boundary that they need to cross to make it to South Africa. After successfully swimming through the river, Givemore guides the journey further into South Africa:

> He steered them along a well known path, trodden by feet of the many that had paved the way before them…. meters rolled into kilometers before they reached what was a menacing barrier of steel wire. The razor-sharp spokes that crowned the barrier's head would tear into anyone who tried

to scale its heights. Givemore indicated gingerly that this was the first of
four fences that they had to get under. (p. 39)

The image created in this passage is one of impenetrability. The fences are threatening to anyone or anything that attempts to navigate through. The description also indicates that the fences are set up to bar entry. This means the migration security officials foresee unwanted entry; they expect illegal attempts in the form of physically jumping over the fence. The visual elements of "razor sharp…barrier's head…scale its heights" buttress this point. There is a double bordering level taking place in this scene. The reader crosses into another fold in the plot in a space between pre-migration and arrival. The characters in the story face a 'pocket' of the border in the form of the fences. Derrida (in Schimanski (2016: 99) argues that folds/pockets are inescapable yet, "they are the product of the unavoidable overlapping between symbolic spaces". The characters adapt to this bordering and invent a method to get across. They "maneuvered their …bodies under the wiry steel" (p. 40). Thus, crawling becomes a method of border subversion. From walking the water to crawling the land, we see adaptability as an art and survival strategy in border crossing.

Finally, in *The Gold Diggers*, Portia demonstrates the intersections and multiplicity of bordering. She and her young son are among the cohort that successfully crosses the Limpopo River and crawl under fences to Johannesburg. Apart from the economic challenges she was facing in Zimbabwe, she migrates to South Africa to reunite with her husband, Sibanda. On arrival in Hillbrow, Sibanda is offended that Portia has left the home unattended to be with him. The following morning, Sibanda gets Portia and their son into a taxi back to Zimbabwe. However, Portia is determined that she and her son deserve "better lives... that did not exist in Plumtree" (p. 83). They get off the taxi and sleep in the Joubert Park for many nights while she seeks employment. Albeit Portia's reasons are embedded in escaping the crisis in Zimbabwe, Sibaso's statement: "you leave my mother and the homestead to come here?" (p. 72), is suggestive that she is also escaping from an entrapping conservative patriarchal space. Due to a lack of proper documentation, she is unable to acquire employment. However, by a streak of luck she, "f[inds] her gold nestled among the long-overgrown grass" (p. 124) in the form of a South African Identity document. She assumes the identity of Phakama Hlophe (p. 124). Mangena (2018: 280) refers to this strategy as "identity masking", where undocumented migrants mask or modify their identities to negotiate their existences in foreign lands. Masked as Phakama Hlophe, Portia transgresses the social and legal borders that restrict undocumented migrants from economic mobility. The identity

appropriation succeeds because of the close cultural and linguistic proximity between Portia's Ndebele and Phakama Hlophe's Zulu ethnic group (Siziba 2015).

Phakama's newly acquired identity secures her a job with Hulisani, Hirsch, Hlomani and Associates Law firm. She is hired to "clean toilets, making tea and sweeping floors" (p. 122). This means that the transgression of the ethnic and citizenship border leads to upward mobility for Phakama. However, it also poses another fold of the border; that of adapting to a new sociocultural environment, especially mannerisms. According to Siziba (2015: 263), some mannerisms would separate a Ndebele from a Zulu, such as "walking, talking and expressive styles, accents". To subvert these bordering social challenges, Phakama "practiced efficacy" (p. 122). We notice another border pocket when Phakama is promoted to a receptionist because of her typing skills, which she would carry out when the hired receptionist, Karabo is out of the office. This new level in the hierarchies of the social realms and of the firm, means she must negotiate new ways of being. Thus, she "practiced walking in heels … emulated the ladies … the way they walked…how they dressed…and imitated them" (p. 122—127). The narrator tells us that, "gradually the old Portia began to disappear, making way for Phakama" (p. 127). In a study of African-Mediterranean travels, Toivanen (2016: 7) refers to this strategic metamorphosis as "identity eras[ing]". It is my submission that Portia engages in identity blending and not erasing, to undermine social borders. The reconfiguration of Portia's identity is dented when she is arrested for "identity theft" (p. 210). Advocate Hulisani, whom she has been having an affair with bails her out of prison and the "docket disappears" (p. 245). This symbolic border subservience provides Phakama another opportunity to cross a social border signified by her marriage to Advocate Hulisani. Unlike the "marriage of convenience" noted by Mangena (2018) and De Hart (2006), or what Digruber and Messinger (2006) call a "residence marriage", in which some migrants appropriate to side-step the immigration laws and gain legal statuses, Portia's marriage is represented as a genuine union. Thus, she unmasks herself, amalgamating to "Portia Mulaudzi" (p. 245). This new identity presents Portia with another form of upward mobility. She moves into Advocate Hulisani's mansion in Houghton, and "runs his home" with the "hired help" (p. 246). On a topographical plane, Portia crosses the border from the dilapidated Hillbrow to the lush suburbia mansion in Houghton. Symbolically, she is transformed, by marriage, from an illegal to a legal citizen. On the epistemological plane, she reinvents herself by "joining a book club" (p. 245) and attending

exclusive events as Mrs. Mulaudzi. This demonstrates the multiplicity of borders and subsequent subversions. From this viewpoint, Portia is successful in crossing and transgressing borders, marked by her assertion that her new life is "content …and fulfilling" (p. 250). Dumisani's diasporic trajectory follows closely to Portias'. He masks his identity by "buying a South African identity" (p. 222). On the social and economic ladders, he ascends to the "CEO of Investage…serving on several boards of JSE-listed companies" (p. 223) and "making millions" (p. 244) from a lawsuit involving a financial company. However, I read his trajectory as an unsuccessful border crossing. Unlike Portia, Dumisani is murdered in a car hijacking incident. He represents what Mangena (2018: 280) phrases as a "tragic figure that dies as a fake citizen". Thus, Dumisani's textual life ends with a boundary symbolized by his murder.

"Mi's home is a room"[5]: Spatial borderings

In addition to reading borders as demarcation lines, I further read them as bordering processes. Brambilla (2010: 75) proposes that scholars should consider studying borders "as socio-spacio agency in their own right and bordering processes do not begin or stop at demarcation lines in space". Guided by Brambilla's argument, I will end my analysis by focusing on the level of spatial bordering in the inner city of Johannesburg. Besides the border implications covered above, it is useful to consider the material spaces occupied by migrants, specifically the living spaces. There are several spatial border crossing instances as the migrants weave their lives in the new diasporic space of South Africa especially in *The Gold Diggers* because of its novel form. Schimanski and Wolfe (2007b: 56) extend our understanding of topographical borders to include "borders which are reinforced by…land ownership borders such as fences, architectural borders such as walls, and bodily borders such as skin". Therefore, my discussion here explores how walls of homes/houses function as fluid borderscapes in the diasporic setting. This section considers the following question: what can immigrants' living spaces reveal about the reinforcements of the border beyond its demarcation lines? In answering this question, I base my analysis on Rosello and Wolfe's (2017: 14) argument in the introduction of their book *Border Aesthetics: Concepts and Intersections* that "aesthetic representations are now produced through a refusal to confine the border to a knowable location or form thus 'estranging or de-familiarizing the border space and scape either as a place and scape of' transformation and difference". Thus, I shift the focus from

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[5] *Crossroads*, 2012: 182

knowable and recognizable locations of bordering discussed above such as the embassy, the Beitbridge border and the Limpopo River to the dwelling place, specifically the flat. I focus on the topography of the flat because it is the prominent immigrant living space in the texts under study in this chapter. The flat, emerges in these texts as confining, unhomely, and unaccommodating, especially to new migrants.

The first level of cross-border interaction occurs in the public space; the bus and taxi terminal; the Park Station. In this social space, the characters are met by family members or friends and travel to their residential places. The space of residence, the flat, and the walls of the private space force the immigrants to experience the material characteristics of the flat through what Green (2012: 574) would refer to as "a sense of border". My reading illuminates how abject crossing manifests in the migrants' abject dwellings. In another related context, Toivanen (2017: 2) finds the hotel space as prominent in "privileged forms of travels". Affluent hotel guests, tourists and leisure travelers in Toivanen's (2017: 2) study, "capture the uneven logic of global capitalism". This point is undeniable in my analysis, signified by the diverse forms of crossings. In Toivanen's (2017) study, privileged travelers experience their accommodations (hotels) as spaces of in-between in their mobilities. My underprivileged illegal travelers, experience their place of accommodation (the flat) as physical and symbolic borders. Therefore, I use the images of the flat as a space to read border poetics.

In *Crossroads* (2012), when the protagonist arrives at Park Station, she is welcomed by her aunt Mi, and they walk to Mi's home. The protagonist has expectations of glamour in Johannesburg. The living reality in Mi's flat proves these expectations false. She soon realizes that her dream of studying and "reinvent[ing]" herself is short of a fallacy. She discovers yet another spatial border that reflects class and cultural borders in Mi's home. She is shocked at Mi's living conditions, which reflect on the spatial bordering trope:

> Mi's home is a room. A single room in a conglomeration of rooms full of God knows how many people, rooms in a narrow dilapidated building that rushes towards phantom salvation in the sky…. [t]here is a mattress on the floor. A two-plate stove by the corner. A freezer next to it. Clothes spilling out of a big stripped plastic bag. (p. 182―185)

In *Shadows*, Mpho arrives in Johannesburg and is welcomed by his friend; Tafi. Like Mi in the above extract, Tafi lives in a flat in a "dilapidated building. Just above a Spar supermarket" (p.

93). Tafi also shares the flat with "other men" (p. 92). The number of occupants in the flat is not shared with the reader. Mpho paints a picture of the flat and its surroundings in this way:

> I stand by the window and watch the streets below. He (Tafi) lives on the eighth floor of a dilapidated building…there are flats all around. They are a sorry sight. They squat in the filth of the streets, with broken windows and dingy walls. Clothes dangle from balconies. Smoke and dust rise from the streets and cling to the clothing. Babies wail. (p. 92)

The dirt, grime and squalor are symbols of poverty and entrapment and a failure of migrants to escape border entanglements. In their reading of Bulawayo's "Shamisos", Mangena and Nyambi (2022) similarly argue that migrant settlements often symbolized by slums "suggest exclusion and economic marginalization" (2022: 81) add to immigrant precarity. In *The Gold Diggers* two extracts strikingly similarly to the above in portraying the dwelling spaces have been chosen. Firstly, upon arrival in Johannesburg, Lindani moves in with Melusi. Lindani agreed to move to South Africa with Melusi expecting a "plush penthouse" (p. 85). She is baffled to discover that they are to live in an "overcrowded" (p. 85) flat with eight other occupants, "sharing one bathroom" (p. 85). Additionally, the flat is located in a "dilapidated six-storey walk-up nameless building" (p. 85). The last character under the analysis of the flat as a migrant space is Dumisani. When he arrives in Johannesburg, he is welcomed by his uncle, Malume Jackson. His uncle's flat is in a "modest six-storey apartment" (p. 108). Dumisani is told that "[t]here is no room for him in the main flat" (p. 109). He is instead escorted to an "enclosed balcony that housed all the junk … [he] sorted through the rubble and carved a little niche for himself behind an old fridge" (p. 109).

In all the four extracts cited above, the flat is a focal place setting and central motif in the discourse of borders and bordering. The flat plays a key role in the "narrative backdrop and symbolic space" (van Herk in Toivanen 2017: 3) on the conditions of migrancy. It locates the characters geographically and symbolically in the city. Moreover, the scenes reveal the precarious living conditions of migrants in Johannesburg. I argued earlier that these migrant mobilities are penurious. We see in the graphic descriptions that their places of dwelling reek with abject poverty and show demeaning and dehumanizing conditions of migrants. The characters perceive this "borderness" (Green 2012: 578) in the flats through the faculties of sense and sight. Although there is no instance where the characters express these spatial set-ups as borders or thresholds, Ernste et al. (2009: 573) remind us that "borders are increasingly carried over space by the human body and mind". Hence, I have argued that the characters "feel" these social boundaries. These instances of

recognition and acknowledgment of their new spaces show characters crossing the epistemological border. They come to realize their surroundings. The words "shocked, chagrin and pity" illustrate new knowledge about life across the border, and a coming to terms with new socio-spacial borders Evocation of confinement and (un)belonging are recalled by the size and decrepit conditions of the flats. Toivanen (2021) argues that in clandestine Afroeuropean journeys, the leitmotifs of "confinement … limited space … cramped spaces" (2021: 123) are key features in the travels of migrants. In my selected stories, these aspects are represented in the flats, which are described as "a single room, a balcony, and a flat shared among other occupants". The flat's living spaces are also reflective of the city space. The narrators' graphic language of the city space metaphorically portrays it in a state of ruin and ruination – "hell, gutter, lifeless and putrid smelling" (p. 67—82) is like the unkempt and cluttered living conditions in the flats. The migrants' living spaces are also described in the same diction of decay and putrefaction, as "filth, junk, rubble, dingy and dilapidation" further symbolizing their de-limitation to the periphery of the idealized Johannesburg, and by a not-so-subtle implication, South Africa. Toivanen (2019) finds that the theme of confinement in the journeys to Europe "conveys the loss of agency and vulnerability" (p. 123) of the migrants. In my reading, the trope of confinement exemplified by the state of the flats represents a state of diasporic in-betweenness in relation to the border. The characters are in the same city but remain excluded. Tshuma's character in *Shadows* captures this metaphor of boundary by experiencing the city space through the window. Although the window serves as a mediation of inside/outside, for Mpho it signifies immobility. This suggests to us that the migrant does not experience borderlessness through the transition from the national border to inside the national landscapes of South Africa. Dumisani in *The Gold Diggers* exemplifies this existence as he lives in a literal liminal space "in a balcony … behind a fridge" (p. 109). The representation of the balcony inside the flat, in which Dumisani occupies, signifies a topographical border inside the home. Traditionally a balcony projects from the wall of the house. On the symbolic level, this means Dumisani is not part of the flat/home but occupies an ambiguous space neither inside nor outside. This evokes Schimanski's (2006: 44) argument that "border-crossers never completely cross the border; they often bring the border with them". Thus, read together these texts suggest a preoccupation with the liminal diasporic living spaces of migrants. The flat becomes a borderscape in which experiences of bordering flow inside and beyond the walls and landscapes of the border.

Conclusion

My discussion has shown that reading texts through a lens of border poetics provides valuable insights into migration literature. This chapter has demonstrated that the framework of border poetics allows an in-depth understanding of migration discourses and migratory spaces and practices. Borders are delimited and reinforced in every aspect of human experience, especially those involving multiple crossings. This reading has illustrated the idea that "borders are everywhere" (Balibar in Rumford 2012: 888), as revealed by the entanglements of the textual, geographical, national, symbolic, and spatial borders. The literary strategies of bordering reveal new ways of understanding the border as space, time, and experience. Moreover, the multi-perspective reading of the texts has illustrated "alternative creative imaginaries" (Brambilla 2010: 77) that migrants undergo to cross national borders. Each of the stories considered here exposes the diverse locations of borders. The strategies of circumventing borders, laws and immigration laws, bribery, swimming, wading, jumping, crawling and identity masking, in and of themselves forms of borders, bordering and border-crossing, presented creative methods that undocumented migrants undertake to subvert borders, while creating and experiencing new borders. Thus, these representations shift the static conception of borders as lines and topographical mappings to a fluid conception of borders.

Importantly, this chapter contributes to border studies and border poetics studies in African migrations. The texts revolve around the aesthetics of the border as the immigration offices, the embassy, the river, walls, fences, amagumaguma, and cultural, spatial, architectural, and social borders. These transitions of creatively crossing borders occur through the river, under fences, inside walls and in the cultural matrix of the host society. These images provide poetics on the discourse of borders and bordering in South Africa as a diasporic space. While the idea of crossing the border is realized for many characters, some characters such as Malume and Thulisiwe in *The Gold Digger* remain suspended in time and space of the Limpopo River. Dumisani offers us another complex layer into the negotiations of belonging in the context of the host community. The representation of his life being 'cut-shot' by a fatal hijacking incident, points to the ambivalence of Johannesburg as a migratory space. Other cases, like that of Portia, represent the successful border crossing through the intersections of different borders that Portia negotiates and mines 'gold' through effective interaction in the diasporic community. *Shadows* conceptualizes the lived experience of waiting at the border, waiting at the border, and waiting to cross the border.

My analysis of *Shadows* has established that immigrant characters experience the effects of exclusion long before they arrive in the host country, and that the subtle connotation of waiting is an instrument of restrictive and exclusionary immigration processes.

Chapter 3: "You look like a Zebra": Metaphors of alienation and alterity in *Bom Boy* (2011) and *Zebra Crossing* (2013)

Introduction

Chapter 2 critically examined the multifaceted and multi-locality nature of literary borders. By highlighting where and how imaginary and real borders are constructed, questions of why people decide to cross borders and what urgency they have in crossing seemingly impermeable borders were explored. In my reading of *Gold Diggers*, *Shadows* and *Crossroad*s, I argued that borders in their diverse forms of topographical borders, border posts, and invented borders are built on the background of hostility towards those that the South African state "Others" as a threat to the authenticity of the nation. In this chapter, two novels, Omotoso's *Bom Boy* and Vandermerwe's *Zebra Crossing* are analysed with a view to raising a fundamental point; that although the African migrant crosses the physical border, he/she remains in a position of marginality and on the periphery of social, economic, and cultural borders. The conditions and situations that the migrant character confronts express the precarity (in-betweenness and liminalities) of migrancy. *Bom Boy* and *Zebra Crossing* are both set in Cape Town, South Africa. This location sets them apart from the texts that I analysed in Chapter 2, whose place setting is the fast-moving city of Johannesburg. Akin to the three focal texts of Chapter 2, *Bom Boy* and *Zebra Crossing* feature prominent migrant characters who illegally cross the border into South Africa. Using different narrative strategies, the texts make revelation of the re/connection between South Africa and the rest of the African continent.

The central motif shaping the narrative in Zebra *Crossing*, is the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and the urgency of sport as a unifying factor beckoning a united Africa. Antithetically, *Bom Boy* uses parallelism to reveal a toxic relationship between Nigeria and South Africa, and within South Africa itself. *Bom Boy* offers a refreshing perspective on the experiences of an African migrant. Omotoso's multi-cultured and cosmopolitan characters defy the category of poor, uneducated, and at times faceless and undocumented migrants we normally observe in African migration literatures such as in *Zebra Crossing*.

The first part of this chapter analyses the psychological and emotional expressions of diasporic alienation in *Bom Boy*. Alienation is not a new phenomenon in literature. However, there has been a growing interest in literary preoccupations with alienation in recent times (Taylor 2000;

Lalchandani 2016; Rashed 2019). For example, in his study of Mexican migrants' assimilation in America through a reading of selected films, Modarres (2005: 3) acknowledges the potential of literary analysis to engage with issues of migration processes. Modarres argues that "we may learn as much from these narratives as we do from the demographic, economic, and political analyses that are the mainstay of migration studies". Consequently, my study, acting as a flashlight to the call by Modarres to make use of literary texts and analysis, provides a unique perspective on the issues of migrant alienation in South Africa. This has been widely covered in other disciplines such as sociology, geography, and migration studies. This chapter also reveals the interconnectedness of the demographic, economic, and political landscapes in creating and maintaining alienating situations for African migrants. Nuttall (2009: 1) refers to this as "entanglement" in negotiating new identities in different times and space.

In a discussion of how Mexican migrants negotiate their relationship with multiple nations, Modarres (2005: 5) draws from Simmel's (1910) concept of alienation as "the relationship between individual and society". To Modarres, alienation is a key hindrance in migrant assimilation. This means there is a correlation between the society that the migrant wishes to become part of and the experiences of migrancy. Focusing on novels that portray African migrants in South Africa, this chapter has the potential to enhance a deeper understanding of the intricate relationship between South Africa and its immigrants. The interrelatedness of alienation and othering is, therefore, important as to be othered is to be alienated and vice versa. Modarres (2005: 5) further argues that "alienation, whether externally imposed by processes such as capitalism or religion, or internally created, often appears because of a separation between a normative and an experiential life". This theorization is relevant to my analysis of migrant characters' grappling with the external processes and internal insecurities. As the discussion illustrates, migrants often experience external forces of alienation such as societal marginalization and job insecurity. They further portray alienation in their "experiential lives" characterised by anxieties, sicknesses, and loneliness. A third form of alienation is found at the "cross-section of desire and despair" (Mandress 2005: 5). Thus, the texts re-imagine the different manifestations of migrants' fusion of national identities and cultures in relation to alienation. A series of diary entries by Oscar and Leke in *Bom Boy* takes us into these issues at a more personal and individual level.

In a study of migration and alienation in a "Turkey Australian migration film", Gurkan (2019) observes that there are three common ways in which alienation manifests. At the initial stage, "the

first generation of immigrants are poor…uneducated…so they will not socialize with other minorities and Australians" (2019: 129). This dialectics of economics and socialization and space of socialization is a leitmotif in the novels under study. In diverse ways, the novels point to the negotiation of space vis-à-vis the financial and economic statuses of immigrants. For example, Oscar and Leke in *Bom Boy* have access to spaces such as the school, university, and the mall. Antithetically, Chipo and George in *Zebra Crossing* experience the entrapment and rigidity of the flat space and spatial relations in Long Street. Gurkan's (2019: 129) second finding is that the immigrants "feel themselves belonging neither to Turkey nor Australia". This state of liminal belonging is a common feature in migrant literatures. Similarly, in *Bom Boy*, Oscar is a second-generation migrant who does not feel welcomed in South Africa as shown through acts of self-isolation and isolation at his workplace. Likewise, Leke experiences a state of in-betweenness because of his Nigerian lineage, which he has never embraced nor lived his Nigerian culture. In *Zebra Crossing*, many characters have fatefully resigned any hopes or intentions of returning to their home countries. Lastly, Gurkan (2019: 129) notes that Turkish immigrants "become estranged with each other and the society" in Australia. This estrangement with the self and others also manifests in both novels. *Zebra Crossing*, for instance, portrays varied forms of estrangements, especially for minority immigrants. The city space of Cape Town is an estranging and estranged space. It is, thus, my intention to explore how Cape Town, as a literary metropolis, disables and enables the African migrant reception. In her review of *Bom Boy*, Fasselt (2015) comments that the novel portrays Cape Town as an intercultural and transitional space that alienates the protagonist through the deployment of subtle motifs of exclusion and seclusion.

The life of Yewande Omotoso, author of *Bom Boy* is a telling narrative worth mentioning at the point. She is of Nigerian and Barbadian parentage, grew up in Nigeria and migrated with her parents and two older brothers to South Africa in 1992. Omotoso's diasporic experiences have the potential to influence and/or reflect the ways she writes about the Nigerian migrant in South Africa. One could hazard the argument that her experiences and perceptions of place and space, of belonging, and alienation occupy an important part in how she reimagines the immigrant experience. She confirms this connection in an interview with Fasselt (2015):

> Everything informs one's writing. We always draw from our experiences
> and from what we see around us. So I would say, yes, my experience as an
> immigrant informed my writing. I write from a unique perspective. (p. 233)

My reading focuses on transnational and transracial disconnections and connections portrayed in the text. In *Bom Boy* Omotoso explores the experiences of Nigerians in South Africa through the prism of migrancy. *Bom Boy* complicates the migrant identities by highlighting moments of cultural and personal conflict and alienation. By juxtaposing the lives of migrant protagonists, Oscar and Leke, Omotoso imagines the South African landscape through a "then and now" modality. Oscar represents the Apartheid cultural and social era, whereas Leke represents the post-Apartheid, postcolonial conditions of South Africa. These conditions could be read in the motifs of walking, alienation, malaise, kleptomania, and gardening as the discussion below will show.

Bom Boy: A synopsis

The central motif of the novel *Bom Boy* is the conditions of migrancy in South Africa. Through an exploration of linkages between Nigeria and South Africa, the novel reimagines how these countries cope with colonial legacies through the prism of migration. The text incorporates elements of life writing, bildungsroman, and magical realism. The novel is written in the form of journal entries, through which we learn about the lives of the characters. Structurally, the novel is organised in two strands – the first traces and records the life of Oscar and his familial past; the second strand focuses on Leke's present life in Cape Town. Oscar's family roots are traced to South Africa and Nigeria. He is born of a racially white South African mother and a black Nigerian father. Under the oppressive apartheid South Africa segregationist rules prohibiting "Mixed Marriages" between Whites and non-Whites in terms of Act no 55 of 1949, Oscar's parents fled the country and migrated to Nigeria to avoid prosecution and persecution. In Nigeria they married and had a son, Oscar. Years later, Oscar returns to South Africa to take up a lecturing position at the University of Cape Town.

The protagonist in the novel is Leke, the biological son of Oscar and Elaine. Oscar met Elaine at the university where Elaine worked as a cleaner. As the story unfolds, we learn that Oscar is imprisoned for the murder of Elaine's guardian, Mr Feathers. About eight months before Oscar is released from prison, he is murdered in an altercation with another inmate. Elaine, who has limited financial and emotional support to take care of Leke, informally gives him up for adoption to Jane, a white woman she met at the post office. Jane and her husband Marcus, welcome Leke into their lives and raise him as their own child. The novel centres the story of Leke as he navigates his life as a young boy and later as an adult. What is particularly interesting in this novel is how the author complicates the notions of family and belonging by creating a web of relations between Nigeria

and South Africa and between races, by contextualising Leke's adoptive family as white. In the following sections, I analyse the aesthetic elements of the novel through Oscar and Leke's navigation of spaces in Cape Town.

"An invisible rash"[6]: Of alienation malaise

This section explores the representation of diasporic alienation through the lives of Leke and Oscar in Cape Town. *Bom Boy* imagines the notion of alienation in intricate aesthetic ways. Although Leke is legally a South African, he has trouble assimilating into the South African community. His ethnicity and paternal roots are traced to Nigeria in the patriarchal paternal tradition that the novel embraces. For this reason, we read that he is constantly in need of human company and connection. He defrauds the medical company he works for by assuming multiple clients' identities. His strategy involves consulting different medical professionals for a varying number of imagined diseases, which sometimes manifest in physical symptoms. Leke's name is short for "Ifaleke where Ifa means triumphs" (p. 37). However, as the novel unravels, it reveals how he "fail[s] to thrive" (p. 63) in the South African environment that has little accommodation for racial, ethnical, and national differences. It is thus, my argument that the social invisibility that he experiences culminates in an existential crisis of identity.

The novel opens with the description:

> "[a] thing began to grow like a tree in Leke's throat. It was the same thing that grew when he was picked for the school play, and it was there when he was later cut from the cast. It was there when girls glanced away as he walked down corridors. An invisible rash". (p. 1)

The oxymoronic description of "invisible rash", reminiscent of Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man* (1952), is disease imagery suggesting a condition in which something is 'felt' rather than 'seen'. A rash is a skin condition that usually appears as an irritation on the skin. Often it is a noticeable change to the skin. However, Leke experiences this rash inside his body "growing like a tree" (p. 1), whereas on the outside of his body, it is invisible. Leke 'senses' this rash, and so do the people around him who in turn avoid him as they would if the rash were physically visible. We see this in how the children at school and colleagues at his workplace have a "hidden rule […]" either to "ignore Leke" (p. 1, p. 73) or to avoid any form of contact with him. An incident at the Plaza Mall demonstrates this rule, where Leke sits on a bench and is confronted by a security guard asking

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[6] *Bom Boy*, 2011. p. 1

him about his increased presence in the mall. The security scolds and physically displaces Leke; "[y]ou may not loiter in the mall … it's a disturbance to our customers…at the exit, he let go of Leke's arm and left him outside the glass door" (p. 89). These experiences are like the exclusion he experienced when he was "cut from the cast" (p. 1) of a school play. Leke recognizes that he is alienated, cast out and chucked out by the "glances away" (p. 1) from him. For Leke, migrancy is a (in)visible condition that alienates him.

The reference to the space inside the mall as a "new wing, Diamond Walk" (p. 88) signals South Africa's transition and the possibility of the recreation of multicultural social space. Ideally, the "multi-tiered" (p. 88) mall should be a space that welcomes diversity in all its forms. However, the glaring irony in the scene above demonstrates the failure of place to accept diversity through assimilation as represented in the mall's name and structure. Markedly, the security guard physically drives Leke outside of the mall. We see a double displacement here. Leke is displaced from his community, and when he goes to the mall to seek human interaction, he is also displaced through ejection and rejection. Leke is called a "disturbance", evoking the idea of an outcast, bringing forth the metaphor of a skin rash that irritates the body. These scenes demonstrate the failed notion of a multicultural "new" South African dispensation.

One of the striking passages that reveal Leke's isolation, and what supposedly causes it, is a visit to a homeopath. The scene unfolds as follows:

> "What are you most afraid of?"
> "Like how?"
> "Another way of looking at that is what do you avoid?"
> "People"
> "What do you mean? All people? Just some people?"
> "…Are you scared of people, or what the people could do?" (p. 122)

As noted earlier, Leke seeks "people" connection and contact, especially after Marcus delivers him an envelope containing the letters his father (Oscar) had left for him. The envelope, which is addressed to Leke, has never been opened by his adoptive parents since they received it from Elaine when she left Leke with Jane. The envelope causes anxieties in Leke, especially about his paternal roots. When Leke first sees the envelope, he assumes that it has connections with his paternal identity, and it causes him bodily aches, leading to insomnia. Although Leke does not have any knowledge of what Hellerwork is or what to expect from the consultation, he consults

with a Hellerwork practitioner and receives "some form of relief" (p. 134) from his loneliness. In the consultation room, the practitioner explains to him that she "works with the deep connective tissue of the body, releasing 'history'" (p. 135). In this extract, the setting and the medical practitioner are symbolic literary choices. The Hellerworker specialises, among other things, on massaging and exercising body tissues to align bodily posture and increase mobility. The doctor explains that for healing, Leke requires a connection with his "history". Accordingly, Leke should re-connect with his roots which could be done by reading the letters bequeathed to him by his father. Oscar's letters are not only an archive of personal history but serve as the "deep connecting tissue" (p. 135) to his diasporic Nigerian lineage. We notice the recurrent theme of re-connection when the doctor instructs Leke to demonstrate how he walks in an effort to observe Leke's body alignment and posture. Body alignment suggests a re-arrangement of the body, but here, it implies the configuration of Leke to his family lineage as well. The Hellerwork practitioner performs the consultation by "massag[ing] [Leke's] hands…shoulders…. upper body and kneading the flesh… with arnica oil (p. 135). The process evokes the notion of 'wholeness' that Leke needs. The doctor massages almost his whole body to relieve the historical traumas that are physically invisible but stored in the "deep connecting tissues".

The symptoms that Leke experiences are multigenerational and transmittable. Leke inherits these unidentifiable and undiagnosable alienation symptoms from his father, Oscar. We learn early in the novel that Leke is a child prone to sickness. As an infant, his mother, Elaine, is concerned about his health and takes him to the clinic. She tells the nurse "[h]e is hot and doesn't sleep at night. Sometimes he doesn't take the breast. When I check the blankets, they're wet. With sweat" (p. 61). The nurse does not find a medical cause for his condition and recommends Elaine to give him vitamin supplements. This indicates that from an early age, Leke has unidentifiable ailments. This recalls the metaphor of the "invisible rush" that opens the novel. Leke's invisible rash communicates the discomforts of diasporic livelihood from Oscar. Looked at from this perspective, diasporic 'genes' are transmitted from generation to generation. Leke' grandparents also migrated to Nigeria because of the Prohibition of the Mixed Marriages Act (1949). Furthermore, Leke is named after Oscar's father, signalling the cultural transference of naming practices. In this sense, the diasporic feelings of exclusion and isolation that Oscar experiences when he arrives in South Africa are almost the same as those experienced by his son 15 years later. This notion of transmittable alienation through historical recurrence is further buttressed by the

reality that Oscar wrote the letters to Leke from "far away in a prison cell" (p. 38). The adjective "far" and the noun "prison" signal a socially distant and isolated location, in which Oscar communicates to Leke in the form of letters. Hence, Leke's health conditions deteriorate when he receives these letters. As noted earlier, his headaches and insomnia become frequent.

I have suggested that even though Leke has not yet read the letters, they communicate the isolation that ordered Oscar's life. From the contents of Oscar's letters, the family is suffering from "a darkness" (p. 139) that runs throughout their lineage. Oscar writes that there is a curse attached to his family after his grandmother refused to give her daughter as a sacrifice to the Babalawo Yoruba god. According to Oscar, "the curse … killed off families, connections, and intimacy" (p. 138) and "in order to thrive [the family] was not to invite love" (p. 140). The result of contradicting the will of the gods would be a "spate of deaths" (p. 140). Oscar's construction of his family history as riddled with "darkness" is symbolic of the notion of transmissibility and historical recurrence. In this sense, the "spate of deaths" is a metaphor for the generational lack of human relationships succeeding from Oscar to Leke. These are manifested through Oscar's isolated life and death, and through Leke's "invisible" existence.

Leke works for Western Medical Fund where he has access to the personal details of its beneficiaries. He defrauds the organization by 'stealing' identities. He consults with several medical specialists to cure his malaise. In line with Leke's isolation, this is his strategy of acquiring human relationships, specifically human contact. Under the alias of Mr Bisset, he consults a physiotherapist about his bodily aches. After a thorough physical examination, the doctor declares that Leke is "a healthy man" (p. 83). Following this, Leke visits a dentist as a Mr Jack Salakulandelwa. In this consultation, we are told that Leke "felt strange to have someone touch his teeth this way" (p. 93). Not only is this examination strange in the uncomfortable manner of a dental examination, but it is also strange for Leke to experience the proximity of another person's body to his own. Given his prolonged periods of alienation, Leke has not been in close physical contact with any person other than Jane, his adoptive mother.

Leke succeeds in manipulating the medical fund and the medical practitioners by appropriating different names. Leke succeeds without any suspicion because of his multicultural identity, which permits him to skilfully and easily cross cultural borders. This is clear in his choice of identities as Mr Bisset, Mr Salakulandelwa, Mr Williams, and Mr Monash, all names that cut across the racial and ethical lines. More importantly, Leke conceals his identity by assuming these aliases and

manipulating his identity as a Nigerian-South African with white ancestry from his grandmother. Thus, he finds it unproblematic to appropriate these identities. His multicultural and multi-local identity is further enhanced due to his upbringing in a white family.

"Walk[ing] off the loneliness"[7]: – Mapping the Nigerian-South African identity in Cape Town

Oscar identifies with Nigeria and 'Nigerianess' more than he does with South Africa and 'South Africanness'. This is not only because of his national patriotism, but also because his father grounded him in Nigerian culture through 'folklore and the history of Nigeria. These connect Oscar more with Nigeria than South Africa. We observe how Oscar mimics this tradition, by transmitting the national and paternal history in the form of letters he writes to Leke. Writing and storytelling become modes of identity transmission. In one letter, we learn that Oscar has been preoccupied with questions of national and cultural identity from an early age. His interracial identity in Nigeria makes him question:

> "Am I Nigerian?" I asked my dad and he nodded.
>
> "And I'm South African too?" My mother nodded.
>
> "How come we don't go there? And how come your skin is like that but Daddy and me are like this?'
>
> "Daddy and I."
>
> "If you're really my mother, how come you're onyibo?"
>
> They never answered my questions…. (p. 39)

We notice here how, from a young age, Oscar is preoccupied with his identity. He grows with these "unanswered questions" and never succeeds in resolving them. Leke, similarly shows an interest in his national identity and culture. I discuss Leke's negotiation of these aspects later in the chapter. Here, I wish to underscore how Oscar and Leke use questions and questioning as symbolic modes of representing their multiple identities.

The overarching focus in this section is on characters walking the Cape Town literary spaces as a way of mapping their identities. Here, it is useful to focus on *how* Oscar and Leke walk in the literary spaces they occupy. In "Walking in rhythms: place, regulation, style and the flow of experience", Edensor (2010) extends Lefebvre's theory of the production of space, arguing for the

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[7] *Bom Boy*, 2011. p. 13

intersections of temporalities and spaces through distinct rhythms of walking. Edensor (2010: 69) avers that "walking produces time-space and the experience of place". In this light, walking practices and walking rituals can be linked to the immigrant experience. An analysis of the character's walking practices can reveal mappings of immigrant identities in Cape Town. In Cape Town, Oscar struggles to transition into the new space, and it turns out to be "lonelier than he'd anticipated" (p. 12). At the university where he works, most colleagues "ignored him" (p. 13). Outside of the University campus community, he has minimal human relations. The only person he has a relationship with is Elaine, a cleaner at the university. Their relationship develops into a romantic affair.

The only other method of social engagement apart from spending time with Elanie, is walking on campus. Throughout the novel, there is only one incident in which Oscar is in a social gathering with his colleagues. Oscar develops "a ritual" (p. 12) of taking walks to the Cecil John Rhodes Memorial on campus. Although these walks are intended to "walk off the loneliness" (p. 13) he experiences due to his communal isolation, they typify the escapades of a *flâneur* (Tester 1994; Edensor 2010). Oscar regularly takes leisurely "strolls" (p. 12) through the University campus. We learn of the spatial organisation in this section of the campus through his subjective observations. He compares the Rhodes Memorial to Moremi on the Ile-Ife Campus to negotiate his belonging in both countries. We notice how he immerses himself in these walks, while appreciating the scenery and surroundings:

> walking up the steps; grudging, he took in the palm-to-cheek bust of Cecil John Rhodes arranged on the top platform amidst imposing Doric columns. At the top, Oscar turned to enjoy the view: the stone terrace at the bottom of the monument; curved stone wall; the forests with an army of towering spindly trees leaning away from the Southeaster; and the familiar shapes and lines of the surrounding neighbourhoods. (p. 12)

This description of the monument and its surrounding recalls Oscar's multi-localness and his *flaneur* consciousness. Ironically, the diction of "imposing", "forest", "army", "towering" is used to describe this space, alluding to its overbearing nature and his unbelonging. In "How Not to Think about Africa" Garuba (2012: 1) writes that the Cecil John Rhodes statue is "the modernist, imperialist version … a vision that represses other peoples, other histories, other knowledges; rather than a dialogic engagement, it privileges a monocentric, colonising view of the world". We observe how the Cecil Rhodes statue has been viewed as memorialisation of the colonial enterprise, which led to the "Rhodes Must Fall" movement at the University of Cape Town in

2015. The students felt 'repressed' by the history of the statue and its visual symbolic meaning of privileging its engagement with space. Notably, the same statue obtrudes Oscar, bringing "the sense of umbrage" (p. 13) of his identity on the space.

Adjunct to this, from the age of nine, Leke shows an "interest in geography, in maps and adventure." (p. 8). These early life interests also occupy his adult life. As an adult, Leke habitually walks through the city of Cape Town. He walks to his workplace, to the mall, and the doctors' offices. Walking and traversing these spatial city settings is some form of identity mapping for Leke. The only instance when Leke drives in a car is when he goes to the township with a colleague Tsotso, to consult a traditional healer. This is in the final part of the novel.

Concerning his walking patterns, the narrator tells us that Leke "watch[es] the pavement as he walked" (p. 17) implying that Leke gives attention to his spatial surroundings and his walking patterns. This could also be an expression of apprehension and avoidance of human eye contact, hence the visual fixation with the pavement. Leke is however, mostly represented as unable to attune with the rhythms of walking that are required in the spaces he traverses. Here, I refer to one instance at the mall. Although Leke enjoys walking to the mall for the comfort it affords him, he is asynchronous with the special and temporal patterns of walking to the mall. He experiences what (Edensor 2010: 70) refers to as "collective choreographies of congregation", as:

> [a]ll the shoppers in the mall seemed …in … an intricate dance that started when they entered the mall and ended when they left…The mall was hypnotic, like an enchanted forest, but instead of trees and bushes, there were elevators and escalators, and in place of animals, there were sales people. Instead of fruit, clothes sprouted in the shop windows, waiting to be picked. (p. 50)

This description suggests the controlling effect of a capital economy in pursuit of profit. However, the control, which resembles hypnotism is what Leke finds aversive because of his multidimensional identity. He does not identify with this capital-controlled-dance in which "geographies of communality and continuity" (Edensor 2010: 70) are experienced. Hence, Leke associates these walking patterns with a hypnotic state, signalling his disorientation in what he refers to as a forest. There is a similar example earlier in the novel when Leke is cut out of the school play, a move suggesting that he cannot be in a rhythmic flow with other learners as required by the synchronized organisation in the performance of a play. Instead of joining in on the "intricate dance" (p. 50) in the walking rhythm characteristic of a "surge of shoppers" (Kärrholm

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in Edensor 2010: 69), he "wanders" (p. 50) and "loiters" (p. 50) – he performs his unbelonging and alienation through asynchronous walking patterns.

