

**Altering Urbanscapes: South African
Writers Re-Imagining Johannesburg,
with Specific Reference to Lauren
Beukes, K. Sello Duiker, Nadine
Gordimer and Phaswane Mpe**

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Abstract

The following dissertation considers the ways in which we have come to perceive of our post-apartheid South African urban spaces. It focusses on the representation of our contemporary urban spaces as I posit that they are re-imagined in the works of Phaswane Mpe, K.Sello Duiker, Nadine Gordimer and Lauren Beukes. In particular, it is concerned with the representation of Johannesburg, and specifically Hillbrow, in relation to the space of the rural, the suburban enclave and the city of Cape Town. I argue that while so-called urban 'slums' such as Hillbrow have been denigrated in the local imaginary, the texts that I have selected draw attention to the potentialities of such spaces. Rather than aspiring to 'First World' aesthetics of modernity then, we might come to see such spaces as Hillbrow anew, and even to learn from them as models, so as to better create more fully integrated and dynamic African cities.

Introduction

Rationale

This dissertation has largely been motivated by reasons very personal to me. I reside in Central, an area of Port Elizabeth. Much of the architecture speaks to the history it has as an area that was largely forged by the English settlers in the 1800s. However, having lived in this suburb for most of my life, I have watched as it changed from a notably white urban space to one that now boasts a majority of black South Africans and African immigrants. The urban space today plays host to a large number of Zimbabweans, Somalians and Nigerians to name but a few of the African countries of origin from whence its residents have hailed. As a white resident walking the streets of Central, I am in fact something of a rarity. With this influx of African immigrants, the area has similarly gained a reputation of some notoriety. Upon finding out that I live in Central, it is not uncommon to be asked if I feel safe living here. My response is always that I suppose I would feel no more or less safe than anywhere else in South Africa. As such, I have become increasingly interested in what constitutes a ‘good’ neighbourhood, and beyond that, a ‘good’ city, in the context of a post-apartheid South Africa. It is true that the streets of my neighbourhood are often more littered with refuse than perhaps those in so-called ‘nicer’ suburbs. It is also not uncommon to be offered drugs on these streets after leaving a club, or even upon walking to the nearest café. Likewise, it is not advisable to frequent the streets or draw money from the ATMs after a certain time at night in the area. Yet, I feel that those who view this neighbourhood as suspicious miss the urban vitality that the area in fact has to offer. Because many of the residents live in apartment blocks or small houses, the public parks in the area are always bustling. For instance, on Sundays, there are a number of soccer games being played by both children and adults alike in our public parks. The streets are similarly teeming with activity most of the day, and on weekend nights. In spite of what may be seen as the drawbacks, then, to residing in such an area, it is here that I feel I am living in a truly integrated African city.

Fictional Re-Imagings of Johannesburg

It is perhaps for these reasons that I was first drawn to Lauren Beukes’ *Zoo City* (2010). The novel makes the area of Hillbrow in Johannesburg central to its investigations of urban spaces emerging in the post-apartheid landscape. While this fictionalised re-imagining of Hillbrow

(otherwise referred to in the novel as 'Zoo City') is not without its elements of economic disparity, the novel resists any labelling of the area as an out-and-out 'unsavoury' neighbourhood. Further, it provides a scathing indictment of those suburban enclaves such as the gated community that have been erected so as to resist intermingling. Thus, these urban spaces act to maintain many of the divisions between class and race boundaries once constituted by apartheid law. Instead of glorifying such spaces as the more 'First World' suburbs they purport to be, the novel interrogates the processes of othering that they in fact inculcate. As such, Beukes' text may be seen as questioning the kinds of spaces we are fostering in a post-apartheid society that is supposed to be built anew on principles of hospitality and inclusion. Similarly, I found myself returning to texts that had formerly dealt with the issues at hand in urban spaces in South Africa so as to read them afresh. I found that they formed interesting points of reference to Beukes' novel. Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2001) provides further insight into the area of Hillbrow, offering up its residents as characters with whom readers might be encouraged to relate. In the same vein that Beukes' narrative questioned the exclusionary practices of suburban enclaves, so I found that Nadine Gordimer's short story "Once Upon a Time" has remained increasingly relevant to the vision of South Africa's urban spaces, in spite of the fact that it predates the country's inception as a fully democratic society in 1994. Meanwhile, K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (2001) deals primarily with the urban limitations of Cape Town in direct opposition to the urban fluidity and diversity that Tshepo, the narrator, finds in his relocation to Hillbrow. As such, I felt that a comparative approach in this study would add to the larger project in considering the importance of how South Africans view our contemporary urban spaces in South Africa. It seemed productive then to consider Beukes' novel in relation to what had been thought and written of similar urbanscapes before her own imaginative recreation of Johannesburg. In so doing, I attempt to locate similar criticisms of South Africa's urban spaces across a wider range of representational interventions. I therefore argue the increasing relevance of the texts mentioned above in how we might begin to rethink our local urban spaces so as more fully to celebrate the more heterogeneous and diverse society we in fact comprise.

The Allure of eGoli in the South African Imaginary

Some attention must be given as to why I have chosen the city of Johannesburg as it arises as the primary focus of this study. Even while I am considering the urban disparities of Cape Town in Chapter Three, it is in comparison to the city of Johannesburg to which K. Sello Duiker's key protagonist chooses to return by the narrative's end. Arguably then, if there is any South African city that has come to represent what it means to be urban and African, then Johannesburg must surely be it. As Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall pose in *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis* (2008), it is this city that has emerged as "the premier African metropolis, the par excellence of the 'African modern'" (2008: 1). This is a land-locked city that stands still for no one. Characterised by a relentless sense of urban mobility, the city is epitomised as an "instant city" of "ceaseless metamorphosis" (Mbembe & Nuttall 2008: 17-18). Here is a city that carries with it the possibilities for endless reinvention, at once both a terrifyingly unstable and thrilling prospect. It may be well-adjusted to modernity's globalised entrepreneurial spirit, but it is an entrepreneurship that includes motor hijackings together with legitimate job creation. The urban dweller is therefore perhaps just as likely to be liberated by such a space as they are to feel threatened by it.

The glittering allure of Johannesburg during apartheid as South Africa's eGoli – literally meaning Place of Gold – once attracted white wannabe-prospectors and desperate black migrant workers to the mining industry in the area. This relocation generally delivered on its promise of wealth for a privileged white minority, and they bought readily into the dream of modernity and urban capitalism on the upsurge in this relatively young city. But the dream of leafy green suburbs and shiny, new shopping malls was ultimately a dream reserved for 'Whites Only'. For an overwhelming majority, living in the city was a tireless task. An indictment of this can be found in the work of the South African protest poet, Mongane Wally Serote. In his poem, "City Johannesburg," Serote's depiction of the Johannesburg is one of a cruel mistress, a mechanical monster of racial inequality and regulated mobility. The speaker of the poem travels on the "black and white and robotted roads" with the "thick iron breath that [Johannesburg] inhales[s]" in the morning, and "exhale[s] from five noon" (ll.'s 20-21). The poem speaks on behalf of an exploited workforce that receives little reward for their hard-labouring efforts, with the speaker's hand that "rears like a starved snake" into an empty pocket (l.6). However, as Nuttall (2008) insists, these disparities between the rich and the poor are still acknowledged in the work of contemporary writers and are thus far from resolved.

Martin J. Murray acknowledges these persistent dualisms and disparities in *Taming the Disorderly City: The Spatial Landscape of Johannesburg after Apartheid* (2008). For Murray, it is “a prismatic, kaleidoscopic, and ever-changing metropolis [...] at once a city of monumental architecture and abysmal slums; a city of luxurious playgrounds for the rich and empty wastelands for the poor; a city of utopian fantasy and dystopian anxiety” (2008: vii). The cover of Murray’s publication¹ conveys a visual to match his description of such a conflicted urban space. Foregrounding the sprawling urban ‘slums’, the look-out point is positioned from the aerial perspective above shantytown shacks surrounded by the dusty ‘wasteland’ he describes. The eye is then carried towards the horizon where the city’s buildings, like beacons of industry, recede into the distance. What is most interesting here are the two contesting interpretations provided by this point of view. The most obvious suggestion would be that, for those living in the poverty and squalor of the shacks, the prospects on the horizon will forever recede into the distance. Yet, a divergent reading sets up the shantytown scene as a direct affront to the ‘tamer’ urbanism of high-rise buildings and apartment blocks as the latter demarcate spaces in a more orderly, Cartesian and so-called ‘First World’ fashion. Furthermore, the foregrounded shacks demonstrate a fluid ingenuity that is at the very least equally invested in the demands of urban living. Hereafter, the shacklands offer another kind of living, arguably exposing the monstrosity of high rise modernity. Using whatever they can find at hand, from corrugated sheeting to old tyres that hold the roofing down, these shacks have been made by the hands of those seeking shelter and some prosperity in the urban space of Johannesburg. This is not a reading that looks to glamourise these urban spaces, or to undermine some of the grim poverty that is the reality in South Africa. It is a reading that simply wishes to avoid any strict bifurcation and to examine closer what these spaces might mean as urban structures that have been actively imposed on the city by supposedly marginal urban actors and not, for instance, by town planners. Thus I suggest that it is not only ‘Third World’ (and by implication African) cities that need to be reimaged as ‘ordinary’ but also those urban spaces reflected within these cities. It is because of this that I am interested in alternative readings of Johannesburg’s more infamous urban spaces.

¹ See Addendum A

Welcome to Our Hillbrow

Few of the city's urban spaces have received as much attention for its current infamy as the inner-city area of Hillbrow. Once a "mostly white, orderly suburb" drawing a great many Eastern European immigrants, Hillbrow has transformed in the post-apartheid era into a "diverse, disorderly Afropolitan inner city quarter" (Nuttall 2008: 205). Murray describes a Hillbrow that is characterised by "rundown tenements, seedy brothels, and drug hotels" (2008: 36). Because of this, Hillbrow has been the site of interest for a series of unsuccessful gentrification projects such as Johannesburg's Inner City Regeneration Strategy in 2001 (Murray 2008: 215). While South Africans have attempted, at least on the surface, to address apartheid's segregational policies and their history of devastating forced removals, gentrification practices may be seen as similarly dubious. Municipal courts have allowed for squatters to be forcefully removed once their buildings have been declared physically unsound. Furthermore, Murray draws attention to the security companies replacing government officials as "the primary instrument for carrying out the dirty work of forced evictions." He uses the frightening example of Wozani Security and their notorious Red Ants as the "perpetrators of officially sanctioned force and violence" (2008: 215). However, as Murray has stated, these attempts have proven unsuccessful and he insists that the inner-city "battle lines" continue to be "fluid, porous and mutable" (2008: 214). With the Red Ants committing what many considered to be acts of barbarism, the inner-city residents responded with riots in 2005 during which the "unlawful occupants" were armed with self-made weapons as they barricaded themselves in (Murray 2008: 216). In 2006, the High Court's ruling finally brought these attempts at 'regeneration' to a halt altogether. City officials were ordered to "cease and desist" the evictions on the basis of their being unconstitutional and an infringement on human rights (Murray 2008: 219).

However, still problematic remains the ways in which we perceive of areas such as Hillbrow, the aversion and repulsion that surrounds them and their inhabitants. The terms of 'slum' and 'ghetto' continue to signify abject dystopian spaces. It is therefore a necessary project to reimagine these denigrated spaces so as to avoid their alignment with either the dystopian or utopian. Because of this, I propose that Beukes' *Zoo City*, Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, and K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* offer a more fluid representation of Hillbrow that neither demonises nor glamourises it in relation to other urban spaces within the city of Johannesburg. I posit that these fictions act to replenish the central 'slum', creating instead a complex and multiplicitous urbanscape. Similarly, Nadine

Gordimer's "Once Upon a Time" contests the kinds of suburban enclaves that are set up in response to such inner-city urbanisation. I ultimately argue the case for such fiction in South Africa, fiction that here deals with the representation of Johannesburg, as a powerful means with which to challenge, resist and subvert the inheritance of rigid and insular cultural co-ordinates by dismantling the premises for 'Third World' vs. 'First World' urban spaces. While they may appear to belong to the realm of the imaginary, a constant and vigilant redrawing of these co-ordinates might ensure the prevention of future crimes of violence against those who inhabit otherwise subordinated spaces.

Chapter Overview

In Chapter One, I provide for a comparative analysis of Beukes' *Zoo City* and Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*. It is my proposition that both novels attempt to rethink the space of Hillbrow outside of the typical view of it as a space that is abject and aberrant. Firstly, both novels provide narrators who reside within the area of Hillbrow. This may be read as an attempt on the part of both narratives to invite the reader to experience Hillbrow in a more intimate manner. This is arguably reinforced by Mpe's constant repetition of the title of his novel within the narrative, 'welcoming' the reader as it were to see a different side of Hillbrow other than that which the headlines offer. While neither novel seeks to glamourise the space of Hillbrow, nor deny the poverty that afflicts many of its inhabitants, they do add an altogether human element that is perhaps often lost in the imagination of the South African public. In both novels we are able to encounter, first hand, the daily and habitual experiences of those who reside in Hillbrow. This potentially destabilises the processes of othering that often denigrates its residents and generally may be seen to relegate them to the status of outsiders. Hereafter, the argument advances that Beukes employs magical realism so as to create a veritable phantasmagoria that celebrates rather than demonises the chaos and vibrancy that such areas might in fact have to offer in the creation of revised urban spaces. It can be suggested that both novels 'save' their characters from the positions of obscurity that they might otherwise be subjected to. As such, they may be seen as writing from the margins and giving representation to those figures that might have remained invisible. Just as the space of Hillbrow has been largely demonised and represented as aberrant, so have its residents been similarly relegated to a position of abject Other. In Beukes' novel, those who have suffered this fate are known as aposymbiots or derogatively as 'zoos'. They are those who have been paired with animal familiars due to their various transgressions in society. As

such, they are not treated as full subjects within their society and are made to operate from positions of marginality. However, the protagonist of *Zinzi* comes to investigate the murders of these aposymbiots that have begun to occur increasingly. While these murders have escaped any media attention, *Zinzi*'s drive to get to the root of the proverbial evil marks their deaths as important. Thus, the novel also interrogates whose lives are perhaps seen as relevant by society and whose lives remain relatively unaccounted for. Furthermore, Beukes' novel cleverly plays with genre so as to allegorically criticise the ways in which we demarcate otherness, thus exposing the arbitrary nature of prejudice.

Likewise, in creating a narrator who speaks from the perspective of heaven, Mpe resurrects characters whose lives may have similarly remained simply beyond the grave. As such, the inhabitants of Hillbrow are given representation, shown for their absolute humanness, even in death. In particular, I am interested in his choice to give representation to a character, Refilwe, who has died of AIDS by the end of the novel. In the same way that the lives of the poor or those viewed as outsiders may be seen to matter less in society, so those who suffer from HIV have become scapegoats for denigration in their contracting of a disease that is often thought of as 'filthy' or 'unclean'. Thus it is posited that both novels offer a perspective of Hillbrow that revives the space in the reader's imagination, promoting notions of inclusivity and general empathy.

Chapter Two turns to Beukes' use of the *noir* genre and Gordimer's employment of the fairy tale in their mutual representation of South African urban spaces. It is argued that both subvert their chosen genres to question the kinds of narratives that we have available to us in our representations of urban space. In Beukes' subversion of *noir*, it is important to consider where the novel chooses to locate the threat of the urbane so common to the genre. In her narrative, readers' expectations are thwarted as the truly evil and corrupt are ultimately seen not to reside in the area of Hillbrow but rather in the gated community where the novel's villain, Odi Huron, lives.

Similarly, Gordimer challenges the idealised expectations surrounding suburban enclaves as spaces of privatised citadels of safety, keeping their inhabitants from harm. Instead, the family of Gordimer's narrative are punished by their desire to build a secluded home that keeps others at bay by the severe injury of their son within the space of their home at the narrative's end. It is further suggested that in stark contrast to these critiques of gated communities and suburban enclaves, Beukes' novel offers up an entirely reinvigorated reimagining of Hillbrow as a dynamic and diversified urbanscape. While highly privatised areas of South Africa, such as those represented in these texts, may seek to tighten and

regulate urban spaces, so the area of Hillbrow is represented as a highly fluid and hybrid space evocative of the potential for a more fully integrated and accommodating South Africa. In so doing, both narratives challenge the inherited ideologies supporting the suburban enclave as a markedly middle-class and privileged response to South African urbanisation. These communities are shown to be neo-apartheid in their rigid and paranoid exclusion, relegating those who are seen not to belong to the status of Other and outsider. Furthermore, both Odi Huron of Beukes' novel and the little boy of Gordimer's short story meet with terrible fates within these otherwise glorified spaces of 'First World' modernity and aestheticism. Thus these spaces are shown to be ultimately dangerous and potentially even sinister in their make-up in comparison with otherwise denigrated urban spaces such as Hillbrow.

Finally, Chapter Three focusses on the urban spaces of Cape Town in relation to Hillbrow, Johannesburg, in K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*. While in Cape Town, the protagonist, Tshepo, experiences profound alienation and constantly suffers as someone who is never fully accepted by those around him. To begin with, a psychotic episode leads him to being committed at the Valkenburg institution for the mentally ill where he is treated as an incompetent child. After his release, he finds a job as a waiter. However, it is not long before his jealous housemate and an ex-prison convict has sabotaged his job and replaced him. Hereafter, he takes up residency with a practicing member of an occult who constantly invades Tshepo's personal space when he is not around and ultimately acts with open contempt towards him. In general, as a young black man, the Cape Town that Tshepo experiences is violently alienating. It is only upon Tshepo's employment as a male prostitute at the 'massage parlour' of Steamy Windows that he is able to begin to carve out a space of belonging for himself in Cape Town. Everywhere else he has been treated wretchedly by those around him. However, even though Tshepo initially believes he belongs to a kind of brotherhood at Steamy Windows (as the other employees purport it to be), this so-called brotherhood is not without its limitations. Tshepo begins to wonder why he is only one of two black prostitutes at the establishment and further questions the lack of any coloured or Indian prostitutes. Ultimately then he is able to recognise his status as the exoticised 'black stallion' that the establishment advertises him as being and is similarly made aware of this racial stigma. Thus, the city of Cape Town constantly thwarts Tshepo's desire to belong in this urban space. As a black, gay male (and beyond that, an incredibly hybridised character), he simply does not fit in to the mould expected of him. However, it is in Hillbrow in Johannesburg that Tshepo is finally able to find an accommodating space for himself. As the

area is home to a number of African immigrants, Tshepo feels he has come to a place where he can celebrate difference. This is in stark contrast with the space of Cape Town that constantly seems to demand that Tshepo conforms to certain models. In this way, the space of Johannesburg, and particularly Hillbrow, as presented by the novel may be read as an entirely heterogeneous one in comparison to the homogenising tendencies of Cape Town. Next the analysis turns to the representation of Hillbrow and Johannesburg in Beukes' *Zoo City* as an equally heterogeneous and even mutated urban space. This is potentially achieved not only through the narrative but also through her generic experimentation. There are many genres and influences that can be found in *Zoo City*. Similarly, in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, Duiker interrupts his realist narrative with moments of the hallucinatory so as to impart upon the reader the extent of Tshepo's trauma in the urban space of Cape Town. Returning to *Zoo City*, besides being nominated for various science and fantasy fiction awards, the novel has also been described by critics as magic realist and *noir*. The book contains chapters that act as extracts from a variety of different sources from magazine interviews, to internet pages, to academic essays. Furthermore, not all of these have been written by Beukes herself. The novelist enlisted the help of other writers for some of the extracts contained in *Zoo City*. This chapter considers this mutated approach and what it might mean both for the future of South African literature and for the reimagining of South African cities.

Literary Reception of the Selected Texts

There has been little attention paid to Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City*. This might be for two reasons. For one it is a relatively new novel, having only been published in 2010. However, another possibility is that it has been viewed as a 'popular' novel and as such, perhaps not serious enough to receive critical attention. Nonetheless, Cheryl Stobie (2012) explores its narrative potential, reading it as a critical dystopian novel that offers up an alternative view of the Johannesburg. Henriette Roos (2011) meanwhile is concerned with the way in which the novel may be seen to raise environmental issues. Similarly, Nadine Gordimer's short story "Once Upon a Time" has received little literary attention other than featuring in Mary West's *White Women Writing White: Identity and Representation in (Post)-Apartheid Literatures of South Africa* (2009) as a study of the fairytale genre.

In contrast to this, Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* has received a great deal of literary attention. Much has been written on his depiction of the Hillbrow urban space and the current realities of post-apartheid cities. Hilary Dannenburg (2012) suggests that the

novel reconfigures the urban space of Hillbrow “within a larger network of connections between rural, urban and global spaces” (2012:40). Lorenzo Mari (2012), Meg Samuelson (2007) and Shane Graham (2009) express similar points of view. Emma O’Shaughnessy meanwhile considers the relationship between fictional urban representations such as those of Mpe’s with “the real social and political makeup of the urban terrain” (2010:1). Gugu Hlongwane (2006) is concerned with Mpe’s prerogative to represent those who would otherwise remain the “face-less and name-less masses of so-called bad neighbourhoods” (2006:80-81). Emma Hunt posits that *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* presents the “new mobility between Johannesburg and other spaces enabled by the opening of South Africa’s borders after apartheid,” suggesting that it “can be harnessed to build an inclusive city” (2006:104). Michael Titlestad argues that Mpe “describes a world of complicated civility in which strangers can arrive and learn their way” (2012:683). Tom Penfold (2012) is particularly concerned with the tension between public and private space as the urbanscape of Hillbrow in Mpe’s novel destabilises western notions of privatised territories. He suggests that works such as Mpe’s offer up “alternative maps that arguably imply the irrelevance of old systems of dominance and old ideas of space,” thereby dismantling boundaries. Hereafter, critical attention has also been paid to the novel’s unflinching yet humane portrayal of the HIV and AIDS dilemma in Africa and South Africa, in the articles of Lizzy Attree (2005) and Neville Hoad (2007). Rob Gaylard (2005) focusses specifically on the role of storytelling within Mpe’s novel and the metafictional aspects of the author’s methods that suggest an emphasis on the importance of narratives within our community. Meanwhile Stanley Ridge (2003) writes about the potential that *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* might have as a setwork book that would teach students about the inherited problems of xenophobia through the text’s illumination of the subject. However, none of the above articles has considered Mpe’s representation of urban space specifically in relation to notions of abjection.

Like Mpe, Duiker has received a fair amount of critical attention (although perhaps not quite to the same degree as Mpe). Dobrota Pucherova hails Duiker as the first South African writer to “create a black gay protagonist” (2009: 936). As such, much of the focus on Duiker’s novel has been on the fact that Tshepo, his protagonist, is both gay and black. This is explored in the articles of John C. Hawley (2010), Marius Crous (2007), and Brenna Munro (2007). Meg Samuelson’s reading of Duiker’s novel is as “dexteritous and energetic fiction” that “shuttles back and forth between realities, exploring interstitial spaces rather than being arrested at their border-posts” (2007:259). Shane Graham meanwhile posits that the novel “poses [...] a great challenge for post-apartheid reconstruction: how to create [...]

safe and autonomous zones of self-determination where true negotiation of selfhood can take place, without creating a society of disconnected, balkanized communities resembling the spatial stratification of apartheid” (2009:121). Annie Gagiano concludes that “Duiker’s text, like Tshepo’s life, depicts a courageous, violence-threatened search for new myths, for a new frame of identity” in post-apartheid South Africa. A contribution to the field by Dobrota Pucherova meanwhile suggests that the novel ultimately offers up an ethics of hospitality and inclusiveness among otherwise strangers. While these studies are useful to my own, none of the articles has considered Cape Town as a specific place with a specific trajectory within the South African post-apartheid landscape. They have neither considered the kinds of ideologies that Cape Town is seen to promote in Duiker’s novel, in direct relation to those he finds in Hillbrow upon his relocation. It is thus the comparative aspect of my approach that makes my contribution unique.

Urban Theory

I have found urban theory particularly useful in my analysis of the selected texts as each one of them represents urban spaces that have a substantial presence in the South African reality. In *The Power of Apartheid: State, Power and Space in South African Cities* (1995), urban theorist Jennifer Robinson insists that the “spatiality” created by the apartheid regime was one that rested on a model of “setting apart.” She goes on to suggest that this spatiality continues to “confound urban managers in their project of repairing the damages of the past” (1995: 1) and as such often undercuts the “efforts to transform this crucial political terrain” (1995: 219). John Manning considers a similar problem when he describes the parallel cityscapes set up by the apartheid government as residences for their exploited labourers and denigrated constituency, namely the ‘non-white’ majority of South Africa. The scene that Manning describes in his article “Racism in Three Dimensions: South African Architecture and the Ideology of White Supremacy” (2004) is one that any South African or visitor to this country would likely be familiar, of townships “located on the periphery of urban areas characterised by row upon row of barracks-like matchbox houses” (2004: 530). While apartheid as a framework of institutionalised racism between 1948 and 1994 may have been formally dismantled as an institution of the past, these kinds of urban spaces are still as evident in the South Africa today.

The persistence of such segregated South African city spaces is arguably compounded by a rapid suburban expansion. In his study, “Suburbanisation, segregation, and government

of territorial transformation” (2005), Alan Mabin notes the growing trend of middle- to upper-middle class South Africans to relocate to the suburbs at an ever-growing rate. He posits that even our CBDs have been affected by this “massive decentralisation,” as office blocks begin to develop in “ribbons along previously residential major roads, and in concentrations around some of the larger suburban nucleations.” Among the major reasons, he cites a key one as a “worsening and white racism” (2005: 54). The CBDs are seen to be predominantly black and increasingly dangerous. With the move of economic opportunities to the suburbs, already deeply-rooted patterns of segregation become further entrenched. He adds that it is not only white South Africans but a black middle class as well who have begun to find appealing the benefit of a perceived safety behind the walled complex. Because of this, “an entirely new pattern of middle class blacks [are] taking up residence in townhouse complexes which can scarcely be completed fast enough to satisfy the demand” (2005: 54). He concludes that while many of our cities may have changed post-apartheid, the attempts made by government and city planners to reintegrate South Africa’s urban spaces fail as we continue to “suburbanise” (2005: 59). Here, Beukes’ representation of gated communities and Nadine Gordimer’s depiction of the suburban enclave serve to reinforce such criticisms.