Leke is familiar with the locality of Cape Town. He grows up, and, as an adult, lives and works in the same space. This understanding of locality causes Leke to walk with ease in the city. There are no instances in the novel where he is lost or unaware of his location in the city. Notwithstanding this grand state of familiarity, he remains socially and emotionally dislocated from the city. In another scene, Leke is walking home from a doctor's appointment. While walking, he "count[s] his footsteps in groups of one hundred, starting again after each century" (p. 70). In another scene, he "walked up and down, counting cobbles" (p. 101) on the street. We observe in these instances how he creates a "rhythm inside and outside [his] body" (Edensor 2010: 70) by creating a flow and rhythm of walking through counting as he walks. However, the rhythm he creates, is unique, personal, and not in sync with the communal rhythm. The discord between his rhythm and that of the community is stuck symbol of his dislocation and alienation. In Edensor's theory (2010: 70) this "latching on to particular beats … with a self-defined choreography … generates links, stoppages, bolts, and rivets to the existing architecture of time and space". We notice how his walks are choreographed rhythms that appear to the narrator as if "he [is] performing a march, solemn and deliberate. Clunk. Clunk" (p. 84). Sheller and Urry (in Edensor 2010: 70) conceptualise this distinct walking performance as "dwelling-in-motion". Thus, Leke connects his identity in Cape Town through particularity of motioned pattern of walking.

Although Leke has a home, his experiences of the city make him part of the homeless. According to Edensor (2010: 71), "in city centres, the denial of places through which homeless bodies may dwell or rest generates a condition of 'perpetual movement'" that is characteristic of Leke. In one episode, he slept in a parking area after spending the entire night loitering in the parking area. We are told that when he finally lays down on his mattress in his rented flat, he drifts away into adventurous dreams which signify perpetual movement. Seemingly, every space occupied by Leke is estranging, even his own home:

> [he] moved, stunned, through the streets…he felt brazen…his footsteps were so laden, he appeared to be performing a march, solemn and deliberate…He noticed the loneliness. It swelled into the small space of the studio. A polite silent guest. (p. 83-84)

The representation of Cape Town as an aloof metropolis with little interaction between people adds to Leke's dislocation and strong sense of alienation. Strangely for Leke, for all his anti-social

life, he still shares a particular relation to the street. The street becomes Leke's way of mapping and asserting his presence in the city. Although he inclines to remain invisible in the textual spaces, he relates to others by 'looking' and observing their movements. Through his movements in the city and the streets, Leke is the eye and ear of the reader as we learn the demographics of Cape Town and most importantly, the persistent quasi-colonial segregations that the city upholds. The same segregation also applies to migrant figures in the city. This is shown in the following extract, which captures Leke walking the streets of his neighbourhood:

> [h]is favourite street was where Elias's store corner shop stood; a narrow road, cobbled, making it unpopular for speeding cars. It seemed more suited to the trendy surrounding suburbs that had been redeveloped but somehow it had landed up amidst the old, creaking neighbourhood excluded from the gentrification project. (p. 101)

Leke's observations coincide with his own multiracial identity. The extract invokes Bhabha's (1994) concept of the "third-space" in the way it recreates Leke's identity and locale. Leke's favourite space is in a "corner", signalling two sides that converge. The space is ambiguous; in its aesthetics as the traditional "cobbled" road, a perfect contrast of the "trendy surroundings". The "narrow[ness]" of the street is also a revealing feature of the ambivalent and suffocating migrant locality. Thus, this location emerges in-between these two opposing city developments. There is the element of class division that is alluded to in the passage. The narrator observes three distinct classes. Those who "walk and stop to drink coffee", and others who "let their tongues water over dainty cakes in shop windows" and a group of "beggars…on the pavement" (p. 101). Leke's position on the corner illustrates his liminal existence. He is not part of either of these crowds. He is also not taking part in any of the activities in the street. He is neither inside the store nor looking inside the store from the window nor on the pavement. The corner here metaphorically represents Leke's in-between cultural identity which excludes him from the space.

"[I]n pursuit of objects"[8]: Of Confinement and Kleptomaniac (un)belonging

Glaring in my discussion in previous sections, Oscar and Leke struggle to assimilate into the communities where they live. The above section demonstrated how walking is a form of escapism from the reality of unbelonging and rejection. The characters navigate their alienation and (un)belonging, through walking the city space. Adjunct to this, the characters experience confined

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[8] *Bom Boy*, 2011. p. 87

and restricted existences. In the first instance, this is symbolised by the office space where Oscar works. He spends much of his time in the office working till night because of the little social interaction in his life. In the textual scenes that feature Oscar, he is inside his office working (except when he takes his leisurely walks on campus), and in the confines of a prison. The office is a confiding/confined space. His "desk [is] set against the wall…to the left of the desk [is] an aging wooden cabinet with dusty glass door" (p. 55). We get here the image of dullness in Oscar's life implied by the position of the desk "against the wall", the "aging cabinet, and dusty glass". Saleem and Bani-ata (2014: 68) argue how alienation entails "estrangement and loneliness […which render] life absurd, meaningless, directionless and futile". Oscar's life and its characteristic "dullness and dust" is meaningless. He is estranged socially and culturally. In one scene, he tells Elaine, that he is supposed to be giving a tutorial, however, the "students complained to the faculty that they can't understand [his] accent" (p. 55). In this context, his accent is one of the causes of his exclusion and a form of silencing that Oscar and immigrants in general experience. A rejected accent becomes a form of silencing and 'othering' of the immigrants who are denied a voice for fear of laughter, reprisal, or rejection.

Soguk (2000) notes how across the world, migrants are problematised as 'Other':

> in political, economic, cultural, religious, and aesthetic senses. At times, they appear as security threats to the national security of the nation. Their names appear next to phrases and words such as international crimes, criminal gangs, Maffia, trafficking of women, or drug trafficking. (p. 437)

These observations encompass the image of the Nigerian migrant in the South African political, social, and literary landscapes. In a study of Nigerian immigrants in the United States, Savaş, et al. (2021: 250) found that immigrants are stereotyped as "criminalized border crossers". We also notice how in the USA, there has been heightened migration security control, especially after the events of 9/11. Although Nigeria and South Africa share a long relationship of migration patterns, in recent times this relationship has become fraught with accusations and counteraccusations of targeted criminality. The widely held stereotypical images of Nigerians has arguably led to violent attacks on Nigerians in South Africa (Crush 2000; Matsinhe 2011). The Nigerian immigrant (especially those who identify as male) have been prejudiced and marked as "makwerekwere" (Mantsinhe 2011) because of their accent. Although "makwerekwere" is a derogatory term that refers to most black African immigrntas, it is widely used in reference to "other" Africans such as Nigerians whose primary language (apart from English) is nowhere near those spoken in South

Africa. For example, the Zimbabwean Ndebele is linguistically similar to the South African Ndebele and isiZulu (Dube 2017; Siziba 2014). In this way, Ndebeles have "linguistic capital" (Siziba 2014: 174) which informs how they negotiate their identities as migrants in Johannesburg. In a study by Morris (2005), conducted in Johannnesburg, the majority of his Congolese and Nigerian participants "all had harrowing tales of prejudice and intolerance" (2005: 1117). Among these intolerances are the stereotypical behaviours such as being asked for identification, even in unnecessary circumstances due to the stereotypes that Nigerians are "criminals" and "human traffickers" (Sogul 2000). Nigerians are widely portrayed and criminalized as "scammers", "drug dealers", "prostitutes" and "commandeering local women" (Morris 2008: 1124; Matsinhe 2011; Crush 2001; Kalitanyi & Visser 2010). In 2010 Kalitanyi and Visser (2010) found a common stereotype of Nigerians as "job takers" (2010: 377), because of the entrepreneurial (especially in the informal sector) and professional skills that most Nigerians possess. These stereotypical images are also evident in Africans novel, for example, Chimamanda Ngozi's *Americanah* (2013) tells the story of Nigerian immigrant, Obinze, who is denied a visa to the USA. Nyathi's *The Gold Diggers* follows the same script in which a Nigerian man, Kiyan, living in Johannesburg is involved in international drug dealing. He lures vulnerable migrant women into his operation to traffic drugs across international borders. Niq Mhlongo's *After Tears* (2007) also portrays a Nigerian character, Yomi, who is involved in criminal activities such as forging documents. However, in *Bom Boy*, Omotoso imagines her Nigerian characters differently and shys away from these stereotypes. Oscar and Leke experience general "conflicts inherent in the immigration process" (Ette 2012: 164) as opposed to the prejudiced and criminalised Nigerian identities cited above. The intersections of Oscar and Leke mean they have different diasporic experiences. Oscar is an educated, middle class male who experiences subtle stereotypical attitudes from his colleagues. Leke's social group as a White adoptee proposes a unique experience of stereotypes and public attitudes.

Linguistic stereotypes tied to Nigerians and other foreign nationals are popular in xenophobic discourse. These stereotypes will be discussed at a later stage. Here, I highlight how this subtle form of xenophobia pushes Oscar to spend time in his office instead of being in a tutorial engaging and using language as an educational tool with his students. As an adult, Leke chooses to study and work in computer programming. This is an intentional strategy to isolate himself and work with "the quiet language of computers" (p. 18) because he is silenced in everyday speech. These instances highlight language as a site of alienation in the lives of immigrants.

We continue to witness how Oscar lives the rest of his textual life in isolation. He spends most of his time in his monotonous office on campus and later "in a prison cell" (p. 38). He dies incarcerated at the Joubert Prison. His death in the prison is symbolic of migrant lives in unhospitable spaces, especially those characterised by constricted isolation and isolating situations. Elaine arrives at the prison after Oscar's death is a telling moment. We are told that the administrator "handed [her] a box with Oscar's name on it" (p. 150). This 'boxing' of Oscar's belongings is a metaphor of his suffocation and identity, as 'other' living on the margins of society. Leke and Oscar have parallel life experiences punctuated by confinement and loneliness. When Leke is left on the park for Jane to adopt, a package with Oscar's letter is left behind with him. The narrator is preoccupied with this metaphor of packaging and packages in migrant identities as if migrants are packages to be transported and delivered (in)conveniently. A case in point is the controversial migrant policy of the United Kingdom to transport all illegal migrants who arrive in the UK to Rwanda. In fact, a court decision challenged and stopped a flight on the runway about to transport and deliver this human cargo. Thus, the motif of migrants and packages to be delivered is still ongoing. In the park, the narrator tells us that the baby is a "cloth bundle" (p. 131) and that Jane collected the baby from "his packaging and held him…" (p. 132). As an adult, Leke is obsessed with packages and packaging as well. For example, he has difficulty letting go of his backpack. In his work cubicle, he sits down with the backpack on his person until it is time to go home. Moreover, he divides and keeps his money in envelopes. This trait can be attributed to his compulsive behaviour; however, it also links with his sense of confinement where he believes that just like his identity and diasporic existence, things should be ordered and separated. After Jane's passing, Marcus gives Leke "an envelope ... a packet" (p. 69) containing letters from Oscar. These are symbolic of confining and suffocating identities expressed alternatively in how Leke "remained concealed …watch[ing] people" (p. 104). This sense of aloofness pushes Leke to observe others' lives from the side-lines yet do little to live his own.

Adjunct to this, Leke develops a kleptomaniac inclination towards people's belongings. His habit of watching people, develops into a practice of following people and stealing their belongings. Markedly, Leke's behaviour cannot be characterised as criminal in the narrow sense of the word. It is narrated that he wanders, waits, and follows random women at the mall. I use random here, because it is not clear how Leke chooses his victims in the story. Reading Leke's odd behaviours in the context of diasporic alienation reveals that he is not voyeuristic, however, he follows random

people symbolically to feel close to them. The following extract point to how alienation produces complex desires for human interaction:

> [h]e stood outside the chemist some distance from the entrance and when she came out, he followed her. When she exited … [he] kept up behind her all the way to the bus stop …she searched for something. Something important. He watched as she searched her body. He knew what she was looking for. … at home, he put the earrings under his pillow. He'd seen her buy them after she'd been to the chemist and then watched them drop out of her bag when she'd passed clothes over the counter at the dry cleaners. Shiny studs that twinkled in the weak winter sunlight. (p. 80)

In another incident at the same mall, he follows an unnamed woman, "[t]he smell of her invaded his senses…. followed as close as he could…whole days disappeared in pursuit of objects" (p. 87). Although in this instance as in the first he does not steal anything, Leke perversely follows these people "in pursuit" of human warmth and closeness. For him, this closeness to other humans and objects functions as an outlet for his diasporic alienation.

Only after reading Oscar's letters, which trace his Nigerian heritage, is Leke able to pursue human relationships instead of objects. At work, he meets a woman named Tsotso. She appears to be interesting, and he follows her home. He habitually stalks her house and watches her and her grandmother going in and out of their residence. One night, he helps Tsotso drive her grandmother to the hospital. Over their conversation, they both learn that they have similarities. In fact, it is Tsotso who reads the letters to Leke upon his request, claiming he cannot read them as they "hurt his eyes" (p. 121). They become friends and exchange life stories. They were both not raised by their biological parents, and this shared experience strengthens their friendship. This relationship is significant in giving closure to Leke's pursuits of other parts of his identity. The relationship and the reading of the letters become a 'cure' for Leke's quest for his cultural roots and identity.

"Think of soil"[9]: Cultivating diasporic identity

When people are uprooted or experience physical mobility from a place, there is a sense in which they create new homes (Motahane & Makombe 2020; Muchemwa 2010; Ralph & Staeheli 2011). Migrants are often conflicted between the desires and ideas of the original home and the aspirations for the new home (Brent 2004; Nannucci 2012). Boccagni (2017: 88) refers to this dilemma as a "metaphorical conflation" between home and homeland, and the migration discourse of

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[9] *Bom Boy*, 2011. p. 10

receiving societies". Thus, these processes take on different forms in literary representations as characters manoeuvre and navigate the new spaces (Nannucci 2012). The textual public places such as the school, the mall, and the workplace fail to provide Leke and Oscar with "place making" and claim of place (Chang 2010: 133), a sense of home and belonging. One of the ways the characters curve their belonging is by walking the streets and the university space and seeking adventure through dreaming and storytelling. In this section, I analyse the aesthetics of belonging by exploring Leke's and Oscar's relationship with environmental elements like the soil and flowers. I zoom in on the textual spaces of the garden as an enabling space of diasporic belonging. The complexities of cultivating new identities in the novel hinge on how the characters attempt to re-live and re-make their past lives, particularly those nostalgic moments when they felt at home. For Oscar, this is done through the letters he writes for and to Leke. The act of writing becomes a temporal mode in which he travels back to the future, mostly to re-live his life in Nigeria and imagine Leke's future. Oscar experiences this personal relationship with his father during their storytelling sessions. Leke develops a coping mechanism of dealing with traumas of alienation through gardening flowers. The process of gardening makes him feel close to Jane and more importantly, to his national roots. The garden represents what Bhabha calls an "intervening space" (1994: 7). For Leke, the garden and the soil become a space in which he re-invents and re-asserts his national identity.

In the first letter that Oscar writes to Leke dated "Saturday, 25th July 1992", he describes how, as a young boy, his father's singing "always makes [him] think of [the] soil" (p. 10). This is the first diasporic metaphor that Oscar relates to Leke about navigating his locality and identity. This earth metaphor is a recurrent stylistic throughout the novel. We notice how in writing his family history and identity, Oscar frequently mentions "the soil, moist almost black" (p. 10) and "the ground and … the soft soil" (p. 59) when he refers to Nigeria. In a related study of transatlantic diasporic identities, Motahane et al. (2021: 28) argue that the umbilical cord (which is buried in the soil) is "a traditional symbol of identity that is used to attach people to place". It is from this ritual that consanguinity of land and person is birthed, giving rise to the son/daughter of the soil phenomenon in African philosophy of life. I wish to extend this thinking, to the symbolic reference of the soil as representing national identity in the context of the novel. Bauman (1992: 697) holds that images of soil and blood are anchored "in the root of individual and communal identity". In *We Need New Names*, this diasporic identity thematic is explored through a third-person narrator who laments

how Zimbabwean diasporans are "[l]eaving their umbilical cords underneath the soil, leaving the bones of their ancestors in the earth, leaving everything that makes them who and what they are" (p. 146). Thus, for Oscar, the soil in Nigeria is 'who and what he is'. The 'softness' of the soil alludes to a national consciousness and the comfort of home. Another notable symbolism through Oscar's relation with flowers is when he recounts how, as a child he appreciated "Touch-me-nots" (p. 59) flowers. Similarly, Leke develops a special relationship with soil and flowers as intricate parts of his selfhood and identity. These link Leke's national identity through the elements of the soil and the flowers. The theme of the soil becomes an important motif in Leke's efforts to cultivate his belonging in South Africa.

Throughout the novel, it remains unclear why Elaine chooses Jane to adopt and raise her child. Elaine and Jane met in the post office when Elaine was buying stamps to send a letter to Oscar in prison. In the scene, Elaine goes into labour and Jane helps her by driving her to the hospital. The narrator refers to Jane as a "hibiscus woman" (p. 33) because of the hibiscus flower on the front of her t-shirt. Although Elaine stalks Jane for a few days before deciding she is a perfect candidate to adopt Leke, she learns nothing valuable about her personality or traditions. Elaine only learns that Jane is a teacher, that she has no children and that she is married to a university professor. The scene in which she first encounters Jane is symbolic in revealing how Elanie choses her. The reference to Jane as a flower is symbolic identity for her unborn child, Leke.

The double meanings of Jane's death and the planting of flowers as a remembrance or memorialisation are weaved into the plot in interesting ways. The choice of flowers, the perennials, symbolises the renewal of life. In an earlier conversation between Leke and Jane, Jane shares her wish to grow perennials in her garden. However, Leke comments that he dislikes perennials because "they lived on and on and that's not real life" (p. 44). Ironically, he associates the same flowers with Jane after her death. He re-invents their relationship by re-growing and replicating the flowers to renew Jane's motherly affections and importantly his South African identity. This is where it says:

> [t]he December after Jane's death, Leke planted the perennials she had mused about, but they only blossomed the following year. Every two years he planted a new batch so that when one plant was dying, another was blooming. (p. 51)

The garden space and the process of planting and replanting flowers whose life cycle revolves around blooming and dying, evokes feelings of renewal, continuity, and belonging for Leke. We

observe early on when Leke moves into his flat how "the entire garden on [his] side had been plucked out …a high wall ran the perimeter, protecting the space from the Cape Town winds; it created stillness otherwise missing from the open streets" (p. 22). The plunging out in the garden signifies Leke's uprooting. First, as a child when he is left in a park for adoption, and secondly, as a young boy of 10 when his adoptive mother dies of cancer. The garden, therefore, offers Leke an enabling space for his migrant identity. It is in the garden that he creates space where he plants himself and asserts his identity. The narrator expresses these ideas in a sensual and emotive language in the garden where it says:

> bright blossoms open and oozing a sweet scent; in another were spindly stems, little babies shooting out of the ground. [Leke] began to turn the soil, inhaling the smell he'd come to love over the years... he thought of blankets and of Jane kissing him goodnight. (p. 52)

The scene evocatively retraces Leke's duality – Nigerian-South African identity. The imagery of 'stems shooting out of the ground' enhances the idea of rooting and belonging to the soil of his birth. Thus, the act metaphorically covers him in a 'blanket' of national belonging. His sense of belonging is alluded to by the diction of 'blossoms' and the 'sweet scent' of the flowers. He physically roots himself in the soil "barefoot" and "kneeling with bared knees" (p. 52) as he gardens the flowers. This tactile imagery creates an impression of Leke grounding himself by sowing himself in the soil. The image recalls Bauman's (1992) idea of the metaphor of soil as representative of the nation and identity. The garden, therefore, is a liminal space that disrupts the anti-immigrant metanarrative in Leke's environment. It is worth noting that in Leke's garden, multi-national and multi-cultured identities are represented by the "multi-coloured" (p. 92) flowers in full blossom. The censure, ridicule, and act of lampooning – all of which are elements of satire – Leke's garden, represents better and convincingly, the rainbowism that South Africa claims to be, yet rejects other shades of Africanness that come into its space.

Leke has a peculiar attachment to Jane's car which he affectionately calls "Red" (p. 22). When Jane dies, Leke takes ownership of the car before it is officially bequeathed to him. In the years that he grows up, the car sits in the driveway unattended and unused. However, as soon as Leke gets a job he starts to repair the car and leaves with it when he moves out of the family home. Strikingly, his attachment to the car has a fetish element. We learn that when he rents a place, it is a garage renovated into a flat. Upon inhabiting the place, he [Leke] insists that the owner reverts it to a garage again. So, "he could park his car *inside* the flat. Not in the driveway but *inside*" (p.

22, my emphasis). Although this aspect of fetish attachment would sensibly fall in the above section on confinement and kleptomaniac belonging, I connect it to the trope of gardening concerning Leke's identity. Apart from repairing and using the car in memorialisation of his mother, the car also has significance to the relationship between Leke, his mother, and gardening. As he reminisces over the past, he remembers how they were "driving out to the flower farms and crowding the boot with pots of Clivias and Orchids. Back home they transferred the plants into the garden …." (p. 23). The car thus, symbolises both the memory of his mother and of the feelings he attaches to gardening flowers as an expression of his multicultural identity.

Writing Alterity in *Zebra Crossing*

In this section, focus shifts to *Zebra Crossing* by Meg Vandermerwe. Vandermerwe was born in Cape Town in 1978. She is an academic and a professor of creative writing at the University of Western Cape. *Zebra Crossing* is her second creative work. Vandermerwe's social positioning and academic knowledge enrich the representation of the conditions of migrancy in South Africa. As a scholar and an intellectual, she is not oblivious to the politics and social struggles faced by migrants in South Africa. The issues concerning migrancy, such as the violation of migrant rights and violence aimed at migrants, are widely covered in academic journals, online platforms, and national television. In her own published article "Imagining the forbidden Racial Other: Attitudes and Approaches in the works of Antjie Krog, Marlene van Niekerk, Meg Vandermerwe and Zukiswa Wanner", Vandermerwe grapples with the questions of how creative writers imagine the Other in their fictional works. She admits the problematics of representing the other from the centre, and notes that to begin to imagine an Other "a certain degree of acute insight and sensitivity is … required" (2018: 91.) Thus, she imagines the other in her novel with a "desire … for self-illumination and self-humanisation" (2018: 87). Specifically, to begin imagining the African Migrant-Other in *Zebra Crossing*, she writes that her creative enterprise is:

> to demonstrate the wider social and moral 'violence' that results when we draw a line between 'the other' and ourselves. Through my depictions of the suffering of my protagonist, Chipo, and the community of immigrants around her, I attempt to highlight the destructive implications of encouraging divisions (through stereotyping and prejudice) rather than building bridges of understanding between 'the other' and ourselves. What is particularly significant about this representation, and which I sought to examine through my narrative, is how such 'othering' is not only occurring between whites and blacks but also through prejudicial attitudes such as

> homophobia and xenophobia towards people with albinism within the
> black community itself. (p. 90—91)

Vandermerwe's comment above reveals her conscious literary choices of the protagonist, Chipo. Furthermore, that the narrative is told against the backdrop of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the Cape Town setting, and other forms of marginalisation such as homosexuality and names, compels the reader to 'cross bridges of understanding' between humans. In this way, *Zebra Crossing* becomes a useful site of crossing into the lives of marginalised African migrants in South Africa.

Zebra Crossing: A synopsis

Zebra Crossing tells the story of Chipo Nyamubaya, a 17-year-old female living with albinism, and her brother George. The pair illegally migrate to South Africa from Zimbabwe after the passing on of their mother. Their father had left the family years earlier. Shortly before the start of the FIFA World Cup 2010, they leave their home with the hopes of finding greener pastures in South Africa. Upon their arrival in Cape Town, their twin cousins Peter and David welcome them. The story is set in Cape Town's infamous Long Street. Chipo shares her hopes and impediments of being an illegal immigrant in the hostility of the Cape Town space. After she is murdered and mutilated by Tanzanian criminals, Chipo narrates the story as a ghost. This phantom role empowers her to vividly remember through flashback technique and an emotive appeal, the violent and sub-human conditions she experienced as an undocumented female migrant. This narrative technique allows Chipo to re-live her life's moments with the advantage of retrospect and the power of supra-human recollection. According to Buxbaum (2017: 84), "her ghost potentially calls for compassion and an ethical response from the reader". As sympathetic readers, we are affectedly guided to ask important questions about *what* Othering/Otherness does and *how* it functions in South Africa. From the viewpoint of an "Other" (meaning not a South African), we learn the overt and subtle functions of stereotypes/stereotyping and their toxicity in migration discourse.

"Nationalities sounds like irrationalities"[10]: The 2010 FIFA World Cup and Ubuntu

As noted in the introductory chapter, one of the challenges that immigrants face across countries and continents is the issue of negotiating differences. *Zebra Crossing* is set on the eve of the FIFA World Cup in South Africa. Through this literary setting, the novel juxtaposes this world 'uniting'

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[10] *Zebra Crossing,* 2013. p. 32

event with the challenges of migrant survival in South Africa. One of the key drivers of the FIFA World Cup was to embrace differences and celebrate the diversity of the African continent. In South Africa, specifically, it was a stepping-stone towards reconciliation after the separatist government of the Apartheid regime. Its slogan of "Its time. Celebrate Africa's Humanity", suggested timely unity across nationalities and countries. This catchphrase recalls the African philosophy of Ubuntu. Ubuntu is a popular philosophy in Southern Africa. It comes from the saying *Umuntu ngumtu ngabantu*, which means a person is a person through their relationship to other people. Ubuntu is recognised as the African philosophy of humanism, linking the individual to the collective through 'brotherhood' or 'sisterhood'. The concept is embedded in humanity and in treating people with kindness. Here, I use the concept of Ubuntu with a tinge of irony given the representation of immigrant experiences in South Africa, and their unique experience of Cape Town. Elsewhere, Mboti (2015) argues that interpretations and definitions of Ubuntu have been "fuzzy…inconsistent…inadequate" (p. 126). While most definitions of Ubuntu promote an essentialist and monolithic view of Africans, or what Matolino and Kwindingwi (2013: 198) call "African mode of being", Mboti (2015) further argues how most definitions have exclusively focused on the 'good' side of Africans. In most definitions, harmony, goodwill, hospitality, compassion, greater humanity, togetherness, "transcend[ing] alterity of any form" (Swanson 2007: 53), solidarity, and communion are priviledged in the discourse of Ubuntu (Bamford 2007; Cornell 2011; Eyo & Etta 2020; Matolino & Kwindingwi 2013; Ramose 1999; Swanson 2007; Matolino & Kwindingwi 2013). Mboti (2015) proposes a "counter-intuitive, contextual, and less universalizing move" (p. 132) on the application of Ubuntu. One in which harmony and discord, good and bad and qualities that are viewed as 'inhumane' can co-exist with those that are seen as of inhumanity. In this light, the concept of Ubuntu is expandable, re-contexualized and applicable to every human quality and characteristic beyond imagined good ethics. As noted earlier, in the xenophobic attacks against African migrants, it is fellow Africans who harm Africans. This means that we can't assume that because South Africans have Ubuntu they can/or will harmoniously accommodate every Umuntu (a person), be empathetic, peaceful by being Umuntu. In its imagination of how South Africans view the African migrant as the inferior other, *Zebra Crossing* (2013), challenges the notion that South Africans essentially possess and practice harmony. It further problematizes the view that Ubuntu preserves the "fabric of African society and encourages peaceful co-existence" (Eyo & Etta 2020: 39). Subsequently, I propose using the concept of

Ubuntu with all its ambivalences in representing the unique immigrant experiences in Cape Town, while the world focused on the unifying humanity of the FIFA World Cup.

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011: 402), the FIFA World Cup was an "opportunity to showcase an African culture of hospitality, solidarity and humanness". This sentiment aptly captures the intended outcomes for South Africa in using sport to realise its "rainbow nation" image post-1994. This is made glaring by the fact that the head of South African delegation to the awarding of the world cup hosting to a nation was ailing Mandela, and the aura of unity and reconciliation that he still carried at the time. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011: 402) refers to the philosophy of Ubuntu as "an African culture". This means that it is an African concept, and it is inherently "African" for Africans to be hospitable. The scholar further argues that "the post-apartheid leadership of South Africa has continued to use mega-events to try to deepen reconciliation and consolidate nationhood" (2011: 405). This has not only been limited to soccer. In 1995, South Africa hosted and won the Rugby World Cup. Markedly, this was the first world-sporting event to be hosted in South Africa immediately after the political transition. The then President Nelson Mandela championed the event. In his speech before the opening match, he declared that the whole country, 'Black and White' was behind the team. The occasion was celebrated across races and ethnicities. The once exclusionary sport was viewed as a symbol of national hope and unity. In this same vein of "oneness", the FIFA World Cup was a project to consolidate nation building. This nationalism was re-imagined in the "'daily life glue' that united the people around particular symbols across racial, ethnic, and generational divides. Vuvuzelas, Bafana Bafana T-shirts and the national flag were used as ever-present symbols of national political renewal" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2011: 403). The philosophy of Ubuntu, in its core principle of 'a person is a person because of other people', is a monolithic view. Concerning this sentiment, Matolino and Kwindingwi (2013: 199) in their article titled "The end of Ubuntu" argue for a re-thinking of the application of this philosophy that has characterized much of the South African government's social justice rhetoric. They argue that Ubuntu is often applied as an "authentic African mode of being" (2013: 199). They further argue that idealizing ubuntu as "the greatest harmony" (Mberu 2015: 130) has its pitfalls. In fact, the vision of Ubuntu should afford "multiple and shifting insights and contributions to … socio-political discourses, as well as perspectives on more sustainable and democratic human relations in general" (Swanson 2007: 54). With this section, I am interested in the issues around

Vandermerwe's narrative methods, particularly those that challenge the human relations between South Africans and Zimbabwean migrants.

Literary representations of the discourse of Ubuntu in South Africa point to an ambivalence of reception marked by hostility. For example, in Baulding's short story titled "Stains Like a Map" (2019), a couple crosses the Mozambique border to South Africa on foot. Upon arrival in the city of Alexandra, situated in Gauteng Province in South Africa, they were subjected to various forms of xenophobic violence. The character named Ido cannot comprehend the level of hatred towards foreigners that lead to violence and mass killings. He says, "I do not understand it…when we arrived all the South Africans we met talked about being able to imagine they were us. Remember that woman who said *we are you, you are us* (p. 55, Italics in original). Here, Ido questions the "collectivist sense, a greater humanity that transcends alterity of any form" (Swanson 2007: 55) that foregrounds the image of South Africa. "We are you; you are us" essentially means a collectivist sense of humanity. However, the violence directed at migrants, points to underlying forms of alterity that transcend humanness.

Writing from the perspective of postcolonialism, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2013) argue that othering:

> can refer to the colonized others who are marginalized by imperial discourse, identified by their difference from the centre, and, perhaps crucially, become the focus of anticipated mastery of the imperical 'ego'.
> (p. 170)

In order to trace forms of Othering in the novel, I draw on the concept of Othering/Otherness as conceptualised by Jensen (2011) who submits that:

> Discursive processes by which powerful groups, who may or may not make up a numerical majority, define subordinate groups into existence in a reductionist way which ascribe problematic and/or inferior characteristics to these subordinate groups. Such discursive processes affirm the legitimacy and superiority of the powerful and condition identity formation among the subordinate. (p. 65)

Thus, in the novel, Othering is a view in which the characters are seen and treated by the local community. In the text, this Othering is negotiated between black races (South Africans and African migrants) and between African migrant communities. As "minority transnational identities" (Pasi & Alexandra 2020: 5) the Zimbabwean migrants face multiple forms of alterity.

Zebra Crossing uses the FIFA World Cup as a backdrop to the text and as a textual event. Chipo and George perceive this global event as an opportunity to reinvent themselves in South Africa. We have two pull factors here, a community (since their friends are already in South Africa) and The FIFA World Cup. They believe the time is perfect to make their border crossing. The characters appear not to be worried about the potential dangers they could face because of their migrancy. They are naïve to think that the only obstacle to their successful crossing is job security. They share this hopefulness when they say, "[w]e are just in time…the whole world will be in South Africa…The World Cup…first time being played on African soil" (p. 14). However, as they later discover, African immigrants who are not economically affluent like themselves are excluded from this mega event. They are quick to lament thus, "we know that this FIFA World Cup does not belong to us" (p. 131). The novel, therefore, calls into question the grey area between nationalistic discourses of cohesion and hospitability and the reality of the hostility of South Africans.

Chipo and George have hopes of improving their lives in Cape Town. However, they discover that life for immigrants is not as lush as they had anticipated. Much like the characters in *Gold Diggers*, *Shadows* and *Crossroads*, discussed in Chapter 2, their living space is less than accommodating. Chipo describes the flat that she shares with Peter and David as follows:

> one room on the seventh floor…one room for four…in the far left corner there is a stove and a sink…three chairs, there are two mattresses covered with blankets on the floor, a green metal chest under a window and a wardrobe with no door. (p. 29)

The similarities between the literary settings of Johannesburg (in *The Gold Diggers*, *Shadows, Crossroads*), and Cape Town (in *Zebra Crossing*) reveal the precarity of migrant lives in South Africa. We find the same literary set-up in *We Need New Names* featuring a Zimbabwean migrant in Detroit Michigan. In the novel, the narrator reveals how they live by working low paying and dehumanising jobs to survive. A further economic precarity is revealed in the food that Chipo and George are offered in the flat. After traveling long hours, they are served "lukewarm mealie porridge" (p. 29) as a welcome meal. This meal reinforces the brothers' financial status. They learn that the brothers share the flat with a Congolese tailor, Jean Paul. This communal living in the city shows that they cannot afford to meet the rent payment on their own. Jean-Paul lives in the room alone because he pays a "lion's share of the rent" (p. 30).

"Name rhymes with shame"[11]: Chipo's multiple marginalities

Chipo Nyamubaya is a young woman living with albinism. When we first encounter her in the text, she tells us that she is the "*Little sister. I am seventeen. It is my job to listen. When I am not scrubbing or sweeping*" (p. 9, italics in original). She works as a cleaner in The General's mansion in Beitbridge, Zimbabwe. These domestic positions and services of 'scrubbing and sweeping' are permanent markers of Chipo's subaltern life throughout the novel. In order to scrub and sweep, one needs to physically position themselves to the ground and/or on the floor. The 'scrubbing and sweeping' metaphorically characterises Chipo's life as low and lowered in the societies she occupies. As a woman, living with albinism, and later as an illegal immigrant, Chipo is marginalised on three levels in the context of a patriarchal society. Crenshaw (1994), in her widely cited article "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color", theorises the intersectionality of identities, particularly how different strands, such as gender, race, and ethnicity intersect and play a role in marginalisation. Much as Chipo's experience of Cape Town and the attitudes of South Africans towards immigrants shape her position as a female immigrant, the patriarchal community she is situated in (in Zimbabwe and South Africa), and the myths and superstitions surrounding albinism in Africa, also shape her identity. I trace instances where Chipo's identities intersect and provide us with a nuanced understanding of how intersectional Othering is a dangerous process that has violent outcomes.

Characterisation as a stylistic, especially character names, plays an important part in shifting our perceptions about those we perceive as different from the Other. Character names become important signs and symbols of how the characters navigate their diasporic existence. To begin with, most the characters in the novel have English names. There is David, Peter, George (named after Manchester United soccer player, George Best), Jeremiah, Jean-Paul and Doctor Ongani. Most of these names have Biblical origins. Chipo is the only character with a Shona name. The Englishness of the names of other characters allude to the Western influence in names and naming practices in African societies. This is also illustrative of the textual life of the characters who live more fulfilling lives in comparison to Chipo. Chipo's name translates to 'Gift'. This naming is indicative of Chipo's destiny and allegorical inability to survive in the diaspora. Doctor Ongani

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[11] *Zebra Crossing*, 2013. p. 10

uses her as 'gift' to his customers, claiming she is a fortune-teller and brings good luck. She is killed by a group of Tanzanian men for imagined "miracle medicin[al]" (p. 104) purposes. Chipo "sounds like chipoko, the Shona word for 'ghost'" (Stobie 2020: 519). Chipo thus, 'gifts' the readers with the story from beyond the grave, evocative of the supernatural powers of ghosts. Kadenge et al (cited in Stobie 2020: 551) analyse this name taking into consideration Chipo's albinism and conclude that "[i]t is a theophoric name, revealing syncretic Christian and traditional beliefs implying that despite the newborn's different complexion she is a gift from God". These Christian beliefs to which Kadenge et al (in Stobie 2020) reference are ambivalent in the novel. This is revealed in a scene where Chipo, her brother and her mother attend a church service when she was young. The pastor in the church discriminates Chipo because of her albinism saying she "bears the skin of the sope. It is a curse…that signifies the sins of her parents. The curse of the Mother shall be visited upon the offspring. As much as Cain's mark branded him as one cursed by God" (p. 66). The church and the pastor's beliefs alienate Chipo and her mother from the church and Christianity. The bitter irony of the role of the church and Christianity as a sanctuary to run to in times of persecution is that this incident marked the last time that Chipo and her mother attended a church.

While in Cape Town and reminiscing her past to make sense of the present, Chipo traces the trajectory of her alienation. In a series of flashbacks in which Chipo privileges affect over imagery, she recounts events and incidences that cast her aside from her community, such as the one above. One of the important flashbacks is moments after her birth. The birth of Chipo marked a change in her family dynamics. Soon after her birth, her father abandoned the family and relocated to Harare, starting another family there. He blamed her mother for Chipo's skin condition. Chipo bemoans how her father "took one look at my foreign pink form and condemned mama for cheating with a white man. My pale skin was the product of an interracial betrayal. Pure and simple" (p. 21). Chipo partly internalises the blame to herself. Thus, she rationalises her father's absenteeism from his family as linked to her "pink form" (p. 21).

Chipo's brother, George, is one of the characters who constantly Others her. Ironic as this may sound, given that they are siblings, who grew up together in the same household, and later migrated to South Africa together. In the opening scene of the novel, Chipo and George are plotting to move from Zimbabwe to South Africa because their employer, The General, is threating to harm them

on suspicions that they helped his wife to cheat on him. George decides that the only way out of the debacle is if they crossed the border. At this stage, George reminds Chipo how her condition is an added danger if they are on the wrong side of The General. He says to Chipo, "you know how they feel about peeled potatoes like yourself" (p. 10). Chipo notices that her brother views her as an inconvenience. Referring to his annoyance, Chipo feels as if he is gesturing to "a blocked toilet" (p. 10). George's feelings towards Chipo are further evoked in the names that he addresses her with, such as "Tortoise" (p. 10), "Zebra" (p. 75), and a "burden" (p. 61). These names have connotations of Chipo's slowness caused by her albinism, which makes her eyes sensitive to light, particularly during daytime. George thus also views Chipo as a burden because of her dependence on him.

In an analysis of *Zebra Crossing* and *We Need New Names,* Stobie (2020) illustrates how Vandermerwe enables an understanding of what it means to be a woman migrant with albinism in situations of precarity and poverty. I want to elaborate on this point by including Chipo's in-betweenness in relation to her identity as a black woman. Chipo's albinism marks her as different from other blacks, although she identifies as black. Stobie (2020: 552) aptly captures how the reading of *Zebra Crossing* through the lens of precarity has a "role to play in shifts in perception regarding the vulnerability and marginality of people with albinism". This characteristic of her skin colour and the ways in which she is cast as an Other, alienates her from herself and forces her to negotiate her skin condition. These derogatory terms do not end with her intimate family and the church. As a woman living with albinism Chipo is marked as a "social pariah" (Stobie 2020: 520) in her country and other African countries. People living with albinism are prejudiced as:

> 'Albino'. Peeled potato. That is what many Zimbabweans call me. Also 'monkey' and 'sope'. There are other names, too, depending where you go. Names rhyme with shame. In Malawi, they call us 'biri'. They whisper that we are linked to witchcraft. In Tanzania, we are 'animal' or 'ghost' or 'white medicine'. Their witch doctors will pay handsomely for our limbs. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, they call us 'ndunud'-living dead. If a fisherman goes missing, they call us to find the body. In Lesotho, we are 'leshane', meaning half-persons, whereas in South Africa, depending on whether they are Xhosa or Coloured, we are 'inkawu', meaning ape, 'wit kaffir', 'spierwit' or 'wit boer'. (p. 10)

Naming as an act of dehumanization reveals African cultural myths about albinisms. Apart from these myths, the people of Africa have deep-seated superstitions against albinos which expose

them to various forms of exploitation. In *Zebra Crossing*, Doctor Ongani exploits Chipo's condition for financial gain. However, this exploitation does not end with Doctor Ongani as the rest of her flat mates also take part in exploiting Chipo, making her another package exchanged for personal gains. At this point, my focus shifts to the entanglements of the Zimbabwean immigrant crisis and Doctor Ongani's creative, but exploitative business ventures.

Chipo turns eighteen years old moments before the FIFA World Cup. This marks a transition from childhood to an adulthood. However, her albinic condition means that she has limited adult 'freedoms', such as interaction with people outside the flat, in comparison to her flatmates. While her male flatmates have opportunities to go outside of the flat for work and leisure, she remains invisible in the flat, where she tends to domestic duties. This reveals the triple burden of femininity, albinism, and patriarchal culture that she has to contend with, well before her immigrant status comes to play. Consequently, she attends to her flatmates' laundry, cooks, and washes the dishes, as a form of identity seeking. Although she refers to herself as "the proper woman of [the] house" (p. 69) when exercising her femininity in the kitchen after cooking a "special" Christmas lunch, she does not gain the recognition she desires. The kitchen space and house chores become the only roles ascribed to her by flatmates. She lives in this state of confinement for months until Jean-Paul hires her as an assistant. Jean-Paul exemplifies the philosophy of Ubuntu in this novel. He considers Chipo as an adult by hiring and paying her for her labour. We observe how, on her birthday, he takes her to Fabric City to choose material for her dresses. Up to this point when Jean-Paul shows kindness and equality to Chipo, she had poetically declared her in-between state as; "Lonely. Lonely because you are the only. The only one. I am the only sope I know. Is that why I am lonely?" (p. 20). These moments of self-reflection reflect the derogatory names and shaming that society attaches to people with albinism as shown when Chipo refers to herself as a 'sope'. The defeatism and resignation she demonstrates through acceptance of negative labels illustrate how she has grown to internalise the constant othering that plays out in society towards her albinism.

Chipo is secretly in love with her flatmate David. However, David views her as a "sister" and has no romantic feelings towards her. In Chipo's view, this rejection is because she is not black enough to appeal to David. She becomes obsessed with imagining what David's bride would look like. In

91

Chipo's imagination, one of the key physical appearances is that the bride would be black. This sets Chipo on a quest to alter herself to fit this image. She decides to get her hair braided. She goes to the Pan African Market on Long Street for this service. This is how the scene unfolds:

> One woman approaches me: 'Yes, sister?'
>
> 'I want what she is having'. I point to a photo from a magazine on the wall of a black woman with beautiful dark braids.
>
> She shakes her head and points to the blonde tourist, whose hair is being plaited.
>
> 'No, I want black hair. Like an African
>
> The woman shrugs and says something to the two women doing the plaiting. Both laugh. Then offers me a seat. (p. 76)

The braider finally plaits Chipo's hair with the black braid she requested. We notice here the desperation that fuels Chipo's decision to do her hair. She is experiencing a desire to be an "Other". She plaits her hair in black to re-affirm her black identity. In her words, she wants to 'look' like an African. Clearly Chipo's blond hair alienates her form other black women. Hence, she decides to braid it in a black colour. At the hairdresser, the women laugh at her, signalling their prejudice towards Chipo. Later, when she arrives at the flat, she is subjected to further othering when her brother George ridicules her, proclaiming "Your hair. You look like a Zebra!" (p. 76) because of the blonde roots of her hair and the black of the braids. In this way, George, like the laughing women at the salon, denies Chipo the agency to conceptualise her own beauty standards. Thus, like a Zebra, she is a combination of black and white. Metaphorically, this alludes to the state of her in-betweenness. She is neither black 'enough', nor white.

Chipo navigates the diasporic space using poetic language, specifically rhyming. This poetic aesthetic runs throughout the novel. It is strategically deployed, to illuminate Chipo's observations of her ambivalent position as a young immigrant woman living with albinism. Fasselt (2021a: 5) argues that this "childlike, yet incisive language play becomes a marker of her vulnerability but also a site of possible resistance". In agreeing with Fasselt, we notice how this 'playful' rhyming becomes an important part of framing the narrative and the plot of the novel. The rhymes become more urgent and complicated as she experiences hostile migrancy. For example, at first, she experiences anxiety over the process of refugee permit application. She tells us that her "feet are

cold, my body shivering. From pre-dawn chill, but also anxiety. Anxiety does not rhyme with or sound like anything. It is unique and terrible" (p. 35). Here, Chipo cannot comprehend the feelings of hostility and unhomeliness she is experiencing. As her experiences broaden and become more subjective, so does her rhyming. For example, "refugees sounds like fleas" (p. 83) and "Ikapa, The Mother City, a place without pity" (p. 28). These rhymes symbolically capture the political and social conflicts between migrants and South Africa, thus, revealing the precariousness of migrants in Cape Town, a place 'without pity' on migrant survival.

We observe a shift in her understandings of the dangers of migrant stereotyping when George is wrongfully arrested at an entertainment event he attends. This incident is paralleled with other overt and covert forms of hatred in the text. For example, Chipo narrates to Jean-Paul how "[c]omplete strangers have started approaching [African migrants]. They say, "We are giving you until the World Cup final. After that, you better go home…sorry for you when the World Cup is finished you will burn" (p. 84). As the uncertainty of being burnt and killed draws near, we notice a development in Chipo's articulation of the impending danger towards the end of the FIFA World Cup. Thus, for the African migrants:

> Fear is a sharp word. It makes your tongue bleed. Anger is sour and fiery. Like acid indigestion. Hatred. Hatred is a word that gets stuck in your throat. Xenophobia. Xenophobia is a long word. Complicated, arrogant. It thinks it is smarter than other words. It is a bully. Anxiety is a terrible word. It is the ground turning quicksand beneath you. (p. 80)

This extract represents the nervous conditions of being a migrant Other. Here the xenophobic anxiety is constructed as an irrational and imminent danger. The systems in which it functions are 'complicated' because they have no real cause. Furthermore, it is personalised as arrogant because it has no reason for causing 'bleeding' and death. It causes the migrants to feel precarious, and like 'quicksand'; they are deprived of emotional and physical stability.

"You look like a Zebra"[12]: Metaphors of Alterity

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[12] *Zebra Crossing,* 2013. p. 76

Like Omotoso, Vandermerwe is concerned with forms of migrant Otherness in *Zebra Crossing*. However, unlike *Bom Boy*, *Zebra Crossing* recounts Otherness as linked to and producing forms of alterity. In this section, I consider various forms of migration alterity as represented in the novel. A notable fact is that migrant characters are othered and excluded from most of the social and economic activities in the Cape Town space. Kirtsoglou and Tsimouris (2018: 1875) argue that "[m]igrants and displaced persons are caught in the hierarchies of entitlement and often reduced to a perpetual status of *allochthony* (foreignness)". Similarly, Noble (2011: 832) argues that "we experience alterity in a seemingly contingent fashion – we 'bump' into it". These processes of confrontation with alterity in its diverse forms, therefore, shape social processes in everyday life. In its portrayal of "aesthetics of alterity" (Hale in Berning 2015: 6), the novel demonstrates that the contact between migrant and new space resuts in othering, and that the space of that contact unfolds at the level of Other(ness). I, therefore, focus on the conditions of migrancy as alterity and how alterity is aesthetized as induced by migration . Thus, the imagined encounters with alterity in the novel, potentially preoccupy the reader to apprehend Otherness and to envisage alterity in the lived experiences of migrants in South Africa. I focus on the characters' experiences of encounters of alterity as influenced by the migratory experience of gender politics, sexuality and national politics.

Thus far, we have seen that Chipo and her housemates are continuously Othered due to their migrant status. In my previous discussion, I illustrated how Chipo, is made "foreign(er)" by her gender, migrancy and her condition of albinism. These conditions of multiplicity "[produce] different orders of interaction" (Noble 2011: 828) and shape her experiences and participation in her community. Madsen (2012: 212) argues that alterity has a double performance – there is a sense "of both the subject position of "Otherness" in which someone is placed and also the adoption of that subject position as the Other's perspective". In this way, alterity is a dialogic process in which a person is viewed and treated as the Other and how those othered view themselves in relation to the one who others.

In the novel, alterity functions as a structural element. The novel is organized around encounters of alterity and Othering. On the level of the setting, Long Street is used to represent social and cultural engagements taking place in Cape Town. Although Tredoux and Dixon (2009: 764) argue that Long Street has "come to epitomise ethnic and racial diversity…a melting pot for mixture of people, culturess and activities and tastes", in the text, Cape Town is a repelling space for

migrants. Chipo narrates the actions taking place on the streets from the window of their small apartment. This view is symbolic of an alterity of place as Chipo Others the people she sees from the window. Chipo has impaired vision due to her albinism; however, she is frequently at the window, observing and witnessing things that she would otherwise miss if she were on the street. The window is a double metaphor of alterity. First, it serves as a literal window, enabling Chipo to observe the outside and 'feel' outside from the inside, making her an outsider-insider. From her elevated position, Chipo has an omniscient view of the street. The window becomes a metaphor of how Othering functions. Chipo tells us that:

> meanwhile, outside, Long Street was totally jammed. Thousands had turned to enjoy the free festivities. A parade of beauty queens from four corners of the globe. The crowd pressing as close to the stage as it could. Everyone wanted a closer look…while I rely on my imagination to carry me above it all and turn sounds into faces. (p. 59).

In other words, when a person is seeing (an)Other, it is through a metaphorical window because they cannot get to know the person fully by simply looking at them. Secondly, the window, with its glass, is also a barrier in Othering processes where people "view'" and make judgments on things with the 'single story' they receive from simply seeing and observing. As the discussion will illustrate, the characters, the community of immigrants, and the native South Africans are viewing the world and making judgments through different 'windows', worldviews, or positions in social standings to judge those who are different.

The second structural element of alterity weaved into the story is the theme of displacement. Displacement is always a traumatic experience; and a constant presence in the lives of the migrants (Luci 2020). This trauma, coupled with illegal citizenship and modes of xenophobia in South Africa, result in a constant fear for the migrants. The migrant characters in the novel are obsessed with national origins, language, and mannerisms of the Other, largely because of the condition of their displacement. This is also reflected by the classifying system applied at Home Affairs. When Chipo and George go to Home Affairs to apply for temporary asylum seekers' permits, they discover that "Zimbabweans will be served on Thursday…Malawians and Nigerians on Wednesday… Somalis on Friday" (p. 36). This reveals the hierarchies of status that Kirtsoglou and Tsimouris (2018) refer to as the functions of alterity. In one instance George is wrongfully arrested at a public event he attends with his girlfriend Harmony. George is released the following morning. He recounts to his flatmates how he is the innocent party in a fight with a ticket inspector.

Jeremiah outlines the core of the problem for the flatmates by saying, "he attacked you because he thought she was a local girl. That you were stealing their women. You know they all talk about us taking South African girls" (p. 81). This discourse of criminality is common in South African public discourse where foreigners are accused of stealing jobs and opportunities from the locals. This scene also reveals a layer of social Othering. It suggests that migrants are not 'entitled' to interact with the locals, as this would be conceived as 'stealing'. In other words, by dating a local woman, George would be robbing South Africans. Wilkinson (2016) traces these stereotypical gazes towards migrants back to the Apartheid rhetoric regarding the prohibition and criminalisation of relationships between social groups. I concur with the scholar, however, I also find an element of stereotyping from the Zimbabwean characters towards other Black migrants from the African continent. For Zimbabwean nationals, the notion of cultivation of this Otherness from the remnants of Apartheid falls short. For example, upon arrival in their flat in Cape Town, George and Chipo learn that the other room in the flat is occupied by a Congolese. George exclaims "why doesn't he live with his own people?" (p. 30). In another instance, when the xenophobic anxieties are at their peak in the country, Chipo notes how "every community – the Zimbabweans, the Congolese, the Cameronians, Malawians, Nigerians, Somalians" (p. 86) fear for their safety. It becomes clear then that the ethnic divisions echoed by South Africans are similar among the migrant communities.

The novel privileges "other" migrant characters and their challenges of disconnection and connection in Cape Town. I use "other" here to refer to how ideas of Othering are foregrounded in the novel's characterisation. All characters in the novel are black migrants from Africa. This privileges and magnifies their view of the diasporic conditions of South Africa. This organization translates the text into Other through characterization, especially their descriptive language. There is no instance in the novel where there is communication or narrative between a South African and a migrant character, except the instance in the salon where the women talked about Chipo and not directly to her. Among the migrant community, we observe sub-groupings, usually according to nationalities. Although Chipo argues that "nationalities sound like irrationalities" (p. 32), the migrants are preoccupied with Us/Them discourse and practices symbolized by the obsession with the question, "where do you come from?" (p. 71). The migrants, therefore, use difference to make logic of the new space, cultures, people, and place. The flatmates believe that nationalities should

share space with their country (wo)men. For example, they ponder why Jean-Paul shares a flat with them and why "doesn't he live with his people" (p. 30). However, these groupings and hierarchies do not function for integration or assimilation purposes as they are used to catalogue and Other. Evident here are the remnants of colonial bordering, divisions and compartmentalisation of nationals and nationalities for colonial administrative control. Food practices and mannerisms also reveal an element of national Othering. For example, "bloody drunk Congolese bastards!" (p. 39), "Congolese…eating their horrible stinking dried fish" (p. 77), "Jean-Paul will not drink [any other coffee] only the Rwandan blend" (p. 58), "Ugandans' room smell[s] of cooked bananas" (p. 59). At their own level, migrants engage in a process of Othering by associating food with nationality. Adjunct to this, there is a subtle alterity hierarchy in the jobs the migrants are employable in. "DRC people do all the security for the shops" (p. 31), "Somalis own spaza shops" (p. 30), "Congolese are security", "Zimbabweans are waiters … sometimes cleaners, sometimes shop assistants" (p. 32-77). In this way, alterity functions as a system that privileges Other migrants and (un)privileges Others. As David remarks "certain nationalities, certain jobs" (p. 31). The condition of migrancy, therefore, becomes an alterity state in which job opportunities are preconditioned to certain nationalities without valid reasons.

Another level of alterity which corresponds to the above characterization is that of sexuality. David experiences Othering on grounds of his sexuality. David and Jeremiah are homosexuals and appear to be in a romantic relationship. Chipo discovers their hidden sexualities when she follows David to a gay bar in Long Street. Since Chipo wishes to be romantically involved with David, she envies the intimacies shared by David and Jeremiah. Her discovery is unconceivable to Chipo because of her background in a society that suppresses the expression of "Othered" sexualities outside of heterosexuality. The flatmates, including Chipo, condemn the possibility of David being a homosexual. Chipo says, "Jeremiah rhymes with 'love thy neighbour'. The Bible commands, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself'" (p. 96). However, it proves difficult for her to tap into her Christian spirituality and "love [her] neighbour" who is different from her sexual orientation. She cannot make sense of this difference and Others David by rhyming and name-shaming him; "Moffie/Buttock Beak/Homo/Homosexual/pede/Gay/Festering Finger/Ngochani" (p. 110). Although she laments that naming and stereotypical naming are dangerous and shameful, she deploys the same Othering technique to comment on "*that sort*" (p. 111, italics in original) different from her. We observe a change in Chipo's attitude as she engages with David's sexuality

and the love he has for (an)Other person. Through the prism of heterosexual normativity, she has grown up with, she observes how the pair smile at each other "the way a man and wife should" (p. 111). Here, we notice the source of Chipo's prejudice, her society, and her experiences of romantic relationships and how expressions of those relationships have been between opposite sexes. Also, because of her albinism, she has internalised that being different from what is deemed 'normal', like her skin condition, should ideally be kept secretive. Apart from using the umbrella to cover sensitive skin to the sunrays, she also uses it to cloak her presence when she is outside. She holds the umbrella close to her face and sometimes even covers her face from uncomfortable people's stares. Thus, she believes David and Jeremiah should be shameful and conceal their relationship. Moreover, Chipo's anger and use of defamatory naming teach us how easy it is for people to resort to alterity out of anger and a lack of knowledge.

The fifth structural level of the plot concerns the exploitation of Chipo and her ultimate death. I have explored how Chipo is Othered based on her identities, and how she suddenly assumes the power to Other Jeremiah for his sexuality. Here, I am interested in how Chipo's albinism is used as an important element in the novels' broader narrative of migrant lives. The myths and superstitions surrounding albinism are represented as a constant struggle. When the FIFA World Cup approaches and the anxieties of xenophobia are displayed, the flatmates use Chipo's albinism in a financial scheme headed by Doctor Ongani. Chipo met the nefarious Doctor Ongani when she consulted him to win David's love and attention. Doctor Ongani promises to "Get lost lover back (1) day guaranteed" (p. 104) by use of traditional 'muti'. However, when the plan backfires, Doctor Ongani approaches Chipo and tells her that if she does not agree with his plan to use her as an exotic pawn to attract customers, he will share her love secret with her flatmates. They devise a fraudulent operation called "Gambler's Paradise" (p. 130) to siphon money out of the desperate gamblers who bet on soccer matches in the FIFA World Cup. The gambling element presents a leitmotif of precarious migrancy. Much like gambling, the characters are uncertain about their lives. Chipo is instructed "not to talk …or see customers … [she] must remain an enigma…sit behind the purple curtain…customers [will think she is] working magic on the muti" (p. 122) during consultations. There is a large sign on the entrance of the flat "Doctor Ongani and Real Live Albino-Special Extra Powerful Muti to Improve Your Luck" (p. 122). The scheme functions for several days and the cohort profits from wagering Chipo's albinism and vulnerability. We

notice here how Chipo's condition is represented as an exotic Other, an "enigma" with superpowers customers believe can affect match results.

In the process of these business dealings, Chipo is silenced and locked in the flat day and night. This new position as an "enigma" results in physical isolation and trauma. She is not allowed to see her brother or cousins or eat any food apart from those supplied by Doctor Ongani. As the end of the FIFA World Cup draws near, the group elevates its advertising and revenue by cutting Chipo's hair and selling it for 'luck'. The advert reads: "Real Albino hair. Get Rid Of Your Enemies (150zars an envelope)" (p. 142). The cutting of Chipo's hair takes place against her will, she resists and "cries" as she is told by her brother to "stop being such a baby. It will grow back" (p. 142). This scene reveals a triple level of alterity where Chipo is simultaneously exoticized, dehumanised and animalised, more like the hottentot woman. Her brother physically represses her down and her hair is commercialised and sold. Silencing functions as a form of alterity for Chipo. She tells us how she is denied the voice to speak for herself, "no one addresses me directly…I sit in the corner knitting" (p. 126). Buxbaum (2017: 79) argues that "certain humans are reduced to, or made akin to, animals in order to dehumanise and more easily objectify them". Chipo's position in the corner alludes to her alterity status. Her position at the corner is an allusive metaphor for in-betweenness of human and enigma. From this point to the end of the novel we notice how these alterity states cause her psychological vulnerabilities. She "writes on the wall" (p. 144) "eat[s] leaves" (p. 151), and "eat[s] toothpaste" (p. 155). Chipo's alienation and lack of food compromise her mental state. She is locked in the room and spends days without eating; only drinking water. She resorts to "pick[ing] up a bunch of herbs and, after sniffing it, tear off some leaves." (p. 154), resembling an animal, to appease her hunger. She advances a survival strategy by writing herself, "want[ing] a record" (p. 147). She "breath[s] into the window…breath fogs the glass … I write. My name is Chipo" (p. 144). This act provides her with the power to 'speak' for herself and about herself by writing herself into existence in a diasporic environment that constructs identities and experience around alterity and othering.

The ending of the novel displays how Otherness has dangerous elements, apart from the psychological and social aspects I have noted above. The novel ends with a group of Tanzanian men entering the flat used by migrants to operate 'Gambler's Paradise'. Chipo's brother and his group are presumably arrested, Chipo says "it has been four days since the police raid, and still no one has come" (p. 155). Chipo is inside the room and recognises the invaders. They kill and

mutilate her body. The superstition in Tanzania is that albinos are "white medicine" (p. 10). Thus, one can deduce that her body parts are violently stolen to be used for traditional medicinal purposes. In the epilogue, Chipo confirms this gruesome assumption saying "I start putting myself back together. Dead hand, dead heart, dead leg, dead head. From head to foot, I make the puzzle of me fit" (p. 157). Thus, in the ancestral realm, in ghostly form, and through an alterity state of disembodiment, she gains the urgency to tell her story. As the title alludes to a pedestrian crossing, a safe space designed to cross over to the other side of the road, the discussions have illustrated how alterity can be a hindrance. Her death is a form of crossing, a transition from the physical human world to the supernatural where she gains the power to tell her story.

Conclusion

In unusual ways, *Bom Boy* and *Zebra Crossing* engage with the conditions of migrant alienation and Othering. The settings of the novels in Cape Town, reveal similarities to the settings of *Gold Diggers*, *Shadows* and *Crossroads* in Johannesburg, that migrant experiences in South Africa are fraught with fear, xenophobia, social, and economic precarity. Class is a contributing factor to the marginality of migrants. In *Bom Boy*, Oscar and Leke are middle class, multi-cultured and educated. Due to these factors, they have access to spaces in the city such as the University of Cape Town, the mall, a multi-racial school, and resources such as the internet. We observe how Leke uses Google search to find the meaning of his name and to steal identities. Thus, these contribute to the cosmopolitan imagining of their migrancy.

The reading of *Zebra Crossing* extended this analysis by exploring the intersections of illegal migrancy, gender, space, and sexuality as Othering stereotypes that reflect the migrant diasporic experience. Furthermore, *Zebra Crossing*, through its styling of Othering as a structural element, has illuminated the functioning of alterity as a constant metaphor in migrant realities. Chipo's fictional life and the gruesome ending of the novel debunks the wildly held myth that African foreigners are a danger to South African sovereignty and nationalism. The fact that it is Tanzanian criminals who murder Chipo and not South Africans, counters the stereotypes and "single stories" (Adichie 2009) surrounding perpetrators and recipients of xenophobic violence in the country. The African migrants in the texts live in constant fear of being "burnt" after the World Cup, yet the ending of the novel suggests that the criminality and criminalisation of African migrants in South Africa is not a reflection of a condition reserved only for South Africans.

Both texts feature migrant characters that face challenges in South Africa. The novels suggests that the diasporic space is an Othering space. The prominent theme of alienation in *Bom Boy* and *Zebra Crossing* is, therefore, no coincidence. Alienation and alterity are two sides of the same coin. The link between the two is the condition of Otherness/Othering as explored through Leke and Chipo's lives. In *Zebra Crossing*, the representation of alterity is overt as highlighted by Chipo's murder for superstitious beliefs. The novel deploys Othering through its characterization, plot, setting, and style. In *Bom Boy*, Leke experiences covert alterity, symbolised by people 'ignoring' and 'avoiding' him. This theme is explored through the 'invisible rash' metaphor. Lastly, both texts point to the failure of the Ubuntu ideal that "promised land rhymes with helping hand" (*Zebra Crossing*, p. 59) pointing instead to the promised land is fundamentally Other/Othering.

Chapter 4: "One does not do that to a human being": Reading human rights in *Going Home* (2005), *A Man of Good Hope* (2014) and *I want to go Home Forever* (2019)

Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated that the representations of migrancy and the conditions of being a migrant in South Africa are marked by isolation, othering, and forms of alterity. The chapter revealed how fictional migrant representations point to marginalization, subhuman and/or non-human treatment of the migrant. This was explored through the life of Chipo in *Zebra Crossing* and the ultimate metaphor of precariousness of migrant lives symbolized by her death. My analysis of *Bom Boy* revealed how Oscar and Leke live isolated and virtually exclusive lives. In the section on *Zebra Crossing*, I explored the novel's aesthetic engagement with differences such as ethnicity, skin colour and nationality, and how they relate with migrancy through the portrayal of Chipo. This demonstrated how the concepts of 'human' and animalization of migration discourses are controversial and political. In the same section, I revealed how Chipo is animalized because of the intersections of her multifaceted identities. The status of her undocumented migrancy, being a female, and living with albinism mark her as a subaltern and sub-human. This chapter builds on the previous one, by focusing on how the selected texts critically engage with the issues the human, human rights, and human rights violations, and their relatability to migrants, migrancy and migration.

In this chapter, I will examine autobiographies by migrants located in South Africa, to explore migrant relationships, especially how these relationships interrelate with human rights as a concept and culture. This chapter analyses *Going Home* (2005), selected stories in *I want to go Home Forever* (2019) and *A Man of Good Hope* (2014). The selected texts are all written by asylum seekers and refugees in South Africa. I read the accounts of their stories as autobiographies although they differ in form and structure. *I want to go Home Forever* is a collection of stories gathered through interviews. *Going Home* is a semi-autobiographical novel, narrating the life story of Mpanda, an Angolan refugee. *A Man of Good Hope* offers the life story of Asad Abduhili, written by Jonny Steinberg. Granted, the texts are different sub-genres of life writing, this study consider the thematics they reveal on migrancy life writing in South Africa. I draw from the widely cited life-writing scholars, Smith and Watson (2010) who hold that:

> [life writing] is an overarching term used for a variety of nonfictional modes of writing that claim to engage with the shaping of someone's life. The writing of one's own life is autobiographical, the writing of another's is biographical; but that boundary is sometimes permeable. (p. 197)

The stories considered in this chapter are autobiographical in that they are literary documentations, narrated by people about their lives and their experiences. Thus, my interest in this chapter is how self-narratives by migrants in South Africa discourse the often over generalized notions of the "refugee experience" (Eastmond 2007: 249) in South Africa. My chapter draws from Goldberg and Moore's (2013: 8) assertion that a study of human rights claims (such as subjects in my texts) "[are] articulated in testimonials and narratives in the multiple spaces of the courtroom, community, and literary production". Therefore, I read the autobiographies for the ways they reveal how African migrants make sense of the conditions and experiences of living in South Africa as a foreigner.

Although the refugee/asylum seeker is a recurring figure in literary representations of migration in South Africa, studies that focus on the refugee/asylum seekers are limited. It is not a surprise that these migrants are a popular feature in South African literature of migration and other texts that do not specifically focus on migration. According to Mberu and Sidze (2017: 80) there were "over 65 000 refugees and 230, 000 asylum seekers in South Africa in 2014". These figures suggest that the refugee/asylum seekers are part of communities across South Africa. From a sociological perspective, Nawyn (2012) argues that "although there is a long history of south-south (Intra-African) migration, the dynamics of these migration patterns remains "undertheorized" (2012: 164). Therefore, a focus on the dynamics of migration within the Southern African continent, such as refugee narratives, has the potential to provide a "richer and more inclusive" understanding of the diasporic experiences in South Africa (Nawyn 2012: 166). From a legal perspective, an asylum seeker refers to an individual who has fled their country and is waiting for official refugee status in another country, whereas a refugee has been granted asylum in a country other than their own (Maley 2016; Shacknove 1985). For cohesion, I will, in this chapter, use the widely used term refugee to refer to all persons of asylum seekers and refugees.

The selected texts for this chapter are stories about the experience of being a refugee in South Africa. *Going Home* is a semi-autobiographical novel, in which the protagonist, Mpanda narrates a story about his forced journey from Angola to South Africa. *A Man of Good Hope* is written by

Jonny Steinberg and tells the story of Asad Abdullahi, who fled Mogadishu Somalia, due to the civil war of 1991. *I want to Go Home Forever*, is a collection of stories by migrants and non-migrants about experiences of belonging in Johannesburg. I have selected the texts because they offer first-person migrant perspectives of grappling to carve space in a society where migrancy determine ways of interaction and survival. The publication of these texts is important in revealing the shifting political and social nature of migrancy and migration processes in South Africa, especially from a migrant perspective. As already noted, the post-2000 witnessed a heightened influx of immigrants into South Africa. Although South Africa receives a variety of migrants, the "refugee" remains a slippery and controversial figure. Thus, my choice in the texts is also informed by the need to explore refugee experiences outside of the generalized term of migrants. For example, the Nairobi civil war of 1975, the Somali war of 1991 (still ongoing), the Rwanda genocide of 1994, and other unrests in the African continent have contributed to the movements of people to South Africa. Due to these conditions, people are forced to leave their countries for safety and protection, hence, they are considered refugees (Shacknove 1985; Maley 2016). According to the South African Refugee Act no 130 of 1998, section 3:

> a person qualifies for refugee status for the purposes of this Act if that person- (u) owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted by reason of his or her race, tribe, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his or her former habitual residence is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it; or
>
> (b) owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing or disrupting public order in either a part or the whole of his or her country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his or her place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge elsewhere: or
>
> (c) is a dependent of a person contemplated in paragraph (a) or (b).

Thus, this conception provides the theoretical basis for the definition of a refugee. It asserts both a moral and legal claim to seek "protection…and refuge elsewhere". My interest in this chapter is to explore how these stories contribute to the discourse on human rights and human rights violations in South Africa. In the preface of *I Want to go Home Forever*, the editors write that the collection is "a result of many hands and voices" (p. xvii). In this chapter then, I am interested in the "voices" of the migrants to which the editors refer. This point recalls Bakhtin's concept of

"polyphony" literary technic that gives texts the power to express a variety of points of view. Although Bakhtin (2010) theorizes on the polyphonic of the novel, I read the selected migrant stories as "speech types" that create "a multiplicity of social voices and a variety of their links and interrelationship" (Bakhtin 2010: 263). In this conceptualization, my study reads the social, historical, contemporary and lived circumstances of the refugees. This means that, for instance, *A Man of Good Hope* narrated by Asad Abdullahi about his refugee journey from Somalia to South Africa carries with it other 'voices' about his encounters with cultures and people. Writing about the immigrant's autobiography, Meerzon (2015: 294) posits that the autobiography is produced by plural 'voices', those are "the voice of the author, the voice of the performer, and the voice(s) of the character(s) are simultaneously diversified and intertwined". The utterances used in the narrative such as "repetitions, interruptions, and everyday vocabulary" (Meerzon 2015: 294) have historical, social, and cultural underpinnings that inform the speaking subject. Thus, a dialogic relationship is presented in the author's performance by telling his/her story, the position from which the story is told – in the case of selected texts, it is the diasporic space – and the artistic work. Musanga and Manase (2015: 295), in their analysis of Zimbabwean identities in the diaspora, refer to these identity performances as "dramaturgical exigencies". Meerzon (2015: 295) further notes that "[t]he exilic artist's voice reproduces the familiar to hear tones of the languages, the cultures, the traditions, and the histories". This also includes the "tones" of the migrancy present of which the autobiographer speaks. The three autobiographical narratives are polyphonic to varying degrees. While Kikamba's *Going Home* mainly focuses on Mpanda's journey from Zaire to South Africa and the precariousness of being a refugee in South Africa, Steinberg's A *Man of God Hope* offers a historical perspective to the conditions that led Asad to refuge in South Africa. Moreover, *A Man of Good Hope* incorporates other "voices" such as that of the author and other interviewees and secondary scholarly materials such as books and journal articles. *I Want to go Home Forever* composes of stories by migrants and local South Africans about the conditions of living in South Africa. One of the aims of the book, according to the editors, is to "reflect so critically and creatively on what South Africa is becoming" (p. xvii). In this light, I read the autobiographies as reflective and reflections of the migrancy condition of what Malkki (1992: 35) refers to as "refugee-ness". The literary texts analyzed in this chapter are illuminations of "what it means to be a *refugee*" as theorized by MacDonald (2015: 412).

The connection between life narratives and experience is widely studied. Some scholars argue that life narratives are the vehicles to understanding historical events, the present and even the future (Attridge 1995; Eze 2008; Noxolo 2014; Eze 2021). Garvis (2015: 1) puts it thus, "many disciplines believe that human experience is a phenomenon best understood through story". Similarly, Eastmonds (2007: 252), holds that "narratives [are] site[s] of re-creation of continuity in which narrators [keep] their minds on the future and sought to establish continuity by linking into the past". Moreover, the genre of life writing has "been employed to illuminate diverse aspects of human life as historical processes, psychological development [and] cultural patterning" (Eastmond 2007: 248) from the point of view of the self. This means another way of understanding a phenomenon such a refuge-ness is to turn to refugee stories. It is through personal narration that most people can make sense of their lived experiences. These include present, past and imagined future experiences. Thus, I analyze the stories for their capacity to express the experience of universal human rights and violations of those rights through experiential selves in narration.

Human rights and Literature: Ethics and Aesthetics[13]

Before analysing the focal texts, it is imperative to discuss the connections between the concepts of art and moral principles of human rights. The interdisciplinary approach of human rights and literature will be the conceptual prism for reading selected texts. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a human rights activist and former chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission advances this relationship when he says:

> if, by reading…we are enabled to step, for one moment, into another's person's shoes… then that is already a great achievement. Through empathy, we overcome prejudice, develop tolerance and ultimately understand love. Stories can bring understanding, healing, reconciliation and unity. (Tutu 2001)

Arguing from a Western perspective, Hunt (2007: 20) in *Inventing Human Rights*, writes that:

> Human rights require three interlocking qualities: rights must be natural (inherent in human beings): equal (the same for everyone); and universal (applicable everywhere). For rights to be *human* rights all humans everywhere in the world must possess them equally and only because of their status as human beings. (p. 20)

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[13] Dawes, J. 2009. Human Rights in Literary Studies. *Human Rights Quarterly*. 31(20). p. 394

The natural character of rights advanced by Hunt (2007) implies that rights, specifically the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (henceforth UDHR) are a "natural given" to all humans because of their humanness. Article 1 of UDHR states that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". Hunt (2007) notes how politics and policies are weaved into the realization of human rights, especially the first article cited above. Similarly, Ndlovu (2019: 110) argues that "human rights are riddled with inconsistencies, paradoxes and weaknesses, and are often contested". It comes as no surprise that the context, histories, and realization of universal human rights vary drastically in different spaces because of cultural relativism. Hunt (2007: 21) shares this sentiment and writes, "[h]uman rights only become meaningful when they gain political content". In the absence of citizenship of a country, or national affiliation, as is the case with refugees and asylum seekers, there are no rights or a state to offer such rights. For Douzinas (2000: 27), "people acquire their concrete nature, their humanity and subjectivity by having rights". This statement implies that without human rights, humans are disenfranchised of their humanity. My reading of the selected texts complicates and problematizes views of refugeeness, statelessness and dehumanization in human rights discourses and practices in South Africa.

The relationship between literature and human rights is not always clear or adequately acknowledged, yet they are an amalgamation. Slaughter writes that

> [l]iterature and human rights may have intersected only recently as common or overlapping areas of scholarly inquiry, but the two have been bound up with one another ... for a very long time. [Also] literary works and literary modes of thinking have played important parts in the emergence of modern human rights ideals and sentiments, as well as in the elaboration of national and international human rights laws. (2012, xii-xiii)

Goldberg and Moore (2013: 9) conceptualize the two related concepts as:

> reading literary texts for the ways in which they represent and render intelligible the philosophies, laws, and practices of human rights from multiple, shifting cultural perspectives and considering how stories, testimonies, cultural texts, and literary theories contribute to the evolution of such philosophies, laws, and practices.

For Nayar (2017: 340) ethics are comprehensible in literature since fiction "calls for scrupulous attention to the processes and the contexts that enable [h]uman [r]ights and their subjects". In light of this, I explore how "fiction can do things with rights", Nayar (2020: 7) and how literary texts

function in the service of human rights through life narratives. In "Human Rights in Literary Studies", Dawes (2009: 369) refers to this controversial and sometimes paradoxical relationship as "ethics and aesthetics". This means that literature reveals the notions, contestations, application and (mis)uses of human rights by interrelating and interweaving the aesthetic and the moral sphere. Potter and Stonebridge (2014: 3) argue that "the connections between writing and rights are complex, nuanced and thoroughly historical". That creative artists write about social issues makes it inevitable that rights and human rights are the topoi we find in some of the creative literatures. Limbu (2018: 75) puts it thus, "in literature and literary studies, the task of making the human in human rights legible has focused on a different kind of supplement or technology: storytelling". The cultural theorist Bhabha (2003) grounded the point by saying:

> performers and practitioners of the arts articulate aspirational value through empathetic acts of making –*poesis*- that transform the material elements of a known and shared world into an instructive aesthetic experience. (p. 166)

In this view, abstract ideas such as human rights are realized and expressed in literary texts as part of the everyday experiences of humanity. The literary creatives re-imagine the values of human rights by creating textual and/or giving testimonies about social situations that would appeal to the readers' moral subjectivities. The engaged reader, in turn, would imagine a communion with the speaker and express "love …and empathy and forms of solidarity, cooperation, and collaboration" as argued by Onazi (in Eze 2021: 51). Banda (2020) in her book "African Migration, Human Rights and Literature" calls these "interactive communit[ies]" in which the reader and the text enter a communion of intimacy. Bhabha (2003: 166) further argues that "arts …translate[s] the exigent materialities of everyday life into forms of consciousness, and designs for a communal, political living – the cultural realm of the affective and the aesthetic". This gives literature a utilitarian role as a convenient site, a "technology or prosthesis" to encounter varied ideas, processes and perceptions and social realities of human rights (Limbu 2018: 75). Hence, literature treads between aesthetically appealing materials and producing materials with ethical considerations. Literary writing, then, is significant for the history of rights because literatures have a special capacity to imagine the "subjectivity of the rights-bearing person and the linguistic power to bear witness to rights abuses, a power that originates in both the experience and observation of abuse" (Potter & Stonebridge 2014: 9). Therefore, "the stories supplement [and] fills a lack and adds a surplus" in

human rights discourses (Limbu 2018: 75). In this perspective, texts are ethics aestheticized and/or aesthetics of ethics.

In addition, literature has an influence and is influenced by the society that produces it, including the issues of human rights. Nayar (2016) writes:

> [b]eliefs and aspirations about what the human *means*, *ought* to mean and deserves, acquire currency through cultural texts wherein models of the human, the abhuman and the subhuman are drawn. Cultural texts construct a social imaginary – the set of beliefs, ideologies and aspirations of the human, and by extension, of Human Rights. (p. xi)

This formulation of aesthetics and ethics, means literature rationalizes and imagines, in varied ways what it means to be human. Stories that people tell about themselves and about others illuminate abstract issues of human rights. Stories, therefore, have the capacity to make humans and to dehumanize. When we read stories, "we encounter a new world, and this encounter has a lot in common with those we have in real life" (Eze 2021: 22). The "beliefs, ideologies and aspirations" to which Nayar (2016) refers to above, are imagined in literary texts and are lived reality. I agree with Eze (2021) that there are similarities between the world we live in and the world we encounter in stories. Achebe refers to this (re)imagining of reality as "a second handling of reality" (1989: 117). For Dawes (2009: 397) "literary works perform a cultural labor that can bring about broad perceptual shifts" in and to real life. In other words, literature is not simply a telling of events or imagining "new worlds". Rather, it is reflective and transformative, with the potential to bring about social change such as when there is a violation of human rights.

Banda (2020: 27) in her book titled *African Migration, Human rights and Literature* draws the connections between the three topics arguing that "fictional literature and Law both involve storytelling: one to entertain and the latter to persuade". This statement deconstructs the idea that rights, their violations (and important for my chapter) the narration of such violations are issues only of the courts of Law. Markedly, both require narration to engage the audience – whether that audience is a reader or a court of law. Reading literary texts this way, makes the text "a literary court of appeals" to use Nance's (2006: 26) theorization of testimonio, in which the reader takes the role of the judge or jury to pass judgment on the perpetrator as represented in the text. Like the idea of a right (pun of right, write and rite intended), literary writing gives form and meaning

through the mode of storytelling, to something poignant and abstract (Potter & Stonebridge 2014: 4). Adjunct to this are the questions of whose rights and who is entitled to rights and what are the limits of these rights? Forms of literatures and cultures provide the necessary visibility to these questions through "representational modes" (Nayar 2020: 4).

Human rights, albeit commonly clutched in the legal realm of society, are based on storytelling. Scholars have made these connections, with others claiming that without the art of storytelling, there would not be human rights to analyse and appreciate. For example, Nayar (2016: xi) argues that "in the social and political realms, human rights campaigns also require that stories – especially of rights being denied – to be told". Similarly, Dawes (2009: 394) holds that "human rights work is, at its heart, a matter of storytelling". Through speaking and telling stories, the subject reveals important nuances in the understandings, violations and upholding of human rights. Dawes (2009: 395) further argues for the transformative power of telling stories. He writes "[w]e make sense of ourselves and our lives, individually and collectively, by telling stories". In this way then, the act of telling immigrant stories is a way of shifting conceptions and ideas about migrants in South Africa.