In his article, “Assimilation, Emigration, Semigration and Integration: ‘white’ peoples’ strategies for finding a comfort zone in post-apartheid South Africa” (2004), Richard Ballard makes a similar observation. He begins on the premise that “[o]ur sense of space and sense of self are mutually constitutive.” As such, we may attempt to mould our surroundings according to the values and principles that we hold, those that comprise our sense of self. In turn, however, these same environments may “shape us, challenge us, and constrain us.” He continues that part of this process is the natural need to seek out or create “comfort zones” (2004: 51). Via a series of interviews, he explores the various responses from white subjects as each particular response indicates a predilection for assimilation, emigration, semigration or integration in the demarcation of their specific ‘comfort zones’. The legacy of apartheid is still apparent in some of these processes of ‘comfort zoning’, as the same old biases and racist notions are perpetuated. The apartheid regime had envisaged South Africa as “a piece of Europe on the tip of the African Continent” (H.F. Verwoed in Ballard 2004: 53). Once the regime was dissolved in 1994, a sudden sense of panic and anxiety was arguably felt by many white South Africans as their cities began to change shape, to shift powers and transform.

As Ballard notes, the sudden emergence of vendors and informal traders in CBDs “represented a breach of the buffers and modernist planning that sought to keep people at bay” (2004: 58). These changes seemed indicative to some that the former westernised ideals

and standards were now under threat. The CBDs of the ‘new’ South Africa were no longer imitative of a “more or less European city” but appeared to usher in the “‘African’ market place” as well. Many white people began to feel uncomfortable in such places and thus avoided them, leading to a ‘semigration’ (2004:52). It is Ballard’s concept of semigration that is most pertinent to Mabin’s own study. Ballard describes it as a “partial emigration without leaving the borders of South Africa” (2004:52). It is a move made by some attempting to keep at bay those whom they deem as “undesirable people” (2004:52). Processes of othering are thus inextricably tied to such practices. One of the ways in which this othering is enacted is via such spatial practices as the gated communities and suburban enclaves (2004: 52). Duiker’s novel also serves as an indictment of a failure to integrate on the part of the city of Cape Town. While Johannesburg has been ‘contaminated’, so to speak, by the highly integrated inner-city area of Hillbrow, Cape Town remains at a loss of such an equivalent.

It is here that my study takes its point of departure by suggesting that fundamental to the ways in which we inhabit and inform our post-apartheid city spaces, are the ways in which we conceive of and imagine them. The task of creating new, dynamic and integrated cities will depend on an equally dynamic reimagining of these spaces. As a phenomenon that appears heavily dependent on racialist and classist mindsets, the sprawl of suburbanisation would seem to suggest that we have suffered a failure of the imagination in this regard. Jennifer Robinson describes a similar dilemma in her more recent work, *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development* (2006). Specifically, hers is a call to fellow urban theorists to reconsider the inherited and often problematic preconceptions surrounding so-called ‘Third World’ cities. She places the blame of these preconceptions on a field of urban studies that “continue[s] to ascribe innovation and dynamism – modernity – to cities in rich countries, while imposing a regulating catch-up fiction of modernisation on the poorest” (2006: 1). She goes on to add that this process of classifying and categorising urban spaces has led to “a hierarchical analysis of cities in which some get to be creative, others deficient, still tainted by the not-modern, placed on the side of the primitive” (2006: 13). Garth Myers expands on Robinson in *African Cities: Alternative Visions of Urban Theory and Practice* (2011), and advances that the field of urban studies tends to relegate African cities to “a different, other, lesser category of not-quite cities” (2011: 4). South Africans taking up residence in more affluent or ‘up-and-coming’ urban areas might likewise impose these same ‘catch-up fictions’ upon the working class of South Africans, viewing the poorer areas that they inhabit as unfit, degenerate or ‘backward’. In turn, it becomes imperative that those areas deemed as ‘backward’ (or too ‘Third World’ to draw directly on Robinson) are

contained and concealed, lest they threaten to encroach upon the middle-to-upper-class dream of supposed westernised modernity. We find an example of this in *Zoo City*, in the attempt of those who are without animal familiars to contain aposymbiots (otherwise known as ‘zoos’) to the area of Hillbrow.

Robinson identifies the problem in the “locatedness of the original concept of modernity and the hegemonic position of Western urban experiences” (2006: 39). Models of western modernity, together with the ‘First World’ aesthetics that uphold them, are thus understood to be universally desirable and do not come under scrutiny. One need only turn to much of South Africa’s architecture to find apparent this pandering to ‘First World’ modernity. In the high walls and European facades found in Gordimer’s short and the home of Odi Huron in Beukes’ novel, we find a fictional representation of such familiar suburban spaces.

If our architecture represents the most visible organisation of our urban spaces, these constructed sites often appear to reflect imported styles, influenced by the likes of the metropolitan skyscraper or commercialised façades of fake European-style villas. Local architects and city planners have supported such criticism. In Manning’s aforementioned article, he advances that our architecture continues to “[turn] its back on Africa, locking it out behind four metre walls.” The structures themselves and the buildings within are described as being “dressed up to create a kind of European world based upon Ancient Greece, Rural England [or] Imperial Rome” (2004: 531). He further criticises a tendency in South Africa to “seemingly believe that the higher [our] walls and the more ornamented their façades, the more First World we are” (2004: 531-2). By observing general architectural practices in South Africa, Manning thus considers the effects of three hundred and fifty years of colonialism and apartheid on our urban spaces, and the role this plays in reinforcing racial divides. Architect and critic, Alan Lipman similarly observes the South African urban landscape as one of buildings “unsuited to our exacting climates,” most of them “stylistic borrowings from ‘overseas’” and “recycled neo-classical oddities that announce the supposed origins and participation in European history of our minority population” (1993: 31). Once again, the emphasis is on the desire to reflect what South Africans believe to be a ‘First World’ architecture.

To return to Robinson then, the converse effect of such an idealisation of the western model means that those urban areas that do not fit within or ascribe to it are relegated to the position of “its excluded others: tradition, primitivism and difference” (2006: 39). As such, Robinson makes a post-colonial move towards seeing “all cities as ordinary, rather than as defined by a-priori categories” (2006: 41). Within our own cities we might benefit from a

similar disposition, a similar broadening of the imagination so to speak. Everyday experiences within our urban spaces are characterised by a shift between and organisation into privileged centres and unprivileged peripheries. This reinforces certain privileges in a series of relational and hierarchising co-ordinates. In the context of South African cities, we are able to admit the presence of such privileged centres and unprivileged peripheries in the oppositional terms of ‘suburban’ vs. ‘township’, ‘ghetto’ vs. ‘gated community’ and ‘informal settlement’ vs. ‘RDP housing’, to draw on but a few classificatory dividers. Thus, Robinson maintains that all cities are “sites of clashing and contestation [...] stages for the ephemeral reconfiguration of meaning on the streets” (2006: 84). In spite of the divides that exist (not to mention those that act to maintain and reinforce these divisions), the very permeability of our urban spaces makes them relentlessly ever-changing, ambiguous and hybrid spaces. It is this mutable aspect of cityness that might be seen as most useful in a dynamic re-imagining of our cities. Barring Gordimer’s short story (which deals specifically with the neo-apartheid infrastructure of the suburban enclave), all of the selected texts of this study offer up representations of Hillbrow as just such a mutable and dynamic urban space. Rather than focussing attention solely on the limitations and challenges facing South Africa’s cities, we might turn them towards those narratives and re-imaginings that generate more fluid, creative and interconnected interpretations of our so-called ‘Third World’ urban experiences.

In rethinking the urban space of Hillbrow, Karen A. Franck and Quentin Stevens are particularly useful in their theorisation of ‘loose’ space. They posit that it is “[l]oose spaces [that] give cities life and vitality” (2007:4). They provide urban spaces where people might “relax, observe, buy or sell, protest, mourn and celebrate” (2007:4). Ultimately it is in loose spaces that we find the allowance for “the chance encounter, the spontaneous even, the enjoyment of diversity and the discovery of the unexpected” (2007:4). They argue that where such a diversity and spontaneity is discouraged, we find the “increasing privatization, commodification and sanitization of public and quasi-public space in cities” (2007:4). As such, they suggest further that such tightened and highly regulated spaces act to “prescribe and homogenize urban activities and identities,” thus posing “serious threats to the continued existence of loose space” (2007:4). It is my position that gated communities and suburban communities are equally restrictive in that they do not encourage the loosening of urban space but rather serve as neo-apartheid infrastructures in the maintenance of classist and racial divisions. In direct opposition to such constrained spaces, I offer that the representations of this study suggest that Hillbrow is in fact a potentially loose urban space in

its richly diverse and heterogeneous mix of peoples. Thus, for all its crime and poverty, this inner-city area nonetheless provides insight as to how we might foster truly post-apartheid South African cities that are more fluidised and hybridised and therefore less exclusive.

Literary Criticism and Theory

In “(Im)mobilizing spaces – dreaming of change,” a contribution to the collection *blank_Architecture, apartheid and after* (1998), Jennifer Robinson considers the impact on South African imaginations. She posits that they have been dictated to by the demarcations of apartheid city space, “with the blank spaces in between, the deadening images of power drawn on the ground.” She goes on to wonder what our new city spaces of “something else” might begin to look like, these new spaces of “change and dynamism” and finds a fitting example in Zakes Mda’s novel, *Ways of Dying* (1998: 163). She draws specifically on a moment in the narrative that describes the protagonist, Toloki, a self-appointed Professional Mourner and one of South Africa’s economically disenfranchised, as he nonetheless “walks to the taxi rank” and “struts like a king, for today the whole city belongs to him” (Mda in Robinson 1998: 163). This scene sees Toloki occupy a position of agency and felt proprietorship in his city. She argues that although Mda does not attempt to “undo the spaces of poverty” that surround his characters in their everyday comings and goings, what is of key importance is that he “refuses to treat the experiences of those spaces as one-dimensional” (1998: 164). While they may in part be spaces of poverty, this does not exclude those who live in them from the dynamic and creative processes that affect and shape our urban spaces on a daily basis. Following the movements of the protagonist Toloki, Robinson is able to demonstrate how Mda draws attention to the “flows and connections within cities that reflect and generate dynamism, and might change their spatiality” (1998: 170). Ultimately, what Robinson insists upon is that the “imagination, then, is a crucial part of (re)making city spaces” (1998: 164). Similarly, my project is concerned with the ways in which the fictions that I have selected might reshape and redraw the co-ordinates of our urban spaces.

Rita Barnard draws on Robinson and arrives at a comparable conclusion in *Apartheid and Beyond* (2006). In her chapter entitled “The Location of Postapartheid Culture,” Barnard specifically explores the role of imagination and our post-apartheid narratives in re-inscribing contemporary South African urban spaces. Appropriating a phrase employed by Es’kia Mphahlele, she begins by asserting that a “commitment to territory” is almost inevitable in the work of South African writers as the right to space was and remains such a contested

issue in this country (2006: 147). However, Barnard argues that it is a commitment that needs to shift its vision in the newly formed state, rather than to rely on only the “all too familiar and ready-made trope” of “matchbox houses in serried ranks” so symbolic of apartheid’s cruel injustices. It is with a “sense of striking newness” that she arrives at Mda’s *Ways of Dying*. Rather than forcing his characters to re-enact this “drama of the ghetto,” Barnard makes the proposition that Mda’s characters are left at times to quite simply “play” (Barnard’s emphasis; 2006: 148). As in Robinson’s assertions, the spaces that Mda represents and that his characters occupy may indeed be spaces of poverty (or spaces of so-called ‘Third World’ developmentalism). However, they are nonetheless written into being in ways that show up their porosity and multidimensionality as “richly imagined chronotopes” (2006: 148). Similarly, I posit that Mpe, Beukes and Duiker offer equally porous and multidimensional re-imaginings of Johannesburg’s inner-city Hillbrow. In the work of Mda, Barnard suggests that we see an interesting development and a move away from “the earlier poetics of a grim documentation [...] to a new, more fluid sense of black urban experience,” not to mention one that parallels recent developments in urban studies such as those aforementioned efforts of Robinson’s and Myers’ (2004: 151). She makes the point that in this way, literary critics might broaden their research to include the work of urban theorists in as much as urban theorists might draw on narrative fiction in their own endeavours so as to better understand the “emergent spaces of the African city” (2004: 153).

Secondly, it is Barnard’s consideration of aesthetics in *Ways of Dying* that is noteworthy. The novel often brings the reader’s attention to that which may be thought of as ‘beautiful’ and that which is considered ‘ugly’. As Barnard concludes, Mda’s novel “takes up this stereotyped discourse of beauty and ugliness and subjects it to carnivalesque inversion” (2004: 156). I argue, particularly in Chapter Two, that Beukes achieves a similar feat in her representation of Hillbrow as Zoo City in much the same way as Mda’s narrative challenges these hierarchical binaries and the notions surrounding ‘Third World’ urban spaces, enabling instead the production of “new possibilities for a creative urbanity” (2004: 157). Also, Barnard is keen to note that the prose of the novel suggests that it has been written with what Lewis Nkosi has called the “cross-border reader” in mind (Nkosi in Barnard 2006: 159). This means that Mda’s ‘possibilities for a creative urbanity’ are not necessarily presented to those of the South African public his work represents, but rather to those who would likely ascribe first hand to idealised and westernised aesthetics thus challenging these inherited positions on what is ‘beautiful’ and what ‘ugly’. Thus, in the cases of Robinson and Barnard, the importance of literature is emphasised in reinvigorating how we view our urban spaces.

In the chapters to follow, I find inspiration in such insinuations by critics such as Robinson and Barnard, that literature (specifically narrative fiction) matters in the processes of reimagining the urban spaces we inhabit daily. I explore the ways in which they might challenge and contest the preconceptions that inform current senses and experiences of our post-apartheid, African and so-called ‘Third World’ urbanscapes.

Hereafter, Julia Kristeva’s theorisation of abjection is useful to this study in thinking through the creation of abject subjectivities and urban spaces. Kristeva describes the abject as having “only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to *I*” (Kristeva’s emphasis 1982:1). As such it is a phenomenon largely concerned with the territories of the self and the maintenance of spatial borders. Derek Hook (2004) meanwhile appropriates Kristeva’s theory of abjection to suggest that it is an active impulse inherent in a perpetuated racism in South Africa today. I argue further that it is particularly relevant to the processes of othering inherent in xenophobia, a significant problem in our congested urban spaces. As such, I am interested in how urban spaces such as Hillbrow have been denigrated as abject in their encroachment upon once sanctified CBDs, leading today to rapid suburbanisation. Judith Butler’s *Undoing Gender* (2004) is likewise useful here in her consideration of those lives that have become invisible. She suggests that some lives have become grievable while others not. It is my argument that areas such as Hillbrow, those areas demonised or rendered abject by society, play host to equally abjectified inhabitants whose lives are considered of lesser import. To reimagine our representations of such spaces is to radically rethink the ways in which we build a truly hospitable and heterogeneous society.

Chapter One

An Exploration of Fiction in the Re-Imagining of South African Urbanscapes: Rewriting Abject Spaces and Subjectivities in Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*

1.1 Re-Imagining Johannesburg in South African Fiction: Redressing the Processes of Othering in Urban Spaces

In this chapter, I argue that it is necessary to explore the processes of abjection that so often create other-ed subjects. I further posit that it is equally important to consider those fictions such as Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* that might liberate such subjects from these abject demarcations. Here Beukes' novel serves as the primary focus of this investigation. However, I draw comparatively on Mpe's attempt to likewise reimagine inner-city Hillbrow in such a way as to free his characters from the kinds of othering that would otherwise define them.

The need in South Africa to redress processes of othering and the making of abject subjects may be seen as an urgent one. In 2008, South Africa stunned the world when the burning of a Mozambican migrant worker made front page news. Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuave had been set alight in the informal settlement of Ramaphosaville. This was the horrifying culmination of a nation-wide uprising against Zimbabwean refugees and Mozambican migrants that had broken out prior in the areas of Alexandra and Diepsloot, spreading quickly through Gauteng. While many South Africans expressed shock and outrage at the violence, it was by no means inexplicable. The year of 1995 that followed South Africa's first fully democratic election had brought with it the pogrom known as *Buyelekhaya* ("Go back home"). The intimation already seemed to be that 'outsiders' had no place in this country (Sichone 1998: 256). South Africans meanwhile attempted to put the aforementioned events behind them, those events that had led to the gruesome apex of the burning of Nhamuave in 2008. However, the local elections of 2011 saw a return to this horrific violence towards those seen as 'outsiders'. Xenophobia continues thus to be an ever-present feature in the South African reality, reasserting itself as Stanley Ridge posits "in resentment at urban newcomers from other areas who have other customs, speak other languages and compete in

the same labour pool” (2003:1). Thus those processes that inform such xenophobic impulses require attention.

Here, the question of language comes in to play in the term that is so commonly used in the naming of these migrant workers and refugees as ‘*makwekwere*’. Although some South Africans maintain that the name is “merely descriptive,” the reality that it is a “term for babblers or barbarians” reveals its connotative problems (Sichone 2008: 259). Its origins may have been as a name spoken in light jest of the African with no knowledge of a local South African dialect. As Judith Butler posits in *Undoing Gender* (2004):

[t]o find that you are fundamentally unintelligible (indeed, that the laws of culture and of language find you to be an impossibility) is to find that you have not yet achieved access to the human, to find yourself speaking only and always *as if you were* human, but with the sense that you are not, to find that your language is hollow, that no recognition is forthcoming because the norms by which recognition takes place are not in your favour.

(2004: 30)

Stanley Ridge further posits that “xenophobic attitudes are intimate, operating beneath the surface, carried in the ways language is used” and adds that a “viable approach to understanding xenophobia must probe the ways in which language carries the values and broach the subject through imaginative recognition” (2003: 2). Applying this ‘imaginative recognition’ then, writers like Phaswane Mpe and K. Sello Duiker have drawn attention to the derogative terming of ‘*makwekwere*’ as outsiders and the name’s complicity in processes of othering.

Beyond this, the continued use of the term allows for a degree of condoned prejudice in a country where the use of that other abjectifying term of *kaffir* may not even be whispered in polite company. While the usage of such terms may appear to have very little to do with our spatial practices, such name-callings arguably decide who is to be included and who excluded (or at the very least, found wanting and unwelcome). Such discourses of language therefore require interrogation in their various manifestations as they designate the co-ordinates for ‘belonging’ or ‘un-belonging’.

It is of further importance to note that the physical feature so often used against foreign African immigrants in this reinvigorated xenophobic impulse is the degree of darkness in skin colour. As Stanley Ridge advances, racism is in fact a form of xenophobia and thus the two are inextricably linked (2003: 1). The South African black people are generally considered to be lighter in skin colour than those African immigrants often relocating from countries where

the peoples are found to be of a darker complexion. Thus, it could be suggested that the darker the skin colour, the more ‘aberrant’ and ‘abject’ the subject.

In “Racism as abjection: A psychoanalytic conceptualization for a post-apartheid South Africa” (2004), Derek Hook proposes that a more covert form of racism has infiltrated South Africa in recent years. South Africans, no longer forced to live along racially-drawn divides, were finally able to welcome in the future of a racial intermingling post-1994. Yet, he argues that those long-lived “routinized and unconscious [...] manifestations of fear and aversion” have persisted all the same in our newly democratic state (Young in Hook 2004: 683). Even today, South Africans might routinely experience “palpable feelings of disgust, nausea, and/or repulsion” in their daily interracial encounters, regardless of their better judgment or liberal views (2004: 683). Ultimately for Hook, these moments of ‘palpable’ anxiety constitute that most “primal response to that which is abject” (2004: 685). Important to my study is to consider the ways in which such fears and aversions are enacted in everyday space for it is particularly in highly dense, urban spaces that such cross-cultural and interracial encounters are likely to occur.

Most useful to my own study is the issue of “border anxiety” central to Hook’s employment of Julia Kristeva’s theory of abjection (2004: 685). This begins as a relatively innocent project in the formation of the self’s identity. Abjection is essentially a process “concerned with the borders of the ego – the boundaries of one’s identity” (2004: 685). The young child learns to distinguish between what is ‘I – the self – and what is not – and thus, other – in order to develop a coherent sense of identity. As Kristeva posits in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982), the “abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to I” (Kristeva’s emphasis; 1982:1). The danger hereafter lies in the development of a “logic of prohibition [...] based on the operation of exclusion” (Kristeva in Hook 2004: 686). Abjection is closely related to the protection of territories for that which causes it may be seen as anything that “disturbs identity, system, order” (1982: 4). As such, the abject might be understood as that which “does not respect borders, positions, rules” and as such constitutes the “in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” (1982: 4). Kristeva further claims that “abjection is above all ambiguity” (1982: 9). Anything that appears to encroach on the borders of the ‘self’ (or in the case of xenophobia, on the borders of the *territory* of the self), must be met with resistance and even violence as the dissolution of both the self and the territory are seen to loom eminently.

It is within this theoretical framework that I suggest there is an intrinsic link between outbreaks of xenophobic violence and the persistent presence of abject subjectivities within

South Africa's urban spaces. This is in keeping with Kristeva's position that the "phobic has no other object than the abject" (1982: 6). Similarly, Owen Sichone describes xenophobia as "an irrational and debilitating anxiety induced by a fear of strangers, foreign things and places" (2008: 255). Within the context of South Africa, this has taken the form of a "racist and nationalist sentiment," escalating to become a consolidated expression of "hatred of, or contempt for, [...] foreigners and foreign things" (2008: 255). Kristeva's theorisation of abjection advances that such a "coding of differentiation" – a "coding of [the subject's] repulsion in relation to the other in order to autonomize [him/herself]" – ultimately "represents [...] the striving for identity, a difference" (1982:82). It is of equal significance, too, that this hatred and contempt has been reserved solely for *African* foreigners and foreign things. Thus it is in those areas where African immigrants take up residence that xenophobic attacks are most likely to occur, in the city 'slums' and poorer 'fringe' areas.

As touched upon in my introduction, few South African urban spaces have become as notorious as the inner-city 'slum' of Hillbrow. In many ways, this inner-city space has come to embody that abject "loathsome inside" of the city's central core (2004: 686). Judith Butler has described such abject spaces as the "'uninhabitable' and 'unliveable' zones of social life," zones "populated by those who do not qualify as full subjects of a particular social order" (Butler in Hook 2004: 688-9). Hillbrow then may be seen as just such a 'zone' and the city's aforementioned attempts to gentrify the area may be read in response to this. As Kristeva posits, every-day responses to the abject usually require "meticulous rules of separation, rejection, and repulsion" (1982:80). By gentrifying Hillbrow, ultimately those who 'do not qualify as full subjects' would be pushed further to the margins where their abject presence would not be found to encroach upon the city's centre.

1.2 The Phantasmagoric Urbanscape in *Zoo City*

Beukes has called her work a new kind of fiction, namely '*muti noir*'. According to the online *Oxford Dictionary*, the word '*muti*' has its origins in the Zulu word '*umuthi*' meaning "plant or medicine." However, in the context of South Africa, the term of '*muti*' can imply either "traditional African medicine or magical charms" or "medicine of any kind." This suggests that while there is an element of *noir* in the novel (which I will deal with further in Chapter Two), there is also the element of the magical or mystical to it. As such, I posit that the novel also employs the genre of magical realism.

Defined simply, magical realism can be seen to occur in a novel where real and fantastical elements are combined “in such a way that magical elements grow organically out of the reality” (Faris 1995: 163). In the case of Beukes’ *Zoo City*, the urbanscapes of Johannesburg with which readers are presented share a strong resemblance with those that exist in reality. The Hillbrow of Beukes’ imagining is not so very different in its social and economic make-up to a current-day Hillbrow. The scene wherein Zinzi purchases a loose cigarette from a Zimbabwean vendor is just one such example as these sort of informal street traders are typical in the South African urban landscape particularly in areas such as Hillbrow. Others such as the nightclub-scenes and the gated communities in the novel also comprise those urbanscapes with which a South African reader would be familiar. As Wendy B. Faris notes, “[r]ealistic descriptions create a fictional world that resembles the one we live in” (1995: 168). However, the most obvious departure from this otherwise realistic depiction lies in the animal familiars that certain characters are forced to bear as part of their life’s sentence for various transgressions. Thus, while the novel is not unrealistic or totally fantastical in its portrayal of the city of Johannesburg, it nonetheless contains that “‘irreducible element’ of magic” that Faris maintains is so prevalent in magical realist fictions. Because of this ‘irreducible element of magic’, “magical things ‘really’ do happen” in the magical realist text (1995: 165).

On the one hand, Beukes’ choice to experiment with genre, and in this case, the genre of magical realism, may be read as simply an attempt to play with the possibilities of fiction. In his exploration of the fiction of Zakes Mda and the use of magical realism for South African writers, Christopher Warnes has noted that many writers during an apartheid South Africa felt the need to depict things realistically in their fictions (2009: 75). This was no doubt because a great many writers trying to speak out against the tyranny of apartheid felt the need to take their writing very seriously. Because of the gravity of the crime against humanity that the society was faced with, apartheid literature was marked by an attempt to deal with the inhumanity. Nadine Gordimer echoed this sentiment when she drew on Chekhov in saying that what was demanded of the South African white writer was “to describe a situation so truthfully [...] that the reader [could] no longer evade it” (1988: 250). Thus, in a post-apartheid state, it could be suggested that there exists a greater freedom felt by writers to write in ways that are arguably less bound to this explicitly ‘truthful’ depiction of Gordimer’s description.

However, this is not to suggest that South African fiction is no longer required to interrogate the dominant discourses of our current society. It is simply to suggest that the spirit within which they might attempt to do so has shifted somewhat. Thus, I argue further

that Beukes in fact uses the genre of magical realism to explore issues of race, abjection and ‘othering’ within our South African urban spaces. If our forms of racism and practices of exclusion have become more covert then Beukes uses the allegory of aposymbiots to demonstrate the arbitrary nature of the fears and aversions upon which these practices are based. Theo L. D’Haen suggests that writers of magical realist fiction “duplicate” aspects of “existing reality” so as to “create an alternative world *correcting* so-called existing reality, and thus to right the wrongs this ‘reality’ depends on” (his emphasis; 1995: 194). As such it often results in the kind of fiction that speaks from the margins. Even in the cases where the writers themselves are seen as “coming from the privileged centres of literature,” they are able to employ magical realism so as to “dissociate themselves from their own discourse of power,” and to acknowledge and recognise the position of “the ex-centric and un-privileged” (1995: 194). It is D’Haen’s position then that magical realism “implicitly proposes this decentering” of privileged spaces and discourses (1995: 194). I similarly propose that Beukes employs magical realism in her novel so as to challenge current stereotypes and their informed discourses surrounding certain South African urban spaces and the peoples that make up their inhabitants.

Rather than allowing othered subjects to be pushed to the margins, then, Beukes foregrounds them in the novel, making just one such subject her story’s narrator. It is my argument hereafter that she draws attention to our making of abject subjects and spaces by creating a phantasmagorical ‘zootopia’ out of Hillbrow. Those things which Kristeva has targeted as amongst the “most primal (and powerful) abject ‘objects’ (or stimuli) are those items that challenge the integrity of one’s own bodily parameters – blood, urine, faeces, pus, semen, hair clippings, etc. – those bodily products once so entirely a part of me that have subsequently become separate, loathsome” (Kristeva in Hook 2004: 686). Not only are these things those abject ‘objects’ that threaten to destabilise the borders of the self, they are simultaneously those things demonstrating that we are irrevocably animal in nature. As Kristeva further posits, the “abject confronts us [...] with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of the *animal*” (Kristeva’s emphasis 1982: 12). Thus, Beukes’ creation of an urban space filled with animalled individuals may be seen as a manifestation of such abject fears and repulsions.

Originally a kind of theatre, the spectacle of phantasmagoria began to circulate first in Paris then London and the rest of Europe towards the end of the 18th century. The Romanticist movement had fostered a fascination with the macabre and monstrous, which would emerge as a prominent feature of the Gothic literature to follow. Together with this

artistic impulse, the invention of the magic lantern allowed for Gothic extravaganzas whereby images on slides were magnified and distorted in their projection. The public flocked to these special theatres to be terrified by these grotesque images, like spectres from a paranormal beyond. Etienne-Gaspard Roberts, a Belgian inventor and physicist renowned for his phantasmagoric productions at the turn of the 18th century, once remarked, “I am only satisfied if my spectators, shivering and shuddering, raise their hands or cover their eyes out of fear of ghosts and devils dashing towards them” (<http://themagiclantern.org.uk>).

This is not an impetus unfamiliar to the literatures of magical realism. Ben Okri’s Booker Prize winner, *The Famished Road*, may be read as a phantasmagoric work of magical realist fiction. Likewise, Lewis Nordan describes writing the novel, *The Wolf Whistle*, as one might an exorcism. The author refers to his novel as “a phantasmagoria based upon history’s broadest outlines,” going so far as to suggest that this magical realist fiction offered a way for him to deal with the lynchings that took place in the American South of his youth (Nordan in Taylor 2004: 441). Yet another familiar insertion is of the spectral Beloved in Toni Morrison’s magical realist novel by the same name, and signifies a phantasmal return of the repressed corpse. Morrison’s *Beloved* has even been described as “the most outstanding Gothic work of recent fiction” (Baldick 2009: xix). Meanwhile Katherine Dunn’s re-appropriation of the American tall tale in *Geek Love* deploys a powerful literalising of the ‘nuclear’ family as her characters plummet towards their phantasmagoric horror show.

However, in the classic tradition of phantasmagoria, the spectators of the 18th and 19th century would leave the space of the theatre to return to their everyday lives. To the contrary, the writer of magical realist fiction is less concerned with escapist displays of the grotesque than s/he is with what these distortions reveal about the extra-textual world. As Luis Leal has argued, the writer of magical realist fiction “confronts reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts” (1995: 121). The phantoms of magical realism do not therefore remain at a comfortable distance from the reader’s realities. Also, magic lantern audiences expect to be awed and terrified, whereas magical realism is more often than not introduced subtly. Readers do not always expect it.

To similar effect, Beukes produces her phantasmagoria with a literary magic lantern that magnifies, distorts and conjures up images of the abject Hillbrow urban landscape so that readers struggle to push them to the imaginary peripheries. If a fear of the abject generally evokes the impulse to expel, then Beukes’ text performs precisely the opposite by embracing it instead so as to make it unavoidable for the reader. Those ‘palpable’ anxieties are literalised and ‘made flesh’, so to speak, with Hillbrow reimagined as a phantasmagorical spectacle that can

neither be contained nor tamed. Instead, readers are forced to confront Butler's 'unliveable' and 'uninhabitable' zone and hereafter, to enter and inhabit it as they are led into this abject space by the protagonist of Zinzi December throughout the narrative.

Readers are told that all aposymbiots, or as they are derogatorily referred to 'zoos' are considered to be "[s]cum of the earth" as "[m]urderers, rapists, [and] junkies" (2010: 8). In this way, Beukes similarly plays with the notion of racial stereotyping, and specifically the kinds of racial stereotyping that were particularly prolific during the time of apartheid. Returning to the novel, in China we are told, these aposymbiots are executed "on principle," while in India they have come to represent a "caste *below* untouchable" (Beukes' emphasis 2010: 86). Although the treatment in Beukes' South Africa is not quite so severe, Zinzi does remark upon the need of "cloistered [...] suburbia" to expel these abject subjects somewhere peripheral (2010: 11). Walking up "on Empire through Parktown past the old Johannesburg College of Education," an animalled Zinzi manages to attract "a few aggressive hoots from passing cars" as they express outrage at her mere presence in their area (2010: 11). Furthermore, Zinzi experiences bans in certain establishments that have chosen to exclude aposymbiots in reserving their right of admittance. A similar scene occurs when Zinzi must con her way into being admitted to the golf clubhouse on a suburban estate. Once again, Beukes draws on the practices of apartheid in reference to the designation of certain places for 'Whites Only.' It thus emerges in the text, that Hillbrow (otherwise known as Zoo City) is one of the few places where aposymbiot's such as Zinzi might find themselves accommodated. In this way, Zoo City becomes the 'home' for the 'homeless', those phantasmagoric and dispossessed subjects whom the society wishes to impound or render invisible. Yet, in this reinvigorated urbanscape, they are no longer those "homeless ones, [...] the ones nobody will miss" (2010: 267). In Beukes' fictional world, they are subjects who gain agency and visibility as the narrative progresses.

1.3 Negotiating the Abjection of the Aposymbiot in *Zoo City*

Zinzi must first deal with that which she feels is abject within herself. While in prison, Zinzi has been told that her animal familiar is "the physical manifestation of [her] sin" (2010: 51-52). Zinzi herself initially refers to Sloth as her "own personal scarlet letter" (2010: 50). As Kristeva emphasises, any "crime, because it draws attention to the fragility of the law, is abject" (1982:4). She further postulates that the "abject is related to perversion" for the "abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but

turns them aside, misleads, corrupts, uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them” (1982:15). Because of this an “unshakeable adherence to Prohibition and Law is necessary if that perverse interspace of abjection is to be hemmed in and thrust aside” (1982:16). Zoo City emerges as just such an ‘interspace’, an urbanscape that resists such an ‘unshakeable adherence to Prohibition and Law’ but rather invokes fluidity and moral ambiguity.

When Zinzi first arrives at Elysium Heights, she spends the day “hiding inside [her] apartment” (2010: 51). She admits that she was not “used to being seen in public with [Sloth] yet” and “still cared about what other people thought, even when the other people in question had animals of their own” (2010: 50). Here Beukes arguably draws attention to the indoctrination of religious zealots that seek to turn all human impulse into sinfulness. As such, Beukes’ fiction may be read as the kind of literature that Kristeva invokes when she writes of those authors who encourage a confrontation of the abject via a “crossing over of the dichotomous categories of Pure and Impure, Prohibition and Sin, Morality and Immorality” (1982:16). Because of this societal sense of shame, Zinzi at first hides Sloth underneath her “hoodie” whenever she leaves the private space of her apartment (2010: 50). It is important to note here that abjection “persists as *exclusion* or taboo [...] in monotheistic religions [...] but drifts over to more ‘secondary’ forms such as *transgression* (of the Law) within the same monotheistic economy” (Kristeva’s emphasis; 1982:17). Thus, Kristeva maintains that it “finally encounters, with Christian sin, a dialectic elaboration, as it becomes integrated into the Christian World as threatening otherness” (1982:17). Initially, then, Zinzi may be seen as punishing herself for what she feels is her own sinfulness and ‘threatening otherness’. It is only from the men that she encounters in the elevator scene, that Zinzi begins to learn to no longer regard her Sloth with a sense of aberration, but rather to embrace him as part of herself. Since slothfulness is one of the Seven Deadly Sins, this can also be read as Zinzi coming to terms with her own sinfulness, her very humanness as it were. The suggestion here is perhaps that we are all burdened with the propensity for sinfulness and the only way to deal with it is to acknowledge its existence. The implication then is that those who do not have animal familiars have not come to terms with this propensity.

While Zinzi may come to more fully accept herself as an aposymbiot within the more open and accommodating space of Zoo City, Beukes still draws our attention to the ways in which society at large denigrates groups of people. In an extract that acts as an internet rant, the writer expresses the view that “apos aren’t human” (2010: 64). S/he quotes the Bible by stating that it is “in Deuteronomy: Do not bring a detestable thing into your house or you, like

it, will be set apart for destruction.” S/he goes on to state that it is necessary according to biblical law to “[u]tterly abhor and detest” aposymbiots “for [they] are set apart for destruction” (2010: 64). The rant ends by claiming that “God is merciful but only to actual, genuine, REAL LIFE human beings” where aposymbiots are “just animals” (2010: 64). This returns us to Butler’s postulation that abject spaces are ‘zones’ inhabited by ‘those who do not qualify as full subjects of a particular social order’. In the textual moment above, aposymbiots are written about in such a manner as to deny them qualification as ‘full subjects’. According to this viewpoint, they should not even qualify as human subjects. Yet, to the contrary, Beukes’ novel focuses on these aposymbiots in such a way as to draw attention to their humanity.

To begin with then, the community of Zoo City is an entirely open and heterogeneous one. As Zinzi emphasises, they are all “about tolerance” and “mutually assured desperation” in Zoo City (2010: 44). It is an urbanscape that resists processes of othering and abjection on the basis of this ‘mutually assured desperation’. Zoo City thus accommodates those with animal familiars and those without. It also plays host to a diverse range of nationalities. In the beginning of the novel and the aforementioned scene, Zinzi purchases a loose cigarette from a Zimbabwean vendor. Later, she returns a lost set of keys to a Cameroonian shopkeeper. Also, there is Zinzi’s lover, Benoît, who is Congolese, and one of his friends who is Rwandan. However, it is of course the animalled who are seen as most abject to those residing beyond the community of Zoo City. It is the aposymbiots who face bans in a variety of establishments throughout the novel, leading Zinzi in one scene to set up a meeting in a Kauia eatery as she knows it to be one of the few places permitting animal familiars.

It is significant therefore that an animalled subject, namely Zinzi December, is the narrative’s first-person protagonist. If it is the response of aversion to push to the margins, Beukes’ novel rescues the character of Zinzi from just such a fate and makes her central to the narrative. This may also be seen as a literary tactic of magical realism for, as noted earlier, it is a genre that resists privileged centres and is oftentimes found to speak from those marginalised positions. As an animalled subject, Zinzi is Other. However, by affording her the position of first-person narrator, Beukes creates a sense of intimacy between the reader and Zinzi thus bridging the gap that might otherwise exist.

Furthermore, while the common consensus in Zinzi’s society is that the animalled all be viewed as criminals, we learn that Zinzi’s crime was an inadvertent one. Her brother intervened in a drug deal gone awry and was shot and killed. Zinzi’s crime therefore is again simply a human one and does not make her an outright criminal or a monster as her society

might attempt to deem her. As such, Beukes' novel may be seen to challenge processes of othering and stereotyping as she demonstrates to readers that there is always more depth to an individual than may initially be known or supposed. This is arguably also a commentary on an ineffective justice system. It is significant as the making of an Other oftentimes resides on the foundation of a single difference. By this logic, if someone is of a different nationality they are immediately relegated to the position of a '*makwekwere*'. Thus, if such othered subjects are shown to be complex individuals or like us, they can no longer be abject or the Other.

Similarly, Beukes' novel renders the character of Benoît as an altogether complex and human character. In an interview that follows the novel, Beukes notes how his character was inspired by her "shame and horror of the xenophobic attacks in 2008" (2010: n.p.). She describes the process of writing his character as an attempt to "find the note of normalcy" and to "distill the humanity from the headlines." Early on in the novel, it is intimated that there is a great deal more to the character of Benoît than may at first meet the eye. Zinzi watches him while he sleeps "with only his calloused feet sticking out from under the duvet like knots of driftwood." "Feet like that, they tell a story," Zinzi narrates. They are feet that "say he walked all the way from Kinshasa with a Mongoose strapped to his chest" (2010: 1). Later, when Benoît stretches, his body further reveals a "mapwork of scars over his shoulders, the plasticky burnt skin that runs down his throat and his chest" (2010: 3). Readers later learn that he was defending his family when he acquired these scars. In his home country, he had fought off members of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda while his family fled into the forest to escape. After capturing him, he had been doused in paraffin and set alight, leaving him with the 'mapwork' of scars Zinzi describes. He has not seen his family in the five years since, not knowing if they are dead or alive, in spite of his efforts to track them down via a host of organisations, online groups, and extended family and friends. Beukes makes it difficult to simply categorise a character such as Benoît as a *makwekwere*. He is a far more complex and rich character. Also, Beukes draws attention to the real problems that many refugees face when fleeing to South Africa. Readers are thus encouraged to empathise with the character of Benoît, to imagine the difficulties and hardships that such a character might face, making it difficult to demarcate him as an outsider or aberrant Other.

Beukes' novel also privileges the otherwise marginalised by creating a subplot that deals with missing aposymbiots. During her investigations as she attempts to find the missing twin, Zinzi also begins to receive a series of cryptic emails. Over time, Zinzi comes to suspect that these emails might be messages sent to her from murdered aposymbiots. These are the

murders that do not “get much in the way of column space” and are otherwise easily forgotten (2010: 253). However, Zinzi is insistent on following up on her hunch and getting to the bottom of who might be behind these murders. This is much in keeping with Judith Buler’s line of questioning when she asks what it is that “makes for a grievable life” (2004:18). It is Butler’s position that some lives are rendered visible, important, grievable, while others are not. Zinzi’s persistence in the case of these murdered aposymbiots may be read as an added attempt to give voice to those whom society might often render invisible.

The inclusion of magical abilities is yet another way in which the novel resists the making of abject subjectivities. While those who have committed transgressions may become ‘accursed’, so to speak, with animal familiars, they are simultaneously granted a particular magical power. In the case of Zinzi, it is the ability to trace lost objects. Meanwhile, for the character of Benoît, it is the ability to mute the magic of those around him. Thus, it is that which marks them as Other, as abject, that in turn grants these subjects the ability to perform wondrous tricks. Furthermore, the animal familiars themselves often aid their human accompaniments. When Zinzi occasionally loses her bearings, it is Sloth who guides her until she finds her way again. Sloth also acts as a symbolic guide for Zinzi, a moral compass steering her away from that which might do her harm.

Thus, rather than rejecting that which is seen as abject or aberrant within themselves, characters such as Benoît and Zinzi come to embrace their animal familiars. It seems relevant that these two are able to survive by the end of the narrative in spite of their lives being severely threatened. In contrast to this, the one character who is unable to come to terms with being an aposymbiot is killed by his very own animal familiar. By committing a gruesome *muti* murder, Odi Huron rids himself of his connection to his animal familiar, the White Crocodile. In so doing, the ties of life and death that previously bound them are broken and the Crocodile is able to clamp its jaws around his body, carrying Huron to the bottom of his murky swimming pool. This scene may be read as a warning to a society that wishes to expel or reject that which is seen as Other or aberrant on the basis of difference. As Kristeva posits, “abjection, when all is said and done, is the other facet of religious, moral, and ideological codes on which rest the sleep of individuals, and the breathing spells of societies” thus comprising “abjection’s purification and repression” (1982:209). Ultimately, then, it is not the abject monster from the outside that ends Odi Huron’s life but the monster from within the confines of his supposedly ‘safe’ suburban enclave.

1.4 Rewriting the Abject Urban Space of Hillbrow in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*

While Beukes' novel arguably uses magical realism as a means with which to comment on the inherent wrongs in processes of othering, Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* employs an omniscient narrator speaking as it were from the realm of the ancestral or heaven to forewarn readers. I will further suggest that both novels offer re-imaginings of the space of Hillbrow outside of a conventional, stereotypical reading of an urban 'slum'. His use of the collective pronoun 'our' in front of 'Hillbrow' may be read as an attempt to rescue the space from marginality. It also raises questions of belonging and un-belonging within this South African city. As Meg Samuelson (2007) has argued, even though Mpe's novel "details crime, decay and outright inhumanity of life on the streets of Hillbrow, the narrative forges new inclusive patterns of belonging in [this] insistent refrain" (2007: 251). She suggests further that Mpe's "reiterated 'welcome' becomes a performative act of hospitality," recognising that "it is in the act of welcoming the continent into the nation, and specifically into its urban worlds, that South Africans will be able to remake the nation as home – a home necessarily of open doors and gaping windows; a home thus risky, yet habitable" (2007:252). Furthermore, the use of the word 'our' incorporates the reader as a responsible party for feelings of either alienation or hospitality that are experienced within the inner-city. Emma Hunt makes the point that the "repetition of the possessive 'our' before nearly every place name in the text dispels prejudice by prohibiting an outsider's viewpoint and demanding that the reader identify with a multitude of places and with the people they contain" (2006:117). Hilary Dannenberg meanwhile posits that "[b]y virtue of an increasing use of 'we' and its related 'our', the novel's discourse draws in and incorporates larger groups of humanity, just as it includes specific characters through the use of second-person narration" (2012: 47). Thus, Mpe's novel might be read as an attempt to encourage more hospitable zones of urban living. Sarah Nuttall reinforces this position when she suggests that the novel's use of the second person, addressed as it is 'to you', ultimately "expands our understanding of form in the context of an ethics of entanglement" (2008:204). Carrol Clarkson posits that the use of 'our' and 'you' have "the disorientating effect of simultaneously distancing, but engaging the reader in the implied community" (2005:452). She suggests further that the "question of answerability [...] thus extends to the reader as well" (2005: 452). Shane Graham likewise draws attention to the novel's use of the "second-person mode of narration, which is

immediately and consistently jarring, and in which the ‘you’ continually shifts and expands to include an ever-large web of relations” (2008:114). As such, this ‘ever-large web of relations’ creates a shift where Hillbrow is rescued from the position of the marginalised or abjectified and rather can be seen as part of a broader network.

Like Beukes, Mpe does not glamourise the space of Hillbrow or gloss over many of its gruesome or tragic realities. Early on in the narrative, a child is killed by a passing car in a hit-and-run. The “choking sobs of the deceased child’s mother” are muffled by the singing of *Shosholoz*... in the streets while the Hillbrowans celebrate a Bafana Bafana victory (2013: 2). It is after the death of this child that readers first encounter the refrain that recurs throughout the novel, “Welcome to our Hillbrow” (2013: 2). Furthermore, Hillbrow is referred to as a “menacing monster” that “lure[s]” people in from out of the city. It is said to already have “swallowed a number of children of Tiragalong, who thought that the City of Gold was full of career opportunities for them” (2013: 3). While this moment may be read as a commentary on the dangers and false promises of city life, it also serves to set up the dichotomy between the space of the rural and the space of the urban. The use of the word ‘children’ suggests an innocence and naivety on the part of the members of the rural Tiragalong community that will only be corrupted by the ways of the city.

However, as the novel progresses, the narrative turns its attention to superstitious ways of those in Tiragalong and the problems inherent in such dichotomising. The narrative begins to reveal some of these problems in the example of a young man from Tiragalong who came to Hillbrow to die of “what could only have been AIDS.” In the rumours that circulate in his home village, it is “said that he was often seen with *Makwekwere* women, hanging onto his arms and dazzling him with sugar-coated kisses that were sure to destroy any man, let alone an impressionable youngster like him” (2013: 3). This may also be seen as relating to that which Kristeva has recognised as the abject within the feminine. She posits that the “other sex, the feminine, becomes synonymous with a radical evil that is to be suppressed” (1982: 69). However, this fear of the abject in the feminine is aimed directly at those women who are seen not to originate from Tiragalong, and particularly to hail from other African countries. This draws attention to her regard of endogamy inherent to the Indian caste system in relation to abjection. As the *Collins English Dictionary* defines it in this context, endogamy refers to “marriage within one’s own tribe or similar unit.” Such a practice then might be seen as rooted in processes of othering and the marking of such others as explicit outsiders. As Kristeva summarises, the “endogamic principle inherent in caste systems amounts, as everywhere else, to having the individual marry within his group, or rather to his

being prohibited from marrying outside out of it” (1982:79). She further argues that “the hierarchic caste system in India [...] provides the most complex and striking instance of a social, moral, and religious system based on pollution and purification, on the pure and impure” (1982:79). Thus, the inherent prejudices that such dichotomising rests upon are revealed. So doing, Michael Titlestad (2012) suggests that Mpe’s narrative “collapses the conventional binaries” of “the ‘Jim comes to Jo’burg’ trope” (2012: 682). The space of the rural Tiragalong is no more or less afflicted with prejudice than the space of inner-city Hillbrow. As Carrol Clarkson argues, “Mpe resists the temptation to construct an idealised picture of a supposedly static, traditional, and by implication, ‘authentic’ way of life in opposition to his postcolonial urban setting” (2005:454). If anything, it is perhaps more prejudicial than the urban space of the city of Johannesburg wherein individuals are forced to deal with their own prejudices as a direct result of the convergence of peoples from all over the continent of Africa.

Further demonstrating such prejudice, the villagers view those Africans who are not South African as the carriers of AIDS. It is believed by these villagers that AIDS is caused by “foreign germs that travelled down from the central and western parts of Africa” and as such, “through *Makwekwere*” (2013: 3-4). Hillbrow further becomes seen as the “sanctuary in which *Makwekwere* basked” and by implication, a disease-ridden place (2013: 4). As Emma Hunt posits, the text “seeks to intertwine the dark urban narrative with one in which the city is also a cosmopolitan space of connection and opportunity – and is certainly no more violent than the rural area from which most of the city-dwellers have come” (2006: 114). Thus, the sense that the rural represents that which is ‘pure’ or ‘idyllic’ in opposition to the space of Johannesburg, and particularly of Hillbrow, falls under critique.

Hereafter, both the space of Hillbrow and homosexuality become demonised when some of the villagers blame “the bizarre sexual behaviour of the Hillbrowans” for the spread of AIDS. Those of Tiragalong are said to believe that “filth and sex should be two separate things.” In this way, Hillbrow becomes synonymous with the practice of homosexuality and as the members of Tiragalong are homophobic, they reject the urban space of Hillbrow by extension. Because of their view that homosexuality is filthy and aberrant, they feel it is only likely that homosexual acts will “lead to such dreadful illnesses” (2013: 4). Already then, the space of Hillbrow is seen as home to both homosexuals and African immigrants and as such an aberrant and abject space. It is important to note here that while Mpe draws readers’ attention to the harsher realities of Hillbrow, he simultaneously focusses on the prejudices that rural communities such as Tiragalong are afflicted by. Also, he simultaneously finds a

way of expressing compassion for Hillbrowans rather than the reinforcing the denigration that is likely to come from the rural inhabitants of Tiragalong. Thus he exposes the xenophobic and homophobic impulses often at work in processes of othering. As Meg Samuelson posits, then, Mpe's novel displays "a persistent preoccupation with confronting and combating xenophobia directed at Africans from across the border who have taken up residence in post-apartheid South African cities" (2007:252). He also exposes communities such as Tiragalong as being marked by a fear of outsiders and difference. Instead, Mpe's protagonist, Refentše is "amazed" at the diversity and number of people "jostling one another in the streets at nine in the evening," with the "concrete pavements" described as "teem[ing] with informal business" (2013: 7). This also speaks to the image of an alternative African city and what it might represent. In direct opposition to the representations of a western urban imaginary, Mpe's Hillbrow is a diversified and vibrant community.