In stories of suffering and violence, such as the ones I read in this chapter, there is a risk of re-traumatization for the victims of violations.[14] Dawes (2009: 395) refers to this as "painful urgency" that is necessary for the storyteller to get people to know about the pain and suffering. In this way, the victim tells their story intending to invite "an ethical response from listeners and readers" (Schaffer & Smith cited in Nayar 2016: xii). Nance (2006: 3) argues that stories "as part of a social project … is [a matter] of *speaking of one's suffering in such a way that readers will be induced to act against the injustice of it* (italics in original). It is worth noting that this is not the only response from readers and listeners of human rights stories. Some readers, just as some members of the community, are apathetic towards the suffering of others. Breithaupt (2015) would call this paradox in emotions of empathy, "empathetic sadism" (2015: 440). This means that the empathetic sadist does not feel empathetic towards the sufferer in the story. Instead, they feel pleasure and enjoy the performance of suffering because, according to their sadists' premise, the victim somehow deserves the pain. My reading of the focal texts, therefore, focus on the "strong affective

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[14] By using the term victims, I am well aware of the developments in vocabulary and diction, where the word 'victim' has been replaced with the word 'survivor' as a way of giving voice and urgency to those who have experienced violations and survived to tell their stories.

dimensions…effects that can be channelled in negative and positive ways, through personal, political, legal, and aesthetic circuits that assist, but can also impede, the advance of human rights" (Nayar 2016: xii).

Ndlovu's (2019) article on African Literature and Human rights at South African's Wits University comes close to what I set to achieve in this chapter. Drawing from classroom interactions with students, the study aimed to analyse the connections between human rights and xenophobia in South Africa. According to Ndlovu (2019), the interdisciplinary approach of human rights and literature offers a reflection of "personal and communal responsibility" (2019: 109). Through critical engagement, literary texts can drive social transformation. Tladi and Makombe (2017) explore these connections in the English curriculum of South African high schools. In their research, the scholars set out to analyse how John Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* (2001) can "function as a tool (cultural and ideological) for developing critical citizenship" (2017: 411). They conclude that the play, when studied through critical literacy can "move students beyond the passive realm to become actors against oppressive situations". In their reading, *Nothing but the Truth* is an instrument "doubly connected to the lifeworld…with a goal of persua[ding] readers to act by educating about injustice (Nance 2006). In this way, through critical engagement with a literary text, students become aware of issues in their socio-political environments and can become responsible citizens who value and uphold humans and human rights.

Ndlovu (2019) does acknowledge the neglect of African literature in the establishment of human rights codes, arguing that it has been classified as "protest literature or anti-colonial" (2019: 112). Citing texts such as *Thing Falls Apart* (1958), *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), Ndlovu (2019) posits that these can be read as concerned with issues of dignity, equality and freedom, key subjects of human rights. Tladi's *Amandla* (1980), la Guma's *And a threefold cord* (1964), and Biko's *I Write What I like* (1978) are a few examples of how imaginative writing has been instrumental in demonstrating the dehumanization of black lives under the Apartheid Government. In the post-Apartheid period, there has been a shift in the literary focus. Texts have tended to focus on state abuse and state powers and the failure of the post-colonial government to provide and protect human rights. For example, Mhlongo's *Dog Eat Dog* (2012), Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hilbrow* (2001), Coetzee's *Disgrace* (2000) and Mda's *Ways of Dying* (1995), all grapple with the conditions facing South Africans in the transition and "post-transition" periods. A key leitmotif in these texts is the failure of the new political dispensation in providing the dreams and better lives

they have been promised during the fight against Apartheid. In the following section, my discussion focuses on *Going Home* and how the narrator negotiates human rights and the conditions of precarity in the context of asylum-seeking migrancy.

"Life and times of a black immigrant"[15]: Writing legal, economic, and social precarity in *Going Home* (2005)

Going Home is a semi-autobiographical novel by Simão Kikamba. Kikamba was born in 1966 in Scandica, Angola. His family emigrated to the Democratic Republic of Congo when he was two years old. He moved back to Angola in 1992, and two years later, he left for South Africa because of political turmoil in the country. *Going Home*, much like Kikamba's trajectory of migration, tells the plight of a refugee character named Manuel Mpanda, of his experiences from Zaïre, Nairobi, and South Africa. The story is at once an autobiographical and a fictional narrative as we glimpse what Vambe (2019) elsewhere calls fictions of autobiography. In an interview with Spencer for Sunday Times in 2008, Kikamba admits the fusion form of the novel as both fiction and life writing. He advances the idea that his identity as a refugee informed and shaped the writing of the novel. He says:

> Fiction is about what is happening… and non-fiction is about something that has happened. Fiction for me is never written in a vacuum, there has to be a context. You know what they say: you write what you know, and it is similar when you write what you have lived. (Kikamba, 2008)

In an analysis of torture novels, Nayar (2017: 340) argues that "the story component of these novels signals the necessity to enter (or re-enter) the torture chamber, via the stories in order to see the socio-institutional precariousness that enables torture". I draw from this formulation to explore how Mpanda's diasporic precariousness contributes to the other forms of suffering such as economic and social.

Claims for shared humanity and universal human rights are central to Mpanda's story. The story "build[s] the social imaginary of [refugee] rights" (Nayar 2017: 340). Storytelling becomes an opportunity for Mpanda's articulation of the problems of refugees in South Africa. In the analysis of the *Going Home*, Fasselt (2014: 72) posits that the novel "speaks of an emergence of a new trans-African culture in the country". Moudouma's (2013) approach to the novel concentrates on the concepts of the "borderland/border/boundary" in the process of migration (2013: 55) and how

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[15] *Going Home* (2005), p. 123

these reflect on Africanity. Strauss (2011) reads *Going Home* as a part of an emerging trend of "violently restrictive narratives of national belonging" that reveal the current "crisis of hospitality" (p. 104—105). Nyman (2017) analyses the novel from the stance of history, postcolonialism and spatiality. The scholar concludes that like many textual representations featuring the figure of the refugee, Mpanda is concerned with "reconstruct[ing] a sense of home" (p. 37). While I concur with the scholars I, nevertheless, read the novel alongside these works from the vantage point of universal human rights. I focus on how the novel reveals discourses and practices of human rights on/and of refugees as problematized and marginalized subjects in the liminality of the host country – South Africa.

Helff (2009: 334) notes that in refugee autobiographies, "paratextual elements are intrinsic to the genre". *Going Home* includes a "Glossary" in which some abbreviations, phrases and words used in the texts are explained. This suggests that the story is directed at an international audience who would not necessarily be familiar with Congolese and/or Zulu phrases. For example, the glossary includes "ngunda" a slang word for a refugee permit and "kwere-kwere" a South African degoratory term designated to African foreigners. This glossary translates the text from a novel into historiography. My claim is further supported by the pronouncement that Mpanda makes at the beginning of the novel to his fellow detainee in Lindela Repatriation Centre in Johannesburg. I return to the circumstances of his arrest later in this section. Here, I explore how the novel is styled as autobiographical. The novel opens with a conversation between Mpanda and Benedito at the detention centre:

> "when did you come to South Africa"?
> "in December 1994" Mpanda replied…
> "then you must go home…" Benedito said
> "Unfortunately, I can't go back home…it's a long story" said Mpanda, and began to tell his story. (p. 15)

From this interaction, Mpanda invites Benedito and us (the readers) to "listen" to his life story and importantly, the conditions that led to him being in South Africa and incapable of "go[ing] back home" to Angola. Mpanda's statement that he "can't go back home", is a self-distinguishing announcement of his identity as a refugee. As noted earlier, the term refugee or the status of a refugee is based on the universal feature in which an individual cannot return home, because s/he faces the reality or risk of persecution (1951 UN Convention Article 1, South African Refugee Act

113

130 of 1998). Chapter 2 of South Africa's 1996 Constitution states that all persons, including citizens and those documented and undocumented, fundamental and procedural protections, expansively delineates the rights of immigrants, and provides for their protection from unconstitutional conduct and human rights violations. My reading, therefore, examines the nexus of asylum, the state policies of asylum-seeking and precarity. Theorist and philosopher Judith Butler (2004) defines precariousness as a generalized human condition that stems from the fact that human beings are dependent on each other. This ontological condition, makes human beings vulnerable. Butler (2009: xiii) further argues "precarity is a rubric that brings together women, queers, transgender people, the poor and the stateless". In Butler's formulation, precariousness is an existential condition of all marginalized human beings. Mpanda constructs his refugeeness as entangled in social, economic, and political vulnerabilities.

According to Jensen (2018: 184), "contemporary narratives of rights violation that draw on both autobiographical facts and the creativity of fiction speak to us in unique and uniquely moving ways". The hybrid form of narration (in *Going Home*) thus, makes the condition of being a refugee in South Africa, and human rights "legible" (Jensen 2018: 185). Studies of autobiographical texts by refugees stress the need to counter dominant stereotypes by making refugees' voices heard (Nayar 2011; Nyman 2017; Stonebridge 2018; Vambe 2019). The novel explores real-life experiences and suffering "by employing a range of aesthetic and mimetic techniques" (Jensen 2018: 189), through the prism of the first-person narrator, Mpanda. The phrase "… Mpanda began to tell his story" (p. 15) establishes its authenticity as an experiential account of refugeeness. This also recalls the concept of an "autobiographical pact" (Lejeune 1986) in which there is an agreement between the reader and the speaker to give an account of 'truth' in his/her story. For Felman 2002 (in Viebach 2017: 60) this is the "responsibility to truth" similar to witness oaths of legal courts. The text is therefore an invitation to bear witness to Mpanda's documentation of life as a black immigrant.

As stated earlier, in my analysis of *Going Home*, my interest is in the human rights discourses and practices and their failures as represented in and through the life of Mpanda. My analysis is guided by the UDHR, Article 22, which states:

> Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each

> state, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his
> dignity and the freedom of his personality

As already noted, Mpanda tells his story from a space of confinement at the detention centre. This restriction/restrictive setting suggests the precarious livelihoods that several black immigrants face in South Africa. The story is structured and organized into four parts. The first part is a short chapter titled "Operation Crackdown" in which Mpanda recounts the circumstances of his arrest. The political and moral issues of Operation Crackdown are discussed below. The second part, "Journey" recounts his education, work history, involvement in politics, marriage, and family in Zaire. We notice how Mpanda strategically opens his story with a violation of human rights incident in South Africa where he currently resides, addressing his present existence as a predicament. Part three of the novel, "life and times of a black immigrant", focuses on the 'life and times' of Mpanda in South Africa. The chapter title evokes the much-studied slave autobiography *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, The Africa, Written by Himself* (1794) signalling a political and social ideology of the novel towards social change. This intertextuality, therefore, recalls the cultural continuity of the minority peoples writing themselves into history. I view the text as a conscious effort by the author to use the form of autobiography to challenge the South African rainbow nation ideals.

To begin with, the South African part of the story is set in 1994. Although the "new" political dispensation proposed the idea that it was "opening up to … to the rest of Africa", Mpanda's lived experience alludes to the opposite. In the year 2000, the then government introduced a campaign 'Operation Crackdown' aimed at combating the crime rate in the country's major cities. However, the campaign morphed into a systematic anti-immigrant operative in which African nationals were targeted, arrested, and deported. The operation has been argued to be a "discriminatory legislation" (Nayar 2017: 331) which was executed as a "policing policy operative … [which] created an underclass of individuals whose basic human rights could be abused by the police with impunity" (Klaaren and Ramji 2001: 36). Steenkamp (2009: 439) refers to it as an "unprecedented campaign of violence against African migrants in post-Apartheid Africa". The majority of these "underclass" victims were African immigrants. Similarly, in their study of Syrian refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey, Oner, et al. (2020: 2) found that "refugees are forced to rely on an unclear and ambivalent regime of human rights". According to Ertorer (2021: 4), the conditions of asylum seekers are similar, they "experience *hyper-precarity* due to multidimensional vulnerabilities that

surround them". In the following discussion, I examine Mpanda's aesthetic mode of re-living the traumas.

According to Pityana (in Klaaren & Ramji 2001: 36), another exclusionary outcome of the Operation Crackdown was that it "prevented individuals from establishing their lawful status and violated their rights and due process of the law". *Going Home* reflects human rights discourse in a manner that illuminates the precarious life of a refugee. Klaaren and Ramji (2001: 36) capture this ambiguous environment as "criminalization of being black and foreign". We notice in the story how Mpanda's asylum permit is "torn up" (p. 12) and he is arrested together with other immigrants from "Senegal, Congo and Zimbabwe" (p. 13) without cause. Nayar (2017: 330) holds that "[i]nstitutional precarity in any context produces routinized violence and mainstream torture". Here, we observe how the arrests are representative of and targeted at 'being black foreigners' rather than "doing [something] wrong" (p. 12). This "production of illegality" (Goldring et al. 2009: 250) demonstrates that their condition as black African immigrants is reconfigured to "make immigrants illegal" (Klarren & Ramji 2001: 36) unlawful residents. It is against this backdrop that I deploy what Baban et al., (2017) terms the "precarity of status" in refugee lives. Goldring, et al., (2009: 241) in their conceptualization of institutionalized precarious migratory status in Canada, refer to this exclusionary phenomenon as "systemic production of illegality". The scholars argue that the dichotomous thinking of legal-illegal or documented and undocumented is limiting in understanding refugee identities. They submit that a precarious status "includes undocumented and documented illegality and other forms of insecure and irregular migrant status". In the same vein, Ertorer (2021: 4) argues that "migration regimes and asylum policies … systematically deny basic rights … [resulting in] hyper-precarity … to material and non-material resources". These insecurities in the status of legality are "constructed by specific state policies, regulations, practices of policy implementation, activism, discourses, and so forth" (Goldring et al. 2009: 248). In his study of the human rights novels, Nayar (2017: 330) concludes that the novels "point to such 'institutional precariousness' where we need a 'strong state to protect us, but state power is often the cause of human rights failures". Like Nayar's (2017) study, *Going Home* illuminates the state induced vulnerabilities of refugees so that a state's citizens become inverted subjects at the hands of the very structures tasked with protecting their citizenship. Furthermore, the vulnerabilities vary depending on "context at various levels". I suggest that Operation Crackdown operated at a systematic level to illegalize refugees in society.

Klaaren and Ramjin (2001) find that in South Africa:

> the illegal immigrant is not merely illegal in the sense of being unregulated or beyond legal institutions (although that too is often true). The illegal immigrant is illegal in the sense of being contrary to the law, of being prohibited. The illegal immigrant is not merely *beyond* the law but is instead *against* the law. (p. 42 italics in original)

Another method of illegalizing immigrants in the narrative is how the state actors (police and migration officials) enforce illegality by detaining immigrants in Lindelani. Mpanda refers to this space as a "concentration camp" (p. 13) which is guarded by men "armed with batons" (p. 219). This imagery of the Holocaust evokes the historical atrocities that have defined humanity. This illegality is prolonged and maintained by the duration that the immigrants are held in the center. As Klaaren and Ramjin (2017: 44) write "migrants are frequently held in unlawful detention for over a month, contrary to the law…".

 In the fourth and concluding part of the novel ironically titled "The Verdict", the narrator says "by the time Mpanda had finished relating his story, it was weeks later, late one evening" (p. 217). Although it is not clearly outlined how long Mpada is detained, the phrase "weeks later" prompts us to conclude that he is disoriented due to the duration of the detention. Coundroutriotis (2018: 78) refers to this tension often foregrounded in refugee narratives as the "incommensurability of place and time". The "verdict" title in the novel is aesthetic and symbolic. This styling takes the form of court proceedings. Nance (2006: 26) calls this textual strategy "a literary court of appeals" in testimonio studies. As a text that seeks to expose the violation of human rights, a "verdict" is symbolic of an ending to a trial, in this case, a public trial between the reader and the narrative. Mpanda has "advanced a specific charge against the oppressor, so, he [is] the plaintiff and the *testimonio* is his or her day in court" (Nance 2006: 26). Although the ending of the novel does not offer us a 'finding/conclusion' as a traditional court would, it is an open-ended conclusion. In human rights contexts, especially in refugee narratives, this ending is a common trope that symbolizes perpetual negotiation between (im)mobility and the uncertainty experienced by refugees.

In the Department of Home Affairs scene where Mpanda goes to apply for a refugee permit, we find a similar scene of precarity of status, humiliation and degradation directed towards African migrants. After six months in the country, Mpanda decides to apply for his asylum-seeker permit. At the Department of Home Affairs, he finds "the score of asylum seekers waiting in a long queue

outside the building, men, women and children from every part of the world" (p. 142). He had assumed that he could manipulate the system by seeking a work permit and being able to work without a valid asylum seeker permit. At this time, Mpanda had been in South Africa for six months, which legally (as specified in the Refugee Act 1998, Chapter 3), he should be considered for a refugee permit. Nayar's (2017: 331) argument that "[w]hen state turns predator … [it] enhance[s] the vulnerability of its citizens" finds expression in the scene performance by the "warden":

> this is my country," he said beating his chest. "I am the one that keeps order here and I never bluff ... you disobey me, you bear the wrath of my faithful companion". He exhibited the club, holding it high enough for everyone to see. "I know people hate me. I don't care. I am only doing my job." … Have you ever seen a beautiful country like this? ... up to the second floor and into the waiting room…I say no need to run, you arsehole! What jungle do you come from? (p. 143)

The symbolic and allegorical significance in this extract is the portrayal of the warden as a 'beast' that is eager to bring down its "wrath" to those "from the jungle" who wish to 'corrupt' his "beautiful country". The warden figure illusively metaphorises the state, which is determined to "keep order" in the country. In the waiting room the treatment is not different, as the narrator says:

> We were crowded into a cell-like hall with only the dusty floor to squat on. While we waited, locked in the hall with little air, children cried, people yawned or slept. No one said anything to try to appease us or exhort us to patience. It seemed we did not count, we were just numbers. (p. 143—144)

Here, the narrator exposes the state's failure to protect refugees. It is therefore important that Mpanda relates these incidences, because as he says they [refugees] "did not count [and] were just numbers". The tone of the statement is melancholic, expressing a desire for refugees to be considered as humans. These incidents are not only dehumanizing but also torturous on the physical and psychological state. Nayar (2017: 330) writes that "[t]orture is not random … it is systematic, organized under the aegis of 'state interest' and sets out to alter forever the relationship between state and citizen". In *Going Home*, the relationship between Mpanda and the state is flawed making it inhospitable for Mpanda to live a fulfilled and fulfilling life.

We further encounter the limits of human rights in the education system that repudiates Mpanda's daughter's access to education as stated in Article 26 in the UDHR. After six years that Mpanda has resided in South Africa, his wife and daughter join him from Angola. Upon arrival, Mpanda registers Isabel and Mansanga at the Department of Home Affairs. He is assured that "Mansanga

could take up studies in South Africa" (p. 208). However, at the schools, they discover that Mansanga could not be registered without a birth certificate. This means that Mansanga cannot attend school although she is of school-going age. Her status as a 'child of a refugee' nullifies her opportunities to get an education. The effects are psychological and emotional. This recalls the morality and ethical aspects in the human rights discourse. The scene between Mpanda and Mansanga reflects this contradiction:

> "Why can't I go to school like other girls?"
>
> "You are not like them." I said
>
> …"how am I different from them, papa? I have two legs, two arms, and a head like them."
>
> …"we are refugees," I said, holding back the tears."
>
> "What is a refugee papa? Why are we refugees?"
>
> "We are refugees because we fled our country," I explained
>
> "But I still want to go to school," Mansanga insisted. (p. 210)

What is most striking about this exchange is Mansanga's grasp of the basic human rights fact that she is a human being like other children and, therefore, deserving of equal opportunities. She naively makes the analogy of possessing 'two legs, two arms and a head' to denounce the South African education system for denying refugees and refugee children basic rights to education. The aesthetic character of a child sensitizes the reader to the harmful effects of rights denial through the eyes of a child. The 'voices' of children is a common trope in human rights and humanitarian literatures. For example, Ishmael Beah's *A way Long* (2008) chronicles his life as a forced child soldier in Sierra Leone. *War Child: A Child Soldier's* Story (2009) offers a first-person account by Emmanuel Jal about the atrocities of war in Sudan. In this narrative styling, Mansanga transforms to a role similar to those of child-soldier memoirs, although not entirely. Mansanga exposes the flaws of the adult world. We see in how her unsophisticated observations are criticism towards the unjust political system that repudiate her access to education based on her migrancy. Writing about precariousness, Butler (2009: ii) holds that "…social and political institutions are designed in part to minimize conditions of precarity, especially within the nation-state…[institutions] are to some extent politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence and death". The extract above illustrates how the population of the refugee is emotionally and socially

"injured" by institutions that are designed to protect and ensure their wellbeing. Due to these reasons, Isabel and Mansanga leave South Africa and return to Angola so that Mansanga can acquire basic education there. This departure strips Mpanda of his family and by extension his basic human right to have and claim one.

Lastly, Mpanda's story can be perceived as a site of refugee existentiality in South Africa. Its styling as a testimonio makes it more affectively compelling as a narrative about the refugee experience and quest for human rights. *Going Home*'s overarching detention metaphor shares similarities of constrictions and restrictions in other texts studied in the previous chapters. *Bom Boy* reflects this metaphor through Leke who lives his life at the margin in Cape Town. In *Crossroads* Tshuma represents this through the symbolic privation of the flat where migrant characters in the story reside. Thus, besides the story's overarching concern with moral justice and (il)legality, *Going Home* also reflects the deeply rooted culture of migrant intolerance in South Africa using the "juridical metaphor" (Nance 2006: 25). Therefore, the life narrative illustrates that the life and times of a black immigrant in South Africa is a precarious existentiality that undermines and limits the fulfilment of the rights of refugees as humans.

Can the subaltern write?: Citizenship and re-writing the self in "Esther Khumalo"

The story of Esther Khumalo explores the vulnerabilities of migration through the vantage point of femininity. Esther's story contributes to women's stories in migration discourses which have been "totally neglected" (Pedraza 1991: 303). Pedraza (1991: 304) argues that "paying attention to the relationship between women's social position and migration will help fill the void regarding our knowledge of women as immigrants and contribute to a greater understanding of the lives of women". My analysis is guided by this thinking and quest to understand the lives of undocumented Zimbabwean migrant women in South Africa from a human rights perspective. Of the 13 stories included in the collection *I want to Go Home Forever*, only three are by women. In this section, I will analyse the story by Esther Khumalo. I exclude the story by Nombuyiselo Ntlale because she is a South African narrating her experience with the Somali shopkeepers. I further exclude the story of Chichi Ngozi because although the story does relate to migration, it does not deliberate on the questions of human rights as a key issue in migration trajectories.

Esther grew up in Zimbabwe with a Malawian father and a Zimbabwean mother. She is married with two children when her husband migrates to South Africa to seek employment opportunities

because "life was hard" (p. 142). Esther decided to migrate to South Africa without official travel documents when she was 21 years old. Her arrival in South Africa was not as rewarding as she had hoped. After difficulties with her husband, she became a sex worker. For more than a decade, she engages in sex work to provide for her family (in Zimbabwe). Like many undocumented female immigrants, Esther's story expresses a gendered and migrancy induced vulnerability. These intersections often result in the violation of human rights since women are often marginalized in societies, especially where mobilities to receiving countries are involved. Esther's life story reveals her need to assert her identity as human, a Zimbabwean citizen, and as an economic migrant in South Africa.

Taking into consideration these intersections in Esther's narrative, I deploy Dembour's (2010: 3) conceptualization of the "protest school" in human rights discourse. In this philosophical lens, those who are in the service of human rights do so with the aim "of redressing injustice" (Dembour 2010: 3). For protest scholars, theorists and human rights subjects "articulate rightful claims…and aspirations that allow the status quo to be contested in favor of the oppressed" (Dembour 2010: 3). As the foregoing analysis reveals, Esther re-constructs her self-identity concerning her multiple marginalities, an array of social struggles and deprivation of human rights. This protest outlook re-construction humanizes Esther, considering the traumas she has suffered in the diaspora. Particularly important for my analysis of Esther's story, I draw from Pedraza (1991)'s rationalization that:

> recording women's life stories was seen as a critical act that resisted structures of power. Women's silence was equated with their powerlessness while their ability to speak, to tell their stories, was a sign of empowerment, of visibility that was denied to them. (p. 643)

It is not my intention to argue that immigrant women are a heterogeneous group. Instead, I submit that they share similar gendered experiences in relation to their male counterparts. For example, Chinyakata et al. (2019: 643) in their study of Zimbabwean female immigrants find that "many female immigrants are invisible players in the global economy and often suffer from human and labour rights violations". Furthermore, globally, immigrants occupy the lower end of the employment hierarchy characterized by "insecurity, lower wages, poor working conditions and lack of social protection" (Chinyakata et al. 2019: 644). There are significant differences in economic and social opportunities for immigrant women. In a study of Chinese migrants in

Johannesburg, Harrison et al. (2012: 900) conclude that their study group of Chinese migrants "are in positions of economic power and are also well connected politically". This means that these female migrants potentially experience the city of Johannesburg differently from migrants from a different ethnic and economic group. In a study by Morris (1998) on Congolese and Nigerian migrants in Johannesburg, Congolese respondents cited "verbal abuse" (1998: 1124) as a common experience from some South Africans, while Nigerian respondents documented "criminal stereotyping" (1998: 1126) from some South Africans.

In her lucid discussion titled *"Imagining Women as Human",* Pitanguy outlines the challenges facing women in human rights discourse thus:

> If there is one intriguing pattern that seems to cut across centuries and different civilizations, it is that a woman is always less entitled to rights than man. This is so in spite of inequalities of social class, race, ethnicity, religion and culture that permeates societies and affect both men and women. (Pitanguy in Roskelly 2013: 217)

This statement recalls Spivak's point that "the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (2003: 28). As an undocumented female migrant, Esther challenges this thesis by speaking against her rights infringements. Furthermore, her economic circumstance as a sex worker adds to the precariousness of her life. Thus, the story creates symbolic dimensions of the everyday precarity of female life that invite readers to "draw connections to lived experience; to locate differences and make them familiar; to interpret fairly and with empathy" (Roskelly 2013: 216). In a way, it creates what Roskelly (2013: 216) refers to as the "power of a cultural narrative" for human rights abuses on women in the migrant settings.

Writing about female narratives, particularly the concepts of voice and voicing, Nagar-Ron and Motzafi-Haller (2011: 654) posit that "women's stories are fragmented and full of contradictions, setbacks, and silences. This is particularly the case when the women are multiply marginalized". Similarly, Nayar (2006: 86) sees women's "narrative[s] that exist at the margins of literature, representing those subjects excluded from authorized representation". In most cases testimonio narratives are documents of atrocities and suffering, bringing one into contact with the victimized. The testimonio becomes the voice of one who witnesses for the sake of another, who remains voiceless. That is, the speaking subaltern subject of the narrative gives voice to the lived experiences of herself and of those who are victims of social and linguistic-literary

marginalization. This means that women's stories are not uncomplicated, rather, they are riddled with contradictions because of their sophisticated, ambiguous writing positions.

Take for instance, Esther's narrative and its recollection and recalling of the concept of intersectional identity (Crenshaw 1991) as a female and undocumented migrant. It, therefore, becomes important in enhancing our understanding of the discourse of human rights in diasporic settings through the prism of gender. Female migrant voices are often silent/silenced in the discourse and literature of migration. Jie and Changfei (2020) find that the females are often silent in autobiographical writings:

> After the war, some Jewish refuges wrote autobiographical texts that they used to process their memories of the Nazi persecution of the Jews, of fleeing Europe and of life in exile in Shangai. Many male emigrates expounded on the exile experiences after the war, while female voices were largely absent. (p. 525)

Thus, I read Esther's story as challenging the notion that migration, especially illegal migration and the 'right' and desire to migrate is a male enterprise. I further argue that this female narrative, and others like it, do not merely reveal women's vulnerabilities, but invoke spaces of performing the self in narrative. In this light, Lara's (1998) conception of women's autobiographies as "creative laboratories" becomes useful for my analysis. In *Moral Textures: Feminists Narratives in the Public Sphere,* Lara (1998: 44) writes that "for women, each new interpretation of an autobiography has been a space in which to perform new meanings of one's own life". I further hold that Esther's narrative is transformative, as it becomes a strategy for her to appeal to readers' effective responses. Thus, my reading of Esther's story is a complex representation of searching for justice and equality against the backdrop of hostile migrancy. Eastmond (2007) conceives of migrant stories as "methodologically … complex it also opens up thematically more interesting possibilities…they can tell us how social actors, from a particular social position and cultural vantage point, make sense of their world" (2017: 250). This suggests that Esther's story takes part and claims its place and space in the gendered constructions of migrant experiences.

Human rights violations against marginalized people especially refugees from Africa in other parts of the world and those in South Africa are common. In their study titled "Erosion of Meaning in Life: African Asylum Seeker's Experiences of seeking Asylum in Ireland" Murphy et al. (2019),

note that Ireland's treatment of asylum seekers may be in breach of international human rights conventions. They conclude that these structural experiences "reduce asylum seekers' sense of purpose, efficiency, value, worth and belonging" (Murphy et al. 2019: 295). Handmaker and Parsley (2001) argue that the South African policies on migration are racist and discriminatory, they cite the Aliens Control Act of 1991 that was put in place to control restrict the movement of racial groups across provincial borders. In a study of asylum seekers from the Democratic Republic of Congo in South Africa, participants described horrific events and incidences encountered during the asylum-seeking processes. Schockaert et al. (2020) note that the processes of seeking asylum were traumatic thereby "perpetuating their sense of insecurity and fear" (2019: 40). As the ongoing discussion illustrates, these insecurities and forms of rights denials are not limited to the confines of the migration offices. They spill into the communities and affect the migrant in psychological ways. Much like the characters in the novels analyzed in the preceding chapters, Esther "didn't use a passport. [she] jumped the border" (p. 142). I explore this strategy in chapter 2, in which I demonstrated that migrants often embark on dangerous crossings in the Limpopo River. For Esther, the decision to 'jump' the border is two-fold. On one hand, she is forced to strategize by Zimbabwe that is making it virtually impossible for her to get a passport. Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 15 states that "Everyone has the right to a nationality." Subsection 2 of the same Article states that "No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality", Esther is denied this basic human right to national identity. She narrates the self as a human with the right to identity, and to nationality, as she passionately reveals:

> I don't have a passport because my father is from Malawi. I have a Zimbabwean ID, but I'm not a Zimbabwean citizen and I'm not a Malawian citizen. It's like I'm in between. I was born in Zimbabwe, but they say I'm not a citizen because my father is from Malawi. So, I have to apply for citizenship so that I can apply for a passport. Now, my ID's written 'alien'. I have to apply for citizenship so that they will cancel that 'alien'. I still ask myself why I am an alien if I was born in Zimbabwe? (p. 139)

This opening of Esther's narrative shows the importance of self-identity in the way one makes sense of who they are in the national space. That Esther feels and confesses her in-betweenness betrays the rigidity and fixity of a nation whose laws are still steeped in colonial history as a way

of controlling cross-border movements. Worth noting is that her precarious position in South Africa is the one that allows her to reflect on her national identity. The act of narration also allows her to engage in the moral dimension of the story of her life, particularly her status as an "alien". The question at the end "why I am an alien if I was born in Zimbabwe" is directed at the audience not only to provoke thought but also to highlight the subjective suffering of being denied a nationality, ironically in the land of birth. The confused and desperate tone of voice in the narration serves to challenge the human rights discourse by illustrating the pain of continued injustice on a woman. The question is not only directed at the reader but the wider human community. In this way, Esther asserts her identity as a 'human' first, which gives her entitlement to a nationality, especially if the cultural philosophy *ubuntu, ngumuntu ngabantu* is to survive the battering of ridicule and censure when questions arise about the place and place of migrant women in the discourse of human rights and ethics.

In retrospect, Esther illustrates how belonging to a human community other than to a national identity assists her in navigating the systems of migration. For example, during her third pregnancy, she navigates the bureaucratic alienation of the health system to enable her to give birth to her child in a hospital. Her friendship with Lebo provides her with the strategy to navigate "in-between" identities and nationalities. The following conversation between Esther and Lebo exposes the strategy for survival of migrant women on foreign land:

> here in South Africa it's very hard. Since you are pregnant and you don't have papers, take this. Say you lost your ID". It's like that paper waiting for ID. She said, "Take this paper to the hospital; they will book you". Just tell them, "I lost my ID, and I applied for another one". So I book there in Johannesburg Hospital with Lebo's ID. My third-born is registered as Lebo's daughter not mine. (p. 147)

Here, Esther deploys what Musanga and Manase (2016: 279) refer to as "strategic and positional identities" in their analysis of Zimbabwean migrant identities in the diaspora. This camouflaging of identity – reminiscent of war-time survival strategy "nom de guerre", an assumed name under which a person engages in combat or some other activity or enterprise – is a common survival strategy used by some Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. For Esther, this strategy is successful because of her gender and ethnicity. In another instance, she strategically 'borrows' the identity of a Zulu woman named Nobuhle, when she needs a passport to travel to Malawi. Since she does not have valid identification, she disguised herself as Nobuhle because they "look alike" (p. 153).

Another time at the hospital when she is denied her ARVs treatment because of her (il)legality, she "wr[ites] the wife of my brother's name, Owethu Dlamini" (p. 152). These names and naming strategies illustrate what I call 'righting rights' where vulnerable immigrants develop schemes to claim their rights to basic human rights. Here, writing is deployed as a protest right, where "precisely … no rights exist" Arendt (1966: 298). Esther's story is a struggle for the right to have rights to a nationality and 'human status'.

A recurring trope in Esther's story is the abuse she suffers in the different social settings, because of her gender, migrancy and economic position. The diasporic location exacerbates the violations of her physical body and her human rights. Notable is the mistreatment by her husband. Also, she trades as a sex worker, a precarious position which exposes her to multiple vulnerabilities. However, the silent and salient one is when she is constantly 'othered' by her colleagues and accused of using 'muti' to attract more business. In this way, Esther underscores the precariousness of migrant female sex workers. For instance, Esther narrates "[her] bad day" (p. 150) in which a customer takes her from the streets under the pretence of sex work services. Upon arrival in a secluded house, he rapes her "without a condom" (p. 151). She tells us that she could not "go to the road for some days" (p. 151) because she was "still in shock" (p. 151). The scene is particularly important in demonstrating the subalternity of migrant sex work for foreigners. It is also symbolically foregrounding Esther's capacity to challenge her subalternity and 'speak' against injustices. Due to her migrancy status, coupled with the criminalization and stigmatization of her job and her undocumented status, she:

> didn't go to the police. Because why? What am I going to do? What must I say? If it happens to South African girls, they take the case to the police. It's better because the South African can manage to go there to the police camp and put a case. But we foreigners, we are scared even to go to the police camp because we do not have papers. It's not me alone. Even other girls, foreigners, I do not think they have opened their case with the police. (p. 151)

Esther's observation that South African institutions like the police and the justice system do nothing to protective migrant lives but rather infringe on their human rights as shown elsewhere through Mpanda's story, buttresses the violence and hostility experienced by migrants in South Africa at the hands of state institutions. The catharsis in Esther's emotional expression to the reader "you see my story's very painful" (p. 153), shows that her story goes beyond the ideas proposed

126

by Limbu (2018: 92) that refugees simply tell "a sad story as a supplement to human rights". Rather, Esther's story supplements human rights work by "showing" (through naming the systems and institutions responsible for the violations of her human rights) and convincing the reader through imagery and evocative sympathetic language of the "pain" of being a black female immigrant in South Africa. The compassionate reader, therefore, condemns the structures responsible for the suffering that Esther has "shown" through her narration. Although Esther is not a refugee in the legal use of the term, she shares similarities with Mpanda in constructing their narratives as stories that are concerned with the topos of movements. To illustrate the displeasure of being a female migrant in South Africa, she ends her story with a yearning for home, saying she "want[s] to go home forever" (p. 153). For Esther, her home is Malawi where her biological father currently resides. Here, I wish to highlight the leitmotif of constant movement in which she concludes her story. This construction of home is a response to the difficult conditions of her existence and point to a need for restored normalcy. My analysis, therefore, answers my question in this section heading whether the subaltern, through "protest[ing]" (Dembour 2010) for human rights does speak. Esther is soliciting sympathy from readers by testifying of her sufferings. As Limbu (2018) suggests, stories are a useful site for examining how human rights protest function. Although Esther does not achieve restorative justice in the judicial methodology of having her victimizers paying reparations for the violations, she claims moral conviction through speaking her "truth". Thus, alerting the reader to the gendered injustice of her circumstances. As readers, we can appreciate the urgency of migrant women's impartial treatment as just human rights' cause.

"When I was telling them my story, they wanted to cry"[16]: Narrating traumatic migrancy in "One day is one day"

Alphonse Nahima's story deals with the 1994 genocide in Rwanda in which, close to a million Tutsi were murdered by Hutu extremists. At the time of the genocide, Alphanso Nahima was 24 years old living in Kigali with his wife and two-year-old child. Nahima recounts the moments leading to the outbreak of the genocide and his journey traversing the continent to re-create a life for himself. Nahima's migrancy is informed by his trauma – it is still a South African experience re-membered by a traumatized memory. In my analysis of trauma, I am guided by the trauma

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[16] *I Want to go Home Forever*, 2019: 165

theorist Caruth's (2016) formulation offered in "*Unclaimed experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*:

> in its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. (p. 11)

Eaglestone (2008: 80) argues that, much like Holocaust autobiographies, "African trauma narratives explicitly aim to explain and historicize the events they narrate". Nahima's narrative of traumatic witnessing illuminates how migration traumas are re-lived in various ways in the diaspora. The narrative is also "concern[ed] not only [with] what the author can know and can legitimately tell, but also, as it were, moral and political issues" (Eaglestone 2008: 78). The structure of the story functions as a "re-construction of the self after the traumatic event" (Nayar 2020: 84). Eaglestone (2008: 79) cites this characteristic in trauma narratives in which the narrator "draws together" periods, histories and genres creating a "rhizomatic subject" (2008: 79). According to Loots et al. (2013), the rhizomatic self:

> has many possible entryways and every entry will lead to other connections, and different versions of selfhood in which the one is not more 'true' than the other. Which entryway is taken and which connections there are made during the speaking, depends on the context in which the telling takes place. (p. 5)

From this rhizomatic perspective, Nahima strategically shifts from the past to the present and from the present to the past to illustrate how the events are connected and inform each other temporally. This narrative strategy allows Nahima to derive meaning about the past and be political and personal about human rights violations. Elsewhere, Balaev (2008: 150) claims that "[r]emembrance of a traumatic event is always an approximate account of the past, since, traumatic experience precludes knowledge, and hence, presentation". However, Nahima demonstrates that the traumatic events can be represented through the mode of storytelling. Moreover, Nahima's story not only performs human rights discourse by merely disclosing the Rwanda genocide from a victim's perspective, but also, it transcends this capacity by performing a didactive role in the history of the Rwandan genocide and the conditions of refugee migrancy in South Africa by "show[ing] the world it is happening" (p. 163). The narrative functions as more than a re-construction of selfhood, but rather, documentation of history, displacement, and trauma.

Eaglestone (2008: 79) argues that in Holocaust genres, narrators often "discuss or explain wider historical events and movements" as methods of making sense of their present. Nahima's narration follows this formulation, as the story includes an epigraph chronicling the events leading to the genocide. It becomes clear that the intention of the story is not only to share experiences of being forced to the diaspora but also to grieve a past and "reflect nostalgia for future(s) lost" (Landau & Pampalone 2018: 3). Nahima frames his narration through the prism of human rights as natural and universal. In the natural school of thought, human rights are possessed "simply by being a human being" (Dembour 2010: 2). It follows that rights are inborne "entitlements…that exist independent of social recognition" (Dembour 2010: 3), which renders them absolute. Nahima problematizes thus:

> I do not understand why God lets bad things happen to human beings...you see that God's image is destroyed by some other God's image and then God keeps quiet ... then you tell me we are equal? We are equal where? (p. 156)

Through multiple rhetorical questions, the speaker raises fundamental questions and issues that challenge the human disposition towards naturalistic praxis of human rights (UDHR; Baxi 2007; Slaughter 2009; Stonebridge 2018). The phrase "where are we equal" in the extract constructs a self-narration that is grounded on raising questions about the universality of human rights and universal equality. This is buttressed by the Christian belief for humanity inscribed in the extract. The "transcendental source" (Dembour 2010: 3) reference to God, position Nahima questioning and challenging the commonsensical belief that rights are bestowed on humans by God. The biblical ideology holds that humanity is created in God's image. In this way then, all humans are supposedly created equally, deserving treatment on par with fellow humans. Thus, Nahima frames this question in relation to what he is not. As a survivor of the Rwandan genocide, Nahima's premise, reflects on the limits of this naturalistic belief of human rights.

Nahima further frames his story as a didactive narrative about the experiences of traumatic migrancy. He frames and constructs his story as a history lesson to his audience. The testimonio scholar, Nance (2006: 19) describes this layer of testimonio as:

> not only to educate readers about injustice but to persuade those readers to act. Given its goal of persuasion, testimonio is properly situated in the realm of rhetoric, which offers crucial analytical tools for approaching the genre on its own terms. (p. 19)

This is captured by Nahima's reflective thinking about the potential cause for xenophobia in South Africa:

> I think it is the lack of education. if it's possible for South Africans to know about foreigners and about other countries, and the history of those countries, then they will know if I say I'm from Rwanda, they will know exactly why I am here. They will know that I'm a refugee and not just a foreigner. (p. 166)

Significantly, Nahima deliberately borders and frames his identity as "a refugee and not just a foreigner" to reflect his conviction that as a refugee he deserves 'better' treatment and sympathy compared to other "foreigners" who might be diasporic by choice or for less disturbing compulsions. In its styling as a didactive testimonio, the life narrative places the refugee at the centre of human rights discourse by making it a lesson in history, of "knowing exactly why [they] are here" to the South African audience.

Pain is also a powerful theme in Nahima's story. He describes his life in Rwanda and South Africa as painful experiences. The gloomy descriptions such as "people were dying like flies, jump[ing] over dead bodies, sleeping in the forest, walking for two days" (p. 157—160) potentially moves the reader to solidarity with Nahima and other refugees around the world. According to Nayar, (2006: 90) "pain moves outward from the narrator to the narrator's community, where things that cannot be written about are written about". Similarly, Maclean (2008: 32) holds that the testimonio is "able to capture an unspeakable, incomprehensible and unbelievable reality". Nayar (2012: 242) refers to this narrative strategy as "durational time" which demonstrates "a resistance to forgetting…an event that has never stopped being an event". The suffering cannot be forgotten because it is a feature of Nahima's everyday life in South Africa, although not to the same degree. Though in exile, the trauma afflicts his daily life in physical and psychological ways. The hostile environment in South Africa, in which he is exploited, abused, and denied human rights exacerbates this traumatic migrancy.

Adjunct to this, Nahima ends his narrative with a plea to the human community for peace. He states that if he has one wish in the world, it would be that "[he] can be a peacemaker" (p. 167). In this way, the story is transformed into a human rights document. Equality, harmony, and peace are at the core of universal human rights. This wish, therefore, symbolizes the desire for refugees, such as Nahima to live without fear of violence and violations. This "wish" recalls the principles of human rights embedded in freedom from cruel and inhuman treatment. The following section

considers the story of Asad, a Somali refugee in South Africa. Unlike Nahima, his story focuses on inscribing various forms of dehumanization and violence on the Somali community in South Africa.

"One does not do that to a human being"[17]: Testimonio of rights in *A Man of Good Hope*

A Man of Good Hope is an autobiography by Asad Abdullahi, a Somali refugee living in Cape Town. The book is written by Jonny Steinberg, a researcher and an academic at the University of Cape Town. Research indicates that there is a long history of Somalia seeking refugees in South Africa, notably, since the outbreak of the civil war in Somalia in 1991 (Handmaker & Parsley 2001; Gastrow & Amit 2012). In South Africa, Somalis have established relations with other migrants and the host communities. In *A Man of Good Hope*, these social networks are illuminated in the depiction of Asad's life. Asad's clan identity as an AliYusef affords him ease of transnational mobility. The AliYusef network connects Asad to other AliYusef in the continent until he settles in South Africa. Upon arrival, his uncle assists him in getting his first spaza shop (convenient store) in operation. The spaza shop industry is principally dominated by Somalis (Gastrow & Amit 2012).

The spaza shop becomes an interactive site of social engagement between Asad and the community. However, the same spaza shop is also a dangerous site for the owners, due to its cash operation. Often, the stores are marginalized from society making them targets for "opportunistic robberies" (Gastrow & Amit 2012: 29). In the story, Asad is a witness to violence in the spaza shop, and turns victim of violence in his own spaza shop. Thus, the spaza shop is doubly a site of survival and of suffering. Despite Limbu's (2018: 80) warning that a number of refugee stories follow a particular formula of suffering and sadness which "follow the same pattern…[suggesting] an awareness that the narrative of violence and suffering can become stale and ineffective", my analysis reveals that the dynamics of east African migrants are complex, especially in narrativizing suffering and sadness. I begin with Asad's witnessing testimonio about a violent murder scene involving his uncle, Abdicuur. In this scene, Abdicuur is in his store in Port Elizabeth, when:

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[17] *A Man of Good Hope*, 2018. p. 231

> Five men had walked into the store and demanded money. Whether Abdicuur had tried to resist, he could not say, but the men opened fire, and Abdicuur had been shot nine times. Still, he was not dead, the man continued. He lived another ten to fifteen minutes. He was conscious for some of that time. (p. 19)

Following this murder, Asad realizes that the mortuary had performed a postmortem and/or harvested Abdiccur's organs without consent or knowledge of the family. As a family member, Asad is allowed to view the body of Abdicuur when he is brought home for the burial. He notices:

> two wounds in his chest and two on his left side. They were small and neat, almost as if a craftsman had made them, labouring delicately with much care. Then I saw the stitches from where they had cut him open after he died…..it is against Islam to remove organs from the body. I do not believe what they were doing was asserting the cause of death. I believe that because we are Somali and defenseless they were taking the organs for other people to use. We do not accept this. … [t]hey set it as a chance: "These people do not have anybody to stand up for them. They do not know their rights". (p. 197-198)

This affective description of the corpse's condition transforms Asad's narration into a "collective narration [which] stand[s] in for the whole social group" (Nayar 2020: 85). It morphs from an "I" narration into a collective "we" to signal that he is standing in for the Somalis who suffer from cultural violations in new settings, especially in South Africa. In the instance where his "brother" is mutilated, Asad speaks for the dead, on his behalf, and for him. Here, Asad assumes the authoritative role of witnessing. Douglas (in Jensen 2018: 187) observes that in "many post-trauma autobiographies, graphic details of physical abuse are used to 'speak for' the traumatized author/victim, but often in a flattened narrative voice that lists atrocities without commenting upon them". As a form of witnessing, Asad's narration speaks for the silent/silenced Abdicuur. We notice how his account carries an affective dimension; "feeling deeply about the surgical work performed on the corpse" (p. 197). Although he stands on the margins to report about the incident involving Abdicuur, his narration is transformed into a "documentary impulse" to borrow from Caminero-Santangelo (2009: 7), weaving together strands of the "brotherhood" (UDHR) of Somali communal testimony. This aesthetic of suffering enters what Limbu (2018: 83) calls a "global public sphere" in human rights discourse. The layered images of violence captured here, as well

as the "witnessing function" (Maclean 2008: 46), potentially appeal for sympathy in the global community against violent acts on refugees.

Significantly, Abdicuur is shot "nine times" in the safety and privacy of his spaza shop. This incident takes place during the day, in the neighborhood he has worked in for more than three years. We are told that no person from the community assists or empathizes with the Somalis. This act reflects, what Cikara and Fiske (2012: 63), in another context, call "schadenfreude", which "refers to the perceiver's experience of pleasure at another's misfortune". In the context of the widely held stereotypical view of the African migrants as "makwerekwere", this community response is in line with stereotyping, dehumanization, and animalization. I use animalization here to denote the animalistic etymology of the word 'makwerekwere', which implies African foreigners' linguistic dialects as unintelligible and mimicking animal sounds. Because of this formulation, this community does not 'feel' pity for the Somalis because they are stereotypically "makwerekwere" and therefore, lesser humans. Their lack of reaction carry with it implicit messages that, the context of death notwithstanding, Abdicuur deserves pain and suffering. Members of the community are presented as sadists 'enjoying' this misfortune. We are told that after the incident they "walked around his body…helping themselves to bags of mealie-meal, to frozen chickens, to airtime…" (p. 249). Furthermore, this scene reflects on the callous attitude of entitlement of some of the communities in South African. On one level, they are 'entitled' to Abdicuur's supplies in the store. At another level, they are 'entitled' to Abdicuur's body parts. Either way, they own Abdicuur and his possessions, because the land upon which he runs his business is theirs.

Adjunct to this, Abdiccur's illegal postmortem examination or extraction of body parts buttresses South Africa's 'skilled' and subtle forms of dehumanization. As Asad shares with the reader, this practice is against the Islam religion. This practice is also in conflict with Article 18 of the UDHR which states that "everyone has a right to freedom of …religion". The fact that the examination took place without the family's consent is violation and violence that humans universally can identify with. In this way, Asad's narration evokes what Hunt (2007: 37) terms "imagined empathy"; that is the ability of the reader or listener to be empathetic towards the other who experiences forms of suffering. Hunt (2007: 37) elaborates on empathy when he says:

> it is not imagined, not in the sense that it is made up, but in the sense that empathy requires a leap of faith of imagining that someone else is like you. Accounts of torture produced this imagined empathy through views of pain. (p. 37)

In the scene cited above, the religion and culture of the Somali community are undermined. Asad expresses refugee vulnerabilities in the statement "one does not do that to a human being" (p. 231). By arguing how one human 'should not' treat another human because of their shared humanity, Asad performs the ritual of "sentimental humanitarianism" (Limbu 2018: 93) that invokes a sense of moral justice for the refugee through rationalizing what constitutes a human. The story has the metaphor of harvesting, which highlights the precariousness and vulnerability of refugees in the context of the inhospitable characteristics of South Africa, as their lives, body parts and material possessions can be harvested any time against their will.

"Show him your humanity"[18]: Violence of/and dehumanization

Asad's narration also centres on the experiences of migrant displacements of 2008, in South Africa. This element is important in my reading to explore how representations of forced dislocation affect the realization of human rights in the context of mobilities. My reading focuses on the connections between refugee-ness and certain conditions that result in violent dehumanization. I use dehumanization as a conceptual tool to read some of Asad (and other Somali refugees') experiences as denial of full 'humanness'. Like the torture and the genocide novels, Asad's testimonio represents the conditions in which "individuals and communities are excluded from the very category of human" (Nayar 2016: xiii). Asad's descriptions of his refugee life, especially the use of poetic diction, "allows us, indeed forces us, to see the interconnectedness of suffering, the mutuality of vulnerability, the similar but not identical instances of resistance across different socio-political-economies, bodies and contexts" (Nayar 2020: 83). My reading in this section focuses on the notion of 'dehumanization', to illustrate how the Somali migrants are denied moral consideration through the experiences narrated by Asad. Rai et al. (2017: 8511) hold that the processes of dehumanization are linked to violence, "caus[ing] perpetrators to perceive victims as subhuman or nonhuman … not entitled to … sympathy, thus enabling perpetrators to act out their violent impulses free of inhibition and without remorse". In this line of thinking,

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[18] *A Man of Good Hope* (2018) p. 250.

dehumanization takes away the 'human' from migrants. Oliver (2011: 84) writes, "by excluding a person from our moral community, it becomes possible to act inhumanly towards them, or else to allow harm to be done to them by others, without invoking any sense of moral inhibition or self-reproach". As the foregoing discussion illustrates, the community responses to the violent acts dehumanize not only the African migrants further but in a case and curse of irony, the very hostile host whose hostility is an expression and betrayal of his/her inhumanity.

In Asad's account, after the 2008 displacements, he together with his family, are relocated from the inner city of Cape Town to Blikkiesdorp. This space of relocation is an important starting point on the layers of migrant dehumanization processes. Blikkiesdorp represents and is representative of the social alienation of dislocated African migrants. Read in the context of "metaphors of inhumanity" offered by Oliver (2011: 96), Blikkiesdorp points to the spatial inhumanity of refugees. In the first chapter of the book, Steinberg writes that Blikkiesdorp, "Tin Can Town … has been described as Cape Town's asshole, the muscle through which the city shits out the parts it does not want" (p. xi). Steinberg's scatological descriptions through metaphors of defecation, highlight the degree to which the residents of Blikkiesdorp are dehumanized and equated to excrement. The language is artistically and deliberately crafted in grotesque images to potentially shock and repulse the reader. With this vivid description, Steinberg stimulates the reader's imagination to perceive the conditions of being relegated to repugnant status. Consequently, the reader is compelled to judge the conditions of refugees' dislocation as a deliberately designed exclusionary exercise in South Africa. As Oliver (2011: 85) argues, to be dehumanized is to be "excluded from the community". It is to be perceived by the "in-group" as outside the moral kinship on the scope of justice, and thus, as "a legitimate target for active oppression and exclusions" (Oliver 2011: 85). We notice how the geographical location and the social setting of Blikkiesdorp exclude its occupants. The residential 'houses' are also built to reflect on the inhumanness of the place. The one-room structures are also made of thin sheets of conjugated zinc. Levenson (2017: 1) calls this condition "living on the fringe". The "ultimate ghetto" (p. xi) where there is rampant crime, poverty, and no economic opportunities. The images of dirt, precarity and crime ridden symbolize a place that is marginal, dehumanizing, and dehumanized.

Another layer of dehumanization in Asad's narration occurs on the level of migrant bodies. One of the ways in which people dehumanize others is to strip them of human capabilities such as the

ability to feel pain and experience emotions. This prejudice marks those who are dehumanized as nonhuman and, therefore, undeserving of compassion. According to Rai et al. (2017: 8511) at one level, dehumanization "causes perpetrators to perceive victims as nonhuman and, therefore, not entitled to moral obligation or sympathy, thus enabling perpetrators to act out their violent impulses free of inhibition and without remorse". The Somali community is target of violent impulses. In the framework by Rai et al. (2007) the perpetrators (often black South Africans) consider the Somalis radically nonhuman. It becomes possible to incite violence simply because they have relegated the Somalis to the lower strata of subhuman, and thus unworthy to be treated with human and humane considerations. In the story, Asad is a victim of different forms of violence such as verbal, physical, and psychological. Here, I focus on the instances in which Asad is a victim of physical attacks and testifies about them.

Like Abdicuur's scene in the above section, Asad narrates a violent scene during his stay in Mabopane where he owned a spaza shop and a pickup truck. One evening after he came back from buying supplies, a group of men accosted him and his assistant with guns. They wanted to seize the vehicle and money in the store. The perpetrators apprehended Asad and his assistant and physically assaulted them. Amid this confrontation:

> Asad found his assailant's eyes. It was an instinctive thing to do. A man had just smashed your arm as if you are a carcass. You show him your humanity; you do not even know that you are doing it. The second their eyes met. Asad says, 'he grew very, very angry. (p. 248)

This extract recalls the argument by Eze (2021: 4) that human rights stories function to "draw attention to the fact that, they (storytellers), too, are humans and therefore deserve better". In this scene, Asad attempts to appeal to the reader's humanness by 'showing [his] humanity. Aesthetically, this 'human' imagery functions to affectively mobilize the reader to recognition and contempt for the perpetrators. Asad makes use of the vocabulary of humanness, negating animalism, saying he is not a "carcass". In this logic, not being a dead animal makes him a human, and therefore, not deserving of this 'inhuman' attack. His sentiments are in the recognition of humanity that is annihilated.

Importantly, the scene occurs while there are customers outside of the spaza shop. Some of them are regular customers and usually engage in conversation with Asad. However, when this incident occurs, they are outside watching without intervening. Moreover, the robbers invite the onlookers

to participate by "opening the door" (p. 249) and calling to the audience; "does anyone want anything?" (p. 249). This call and invitation by robbers turn the whole incident into a community act of robbery. By collectivising the robbery, they are merely triggering an emotion that has been lurking in every other member of the community, waiting for a trigger. Asad tells us that the community accepts the invitation and loot goods. What is important here, is how violence against those dehumanized is regarded as "morally justified, obligatory, and even praiseworthy" (Rai et al. 2017: 8511). This is exemplified by the community not interceding in the robbery, but instead "justifies and glorifies" (Rai et al. 2017: 8511) it by participating and gaining from it. This perspective relates to Oliver's (2011: 86) argument that dehumanization enables "persecutors to commit [crimes], and for bystanders to stand by without objection and remorse". This is because dehumanization functions at a communal level, where a group of people develop an 'enemy image' of the other group. Thus, it makes it possible for the robbers and the community members that participate in the looting, to act in conflict with the moral code of humanity. This violent act and the community's reaction are representative of South Africa's inhospitable attitudes towards migrants. We notice here a level of sadistic relationality. The community derives 'pleasure' in seeing the foreigner suffer. In this way, *A Man of Good Hope* is transformed from a 'story about suffering' to a palimpsest of human rights.

Conclusion

I have made two main arguments in this chapter. First, human rights discourse and principles as declared in the UDHR are riddled with contradictions, especially in the context of migration. I have demonstrated that the discourse of human rights is fundamentally ambiguous in a manner that makes their realization an impossibility for African immigrants in South Africa. This further demonstrates that the idea of a South African rainbow nation falls short in the context of policies and procedures of migrants, especially refugee management and assimilation.

Secondly, I have argued that literary texts have the potential to illuminate and address situations where we can engage with the abstract concepts of human rights, thereby demonstrating complex engagements with reality. In the stories studied, the tropes of human rights violation and hopes for better futures (in South Africa and elsewhere) occupy the life writings I have examined in this chapter. My reading of selected texts as autobiographies and testimonies has allowed my inquiry with the literature that reveals these situations and conditions that testify to the precariousness of

immigrants and refugees in South Africa. My discussion of *Going Home* centred on the threats of human rights and the 'inhuman' consequences where the state sets laws that are against the refugee. Esther's story revealed that the act of speaking/writing in diasporic settings, when read in the context of human rights services, is an act of righting. For instance, her emotive testimonio of appealing to the reader to "see" her predicament takes form of a rights' claim. Nahima's story employs the metaphor of "we too, are humans" (Eze 2021) thereby complicating the refugee narrative by affectively targeting readers' moral consciousness. Thus, Nahima's story illustrates that the traumas of human rights violations are fluid. Nahima's testimony suggests that the responses to genocide are long-term and can be relived in a space such as South Africa that is anti-refugee. In *A Man of Good Hope*, I sought to explore the questions of whether there is universal humanity that could lead to a fair and just migrant experience for the immigrant fleeing war. Asad's story revealed that this idea of shared humanity is a myth. Furthermore, Asad's story reflected the historical and wider, deep-seated stereotypes and how they function strategically to strip the refugee of rights. In the same story, the concept of dehumanization from a human rights perspective was explored. I demonstrated how forms of dehumanization in social spaces and language marginalizes and at times lead to violent Othering. Thus, my analysis in this chapter recalls Nayar's (2016: xii) assertion that "to imagine the human, is to imagine human rights".

Chapter 5: "migrant blues"[19], immigrant ice"[20]: Journeys, Home(lessness), Nostalgia, Fear and Language in selected African migrant poems

Introduction

Recent literary studies on intra-African migrations have predominantly focused on prose narratives, especially the novel form. In the introduction of a special issue on African and Diasporan Poetry, in the *Journal of Literary Studies*, the guest editors, Vambe and Musvoto lament the scarcity of poetry analysis in the scholarship on African migration. They hold that the scholarly inclination towards prose narratives, "create[s] the impression that genres such as poetry and drama have less significance in the creation of African and diasporic consciousness" (2017: 78). In the South African academic space, specifically, studies on migrant poetry have received limited critical attention. Thus, the concerns of this chapter are two-pronged. Firstly, I respond to the glaring lack of studies on migrants' experiences via the poetic form. Secondly, I examine how selected poems portray certain conditions and situations of migrancy in South Africa through the evocative aesthetics of poetic devices.

This chapter analyses selected poems from *Splinters of a Mirage Dawn: Anthology of Migrant Poetry of South Africa* (2013) and Tariro Ndoro's *Agringada: Like a Gringa like a foreigner* (2019). From the collection *Splinters of a Mirage Dawn: Anthology of Migrant Poetry of South Africa* (2013) a few poems have been the subject of academic inquiry in Abodunrin's (2018) article titled "'Why Are You Here?': Multiculturalism and Migration – A Study of Migrant Poetry from South Africa". In the article, Abodunrin (2018) reads the selected poems for the ways they creatively "contextualize contemporary migrant experience in South Africa" (2018: 63). Thus, this current research shows that Ndoro's collection has not received robust scholarly attention yet. This glaring gap buttresses my argument on the limited interest in migrant poetry. Thus, my chapter examines how poetry as an artistic form of expression conveys the varied range of migrant experiences as they relate to the South African context.

Splinters of a Mirage Dawn: an Anthology of Migrant Poetry of South Africa (2013), (henceforth *Splinters*) contains poems from migrants from around the world living and/or working in South

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[19] d'Abdon, R., 2013. *Migrant blues,* in *Splinters*.
[20] Spanoudes, R. N., 2013. *Immigrant ice*, in *Splinters*.

Africa. One of the editors of the collection, Amitabh Mitra, notes that the collection is of "[m]igrant poets living in South Africa, their poems relating to everyday mind …" (p. 10) as they negotiate their existence in South Africa. The biographies of the poets are varied – they include academics, creative writers, and teachers. Fellow editor, Naomi Nkealah writes that the collection is "born out of a need to document, in poetic form, the vast experiences of migrants living in South Africa" (p. 11). In this way, one can view the collection as a form of archival material that reflects on the contemporary conditions of migrants and migrancy. Thus, the collection embraces multiple voices, which provide my chapter with polyphonic perspectives on the South African diasporic space. Tariro Ndoro is a Zimbabwean poet and storyteller. She holds a Master of Creative Arts from Rhodes University. Ndoro's debut poetry collection, *Agringada: like a gringa, like a foreigner* (2019), (henceforth *Agringada)* won the inaugural NAMA Award for outstanding poetry book. As the title suggests, the collection is concerned with the 'migrant blues', specifically with the exploration of dislocation, (un)belonging, language and exile in its many forms. The poems oscillate between history and the contemporary. Although the poems are not chronically structured, they are semi-autobiographical in their settings and dominant choice of personae. For example, the personae are a young girl, a teenager at school and a woman in the kitchen. The diverse settings of Mbare, Harari, Beitbridge, Francistown, and Joza Township are suggestive of the different mobilities in migrant lives. As Cillers (2020: 121) notes in her review of *Agringada* (2019), "to reimagine what it means to belong— beyond the binaries, the borders, the rigidity that seeks to cement belonging but in reality, only displaces us and alienates us from the world". The collection reimagines the concepts of binaries and borders by cutting across poetic forms and languages. It demonstrates this by its polyvocality, not only in narrative voices but also in language. Although it is in English, it also contains Shona, Sesotho, Zulu, Mexican, Spanish, and French phrases, and words. This linguistic medley points to the multiple and sometimes conflicting notions of the diasporic condition.

"raven's two voices"[21]: On migrant Journeys

In my analysis of two novels focusing on representations of borders in chapter 2, one of the key aspects that came out was the delimitation of the geographical border, in which focus spotlighted the theme of movement, geographical borders and the subsequent crossings of those borders. This

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[21] Mwanaka T. R, 2013. *Journey to South Africa,* in *Splinters.*

section centres on my reading and interpretation of the selected poems as musings of alternative imagined sites on the affective layer of diasporic journeys. My focal poems are Makombe's "Crossing the Limpopo" and Mwanaka's "Journey to South Africa". My analysis draws on Brah's (1996: 179) idea that "at the heart of the notion of diaspora is the image of a journey". I use the images and evocations of the journey motif to guide my exploration of the intersections of departures, journeys, and diasporic living situations in South Africa.

Mwanaka's "Journey to South Africa" and Makombe's "Crossing the Limpopo", are free verse poems which mediate the journeys from Zimbabwe to South Africa. The titles are transitional in nature, carrying in them evocations of journeying. Thus, I analyse them concurrently to explore the nuances of the journey motif in the migration processes. In "Journey to South Africa", the persona provides a graphic portrayal of the social and political push factors towards emigration:

> Out of "there is no cholera in Zimbabwe"
> Out of the dead man from cholera
> Out of the dead woman from HIV AIDS
> Out of dead children from hunger
> Out of the dead young children from political killings
> Out of little children become war soldiers
> Out of the vengeances of Mugabe's CIO
> Out of the beast ZANUPF, police and army
> Out of a country now locked in political gridlocks (l. 5—14)

The narrator is styled as a "raven's two voices" (l. 3) and this creates the impression that they possess insights, from a bird's eye view which span across time and space, hence the "Out of" impetuous motif is not limited to a particular history and place. The raven's observation of social and political dystopia leads to the conclusion that it is "chaos" (l. 22) in Zimbabwe which "leads across the Limpopo River" (l. 23). Makombe's first-person point of view narration portrays the moral and aesthetic agency to the dispersal as a response to political and social conditions detailed in "Journey to South Africa" above. The effects of the political and social conditions, find an affective outlet through the speaking 'I' in "Crossing the Limpopo":

> The heat
> the burning heat in the sky
> the blisters under my feet
> the tight knot in my belly

> the fatigue, the anger, the fear…
>
> i feel excruciating pain in my joints
>
> i can only go ahead, a man can only go forward (l. 1—7)

The tone of resentment of the speaker in "Crossing the Limpopo" is a direct consequence of the unbearable conditions which push the speaker in "Journey to South Africa" "Out of" their "country". In the above quotation the alliterative, "burning, blisters" provides the inhospitable mood indicative of a country analogized as a "burning nightmare" that turns its citizens into "marauding herds" driving them "Out" on journeys in search of better lives elsewhere.

The two poems, evoke ambivalent representations of journeying to South Africa. Although the speakers voice their journeys under "fevered breath" and "hushed voices" expressing "[their] wounded feeling[s]", "anguished cr[ies]" and "the excruciating pain" of leaving their country, they are nonetheless hopeful of the future (l. 4, l. 6, l. 20, l. 32 & l. 38). They share "silenced dreams" of "milk and honey ahead" (l. 10) and "splendor of […] new life" (l. 14) at the imagined and imaginary good life awaiting at the journey's end. In "Crossing the Limpopo", the speaker's mood changes from melancholy to enthusiasm throughout the poem. In the first 9 lines, the speaker is anxious and enraged about the journey, ending the grumble with the line, "I think of home where i can't return". This mood takes a turn from line 10:

> …bread costs only five rand
>
> Five thousand a fortnight
>
> Ah! if the white man likes your hand…
>
> I look at the splendor of my new life (l. 11—14)

The poem ends in the same hopeful, joyous and optimistic mood, with the persona making a direct address to the host nation, "South Africa here i come" (l. 29). Thus, for the speakers, the journey is representative of both the literal journey from the original place, and the imagined better lives in the host country.

One of the key features in both poems is the central theme of the Limpopo River as a facet of the journey. In chapter 2 of this thesis, I demonstrated how *The Gold Diggers* uses the Limpopo River as simultaneously a link and a boundary to South Africa. The poems also follow this script of the hazardous mobilities symbolized by the Limpopo River. However, in the poems, it functions as both a represented place and as a metaphor for the unpleasant feelings that the speakers associate with transit moments. In other words, as much as the Limpopo River is a hazardous place for illegal border crossing, the speakers allude to it to analogize the trip across borders. In "Crossing

the Limpopo", the speaker describes the river as "fuming and frothing" (l. 24), while the speaker in "Journey to South Africa" uses the metaphor of a "churn" to create the image of endangerment. These images give way to horrors: Limpopo River is "now a mixture of silt, blood, bones and scars/Where other traumatised adults giggle chorus of grief" (l. 38 & 39). In these lines, fashioned as elegies, the speaker bemoans the loss of lives in the river. The poem deploys the metaphor of a 'giggling chorus' to associate the notions of 'leaving home' with a feeling of immeasurable sorrow and loss. Similarly, the poem "Journey to South Africa" evokes loss through the metaphor of a raven. The speaker says, "So we call out like a raven/In ravens two voices" (l. 2.& 3). The 'two voices' become the speaker's vocalization of the double despondency of living at home and the 'dark' journey ahead, which is alluded to through the repetition of the word "raven". This ominous symbolism of the raven is reflected in the connotative meaning of lines such as "darkened leaves/dark nights/dense forests" (l. 28, l. 31 & l. 32), which describe the "other side". In the following section, I shift focus to the conflicted and conflicting idea of 'being at home' as conceptualized in the selected poems.

"Why are you here?"[22]: On diasporic Home(lessness)

One of the central themes in migration discourse is the idea of home and its relationship to place and identity. I am interested in how the speakers in the selected poems conceptualize the idea of home. Thus, my analysis in this section focuses on the exploration of different notions of 'being at home' or what Brah (1996: 176) would refer to as a "homing desire". This concept is useful for my analysis in that it advances "a distinction between 'feeling at home' and declaring a place as home" (Brah 1996: 176), which is a common conundrum in the selected poems. In addition, I analyse the concept of home from a diasporic viewpoint, following on Brah's (1997: 192) theorization of home as that "which, on one hand is a mythical place of desire in the diasporic imagination, a place of return… [a] geographical territory … a place of "origin" and on the other hand, … a lived experience of locality, its sounds and smells, its heat and dust". Here, I seek to analyse Makombe's "Why are you here?" and Ndoro's "Instructional" on two related strands. The first strand is a question; where is home? I attend to this question from the vantage point of the diasporic location. The second strand is an extended, compound question; what are the feelings associated with South Africa as a home(s) when one is away from the 'home' home? I pose these

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[22] Makombe, R., 2013. *Why are you here?,* in *Splinters.*

questions to explore negotiations of belonging, longing, and homing in the diasporic space. In other words, the overarching question examines how, at the intersection of space, form, and content, we can locate a discourse and even epistemology of (re)knowing South Africa as a diasporic home.

"Why are you here?" resembles the 'journey' poems analysed in the previous section, because of its interest in the question of locality. In its title and form, the poem evokes a notion of home and belonging in the context of a threatening foreign space. In a descriptive semi-Haiku, the speaker constructs the diasporic home in terms of the homeland, as the following lines reveal:

> Please Sir, I can't go back to that country
> Look at the boils on my back
> If you send me there, they will finish me off (l. 1—3)

In these lines, the poet depicts the homeland as a place of no return. Through the structure of the poem, the poet evokes this notion of home as a place to which one cannot return. The 3 lined poem, with no rhyme scheme, alludes to the ambivalence of home in the diaspora and the home in "that country". The brevity of words represents the crisis of place-making. Although the speaker does not make a clear indication of the context of their plea to stay in South Africa, one can infer, from their fear of returning, that the lines are a direct response to the question 'why are you here?' Seemingly mundane, this question is not innocent; it is connotative of the hostile environment that is unreceptive to threatened migrants seeking asylum from their repressive home government. The poem's opening phrase, "Please Sir" treads the thin line between begging and pleading, and its tone of desperation metaphorizes the relationship between the host and the migrant where the latter resign his/her life to the hands of the former who holds the power to decide the fate and future of the latter. Given the backdrop of the speaker's homing history revealed in "boils on [the] back", the adverb 'Please' reflects the intensity of persecution referenced in the graphic imagery of boils and the fear of being 'finished off'.

Adjunct to this, Ndoro's "Instructional" offers a 'manual' of instructions on how to navigate 'home away from home'. One can read the poem as a thematic response to Makombe's "Why are you here" analysed above. It reads as a manual or migrant's guide on 'how to be here'. In a free verse form, "Instructional" plays with the idea of the diasporic space as a surrogate home. The notion of

a surrogate home is buttressed by the 'instructional' tone of the poem as well as its didacticism whereby the speaker lists the mechanics and mechanisms of re-creating the homeland in the host nation. Boym (2005: 19) contends that nostalgia (a common condition in diasporic subjects), is sometimes experienced through preoccupations with "emblems and rituals of home and homeland in an attempt to conquer and spatialize time". The speaker in "Instructional" uses the metaphor of 'instructions' to allude to the need for 'learning' in the process of forging surrogate homes in the diaspora. This is captured in the line "like an epiphyte your roots are grounded in no soil" (l. 23). Much like a surrogate, an epiphyte is a plant that grows upon another plant for physical support. Ahmed reminds us that one of the ways of conceptualizing home is through familiarity, thus it is a "place that is comfortable and comforting" (1999: 330). In the same vein, the speaker in *"*Instructional" advises the migrant on how to create familiarity as a pre-requisite for constructing the diasporic home. The speaker is sensitive to the "brutalities of binaries" (l. 6), which accompany diasporic belonging. Hence, the warning that the diasporic home is created "within the unhomely". The poem uses the 'homing surrogacy' items to create prosody in the poem. The phrases, which are less than four words each, strengthen the idea of home and homing in the poem. These lines, "plate full of sadza/surname, ancestry/in speech in ancestry/brothers (l. 2, 11, 18 & 26) reinforce the themes captured in the poem by creating breaks in the stanzas. In the first stanza, the speaker portrays diasporic existence as unpleasant. Thus, these 'instructions' are designed to teach/instruct "countrymen" (l. 1) on how to "appease" (l. 1) the conditions of homesickness. According to the speaker, cultural rituals such as sharing food from home can replicate home "in a plateful of sadza /…with a side of tripe" (l. 1 & 2). The staple food and its accompanying casserole are for physiological use, more so than they are for pacifying the feelings of homesickness. This is further revealed by the identities of the cooks of these dishes, "women with names like Shuvai" (l. 3 & 4). Those who share similarities with the migrant create an atmosphere of familiarity of home. The speaker (an implied Shona migrant) says, "look for Shona girls to pair with" for "a kind of shelter" (l. 5 & l. 6). In other lines, the speaker refers to "brothers, uncles, fathers" as proxy family members in the imagined home. The diction of 'pair' and 'shelter' further alludes to diasporic mechanisms of manufacturing familiarity. In the same vein, familiar "Shona girls" (l. 5) become sites of safety and the homely. This idea of home is further reinforced by "volumes of sungura music and dancehall" (l. 7 & l. 9) – a reference to some of the musical genres popular in the Shona culture.

Thus, music, especially the culture of music as a collective expression of "allegiance to country" (l. 7) placates the homing desire.

In the third stanza, the speaker advocates for ancestral autochthony as an indispensable element of home. Addressing the migrant, the speaker says:

> soothe these sons of the soil who are magnetized to your name
> surname, ancestry
> …..
> who call each other wezhira, regardless of clan and totem and village
> and name (l. 10—16)

In this way, the migrants understand home as ancestral roots in the homeland, which provide imaginative resources to reconstruct the home away from home. The phrase "sons of the soil" (l. 20) is symbolic of land and having one national identity. Hence, a shared 'soil/land' to which they belong. On the other hand, referring to the community of migrants as "sons of the soil" implies that the cohort exist in a locality which is not "the soil" of the 'home' home. Thus, the migrants share a camaraderie by virtue of ethnicity and place of birth. Considering that the speaker is in the diaspora, the "names, surnames, totems, clan names" function as makeshift sources of collective identification in processes of re-making home. Therefore, in the diaspora, the affectionate group reference "wezhira" transforms from a specific identity of Shona-Karanga speakers from the interior of the Masvingo province in Zimbabwe, to encompass cross-border 'home' acquaintanceship. In their handling of the home motif, the poems "Why are you here?" and "Instructional" reveal the intrinsically connected notions of homesickness and nostalgia. In the following section, I shift focus from the ideas of homes and imagined homes to the trope of nostalgia.

Nostalgic imaginations of home in "Far From Home" and "Nostalgia"

In the previous section, especially in my analysis of "Instructional", I demonstrated "homing desires", to borrow from Brah (1996: 177), that drive the migrant to rebuild an imaginary homeland as a coping mechanism of appeasing homesickness. The cultures of food, music, and proxy 'family members' when looked at difference, are illustrations and recreations betraying nostalgia for the past, the present and the future. According to Turner (2005: 83) [n]ostalgia, from "the Greek *nostos*, "to return home," and *algia*, "a sorrowful or distressing condition or illness", means "a state of homesickness". For Boym (2008: 83) in *The Future of Nostalgia,* nostalgia is a complex

"iconic, inconclusive and fragmentary" experience. Boym (2008) further differentiates between two types of nostalgic namely, reflective and restorative nostalgia. For Boym (2008: 83) [r]eflective nostalgia "has a capacity to awaken multiple planes of consciousness". Furthermore, it is the "[d]efamiliarization and sense of distance tha drive [nostalgics] to tell their story, to narrate the relationship between past, present and future" (Boym 2008: 83). This is reflected and reflective in the 'nostalgic' themes and the tones of "Far From Home" and "Nostalgia", especially in the portrayal of the relationship with the home left behind. Ladino (2004: 9) argues that "all nostalgia is a form of longing". This means that the sentiments and feelings of nostalgia transcend spaces, times, and experiences. In "Far From Home" by Moeno and "Nostalgia" by Nyoni, nostalgia implies times, home spaces, peoples and their complex intersections in the negotiation of the diaspora.

In "Far from home", the speaker attempts to reconcile with the diasporic feelings of being 'far from home'. For the speaker, nostalgia is a sorrowful feeling that stems, not from being far from home, but rather, from being from the future home imagined. Written in two stanzas and narrated in a solemn tone, the poem portrays a troubling sense of the condition of nostalgia in the context of the diaspora. In the first stanza, the speaker lyrically laments nostalgia as a tormenting feeling:

> Harrows unheard of
> They stack up against all known odds
> And bow to the thud of thunder bolt
> It strikes deep and dares to sunder emotions from self
> They say it comes and goes
> But might it be here to stay? (l. 1—6)

The speaker uses the metaphor of thunder to mediate the condition of reflective nostalgia. In the above stanza, the implied meanings of the 'harrows stack[ing] up' are the tortures of nostalgic feelings which are vividly imagined in line 3 as "the thud of thunder bolt". Although in line 1 the speaker claims that these harrows are 'unheard of', line 3 reveals how these 'harrows' can be 'felt'. The assonance in the phrase "thud of thunder" evokes the sensations of an explosion. In the following line, "deep and dares", the consonance further creates a symbolic sensory effect of nostalgia as a harrowing experience. Thus, the diasporic space, revealed in the phrases "foreign land" (l. 11), and "long cruel journey" (l. 12), are the sources of the speaker's discontent. The picture one gets is that nostalgia splits the migrant's consciousness of being. This can be inferred

from the phrase "sunders emotions from the self" (l. 4). Hence, the speaker compares nostalgia to thunder, which causes a blast of emotions. The last two lines are a reflection of the gripping effects of being far from home. The rhetorical question "But might it be here to stay?" (l. 6), is aesthetically deployed to represent the nostalgic condition in relation to the diasporic state of limbo.

In the second and last stanza, the speaker is nostalgic for an imagined "home elsewhere" (Nyambi et al. 2020: 83), a recuring motif in migrant literature:

> I begged and begged on fortune
> I told him: fly me off to
> A life of bounteous bargains
> Heralding prosperity upon days yet to rise
> After all, from a foreign land I embarked
> On a long cruel journey
> But it whispered still, this is not your home child! (l. 7—13)

Thus, the speaker is requesting fortune to fly the self "home". This version of the home is the desired 'home' home as revealed by the phrase "bountenous bargains" (l. 9). What we can infer from the lines above is that the speaker is restless in South Africa and, therefore, wishes to undertake a journey that leads elsewhere. This stanza is also concerned with the concept of home. Lines 10—13 reveal this preoccupation in the diction, "days yet to rise, land and home" (l. 10 & 11), signaling the sentiment of a home missed and longed for. I have noted, earlier on in this chapter, the close links between the ideas of home and nostalgia. This stanza reveals these links, especially how nostalgia can be a yearning for the homely or a place that migrants feel 'at home', not necessarily the yearning for a return to the original 'home'.

Similarly, in a poem titled "Nostalgia", Philani Amadeus Nyoni frames the condition of nostalgia through the prism of the past, the present and the future. In free verse form, "Nostalgia" mediates the painful state of being a diasporic subject. The first stanza is concerned with the conditions of the diasporic home. The second stanza reflects on the conditions of the "other side of home" (l. 1), which refers to the home before trans-national migration. Unlike "Far From Home", "Nostalgia" places emphasis on the condition of nostalgia as psychological longing rather than a geographical longing. The speaker opens the poem with: "And what of the night that beacons me home?" (l. 1). In this line, the conjunction "And" is used to connect the spatial setting (South Africa) with the imagined 'home' setting. In the first stanza, through magical realism, the speaker deploys the

metaphor of darkness to explore diasporic nostalgia as a dark existence associated with migrant lives. The metaphor of darkness metaphor the stanza. The speaker makes references to the "night that beacons [them] home?/spectacle of the night/cloak of dark/blackness" (l. 1, l. 4, l. 12 & l. 13). Apart from the diction, the nocturnal animals: "owl/crickets" further allude to the darkness/night metaphor. Thus, for the speaker, being a diasporic subject in South Africa is a fearsome and 'dark' form of existence.