1.5 Negotiating Xenophobia in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*

The prejudices towards African immigrants do not exist in the smaller rural communities alone. Even in Hillbrow itself, the protagonist, Refentše, experiences such prejudicial thought and behaviour on a daily basis. Refentše accuses his cousin, a Hillbrowan himself, of being a hypocrite for supporting African football teams while expressing his "prejudice towards black foreigners the rest of the time." His cousin places the blame of the "crime and grime in Hillbrow" squarely on the shoulders of the African immigrants whom he sees as not only responsible for the "physical decay of the place, but the moral decay" as well (2013: 17). Similar views are expressed by Refentše's white superintendent who feels that it is the Nigerians who are responsible for the general degradation of Hillbrow, being of the opinion that they are all drug-dealers. So doing, Mpe emphasises the extent of xenophobia in South Africa forcing readers to engage with their own prejudices. Mpe similarly exposes the ways in which the racial prejudices of the past have spilt over into this new form of othering and how cultural shaming has this reproductive effect so that there is always someone who has to be rendered as other.

Mpe asks that readers further consider such issues when Refentše defends the plight of African immigrants in South Africa to his cousin. Rather than being seen as outsiders, as those who do not belong, Refentše reminds his cousin that many of the so-called *makwekwere* he blames for the crime and state of Hillbrow, are simply "sojourners, here in search of green pastures" (2013: 18). In Refentše's argument, he addresses his cousin as

'you' and the pronoun of 'our' is often used, as it is repeatedly in the aforementioned refrain of 'Welcome to our Hillbrow'. This also evokes a mutual responsibility for contributing to the creation of a community which is in direct response to this kind of othering, implying that we are mutually responsible for the making of these insider/outsider spaces. This is pertinent as the reader is thus engaged and similarly addressed by our protagonist. Refentše also remarks that many of the African immigrants now seeking asylum in South Africa are no different from those South Africans who were forced to seek shelter elsewhere in Africa during the times of apartheid. In this way, Refentše's position attempts to break down the sharp distinctions that are so often drawn between South Africans and African immigrants, between 'us' and 'them'. Mpe once again makes readers aware of the importance of language in even such a simple matter as the use of pronouns when Refentše's cousin remarks that AIDS is a disease that "*they* transport in this country" (Mpe's emphasis; 2013: 20). By italicising the word 'they', the impact that this has in distinguishing one group of people from another is emphasised as is the extent to which language can assist in processes of othering. Also, as Neville Hoad argues, it indicates the degree to which the "Tiragalong migrants [...] would like to claim safety from HIV/AIDS as they are not green monkey eaters from West Africa, nor homosexuals who have anal sex" (2007:124). As such, they see themselves as immune to the disease simply on the basis of being South African and heterosexual. Thwarting this binary logic that distinguishes so unquestioningly between an 'us' and a 'them', however, Hoad further points out that the people who perish from the disease in the novel are "the young, educated respectable people from Tiragalong" (2007:124). So doing, the "novel both presents and debunks all phobic folk narratives, which seek inoculation from the disease through the assertion of identity-based virtue and sin" (2007:124). Thus the narrative further breaks down this opposition between the rural and supposedly 'idyllic' community of Tiragalong and that of the assumed 'degenerate' Hillbrowan urban space.

Hereafter, Mpe's narrative further serves to critique processes of language and naming in the marking of Other. Readers are told that "black foreigners from African countries" are "vulgarly referred to as *Makwerekwere*." This word has already appeared within the body of the novel but here Mpe reveals its etymology so as to also explore the connotative problems of the word that were discussed earlier in this chapter. As "a word derived from *kwere kwere*, a sound that their unintelligible foreign languages were supposed to make," it may be seen as a highly problematic name, suggesting a kind of incoherence and barbarism on the part of African immigrants (2013: 20). Similarly, the fact that Refentše views the term as 'vulgar' emphasises that it is a derogatory term and that such processes of naming are by no means

innocent in demarcating otherness. To the same effect, Beukes' draws attention to the use of the word 'zoos' as a derogatory term for those aposymbiots inhabiting Zoo City. The term in her novel implies that the subjects who are aposymbiots are seen as 'not quite' human, as lesser subjects. This might also be read as a direct indictment of such derogatory terms as '*makwerekwere*' that deny their subjects their own humanity and dignity.

Readers are asked to be empathetic towards African immigrants as those of Mpe's novel experience police brutality and extortion. Refentše's cousin is known for gathering hoards of African immigrants into his van. Here he detains them, threatening that it will be the last time they lay eyes on Hillbrow. In this way, his cousin is able to extort bribes from those who are often in already financially desperate circumstances. Even though Refentše is opposed to his cousin's opinions when it comes to foreign immigrants he is nonetheless a "beneficiary of his activities," having his cousin buy him both beer and food from time to time (2013: 21). One possible reading of this would be to suggest a certain complicity on the part of Refentše simply for indulging himself in his cousin's ill-gotten spoils. It would be possible to extend this to suggest that Mpe's novel passes commentary here on the nature of complicity. If a police force is able to extort bribes from those seeking sanctuary, it is perhaps the responsibility of the society at large to ensure that these African immigrants are protected from such crimes against humanity in the future. Also, it begs the question of culpability in how such institutions serve to further reinforce the status of 'insider' vs. 'outsider'.

The use of the pronouns 'our' and the narrator's address of the characters as 'you' work to similar effect. Not only do they assist in resisting the binaries that are created between 'us' and 'them', but also in resisting a distancing between reader and character. The reader is forced to share more intimately in the experience of the two key protagonists of Refentše, and Refilwe. Likewise, the reader finds it more difficult to distance him/herself from a shared complicity. In dealing with the prejudices of Hillbrow or Tiragalong, the reader is asked to confront their own inherited prejudicial tendencies and the effects that these may have on the collective realities in South Africa. As Refentše is called upon "to witness it all for [him]self; to come up with [his] own story," so too is the reader asked to consider the more personal stories of Hillbrow and the larger ramifications of xenophobia (2013: 6).

The use of the word *makwerekwere* is not the only instance of xenophobic naming that falls under critique in the novel. Readers learn of another word that the villagers of Tiragalong have for African immigrants and as such, those designated as outsiders, namely: *mapolantane*. Mpe's narrative explains that to begin with, the term of "*Mapolantane* referred to the people of Blantyre." However, over time it has "been stretched and stretched like

elastic” and now implies any African immigrant. Like *makwekwere*, the word does not have favourable connotations and readers are told that should children misbehave in Tiragalong, they are often admonished with the expression, “Now you are not going to start behaving like a *Lepolantane*” (2013: 73). As such, we again find a word that appears to imply a kind of barbarism on the part of African immigrants.

Yet this kind of othering does not apply to African immigrants alone in the rural community of Tiragalong but to those who are seen to have been raised in the city of Johannesburg as well. When Refentše rejects his past lover, Refilwe’s, advances he is aware that she is “disappointed that a child of Tiragalong like [him] should find vulgar Johannesburgers equal to – or better partners than – the women of the village” (2013: 90). The ‘vulgar Johannesburger’ of Refilwe’s envy refers to Refentše’s current lover, Lerato. The novel’s use of the word ‘Johannesburger’ reflects the fears and aversions of the rural communities who believe the urban space to be one that taints, corrupts and contaminates. To Refilwe, it seems unlikely that he should love someone like her over and above someone who is from his own community. When Refentše commits suicide, Refilwe takes the opportunity to place the blame on Lerato and to tarnish her name by suggesting that her father was a Nigerian and as such, she is not only a ‘vulgar Johannesburger’ but a *makwekwere* as well. To the community of Tiragalong, whether or not Lerato is a Johannesburger or half-Nigerian is somewhat irrelevant. Whether Refentše has killed himself “because of a *Lekwekwere* or a Johannesburger [does] not make much of a difference.” In their estimation, both are “[i]mmoral... drug dealing... murderous... sexually loose... [and] money grabbing” (2013: 46). Both are thus marked as aberrant and Other. The implication here is that it is city living that is fertile ground for aberrant behaviour. However, through the empathetic positioning of the narrative, readers are able to come to know the inhabitants of Hillbrow intimately, and to see them for their humanness rather than to view them as abject subjects.

1.6 Writing against Prejudices in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*

The narrative soon teaches Refilwe the folly of her ways. First, she finds herself endlessly reading and re-reading a short story that Refentše has written about a woman who contracts AIDS. The woman of Refentše’s short story is rejected by her rural community. The villagers accuse her of “opening her thighs to every *Lekwekwere* that came her way” (2013: 54). Thus, the villagers of Tiragalong (the place from which the woman has come) are able to “danc[e] because [their] xenophobia – their fear and hatred for both black non-South Africans and

Johannesburgers – [is] vindicated” (2013: 54). His protagonist then attempts to deal with her grief and pain through writing but finds that, as she has written her novel in Sepedi, publishers are hesitant about its appeal. Furthermore, publishers criticise the novel’s use of language, citing it as too crude and of “questionable morality” because it does not euphemise those things which are a part of daily reality (2013: 58). Stanley Ridge has read this as Mpe’s critique of a “habit of euphemism in South Africa that has [become] a systemic force with major political and social consequences,” making it “extremely difficult to deal with the realities of cultural confusion and prejudice and disease that are a real threat to the country” (2003:9). This metanarrative aspect of the novel thus arguably attempts to “break through inhibiting conventions of using language to address [these] matters of major import” (2003:9). Because they feel they would not be able to prescribe a book that uses such language to a school curriculum, they are not willing to publish. The more Refilwe reads this story, the more engaged she becomes with the plight of its protagonist. In Mpe’s narrative then, as Stanley Ridge has posited, “[s]torytelling itself becomes a means of understanding and dealing with the contradictions and tensions of urban life” (2003:8). Furthermore, Rob Gaylard has suggested that Mpe both draws on “an oral story-telling tradition” while simultaneously reflecting “the role that story-telling continues to play in contemporary South Africa” (2005:164). As such, Gaylard insists that Refentše’s story “sets in motion a process of self-reflection and self-examination: Refilwe begins to revise and rethink her own attitudes to AIDS and migrants and ‘Hillbrow women’” (2005:168). He argues further that Mpe’s narrative, through its employment of “meta-commentary” in this instance, “illustrates the power of fictional storytelling” when it combines “fictional innovation and experimentation with social responsibility” (2005:169). In so doing, the novel may be seen to make the point that by “entering the world of storytelling, whether as writer or reader, narrator or auditor, one may be better able to contemplate the ‘painful and complex realities of humanness’” (Mpe in Gaylard 2007:169). Similarly, Emma Hunt proposes that Mpe might be seen as suggesting that the “storytelling tradition can be harnessed in order to promote identification among regions and people” (2006:118). It is her reading that the novel’s “conflation of text and orality in its narrative style provides a concrete example of how African traditions can be used to bring spaces together rather than to keep them apart, as was the case during apartheid” (2006:118). Ultimately, Hunt argues that Mpe makes a case for the way in which “a heterogeneous society might be built by using African methods of storytelling and networking” (2006:119). Thus, the way in which the woman of the story is ostracised and

made outsider begins to teach Refilwe the lesson of empathy and to perhaps reflect on the ways in which she has ostracised others herself as in the case of Lerato.

When she leaves to study in Oxford, England, she further realises that xenophobic prejudices are not isolated to South Africa alone. At Heathrow airport, she is “strongly reminded of our Hillbrow and the xenophobia it engendered” and learns of “another word for foreigners [...] not very different in connotation from *Makwekwere* or *Mapolantane*.” This time, however, it is a “much more widely used term: *Africans*” (Mpe’s emphasis; 2013: 102). Refilwe also learns that in England, to “come from South Africa and to come from Africa” are not considered the “same thing” (2013: 102). While South Africans are afforded a “privileged [...] status,” readers are told that “Nigerians and Algerians are treated like pariahs in our white civilisation” (2013: 100-101). The use of the word ‘our’ here is important as it disallows the reader from distancing him/herself yet again. It is through the lens of the xenophobic behaviour that Refilwe bears witness in Oxford and Heathrow, that she is able to fully comprehend the wrongs that lie within our processes of othering. The text similarly works to emphasise the extent of prejudices that are not only local but global, by locating one place within another as in the following textual moment:

Hillbrow in Hillbrow. Hillbrow in Cape Town. Cape Town in Hillbrow. Oxford in both. Both in Oxford. Welcome to our All...
(2013: 104)

Thus the novel may be seen to emphasise, as Neville Hoad has suggested, that “Hillbrow is a global place, that the problems of xenophobia, AIDS, and premature death that can be found there circulate between Tiragalong, Hillbrow, Alexandra, Oxford [...] and heaven and earth” (2007: 125). Similarly, Hilary Dannenberg suggests that via the narrative’s “inclusion of multiple spaces, the novel shows how each nation, region or city is linked by the same pattern of discriminatory discourses, othering and negative stereotypes which every region or nation constructs about outsiders” (2012: 45). It is also while at Oxford studying that Refilwe encounters a Nigerian who bears a striking resemblance to Refentše in a local pub called *Jude the Obscure*. Immediately drawn to him because of this resemblance, it is not long before she approaches this “stranger-who-was-not-a-stranger” and the two become lovers (2013: 109). However, their relationship is not enjoyed for very long before they both discover that they have AIDS. Contrary to the common belief of the villagers that it is through African immigrants that one contracts AIDS, we learn that Refilwe has in fact carried the disease for

up to ten years. The symptoms have simply been dormant. The Nigerian similarly has carried the disease prior to his relationship with Refilwe. Yet in spite of the fact that Refilwe had been a carrier of the disease before she and her Nigerian lover had even met, the villagers are persistent in making an example of her, an “example of what Oxford, Johannesburg and Makwekwere could do to the careless thighs of the otherwise virtuous ones of Tiragalong” (2013: 121). Refilwe’s experience of prejudice in Oxford also indicates the complicity of the western world in the perpetuation of xenophobic tendencies. While it is a space that is supposed to embody the proverbial ‘seat’ of learning and western civilisation, it is as equally informed by the backward and problematic xenophobic impulses as the Tiragalong community. Thus, Mpe arguably demonstrates the extent to which processes of othering are prevalent as much in learned and western societies as they are in African ones.

This moment has an element of irony to it and acts in some ways as Refilwe’s penance for the vicious rumours that she had spread about Lerato, having falsely accused her of being Nigerian-born and calling her a *makwekwere*. Refilwe thus returns home where she must reap “the bitter fruits of the xenophobic prejudice that she had helped to sow in Hillbrow and Tiragalong” (2013: 113). Also, Refilwe comes to understand her own identity as one more wholly complex from before. No longer can she “hide behind [her] bias against Makwekwere” (2013: 122). In Refilwe’s “heart,” Nigeria and Tiragalong have become joined, “blended without distinction” (2013: 122). The omniscient narrator informs her:

You have come to understand that you too are a Hillbrowan. An Alexandran. A Johannesburger. An Oxfordian. A Lekwekwere, just like those you once held in such contempt. The semen and blood of Makwekwere flows in your Hillbrow and Tiragalong veins.
(2013: 122-123).

We find a similar moment in the text when the omniscient narrator calls upon Lerato, Refentše’s lover, as that “loving child of Alexandra, Tiragalong, Durban and Hillbrow” (2013: 49). Because the characters become more complex in this way, the novel refuses any easy categorisation that would set up ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ or that would allow some to ‘belong’ in one place and not others. Such a litany of places of *being*, so to speak, arguably demonstrates that we are all in fact comprised of multiplicitous identities, promoting instead of resisting the kind of intermingling that occurs with such boundary-crossings. Moreover, as Refilwe becomes more emaciated with time, she slowly becomes the literal incarnation of the

“scarecrow woman of Refentše’s fiction” (2013: 120). In one way then, the story that Refentše had written may be seen as having prepared Refilwe for the reality that would follow. So doing, Mpe arguably makes a case for the importance of literatures and of narratives that deal with the more gruesome realities of those who are otherwise forced to operate from the margins, those who are so often ostracised by their communities. Refentše finds a “mission within omission – a mission to explore Hillbrow in writing” (2013: 30). However, he does not complete the task of finishing a novel about Hillbrow. Instead, he chooses to take his own life. Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier, the woman of Refentše’s short story is unable to get her novel published. So it is *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* that comes to the fore to fill in these blanks, to address the issues of “[e]uphemism,” “[x]enophobia,” “[p]rejudice” and “AIDS” (2012: 60). It welcomes readers, so to speak, to embrace this Hillbrow of both “milk and honey” and also “bile” (2013: 41). It asks readers to look beyond their own prejudices and presuppositions and to discover a Hillbrow full of personal (although oftentimes tragic) stories.

The reader similarly learns by the mistakes of the protagonists. As Refilwe is subjected to the same criticisms and gossip that she had spread about Lerato before leaving for Oxford, so the readers are taught the problems inherent in scapegoating and avoiding complicity. Also, we as readers must come to acknowledge our own capacity for being complicit in processes of othering. Meanwhile, when Refentše finds himself to be unfaithful to Lerato with his best friend’s girlfriend, Bohlale, he discovers the limitations of his own humanness. Before this moment, he has been judgemental towards those whom he has seen as sexually promiscuous. In his infidelity, however, he quickly discovers that he is just “as vulnerable as the drunks and womanisers that [he] used to criticise for their carelessness; as vulnerable as the prostitutes populating Quartz and other streets, pasted against the walls of the concrete towers of Hillbrow” (2013: 59). Furthermore, it is Refentše’s inability to recognise and acknowledge this same vulnerability in Lerato that leads to his death. Returning home early one day, he discovers Lerato in bed with his best friend, Sammy, and swiftly takes his own life. He is unable to see his own actions simply reflected in the actions of Lerato and kills himself before she can attempt to resolve the matter and ask for his forgiveness. Again, in both lessons, the novel seems to suggest a sense of unity, an importance in seeing one’s self reflected in another. In so doing, we might be able to break down the rigid barriers that are constructed between ourselves and others. As Sarah Nuttall posits, it is in so doing that Mpe “offers a different vision of stranger civility” (2008:204). It is a ‘stranger civility’ “learned from a consciousness of vulnerability and humanness, self-reflection and imperfection”

(2008:204). This way we would not deem others as different and aberrant on the basis of their being a ‘Nigerian’, ‘*makwekwere*’, ‘*mapolantane*’, Hillbrowan, Johannesburger, or African. Thus it is that we would be better equipped to address the issues at hand in the “collective consciousness” of which Mpe so powerfully writes (2013: 41).

1.7 Whose Lives Are Grievable?

Gugu Hlongwane posits that Mpe, as a resident himself of Hillbrow, “clearly had a vested interest in the preservation of the place” (2006:80). In the same way that his character, Refentše, attempts to show his “commitment to this inner-city by redressing the omission of Hillbrow” in writing his short story, so Mpe is seen to go “a step further by publishing a novel about Hillbrow” (2006:80). In so doing, Hlongwane argues that Mpe simultaneously “succeeds in pointing out that there are no cities or places of just milk and honey,” as all places “have their bile” (2006:80). Furthermore, “since people occupy even the meanest of streets, respect is therefore due to those in ghettos around the world, who, because of racial and economic reasons, become the face-less and name-less masses of so-called bad neighbourhoods” (Hlongwane 2006:80-81). I am particularly interested in who constitutes the ‘face-less’ and ‘name-less’ of whom Hlongwane writes. As Judith Butler suggests, certain “humans are recognized as less than human, and that form of qualified recognition does not lead to a viable life” (2004:2). She posits further that certain “humans are not recognized as human at all, and that leads to yet another order of unlivable life” (2004:2). Thus, she begins early on in *Undoing Gender* (2004), with “the question of the human, of who counts as human, and the related question of whose lives count as lives, and with a question that has preoccupied many of us for years: what makes a grievable life?” (2004:17). She argues that she, as any subject, “may feel that without some recognisability [she] cannot live” (2004:4). However, she “may also feel that the terms by which [she is] recognized make life unlivable” (2004:4). Thus, Butler believes it is at this moment that “critique emerges, where critique is understood as an interrogation of the terms by which life is constrained in order to open up the possibility of different modes of living; in other words, not to celebrate difference as such but to establish more inclusive conditions for sheltering and maintaining life that resists models of assimilation” (2004:4). She advances that crucial to this form of critique is that we “cease legislating for all lives what is livable only for some, and similarly, [...] refrain from proscribing for all lives what is unlivable for some” (2004:8). Of course, the study from which this line of thought emerges is *Undoing Gender* (2004), and, as the title suggests, it is

largely concerned with the way in which we might rethink rigid gender prescriptions. However, as Butler points out, the reality that “feminism has always countered violence against women, sexual and nonsexual, ought to serve as a basis of alliance with these other movements, since phobic violence against bodies is part of what joins antihomophobic, antiracist, feminist, trans, and intersex activism” (2004:9). She returns then to the “category of ‘human,’” suggesting that it “retains within itself the workings of the power differential of race as part of its own historicity” (2004:13). However, she maintains that this ‘category’ might always be open to contestation, its “historicity” need not necessarily be “over” and its term of ‘human’ need not be “captured once and for all” (2004:13). Rather, it acts as a category that has been “crafted in time,” and as such, “it works through excluding a wide range of minorities” (2004: 13). For Butler, this means that its “rearticulation will begin precisely at the point where the excluded speak to and from such a category” (2004:13). It is my argument that Mpe’s narrative gives rise to just such an occasion, allowing those characters who might often be excluded from the category of ‘human’, the chance to ‘speak to and from such a category’ even though they may find themselves in somewhat marginalised positions. The novel thus foregrounds their implicit humanity and right to human dignity. This is a right that might otherwise have been denied such characters in real life. As Butler asserts, certain “lives will be highly protected, and the abrogation of their claims to sanctity will be sufficient to mobilize the forces of war” (2004:24). Meanwhile, and to the contrary, there are those whose lives do “not find such fast and furious support and will not even qualify as ‘grievable’” (2004:24). It is hardly coincidental then that she asks “how many lives have been lost from AIDS in Africa in the last few years?” (2004:25). More important is that she begs the question, “[W]here are the media representations of this loss, the discursive elaborations of what these losses mean for communities there?” (2004:25). I am interested in the way that Mpe’s narrative makes a case for those characters whose lives would not necessarily be ‘grievable’ otherwise, particularly in the instance of the character of Refilwe who dies from AIDS by the novel’s end.

Already in the beginning, readers are met with the death of a child in Hillbrow in a hit-and-run accident. While the mother’s sobs are drowned out by the singing of the Hillbrowan crowds enjoying a televised game of soccer in which Bafana Bafana are playing, Mpe’s narrative ensures that the death of the child does not go unnoticed by readers. Thus, in this singular and relatively short scene in the narrative, readers bear witness to the end of a life that might have gone relatively unnoticed in reality and are made privy to the cries of the child’s mother. Similarly, Mpe rescues his Hillbrowan protagonists from obscurity in writing

them back from beyond the grave, so to speak. While Refentše commits suicide after finding out that the ‘Bone of his Heart’, Lerato, has cheated on him with his best friend, the narrative nonetheless continues to write of his life from the perspective of heaven. Shane Graham argues that the “narrative is thus structured around a perpetually present absence, preserving the memories of the lost one by recalling the traces of his movements in life, and reinforced by the perpetual use of the subjunctive and conditional tenses in the novel” (2009:115).

However, as I have already mentioned, I feel that particular attention must be given in this regard to Refentše’s childhood sweetheart, Refilwe, who suffers and perishes from AIDS in the novel. As has been noted earlier in this chapter, the rural community of Tiragalong view the disease of AIDS as a particularly ‘filthy’ and aberrant one. It is their belief that one can only contract the disease through either sexual liaisons with the ‘loose’ so-called *makwekwere* men and women, or through engaging in anal sex. Kristeva remarks upon the relationship between the abject and what is seen as filthy in suggesting that “filth is not a quality in itself, but [...] applies only to what relates to a *boundary*, and more particularly, represents the object jettisoned out of the boundary, its other side, a margin” (Kristeva’s emphasis; 1982:69). As such, diseases that are viewed by societies as filthy are arguably those that are seen to encroach upon the boundary of the self, to contaminate and pollute the territory of the self. Here Kristeva is of further relevance in that she maintains the “potency of pollution is [...] not an inherent one” (1982:69). Rather, she posits that it is “proportional to the potency of the prohibition that founds it” (1982:69). Because the inhabitants of Tiragalong are outright homophobic and xenophobic, they thus inextricably link the sexually-transmitted and abjectified disease of AIDS to those acts that they view as ‘impure’ and ‘unclean’. Furthermore, Lizzy Attree posits that the “very nature of a disease which enters the body in the intimate contact zones of sex and love – and external threat, which becomes incorporated internally into the bloodstream and proceeds to destroy from within – mirrors the common conceptualisation of invasion from outside” (2005: 173). In this way, then, the Tiragalong community’s stigmatization of the disease is shown to be in direct correlation with their fear and rejection of those who are viewed as outsiders.

Yet, what is important in Mpe’s novel is that the constant repetition of ‘our’ suggests a culpability even on the part of the reader, as I have noted earlier. The prejudices surrounding the disease of AIDS, as they are expressed through the views of the Tiragalong community, are arguably ever-present in societies around the world. Thus, the novel calls for a global dismantling of such prejudicial responses and as such, seeks to give more full representation to AIDS sufferers, both in the character of Refilwe and the female protagonist of Refentše’s

short story. In so doing, it resists the relegation of such individuals to the margins as mere representations of tragic statistics, and shows them for their intrinsic humanity. As Attree argues, AIDS has been largely “neglected and overlooked” to date (2005:171). She notes further that “AIDS, like gayness, demands silence,” an assertion that is supported by the “scarcity of literature on both subjects in South Africa and Zimbabwe,” with the exception of K. Sello Duiker (2005:171). Thus it is not only the omission of Hillbrow and the misrepresentation of those areas considered ‘slums’ that Mpe redresses in his novel, but the omission of AIDS in literature as well. It is for this reason that Attree considers the importance of narratives that might “change cultural meanings, notions of sexuality, gender and community” by offering a “counter-narrative” to the AIDS crisis (2005:171). Once again, Mpe simultaneously destabilises the myth of urban contamination in relation to idyllic rural purity. Attree suggests that the “very associations” surrounding disease, the “stigma and taboo,” are ultimately shown in the novel “to be more deadly than AIDS itself, leading to accusations of witchcraft and violent retributions such as necklacing” (2005: 172). Furthermore, as John C. Hawley puts forward, in “a country with so many citizens infected with HIV, or coping with AIDs, or living in the aftermath of the loss of a parent or spouse, those who are gifted at telling the nation’s unfolding story can help heal the schisms that still traumatize South Africa” (2010:198). While the stigmatization of AIDS may seem initially to have little to do with spatial configurations, Attree insists that images of “intermingling, fear of dilution, infection with disease, sin, foreign-ness, tainted with stigma, are all culturally constructed and embodied in the divisions of public and personal space that we construct around ourselves and which are particularly divided in the still gated communities of Johannesburg” (2005:174). Mpe’s novel might be seen to draw attention to the plight of those afflicted by AIDS, as in the case of Refilwe, so as to promote more integrated, inclusive and hospitable South African urban spaces that do not denigrate and marginalise those suffering from the disease.

1.8 Conclusion

To conclude, in this chapter I have considered the condition of abjectified spaces and subjectivities in the inner-city urban space of Hillbrow. As Derek Hook suggests, the processes of othering involved in the making of such abject spaces and peoples may be seen as constituting an unconscious manifestation of racism that persists still in our post-apartheid

society. I have further extended his own study, while simultaneously drawing on Judith Butler and Julia Kristeva, to consider the role of othering embedded in xenophobic impulses and the stigmatization of AIDS.

Turning to the role that certain literatures might serve in rewriting such abjectified spaces and subjectivities, I argue that Beukes employs magical realism in *Zoo City* so as to create an untameable and phantasmagoric ‘zootopia’ of Hillbrow thus directly confronting the ways in which it has been demonised as a ‘slum’. I posit that her novel celebrates rather than denigrates the elements of chaos and disorder to be found within the inner-city urban space of Hillbrow, by amplifying it to include the presence of animal familiars. Furthermore, I consider the importance of her choice to have the novel related to the reader by an aposymbiot (and thus an abjectified subject and ‘zoo’), Zinzi December. Rather than relegating Zinzi to the role of Other, readers are drawn into the character’s life and are able to experience the very ordinariness of the Hillbrow she inhabits. This again may be seen as another strategy of magical realism in the genre’s insistence to write from the margins, thus resisting privileged centres. The empathetic portrayal of Zinzi’s lover Benoît works to similar effect. As readers are encouraged to come to know Benoît more intimately, the processes of othering by which we term African foreign immigrants *makwekwere* are challenged. Readers might instead come to see in Benoît something of the struggle that has brought him to South Africa, and in so doing, might be able to find in him a shared sense of humanity. Hereafter, the subplot of the missing aposymbiots becomes relevant to my study. While Zinzi is initially hired to find a missing pop sensation (and as such, a privileged member of society), she becomes ultimately embroiled in a case of missing aposymbiots. In so doing, Beukes’ narrative rescues those characters whose deaths would otherwise remain unnoticed from obscurity. Finally, I have argued *Zoo City* makes a case for those fluidised and hybridised subjectivities that are often rendered abject by providing these characters with magical abilities. Thus, it suggests that such characters are perhaps more adept at meeting the demands of urban living, able as they are to occupy such spaces of fluidity and ambiguity.

Next, I have drawn comparatively on Mpe’s representation of Hillbrow in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*. I have suggested that his constant use of the collective pronoun, ‘our’, and the repetition of ‘welcome’ act as a means of drawing the reader into this inner-city urban space. It may be seen to further suggest a sense of culpability on the part of the reader in the issues of xenophobia and the stigmatization of AIDS that the novel interrogates. The novel further draws attention to the role of language in the making of others via its exploration of such derogatory terms as *makwekwere* and *mapolantane*. In the metafictional aspect of the

narrative, with the short story that Refentše writes about a woman suffering from AIDS, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* similarly makes a case for the role of language and storytelling in forging better, more inclusive societies. In confronting the prejudices of South Africans living in Hillbrow as well as those of the rural Tiragalong community, so too are readers encouraged to reflect on their own prejudicial notions. Also, in Mpe's confrontation of the xenophobic and homophobic community of Tiragalong, he simultaneously subverts the traditional 'Jim Comes to Jo'burg' narrative. As the space of Tiragalong is shown to be an equally violent and prejudicial one, it no longer stands to represent the idealised rural idyll in direct opposition to the supposedly dangerous and corrupt urban space. Thus his narrative destabilises the conventional binarization of the terms of 'rural' and 'urban'. Hereafter, readers are encouraged to see Hillbrow through the more sympathetic eyes of the character of Refentše as he takes up residence in the area and becomes aware of the difficult plight of African immigrants struggling to make a home in this country. As Emma Hunt posits, what "we see in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* resonates with other recent South African texts that use Hillbrow as a way to build a positive and open, *African city*" (Hunt's emphasis. 2006:119). She adds that in spite of the novel's "violence, Mpe self-consciously writes a better post-apartheid city into existence: his fictional city teaches other characters and the reader how to read Johannesburg as a more inclusive space" (2006:115-6). To end, I suggest that Mpe's narrative similarly emphasises that the making of abjectified spaces and subjectivities is not to be found in communities such as Tiragalong alone but in fact globally. The character of Refilwe bears witness to the ill-treatment of Africans (although notably not *South Africans*) upon her arrival in Oxford, England. In the omniscient narrator's use of the phrase, "Welcome to our All", might be found the insistence for a global effort to rethink the demarcation of certain individuals and spaces to the marginalised position of Other (2013:104). Sarah Nuttall similarly suggests that *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* "disavows a politics of hatred in favour of an ethics of hospitality" (2008a:203). Ultimately, then, it is in novels such as Beukes' *Zoo City* and Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* that we might find the terms for such an 'ethics of hospitality', encouraging us to redress the stigmas and taboos that surround certain urban spaces and their inhabitants, reclaiming them instead as part of our larger humanity.

Chapter Two

An Exploration of Genre in the Re-Imagining of South African Urbanscapes: The Use of *Noir* in Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* and the Fairytale in Nadine Gordimer's "Once Upon a Time"

2.1 Introduction

As discussed in my introduction, in a post-apartheid South Africa, Johannesburg has arguably come to represent what it means to be 'urban' and 'modern'. As such, the various representations of the city may be seen as relevant in considering how we might begin to redefine our urban spaces in post-apartheid South Africa. In the following chapter I provide a comparative study of Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* and Nadine Gordimer's "Once Upon a Time." I argue that Beukes uses the genre of *noir* to reimagine the urban space of Johannesburg. I suggest further that Beukes' novel interrogates our gated communities as potentially sinister spaces, while Gordimer subverts the fairytale to similarly question the space of the suburban enclave. In their mutual experimentation with genre, I ultimately posit that Beukes and Gordimer attempt to scratch beneath the surface, so to speak, of our current post-apartheid realities so as to better reimagine our urban spaces. I begin with an analysis of Beukes' protagonist, Zinzi, as the typical 'everyman' of *noir* fiction. While the classical detective such as Sherlock Holmes belonged to the upper echelons of society, *noir* fiction breaks away from this tradition and offers readers a protagonist who truly belongs to the city, who is immersed in its grittiness, its 'everyday-ness'. I next consider the moral ambiguity of the *noir* protagonist. The role of the morally complex urban space becomes important here. Because the protagonist is an 'everyman' and deeply embroiled in the diverse and intense space of the urban, they must often operate in ways that might otherwise be considered morally dubious. Hereafter, the elusiveness of the *noir* protagonist comes to the fore in my analysis. As the city in which the detective must operate is an ever-changing space, the detective must ensure their own survival in such a space. To avoid danger and threats, the detective must sometimes protect his/her anonymity. However, while the *noir* protagonist would prefer to remain hardboiled and anonymous, s/he often proves to be a far more emotionally complex character.

In my next subsection, I consider the ways in which Zinzi is drawn deeper into her investigations and the space of the city in spite of herself. Although she attempts to keep herself at a safe distance and to remain always undetected, she finds herself unable to

maintain this stance in the urbanscape of Johannesburg. Following this, I turn to one of the novel's subversions of the genre of *noir*. While it is typical for the protagonist of *noir* fiction to be a male detective, Beukes offers readers instead a female sleuth. I argue the importance of this in terms of redefining the role of women in our contemporary urban spaces. Yet another subversion of the genre emerges in the relocation of the sinister in *Zoo City*. Rather than locating danger in the infamous space of Hillbrow, where Beukes' protagonist resides, Beukes relocates the truly evil to the gated community of the novel's villain, Odi Huron. As Gyan Prakash argues in *Noir Urbanisms: Dystopic Images of the Modern City* (2010), the "dystopic imagination" of *noir* "places us directly in a terrifying world to alert us to the danger that the future holds if we do not recognise its symptoms in the present" (2010: 2). Similarly, Li Zhang suggests in the same study that "the images of urban dystopia are usually deployed as a critique of social conditions produced under different historical and cultural circumstances" (2010: 129). Here I posit that the narrative provides for a harsh indictment of these neo-apartheid infrastructures and shows them up for the potentially damaging spaces they may be seen to represent.

I turn next to the representation of the suburban enclave in Nadine Gordimer's short story and subverted fairytale, "Once Upon a Time." Like Beukes, it is my argument that Gordimer's narrative reveals the inherent problems in the setting up of isolated and 'protected' suburban areas that become intent on keeping those considered outsiders at bay. Finally, I consider what spaces might operate in juxtaposition to these gated and suburbanised communities and turn to Beukes' representation of Hillbrow. While it is Hillbrow that is known for its infamy, Beukes reveals another dimension to this inner-city so-called 'slum'. Through the lens of Beukes' fiction, readers are shown the sense of community that abounds in part out of the necessity for survival and in part out of the dense living conditions of such an environment. Although the relationships formed may be predicated on necessity, they nonetheless add an altogether human element to an area that has otherwise been largely denigrated as a 'slum'.

2.2 An Introduction to *Noir* in *Zoo City*

Turning to Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* (2010), it has proven itself a somewhat difficult novel to 'categorise' as belonging to any one particular genre or another. Having won the coveted Arthur C. Clarke Award in 2010, there followed much debate about whether or not the work of fiction could indeed be considered a science fiction novel. Beukes herself has been evasive

on the topic, stating that the novel could just as well be read as “New Weird” or “urban fantasy” (2010: n.p.). However, as mentioned in Chapter One, when pressed she has referred to the novel somewhat jokingly as a new kind of genre, namely “*muti noir*” (2010: n.p.). Similarly, in the special edition of the Jacana Media publication of the novel that follows with an author interview, Beukes asserts that the “story about a girl who finds lost things in a decaying inner city just had to be a *noir*,” with its protagonist the “damaged, wise-cracking PI-on-the-skids archetype.” Thus, she strongly aligns the novel within the classic *noir* tradition.

Noir fiction typically requires a detective or private investigator as the narrator who is commissioned to solve a particular mystery against the backdrop of a gritty, urban setting. As Zinzi, our protagonist, is recruited by a music producer to solve the mystery of his missing starlet and pop sensation, the basic *noir* plot exists. Furthermore, she must attempt to solve this mystery in the urban underworld and dark maze of Johannesburg. Thus, while the novel no doubt has other dimensions to it, it is arguably an unmistakable piece of *noir*-inspired fiction. The South African book cover alone hints at the dark mystery to unfold within the novel’s pages. For the award-winning cover,² designer Joey Hi-Fi wanted to create a visual that would be “in keeping with the underlying menace, magic and mystery of the novel” (2010:n.p.). Stark typography in black and white has been rendered using a mishmash of urban and animal images while a sinister-looking Marabou stork features on the back-cover. The urban buildings and skylines that have been included in the typography immediately place readers in the ‘playground’ of the *noir*, as it is the urban landscape that lends *noir* fiction and film their sense of locality. This is crucial, as Steven M. Sanders has suggested in “Film Noir and the Meaning of Life” (2006), that it is the urban that affords *noir* films and fictions their “authenticity, adding texture to their psychologically dense and convoluted plots” (2006: 92). In addition, the lack of colour is evocative of the classic black-and-white 1940s and 50s era of *noir* film. It also works to visually convey the gritty and dark urban underworld of shadowy characters and deceptions so typical of the genre.

The title similarly roots the reader in the urban. One of the working titles for the novel had originally been *The Pale Crocodile* and it is noteworthy that Beukes ultimately changed this to *Zoo City*. So doing, the novel is potentially aligned with such other cult *noir* classics and their invention of *noiresque* cities such as Gotham City under Batman’s protective watch and Frank Miller’s Sin City (both of comic book and film fame). Most importantly, the title

² See Addendum B

asserts that the central muse of Beukes' literary re-imagining is the urbanscape of Johannesburg. This is in keeping with the *noir* tradition which began with the urbanscape of Los Angeles at its dark centre in the post-WWII era. It has been suggested however by such critics as Read Mercer Shuchardt that it later migrated to New York (2006: 49). Regardless, the fundamental still holds true, that the *noir* protagonist cannot exist without his/her complicated city wherever it may be located.

In Frank Miller's *noir* film interpretation of the comic by Will Eisner, *The Spirit* (2008), the protagonist and superhero Denny Colt (a.k.a. The Spirit) even begins with a voice-over soliloquy declaring the city his one true love as he travels across the rooftops in search of criminals. We find a similar moment in Beukes' novel, when the protagonist, Zinzi December, compares the "[m]orning light the sulphur colour of the mine dumps" that "sears through [her] window" to her "own personal bat signal," as if the city itself is summoning her to save it (2010: 1). The heroics of this moment do not last long, however, as the cynical first-person narration expected of our *noir* anti-hero/ine soon interrupts and Zinzi declares that this might simply be "a reminder that [she] really need[s] to get curtains" (2010: 1). "[M]orning has broken and there's no picking up the pieces," Zinzi remarks in the traditionally dry manner so typical of the genre (2010: 1). Opening up her cupboard to consider clothing options, we are told that "[c]alling it a cupboard is a tad optimistic, like calling this dank room with its precariously canted floor and intermittent plumbing an apartment is optimistic" (2010: 2). It is important to note too that this moment indicates the squalor in which Zinzi lives. As Mark T. Conrad notes in his definition of *noir*, from the onset we are able to immediately recognise "the clipped, gritty phrasing of the hard-boiled school, the dirty gutter setting, and the down-on-his-luck character" (2006: 15). Thus, the stage is set for a noir mystery complete with a pessimistic protagonist in her derelict urbanscape.

2.3 The 'Everyman' Protagonist of *Noir* Fiction

A typical convention of the *noir* protagonist is that s/he also be considered an "[e]veryman" (Abrams 2006: 77). As a member of the working class living in the community of Zoo City, Zinzi is a far more readily identifiable character to the 'average Joe' and is not afforded the same privileges of the more classical detective. While the reader is often left in awe of the intellectual prowess of the more classic detective such as Sherlock Holmes or Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin, the *noir* detective is someone with whom s/he can identify more easily. The famous protagonist of the television series *Columbo* is a typical example of this. Unlike the

classical detective who appears to be without fault, the IMDb synopsis gives an accurate account of Columbo as a detective forever in a “crumpled raincoat,” smoking an “ever-present cigar” with a “bumbling demeanour.” However, in spite of their apparent ordinariness, the *noir* protagonist is not to be underestimated. They emerge as the new representatives for a new urban space.

In literary fiction, there are a number of narrative differences that mark the departure from the privileged classical detective to the working class protagonist of *noir*. To begin with, is the difference in the style of narration. In the case of Sherlock Holmes, the adventures are related to the readers by his assistant, Watson. Watson’s narrative serves to reiterate the reader’s sense of admiration and marvel. In contrast, the *noir* narrative is almost always told from the perspective of the hardboiled detective him-/herself. Here the reader is allowed a far more intimate look into the life of the detective and into the lived realities of his/her city. As readers of *Zoo City*, the first-person narration ensures that we are more privy to the inner world of Zinzi December, to her misgivings, suspicions and as discussed above, those feelings that she keeps otherwise closely guarded.

The world in which Zinzi lives is also fully identifiable to the reader. She even reads the same tabloid magazines that readers might, such as “*You* magazine with its gleefully scandalised headlines about minor league South African celebrities” (2010: 57) and *Heat* (2010: 76). The colloquialisms and everyday allusions employed in the narrative style further assist in the sense of commonality between the reader and the narrator. In one scene in the narrative, Zinzi alludes to the well-known film, *The Wizard of Oz*, based on the children’s books by Frank L. Baum when she describes a prostitute’s pair of shoes. The “sequined red stilettos” are described as “real showgirl shoes, like Dorothy got back from Oz all grown up and turned burlesque stripper” (2010: 6). In another scene, both the famous novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald and a global pop sensation are alluded to when a nightclub is touted as “Great Gatsby by way of Lady Gaga” (2010: 193). These references to items or peoples of popular culture together with Zinzi’s informal and relaxed style of narration ensure that the reader recognises the *noir* protagonist as very much a part of his/her own world. It is also important to note that this world becomes distinctly recognisable as Johannesburg. In this way, Zinzi is not only identifiable as an ‘everyman’ but also in so much as she is immersed in an urbanscape familiar to readers.

Yet another way in which the *noir* private investigator distinguishes him/herself as an ‘everyman’ is by their class (Abrams 2006: 77). While the classic detective often operates on the upper-crust of society, enjoying their profession as one might a sport or a hobby, the *noir*

detective is very much a part of the common working class in the inner-city rather than belonging to the privileged estates. Zinzi makes this very clear in the beginning of the narrative not only by the squalor in which she lives but also by the way in which she is constantly on the move. Her lover Benoît has barely woken when she tells him to “[h]ustle” as she has a day of hard work to attend to, a day that involves dredging around in the sewers for lost items no less (2010: 3). Even though she admits that “the problem with being *mashavi* is that it’s not so much a job as a vocation,” she still uses her brand of magic to eke out a living for herself in the lower-class area of Zoo City/Hillbrow (2010: 10). Zinzi’s class is further marked by the presence of her animal familiar, Sloth. The very fact that she has become animalled, so to speak, denies her easy access to the upper echelons of society.

Finally, the moral ambiguity of the *noir* PI creates a character that is flawed and thus further relatable to readers. Zinzi has her past drug addictions and bad habits such as cigarette smoking that make an ‘everyman’ out of her. Although the classic detective may have indulged in opium or pipe-smoking, at the time these were considered leisurely activities and were not frowned upon as they are today. In the case of the hardboiled detective, s/he is aware that some of his/her chosen habits are bad and continues to perform them regardless. Also, the suggestion here is that morality is only something that the rich can afford. However, as the novel presents later, it is arguably in those spaces of the privileged where it is found to be ultimately the most lacking. Also, while the reader may not always approve of Zinzi’s criminal dealings (such as her involvement in the 419 scams), s/he may nonetheless vicariously appreciate her anti-bureaucratic stance. As Jerold J. Abrams asserts, we as readers “enjoy all [the *noir* protagonist’s] sadistic pleasures: telling people off, beating up criminals, and, of course, looking cool doing it” (2006: 77). Ultimately then, the *noir* protagonist of Zinzi December is a fully identifiable character in the fully identifiable urbanscape of Johannesburg.

2.4 The Moral Ambiguity of the *Noir* Protagonist

Abrams posits that “[i]n all detective fiction, the detective’s abilities emerge from his positioning between two worlds – the ‘world of the cops’ and the ‘world of the criminals’,” being “part of both [...] [but] at home in neither” (2006: 75). This similarly emphasises the highly hybrid nature of the *noir* protagonist. As their urban playgrounds become further fluidised and hybridised, so our detective figures too must adapt. Already on the first page, Zinzi states, “Let’s just say I’m precious about work. Let’s just say it’s not entirely legal”

(2010: 1). By this, Zinzi is referring to the 419 scam formats that she writes up and emails so as to pay off her former drug-dealers. She thus immediately places herself outside the parameters of the law-abiding citizen.

Readers further learn that she is responsible for her brother's death. Her brother attempts to intervene when Zinzi's drug-dealers come after her for money owed and is caught in the crossfire. Zinzi is left with two stark reminders of her implicit guilt. The first is the "mangled wreckage of [her] left ear" that she hides underneath her "little dreadlock twists," the damage done by the same bullet that killed her brother (2010: 2). The second is Sloth, Zinzi's animal familiar and "scarlet letter" so to speak (2010: 50). In Beukes' novels, 'zoos' or 'aposymbiots' are those people who find themselves animalled because of the transgressions that they have committed. Zinzi tells readers that all aposymbiots are "criminals" and "[s]cum of the earth" in one way or another (2010: 8). An animal familiar becomes attached to the guilty person but this particular brand of *mashavi* (loosely translated as 'magic') also grants the person a specific power. In the case of Zinzi, it is the ability to trace lost things.

In Chapter 19, an extract entitled "Bibliozoologika: An Entymology of Animalled Terms" the origins of the term '*mashavi*' is further explained as a reworking of the word '*mashave*' which was the collective name for "the spirits of foreigners, or of wanderers who died far away from their families and clans and did not receive a proper burial." Because of this, these spirits remain uprooted, "[h]omeless," and seek a body to which they can become attached (2010: 177). Thus, the position of the *mashavi*-ed is also implicated in a kind of rootless and homeless existence. This lends added credence to Zinzi's positioning 'between two worlds', to her being an outsider in many ways. Her brother's death and Zinzi's newfound sobriety subsequently also mark the moment in her life where she becomes the *noir* character that readers now encounter. Getting dressed in the morning, Zinzi remembers how she used to be "an outrageously expensive indie boutique kinda girl." "But," she proceeds, "that was FL. Former Life" (2010: 2). Her sordid past has left her changed and jaded and there can be no going back.

Zinzi's status as something of an outsider also affords her the degree of moral ambiguity needed to walk the thin line between the world of supposed bureaucratic good and that of lawlessness. When Zinzi learns late in the relationship that her lover, Benoît, is in fact married and has been separated from his wife because of the war in the Congo, she questions her own morality. He asks her if it would have mattered had she known earlier. Zinzi knows what the "textbook answer" would be and that the "manual of morality dictates that [she]

should have said ‘of course’.” Yet she admits that she has “never been a dependable liar. Or a good person” (2010: 55).

Meanwhile, as far as Zinzi’s relationship with the police is concerned, it is more a matter of mutual mistrust. Early on in the narrative, a client of Zinzi’s is brutally murdered in her apartment. When Zinzi returns to the apartment to give the client her lost (and found) wedding ring, the police descend upon her as a potential suspect simply because she has an animal familiar and had a degree of involvement with the deceased. This indicates the degree to which those animalled characters such as Zinzi have been scapegoated in her society. It is further indicative of the role of the police in protecting the interests of some and not of others. It begs the question of legitimacy in our city spaces and whose lives are seen as legitimate and whose are not. In the same way the Phaswane Mpe draws attention to the abuse foreign immigrants receive at the hands of the police in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, so Beukes similarly interrogates the potential crimes against humanity on the part of certain institutions. Later in the novel, she is interrogated for another murder on the basis of the same reasoning. In the interviewing room with the police inspector, Tshabalala, Zinzi’s contempt for this particular arm of the law is expressed. Zinzi at first maintains a disaffected silence, and when she does finally speak, her retorts are sarcastic and unhelpful. After the interrogation, the police keep the ring and the R500 in Zinzi’s wallet as ‘evidence’ and leave her to “sign a hundred billion forms,” further fuelling her distaste for bureaucracies (2010: 25). She clearly considers the inspector an ineffective buffoon and throughout the narrative seems to think similarly of the entire police force. Her reasoning proves to be hardly unjustified. True to the moral ambiguity of the *noir* narrative, the police force is repeatedly shown to be either corrupt or indifferent. In one scene, Zinzi witnesses a police officer being handed a “wad of blue R100 notes” as a bribe (2010: 221). We are also told that the infamy of Zoo City means that “cops and ambulances are slow to respond to ‘incidents’ [...] if they respond at all” (2010: 118). Rather, the police have become instead “a joke with a punchline you’ve heard before” (2010: 206). Put plainly, Zinzi’s feelings are that the “police don’t care” (2010: 211). The suggestion here is that a corrupt police of an apartheid past has simply been replaced by a present-day corrupt force. As she reiterates when confronted by an area surrounded by yellow police tape that is yet to be taken down, a “dead zoo in Zoo City is a low priority even on a good day” (2010: 4). This once again speaks to the issue of legitimacy. As the foreign immigrants of Mpe’s novel are treated as lesser subjects without agency, so the aposymbiots of Beukes’ narrative are denigrated in her fictional urbanscape. Those with animal familiars such as Zinzi are seen as degenerates and the arm of the law would have as little to do with

them as necessary. Typical of the *noir* tradition, the protagonist seems to prefer it this way. The anonymity that city life provides Zinzi becomes a means of protection against such forces as the police.

2.5 The Elusive Detective in an Elusive Metropolis

Zinzi's distrust of the law is perhaps simply indicative of her distrust when it comes to just about everybody. The classic *noir* protagonist is famously known for being "always cloaked in his massive trenchcoat" with his low-sitting hat while operating from the shadows, keeping himself aloof and at a distance from others (Abrams 2006: 26). Zinzi similarly uses her wardrobe as a means of acting in character, creating her own brand of visual evasion. In an early scene, she says of her outfit, "let's call it Grace Kelly does Sailor Moon" (2010: 2). Later she tells readers that "slipping back into Former Life is as easy as pulling on a dress," with "[f]ashion [...] only different flavours of you" (2010: 123). Zinzi's smoking habit, too, is something of a façade as she uses it to her advantage, remarking that it is "still the number one ice-breaker known to humankind" (2010: 191). This also speaks to the performative potentialities of city spaces. Characters such as Zinzi December, living in densely populated urban spaces, are able to use the anonymity afforded them to inhabit various personae, to blend in and play a host of different roles.