The speaker deploys prosody and cadence to create rhythmic feelings of vulnerability. Below is an excerpt to demonstrate:

> Beyond these rogues that deceive
> Under the cloak of dark I still hunger
> For that palatable blackness pouring out minute flavours
> Of silence, the burst of pods in time-conscious continuity,
> The call of night bather who leave tell-tale
> Froth on the rims of puddles,
> Tinkling crickets calling their mates to ball,
> The distant bellowing danger juxtaposed
> With the safety of family laughter. (l. 11—19)

The first three lines, and their lack in punctuation, place emphasis on the despair of existing in a diaspora location. This creates a reminiscent tone. The first three lines flow into each other, ending in the fourth line with "silence", thus creating a pace of despair that falls into rhythmic 'silence' or pause. The subsequent lines use commas to break the flow of the poem. Significantly, in these lines, despair is explored through the metaphors of "burst/froth/tinkling/bellowing" to create images of the volatile nature of nostalgia. Adjunct to this, the diasporic space is also represented as dangerous. We notice how the speaker represents the relationalities through the metaphor of "all-seeing owl rules/ those googles turn man to mouse" (l. 3 & 4). Here the speaker is referring to the immigrant as a mouse playing hide-and-seek with the police, thus alluding to the vulnerability of diasporic existence. The vulnerability coupled with the nostalgia for safety is metaphorised as a "pouncing paranoia" (l. 5). Hence, these feelings can be soothed by the "safety of family laughter" (l. 19).

For the speaker, this family laughter is located on "the other side of home" (l. 26) to which he dedicates the second stanza. The 'home' to which the speaker refers in this second stanza is one of "ancestors" (l. 34). This means it is the home they originate from. We have inferred from the

analysis of the first stanza that the speaker experiences painful nostalgia in the present space. The second stanza reminisces on the pain and nostalgia of the home left behind. However, this is not merely done as a reflective exercise, but rather as melancholy of the collective for the current state of home. What is most revealing in this second stanza is that although the speaker is melancholic about the "other side of home", they do not necessarily share the sentiment to return to this home. The speaker is expressing feelings of sadness over the home where it says:

> The relentless rays of heaven, the ground refusing bare feet,
> Acrid winds playing marimba on the exposed ribs of livestock,
> Swirling dust gathering the remnants of last season's plenty
> And tossing it about to mock the unfed,
> ...
> Infant faces streaked in dried mucus reminiscent of warrior paints
> Supposedly worn by their ancestors,
> Sand caked limbs, fight boredom to forget hunger.
> …
> Goats stand on two feet and negotiate with thorns
> Protecting the last of leves on braches. (l. 27—38)

I argued, in Chapter 2 of this thesis, that the selected novels deploy the concept of exodus to explore various dimensions of the Zimbabwean crisis. The poem follows closely on the novels' subject matter of departure by using metaphors and imagery to create a discourse of a crisis-induced exodus. In the stanza above, although the speaker does not make reference to Zimbabwe, the "*umalayisha*" (l. 31) "delivering groceries from … that land across" (l. 32) suggests that the setting is Zimbabwe. In the lines cited above, the home/Zimbabwe is synonymous with hunger. The imagery of "exposed ribs of livestock/last season's plenty/the unfed/sand caked limbs/kids suckling dry nipples" (l. 27, l. 28, l. 29, l. 35, creates images of dire poverty, life of lack, and hunger, signaling social and economic crisis. According to the speaker, these conditions necessitate "far[ing] to South Africa" (l. 49).

The third stanza focuses on the future through the character of the sister. The sister is portrayed as a naïve and innocent diasporic subject who is "pretty beneath her lack":

> And takes one man with her brother's accent
> And a stack of Rands to notice this and make his offer…
> Another death, another funeral […] (l. 55-57)

The sister is an allusive metaphor for diasporic subjects' negotiation with the host country, especially in connection with the nostalgia of being away from home. The "stack of Rands" implies the economic pull factors into South Africa. For the speaker, nostalgia is metaphoric of death. Hence, they end with a monostich "[l]ife goes on" (l. 60). Therefore, the condition of nostalgia is ambivalent. As we have observed in this poem, the speaker oscillates between the past, the present and the future. My reading of "Nostalgia" together with "Far From Home" demontrates that African migrants in South Africa occupy an interstice space which affects place making.

"[Y]our tongue is not yours"[23]: On language and dislocation

In this section, I explore the theme of belonging in relation to migrancy in the selected poems. I focus on how the poems depict the relationship between belonging and displacement from the prism of language use and words. "Self portrait at nine" negotiates the displacement of language at school and home. The speaker is located in the homeland and is not a diasporic or translocated subject. The poem constructs the displacement of languages as symbolic of the physical displacement of the speakers of the languages. The speaker in the poem is a young girl aged nine who attends a 'white school', where she is one of the two Black girls in a class photo (l. 2—3). The girl laments the challenges of language negotiation and the dislocation from space through language at school and at home.

The speaker is doubly displaced, at school and home, places that demand use of two different languages – English and Shona. For the speaker, whose language is comparable to "an electronic cord" (l. 27), the negotiation of another language is like losing the 'home' symbolized here as the "mother" through the metaphor of the umbilical cord. From the 'portrait' provided to us, language is a systemic and cultural displacement tool. Apart from the displacement that occurs through acculturation and the acquisition of a foreign language in the new community (the school), the girl negotiates the "sound of home" (l. 20) at the home. In the home, the young girl does not 'sound' authentic due to the "double consciousness" (DuBois 1903) resulting from the betweenness of English and Shona. DuBois (1903) developed the concept "double consciousness" to account for an inward "twoness" commonly experienced by African-Americans because of their racialized oppression and subordination in a white-dominated society. The speaker's "twoness" is not a result of racial structures as conceptualized by DuBois; rather, it stems from a conflict of the languages

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[23] Ndoro, T., 2019. "Instructional", in *Agringada: Like a Gringa, like a foreigner*.

151

and how English is ostensibly 'superior' to Shona. The English and the Shona cause psychological and social dislocations, as the following citation shows:

> your granma wants to know
> why is it that almost holonyms
> tend to trip you up:
>
>> motsi/ mutsa
>>
>> nzara/ nzwara
>>
>> dzungu/ nzugu
>
> a cousin laughs at your syntax but
> you do not tell her
> that Sister sometimes
> sits in detention
> for speaking the wrong language
> at the wrong time
> that you are cultural chimaeras
> who've forgotten the sound of home (l. 10—20)

In the lines above, the speaker is experiencing displacement in the home where she is chastised for "forgetting the sound of home". We observe the confusion caused by the similar sounding of the Shona words "motsi/nzara/dzungu" which typically come naturally to a Shona speaker. The descriptive marker of holonyms implies that the speaker's mastery of the Shona language is not 'whole'/complete, hence they stumble on the articulation of the similar sounding words. The speaker characterizes this duality as a "cultural chimaeras" in how they are dislocated in the 'home' language and also the second acquired language. The image of a chimaera symbolizes the hybrid existence between cultures. Abodunrin (2018: 64) refers to this liminal existence as "[c]ultural schizophrenia", to account for how this dual existence sometimes results in emotional and mental fragmentations. In the poem, the speaker is sometimes physically confined "in detention" for "speaking the wrong language" in the 'English/White' space of the school. 'White' activities such as the "gymkhana/The Vengaboys" are unfamiliar to the girl, therefore, she cannot join White girls in their obsession with these cultural activities. Thus, the speaker is culturally dislocated and "wears silence/…/a shroud-like speech". The simile of shrouded speech demonstrates the extent to which the negotiation of the two languages and cultures leads to silence and silencing. In other words, silence is not a temporal experience but a continuum as we have seen in the settings of

school and home. Therefore, silence becomes a type of language for the speaker. This sense of loss of speech is aptly captured by the speaker who declares that "[l]anguage does not belong to you" (l. 31).

Language and its symbolic meanings of belonging are central to Ndoro's poems of migration. For example, in the "Vow of silence", the speaker observes how "our mestengo fails to absorb a new language" (l. 4). In "The dance of the mustang", the speaker laments how, in South Africa, "they'll tether your tongue like they tether geldings" (l. 11). What we notice here is the notion of how belonging is predicated upon language and its use. Adjunct to this is the metaphor of "tether[ed] tongue". This metaphor aestheticizes silence as a multifaceted concept to explore the disconnect associated with movement from the homeland and to express the vulnerabilities of displacement. Mazzer (2007) offers the framework of "poetic of silence" to read silences and their potential meanings in literary works. The scholar puts forward the idea that "listening to … silences as poetic constructions, we can be attentive to the multiple layers in, around and in between the text" (Mazzer 2007: 61). Following closely on this theorization, I turn my attention to the silence in "Self portrait at nine" and make reference to other poems in Ndoro's anthology to explore the aesthetic function of silence. To begin with, "Self portrait at nine" aestheticizes silence as a "subtext to the spoken words" (Mazzer 2007: 59). Apart from the technical use of the breaks to form stanzas, the breaks command the flow of the poem into silence. In the last two stanzas, silence becomes the object of the speaker's traumatic reminisces:

> You wear silence
> sitting on the concrete floor of a library
> a shroud like speech
> …
> Language does not belong to you (l. 31—34)

Silence functions in two ways. First, as a conceptual metaphor for the loss of language or the ability to speak in the diasporic space. Thus, the abstinence from speech/utterance envelops the speaker. The second function of silence is evident in the form of the poem. The poem is "given a voice in the spaces between the words, and in the space which envelops the poem" (Brook in Mazzer 2007: 58). Silence structures the metric of the poem, especially the transition between stanzas. The line "a shroud like speech" rhythmically functions as a caesura. This allows the last line to have a theatrical silencing melody. Therefore, the line "[l]anguage does not belong to you" doubly

expresses a finality and the limits of language. In the previously cited stanza, the speaker's (mis)use of Shona words links to the exploration of the motif of silence. In other words, the strategic use of Shona words disrupts the flow of the poem, written mostly in English. However, in Shona, the words follow a rhyme scheme, especially when read together with their 'mispronounced' counterparts. This blending of languages alludes to the hybrid nature of diasporic existence.

The metaphor of "wearing silence" in "Self portrait at nine" flows into the poem "Detention Excerpt" featured in the anthology. "Detention Excerpt" symbolically includes a quote: "The tongue that is forbidden is your mother tongue" by Theresa Hyak Kyung Cha. The symbolism in the paratext alludes to the forbiddance of language and speaking. Accordingly, the poem explores the prohibition of speaking in the "mother tongue". Similarly, in the poem, "Instructional" the speaker laments the constrictions of language using the metaphor of the tongue: "...tongues are not loose until they speak the language of their fathers" (l. 56). In the setting of a school, detention is typically a punishment handed to a student for wrongdoing. The detention requires the student to remain in an undesirable place outside of school hours. This poem considers South African migrant dislocations through the issues of language. In the poem, which is in the form of an excerpt, the student is 'detained' for speaking in Shona at the 'wrong time'. In 21 lines, the student/speaker repeats the phrase "I will not speak in Shona except during Shona lessons". The repetition of the sentences turns the poem into an intense lament. Although the speaker conceals other words in the lines, the strategy demonstrates the limits of language in expressing the traumas of "forbidden" language. This sentence appears complete only in lines 10 and 11. In the other lines, some words are concealed in black. I read the concealed words as silences. Silence intricately links to the pacing of the work. For example, the sentence becomes shorter and lyrical; "I will not speak Shona…./I will not speak … lessons/I …/I will not speak". Stylistically, the obscuration of some words creates an image and rhythm of silences. The 'unspoken' words are silent to create "sounds of silences" (Richardson in Mazzer 2007: 58) which link to the metaphor of "wearing silence". Thus, the poem illustrates that prohibition from speaking in the "mother tongue" is a traumatic displacement. In this way, "silence fills the space that allows the depth of trauma to be felt" (Watkins 2019: 257). Hence, in the final line of the poem, the speaker declares "I will not speak…", making silence "the expressive power in its own right" (Mazzer 2007: 58), where the speaker expresses displacement

of language through the urgency of silence. Silence, in the poem, is an alternative mode of articulation.

Lastly, in the exploration of the metaphor of the "tongue", Fawole, in "A case of backs and bags", humorously foregrounds language to critically engage with the links between language and diasporic displacement. The poem aesthetically engages language, specifically the ambiguities of pronunciations to explore dislocation. The poem is styled as a dialogue, which features a conversation between a patient and a doctor in a consultation room. Both subjects are fluent in the English language, however, their style of speaking obscures meaning. Because of the elocution, the doctor and patient fail to communicate. The poem ends with the patient not receiving the consultation and rushing out of the consultation room. The exchange between the Doctor and patient unfolds thus:

> "Doctor, I have this pain in my back. Oh it hurts terribly."
>
> But the doctor heard, "I have this pain in my bag."
>
> And so he said "I can help you"
>
> With my eyes almost popping out of sockets,
>
> The patient asked "What? Mara? why?"
>
> "I have a pain here", gingerly touches her back.
>
> "Oh your back. Have you taken anything for the pain?"
>
> "Yes, it is in my bag."
>
> But the doctor heard, "It is in my back"
>
> "How can you keep medicine in your back?"
>
> "where else do you expect me to keep it?
>
> "in your bag, of course!" (l. 1—13)

The poem ends with the woman rushing out and claiming, "there is a mad man" (l. 14) in the consultation room. The doctor similarly shouts, "please run after that woman/I believe she needs psychiatric care" (l. 15 & l. 16). We notice how the poem uses humour to explore how language, especially elocution, is a challenge in South African diasporic settings. I use humour here drawing from the description provided by Polimeni and Reiss (2006: 347) as "a complex cognitive function

which often leads to laughter". Although humour is riddled with ambiguities, it is used in the poem to achieve laughter and as a discursive site. At the end of the poem, the reader experiences emotions such as a smile, giggle, or a loud laugh because of the words and the situation. The use of the homophones "bags and backs" leads to an incongruous situation, where the reader experiences a "tickling sensation" (Adjei 2015: 201) and "funniness occurs" (Palmer 2003: 3). On one hand, the use of humour in the poem is to entertain, and/or to amuse the reader. On the other hand, as Polimeni and Reiss (2006: 351) argue, it is to "provide valuable social information…" to the engaged reader on the negotiations of language/pronunciation from a migrant perspective. Considering this, the dialogue's humorous impression amplifies the questions of belonging through the prism of language. As Polimeni and Reiss (2006: 347) reminds us, "whether something is funny or not depends on nuanced verbal phrasing in combination with full appreciation of prevailing social dynamics". Here, the dialogue reveals, in subtle ways, the unique situations which characterise migrancy in South African spaces. On the subject of humour and its function in text, Adjei's (2015) study of Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966), establishes that there are several sources of humour in the text that all play significant roles in underscoring the concerns of the text, particularly the subject of corruption. In this way, according to Adjei (2015), Achebe is also able to "downplay the importance of serious issues like misfortune, death, politics…[which] are narrated with some level of casualness" (2015: 202). Thus, the "casualness" in "A case of bags and backs", in its playful representation of the link between language and logic reveals the limits of language in South African migrant experiences.

"Fear is a sharp word"[24] in Mwanaka's "Refugees"

The texts I have studied in this thesis, using different literary strategies, point to a condition of real and imagined fear and danger in migrant lives. Fear is a common feeling and experience in migrant lives in South Africa and elsewhere. De Genova (2002) notes that uncertainty and fear are largely due to a "lack of any legal entitlement to work [and] access to welfare". Bloch (2014: 159) similarly argues that "fear of deportation affects decision-making in terms of the use of public spaces, travel, work and social interactions". Therefore, fear is a recurrent emotional motif in migrant stories. For example, in *Shadows*, Nomsa (a Zimbabwean migrant) describes living in Johannesburg as a fearsome existence. She says Zimbabwean migrants living in South Africa have

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[24] Vandermerwe, M., 2013: 80. *Zebra Crossing*.

"fear hanging heavy like salt on our tongues…" (p. 102). In *The Gold Diggers* the migrant characters live in constant fear of deportation because of their illegal status. Moreover, my reading of migrant self-writing in chapter 4 of this thesis illustrated how immigration laws and other punitive enforcement practices impact the lives and subjectivities of immigrants in South Africa. Also, my analysis of *Zebra Crossing*, with a focus on Othering strategies revealed how the space of Cape Town induces fear and anxiety in the life of Chipo and other African migrants. Markedly, read in the context of the time-space of the violent outbreaks directed towards migrants in recent times, these literary examples point to a constant precarious migrancy of living in fear. In this section, I am interested in the representations of imagined and real fear in Mwanaka's "Refugee", which represents South Africa from a refugee's view-point. In my reading of fear, I draw on Ahmed's theorization of the "affective politics of fear". In Ahmed's (2004) theorisation, emotions, such as fear "do not involve processes of thought, attribution, or evaluation: we *feel* fear…" (2004: 62) in our proximity to threat or imagined threatening situations. Cates (2003: 326) argues along the same lines that "emotions have *some* relationship to thoughts – especially to beliefs and evaluative judgments that they are appropriately subject to critical reflection and moral evaluation". According to Ahmed (2004: 69) "fear is often defined as a dangerous situation accompanied by a set of physiological and behavioural reactions that typically ends in flight". Furthermore, fear is 'felt' through the symptoms in the body, in how it "envelops the body that feels it, as well as constructs such bodies as enveloped, as constrained by it, *as if it* comes from outside and moves inward" (Ahmed 2004: 63). Similarly, Nussbaum (1997: 232) theorises "emotions as judgments in which we acknowledge our neediness and incompleteness before those elements that we do not fully control". In this way, fear emanates from situations beyond 'control', in that "particular objects elicit fear because they can be appraised as exhibiting the core theme expressed in the fear appraisal" (Nussbaum 1997: 233). In cognitive linguistic studies of fear, Csillag (2018: 247) argues that "details of our fear experience are captured in conceptual metaphors and metonymies". Drawing on this rich archive of information on fear, I am interested in the evocative diasporic South African experiences of fear that are portrayed in the poem.

Mwanaka's "Refugees" is a free verse poem concerned with the figure of the refugee as the title alludes. Although the poem focuses on the departures and situations that lead to journeys "out of" the 'home' country, my attention is on the experiences of fear in the host country. In the following

157

extract from Mwanaka's "Refugees", the speaker's tone and diction point towards a fearsome diasporic existence. In the fourth stanza of the poem, the speaker expresses fear and enragement in what the persona calls an "illegal war against immigrants" (l. 21). The stanza includes the following lines:

> They want to crack our skulls
>
> They want to burn us alive
>
> Laugh and rejoice around our dead
>
> They want to kill every foreigner
>
> Cut cords from our bellies
>
> Suck blood from our corpses
>
> They want to eat our flesh
>
> They want to rape our women
>
> Step on our babies
>
> They want to dig our graves
>
> And burn our bones
>
> So that we cannot live anymore
>
> Cannot die again (l. 23—35)

The speaker reflects on South Africa as a space of beleaguerment and fear for the refugee. In the above lines, the denotative meanings, and effects of words such as "crack/burn/kill/cut/suck/rape", are what Csillag (2018: 244) might call the "metaphors which stand for fear". They suggest a capricious existence marked by a sense of vulnerability and anticipation of danger. These vulnerabilities are depicted as constantly present in migrants' lives, as revealed in line 34, which states, "we cannot live anymore". In other words, the threats of being injured, and the reality of being harmed are psychologically paralyzing for the migrants. The results are a literal loss of life, but also the metaphorical expression "cannot live" suggests a limited and limiting freedom in life, which is created by the unpleasant intensity of fear. Ahmed (2004: 63) writes how fear possesses the body in a way that the "…body itself becomes enclosed by fear and comes to feel that fear as

its own, such that it is felt as an impossible or inhabitable body". Hence, for the speaker, fear is an overwhelmingly present force that is evoked as life ending. Moreover, the hosts who are referred to as "they" are portrayed as "curious animals sniffing for a bribe", cannibals who "want to eat our flesh", rapists who "rape our women" and murderers who "kill every foreigner". Apart from the highlighted perceived dangers, these lines further point to a specific, concrete, real, and recognizable threat – the South African host as a source of the fear.

Some of these fears originate from contemporary public treatments of African migrants in South Africa. For example, a Mozambican asylum seeker Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuave was beaten, stabbed, and set alight in Alexandra in the 2008 xenophobic attacks. Political rhetoric compromises the safety of migrants. In 1998, the then Minister of Home Affairs and Inkatha Freedom Party leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi claimed "South Africans are going to compete for resources with millions of aliens who are pouring into South Africa" (cited in Harris 2001: 74). In television and other media news reports, African migrants are often blamed for the "current crime wave, rising unemployment and … the spread of diseases" (Neocosmos 2010: 100). These public displays of xenophobia and hatred for the African immigrant creates what Neocosmos (2010: 587) terms "a state politics of fear". The function of this fear is to create a climate of fear of migrants. Thus, "African foreign nationals are feared, hated and distrusted" (Matsinhe 2011: 302). My reading of the poem demonstrates that African migrants live in fear of South Africa(ns). Ahmed (2004: 64) refers to the threat of physical harm as "[c]annibalistic fantasy", which is the fear of "being incorporated into the body of the other…". We notice how this cannibalism metaphor occupies the speaker's thoughts, for example, in the line "suck blood from our corpse" (l. 28). Here, the sucking of blood implies the cannibalistic act of drinking/consuming the migrant body. In the last stanza of the poem, the speaker shifts to subtle humour to convey the fear of imagined imminent annihilation. The speaker says "[m]aybe next time they would grind us into flour/package and distribute us" (l. 40 & 41). The word "grind", much like in my earlier examples, reflects the violent nature of the possible threats to the migrant. Moreover, the poet captures the cannibalistic innuendos in the image of a consumable product, "flour", which the host can potentially 'eat'.

In addition, the mater-of-fact fearful tone of the poem reveals the speaker's attitude towards South Africa as a diasporic space. Apart from the dystopia discussed above in the reality of migrants, the speaker's evaluation is also concerned with the subject of departures of the characters in the poem.

159

I focus on these events in the poem with an emphasis on what they can uncover about the past events that shape the present forms of fear. On the level of style, the tone creates an angry viewpoint, which highlights the conditions of becoming diasporic and living in South Africa from the point of view of a refugee. In the second stanza of the poem, the speaker describes events and situations that the refugee undergoes to survive. The despondent tone describes gruesome events, creating horrific imagery of diasporic living. The speaker regrets how "girls become bitches/men become killing bastards/fires, floods and lives lost" (l. 10—14) in the quest for better lives. These images, when read together with the perceived and recognizable threats of "crack/burn/kill/cut/suck/rape" cited earlier, evoke emotions of despair in a sentient reader. Furthermore, the tone is an aesthetic quality that simultaneously reflects the subject matter of the poem. In this way, the poem does not only represent diasporic dystopia as the reflection of fearsome reality, but also reflects upon it through focalization and tone, which create an atmosphere of trepidation.

In the poem, the appraisal of fear comes from a particular source. As already hinted, the South African space is so threatening that it generates anxieties and fears for migrants. Ahmed (2004: 65) argues that for fear to develop, it "involves relationships of proximity ... such proximity involves the repetition of stereotypes". In light of this, the other aim of the persona is to consider the associations stereotypes with dangers and threats to life. This can be inferred in the following lines "Always being quantified, measured/And tagged Makwerekwere, Makwerekwere" (l. 38—39). These lines reveal how "[t]he threat itself is shaped by the authorisation of narratives about what is and is not threatening; about who are and are not the appropriate 'objects' of fear (Ahmed 2004: 69). Therefore, the stereotypes and common narratives of "Makwerekwere" label the migrant as Other, thus, creating a threatening migrant environment in South Africa. Matsinhe (2011: 310) argues that the "ideology of Makwerekwere seeks to make visible the invisible object of fear …" in the South African public imagination. As the speaker remarks, the migrants' presence is "an affront to them" (l. 37). Hence, the persona's assertion that in South Africa, migrants live with "fear, anger and poisoned hearts" (l.14). Cates (2003: 233) reminds us that "[e]motions contain evaluative judgment that explicitly characterizes their formal objects". As revealed in the speaker's assertion above, the metaphors of fear cited earlier point to South Africa as an inhospitable diasporic space marked by perceived and recognizable fear and violence.

Rhythm and blues: Melancholy in "migrant blues" and "immigrant ice"

As already discussed in the previous sections, the diasporic space is marked by emotional challenges such as despondency, nostalgia, and trepidation. So far, the poems I have analysed reveal that South Africa as a host space is inhospitable, volatile, and violent. In this section, I shift my focus to the poems "migrant blues" by Raphel d'Abdon and "Immigrant ice" by Renos Nicos Spanoudes to explore how through the strategies of surrealism they imagine the omnipresent condition of melancholy in migrant lives in South Africa. The poets attend to and critique the condition of melancholia to comment on the relationship between the self and the diaspora. "[M]igrant blues" and "Immigrant ice" evoke the feelings of 'blues' often associated with the African-American musical genre of the 1860s. In relation to emotional expression and music, Tettenborn (2006) argues that melancholia finds expression through the melodies of the blues. The scholar further argues that "contemporary African American literature has claimed this form of mental difference as a source of political empowerment" Tettenborn (2006: 102). For Chaters (2019: 5) it is "the blues' intensity and directness, its response to the reality of experience, which gives it a traveled appearance". This means that the 'traditional' understanding of melancholia as a disabling mental condition is challenged through the blues' "strong universality" (Charters 2019: 4) of emotional expression. The selected poems achieve this 'blues' stylistic element through the subject matter and form. The poems' structures rely as much on the conventions of the blues as to that of poetry. According to Charter (2019), poetry and the blues share commonalities in their use of "poetic language", to articulate the experiences of everyday life, especially the experiences of struggles and resilience. I, thus, read the poems as 'blues poems', particularly paying attention to their handling of the theme of melancholia as it relates to the 'blues' form.

Melancholia, as I conceptualize it here, draws from Bahun (2013: 4) who proposes that it is "not simply an escapist frame of mind, but a dual phenomenon with specific resonances and repercussions in the public sphere: both as a discourse that interprets, constitutes, and produces experiential reality". Tettenborn (2006: 103) cautions against the romanticization of melancholia "to denote a continued mental attachment to and yearning for a lost object". In other words, melancholy is a multilayered experience that cannot be limited to reminiscing about the past. Although in migrant lives, attachment is a frequent experience, for example, in the previous section on home and language, we have already seen how the yearning for the past resonates with the re-

creation of the past home settings and the 'home tongue'. Another layer of melancholy expresses despondencies towards imagined futures. Bahun (2013: 14) advances the idea of reading melancholia within a specific context. The scholar writes that "the meaning of the concept/condition of melancholia is defined by the historical and cultural contexts its users are traversing". Thus, my reading has the potential to reveal certain conditions and circumstances of diasporic experiences in South Africa.

Haverkamp (1990: 693) describes the close nuances between mourning and melancholia "in terms of unconscious and conscious losses, conscious in the case of mourning, unconscious in the case of melancholia". In this way, mourning and melancholia can be seen as two possible responses to the experience of a substantial and/or significant loss, both conscious and unconscious. Like Bahun (2013), Tettenborn (2006: 5) proposes the "hermeneutic advantage" of melancholia in studying texts. For example, Tettenborn (2006) demonstrates how African American literature has "portrayed characters with different melancholic minds as figures who are not to be pathologized but who must be read as subjects engaged in acts of political resistance to domain version of memory and histography". I, therefore, deploy this methodology to examine how the imaginations of melancholia and mourning (re)discourse South African migrant subjectivities.

To begin with, "Migrant blues" imagines melancholy as a result of intersections and transitions of journeys, movement, and arrival. Through free verse and a surrealist mode, the speaker reminisces about the present, the past and the future lives of migrants. Markedly, the most revealing image of melancholy in this poem lies in the first word, "crossing" in the opening line of the poem. The line, "crossing a land grooved" provides us with a powerful image that directly relates to the experiences of the 'blues' in the speaker's life as alluded to in the title of the poem. Much like "Journeys to South Africa" and "Crossing the Limpopo" analysed above, the phrase depicts cross-border movement as a traumatic event. For the speaker, 'crossing' has symbolic meaning revealed by the sombre tone and the title, both of which are experiential evocations of making the "crossing". The speaker describes the journey as emotionally exhausting and lugubrious, as invoked in the lines "land grooved/by the presence of dauntless signs" (l. 1 & 2). This melancholy melody carries over to the next stanza, where the speaker "sighs" emitting long-held sadness as the night breaks. What this stanza also reveals is the gloom of diasporic life, captured by the metaphors of a 'hovering/ aching life'. For the speaker, the night is isolating, but it also soothes the sorrow and longing that characterize the migrants' life. We notice this characterization in the couplet comparing the night

to migrant lives: "sighs of solitude hovering/over the aching night" (l. 3 & 4). Hence, for the speaker, the night provides for reflection and comfort in "memories" (l. 6) of the past. Moreover, the unconscious mind symbolized by the conceptual metaphor of the night is the 'places' to which the speaking subject travels in this dream-like state. This can be inferred in the lines following the 'moonlit memories', "a quiet view/ of places left/ and paths imagined" (l. 8—10). These lines further reflect the mournful state of the speaker in relation to diasporic belonging. Tettenborn (2016: 104) reminds us that mourning "serves to establish and uphold both emotional and temporal order". We notice in the above lines that the speaker temporally arranges the 'memories' of past and future places.

"Immigrant ice" uses the metaphor of ice to explore the condition of melancholy among South African diasporic subjects. The metaphor of ice is an aesthetic appeal that creates the rhythm and flow of transition in the poem. The speaker opens the poem with the metaphor of life as ice:

> when the ice
>
> of our life
>
> time thaws away
>
> melting and draining our sojourn (l. 1 - 4)

Here, ice is a metaphor that explains the transitions involved in migrants' sojourns. The invocation of ice, a substance associated with cold/freezing conditions, alludes to the temporariness of migrants' lives. The transient metaphor of "time [that] thaws away" also affirms this point. In other words, the metaphors of ice and time and subsequent melting suggests the bereavement that the speaker associates with diasporic existence. In a study of contemporary African American literature, Tettenborn (2006: 106) finds that melancholia has the "ability to preserve a cultural record of loss". Symbolically, in the following stanzas, the speaker deploys the image of a disintegrating body to depict the fragility and vulnerability of South African diasporic subjects. To begin with, the stanza uses the words "foreign/strange/hollow" to describe the "skull/face/head" of the speaker. Then, the image of a disintegrating body expresses the rupture of melancholia:

> or perchance my arms
>
> outstretched wrists
>
> amongst other limbs

and bones

strained the bronzy-brown of a bruise (l. 9—13)

Through the stream of consciousness technique, the speaker discloses the fragmentation of the self. The image of a crumbling body is representative of the self which is dismembered as a trigger to the temporality of the sojourn. Tettenborn (2006: 103) notes how melancholia is sometimes experienced as a "mental or emotional condition that has the potential to disable a subject to the point of death". In the above citation, we observe how the injuries and damages to the body are symbolic of "death". This image of a wounded and splitting self recalls Tettenborn's (2006: 106) idea, which draws from Sigmund Freud on how melancholia's "performativity can only reside in an insistence on itself, an instance for which the ego eventually pays with itself". Thus, for the speaker, melancholia is similar to the loss of life. The rest of the poem is structured around the speaker attempting to reconstruct the self. In the lines:

how you mocked

my wobble wobbling

like a silly billy

on my ill-fitting bladed shoes

……………….

as i slowly learnt to stand

then walk

then stride with twists and leaps (l. 16—26)

Melancholy is depicted as an intense experience, compared to a child learning to walk. We notice how in the lines above; the speaker also deploys a child-like voice to aestheticize the South African experience. The alliterative assonance in "wobble wobbling/ silly billy" recreates the image of a clumsy child learning how to walk, and in turn, generates soothing melodies for the reader. These melodies uncover a sense of naivety in the speaker. In other words, the imagining of the present through a child-like perspective provides the speaker with a sense of comfort from the "cold surrounding[s]" (l. 44). The motif of cold/ice is repeated in the line "a frozen life" (l. 40). Thus, the image if cold/ice implies that South Africa is an unwelcoming and inhospitable migrant space.

The speaker deploys child-like tones and the child's inability to walk to symbolise the hardships that migrants endure in South Africa.

Adjunct to the above, Bahun (2013: 6) reminds us that melancholia involves "struggles of ambivalence, experiences of dislocation and feelings of fragmentation in the face of an unacknowledged, cognitively inaccessible loss". We notice how in the above quotation, the informal language (silly billy), and the (in)ability to walk are symbolic of the ambivalence of hospitality and dislocation in South Africa. Thus, for the speaker, the feelings of severe sadness are expressed as fragments of the present and the ambivalence of the future. In the following lines, the poetic subject laments existence in South Africa:

> diasporic
>
> a strutting fretting life
>
> carved into the rink
>
> ……..
>
> tell me will they
>
> …….
>
> will they
>
> …..
>
> and if they don't
>
> will it matter (l. 49—56)

Apart from the glaring reference to the word "diasporic", the speaker's frame of mind can be inferred from the allusion to walking, which was discussed earlier in chapter…. The feelings of trepidation relate to an acknowledged source, which is the diasporic space. As discussed above, walking is an association technique that the speaker uses to highlight diasporic melancholy. The images of diasporic vulnerabilities are indicated through the diction of "strutting/fretting/rink". In other words, navigating South Africa as an African migrant is as complex as walking in an enclosed area of ice. What is particularly revealing in my reading of melancholy in "Immigrant ice" is the structure of the stanzas. The form of the stanzas above point to fragmentation, which is a common reaction to loss (Freud 1917). In other words, the speaker expresses the desolate South African space through fragmentation. The stanzas deviate from the form that the speaker has been

using throughout the poem of 5-6 lined stanzas, to a couplet and a monostich. This transition in form demonstrates the frame of mind of the persona's fragmentation in thought processes, temporal experiences, and interpretation. Concerning this, Oliver (1998: 3) writes that "the blues are a state of mind and a music which gives voice to it". The stylistic arrangement in the line "tell me will they/will they" resembles a chant, which is a key rhythmic element in the blues. Thus, the monostich doubly reflects the state of fragmentation and provides the poem with a blues rhythm through the pace and stanza breaks.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has demonstrated that migrant poetry is a critical site for discoursing the migrant condition in South Africa. The discussion has also revealed that the conditions of melancholy, nostalgia, mourning, and fear are interrelated and dialogic in South African diasporic spaces. "Journeys to South Africa", "Crossing the Limpopo" and "Far From Home" offer alternative imaginaries that allow a glimpse of inhospitable encounters in the course of navigating a complex South African environment. The concept of fear is a common theme in the poems, thus, my analysis of "Refugees" revealed how the conscious and unconscious threats precipitate processes, acts, and situations that induce fear in African migrants. In the poem, the persona expresses fear of South Africa(ns) through the trope of cannibalism and annihilation. Ndoro's *Swept Away* similarly explores annihilation of migrant subjects through the metaphor of "fiela" (to sweep away). My reading of "immigrant ice" and "migrant blues" has exposed that melancholia and mourning are not disabling conditions of the mind, but rather, a mechanism and mechanics of ensuring memory in the fabric of South African histography and culture. The traumatic events of journeying to other places result in mournful expressions about the past place. Reading the poems through the 'blues' mode indicates that the poetic stylistics of chants, shouts and simple rhymed lines are reflective and a reflection of the gloom that the speakers associate with diasporic existence. Finally, my reading of the poems explored how poetry can be a cathartic site for diasporic subjects. Ndoro's *Agriganda* revealed the feelings associated with language and speaking, especially as they relate to how language locates and dislocates.

Chapter 6: Racial and gendered perspectives: Abject and Cosmopolitan integrations in "The Ghosts of Sofina*"* (2019) and *London Cape Town Joburg* (2014)

Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on Mashigo's short story "The Ghosts of Sofina" and Wanner's novel *London Cape Town Joburg*. Using the two texts, the chapter offers a comparative analysis of different migrant settlement experiences of South Africa. By focusing on the representations of class, race, and gender, the chapter explores how these markers of migrant identities complicate and/or prepare for integration and settlement in South Africa. "The Ghosts of Sofina" is published in an anthology titled *Sofina is not the end* (2019). The author, Keketso Mashigo is a South African essayist, poet, and fiction writer. He lives in the village of Madjembeni, in Mpumalanga. *Sofina is not the end* focuses on a variety of themes such as domestic violence, paedophilia, child labour, and sex-work. "The Ghosts of Sofina" shows a marked degree of interest in abjection, abject migrants, and abject migrancy. The story goes further than simply imagining the migrant in South Africa as an abject figure based on migrant status and conditions of migrancy. The story deploys the motif of dirt, filth, and disease to portray the characters' abject existence. I am guided, in my analysis of these 'rejected' migrants occupying dirty margins of society, by Kristeva's (1982b) concept and framework of abjection. According to Kristeva (1982b: 57), abjection can be described "as reaction people would have due to defenseless breakdown in meaning caused by their ability to distinguish between themselves and others". Nyers (2003: 1072) stresses how abjection describes a "degraded, writhed and displaced condition". For Rose (in Nyers 2003: 1074) abjection is "a matter of energies, the practices, the works of division that act upon persons and collectivities such as ways of being, some forms of existence are cast into a zone of shame, disgrace or debasement, rendered beyond the limits of the livable, denied the warrant of tolerability, accorded purely a negative value". I take my cue from these formulations, which point to abjection as a useful concept in understanding the conditions of African migrants and their experiences of space and settlement in South Africa. My analysis of "The Ghosts of Sofina" centres on the role of dirt/filth and deterioration in migrant living spaces, bodies, and ethical/moral realms. Using McGregor's (2008: 469) concept of "abject spaces", I demonstrate how these spaces compel us to

encounter "the implications of, and reactions to such multiple positioning and varied opportunities" in South Africa's discourse of migrant integrations. Kristeva (1982b: 68) suggests that we consider the "demarcating imperative" in experiences of abjection, which also vary according to time and space, even though abjection is universal. Read this way, dirt/filth motifs as evoked in the setting and characterization of "The Ghosts of Sofina" reveal the complexities of migrant settlement in South Africa in the contemporary chronotope.

My reading of *London Cape Town Joburg* uses the cosmopolitan lens to illustrate how South Africa, especially the cities of Cape Town and Johannesburg, organize and arrange space to be experienced in certain ways and not others. The novel depicts cosmopolitan lives that are variously impacted and conditioned by multi-layered identities, genders, homes, and cultural heritages. Migrant identities in this novel are gendered and racialised across urban spatial and temporal spheres. Through the character of Germaine, the story shows how, in South Africa, migrant identities are formed, deformed, and reformed along certain assumptions of race, ethnicity and gender (boundaries). In this way, the story highlights the complex and contradictory process of interaction in discourses on migration and settlement. My interest in this novel, then, is in the way whiteness is negotiated in contemporary South Africa from the perspective of a white European female migrant.

The primary objective of this chapter is to demonstrate how a gendered and racial analysis can offer a nuanced optic through which we can encounter new meanings about migrant experiences in South Africa. From the above discussion, there are marked temporal and spatial differences between the two stories. My focus on their thematic concerns prioritises the ways in which they disrupt 'normalized' forms of migration in South Africa. As my previous chapters have illustrated, in South Africa, the migrant struggles for recognition and assimilation. Specifically, Chapter 4 of this thesis revealed the deficit of humaneness in refugee/asylum identities and how this lack inspires the autobiographies. The same chapter reflected on how certain forms of power and institutions are geared towards systematically under-privileging and illegalizing refugees. "The Ghosts of Sofina" presents different layers to the precarity of migrancy analysed in Chapter 4. Although the characters in "The Ghosts of Sofina" share similar institutional and social realities with, for instance, Asad in *A Man of Good Hope*, characters in "The Ghosts of Sofina" demonstrate unique agency – they break free from disabling structures and acquire self-actualization and freedom.