Her general interactions also indicate her level of distrust when it comes to others. When she meets with her 419 scam employer, Vuyo, she is quick to "memorise the licence plate." While it is "undoubtedly a fake," we are told that she is a "packrat for information" regardless (2010: 41). Zinzi is equally quick to play "the investigative journalist angle" with others, while seeking out information, keeping her real motivations well-hidden (2010: 99). In this way Zinzi manipulates her various 'persons of interest' for she finds that "[e]ven vague proximity to celebrity turns people into attention whores" making them "open up to [her] like an oyster come shucking time" (2010: 121). Once again, we find that Zinzi is not only able to exploit the anonymity of city living to dress in ways that might conceal her, but also to play certain characters as well.

When she is forced into closer contact with others, she keeps up her personal front by making her own summations and giving characters names such as "Laconic Photographic Guy," "Piercing Girl/Juliette" (2010: 126) and "Overshare Girl" (2010: 150). By way of a similar process of deduction, Zinzi wastes little time in taking in her surroundings. At the home she visits for those with addiction, Zinzi immediately deduces that the Executive

Director showing her around is the “art buyer.” The tell-tale sign she reveals is in the Director’s shoes: “[t]eal blue Mary Janes with playful detailing – purple and red flowers perched on the strap” (2010: 153). Zinzi is also put out when she senses that the same Executive Director of the home is attempting to “psychoanalyse” her and asks if the “therapy session comes free with the tour” (2010: 154). The attitude seems to be that the more information Zinzi has on others and the less they have on her, all the better for it. Zinzi is also the consummate example of the *noir* ‘lone wolf’, telling a pair of employers that she needs to work “alone,” that it is “how [her] *shavi* works.” Readers are told that this piece of information is “all monkey crap” but that it is unlikely her employers will be any the wiser (2010: 84). Zinzi upholds this code of isolation and mistrust in that as far as she is concerned, “[p]eople are such assholes” besides (2010: 26). Ultimately then, the need to employ certain disguises and to ‘read’ others quickly may be seen as crucial to the survival of characters such as Zinzi in densely-packed inner-cities.

Even with her own lover, Benoît, Zinzi attempts to maintain a certain emotional distance. When he calls her “*cherie na ngayi*,” she remarks that it is “easier to disregard” when ‘my love’ is spoken in Lingala (2010: 3). Like her responses in the police interrogation room, Zinzi’s conversations with Benoît give way to often sarcastic and evasive quips on her part as in an early moment in the text where she tells him, “Don’t get comfortable is all I’m saying” (2010: 3). Some have argued that this attitude indicates the completely alienated, amoral and isolated stance of the *noir* detective (Abrams 2006: 75). Letting one’s guard down can be fatal. The *noir* urbanscape is one of deception and danger and the protagonist is often all too aware of this. As Zinzi reiterates, lighting up a “Remington Gold, half the price of a Stuyvesant,” the *noir* city of Johannesburg is “all about the cheap knock-off” (2010: 7). In another scene, a ‘working girl’ (or as Zinzi calls her, “one of the transgressions of the night”) “pulls her denim jacket closed over her naked breasts, too quickly for [Zinzi] to figure out if they’re hormone-induced or magic” (2010: 5-6). Thus it is up to the hardboiled protagonist to distinguish between what is real and what is fake as she follows the clues and attempts to unravel this *noir* mystery for the sum of money promised. This becomes a doubly complicated task in a city where magical trickery is also a possibility. Along the way then, it undoubtedly “helps to have a certain reputation” (2010: 42).

2.6 The Moral Entanglements of the *Noir* Urban Space

Zinzi is hired to find the missing twin, Songweza, of a teen pop sensation called iJusi. However, by the time she manages to track down Songweza's location, she finds that her employer, Odi Huron's, 'henchmen', Mark and Amira have already beaten her to it. As Zinzi leads Songweza away, with Mark and Amira following behind, she tries to get to the bottom of things by "talk[ing] softly so that the Marabou and the Maltese won't hear." But the found and captured Songweza is abrasive. She clearly does not want to 'be found' in the first place and responds to one of Zinzi's questions with a simple "Fuck you." Zinzi in return informs Songweza that she is only "trying to help [her]" (2010: 220).

While Zinzi's involvement should stop there (for the 'mystery' of the missing person has been solved so to speak), she does not trust that Songweza is in safe hands and continues to take an interest in the affairs of the young girl. She tells Mark and Amira that she will return to Odi's homestead to collect her payment, but that she would also "like to see how Songweza is doing" (2010: 222). Soon after, she calls Songweza's phone, feeling "a stab of guilt for neglecting her" (2010: 238). Zinzi instructs Songweza to take down her number in case she should "run into any trouble." When the young girl is again abrasive in her tack, Zinzi reiterates that she really does want to "try and help [her]" (2010: 239). However, Songweza is unresponsive and "spacey" because of the medication Odi Huron has her taking (2010:239).

When Zinzi finds she cannot get through to the young girl, she continues to be relentless and gives her number to a friend of Songweza's brother instead. She informs him to phone her first and then the police should anything out of the ordinary and "weird" happen (2010: 240). Later, when she meets again with Odi Huron, Zinzi is quick to threaten that should anything happen to Songweza she will be the first to report him to the police. She embellishes the truth and lists her "one-time interrogator," Inspector Tshabalala as "an old friend." She reassures him though that "so long as Songweza stays singing fit and healthy, [she] won't trouble [him] with the slightest little thing" (2010: 243). In the end, Zinzi enlists the assistance of Benoît and the two of them risk a great deal by breaking into Huron's house in an attempt to rescue the twins, Songweza and her brother, S'bu. Both Zinzi and Benoît are nearly killed in the process, with Benoît left severely injured. While they are unable to save the twins from the dark and twisted fate that befalls them at the hands of the sinister trio, they nonetheless make a noteworthy attempt.

This indicates that although the money (and an escape from the life of a 419 scammer) may have been the initial motivation for Zinzi, she inevitably comes to care for the safety of the twins and thus becomes more personally embroiled in the case. Also, while the *noir* protagonist occasionally seems to lean on the side of the criminal, Zinzi joins the ranks of those who ultimately fight the Good Fight against true evil thus redeeming herself. As Deborah Knight asserts, the *noir* detective inevitably develops a “personal and emotional investment in the events and people he is investigating, an investment that requires that he act to ensure justice is done even after the crime has been solved” (2006: 208). In the final scene of the narrative, Zinzi resolves to put her sleuthing abilities to better use by travelling across Africa to find Benoît’s family while he is in hospital recovering from their ordeal. While it may be “awkward” at first, she tells readers, it is “going to be the best thing [she has] done with [her] miserable life” (2010: 309). So doing, Zinzi ultimately chooses to become invested in the lives of others for the greater good.

Hereafter, Zinzi is not as emotionless as she might have others believe. When she insults a friend of Benoît’s, teasing him for his naivety, she is aware that his smile has “drop[ped] from his face like a kicked puppy [...] with a pitiful yelp.” In a somewhat modest effort, she attempts to make him feel better by “punch[ing] his arm to show no hard feelings” and is relieved when he looks “less downcast” (2010: 45). Later, thinking back upon her murdered client, she even experiences “a kick in [her] gut,” like “a lost heart attack that’s wandered into [her] intestines by mistake” (2010: 47). Zinzi feels it again, only moments afterwards when Benoît mentions his wife and children. Readers are told, “[a]nd there’s that feeling again [...] burning a hole in my stomach right now: a mix of Stroh rum and sulphuric acid” (2010: 48). She even goes so far as to remark at a point in the narrative that she “should really try to be less cynical” (2010: 160). In spite of herself, she is also haunted by her dark past. Mid-conversation, she finds her “words come out on autopilot” as she is “ambushed” by the vivid memory of her brother’s death, the “mental picture of [him] sprawled in the daisy bushes, [her] mom screaming” (2010: 85). These instances in the narrative belie the ‘tough guy’ attitude that Zinzi often exudes and show her to be the more emotionally-invested *noir* PI archetype, over and above the dispassionate and uninvolved classical detective (such as Sherlock Holmes) who so often solves mysteries for the mere intellectual sport of it (Knight 2006: 208). This emphasises the impossibility of remaining at an emotional distance within contemporary urban spaces. Instead, Beukes seems to call for the recognition of complicity in the kinds of tragedies that ultimately characterise our post-apartheid cities.

2.7 The Emergence of a Female *Noir* Protagonist

Zinzi subverts the *noir* genre in that she is a *female* protagonist. The reason that there is no obvious *femme fatale* in this narrative is perhaps due to the fact that Zinzi is a woman and thus becomes the subject of the investigation rather than the object of desire. The dominance of the male protagonist as the hardboiled detective archetype is an important one to consider as it reveals the ways in which the city has been very much ‘closed off’ to women. As Elizabeth Wilson notes, “whether women are seen as a problem for cities, or cities as a problem for women, the relationship remains fraught with difficulty” (1995: 5). The city in general has been marked as an entity too dangerous for women and as such, they have been largely relegated to the space of the suburban, the domestic. Inherited gender conceptions have arguably imprisoned women in the domestic space as a result of not feeling safe as the more ‘vulnerable’ sex in cities. As Phil Hubbard has suggested in his urban study, *City* (2007), the *noir* narrative further exacerbates this, by creating an “unknowable and unmappable city” that preys particularly on women (2007: 63). In the world of *noir*, the “dark maze of the night is everywhere and nowhere, and the only one who knows it clean is the hard-boiled detective, who navigates its thousand hidden passageways” (Abrams 2006: 69). Because this ‘dark maze’ has been considered as simply too dangerous for women, it has been up to the male PI to solve the mystery. Yet, in *Zoo City*, it is Zinzi, a woman, who is best adept at navigating the urban spaces of Johannesburg.

Zinzi’s magical ability of course aids in her navigation of the city’s spaces as she admits that “[f]inding something is all about figuring out which string to tug on” (2010: 6). In one scene, she presses upon the palm of a client and instantly feels the thread of a lost wedding band as it unspools and runs “deep into the city, deep under the city” (2010: 9). Following this thread to find the wedding band she expresses her loathing of the city’s drains, telling readers to name it “contempt of familiarity” (2010: 10). Zinzi is unable to escape the waste and pollution fostered in her dense urban community and as such, must become ‘familiar’ with it instead. Thus, she is not only able to navigate the ‘dark mazes’ of the city above ground, but underground as well. She also tells readers early on that she has a “talent not just for finding lost things, but shortcuts too” (2010: 4). Readers are privy to this ‘talent’ moments later as Zinzi navigates her exit strategy to avoid the police tapings in her building. She effortlessly “duck[s] into number 615 [...] and scramble[s] down through the hole in the floor

that drops into 526.” When she is soon plunged into total darkness (the lightbulbs having been used as *tik* pipes), Zinzi’s animal familiar comes to the rescue and “drives [her] like a Zinzi motorbike, his claws clenching, left, right, down, down, down for two storeys to where the bulbs are still intact” (2010: 5). Later, when Zinzi is framed for a murder she similarly evades an arrest by the police:

I keep moving forward and, at the last moment, sidestep into the burned-out doorway of apartment 615.

By the time the cops hit the kitchen with its ripped-out pipes and smashed sink, I’ve already dropped through the hole of the floor in the second bedroom, into 526. But instead of taking the main stairwell, I cross the walkway, climb through the window of *Aurum Place*’s 507, clamber down the broken fire-escape and drop the last half-storey to the street. Queen of the shortcut.

This moment also draws attention to the ways in which derelict and abandoned urban spaces may in fact be repurposed as incredibly porous and potential spaces, spaces that allow a female protagonist to invoke a far more fluidised sense of self and belonging in the city. In so doing, Beukes draws readers into a fictional reimagining of Johannesburg’s most infamous suburb, Hillbrow, where they are led no less by a woman. By opening up the city space of inner-city Johannesburg to a female character, Beukes also manages to demythologise the area. On the one hand, a sense of ownership and belonging is created as Zinzi effectively becomes the ‘queen’ not only of the shortcut, but of Hillbrow as well. This ultimately creates a place for women in our inner-cities. Meanwhile, an otherwise abhorrent and abject area is rendered navigable and in many ways, *ordinary*.

2.8 Plot Conventions of the *Noir* Tradition

Turning next to the plot of the classic *noir* narrative, a sense of “impending doom” is generally imperative in their make-up (Sanders 2006: 92). Zinzi’s clients are most certainly dubious from the very beginning. As such, they are arguably the typical kinds of characters that would be likely to inhabit the city spaces globally. Odi Huron, her main client in the narrative, is described as having “sallow” skin with “his jowls sunken” and eyes that are “bright and flat” (2010: 75). Later, when he laughs, Zinzi notes that his eyes remain “cold” at the same time (2010: 76). When the two finally settle on a price for Zinzi’s participation in the missing persons case, they share a “conspiratorial grin” that leaves the protagonist

wondering if it might not be an instance of the two “baring [their] teeth at each other, like chimps competing for dominance” (2010: 78). Finally, as Zinzi drives off into the distance, she looks back at Huron and describes his “picture of laidback cool” as a typical “junkie look,” his hands no doubt “clamped into sweaty fists” inside his pockets with his fingernails tearing into his flesh (2010: 79). Already then, Zinzi’s potential client indicates a level of ‘impending doom’ within the narrative as any involvement with him can surely come to no good. Thus immediately, Beukes raises concerns for readers as to Zinzi’s involvement with such a character. Sloth’s reaction to their transaction further reiterates these concerns. Throughout the narrative, Sloth behaves as something of a moral compass and guide for Zinzi. She leaves Huron’s establishment with an angry Sloth who “clammers onto [her] back, stiff and cross” (2010: 78). This way, Sloth’s feelings may be seen to serve as an omen of dangerous things to come. This is also further indicative of the ways in which city spaces traffic in a sense of danger for their inhabitants.

The narrative does little to assuage readers’ fears as one character describes Odi Huron as a “[d]odgy motherfucker, by all accounts” (2010: 134). The sense of impending doom is only emphasised when Zinzi is encouraged to consult with a natural healer in her pursuit of the missing twin. Throwing a collection of items onto the ground to ‘read’ them as they land, he informs her that they signify “[v]ery bad luck” and that she has a “shadow” upon her (2010: 169). While the cynical Zinzi takes this to refer to her animal familiar, there is of course the suggestion that the changing of Zinzi’s so-called luck may have more to do with the case in which she has become recently embroiled. These omens are only confirmed by the gruesome death of both twins towards the end of the novel. In spite of Zinzi’s efforts, she is ultimately unable to save them from Odi Huron. Zinzi herself seems to be aware of this inevitability at times in the narrative. When Amira and Mark drive off with the formerly missing twin, Zinzi remarks that she is “out past the shark nets now” (2010: 223). These instances serve to confirm the inescapability of doom in the *noir* narrative. In conjunction with this, there can also be no ‘cookie-cutter’, happy ending to the narrative. Zinzi experiences the “death of hope” towards the end of the narrative. In her personal life, she must accept that her lover wishes to be reunited with his family (2010:235). Meanwhile in her professional life, she begins to suspect that her missing person’s case is unlikely to end well. When she responds to these feelings of despair by lapsing into her old ways of debauchery, she tells readers that she is in a familiar place again: namely, “[r]ock fucking bottom” (2010: 235). Also, this sense of impending doom is arguably indicative of the real-life degree of crime and corruption in

cities, an element of urban living that city inhabitants must encounter daily in the same way that Zinzi must steer herself warily as she enters the treacherous maze of her investigations.

2.9 The Relocation of the Sinister in *Zoo City*

What is noteworthy in Beukes' novel is where she chooses to locate the source of evil that ultimately permeates the narrative. Readers are told that the "notoriously reclusive" Odi Huron has not left the site of his "rambling Westcliff property" in nine years (2010: 138). This Westcliff property is situated within the kind of gated community that has become so typical to the landscape of South Africa. As discussed in the introduction, middle-to-upper-middle class South Africans have increasingly begun to view local CBDs as dangerous (Mabin 2005). So much so, the building of such suburban gated communities can scarcely keep up with the demand from those who wish to escape from city centres (Mabin 2005: 54). Here we find Ballard's notion of 'semigration' in play, the process whereby South Africans partially emigrate "without leaving the borders of South Africa" (2004: 52). While to many these communities suggest a sense of 'First World' modernity and safety, Beukes's novel challenges this otherwise 'picture-perfect' image.

In the context of *Zoo City*, these gated communities are set up to secure those without animal familiars a safe haven from those who have. Yet the hypocrisy of these communities is pointed out to readers early on as the boom that Zinzi approaches with Mark and Amira is protected by a guard with a rat in his pocket. Zinzi remarks that "Zoos do okay in the security sector" (2010: 67). They may not be afforded the opportunity to live within such communities but their services are certainly welcomed when they are assured with minimum-wage incomes. The presence of the boom and the security guard are also important as they demonstrate the extent to which the comings and goings of others is regulated in such communities. Furthermore, this moment reintroduces the politics of apartheid, problematizing such suburban enclaves. If I insisted in the introduction that the persistence of loose space as conceptualised by Franck and Stevens (2007) is vital to the post-apartheid urbanscape, here instead we find the promotion of an entirely tightened space. There can be few spontaneous encounters with others and there is a marked lack of urban vitality in the scene as Beukes describes it. The streets are empty and devoid of human interaction. The only person that Zinzi encounters before she arrives at the home of Odi Huron is the security guard. As the car is let through the boom, Zinzi describes their entrance into this gated community as a trip into the "rotten heart of leafy suburbia" (2010: 67). The imagery conjured by Zinzi's narrative

thus constantly serves to challenge the perfectly groomed scenery as the “grassy verges” are noted as being “more manicured than a porn star’s topiary” (2010: 68). This depiction also passes comment on the very homogenisation and conformity of such spaces. In this light, such aspects are seen to be unnatural, and as such potentially sinister.

The reader’s attention is also drawn to the level of cloistered living that such an environment provides when the walls surrounding the properties are said to be up to ten-metres high and “topped with electric fencing” (2010: 68). Looking at these walls, Zinzi makes the observation that “[a]nything could happen behind those walls and you wouldn’t know a thing,” remarking further that that might be “the point” after all (2010: 68). As taken from Manning (2004) in the introduction, this speaks to the growing trend among South Africans to believe themselves more ‘First World’ the higher their surrounding walls are. It also of course speaks to an ever-growing paranoia of those who are seen to be outsiders and a deep-seated fear of crime in our cities.

If Zinzi suspects that she has entered the ‘rotten heart of leafy suburbia’ then Huron’s establishment must surely be the very centre. The hill that rises up behind his house “sticks out like a hairy wart on the face of cool modernity” (2010: 68). The property itself appears to Zinzi to be completely “derelict” and “abandoned” (2010: 69-70). A cracked and unused tennis court justifies her estimation while weeds grow up between the paving stones and the surrounding lawns are “dry and yellowing” (2010: 69). The swimming pool is the key site of this dereliction. The “classical water feature of two maidens” has been so overcome with lichen that it appears as if “someone ate their faces” (2010: 72). Meanwhile the tiles of the pool itself are “chipped” and their original colour of “lapis-lazuli blue” has turned to the colour of a “dull glaucoma” (2010: 72). The ‘classical water feature’ may be seen as one of the “recycled neo-classical oddities” that architect, Alan Lipman, refers to (1993: 31). Instead of standing in as a symbol of glorified western culture, the water feature thus becomes the site of ruinous decay, indicating the negative impact of such a pandering to so-called ‘First World’ models. Thus, the modern sanctuary that a gated community might originally represent has been inverted. Instead, readers are arguably left with the sense that this might be the site for sinister and shady intentions. Also, the fact that the swimming pool conceals Odi Huron’s own animal, namely a White Crocodile, may be read symbolically. The recent proclivity to re-segregate urban spaces, this time according to class, only further enforces the damaging legacy of apartheid. The White Crocodile that resides beneath the surface of Odi Huron’s pool arguably represents the inheritance of apartheid that lies beneath the surface, so to speak, of the gated community. While we may have formally dismantled the legacy of

apartheid, highly guarded pockets of privilege persist all the same in our contemporary urban spaces.

We find a similar moment when Zinzi visits the golfing estate that is the home of the twins, Songweza and S’bu. When they arrive at the boom of this gated community, they are interrogated for ten minutes by the guard and made to step out of their vehicle so that their pictures might be taken for security purposes. To this, Mark comments that there are “animalists everywhere” and that they would “bring back the quarantine camps if they could” (2010: 85). The townhouses themselves are described as being “relentlessly modern” (2010: 86). To the outside observer, Zinzi notes that the homes are all “identical,” an almost endless series of “cookie-cutter townhouses with their perfect green lawns and chorus line of hissing sprinklers” (2010: 86). The scene is a vast cry from what Zinzi is familiar with in the chaotic Zoo City, and the reader senses that she regards these ‘cookie-cutter’ homes with some suspicion and even contempt.

This is further emphasised when Zinzi visits the golfing estate’s clubhouse to try and obtain some information on the twins from two of S’bu’s friends. Upon arrival, Zinzi is quickly informed that “no animals” are permitted in the clubhouse (2010: 100). Readers are told that those with animal familiars are unable to be without their animals for the “separation anxiety is crippling” and “[c]rack cravings” are but mild in comparison (2010: 124). Thus, when animals are prohibited, it goes without saying that the *mashavi*-ed person is essentially being denied access. This way, certain institutions in the novel may be seen as maintaining a certain exclusivity by denigrating those members of society it deems as lesser. Furthermore, it arguably emphasises the avoidance of complicity on the parts of those who remain privileged while those without privilege are forced to bear the burden of guilt.

This may also be read as yet another attempt to tighten and regulate space. If loose space is enforced by free access as Karen A. Franck and Quentin Stevens posit in *Loose Space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life* (2007), a sense of easy mobility and a mixing of diversified individuals, then the denial of such elements arguably works to create constraining spaces. Zinzi is all too aware of this attempt at exclusivity as she takes in the sight of the waiter at the clubhouse in a “bowtie and gloves, like this is Inanda instead of Mayfields” (2010: 100). Always with the gift of the gab, Zinzi quickly overcomes this obstacle by claiming to be a journalist from *The Economist*. The waiter relents with his “best fake-obsequious smile,” not wishing to call Zinzi on her bluff (2010: 100). This moment is important so far as that Zinzi’s actions can be read as highly transgressive and potent. In spite of the attempts to tighten space, as discussed in the introduction, it is the actions of people

that ultimately loosen a space (Franck & Stevens 2007). By tricking the waiter and gaining entrance, Zinzi in fact loosens the space of the clubhouse, if only briefly. Finally seated at the clubhouse, Zinzi questions the two boys while “overlooking the gentle rolling greenery” of the golfing estate (2010: 100). However, as Beukes similarly contradicted the picture of ‘cool modernity’ with the derelict and sinister abode of Odi Huron, so she quickly interrupts this otherwise picturesque scene. Zinzi notices a shrike eyeing their table for scraps and comments on how this seemingly sweet bird is also known as the “butcherbird” because of its “habit of impaling its prey on barbed wire” (2010: 100). This might be read as a commentary on the picturesque scenery of the golfing estate with its identical houses and plush lawns. For all its supposed perfection, it represents the kind of so-called ‘First World’ perfection that is achieved via exclusionary practices that denigrate and deny certain members of society, reinforcing processes of Othering.

2.10 An Introduction to the Fairytale

Angela Carter writes in her introduction to *Angela Carter's Book of Fairytales* (1992) that for “most of human history, ‘literature’, both in fiction and poetry, has been narrated, not written – heard, not read” (1992:xi). As such, “fairy tales, folk tales, stories from the oral tradition, are all of them the most vital connection we have with the imaginations of the ordinary men and women whose labour created our world” (1992:xi). Beyond this, however, they likewise encompass the kinds of morals and value systems that certain societies have chosen to uphold in their various stories. Also, because the fairytale or common folk tale has its origins in an oral tradition, it denotes a certain malleability of the genre. As Angela Carter insists, the “chances are, the story that was put together in the form we have it, more or less, out of all sorts of bits of other stories long ago and far away, and has been tinkered with, had bits added to it, lost other bits, got mixed up with other stories, until our informant herself has tailored the story personally” (1992:xi). Today, it could be argued that the most popular form of the fairytale is that which has been commodified and altered for the purposes of movie production houses. With the release of their first full-length animated feature, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, Disney followed with a number of successful films based on well-known and beloved fairytales. Among these are *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella* and *The Little Mermaid* to name but a few. In these films, the general narrative entails a beautiful young woman who is ultimately saved by her handsome prince. In so doing, such films reinforce heterosexual normativity, relegating women to the role of the passive, with men as their

dashing saviours. Alison Lurie makes a similar point when she laments the fact that the fairytales we have become so familiar with are the ones in which “the heroes seem to have all the interesting adventures,” while the heroines must simply “wait patiently for the right prince to come along” (1980:xi). She insists that these kinds of fairytales have promoted the notion that “girls are supposed to be beautiful and good and helpless and dull” (1980:xi). Similarly, these narratives uphold and universalise the capitalist prerogative of the western world, as the female protagonists are ultimately married into the monarchy by the end of the narrative, claiming their place among the wealthy and upper echelons of society. Thus, they may be seen as instilling in the dreams of little girls the prerogative to one day grow up to become princesses, to occupy their own proverbial kingdoms on the arm of a handsome prince.

With the contemporary criticisms that such films have received, particularly on the part of female critics such as Lurie noted above, recent cinematic revisions of the fairytale have attempted to provide viewers with less passive female protagonists and to rewrite these ‘happy endings’ so that they do not necessarily close with a wedding. One such example is the release of *Brave* by Pixar, a subsidiary of Disney. The female protagonist and princess of the film is presented early on with a host of suitors who have come to win her hand in a display of their masculine prowess, participating in an archery competition (and so forth) so as to impress upon her their worth. However, the princess is strong-willed and does not desire to marry, arguing instead that she will win her own hand. Demonstrating that she is a far cry from the typical passive heroine of such stories, the princess succeeds in trumping her suitors during the archery competition. Triumphant, she believes she has made the point that she can ‘out-shoot’ any man. Her parents, however, are outraged by her brazen display and inform her that she is nonetheless expected to perform her future duty as one-day queen and accept one of the suitors. It is at this point that she enlists the help of a witch in the forest which leads to her mother, the queen, being transformed into a bear. From here on out, the narrative becomes centred around the relationship of the mother and daughter as the princess must rescue the queen from forever being trapped in the form of a bear. As such, there is a notable absence of the ‘saviour prince’ figure in the narrative. It is instead the princess who assumes this role. That said, it is still implied by the film’s end that the princess will one day have to marry and accept her role as queen, even if the suitor is of her own choosing. Furthermore, because the female protagonist is ultimately a princess, the narrative fails in addressing the issues of class inherent in such stories. Thus, the modern-day fairytale remains a somewhat problematic arena. Even as they might resist certain stereotypes they nonetheless still

participate in the work of promoting the ideology of heterosexual normativity and classist division.

In direct opposition to these kinds of narratives in the modern movie tradition, Nadine Gordimer's "Once Upon a Time", then, might be read as a radical intervention and rewriting of the fairytale genre. As Mary West points out in her analysis of the short story in *White Women Writing White: Identity and Representation in (Post)-Apartheid Literatures of South Africa* (2009), to begin with the narrative starts where the conventional fairytale ends. The couple of the story is already married, with child, and living out the supposed fullness of their 'happily ever after'. Also, there is no typical villain in the narrative. Thus, while it is usually the villain who receives punishment by the narrative's end, it is in fact the family (occupying their 'kingdom' in suburbia) that is ultimately punished for the unquestioning manner in which they attempt to maintain their intensely privatised fiefdom.

2.11 Interrogating the Suburban in "Once Upon a Time"

In the same vein that Beukes' representation of the gated community reveals its neo-apartheid tendencies, so a similar indictment of the suburban enclave can be found in Nadine Gordimer's short story, "Once upon a Time" (2004). Gordimer begins by telling readers that she has been asked to write a children's story to contribute to an anthology. She replies that she does not write stories for children. However, the person is persistent and informs Gordimer that he has heard everyone should write "at least one story for children" (2004: 236). The author does not take kindly to this insistence that she "ought" to write anything in particular (2004: 236). Yet it is only a matter of time until Gordimer finds herself inspired to write the fairytale that follows her introduction.

It is important at this juncture to discuss Gordimer's inspiration for the story. It all begins when she finds herself waking during the night, roused by the creaking of the wooden floors in her home. She listens intently, imagining it might be feet treading from one room to another, the feet of intruders. This serves also as her recognition of the gut response of suburban dwellers who fear the imminent threat to their suburban enclaves, something which has become such a familiar feature in post-apartheid South Africa. While she notes that she has "no burglar bars, no gun under the pillow," she nonetheless admits to having "the same fears as people who do take these precautions" (2004: 236). She tells readers how a "woman was murdered (how do they put it) in broad daylight in a house two blocks away." Only a

year has passed when, in another incident, a widower is killed by a labourer whom he had refused to pay (2004: 236). However, after some time, she resolves that the creaking sounds that have her heart beating so, are only the caused by the house's foundations, nothing more. It is at this point that she begins to tell herself a "bedtime story" so that she might fall asleep (2004: 237).

There has been some discussion in the introduction surrounding the fears and paranoias of those relocating from the city centres. There has also been some discussion criticising the trend of middle-to-upper-middle-class South Africans to 'semigrate' and to set up homes behind high walls (prettified as they are by their European facades). However, it has to be noted that the fears Gordimer holds as she describes the scene above, are not flippant ones. As she describes it, in her area there have been actual incidents that only serve to further fuel the flame of her fears and anxieties. If it could happen to a neighbour, it could always happen to you. Furthermore, the victim is often blamed for not having a security alarm, for not having burglar bars. Where a woman is attacked on the beach, it is not uncommon in South Africa to question the fact that the woman was so brazen as to be walking alone to begin with. South Africa's crime rate, and the extent of the violence of these crimes, is undeniable.

However, what I suggest of both Beukes and Gordimer is that they attempt to question the particular kind of recourse to action that South African citizens take in response to these fears and anxieties. We may perhaps live in a society where it seems a dubious judgment to trust strangers. Yet, to set up neo-apartheid infrastructures and living environments, to dedicate our lives to the mistrust of the Other, cannot necessarily be the answer. The recent shooting of Reeva Steenkamp at the hands of her famous athlete boyfriend, Oscar Pistorius, in his suburban home is further reason to treat such enclaves with suspicion. While the trial is still ongoing, the reality of her death speaks to the inherent problems of a nation living with fear and paranoia, encasing themselves in privatised citadels. In the case of Beukes, then, the genre of *noir* is used to reveal that the ultimate presence of the darkness of human nature resides in the suburban. Gordimer uses the form of the fairytale to similar effect. As Mary West has posited, the fairytale is "above all [...] an oral tale, passed on from generation to generation, subject to revision and reinterpretation, depending on the teller and the audience" (2009:171) If fairytales serve as lessons, stories to forewarn and forearm us, then Gordimer's short story serves to remind us of the dangers of such cloistered and fearful living.

Gordimer's 'bedtime story' begins "[i]n a house, in a suburb, in a city" where there lived "a man and his wife who loved each other very much and were living happily ever after" (2004: 237). In addition to each other, the couple in Gordimer's story also have a dearly-

beloved, little boy, a cat and a dog, “a housemaid who was absolutely trustworthy and an itinerant gardener who was highly recommended by the neighbours” (2004: 237). Early on in her story, the happy couple’s deeply entrenched fear of Others is made apparent. It is necessary, in their view, that the ‘itinerant gardener’ come ‘recommended by the neighbours’. It would be considered ill-advised and unsafe to simply accept “anyone off the street” into their home (2004: 237). Also, their gate has been fixed with a plaque that reads “YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED” so as to ward off any “would-be intruder” (2004:237). However, the wife’s fears are not assuaged by the presence of the plaque and at her requests, an electronic gate is fitted to further ensure the family’s safety (2004: 238). This does not prove to be sufficient.

Upon hearing news of burglaries in the neighbouring area, the “trusted housemaid” implores that the couple also invest in an alarm system and burglar bars for the doors and windows of the house (2004: 238). Readers are told that from this moment on, the family “now saw the trees and sky through bars” (2004: 238). It is in moments such as these that Gordimer’s narrative underscores the supposed idyllic, suburban set-up. There seems to be a fine line between safe-guarding one’s self against harm and creating a veritable prison from which to view the rest of the world. Gordimer further adds an element of the absurd to the family’s drama, as it is their pet cat (and not those ‘would-be intruders’) that repeatedly sets off the house alarm system. As if in response, the alarm systems of neighbouring households are also set off, no doubt “triggered by pet cats or nibbling mice” seemingly “call[ing] to one another in shrills and bleats and wails” (2004: 238). Over time, this occurrence is so frequent that the neighbourhood grows accustomed to this alarmed cacophony, so much so that “the din roused the inhabitants of the suburb no more than the croak of frogs and musical grating of cicadas’ legs” (2004: 238). Here, one reading would be to suggest that Gordimer offers a critique of the naturalising of such unnatural environments. It describes an urban scene wherein South Africans have become so very used to this strict policing of space that the practices required no longer seem odd or even remotely questionable.

Hereafter, the neighbourhood of the happy family becomes infringed upon by those considered ‘unsavoury’ types. There are those who are seeking work but have unfortunately not come ‘highly recommended by the neighbours’. There are also those who are there simply to drink and to loiter, “foul[ing] the street with their discarded bottles” (2004: 238). There are the beggars who take every opportunity to approach the husband or his wife when they are entering or exiting from their electronically-controlled gate. The inhabitants lament the state of their otherwise “beautiful suburb,” “spoilt” only by the intrusion of those

individuals who are seen not to belong (2004: 238). It is at this point in the narrative that the couple decides to extend the height of their surrounding wall. Thus, the lengths to which one must go to secure the sanctity of the inner domain from the outside world are shown to be extensive, almost endless.

However, for Gordimer's story it does end. Her fairytale finally comes to a gruesome end when the family decides to put up added fencing on top of the already extended wall. The seed is first sown when their pet cat is spotted easily scaling the wall that is now supposed to be impenetrable. The cat seems to do so with such careless ease that it leaves them questioning the actual effectiveness of the wall. On the other side of the wall, too, the family notices what appear to be "larger red-earth smudges that could have been made by the kind of broken running shoes, seen on the feet of unemployed loiterers" (2004: 239). They become convinced that these smudge marks "had no innocent destination" in mind (2004: 239). Thus, the family begins their search for the best kind of fencing.

So intent are they in their pursuit that they pay no heed to the changing spaces of their present urbanscape. Those "show of roses or that perfect lawn" that the family used to admire, are now all hidden behind "an array of different varieties of security fences, walls and devices" (2004: 239). They are too wrapped up in their own fears and anxieties to question the extent to which similar fears have closed off all the surrounding spaces in their neighbourhood. Gordimer then returns us to the couple's current preoccupation, following with a long list of their available options all commonly familiar to the average South African. She begins by listing the "low-cost option of pieces of broken glass embedded in cement along the top of walls." There are also those spikes that attempt to "reconcil[e] the aesthetics of prison architecture with the Spanish Villa style." Gordimer's narrative also effectively unmask the intention of such fencing as she follows each aesthetically-orientated depiction by a bracketed description of what the fencing actually entails. By way of example, "plaster urns of neoclassical facades" are in turn revealed to be "twelve-inch pikes finned like zigzags of lightning and painted pure white" (2004: 239). This way, Gordimer likewise interrogates the kind of European architecture that the gated community uses to beautify what is in fact prison architecture. This might also be read as a critique of the extent to which we, as Africans, continue to mimic and replicate the obscene architecture of the western world.

After weighing up all their options, the family finally decides on a type of fencing supplied by a company called "DRAGON'S TEETH" (2004: 240). Once again, this is a play on the fairytale genre that might require the prince to rescue the fair maiden from the dragon's lair. Consisting of a "continuous coil of stiff and shining metal serrated into jagged

blades,” the couple is assured that there would be no way of attempting to scale it “without getting entangled in its fangs” (2004: 240). Any attempt thereafter at escape would only ensure that the person ensnared become “bloodier and bloodier” as their flesh was further torn (2004: 240). Even the wife “shudder[s]” just to look at the fencing (2004: 240). The cat is savvy enough after this point to restrict his comings and goings to the enclosed garden of the home. However, it is the little boy who must ultimately pay the price for his parents’ misguided judgment. Inspired by a book of fairytales that he has been given by his grandmother, he pretends to be the prince who will save Sleeping Beauty from her deep slumber. First, though, he must enter the “terrible thicket of thorns” that guard her sleeping form (2004: 240). A ladder is dragged to the wall whereupon the little-boy-as-prince attempts to tackle the razor sharp wiring that has become the thicket of thorns in his imagination.

As the “razor-teeth” tear deeper and deeper into the flesh of his “knees and hands and head,” he becomes stuck in its “tangle” (2004: 240). His screams rouse the attention of the housemaid and the gardener who are the first to witness his bleeding form. The gardener attempts to rescue the boy but only tears his own hands in the process. Finally, the man and his wife rush out into the garden to see the “bleeding mass” that is the body of their son. At the same time, the alarm system is set off, so that the “wailing” of the system is in conjunction with the screams of the trapped boy. The story ends with the body of the little boy being “hacked out of the security coil with saws, wire-cutters, [and] choppers” and taken back into the house (2004: 240). It is important to note that the young boy’s terrible undoing is spurred on by the book of fairytales that he has been given. In this, Gordimer seems to comment on the kinds of stories that we tell ourselves, the fictions that inform our understandings of the world around us. It could be suggested that by choosing to write a different kind of fairytale, a new kind of fairytale, Gordimer insists upon revised narratives for the society within which we live. If our societies have grown so accustomed to the relentless policing of privately owned space in South Africa, then we require new fictions that will allow us to see the tyranny of such spaces anew. Because it is not an outsider but the family’s own child who is ultimately hurt in Gordimer’s story, it might also be to suggest that by erecting such tightly organised spaces, the harm we do is of a deeply intimate and personal nature. It of course also contests the kinds of spaces that we produce as well as the kinds of communities that we encourage (or in this, case, discourage) in a post-apartheid South Africa.

2.12 The Potentialities of Loosened Urban Spaces in *Zoo City* in Relation to “Once Upon a Time”

In stark contrast to these negative representations of exclusive suburban enclaves, the reader finds Beukes’ reinvigorated re-imagining of inner-city Hillbrow as Zoo City. It is not the protagonist’s first choice to seek accommodation in Hillbrow. She learns quickly, however, that there is no room for an animalled individual such as herself in “cloistered [...] suburbia” (2010: 10). She tells readers, “It was inevitable that I’d end up in Zoo City” (2010: 50). All of the five rental agencies that Zinzi tries regard her Sloth with trepidation and end their session with the query: “had [she] tried Hillbrow?” (2010: 50). The derelict Hillbrow apartment block of Elysium Heights may never have been Zinzi’s “obvious choice of location for Starting Over” (2010: 50). In fact, she admits that there were “other, nicer blocks” available for rent in Hillbrow (2010: 50). Yet it is Elysium Heights that she chooses to inhabit and over time she begins to find herself warming to the place. While it may be for reasons of shame and self-punishment that Zinzi first inhabits Elysium Heights, it ultimately becomes a homely space for her, a place in which she might genuinely belong.

Readers are further told by Zinzi that she finds a strange and reassuring comfort in the “sprawling ghetto warren” of Zoo City (2010: 50). Her own building, Elysium Heights, has lapsed in infrastructure to become a series of interwoven connections where she can even drop down from one floor into another as noted earlier. It is also connected to the surrounding buildings via both official and unofficial bridges. Already then, where the suburban enclave relies on a sense of apartness and safety-as-isolation, here we find an urbanscape that comprises a network of attachments and connections. The importance of such networks are arguably fundamental to the presence of loose spaces for the “potential of a space to become loose may lie in its relationship to other spaces” for “[w]hen the edge is porous, one can see and move easily between spaces” (Franck & Stevens 2007: 9). The illegal, electrical “hook-ups” between flats and other buildings are described as being “flaccid tightropes for a decrepit circus” (2010: 53). This description suggests too that there is a sense of play to be found in the urbanscape of Zoo City. Also, it denotes a heightened mobility and freedom for those social actors inhabiting the area. While the fact that the ‘circus’ of Zoo City is described as being ‘decrepit’ may appear to have a negative connotation, it is important to note that it is often ruinous or abandoned sites that allow for the active re-appropriations that loosen space (Franck & Stevens 2007: 6). As Franck and Stevens argue, a “certain amount of physical disorder can encourage new and inventive uses, not only because it indicates lower

surveillance and lack of regulation but also because it provides spaces and materials that expand the potential scope of actions” (2007: 9). Thus, where sites are ruinous, decayed, or abandoned, such “physical deterioration can make complex the layout of the terrain, opening up new links and thus new opportunities” (Franck & Stevens 2007: 9). Because of these links, Zinzi can engage with her environment in ways that she would not otherwise have been able to had there been a more enforced physical structure.

Furthermore, where the suburban scenes described by Beukes and Gordimer reveal the ways in which these urbanscapes attempt to monitor the comings and goings of strangers, in Zoo City this becomes an impossibility. There are too many strangers seeking residence in the densely-packed area of Hillbrow for the avoidance of others to be even remotely possible. Those who occupy the urbancape of Zoo City have been denied access elsewhere due to their being ‘undesirable’. This may be for a number of reasons. In the case of many, such as Zinzi, it is because they are aposymbiots or ‘zoos’ and have committed past transgressions. It may also be the case that they are illegal immigrants without the necessary paperwork to apply to live in supposedly ‘nicer’ areas such as the suburban enclave of Gordimer’s short story. Otherwise, it may simply be the case that they cannot afford to live elsewhere. Franck and Stevens suggest that the processes of accommodation that loosened spaces encourage are ultimately beneficial for the society at large. They posit that where loosened spaces are the result of “the density and mixing of people [...] people must encounter many others different from themselves” (2007: 5). Because of this “the diversity and the density of urban space demand measures of social flexibility and acceptance that we would call ‘tolerance’” (Franck & Stevens 2007: 6). Thus, in Zoo City, this large host of characters of diverse backgrounds must all compete for living space and learn to accommodate one another in their daily survival.

In Beukes’ literary rendering of Hillbrow, we are presented with an urbancape that rests on the tolerance of others. Zinzi tells a character in the novel that she is surprised animal fights do not occur more frequently in Zoo City, what with “[h]erbivores and carnivores all mixed up together.” She goes on to say that they “should probably segregate” (2010: 73). However, in spite of Zinzi’s wry suggestion, the characters of Zoo City do not segregate. To the contrary, Zinzi maintains they are “all about tolerance in Zoo City,” that theirs is a community built on a sense of “mutually assured desperation” (2010: 44). Also, while many aposymbiots are forced to take up residence in Zoo City, having being denied access to other ‘nicer’ areas in the novel, there is “no rule saying [an animal familiar] is obligatory” (2010: 44). Thus, while the gated communities and suburban enclaves serve as examples of those

kinds of spaces that are cloistered and constrained, Beukes' Hillbrow is presented as an entirely loose and open space.

An interesting case in point about the kind of 'tolerance' motivated by Zoo City's diversity occurs in the elevator scene briefly noted earlier in this chapter. An elevator is a fitting example of the kind of space where close proximity to others, to strangers, cannot be controlled. In this particular scene, Zinzi encounters a host of other aposymbiots in the elevator of Elysium Heights. Zinzi's initial hesitance is shown when the Mongoose strapped to the chest of a "giant" snarls at her (2010: 52). Although this 'giant' is in fact Benoît who will later become Zinzi's lover, her initial encounter with him is one filled with trepidation. She takes a quick pause before stepping into the lift with the group of animalled strangers. As the doors close, Zinzi attempts to turn her back to "the men and their menagerie" inside (2010:52). Beukes arguably plays with this anxiety and as the protagonist turns her back, she is rewarded instead with their carnivalesque and "warped reflections in the aluminium, like a cheap funhouse mirror by way of Hieronymus Bosch" (2010: 52). Noticing her hesitant response to them, Benoît asks her if she is afraid to be in there "with all us *animals*" (Beukes' emphasis, 2010: 52). To this, her quick response (which as I argued gives her added credence as a hardboiled *noir* protagonist) is that they should all be afraid to be in such a confined space with her instead. At this, the entire elevator erupts into a fit of raucous laughter and the ice is broken, so to speak. Thus, an intimate and spontaneous moment occurs in an elevator-full of strangers. Also, Zinzi learns from the men in the elevator to embrace her Sloth. Up until this point, she has hidden him under her hoodie, believing him to be a mark of shame. These men, however, do not hold their animals as "burdens" but rather with the sense of power and agency that one might wear "weapons" (2010: 52). Because of this, Beukes' fiction may be seen to present the case that a more interconnected urbanscape can also create an environment whereby we take inspiration from others, learn from their own appropriations of space and senses of self.

If we return to the earlier examinations of suburban enclaves, there seemed to be little to no sense of community. In the case of Odi Huron, he is described as being highly reclusive. Also, as I noted, upon driving into the estate, Zinzi does not encounter another single individual other than the security guard until she arrives at Huron's homestead. Instead, she is simply surrounded by high walls. Similarly, in Gordimer's story, the family appears to live almost in isolation from others. There are stories of the neighbours and the terrible crimes that have befallen them, but we do not encounter these neighbours. Also, in walking their dog, the couple does not encounter any neighbours along the way. We are only told of the

fences and high walls that appear to be littering their urbanscape. The only other souls who are mentioned are the vagrants and those unemployed seeking work from whom the couple intently attempt to keep their distance.

On the other hand, the Zoo City that Beukes' fiction offers up is a rich and peopled urbanscape. When Zinzi throws her lighter in frustration against her apartment wall, smashing it to pieces, she "manage[s] to score a box of matches off a woman carrying a bucket of water up the stairs on her head" (2010: 202). In another scene, Zinzi cannot find anything suitable in her wardrobe to wear to a nightclub. In the end, she "settle[s] on skinny jeans and a surprisingly tasteful black top" borrowed "from one of the prostitutes on the third floor." Of course, Zinzi clarifies that when she says "borrow[s]" what she in fact means is "rent[s]." However, for a mere "thirty bucks," she is assured that the top is clean. Although she admits to being "dubious" of this however, the top nonetheless passes her "sniff test, so fuck it" (2010: 124). This indicates too that there is a far greater ease and intimacy with others in the urbanscape of Zoo City. Zinzi is able to comfortably don the clothing of a neighbour that may or may not be washed without giving much thought to the matter. As long as it passes her 'sniff test', she is quite content to wear it. Zinzi also thinks very little of it when the 'giant' whom she has encountered in the elevator scene knocks on her door with a hotplate offering to whip up dinner for the two of them. Benoît argues that since Zinzi has electricity and he has the hotplate and ingredients for dinner, theirs is indeed a situation of mutually assured desperation. It is this mutual assurance that allows Benoît to insert himself into the otherwise private home-space of Zinzi. It is also the openness of the community of Zoo City and of the familiarisation with others that comes with living in close quarters that allows Zinzi to welcome Benoît into her home without any fear or anxiety. Soon after, the two former strangers become lovers suggesting that genuine relationships can be fostered between diverse peoples in such an environment. In another tender and domestic scene in the novel, Zinzi arrives home to find Benoît preparing lunch for the two of them. Benoît "insists that [they] take [their] faintly charred hot-dogs up to the roof" where they can look over the view of the city (2010: 117). This rooftop acts as a prime example of where space might be loosened by the appropriations of others. Although Zinzi tells readers that the roof is rarely used since the elevator service has been down, she does admit that the inhabitants of Elysium Heights use it to hang their laundry when the sun is out. It is also noted as being used for the occasional "party [...] to celebrate a wedding or a birth or when one of the local gangs feels like buying some community goodwill with a spit-*braaied* sheep and grilled offal" (2010: 118). While the rooftop serves a simple, structural function as part of a building, here we find

that the space is used in other ways by the community to further their needs and desires, thus loosening the space. It is also important to note that such appropriations can be seen to occur prominently in high-density, lower-income areas where the inhabitants do not have the privileges of private backyards or areas specifically designated to the hanging of laundry. It is of further importance that such open usages of space rest again upon a sense of mutual assurance within the community. Those who hang their laundry on the rooftop must do so trusting that their clothes will not be stolen. Meanwhile, rooftop parties are generally open to all as the space is a public one, thus making it difficult to control who attendance. Benoit further demonstrates this point when he “plucks a quilt off the line” and lays it down for Zinzi and him to sit on while they eat their hotdogs (2010: 119). Here he helps himself to the laundry of someone else for the sake of their picnic. Looking over the cityscape from the perspective of the rooftop, Zinzi regards the “skyline in crisp focus” and the “dust in the air that makes the Highveld sunsets so spectacular, the fine yellow mineral deposits kicked up from the mine dumps, the carbon-dioxide choke of the traffic” (2010: 118). It is at this moment that she asks readers rhetorically, “Who says bad things can’t be beautiful?” (2010: 118).

It is with this sentiment in mind that I turn to the next aspect of Beukes’ representation of Johannesburg’s otherwise infamous inner-city suburb. If loose spaces are defined as those spaces “where definitions and expectations are less exclusive and more fluid, where there is a greater accessibility and freedom of choice for people to pursue a variety of activities,” then Beukes’ fictional rendering of Hillbrow is just such a space (Franck & Stevens 2007: 3). As Franck and Stevens insist, it is in these spaces that we find “the breathing space of city life, offering opportunities for exploration and discovery, for the unexpected, the unregulated, the spontaneous and the risky” (2007: 3). It is in these spaces that “people relax, observe, buy or sell, protest, mourn and celebrate,” in other words, *live* (Franck & Stevens 2007: 4). Ultimately, it is in urbanscapes such as these that city life gains its much-needed sense of vitality.

We find just such a scene of city-life vitality when the protagonist describes the hubbub of commotion and interaction that Zoo City becomes after dark. She notes that while those who “would happily speed through Zoo City during the day won’t detour here at night, not even to avoid police roadblocks” (2010: 115). However, she thinks it misguided as this is “precisely when Zoo City is at its most sociable” (2010: 115). The scene that follows is one where

[f]rom 6pm, when the day-jobbers start getting back from whatever work they've been able to pick up, apartment doors are flung open. Kids chase each other down the corridors. People take their animals out for fresh air or a friendly sniff of each other's bums. The smell of cooking – mostly food, but also meth – temporarily drowns out the stench of rot, the urine in the stairwells. The crack whores emerge from their dingy apartments to chat and smoke cigarettes on the fire-escape, and catcall commuters heading to the taxi rank on the street below.

(2010: 115).