Perhaps the most important fact about the selected texts in this chapter is that they depict migrant women's experiences in South Africa. As such, and following on Bakhtin's (1981) notion of the chronotopic nature and function of fiction, the texts can be conceptualized as temporal products of space that reflect on many aspects of its spaceness. I invoke Maria Pia Lara's feminist theory of the "moral textures" of female narratives to understand the intersection of textuality, space, and gender. According to Lara (1998: 1), female narratives have the capacity "to generate solidarity through narratives which demand recognition". In other words, the stories I analyse in this chapter have the capacity to enhance our understanding of the contemporary female migrant experiences in South Africa by, amongst other ways, illuminating the injustice of female marginalisation. Pedraza (1991: 305) puts this point eloquently saying, "[p]aying attention to the relationship between women's social position and migration will help fill the void regarding our knowledge of women as immigrants and contribute to a greater understanding of the lives of women". In "The Ghosts of Sofina", for example, the discourse on South Africa as a migrant space is constructed through the motif of the grotesque which affectively demonstrates the migrants' abject positions and lived experiences. In *London Cape Town Joburg*, Germaine's 'flawless' assimilation into South African cities reveals underlying historical and political legacies of white privilege in South Africa. Whiteness is the machinery of acceptance which conditions South African space to provide Germaine the comfort of travel and settlement in the former empire. Both these women's stories produce, in different ways, the "illocutionary force" that, according to Lara (1998: 5), enables "emancipatory narratives [that] can … create new forms of power, configuring new ways to fight against past and present injustices, thus making institutional transformation possible". In this logic, "The Ghosts of Sofina" can be seen as an apt site from which to access a discourse of social margins, difference, exclusion and migrancy in South Africa. The same imaginaries of space, difference and exclusion occur in *London Cape Town Joburg* where they are enabled by a different narrative of affluence, race, and an urban cosmopolitanism, thus affirming that *London Cape Town Joburg* does not readily generate the illocutionary force of emancipatory narratives as envisaged in Lara's theorisation and 'performed' by "The Ghosts of Sofina". However, my reading of the novel demonstrates that *London Cape Town Joburg* engages with racialized spaces, exclusions, and inclusions thus, in complex ways, "configuring new ways" (Lara 1998: 5) of knowing both white and black migrancy in South Africa. The argument is that these stories draw our attention to

the multiplicity and intersectionality of female migrant identities, experiences, and narratives in South Africa.

Dystopia, Abjection and Dis/ease in "The Ghosts of Sofina"

In this section, I focus on the short story "The Ghosts of Sofina" from the collection of short stories titled *Sofina is not the end* by Keketso Mashigo. I turn my attention to how the short story explores the complex situations of migrant women in the ways it deploys the motifs of dystopia, abjection, filth, and dis/ease. My interest is in the various ways the short story's evocative qualities appeal to the reader's emotions and sensitivity to situations of gendered migrant victimhood and resistance. My focus is on how, through graphic and powerful descriptions of the protagonists' and other migrant characters' health and living conditions, "The Ghosts of Sofina" (henceforth "Sofina") creates a discourse on the peripheral migrant communities, especially women in the South African society.

My analysis of *Shadows* and *The Gold Diggers* in Chapter 2 of this thesis demonstrated that among other things, space and living space are sites of negotiation that are tied to class and social mobility. In "Sofina", Mashigo represents a dystopian village named Sofina occupied only by African migrants. As in *Shadows* and *The Gold Diggers*, this space is imagined and constructed to reflect the economic and social status of the migrant inhabitants. Sofina is a place of filth, dis/ease and degradation and these conditions are used as metaphors of the conditions of migrants living in South Africa. In my reading of the filth and diseases as symbolic of South African migrancy, I draw from Kristeva's (1982b: 4) conception of the abject as "… not the lack of cleanness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, and order. What does not respect borders, positions, and rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite". In this sense, the exclusionary location of characters in Sofina demonstrates how the characters are cast out socially, geographically, economically, and morally. The characters suffer from myriad dystopian elements such as poverty, sicknesses, food shortages, sexual and physical violence, and natural/environmental degradation. In a study of dirty and diseased bodies in Asian American literature, Dokko (2018: 186) concludes that "in varying degrees of intensity, and through some of these unhygienic and/or unhealthy figures … their impurities convey, across those differences, profound deprivation". Similarly, in a study of levels of othering focusing on Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa, Dube (2017: 392) concludes that "Zimbabweans are now the archetypical other, often viewed as dirty, smelly criminals—the untouchables of South Africa".

From a discourse and communication perspective, Murray (in Banda & Mawadza 2015: 53-54) argues that "the unwanted newcomer is regarded not only as a tramontane intruder who disrupts the status quo, but also as one who figuratively pollutes, contaminates, and despoils the existing moral order". From these perspectives, the metaphors of dirt, filth and putridity reflect a condition of marginality and otherness in relation to the host nation's notions of normality. Without implying that this condition is only experienced by non-South Africans, my reading of gender, space and migrancy in "Sofina" relies on the aesthetic and discursive functions of dirt and filth to uncover the deeper meanings of migrant marginalities and subjectivities especially as they pertain to gender.

To begin with, the story is symbolically set in an imaginary dystopian village of Sofina. The village, in its grim structure and its position at the physical margins of South Africa, points to an active process of peripheralization. In this way and drawing from Murray's notion of the "unwanted newcomer" explained above, the village's geographical position manifests its exclusion. Its marginal existence reflects its relationality – its existence as if a geographical measure to circumvent the perceived imaginary of the African migrant as polluting. Geography, borders, and demarcations are portrayed as buffers against the perceived infestation of migrant dirt and disease. The narrator describes Sofina thus:

> … like a tiny, war-torn village… the air, landscape and water are not friendly to its inhabitants. There are abandoned mines a few kilometers out of the compound, which leave the air thick and heavy to breathe. (p. 56)

The imagery of contamination as well as the bad quality of air in this village suggests its inhabitants' expendability. The migrant inhabitants of the village are undesirable and unwelcome in the liveable spaces of the country. Sofina represents what Moawad and Andres (2022: 3) call "spaces of pure bare life". The migrant's worth is thus evoked in the symbolism of the squalid conditions of their habitat. Besides the village and its degraded environs, the living space is described in a similar unattractive fashion as "huts made of garbage and debris, straggling hutments and shanties" (p. 57). Abjection is dramatized through space and housing in which "patchworks of arrangements [are] nestled within existing and recognizable spaces yet forming interstitial territories that are literally neither here nor there" (Isin and Rygiel 2007: 171). Thus, unpleasant motifs of debris, filth and margins pervading descriptions of place inscribe on

inhabitants, a sort of reflexive peripherality which illuminates their migrancy. The following quotation illustrates this:

> the landscape around is absent of distinctive gatherings of trees or other landmarks except for the strange dust pile of debris … rubbish lies around in bags and there are problems with fleas, cockroaches and rats … communal areas in the compound are filthy with cockroaches, vermin, blood and vomit. (p. 56)

Filth, in this quotation, goes beyond reflecting the nature of the village. Rather, filth is a metaphor of a condition of being which simultaneously reveals and blurs the connection between the place and its inhabitants. Morrison (2013: 467) argues, in another context, that "[t]he cultural model of waste is mapped onto humans…where certain classes of humans are seen as trash due to their status. In the "wasting" of whole classes of human beings, they become nonentities, equivalences for trash, garbage, and filth". In *Sofina*, the African migrants become their place of habitation – a waste(land) and both entities reflect (on) the other. This recalls Isin and Rygiel's (2007: 171) argument that "these other spaces are abject spaces insofar as they aim to render their inhabitants and occupants as being neither subjects nor objects but abjects". This abject demarcation of being is further revealed in the allusive metaphor of the vermin occupying the same space as the migrants. Like vermin and its parasitic connotations, African migrants are portrayed as harmful to the South African society. The symbolic imagery of a vermin characterizes both the despicability and threat of the place and its inhabitants. This portrayal of African migrant and migrant spaces as carrying diseases and being diseased reflects on the migrants' dis-ease, which is alluded to in the symbolism of "blood and vomit" in the communal spaces. The bodily fluids of blood and vomit are symptomatic of "bodies that leak" (Rudge 2015: 504) – an allusion to conditions of danger, vulnerability, and victimhood.

The geographical position of Sofina and the abject living conditions discussed above render the African migrants invisible. The image of African migrants as "fearsome invaders" (Zembylasin in Toivanen 2018: 121) evokes their abject existence and habitancy. On another level, the story uses the trope of ghosts to interrogate African migrants' invisibility, dehumanizing living spaces, alienation, and abject status in South Africa. Apart from its allusion in the title of the story, the metaphor of the ghost is deployed in the characters' everyday existence. Analysing *Zebra Crossing* Ndlovu (2022: 2) argues that "…ghosts occupy an ambiguous, indeterminate, transcendal zone that troubles and destabilizes national and racial dichotomies". Ndlovu's (2022) argument is based

on the character of Chipo in *Zebra Crossing* who narrates the story of the mystical embodiment of a ghost. In my analysis of the same text in chapter 2 of this thesis, I illustrated how the characterization of Chipo is aesthetized to highlight and challenge different forms of alterities towards African migrants. My argument here draws on Ndlovu (2002), and I submit that in "Sofina" the metaphors of African migrants as ghosts suggests "an identity imposed upon them by the state as they cross the border that confines them within a space of forced invisibility, exclusion and subjugation" (Fasselt 2021b: 15). This means that Sofina is a space which is socially constructed in which various social, political, gender forces and agencies influence its social relationship and negotiation of identities. In the story, Mukamutara laments precarious existence saying, "there is no law for people like us…we are here through the back door. We are invisible to the law and authorities of this country, and its people … so there is nowhere to run" (p. 55). This recalls McGregor's (2008: 475) "[l]anguage of loss of status" in the condition of abject classes. Thus, not only are the occupants of Sofina illegally resident in South Africa, but their invisibility is also perpetuated by lack of "social validity" Petherbridge (2017: 104) in a society which dehumanizes migrants.

South Africa's abject outlook towards migrants is further demonstrated in the conversation between Brian and his mother (South Africans). We notice the perpetuation of the stereotype of African migrants as ghosts when Brian's mother comments that African migrants possess superpowers. She says, "take their bavu on credit; they will show up at your house even though you didn't show it to them. you don't play those ones. Cheat nje, you will have to fetch your penis in Zim" (p. 56). This stereotypical perception of Zimbabweans is much like phantoms where they mystically possess the power of knowledge and to transport and 'steal' goods, people, and body parts to Zimbabwe. In South Africa, then, abject stereotypes discursively function to produce mechanisms of African migrants invisibilization.

The tropes of darkness, destruction, and concealment, which convey the metaphors of ghost and invisibility pervade the story. In the scene where Chipo bathes her father, they are presented as phantoms in "the blind dark… [where] they appear like caricatures against the wobble dim light of paraffin lamp; two sub-humans…" (p. 52). The dim lit room highlights their bare life. The image of caricatures underlines the migrants' dehumanization status as 'imitations' of human beings. Subsequently, most of the events in the story take place during the night. The migrants working on the watermelon farm return to the compound when the "moon already shines" (p. 55) every

day. In another scene where they have a meeting under a tree to discuss the escape plan, we are told "their conversations and yodels…scare away an owl" signalling the time of the night. Further allusions lie in the characters referring to their planned journey out of Sofina as an "escape" (p. 66) which suggests Sofina as a confinement and confining space. The journey out of Sofina also takes place elusively under the cloak of the night. The migrants travel in the confines of a "truck" (p. 70) hidden like cargo. Chipo's father personifies "zombification" (Toivanen 2018: 121) as he spends all day and night in the house. Although his housebound confinement is because of his physiological immobility, on a metaphorical plane, it symbolizes his ghost status. Darkness and confinement evoke the challenges of survival in South Africa. The character named Mpho conveys the idea of speechlessness in relation to the metaphor of the ghost. Mpho is a young boy who should be capable of speaking. However, due to his prolonged stay in Sofina, he losses speech and becomes silence(d). We are told "[h]e can't speak … and tries to swallow the remains of sorrow stuck on screams- clogged throat" (p. 66). Jarenski (2010: 87) reminds us that "the abject realm is a space of disempowerment". Here, loss of speech is disempowerment symptom stemming from the dis-ease and traumas of (in)visiblilization in Sofina.

Apart from the degenerating setting and its invisibilizing conditions, the story also advances a feminist position through the characters and their different experiences and fates. The story engenders evocative capacities for gendered sympathies through the female character of Chipo, especially her focalization as a migrant inhabitant of Sofina. Chipo's narration of abject existence is conveyed in emotive language which configures "disclosive possibilities of new understandings, to relate in different ways things that were once seen otherwise" (Lara 1998: 5). I zoom in on Chipo's negotiation of a patriarchal system, undocumented migrancy, agency and resilience, to show how her gender layers unique migrant experiences of South Africa. Chipo occupies an interstice position where intersections of her race, gender, migrant status, and 'role' in her family generate a rhizomic identity with many symbolic parts. Chipo is an undocumented female migrant who takes care of her sick father and works on the farm owned by Father Nicholas. The reader first meets Chipo in a scene where she is taking care of her sick father. In a traditional patriarchal African family set-up, the father is the 'provider' in the family. However, in the context of the story, these 'traditional' gender roles are exploded, and revised, as most adult males are portrayed as incapacitated and incapable of taking care of the family and even themselves. Toxic and hapless fatherhoods in this story are symptomatic of abjecthood. Chipo's father is demoralized and

emasculated, speaking in "a defeated voice" (p. 62) and having "defeated eyes" (p. 53). Apart from this, abject lives in South Africa trigger nostalgia for home. Chipo's father portrays nostalgia as he recalls fond memories of Chipo when still in Zimbabwe. This can be inferred from the Shona folk song that Chipo's father recalls,

> Shiri yanaka unoendepi? [sic]
>
> Huya, huya, huya titambe
>
> Ndiri kuenda kumakore
>
> Kuti ndifanane nemakore (p. 53)
>
> My translation:
>
> Beautiful bird, where are you flying to
>
> Come, come, come and play with me
>
> I'm flying to the clouds
>
> so I can be like the clouds

The story reconfigures the patriarchal "normatively prescribed … gender roles as well as … the hierarchy of power within the household" Pedraza (1991: 308). Disease and dis-ease debilitate Chipo's father to a point that he is bedridden and decomposing while alive. Chipo takes the duty of caring for her sick father. In the opening scene where she bathes her father, we are told that "[h]e winces and chomps his teeth as he sobs gently. He lies with his stomach on the floor. When she presses the damp cloth against the wide-open wound on his anus, he hisses and gnaws" (p. 51). What is particularly marked in this scene is the reversal of gendered agency where African taboos about bodies and 'shame' are shuttered by necessity. We are told that Chipo cares for her father "like a mother does her child" (p. 64). The precarious state of the father's health and, perhaps more importantly, Chipo's performance of care is affective. Although the performance is desperate, especially as it involves dealing with a diseased body in a context where healthcare is inaccessible and unaffordable, we observe no emotional or physical repulsions from Chipo whose actions come from a place of care and moral duty. In line with this, Kuczok (2016: 28) holds that although disgust has a social function, "in intimate relationships [it is] suspended … [for example], parents and children who take care of each other even though it involves contact with excrements or symptoms of illness". The shift in the father-daughter relationship where Chipo takes on the role

of caregiving is symptomatic of deeper social and familial shifts that are created and/or exacerbated the family's illegal migrant status. Chipo's father is emaciated by sickness which physically infantilises him to a point of needing "diapers" (p. 52) and "spraw[ling] on the floor" (p. 62). This shift in roles and responsibilities demonstrate the fragility of patriarchal gender roles especially in unfamiliar territories such as South Africa that threaten 'disabled' bodies'. The reader is drawn to empathise more with Chipo who comes from a position of gender-limited agency to assume the role of a carer, than with her sick father whose patriarchal privilege dissipates at its dislocation from familiar territory and on account of his physiological incapacitation. This role as a caregiver foreshadows the collective 'care' that Chipo fulfils at the end of the story when she successfully executes an escape plan for a cohort of African migrants from Sofina.

Apart from Chipo's wasting father whose diseased body is degenerating in a 'wasteland' far from healthcare, "Sofina" explores the 'waste' metaphor through male characters whose patriarchal entitlements come unstuck in South Africa. Chipo's partner Brian has a "fetish for alcohol" (p. 53). He aggressively consumes alcohol; wastes the little savings they have and maintains 'wasted' state of existence every day. Then, there is the previous owner of the Sofina compound who committed suicide (p. 57). The unnamed man was also sick, we are told he "would bleed severely on the anus and Chipo would take care of him …" (p. 57). Just like most men around Chipo, Father Nicholas is portrayed as a mentally, socially, and spiritually abject figure. He is the owner of the farm close to the village on which the 'healthy' migrants work to survive. Father Nicholas is a slave driver who unlawfully forces his workers to work from early morning until dark hours of the night. On Sundays, Father Nicholas takes on the role of a pastor cum prophet. He maintains a power-hungry demeanour. We get this image in the church scene where he "stands upright with an assertive and dominant posture, chin up, chest out; shoulders back and stomach in … maintain[ing] his soldier stature" (p. 62). His sermons are also for self-aggrandizement as he (ab)uses scriptures to manipulate people. He indoctrinates the congregation into believing that "they can never be blessed unless he approves" (p. 66). In another instance, he leads a woman to commit suicide by forging a story that the deceased husband wanted the woman to kill herself. Moreover, he is a rapist. We learn, through the character of Mukamutara, that, in Sofina, "kids can't walk properly. They all walk with their legs open" (p. 67) because Father Nicholas rapes them. Father Nicholas's social positions, mannerisms, morality, and behaviours make him a caricature of the manipulative South African host. Not only is he a host, but he also inflicts

unlawful and violent acts on the migrants with impunity and without repercussions. Chapter 4 of this thesis revealed that the glaring lack of accountability and consequences for crimes committed against migrants are some of the major issues affecting the migrant community in South Africa. In a similar context, Dokko (2018: 18) argues that ""dirty" figures in Asian American literature address the way national abjects subordinate … "others," creating a cohort that can be described as the "abject's abject". A case in point where Father Nicholas doubles as a national abject and an allegory of a South African host is exemplified in the scene where Chipo approaches him to request a litre of paraffin for housework. He evokes the stereotypical South African narrative of migrants 'taking/stealing' from South Africa(ns), saying, "Fuck it! I knew you motherfucking Zimbabweans demand a lot. I give you fingers you want to gnaw the whole fucking hand" (p. 69). Father Nicholas's lexicon in the statement depicts the Zimbabwean migrant as a gluttonous 'Other' who endangers the South African social order. In this way, and borrowing from Dokko's (2018) idea above, African migrants become "abject's abject" who live at the mercy of South Africa's own outcasts and riff-raff.

In contrast to the males, Chipo and Mukamutara are portrayed as 'healthy' and 'clean' characters. Chipo is described as beautiful and caring for her body and hygiene. This can be inferred in the following extract:

> Chipo's black-mud dark skin shines bright as her body absorbs and basks in the still quiet red of the morning sun. The sun pops out red like the head of a newborn. When a tinge of its gleam red rests on Chipo's silent round brown eyes, it makes them look more like a deep river…Chipo takes a quick bath. (p. 52)

For Chipo, her distinct physical features set her apart from other characters as a 'healthy' and 'hygienic' person. We notice how despite the unliveable state of Sofina, in the scene, Chipo shares a tranquil utopian moment. Amid the filth and decaying male bodies, Chipo's body shines, indicating its capacity to absorb and overcome the adversities of Sofina. Importantly, this physique allows her to resist the structures of patriarchy-class-gender-based violence to imagine justice and a 'better' life outside of Sofina. Against the backdrop of Sofina's dystopia and decay, she seeks pleasure, diversion, and social justice. In Kristeva's (1982b) theorization, Chipo occupies a liminal space, a transitional space between abject and 'worthy/normal' boundaries. For instance, Chipo shares intimate moments with her partner, Brian. In the context of the story, sexual pleasure is an escape route from the dystopian entanglements of Sofina. Rye and Meaney (2007: 28) advance the

idea that intimate mutual sexual engagements often result in "a reflex that is pleasurable and tension-releasing". This sexual pleasure might also result in a psychological state of what Baudrilland (in Diken & Laustsen 2004: 100) calls "ecstasy … [in which] all sense is lost, and the body shines forth its pure and empty form". We notice how Chipo experiences this "ecstasy" when Brian asks if "[she] is satisfied?" to which Chipo responds, "like a camel after drinking the entire stream" (p. 61). Here, the simile of sexual pleasure to a quenched camel is used to describe the "pure enjoyment and excess" (Diken & Laustsen 2004: 100) and 'satisfaction' from the sexual encounter. Sex, therefore, extricate the African migrants (albeit temporarily) from abject existences. Although Chipo is the object of exploitation by Father Nicholas, sex is a site where the African migrants feel visible and 'alive'. Chipo expresses this lively-ness by "smiling [and] laughing" (p. 61) after the sexual encounter. In another instance, the narrator comments that she spends her time under a tree reading novels. In the context of the spatial and social dystopian context of the story, these occasions amount to mechanisms of negotiation and resistance where, unlike the male characters who crumble at the weight of Sofina's socio-economic demands, she navigates her way out of danger.

Not only does Mashigo imbue Chipo with 'utopian' affinities, but the novel also portrays scenarios and situations that compel gendered readings of agency in precarious migrant spaces. I have already noted how Chipo takes on the feminized role of caregiver. As the plot unfolds, this role is re-configured as Chipo takes on an aggressive and violent approach to 'taking care/caring' of the inhabitants of Sofina. Chipo organizes "an escape" (p. 67) together with a few mothers and children to seek a better life outside Sofina. The cohort, driven by Brian in his work truck flee Sofina at dawn to an unnamed location. The escape can be read as some form of a double emancipation from the threatening place and the violence that Father Nicholas mets out at his will. Significantly, Chipo symbolically 'cares' for the victims of Father Nicholas by killing him before their departure. As already noted, Father Nicholas has committed several crimes. Chipo learns from her father that Father Nicholas "sodomized [him] and raped [her]" (p. 64) when she was young as a way of "repay[ing] himself" (p. 64) for the 'kindness' he extended them. Chipo kills him in a rage of "boiling anger" (p. 65) for the injustices that she and the other African migrants have suffered. Chipo aims to use the murder "to make a point justice is served" (p. 65). Thus, Chipo murders Fathers Nicholas:

[she] sat on his chest. She grabs the dagger with both her hands and clenches it like an eagle catching fish with its claws. She lifts it up with full might that her spinal cord burns, when it lands on his throat it tears his skin deep into the trachea. Chipo repeats the same thrust several times until her hands tremble. She pants like a tired dog. Blood on the sheets, shit gushes and vomit covers his chest. His lifeless body lies on the bed. (p. 69)

Chipo's construction as occupying a 'waste-free' and 'healthy' body allows her to perform this physically and psychologically demanding act. In other words, her killing act is connected to her femininity and how it has allowed her to keep in shape to execute it. Although Chipo is the murderer, the moral focus is placed on Father Nicholas' horrid body which metaphorize his being. The body is repulsively described as a "lifeless body … expelling blood … shit gush[ing] and vomit cover[ing] his chest" (p. 69). In contrast, Chipo's physical symptom of the act is "trembling hands" (p. 69) which reveal a deeper motive than a mere instinct for murder. Chipo symbolically emerges as a heroine in the story, and this is not least because she physically eliminates a toxic masculinity constraining Sofina residents' lives. It is in her determination to "prov[e] [their] existence" (p. 68) that her killing of Father Nicholas acquires heroic associations. In resisting Father Nicholas's oppression, Chipo effectively rejects the "abject-abject" status of African migrants in Sofina. This triumphalist retrieval of migrant worth is not only confirmed in Chipo's altruistic declaration that "I love my people" (p. 68) but also in Mukamutara's praises of Chipo's self-sacrificing heroism. Mukamutara says "you freed us" (p. 70). The notions of freedom alluded to by Mukamutara are two-fold; one from a place the migrants regard as "the worst prison … where they are held captive for being poor migrants" (p. 58) and second, from the abject societal existence of Sofina. Chipo emerges as a liberator – not only through the way she kills the victimizer but also the way she metaphorically 'kills' Sofina. The death of Sofina is signified by the arson of Father Nicholas' house. McGregor (2008) conceptualizes "abject spaces as spaces of politics; such spaces … reduce people to abject inexistence … [also] creating varying conditions rightlessness but also making different logics and acts of resistance possible". In Kristeva's (1982b: 217) formulation, this "resistance" to abjection is referred to as a "liminal space". In resisting abjecthood and claiming human rights, Chipo transcends abject borders and establishes the collective 'self'. To an affected reader, her transgressive acts are justifiable – not only in the redemptive act of killing the rapist and abuser host Father Nicholas but also in her dismantling (symbolized by the

179

blaze) of extreme forms of female victimhood curated by a degrading space, undocumented migrancy, and patriarchy.

Cosmopolitanism, Whiteness and Gender in *London Cape Town Joburg*

I have, so far, in this thesis, focused on literature that represents economic and social push factors from the original country, and, on the flip side, my analysis has similarly revealed pull factors that attract migrants and refugees to South Africa. In the previous chapters, my analysis has (much like the public discourse on migrants in South Africa) focused on the underprivileged African migrants moving to South Africa using 'alternative' and illegal forms of border crossings. A few South African texts have considered the aspect of 'return' and legally inward migration. In this section of the chapter, I shift focus from the 'usual' illegal migrant epitomized by Chipo and Sofina residents to the figure of the white migrant. In this light, I focus on the intersections of location, whiteness, and gender as portrayed in Wanner's novel *London Cape Town Joburg*. This section adds to the discourse of migration subjectivities in South Africa from a racial and gendered perspective. Wanner's biography as published on her website "Zukiswa.com" emphasizes her own multi-located-ness. She is a writer, editor and publisher born in Zambia to a Zimbabwean mother and a South African father, raised in Zimbabwe and currently lives in Kenya. In the novel, Wanner represents migrants who are globally sophisticated in their engagements with location, nation, roots, race, and language. As such, I read the novel using a cosmopolitanism lens. I explore, in my analysis, how the white European female character Germaine, reinstalls white privilege in a South African post-apartheid landscape that allows her to negotiate migrant spaces with better ease than, for instance, the Zimbabwean residents of Sofina. Thus, this section is occupied with the question: how are the logics of whiteness lived and negotiated intersectionally in South Africa as a diasporic space?

A few literary scholars have read *London Cape Town Joburg* as a text that engages the complications and complicated realities of post-Apartheid South Africa. Demir (2019), for instance, analyses the novel in the context of national and personal melancholia in how it "mourns personal losses and traumatizing aspects of the apartheid past" (2019: 8). Millazzo (2016: 7), in a book entitled *Reconciling racial revelation in post-apartheid South African Literature*, points to the text's engagement with the "hustle and bustle of everyday life in the post-apartheid city". Almost similarly, Moreillon (2019) has explored the shifts in the urban space and subjectivities of city dwellers in the post-apartheid era while Williams (2017) approaches the novel from a 'return'

migration viewpoint, analyzing its interests in the multifaceted politics of belonging and identity formation. In a review of the novel, Nyongesa (2020) comments on the novel's "aim to highlight the fragmentation that results from the othering that stems from cultural mixing and globalization". From a feminist perspective, Dlamini (2021) focuses on the connections between rape, intimacy, and empathy in the context of the post-apartheid era presented by the novel. As such, most critics of this novel have been preoccupied with the conditions of the 'post-apartheid' period and the legacies of Apartheid in South Africa. My reading of the novel diverges from these perspectives. It focuses on whiteness and gender as old forms of existence intersecting with 'new' structures of identity formation related to space and migrancy. I am interested in the migration element of the novel, specifically, its cosmopolitanism featured in the setting, plot, and characterization of the novel.

Cosmopolitanism has a long history as a conceptual framework for understanding contemporary global identities related to mobility, migration, and citizenship. Schwetman (2014: 186) cautions against the economic exclusiveness associated with cosmopolitanism, writing: "our traditional notion of cosmopolitanism is hard to detach from its historical status as a mark of economic privilege, especially the privileges enjoyed by the world's urban elites". However, my use of cosmopolitanism in this section hinges on "its connotations of an individual ethos and an intellectual enterprise: a stance adopted by those who seek to be 'citizens of the world'" (Agathocleous 2010: 452). I thus, apply the term in its theoretical form as cutting across national and identity boundaries in the context of transcontinental mobilities, with a focus on migrant experiences of South Africa. Fine and Boon's (2007: 6) research on race and cosmopolitanism, finds that:

> the historical awareness that the 20th century has been characterized not only by the rise of human rights but also by the denial of the right to have rights to all manner of people and peoples deemed not to belong – to those 'others' who for one reason or another have been excluded from the nation, the race, the class or even the human species. (p. 6)

Similarly, Debnár (2016: 10) argues that a focus on the white figure in migration discourse illuminates "multifarious manifestations of whiteness". Writing on cosmopolitanism in literary studies, Appiah (2010: 207) argues that the novel form functions "as a testing ground for … cosmopolitanism with its emphasis on dialogue among differences". According to Patell (2015: 6), literary fiction is a ripe site to explore the concept of cosmopolitanism because of "its ability

to present characters; points of view and subjective experiences of the world, [and an] appropriate medium for conveying the individual's relationships towards the lived experience of different environments and cultures (2015: 6). In line with this conceptualization, Shaw's (2017: 6) study of Salman Rushdie's *Fury* (2001) demonstrates how cosmopolitanism as an approach to reading the novel helps us understand the complexities of displacement and settlement, arguing that it "provokes us to think of cosmopolitanism not only as an abstract theory of human rights but as an enraged emotional response to displacement typified by, but not necessarily exclusively to, the immigrant in America". In this sense, *London Cape Town Joburg* can be read as an illumination of the conditions, experiences, relationships, and relationalities of migrant subjects living in South Africa. Schwetman (2014: 202) points to cosmopolitanism's transcendence perspective of bridging the gap between the local and the global in how it "celebrate[s] migration as an opportunity to transcend local attachments". This transcendence facet to cosmopolitanism occurs primarily in the form of the setting of the novel in England and South Africa. This literary strategy does not merely drive the plot. Rather, it enables its cosmopolitan approach by disengaging and relocating the characters. Moreover, the multiple urban city settings in the novel are a technique that the author "uses to bring the local and the global into conversations" (Agathocleous 2010: 452). In this way, cosmopolitan characters in the novel attune to Appiah's (1997: 621) concept of "cosmopolitan patriotism" in which:

> [t]he cosmopolitan patriot can entertain the possibility of a world in which *everyone* is a rooted cosmopolitan attached to a home of one's own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of an other, different places that are home to other, different people. (p. 621)

Similarly, Patell in *Cosmopolitanism and the literary imagination* (2015), holds that cosmopolitanism is a "structure of thought, a perspective that embraces difference and promotes the bridging of cultural gaps" (2015: 8). Wanner's cosmopolitan sensibilities follow Appiah's (1997) "cultural particularities" and Patell's (2015) idea of "bridging cultural gaps" in the novel's engagement with transculturalism. This aesthetic in characterization reflects the complex nature of the cosmopolitanism explored in the novel. For instance, most of the characters in *London Cape Town Joburg* are from 'elsewhere' in the world. In the London setting of the novel, we meet a variety of immigrant inhabitant characters, for example, India, Italy, and Germany. Apart from this, the novel also alludes to spatial cosmopolitanism. Wanner maps cosmopolitanism through the

familial, cultural, and personal aspects of the characters. On the level of narration, the story is narrated by both Germaine and Martin, each in different chapters. The textual strategy of co-narration offers a window for the reader to encounter the ways in which cosmopolitan subjectivities are constructed at personal and intimate levels. The narrators, Martin and Germaine, are both raised by adoptive parents. Martin is the son of South African exiles, Sindiwe and Martin Mtshali. His parents met at Bristol University while pursuing higher education. The father, Mtshali, abandoned the family in London when Martin was weeks old. Martin's mother, Sindiwe then re-married O'Malley of Swiss origin who legally adopts Martin. O'Malley also enters the marriage with a son, Liam, whom Sindiwe legally adopts. Hence, Martin O'Malley and Liam are 'brothers'. As an adult, Liam migrates to South Africa where he becomes a businessperson cum politician, a member of "the Party" (p. 156). To access and ascertain his political power and influence in the black dominated country and political party, he transforms his identity and takes the surname of his late South African mother, thus becoming Liam "Swart" Mokoena (p. 156) or "Bra Swart" (p. 158). The identity matrix portrayed by Wanner here situates the characters in a larger global context. In this way, the novel portrays an openness to the global community by refusing to locate and confine its characters to a specific location or culture. Wanner creates characters that are multicultural, educated, middle class and well-travelled – cosmopolitans. Thus, *London Cape Town Joburg* complicates the underlying, global migration narratives attached to the legacy of colonization and presents readers with a more globalist state of transnational mobilities and identities.

For purposes of my analysis, the concept of intersectionality originally coined by Crenshaw (1989) becomes relevant. The term has been widely used as a theoretical tool for investigating social relations and how these are affected and effected by power relations in societies. As recently outlined by Collins and Bilge (2020):

> Intersectionality investigates how intersecting power relations influence social relations across diverse societies as well as individual experiences in everyday life. As an analytical tool, intersectionality views categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, ability, ethnicity and age – among others – as interrelated and mutually shaping one another. Intersectionality is a way of understanding and explaining complexity in the world, in people and in human experiences. (p. 3)

In light of the above, I trace how the identity of Germaine in *London Cape Town Joburg* shapes her migrancy in South Africa. It is worth noting that in South African 'popular' migration discourses, white people tend not to be seen as migrants. Rather, "white subjects 'out of place' are more probably conflated with the position of a tourist, an expatriate, a mobile professional" (Lundström 2014: 13). In this line of thought, the experiences of white migrant women are significantly different from those of black migrant women. Halvorsrud (2019: 97) argues that "whiteness … although tied up with socio-economic and racialized global processes since colonial times and beyond … must be analysed as negotiated in various national and localized contexts". Wanner portrays an affluent white female migrant and, in so doing, shifts the discourse on how 'the migrant' has become famously imagined as the embodiment of suffering caused by political and social exposures at home. For example, internationally acclaimed texts on migration such as Adichie's *Americanah* (2013), Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013) and Atta's *A bit of Difference* (2012) explore the cross-cutting issues of migration, place, and space through the lens of black female protagonists who are pushed out of their homes by excruciating factors. Lundström (2014: 2) argues that "there is a discursive gap between privileged subjects experiencing a lack of discrimination and (im)migrants, who are defined by discrimination". In the novels cited above, one feature of settlement that the black female characters contend with in the host countries is discrimination occasioned by multiple factors at the intersections of migrancy, blackness and femaleness. Hence, in *Americanah* (2013), Ifemulu remarks that it is only after arriving in America that she feels black for, in Nigeria, she only had the problem of ethnicity to negotiate. Germain's experiences of South Africa, South Africans, sexism, and racism are significantly different from those of Ifemulu, Darling and Deola in the novels cited above. As a white female travelling from the North to South Africa, her negotiation of the new space is marked by advantages and opportunities. Pugh (2014: 234) states that "many migrants in South Africa are economically marginalised and represent a heterogeneous group, with no citizenship rights or voting privileges, and little political representation". However, my analysis demonstrates that this point is inadequate to describe the experiences of a varied nature of migrants in South Africa. Pugh's assertion cannot be applied to the white female migrant in Wanner's novel because of the privileges linked to whites and whiteness in South Africa. It is worth noting that privilege is a relational term. I use it here, to understand how "being privileged due to white privileges connotes the uneven distribution of privileges favoring white subjects" (Halvorsrud 2019: 98). In light of this, Lundström (2014: 2)

holds that "'white migrants' can inhabit the world as global enterprise". Whereas the black female migrants are confronted with intersecting issues of racism and sexism, for white migrants, these interlocking identities and identifiers uphold certain meanings and advantages which ease their individual experiences. Whiteness is usually conceptualized as "a fluid, contextual and relational construction with unstable boundaries" (Lundström 2014: 15). In the South African imagination, however, the physical white body is a carrier of ontological meanings. Although Halvorsrud (2019: 98) perceives "whiteness as a set of 'contingent hierarchies' and describes how white migrants might be considered as 'insiders' in accordance with host societal notions of belonging relating to skin colour", my analysis demonstrates that in South Africa, white migrant subjects are considered 'insider' despite (also because of) their migrant status. Lundström (2014: 20) uses the concept of "white capital" to explain how historical advantages of whiteness are carried over structurally and institutionally to the benefit of white subjects. In another related context, Halvorsrud (2019) finds whiteness to be a beneficial aspect in former white colonies. For Halvorsrud, "some white South Africans in the UK emphasise aspects of their group status deemed to be 'desirable' by the white host society population to offset any negative connotations associated with their label as 'migrants'" (2019: 97). In this way, the white migrants confer into their inherent association with "white capital" to be viewed as 'deserving' inclusion into white-dominated spaces. In South Africa, "white capital" is linked to the legacies of colonialism, post-apartheid elitism, superiority, and financial security hence the popular perception that white migrants are beneficial to and do not take from South Africa(ns). As such, my analysis of Wanner's protagonist focuses on how intersections of whiteness, gender and location manufacture a unique cosmopolitanism that facilitates, rather than hinder, opportunities.

When we first meet Germaine, she is a London resident and professional teacher who also makes art. The profession, which offers Germaine access to theories and cultures outside of England, instils, in her, a sense of world community outside of the nation. In her class, she is impressed by a clay pot made by Ngozi, a Nigerian student. Through interaction with Ngozi and the artifact, we notice how Germaine's migrant sensibilities are triggered. She tells us "I found myself wanting to go to Africa, a place I had never really cared for, that I associated with babies, flies and Oxfam donations […] I hear there is female circumcision there, and the worst thing, it is supposedly women who do it … [and] whether kwashiorkor is a town in Ethiopia" (p. 36—37). The stereotypical views on Africa and Africans are obvious in this statement. They recall Wainaina's

(2005) satirical essay on "How to Write about Africa". Wainaina (2005) makes a compelling argument that the image and imagining of Africa from a Western perspective is riddled with the stereotypical view of Africa as a country, as a disease-infested place where people are dying of starvation and cannibalism. Although Germaine claims that she has a "sense of the world" (p. 37), her positionality as a white European woman limits her understanding of the complicated narrative of Africa and Africans. To her, Africa is a place in need of Western donations and interventions. Moreover, the struggle for equality/freedom in South Africa is won "thanks to the Anti-Apartheid Movement here in London that put pressure on the old fascist government" (p. 38). According to Germaine then, South Africa won its liberation because of the "benevolence of the West" (Wainaina 2005: 93) in its involvement and influence from London and not due to South Africans' will to self-determination.

Although Germaine has this view of Africa and by extension, South Africa, her motivations for migrating are personal rather than political or social inclinations to 'save' Africa. Once she and Martin marry and learn that they are expecting a child, Martin makes the proposal for them to move to South Africa. For Martin, the move is personal as much as it is political. Drawing from his own racist encounters in Europe as a child, Martin feels that he needs to give his son a different experience from his own, especially concerning racism. He tells the reader that "I want my son to grow up among people who look more like him" (p. 138). Although Martin had the privilege of class and education, his father could not protect him from racial discrimination stemming from his blackness. This recalls Fanon's (2008) point in *Black Skin White Masks* (2008) that in white societies, non-white people are judged and culturally identified based only on the colour of their skin. Martin acknowledges this "black problem" (Fanon 2008: 82) from his experiences in London where he remarks that "money can shelter you from a lot of things but at some point, in time, he [Zuko] was going to realize he was a young black man" (p. 138). In another instance, Martin recalls a scenario where a young white boy called him "a little monkey" (p. 139) whilst playing in the park. This experience of the "white gaze" (Fanon 2008: 90) shapes his imagined 'non-white' future for his son. Thus, he believes that in South Africa, a country with a black majority, his son would be 'safe' from racism. These ideas are also rooted in the post-apartheid turn in South Africa with a promise of a 'rainbow nation'. For Germaine, however, the reasons for her move to South Africa are rooted in cosmopolitanism. We notice how she decides to relocate without much thought about what the movement entails and means. In Cape Town, she would re-configure herself as a "full-

time artist, mother and wife" (p. 145). The employment concerns are absent because Martin is already offered a "vice presidential post at an investment bank" (p. 144) because he held an MSc from the London School of Economics.

The novel portrays the transition from London to Cape Town as seamless and uncomplicated. Although the couple had visited Cape Town during their residence in London, upon arrival for the permanent stay, Germaine observes how the "air was crispy and there was sunshine" (p. 145). The good atmospheric conditions set the scene for the experiences of the couple. In the immigration clearance section, Germaine notes that it was an "easy" (p. 145) process. Markedly, the process is effortless due to the intersections of privileges. In the South African space, these privileges unfold in interesting ways that often hinge on race as a key marker of certain advantages. To demonstrate this point, I cite two scenes at the airport, which I read as symbolic of privileged entry into the country and foreshadowing the experiences of migrancy. For Germaine, the scene unfolds as follows:

> "Welcome to Cape Town, Madam, how long do you plan to stay here?"
>
> "Indefinitely, I will apply for my residency from Home Affairs."
>
> "Thank you, madam, enjoy South Africa." And our passports received entry stamps. (p.146)

Martins's experience is significantly different from Germaine's above. Due to his identity as a black man, he is interrogated rather than welcomed back into the country:

> Immigration officer: "…you want to tell me you are O'Malley, wena? As black as you are? Where are you from?".
>
> Martin: "My family is from the Eastern Cape …"
>
> Immigration Officer: "Hayi ngeke, ulikwerekwere, you can't tell me you are from emakhaya, wena. You are too dark to be a Xhosa". (p. 146—147)

The scenes above reveal how colonial legacies continue – how human worth and acceptability is still marked by difference, especially in one's skin color. The officer's reception of Germaine is a friendly welcome. The immigration officer assisting Germaine does not seem to have any objections to a White European woman coming to South Africa to settle "indefinitely". The official's attitude reflects how white subjects are considered desirable for inclusion in the South

African community. As the plot unfolds, years later, when Germaine visits the USA for an Art exhibition a similar encounter transpires. She tells us, "at JF Kennedy … two male security guys … smil[ed] and wink[ed]" (p. 255) at her. The amiable attitudes of the airport officials in both South Africa and America demonstrates legacies of transcontinental conviviality for white bodied border crossing. Martin's scenarios reflect the rejection of black bodies and the endurance of historical stigmas attached to blackness vis-à-vis transnational and transcontinental boundaries, even though, as in Martin's case, South Africa is 'home'. This interaction between guest-host relations reveals complex layers of race-based identities and relationships in South Africa. Firstly, the airport official takes the role of gatekeeper. The interrogation is essentially an act of screening the arrivants. Secondly, Martin's skin, which the official deems "too dark" (p. 147), is a key defining feature that marks Martin as a potentially unwanted 'migrant'. In the scene, blackness is a category of suspicion which easily renders one an undesirable "kwerekwere" in the country. Dube (2017: 291) argues that some South Africans (as represented by the immigration official) bear "South African exceptionalism" which "regards whiteness as a virtue". That is to say that some South Africans imagine whiteness along its colonial symbolic meanings, and associations of superiority. This is demonstrated in the same airport scene when the Immigration officer changes his averse attitude towards Martin upon learning that his wife is a white woman. When Germaine asks if "there is a problem", the Immigration officer responds "Hayi, no, madam. No problem at all … [a] mistake, Chief. Welcome home" (p. 147). This hierarchically elevates the white migrant over the black one who is suspected and stereotyped as a potential threat to South Africa. To the official, and by extension afrophobic South Africans, a routine process of reception to the country is not only marked by considerations of skin colour but also the degrees of darkness of the black skin.

The 'race' of settlement: negotiating whiteness and difference

The part of the novel focusing on the couples' settlement in Cape Town follows the same script of effortless assimilation and integration for the white migrant. Much like her welcome at the airport, Germaine notes that "Cape Town is beautiful … [and] easy city to settle into" (p. 152). Apart from racialized entry into South Africa, the novel explores race and gender privileges through the Nomakanjani Girls' Club, a pottery business and school developed by Germaine. Germaine proposes to Liam that she is interested in a collaboration project with the women in the community.

Through Liam's political associations, they manage to secure a working space "rent-free in Gugulethu" (p. 158). Interestingly, Gugulethu is a disadvantaged township with high rates of unemployment, crime, and overcrowding. In situating her working studio in Gugulethu, Germaine sets out to confront frontiers of space, class, and race. She aims to "teach some of the unemployed women to make some cups, mugs and teapots and we could mass produce for a supermarket chain as well" (p. 156). Thus, Germaine seeks entry points into South African society through her pottery project with the local women. Her method of settlement recalls Patell's (2015: 6) argument that cosmopolitans are concerned with "establishing cultural attachments" instead of seeing differences as boundaries. On another level, Germaine's innovative ways of improving the living standards of the women in Gugulethu can be read as engaging in skills transfer and capacity building, a cooperative effort that allows her a smooth integration. This image is reinforced by the comparisons of privileges between Germaine and a black female character, Nomawethu. Noma is an unemployed young adult who is introduced to Germaine by Liam. Although Noma holds a degree from the University of Cape Town Business School, she has difficulties securing a job. According to Liam, Noma is in this predicament because she "made some wrong choices earlier and after that none of these white-run companies would touch her" (p. 158). There is much about the 'race' of advantage that can be gleaned from the contrast between Noma, whose unemployment is attributed to the whims of white capital and the white Germaine whose capital 'creates' employment. Germaine's multiple privileges offer her the opportunities to work and teach in a black township, whereas, Noma, a black female, cannot find employment. The intersection of race and unemployment can be inferred from Noma's explanation of her failure to secure employment: "I had applied to many places for employment without luck. It was always something. She had no experience. She could not speak Afrikaans. Something" (p. 173—174). The racial and classist structures of exclusion in Noma's explanation reveal how the system is arranged to (dis)advantage people based on race as well as how far they can go to be beholden to white capital.

Unlike Chipo and Sofina's peripheralized illegal migrants who have nothing to give to South Africans (except their labour and bodies for Father Nicholas's sexual predation), Germaine's cosmopolitanism, buoyed by her race and capital, buffers her from the usual imaginary of what Father Nicholas (in "The Ghost of Sofina") calls the 'leaching', dependent migrant. Germaine's political connectedness, whiteness and capital ensures her agency in her process of settling. Besides being of material help to the impoverished community of Gugulethu, Germaine's ease of

settlement is driven by her cosmopolitan ambitions of integrating. We hear that she "bought a Xhosa/English dictionary as well as language tapes" to learn the local language because "… it was their country, the least I could do was to learn their language" (p. 143). Patell (2015: 4) argues that cosmopolitans "experience otherness by opening themselves up to another person's world and thoughts". "Otherness" in Germaine's case is not a category of disadvantage or inferiority. Rather, Germaine's 'otherness' is (to the black beneficiaries of Germaine's project in Gugulethu) a mark of a desirable foreignness that is acceptable to South Africans. Germaine strategically learns Xhosa to enhance her inclusion and become part of the Xhosa language and its culture. The symbiotic relationship between Germaine and the people of Gugulethu represented by members of the Nomakanjani Girls' Club is facilitated by Germaine's "cosmopolitan restlessness" (Appiah 1997: 662) where Germaine's lifestyle becomes her method of integration.

The Nomakanjani Girls' Club is strategically used as a site to encounter how differences of race and gender are negotiated in Cape Town. Apart from the contrast I have drawn above between Germaine and Noma, the novel deploys the leitmotif of attitudes in illuminating race and gender(red) relations. At the Nomakanjani Girls' Club, Germaine encounters Njabulo who acts as a car guide and then demands money for his services. Germaine tips him with rand coins. Then, Njabulo begs for cigarettes from Germaine. Noma refutes this and advises Germaine "not to just hand out money" (p. 172). Njabulo's demeanor in the following extract reveals how white women are perceived and treated differently:

> "Voetsek wena, sfebe, ungenaphi?" Then turned to [Germaine], "madam do you have skyf?"
>
> "Now we will see who's your sfebe, wena sgebengu. Voetsek." She said as she violently tore the ciggarretes and the pack into pieces …
>
> [Njabulo] put his hand in a fist, started walking slowly and calculating back to us …
>
> Noma looked at him and said, "What? You want to beat woman? That makes you feel like a real man, neh? Hee? Manje, try me. I will moer you, voetsek. Me? A slut? I am your father's slut? (p. 172)

Germaine's whiteness earns her the respect of Njabulo. This is demonstrated by the class-defining term "madam". Germaine's perceived financial standing similarly renders her a target of exploitation. Not only is her whiteness a source of begrudge from some black South Africans, but also signifies the colonial ideology of valuing white bodies over black bodies. In my analysis of

"The Ghosts of Sofina", I demonstrated how migrant bodies are abject(ified) and portrayed as expendable in South Africa. In the case of Germaine, it is her white migrant body which buffers her against violence and discrimination despite her migrant status. On the other hand, Noma is perceived as a 'worthless' human being. According to Njabulo, there is nothing he can gain from Noma. Hence, he showers her with insults and physical aggression. As such, after this incident, Germaine recognizes her favourable position in a black disadvantaged community. Although she "instantly clicked" (p. 158) with the women in the Club, she tells us that she, "wasn't familiar with being a mlungu (white) in a black neighbourhood". Germaine's identification as a 'mlungu' is a realization that her whiteness is a desired identity for inclusion in South Africa.

In the novel, art, specifically pottery is an elusive metaphor for Germaine's settlement and belonging in South Africa. As already noted, Germaine is a professional art teacher and artist. Much like the process of moulding clay into a desired shape and form in pottery, Germaine's cosmopolitanism allows her to configure her identity and settlement into new spaces. In the production of her ceramics, she uses local resources such as clay, earthen elements, water, and powders. The Nomakanjani Girls' Club is one example where, like in crafting ceramics, she moulds herself into Gugulethu and forms relationships with the community. The capitalist nature of artifacts preserves Germaine's financial and social affluence. For example, she sells a ceramic piece made at the Club for "thirty-five thousand dollars to a Hollywood A-lister" (p. 208). Unlike the women of Gugulethu who had the 'unscientific' knowledge of pottery from playing with clay from the riverbanks and lakes, "her talent was nurtured … considered art, to decorate the homes of the indulgent rich who could afford [her] pieces" (p. 179). This reveals how Germaine's formal education in art is a "privilege [that] carries with it economic rewards" (Pereira 2018: 256). The cosmopolitan nature of art is revealed in a scene where the family visits Martin's paternal home in Mahlabathini, KwaZulu Natal. Upon arrival, Germaine learns that Martin's 'sister', Lerato (a Psychology professor at the University of KwaZulu Natal) already knows who she is through her ceramic piece. We are told that Lerato and her husband bought "her piece at a bargain price of twenty dollars" (p. 298) when they travelled to California. Through art and its circulation capabilities to and cross ethical, geographical, and social borders, Germaine's cosmopolitanism is rhizomatically located.

South Africa is evoked in Wanner's novel as a transnational node connecting cosmopolitan identities and practices across continents. Germaine's success with the Nomakanjani Girls' Club

affords her the opportunity to travel for exhibitions in New York. Her description of her travels reveals how her exposure to the world outside South Africa is connected to her modes of social integration in the country:

> It wasn't as though we sat in Cape Town throughout the year. I did my share of travelling with exhibitions and workshops and talks at least six times a year. Martin would travel to the financial hubs of the world too. It used to be Tokyo, London, New York. At some point the dynamics changed and it had become Beijing, London, New York…once a year, as a family, we did a trip to some other African country…I was feeling caged in at the foot of Africa. The nomad in me seriously needed to be away from Cape Town. (p. 232)

The novel's cosmopolitan perspective is revealed in the quotation above where the characters are constantly mobile around the world. The couple decides to relocate from Cape Town to Johannesburg. Whereas Germaine defines herself as a nomad, Martin's reasons for the relocation are economically inclined. He is offered the role of a chief executive officer by Liam in his company, Mokoena Holdings. The notion of a nomad in Germaine's self-characterization is telling of the ease with which she settles in South Africa. The opportunity to live easy lives in the cities of Cape Town and Johannesburg characterized by urban squalor reveals the advantages of her cosmopolitan migrancy. Much like Cape Town, Johannesburg, for Germaine, is an effortless city to settle. The city is an "entertaining …cosmopolitan [city with] endless possibilities and ideas for an artist to pursue" (p. 261). Johannesburg's cosmopolitanism is thus portrayed as enabling settling for those migrants who are skilled and have capital. In their book *Johannesburg: The elusive metropolis* (2008), Nuttall and Mbembe describe Johannesburg as a city shaped by "… modernity and worldliness … so intrinsically connected to various forms of circulation of people, capital, finance, and images and to overlapping spaces and times". Johannesburg, therefore, becomes a site of encountering what Gilroy (2004: xi) terms "cosmopolitan conviviality" which is the "process of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of social life in … postcolonial cities […]".

In the novel, a contrast is drawn between the squalor of "The Ghosts of Sofina" and Wanner's opulent cosmopolitans. When Germaine and her family relocate to Johannesburg, Germaine observes "harsh gold mine dumps" through the plane's window. She remarks that they are "jarring when one sees those mines from the sky … to an accustomed eye, one mine dump looks like the next" (p. 255). The mine dumps, in abject appearance and physical location resemble Sofina.

192

Germaine's privileged position in "the sky" leads to an abject perception of the mine dumps. On a symbolical plane, Germaine is a 'sky-high' migrant settler in comparison to the 'lower' settlers of Sofina. Germaine's social status elevates her above the abject of Sofina and some of the disadvantaged South Africans. Markedly, the abject reaction of "jarring" alludes to the conscious separation between herself and the inhabitants of Sofina. Whereas Chipo and the other migrants have limited options about the location of the settlement, the trajectory of Germaine's relocation is decorated with choice in its varied forms of elasticity and security. In Johannesburg, the family moves into a fully paid house (p. 255). They also own a car which supports mobility around the city. Zuko is also enrolled into a comfortable school with a "swimming pool programme" (p. 200). These depictions further imbue Germaine and her family with a sense of ease and "healthy assimilat[ions]" (Harris 2019: 95). Unlike Mpho in "The Ghosts of Sofina", Zuko integrates in the new community by attending school. The two child characters' different assimilations are draw on their bodies and the bodies' physical performance. Mpho's muteness is a symbol for his detachment from the South African space and community. For Zuko, his position in the liveable space of Johannesburg leads to an uncomplicated integration. This is implied through propulsion and floatation involved in the process of swimming. Germaine's experience is 'humanizing' as opposed to the dehumanization that black migrants experience in Sofina. Unlike the migrants in Sofina, Germaine has the legal citizenship right "to vote" (p. 260). Hence, Germaine remarks that "the world is small" (p. 298). However, the disparities between the two stories show that it is race, gender, and capitalism that influence the metaphorical cosmopolitan outlook of a "small world" manifesting in easy settlements.

The fictionalized 2008 xenophobic attacks in the novel bring the question of race and cultural heritage into sharp focus. Germaine and Martin experience turbulence in varying degrees. Their unique experiences are informed by their different stances on cosmopolitanism, gender, and race. Germaine, the cosmopolitan, takes on the role of aid by donating "bread, milk, diapers and sanitary towels" (p. 236) to camps around the city. This reveals the "citizen of the world" (Appiah 1997: 622) attitude associated with the cosmopolitans and cosmopolitanism. Germaine is not 'personally' affected by the unrest. However, she expresses solidarity with the affected African migrants dislocated from their homes. As Derpmann (2009: 102) argues, "solidarity relations and practices should be seen as vital features of cosmopolitanism". Germaine's actions can thus be read as a method of cohesion. As a white female, Germaine is excluded from the attacks. In other

words, because of her skin colour, the attackers do not view Germaine as a "kwerekwere" although she is a migrant, hence there are no xenophobic confrontations or hostilities towards her. Furthermore, Germaine's cosmopolitan outlook is rooted in the universality of humanity. This can be inferred from the following extract:

> [n]ewspapers reported that the two major reasons for the attacks on "foreigners" were that "they are taking jobs and taking our women". It would have been laughable if it weren't so tragic. The patriarchal sense of entitlement to everything and everyone including other human beings didn't escape me. (p. 236)

For Germaine, the South African rhetoric to use African immigrants as scapegoats for the problems facing the country is an incomplete account of the events. We notice the sarcasm in the second sentence, which regards the blame on the "foreigners" as "laughable". The feminist statement that these reports perpetuate patriarchy's "entitlement" on "human beings" demonstrates Germaine's cosmopolitan ethos. This recalls Patell's (2015: 7) idea that cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitans imbue the characteristic of "openness to the world and hospitality to otherness". In other words, Germaine refuses to view the resurge of xenophobia and its effects as the responsibility of a certain racial or ethnic group, but rather, as a humanitarian crisis.

However, for Martin, the events are experienced more personally. As a black man, he responds to the xenophobic attacks with self-reproach, feeling "ashamed [and] guilty of his South African heritage than he'd ever been" (p. 236). As a black South African man, Martin imagines some responsibility for the actions of the attackers. Hence, he feels "ashamed" of his black South African heritage portrayed through the black-on-black violence. This aversive response is rooted in Martin's cosmopolitan sensibilities. In other words, although he is negotiating "racial solidarity" (Shaw 2017: 22) with the victims of the violence, he simultaneously feels guilty that it is 'his' South African fellows exercising the violence. Hall and du Gay (1996: 2) describes how "identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation". As such, Martin's conscience influences him to perceive violence as unjust and immoral. His ignominy stems from his shared identification with South Africans and the African immigrant victims of the violence. On the flip side, we notice how Martin's response undermines the notion of "world citizen" in the cosmopolitan imagination.

In other words, this moment in Martin's life reveals the contradictory logic of the cosmopolitan ideal. In this sense, he invokes a cosmopolitanism rooted in nationalism. This recalls Anderson's (2006: 125) argument on how nations are "imagined communities" with a shared history and race. We notice how the events compel Martin to confront his South Africanness through the actions of his fellow South Africans. This point is also exemplified in Martin's explanations about the xenophobic attacks to his son Zuko. He says, "contrary to the beliefs of his South African private school friends, African is not the other. We too are African" (p. 237). The collective perspective of "Africans" used here further alludes to the humanistic nature of cosmopolitanism. In the context of a multicultural South African ideal, cosmopolitanism allows for the examination of xenophobia in relation to the promises and failures of the 'rainbow nation'. One of the crucial hallmarks of cosmopolitanism is human diversity. Through the exploration of the actual events of xenophobia, the novel complicates the notion of a cosmopolitan South Africa founded on ethnic, cultural, and economic inclusivity. Thus far, my reading has illustrated different expressions of cosmopolitanism. For Germaine, it means being a citizen of the world with no ties to place or nation. It also means tapping into the legacies of colonialism and apartheid to comfortably navigate and assimilate into new spaces. As a white female, Germaine is 'excluded' from racial and sexist prejudice and discrimination, this aspect of her identity and lived experiences demonstrates the intersectionality of privileges.

Conclusion

My reading has demonstrated that *"The Ghosts of Sofina"* presents a dystopian outlook of the experiences of marginalized migrant groups in South Africa. The theme of abjection is inscribed with the narrative of displacement, place-making, and survival in South Africa. Sofina is presented as a dirty, un-liveable, degraded space. Similarly, the African inhabitants who live there are diseased bodies suffering from being 'unwanted wastes' of South Africa. Dis/ease is an important trope in the story. It is deployed as metaphor for the imagined 'abnormal conditions' that the African migrants bring to South Africa thereby negatively affecting the structure of the country to function 'normally'. My analysis has revealed how the elusive metaphor of the African migrant as a particular disease-carrying organism alludes to the scapegoating discourse that African migrants

causes distress, dysfunction, and social unrest. Father Nicholas's attitude towards African foreigners is microcosmic of some South Africans' attitude towards African migrants. He is an exploitative, abusive and a morally deranged character. The strategic use of the ghost metaphor in the story calls for an understanding of how (in)visibility hinders African migrants' assimilation into space and community. Mashingo's female character, Chipo is the heroine who 'saves' the African migrants from the clenching claws of Father Nicholas and the ignominious Sofina. Chipo's healthy body and utopian impulses for a better place elsewhere transform the abject migrant story into a "collective understanding of justice and the good life" (Lara 1998: 1).

What emerges from my reading of *London Cape Town Joburg* is that alongside the popular grotesque narrative about the African migrant in the South African literary canon, there are (although limited) novels that focus on the privileged cosmopolitan figure. The novel reveals that white women migrants' experiences of the former empire are intrinsically tied to colonial 'white' privileges, therefore, manifesting in 'easy' transitions. The text evokes the female experiences of Germaine as a spotlight on the privileges of whiteness and gender which are rooted in colonial legacies. In South Africa, white cosmopolitan women have an uncomplicated relationship with (un)belonging and assimilation. My reading of Germaine's 'easy' reality, relationships and relationalities has demonstrated the contemporary significance of white privilege and associations with white privileges from a migrant perspective. I have illustrated, through my interpretation of the flight, swimming, and dis/ease metaphors how, in contrast to "The Ghosts of Sofina" the novel reinscribes migrant identities with 'worldliness' ideals, especially in the imaginings of nation, community and belonging. In the following chapter, I conclude the study and highlight its major findings.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This study has examined a variety of African migration texts set in South Africa. The overarching aim of the study was to explore the conditions of migration, migrancy and migrants in South Africa as represented in creative literary texts by African writers of different and cross-cutting nationalities. This study set out to engage on the topic of migrant experiences of South Africa in African literature. My interest in migrant writing in South Africa is a response to the realities of the current social, political, and economic precarity of immigrants in the country, and how new sites of encountering this precarity such as literature and literary studies may help to understand it in new ways offered by news way of seeing, telling, and reading. As discussed in the introductory Chapter, in recent years, the South African economy stuttered and anti-migrant rhetoric by senior politicians resurfaced with increased venom. I used a critical literary approach to examine the potential contribution of migrant narratives of South Africa in re-discoursing epistemological methods of knowing, telling, seeing, and reading migrants, migration and migrancy in contemporary South Africa. Using a triangulation of theories that include postcolonial theory, human rights concepts, Bakhtin's chronotope, Bhabha's third space, Schimanski and Wolfe's border poetics, Crenshaw's intersectionality, Lefebvre's social space and Butler's concept of precariousness, I examined the migrant subject in this time-space. I also used Hall's constructionist theory of representation, to make possible a profound examination of the masculine subject in this time-space. To analyze the complex nuances of migration in South Africa, I have used a variety of literary genres namely, novels, short stories, poetry, and auto/biographies, which dramatize in various ways, the experiences of being a migrant in South Africa. The analysis of the texts involved examining how narrative strategies, form, motifs, and other aspects informing literariness, illuminated certain ontological aspects of textualizing migrants' diverse negotiations of new space, difference, economic, socio-political, and psychological conditions of being migrant in South Africa. Throughout the Chapters, I have shown how the reception and assimilation of black migrants in South Africa have been, for the large part, less than enthusiastic. Thus, revealing how the ideal of "rainbowism" (Gqola 2001: 62) is turning into a myth for black migrant characters. Germaine's character and experiences dramatizes the full reception of white migrants into South Africa.

The literary texts studied here are set in the contemporary time of post-2000. This time-space, captured in the texts' geographical and temporal settings, has revealed a growing creative interest in writing and representing migrancy in South Africa. This fascination, which is explored through myriad fictional forms, makes evident the radical shifts in conceptions of migrancy and migrants. Through studying different migrant genres, my thesis has revealed the diversity of perceptions about seeing, telling, reading, and knowing about migrants and migrancy, thus exhibiting a dialogic interplay with the social, economic, and political reality of South Africa. The writers create literary lifeworlds that illuminate some of the political, economic, and social realities of our times. As we have seen, my analysis of these narratives and their interplay with the social and political discourses, migration laws and state-led anti-migrant procedures such as Operation Fiela and Operation Crackdown, has extended our knowledge on the current state of migrancy and migration in South Africa. In different ways, the texts suggest a failure of 'rainbowism' and Ubuntu. Chipo's intimation, in Vandermerwe's *Zebra Crossing*, that the "promised land rhymes with helping hand" (p. 59) suggests that the rainbow nation has failed to deliver the core values of the Freedom Charter and its imagined liberal nationalism.

The study emphasises how conditions and situations in the political and social spheres construct and constrict experiences of 'successful' migrant integration in South Africa. I have thus placed particular interest in the narrative's use of language, images, symbolisms, diction, and other forms of narrative styles to uncover how these literary elements and stylistics express migrancy. In the introduction, I surveyed some public discourses on the reciprocation of migrants. My discussion there and in the subsequent Chapters showed varied forms and degrees of hostilities towards migrants. Although migration trajectories are different and occur at varied speeds and conditions, my focal texts suggested that borders are a key site to engage with the temporalities and materiality of migration. In Chapter 3, I made an argument about the concept of borders and bordering. The analysis, which used the theoretical lens of border poetics is an innovative methodological approach in the reconceptualization of borders and border crossings in literary studies in South Africa. This element provides my study with a niche in studies of migration in African texts. As my discussion has shown, the concept of borders is central to providing insights into migration processes. The Beitbridge border is a common trope in literature between South Africa and Zimbabwe. My discussion went beyond locating and discussing the impact and effects of the Beitbridge border on migrants to reflect on how, in the words of Balibar "borders are everywhere"

(in Rumford 2012: 888). By focusing on the entanglements of geographical, textual, symbolic, and temporal borders, Chapter 2 revealed new ways of understanding the border as space, time, and experience. Thus, my multi-perspective reading of the texts illustrated "alternative creative imaginaries" (Brambilla 2010: 77) of literary borders. The strategies of circumventing borders, laws and immigration laws, bribery, swimming, wading, jumping, crawling, and identity masking constitute creative methods that undocumented migrants undertake to subvert borders. *The Gold Diggers* suggests the porousness of borders. Portia is the epitome of how topographical, social, and cultural borders become compromised and transformed despite the draconian migration laws and securitizations. In contrast, *Shadows* and *Crossroads* showed how borders influence migrants beyond the physical administrative border. The living spaces (permanent and temporary), the streets, the workplaces become sites of manifestations of how social and spatial borders affect the migrant and consequently indicating compliance and/or resistance.

The consideration for an intersectional reading of the texts has guided my study to reveal gendered dimensions of migrancy in South Africa. Gender, intersectionality, and Lara's theorization of the "moral texture" of oppressed groups' narratives, have helped me to analyse how gender is reconstituted by means of complex dynamics which the literary characters must navigate, as patriarchy constantly transmutes in response to geographical, political, and economic changes. The nexus of migration and women's quests and desire for mobilities and assimilation demonstrate how migration is fraught with complexities and ambivalences. Women and girl characters have to negotiate the multiple binds of mobility, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and class. For women and young girls, mobility or rather lack of mobility is highlighted by situations that hinder and sometimes facilitate assimilation in the host-land. My reading of the characterization of Gugulethu in *The Gold Diggers* demonstrated how women and girls are often rendered immobile by the physical and geographical hurdles involved in migrations. Thus, they must negotiate innovative ways of inclusions. This discussion led to the focus on gender in Chapter 6. Shifting the focus to the gendered experiences, I showed how females are also constantly adapting themselves, innovating, negotiating, renegotiating, and engaging with the host space and its peoples and also an extra layer of patriarchy.

Migrant expressions of ambivalence towards South Africa are portrayed through feelings of dislike, uncertainty, and fear. The motif of fear and uncertainty runs throughout most of the focal texts and, indeed, the study. My focus on the evocations of fear in Chapter 5 confirmed the multi-

layered nature of migrant fear. We saw how fear, in its varied forms in the different poems, unsettle fixed nations of (in)security and belonging. I demonstrated how fear is symptomatic of unsettled and unsettling migrant spaces. Csillag's (2008: 68) theorization on how "fear experiences are captured in conceptual metaphors and metonymies", became a useful entry point into how the language used by the migrants explain the circumstances and situations of living in fear. Silence is a mode of expressing fear. Through the act of silence, speakers in "The vow of silence" and "Self Portrait at nine", reclaim the self. Accordingly, migrancy in South Africa is a constant state of fear. In "Refugees", Mwanaka portrays South Africa as a dangerous space for refugees. The metaphors of darkness, danger, confinement, and death imageries pervade the poem, imagining South Africa as a vicious space. Interestingly, Chapter 6 revealed a different angle of fear that this study had not anticipated. The encounters of migrancy as represented in "The Ghosts of Sofina" has suggested that the South African community is inversely fearful of migrants. The violence committed on Chamunorwa in *The Gold Diggers* where he is set alight by a group of black people dramatizes this xenophobia. Likewise, in Zebra Crossing, Chipo's gruesome murder unsettles the wildly held myth that African foreigners are a danger to South African sovereignty and nationalism. The fact that it is Tanzanian criminals who murder Chipo and not South Africans counters the stereotypes and "single stories" (Adichie 2009) surrounding perpetrators and recipients of xenophobic violence in the country as discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis. The African migrants in the texts live in constant fear of being "burnt" after the World Cup, yet the ending of the novel debunks the perceived stereotype of migrant criminality and criminalization in South Africa. In covert and overt ways, language is used as a motif of perpetuating fear, control, and hostility.

Ndoro's poems have shed light on the conditions of being dislocated through language. In my reading, language is used as a weapon of violence. On one end, the language and naming in words such as "makwerekwere" and "kwerekwere" are methods of expressing dislike for foreigners. On the other, the migrant who is not fluent in any of the South African languages loses the ability to communicate and becomes silence(d). The focal texts, especially Ndoro's poems express this as a violent act expressed through imagery of physically 'losing the tongue' and possessing a 'split tongue'.

The sense of unbelonging and unsettledness run throughout all the texts studied here for those who come to South Africa to find temporary and permanent sanctuaries. By reading Mashigo and

Wanner's texts comparatively, I deliberately teased out the (dis)connections in the South African space as informed by some legacies of colonialism, apartheid, and the post-apartheid periods to explore how the current temporalities of migrant settlements are influenced by race. The survival of apartheid privileges grounded in the color of the skin, impacts the experiences of spatiality in both black and white characters. Although Martin is economically affluent, his unbelonging in the post-apartheid space illuminates the unique spatial negotiations of racial inequality. Sofina and its inhabitants epitomize the inaccessibility of space and in turn, homemaking. The evocations of filth, dis/ease, diseased bodies, darkness, and death metaphors dramatized unlivable land occupancy.

Land and soil are important tropes in the interpretation of integration and belonging beyond their spatiality evocations. Soil and its connotations for claiming belonging have gained popularity in political circles. South Africa's left-wing political party, The Economic Freedom Fighters inscribes its radical patriotic ideology on the rhetoric of autochthony – on being from 'the soil' and being 'daughters and sons of the soil'. This sentiment is encapsulated in its slogan, "Our land and jobs, now!" which reflects the eminence of the 'soil' in imaginaries of belonging to the country. This critical thread in the politics of nativism and belonging reflects in social and economic encounters in the textual life of the characters. In *Bom Boy*, Leke is obsessed with gardening flowers, and uses soil to connect to his Nigerian heritage and culture. His fascination with walking and walking patterns denotes belonging in relation to spatiality and the land. Land, or rather the lack of land (as represented by the degradation of Sofina in "The Ghost of Sofina") is a paradoxical site from where notions and complications of belonging and assimilation unravel. In the short story, Chipo's burning of Father Nicholas's house is a symbolic momentary triumph where the migrant assumes agency as a matter of survival. A pattern emerges in the texts where there is a complex negotiation of home through the metaphors of land and soil. In Chapter 3, I demonstrated how the migrants' living spaces are cramped metaphors of (un)belonging in space. Flats, hotels and rooms illustrate the condition of unbelonging and its relationship to class and privilege. In Chapter 6, I showed how Germaine, as a white female from Europe experiences an abundance of freedoms on the land. She is flexible in Cape Town and Johannesburg. This fluidity and subsequent ownership of land, marks the ease of her settlement and belonging in South Africa. Although in Bom Boy, Leke is suffering from psychological and cultural belonging, his class and economic status contribute to his adaptability in the city. In *A Man of Good Hope,* Asad narrates how after the xenophobic violence of 2008, he and other victims were displaced to temporary

settlement camps. The camps are confined and lack the necessary basic human needs for survival. These lead to the question of human rights in migration discourse in South Africa.

Chapter 4 shifted genre focus to life writing and its representations and discourses on human rights and migrant rights in South Africa. In the Chapter, I analysed three autobiographical writings; *A Man of Good Hope*, *Going Home* and selected stories from *I Want to go Home Forever*. The diversity of the narrators, their nationalities, genders, age and conditions of migrancy, expanded our perspectives of who are refugees and how they experience refuge in South Africa. This Chapter varied from the other Chapters in that it highlighted the conditions of the "refugee experience" (Eastmond 2007: 249) through the lens of narrated embodied experience. The 1951 UN Convention Article 1, and South African Refugee Act 130 of 1998 together with the South African constitution enshrine the protection of refugees. However, as my Chapter demonstrated, the lived realities of refugees are marked by insecurities, dehumanization, and suffering. The characters claim that their human rights are compromised by antagonistic policies and social attitudes against migrants. In the Chapter, I considered the autobiographies as plural 'voices', which as "the voice of the author, the voice of the performer, and the voice(s) of the character(s) are simultaneously diversified and intertwined" (Meerzon 2015: 294). As Goldberg argues "human rights claims are articulated in testimonies and narratives in the multiple spaces of the courtroom and community, and literary production". Similarly, Hunt (2007) asserts in *Inventing Human Rights* that:

> Human rights require three interlocking qualities: rights must be natural (inherent in human beings): equal (the same for everyone); and universal (applicable everywhere). For rights to be human rights all humans everywhere in the world must possess them equally and only because of their status as human beings. (p. 20)

The Chapter demonstrated the capacity of life writing to unveil the onion-layered experiences of "refugee-ness" Malkki (1992: 35). The concepts of Human Rights and literature, implying and implicating, "aesthetics and ethics" Dawes (2009: 349) offered useful but not uncomplicated resources to re-know the refugee and what and where is (in)secure. According to Slaughter:

> [l]iterature and human rights may have intersected only recently as common or overlapping areas of scholarly inquiry, but the two have been bound up with one another ... for a very long time. [Also] literary works and literary modes of thinking have played important parts in the emergence of modern human rights ideals and sentiments, as well as in the elaboration of national and international human rights laws. (2009, xii—xiii)

This understanding of the aesthetic method of literary life worlds informed my argument that literary texts help us better to understand the pitfalls, paradoxes and complications of international human rights in relation to migrancy in South Africa. The stories revealed the common aesthetic of refugee-ness as suffering. This element in refugee narratives was highlighted as a denial of the moral principles of human rights. My reading of Asad's story in *A Man of Good Hope*, showed us that the violence and displacement suffered by refugees in South Africa are entangled with the legal realm which impedes the migrants' rights to refuge in South Africa. I showed, through analysis of certain conversations and language styling, how the concept of being human is legally undermined for refugees. The heading of the Chapter as quoted from *A Man of Good Hope*; "one does not do that to a human being" - is a claim to human rights which suggests that refugees feel excluded from the community of what and who South Africa(ns) perceive as deserving of 'human rights'. Thus, dehumanization became a motif for refugee-ness. Esther, in *I Want to go Home Forever* similarly narrates the self as an 'alien' relegated to un-human status because her citizenship is stripped by the Zimbabwean government. Her position as a sex worker in Johannesburg further perpetuates her victimhood. The working conditions of sex work and lack of protection for sex workers and for illegal migrants exposes her to physical and physiological dangers which problematize her experience of South Africa as a refuge.

We see the same trope in *Going Home*. The autobiography is styled like a novel. Kikamba deploys the novel form to narrate the life and times of Mpanda, an Angolan refugee. Through narrative aesthetic devices natural to the novel form such as plot and discourse, Kikamba demonstrates the social and cultural influences of space on the precarity of life as a refugee in South Africa. My reading of the autobiography illuminated the synonymity of refugee-ness and precarity in South Africa. Butler's (1994) theory of precarity was useful to my exploration of new perspectives on refugees in South Africa. For Butler, precariousness is an existential condition of all marginalized human beings. I showed how from a position of marginality, induced by lack of human rights and minimal legal rights, Mpanda constructs his refugee-ness as entangled in social, economic, and political vulnerabilities. The result of this complexity is ambiguous senses of loss and suffering. In South Africa, social precarity is facilitated by anti-migration laws and as such, the conditions complicate refugee livelihoods impeding on human rights such as job security. Through the trope interruptions and pauses, Mpanda compels us to witness manifestations of precaritization. My Chapter concluded that the autobiographies' emotional and psychological evocations of migrancy

allows us to bear witness to refugee-ness in South Africa. Through use of literary devices such as metaphors and juxtapositions, the autobiographies become unique testimonies of the political, economic and sociological realities of refugees. By providing us with "an account of injustice created by situations of marginalization, oppression and exclusion" (Lara 1998: 3), the writers construct South Africa as a dangerous space.

The concepts of the Other and Othering characterise the condition of migrancy in South Africa in all the texts studied in this thesis. In *Zebra Crossing* and *The Gold Diggers*, borders, border crossings, cities (Johannesburg and Cape Town) are tropes of difference where performances of the self and the other generate zones of differentiated settlement and rejection. In Chapter 3, I analysed how in *Zebra Crossing* Othering and Otherness are dramatized in the novel. The novel's plot, and characterisation highlight the different forms of marginalization suffered by migrants. Chipo's characterization revealed the complex and intersecting layers of her exclusions which are based on various factors shaping her identities. As an illegal migrant, young woman, and a person living with albinism, Chipo is relegated to the margins of each community she enters. In Zimbabwe, she is victimised for her "pink form" (p. 98). In their hired flat in Cape Town, her patriarchal brother and cousins treat her as a subaltern. In the streets, South Africans and other migrants label her based on stereotypes about albinism. This multi-layering of Othering and 'otherness' unsettles the philosophy of Ubuntu and how it is often primed to chart human relations irrespective of origins and 'status'. Chipo's horrendous murder reflects the instability of South Africa as the place of Ubuntu. We have seen, through my reading of London Cape Town Joburg how whiteness as an ontological condition articulates a different world marked by affluence, and access to spaces and materiality. Thus, I illustrated how past constructs continue to influence and complicate the present vis-à-vis the ways people re-construct identities in relation to shifting identities and places.

The topic of migration and migrants has received considerable interest from multiple disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, politics and economics. In literary studies, focus on this topic has not received attention, apart for a few scattered articles. My study has made a significant contribution to the grey research area in that it curved a unique niche by approaching this timely topic from a literary perspective. Literature seemed most appropriate for my research. Its unique ability to animate social situations makes it more accessible to studying migrants, migration and migrancy in South Africa. Literature's correspondence to lived experience in all its dimensions,

and capability to imaginatively reveal social and historical contexts makes it a fruitful site to encounter migrants in new spaces. The stories studied here reveal, from a migrant's perspective, what aspects of everyday life need negotiation. As Eaglestone (2008: 80) argues, stories "explain and historicize events they narrate". They also tell us how it feels to be a migrant in South Africa. For instance, stories personify abstract ideas such as humanity. We have seen how the refugee autobiographies personalised issues of dehumanization and absence of human rights protection. In the process of engaging with literary texts, the reader relates to the pains and suffering of migrants. For example, in *I want to go home forever*, Nahima makes it possible for us to witness the traumas of being an African refugee in South Africa. Nahima frames his story of migrancy in divergence to the Rwandan genocide. Through vivid narration which "speaks the unspeakable" (Nayar 2006: 87), the story becomes powerful evidence of contemporary migrancy. Maclean (2008: 32) reminds us that literature, especially autobiographies, tell the "unspeakable, incomprehensible and unbelievable reality". Hence, Nahima shares his suffering to "show the world that it is happening" (p. 163). Likewise, Asad in *A Man of Good Hope,* deploys an engaging plotline and textured evocations of different levels of violence to "show [us] his humanity" (p. 106). The stories of pain, suffering and "hyper-precarity" (Ertorer 2021: 17) moves us to personal emotions and perceptions. Therefore, stories have the capacity to persuade people to share a particular view and opinions created by their representations. The consequences of such a reader engagement can be a personal and communal responsibility towards migrant inclusivity.

In the contemporary era or what Crush (2008: 87) terms the "migrant crisis" period, the condition of (especially the African) migrant in South Africa is reminiscent of what Nuttall has described as "entanglement" (2009: 1), an interesting area of study regarding the migrants involved. Although my study has diversified genres and themes, there is still much to be done. Hence, exploring other genres such as plays, science fiction, films and artwork fit into the discourse of migration aesthetics. This is a possible extension of this study. The characters and situations studied here were guided by the focal texts, so, they do not represent all migrants in South Africa. Further research could shift focus and explore other important identities such as children and LGBTQIA+ identifying persons. The intersections of sexualities, sexual orientations and migration could be a productive entry point into this topic. New literary works are currently emerging from South Africa, for example, Nwelue's *The Strangers of Braamfontein* (2021) and Ngamije's *The Eternal Audience of One* (2021). These texts present a further area of study of 'new' developments in

South African migration literatures. All these suggested studies fall beyond the scope of this thesis but might provide a basis for future investigation.

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216

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