It is important here to note that Beukes does not recreate a Hillbrow as seen through rose-tinted lenses. There is of course the reality that where people are impoverished they are likely to resort to illegal means of daily survival such as drug-peddling or prostitution. Also, where areas are less tightly regulated and controlled, the occurrence of transgressive acts are more likely. Beukes neither denies the squalor that those living in Hillbrow generally face, as in the 'stench of rot' and 'urine' that permeates the 'stairwells'. However, because of the looseness of such a space, the children play in spaces otherwise not designated for such a usage, filling the corridors with their sounds. The prostitutes, too, appropriate the public space of the fire-escapes and further loosen the space with their own sounds as they whistle and catcall at the passersby below. Readers' attention is drawn to the sensory elements of *Zoo City* too. Franck and Stevens posit that "[m]eaning is not only conveyed by what the environment looks like" but also by the "touch, sound and smell of a place" as they all add to the "perceptions" that surround it (2007: 10). They add that these "experiences of urban space are typically intense, sudden, random, fleeting and mysterious – in other words, loose" and as such bring about a "de-familiarization of space [that] promotes loose and playful responses, a re-discovery of space's potential" (2007: 10). Rather than being locked away and imprisoned in their own homes as we find in the case of Gordimer's family and Odi Huron, here the 'apartment doors are flung open'. In her own way, by neither glamourising nor demonising the urbanscape of Hillbrow, Beukes reveals to readers the inherent dynamism and sense of community in/of such a space. If Zinzi attests to the fact that even 'bad things can be beautiful', Beukes seems to share in this opinion.

2.13 Conclusion

Thus, in this chapter I have discussed Lauren Beukes' deployment of the genre of *noir* fiction. I have also discussed the ways in which she has subverted the genre and acted against the

expectations of the reader. For instance, it is highly subversive that the novel is narrated by a female protagonist given that the typical *noir* detective figure is almost always male. Doing so, she has renegotiated the space of the city and made it navigable not only to men but to women as well, those secondary characters so often relegated to the margins in our urban fictions. She has also thwarted reader's expectation with regard to the positioning of the minotaur in the dark maze of *noir* fiction. It is not in the inner-city 'slum' of Hillbrow that the reader encounters the ultimately monstrous, that darkness that *noir* often suggests is inherent in human nature. Instead, it is in cloistered suburbia that the terrible *muti* murder of the young twins occurs in Odi Huron's attempt to rid himself of his animal familiar. Similarly, I have argued that Nadine Gordimer problematises the space of the suburban enclave in her short story and fairytale, "Once upon a Time." While the family seeks safety and shelter from the outside world, in the end it is within the confines of their very own home that the truly gruesome occurs as the little boy of the narrative is ensnared in their security fencing. Both of these writers seem to write against the maintenance of tightly regulated and controlled urban spaces, suggesting that their legacy is a fraught and damaging one to our society at large. While Beukes expands upon the traditional narrative of the *noir* novel, Gordimer has revised the format of the classic fairytale. In exploring their re-appropriations of genre, I have suggested that they do so to offer us new kinds of fiction that might better represent South Africa's urbanscapes. Thus, through experimentation with genre they have arguably attempted to both critique and reimagine our contemporary urban spaces. If we are to be vigilant in our promotion of diversity and difference in a post-apartheid South Africa, we will require fictions such as theirs that remind us of the importance of loose space, of the importance of urbanscapes that allow for open exchanges rather than those urbanscapes that might deny or regulate any such exchanges.

Chapter Three

Fictional Experimentation in the Re-Imagining of South African Urbanscapes: The Chimeric Potentialities of Johannesburg in Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* and K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*

3.1 Introduction: Contrasting Representations of Johannesburg and Cape Town in Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* and K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*

In this final chapter, I argue the case for fiction that deploys a more experimental and mutated form so as to better encapsulate the current experience of urban living in South Africa. Those hybridised and loosened cultural terrains of urban life potentially allow for urban inhabitants to redefine and redraw themselves accordingly, enabling them to forge new identities that are less prescriptive and restrictive. As both Duiker's and Beukes' novels demonstrate, it is arguably in such spaces as Hillbrow (where I have argued in Chapter Two that there is a loosening of the urban domain) that such fluidised revisions of identity can occur. In this way, urban inhabitants can recreate a sense of identity that does not pander to the conventional expectations inherent in racial or gendered stereotypes. This is perhaps in direct opposition to the protected and privileged communities where homogenisation is in fact encouraged. As AbdouMaliq Simone has argued, “[u]rbanization conventionally denotes a thickening of fields, an assemblage of increasingly heterogeneous elements into more complicated collectives” (2008: 69). It is important that fictions emphasise this chimeric potentiality of the city to allow the reader to explore alternative identities. I suggest that both Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* and K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* accomplish this re-imagining of urban communities not only in the novels' characterisations but also by way of their experimental narratives.

As the previous chapter emphasised, Beukes' *Zoo City* makes a powerful case for spaces such as Hillbrow in what they might be able to represent in the reconfiguring of post-apartheid South African cities. However, as K. Sello Duiker's novel demonstrates, there are post-apartheid city spaces that are still inherently divided along lines of class, gender and more emphatically, race. In my analysis of *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, I consider Duiker's representation of Cape Town as just such a fraught and damaging urban space. As Dobrota Pucherova posits, the novel is set “during the transitional period of 1998 to 2000” and “expresses disillusionment with the fashionable middle-class culturalism that only

disguises thriving racism, xenophobia, and homophobia” (2009:936). While Johannesburg has been heralded as the new ‘afropolis’, creating for itself a notably more African urban identity, Cape Town may be seen as having based itself heavily upon western models of urban experience.

Cape Town has been represented by many names and city identities. Influenced by its geographical location as a peninsula between two oceans, it was once known as the ‘Tavern of the Seas’ (Watson 2006: 4). It was also once marked by its complicity during the apartheid era as a Coloured Preferential Area in the political allegiance it held in the Western Cape (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/south-africa/cape-town/history>). One might say that the city’s most prominent, aspirational and ambivalent representation can be found in the metaphorical bosom of its name as the ‘Mother City’. This may signify a term of endearment to some. However, to those who have experienced alienation in the city, it has arguably come to serve as an ironic namesake. Most significant to this chapter ultimately is the manner in which Cape Town has come to pride itself on being a “Little Europe incarnate,” a city “not really” African (Watson 2006: 4). In so doing, it has simultaneously established itself as the tourist capital of South Africa. The question this chapter asks is what impact does such a status carry for those living within the city of Cape Town? Furthermore, it asks the question as to what kind of an alternative space (in this case, the space of Hillbrow) might better constitute a place of belonging in opposition to the otherwise inhospitable so-called ‘Mother City’?

As Justin Cartwright remarks in his essay, “The Lie of the Land” (2006), the city’s allure for many rests in the promise of Cape Town as an “antidote to Africa,” a place where even the “Mediterranean climate” is of a “classier kind [...] more refined, more classical, less turbulent.” Reputedly, it is the Cape’s vineyards, the majestic Table Mountain, vast ocean views, “elegant hotels” and “a lingering sense of a colonial town” that draw tourists and inhabitants alike to its shores. However, Cartwright asserts that the traveller who does not seek a so-called ‘antidote to Africa’ may instead “feel as if they have strayed into an alien and somehow hostile environment” (2006: 199-202). It is potentially this aspect that lends the city a sense of duality. Sometimes teasingly referred to the city divided by the ‘espresso curtain’, it has become the “tale of two cities”: the Cape Town of “the privileged, their rose and vanilla mansions hugging those contours of privilege close to the city’s mountain chain” and the Cape Town of the “dispossessed and deprived [...] steadily filling up the waste ground between the city’s mountain backbone and the barrier range of Hottentot’s Holland” (Watson 2006: 3). I posit that K. Sello Duiker’s novel provides a scathing indictment by

turning its narrative lens upon the kinds of privilege that the city perpetuates in creating such divides.

3.2 The Torturous Violence of Valkenberg

The protagonist of Duiker's novel, Tshepo, initially leaves Johannesburg for Cape Town in an attempt to cut off all ties with his crime-lord father. In this way, he views the city of Cape Town as a place where he can start afresh, where he can redefine himself as a man set apart from his strained paternal ties. Yet the narrative soon reveals the ways in which the city has slowly begun to make an outsider out of Tshepo as he struggles to find a sense of self and belonging. When readers first encounter Tshepo, he is a character in desperate need of hospitality and consolation. He narrates that he only wants "to be the beloved for a change and not know love as an unreliable friend always making promises" (2001:7). He further expresses a state of constant uncertainty, telling readers that every day he asks "new questions and every day the answer seems more elusive" (2001:7). Hereafter, he seems to long for a sense of freedom, articulating the desire "to fly, to spread [his] wings a little and feel warm air form curlicues under [his] arms as [he] glide[s]" (2001:7). Instead, the state that he finds himself in is one where he feels "desperately alone" with the sense that he is "drowning in [his] own life, his [own] events" (2001:7). He has been institutionalised in the mental facility of Valkenberg due to a psychotic episode after smoking marijuana. Rather than come to his rescue, the space of the mental institution of Valkenberg emerges as an entirely rigid and cruel place, subjecting its patients (Tshepo among them) to inhumane treatment. This is arguably indicative of the way in which those who are not seen to belong are pushed to the margins in the city. It takes Tshepo and his friend, Mmabatho, a long train ride from Valkenberg to return to the inner-city area of Cape Town, thus indicating its location on the outskirts of the city. The novel plainly critiques society's ostracising of the mentally ill in narrating that "people can sleep safe at night when they rest because the really sick people are locked away while they snore peacefully" (2001:48). Thus, society's inhospitable treatment of the mentally ill is emphasised.

Furthermore, rather than a caring and hospitable institution, the mental facility is presented as a hostile environment where the staff do not have the patience or tolerance for those under their care and supervision. Tshepo finds that the nurses and psychiatrists are "indifferent" and only seem to "communicate through prescriptions" (2001:10). Upon visiting Tshepo at Valkenberg, Mmabatho similarly notices that the nurses appear "aloof and

aggressive” (2001:16). Tshepo is treated as a “child again” and must obey the rules accordingly (2001: 19). Tshepo feels that he must simply “listen meekly as they plot their strategies against [his] mind,” ensuring that he does not “make a fuss when they medicate [him] even though [he] know[s] it is going to assault [his] system” (2001:19). He expresses that it is “humiliating sometimes, to smile at the doctors who come and see [him] during the ward rounds” (2001:138). He overhears one of the doctors warning another that some of the patients have fleas. He notes further that the doctors look at the mental patients “with a mixture of disgust and pity, as they don’t really know what to do with [them], for [them]” (2001:138). However, he resolves that he must “swallow their shit” if he is to have a hope of ever getting out of this “baleful place” (2001:138). The novel similarly critiques the level of dehumanisation at work in the treatment of mental illness as Tshepo feels that the doctors “don’t see a person” but rather they “see a case, something which they must work out, decode, diagnose” (2001:140). It is his belief that to them, his “mind is merely a jigsaw puzzle” and that they are simply “fascinated by its fragments” (2001:140).

The doctors do not seem to see “[e]verything else, the gestures, the pauses, the looks of despair and desperation” that make up Tshepo’s humanity (2001:140). Instead, these all “disappear in a vacuum called therapy” (2001:140). Thus, Tshepo concludes that, as patients, they are “nothing” to the doctors and nurses but “question marks and full-stops” (2001:140). It is not by their personal names that they are known, but as “[m]ental patients with cannabis induced psychosis – that’s how they refer to us here,” Tshepo informs the reader. This inability to recognise a common humanity leads Tshepo to suspect that they “will never understand” patients such as himself (2001:140). It is noteworthy that Tshepo is taken aback when one of his psychologists turns out to be “sympathetic and strangely kind” as the reader might imagine that such traits are to be expected of the profession (2001:53). Instead, Tshepo claims that “you don’t find many kind people in a mental institution” (2001:53). In Tshepo’s estimation of Valkenberg, it is rather a place that “breeds nastiness and ill feelings,” a place where there are “no unexpected smiles that can lift the veil of depression from you, no spontaneous acts of kindness from other patients or even the staff” (2001:53). As such, the staff members at Valkenberg are unable to answer Tshepo’s quiet desire to be loved. “We are searching, asking, pleading, praying,” he desperately wishes to say aloud. “Love us, we are not mad,” he reiterates, wanting only to remind the doctors that all the patients “need” is “the best love” (2001:54). However, his silent pleas remain unrecognised. Duiker might be seen, then, to question the value of a western-inherited approach to treating mental illness that only potentially dehumanises its subjects in making clinical case studies of them. Readers are

further told that once a patient has been certified, they “can’t vote, can’t drive, can’t open a bank account” and “basically [they] don’t exist” (2001:135). This is yet another indictment of our society’s treatment of ‘madness’ and how those who are seen to be suffering from it are relegated to extremely marginalised positions of subjectivity.

Hereafter, the novel gives attention to the cruel methods that such institutions subject their patients to, particularly in the use of the kulukutz. Any minor transgression results in a patient being subjected to solitary confinement and locked away in the kulukutz. Another patient at Valkenberg who speaks from the position of a first-person narrator within the novel is Zebron. Zebron is locked away in the kulukutz for three days after having sworn at his psychologist during a ward round. The psychologist nearly attacks him and subsequently they assign a new psychologist to Zebron, indicating the ease with which patients are passed on within the system (2001:115). Returning then to the use of the kulukutz as a means with which to punish patients, it can be read as a similar method to that which is used in prisons, in placing individuals into solitary confinement. The torturous dimensions to such a punishment can be found in Zebron’s experience of the kulukutz:

You feel vulnerable as if you’re about to break into tears, only you’re too drugged to cry. And the nights are always long and cold, regardless of the warm weather, because there is no window to look through. It stinks in there because the last guy was too broken to piss in the bowl and his shit skids off the wall as if in protest. There is nothing spiritual or healing about the kulukutz. The door is heavy and they bolt it as though you are a dangerous beast that no one should see. During the day fluorescent light flickers and dulls your vision. You feel colour draining from your face. The walls are impenetrable. The room oppresses you with frustration. There is a feeling of interminable doom about it. It is hellishly lonely in there. And the blankets and mattresses always stink of urine and crawl with fleas.

(2001:23).

The ineffectiveness of such methods employed by these institutions is further criticised when Zebron notes that before “they mend you, they have to break you” (2001:23). Further demonstrative of this is the fact that Zebron himself has been in and out of the hospital for a total of ten years and that he feels “more broken now than when [he] first came in” (2001:23). The methods are never questioned by those working for Valkenberg as Zebron tells readers that his lack of progress is never met with an inward consideration on their part. He laments that “they never stop and question if their methods are effective” (2001:24). Rather, they “punish [him] by making [him] stay longer or increasing the medication” (2001:24). In so

doing, Zebron believes that “doctors and psychologists and silly people who think they’re doing [their patients] a favour can congratulate themselves tirelessly, their deeds religious instalments for the next paradise” (2001:53). This might also be read as Duiker’s critique of the over-reliance of drugs on the part of such institutions, ‘doping’ patients as it were, into submission, rather than healing them in a more holistic manner.

Of final importance here, is the effect that Tshepo’s stay at Valkenberg begins to have on his person. Rather than feeling as if he is part of a shared community amongst fellow sufferers, Tshepo finds himself surrounded by patients who “look like they are just getting by, like people who have given up living” (2001:19). He describes his fellow patients as carrying “depression and solitude with them, wherever they go,” and admits that he has begun to feel “imprisoned by their lack of hospitality and their lousy company” (2001:19). He notes that it is difficult to escape the “hypnotizing smell” of the institute, a smell that permeates and keeps the patients “in a perpetual limbo, drifting through the days like exiled zombies” (2001:54). The patients at the hospital are constantly found to be provoking each other, while their actions become “amplified under the psychologist’s gaze” (2001:26). At night, Tshepo finds himself attacking Zebron, whereupon another patient beats him in turn. The staff members at the hospital are not privy to these night-time instances of violence as the patients are sure to settle down and “go to sleep before the night nurse on duty hears” (2001:25). It is while “bleeding in the dark” that Tshepo senses he is “losing control” of himself (2001:25). He tells himself that he is “supposed to be getting better” at Valkenberg, that he is “going to get through this,” but his attempts at self-reassurance fail (2001:25). It is with some sense of irony, then, that Tshepo regards a “chart about mental health” posted on the wall at the institution (2001:28). Among the characteristics that it lists are “[h]onesty, self-respect and trust” as being the “most important qualities of sound mental health” (2001:28). Rather than representing a space that encourages and fosters these qualities, however, Tshepo finds it “perfectly reasonable to be mistrustful of people” in his ward (2001:28). He resolves to break out of the institution before it “destroys what’s left of [his] sanity” (2001:55). This is again contrary to the expectations of the reader and arguably society at large as it is in mental institutions that we trust patients will be healed and have their sanity returned to them, rather than taken away.

While his friend, Mmabatho, is disapproving of his decision to escape, Tshepo narrates that she does not “know the madness of tolerating a stay in an institution” (2001:62). He is emphatic that it “can kill you” and “maim your outlook on life,” making “you a stranger even to yourself” (2001:62). Such he feels is the “nightmare of being found by darkness, demons

and things that lurk in places we think are safe” (2001:62). However, although Tshepo escapes Valkenberg, it is not long in the text before he has another psychotic episode and is returned to Valkenberg. This time, even his friend Mmabatho bears witness to the manner in which the place has taken its effect upon him. She notes that there “is something different about him, a detached regard that wasn’t there before” (2001:133). When a fellow patient walks up to them, Tshepo tells him to “piss off and nearly pushes him” (2001:133). Shocked by his newfound aggression, she admits that she has “never seen him like that” (2001:133). Noticing her alarm, Tshepo’s excuse is that a place like Valkenberg “can change a person” (2001:103). In fact, he finds that as he is losing a sense of himself this second time, he is becoming more and more like the dark character of Zebron. He walks around place with Zebron, the two of them “like predators, stealthy cats waiting for the chance to be freed” (2001:138). He describes how, sometimes, “after [the staff] hand out tobacco, [he] harass[es] the more psychotic ones and steal[s] their share, only to bargain it for food or chewing gum” (2001:138). Thus, the place of Valkenberg is shown to be a ‘dog eat dog’ world, with no genuine sense of community. Instead, a hierarchy is formed wherein those patients who are less psychotic prey on the weaker, more vulnerable ones.

Tshepo tells readers that the place is “eating” him, “its decay pervasive” (2001:138). Once again, he resolves that he “must leave, before the worst happens,” before he finds out “what the worst version” of himself is (2001:138). Ultimately, what it has come down to in Valkenberg, is a matter of brutal survival. It is a survival that Tshepo feels demands that he must “give up [his] centre” and “surrender [his] identity because that is what you have to do survive this place” (2001:138). When he goes to sleep at night, he tries desperately to regain his former sense of self, to “remember what it is like to be [himself]” (2001:138). Instead he finds that he cannot “remember clearly” as he is “becoming something else” (2001:138). This second time in Valkenberg he begins to suspect that he is “becoming the paranoid schizophrenic they initially told [him] [he] was,” another one of “the monsters they fear [the patients] are” (2001: 141). Thus, rather than an institute where Tshepo is able to heal and recover, he begins to slowly lose all sense of himself while inside the institution. Also, in direct opposition to the alienation that Tshepo is subjected to at Valkenberg, it is during his episodes of ‘madness’ that he experiences a “synchronicity” with the world around him with “a frightening intensity” (2001:38). It is in these moments that he tells Mmabatho “everything” makes “sense” and “everyone” seems to be “communicating” with him (2001:38). Mmabatho’s response is that such feelings constitute the state of being “delusional” (2001:38). However, Tshepo feels that “madness” may be a “way of seeing the

divine in our small lives,” a means of recognising that “the one who made the sun out of a piece of fluff is nearer than we think, more playful than we imagine” (2001:60). As such, he resolves that he must “decode the logic of [his] own madness” as he believes that “[l]ife is telling [him] something” and that he intends to listen to it, whatever the message may be (2001:91). Thus, he concludes that he “must let real madness heal [him]” (2001:103). It is interesting, then, that the novel arguably introduces the space of insanity as a potentially healing one in direct opposition to the clinical and dehumanising effects of the space of Valkenberg. As the narrative takes a turn for the truly hallucinatory towards the end, just prior to Tshepo’s relocation to the more hopeful space of Hillbrow in Johannesburg, it does seem to suggest a reconsideration of the oppositional terms of ‘madness’ and ‘sanity’.

3.3 The Quiet Inhospitability of Cape Town

Outside of Valkenberg, Tshepo’s experiences of living in Cape Town are similarly damaging. Tshepo perpetually finds himself living with housemates who are either devoid of empathy, or outright violent and abusive. After he has left the institution, he attempts to return to his previous abode, only to be informed that his housemates have decided he can no longer stay there. The intimation is that since he is mentally unstable, he is not wanted there. Once again, this is a demonstration of how those who are not seen to fit are ostracised and alienated in the city. Later in the narrative, after his second stay at Valkenberg, he finds himself taking up residency with Chris, a former Pollsmoor prison inmate. While the two initially seem to strike up a friendship, Chris soon turns on Tshepo. Envious of the privilege that education and a clipped ‘more European’ accent has afforded Tshepo, he begins to spread rumours around their mutual workplace. Eventually Tshepo loses his position as a waiter because of this. Chris also routinely beats Tshepo and ultimately subjects Tshepo to gang-rape at the hands of himself and two of his friends. Finally, Tshepo moves in with the dubious character of Jacques. Tshepo begins to find signs that Jacques is perpetually rifling through his personal items. He lays traps for Jacques by sprinkling coarse salt on the floor of his bedroom, searching the salt afterwards for footprints. All the while, when the two are together, they remain “polite, grinning at each other superficially” (2001: 309). This does not last long, however, and soon the two become openly hostile towards each other. Towards the end of the narrative, Tshepo remarks that he is “tired of living with arseholes,” adding that he seems to “have a knack for picking them” (2001:414). He further suspects that he “may even be

turning into one [him]self” (2001:414). However, Tshepo’s strained living situations may signify more than simply a ‘knack’ for choosing poor housemates. It arguably represents yet another arena in which the city of Cape Town has failed to provide Tshepo with a sense of hospitality and belonging.

Briefly, Tshepo seeks out this sense of belonging at Steamy Windows where he takes up a position as a masseuse and later, male prostitute. He is told that those who work at Steamy Windows are part of a brotherhood inspired by the pre-Raphaelites. Pre-Raphaelite prints adorn the rooms and hallway of the building as a reminder of this. After the last clients have been received, members of this so-called brotherhood often sleep together in the available rooms. Sometimes this also involves sex, or at least some kind of sexual exchange. However, Tshepo begins to doubt the validity of this brotherhood when the owner of Steamy Windows accidentally makes a racial remark and uses the word “kaffir” (2001: 285). As the owner is a married man who does not provide any other services than a massage, Tshepo initially consoles himself that Shaun is not in fact a true member of the brotherhood. Yet, it is pointed out to Tshepo later by another ‘black stallion’ at Steamy Windows that the “whole brotherhood thing is a clever gimmick [...] convenient because it works” (2001: 346). Ultimately, he reminds Tshepo that he is “still black” and that “[t]hat is how they see [him]” (2001: 347). It is also problematic as the model of a pre-Raphaelite brotherhood is gleaned from the western world once again demonstrating the aversion that Cape Town holds towards that which is African.

Furthermore, the so-called brotherhood is shown to be flawed in the emphasis it places upon superficial appearances. Tshepo learns this quickly when he arrives at work with a leather bag he has bought from a market stall. One of the men remarks that it is “quite nice for a flea market knock-off.” Tshepo notes that the men are “all like that, very conscious of labels and brands” (2001: 269). In general, Tshepo describes the gay men he encounters as being “slaves to labels,” influenced largely by “[i]nsignificant, vacuous things that are not the measure of a person’s worth” (2001: 417). Readers similarly begin to take notice of the ways in which Tshepo himself initially comes to place a great deal value more on the superficial. The most striking manner in which he first achieves this is in changing his name to ‘Angelo’ for the purposes of Steamy Windows. He takes his inspiration from the artist, Michelangelo, and problematically, from a model of Western culture, thus rejecting his more African identity as Tshepo. Hereafter, he uses his friend, Mmabatho’s, dye to bleach his hair a copper colour. It is also after Tshepo’s initiation as Angelo into the supposed fraternity of Steamy Windows that his narrative routinely describes his outfits in detail whereas before they did

not. An example of this occurs when Tshepo visits a “posh bar in Green Point’s gay district called New Yorkers.” Tshepo feels confident in his “blue cotton shirt with loose fitting Levi black jeans and black shoes.” There is the addition of a designer “Diesel bag [...] strapped over [his] shoulder” and his hair is “properly manicured and dyed in [the] copper colour that brings out [his] dark eyes” (2001: 342). Therefore, the insinuation is that to be gay in Cape Town and accepted, a certain style (and arguably a thoroughly European style) must be adopted.

However, for all that Tshepo has adopted a certain lifestyle and mode of dressing, his race still remains a hindrance and he is unable to find full acceptance within the gay community of Cape Town. In the scene at New Yorkers bar described above, Tshepo may be dressed appropriately. Yet it is not long before he is mistreated on the basis of the colour of his skin. To begin with, the barmen appear to be in no rush to serve him. When a barman finally does address Tshepo, it is in a “bland voice” (2001: 342). Hereafter, he takes the money from Tshepo, barely making eye contact, and does not return with the change. Tshepo leaves the matter for the time being and continues to drink his beer. When it is finished and he would like another one, he notes that they “both seem to ignore [him]” as he “watch[es] them serving two white guys who have just come in” (2001: 342). When he finally calls one of the barmen over and informs him that he is still waiting for his change, the barman calls the other one over, saying that he cannot understand Tshepo’s accent. Tshepo is told by the next barman that he cannot simply open the till “for no reason” and that if there is “trouble” he will have to call “security” to come and sort it out (2001: 343). It is at this point that Tshepo realises, aside from the “young black boy wearing an apron [...] and clear[ing] empty bottles from tables,” he is “the only person of colour” in the establishment (2001: 343). Tshepo subsequently describes this moment as a “rude awakening,” having shattered the notion of a gay fraternity that he had invested in (2001: 343). Instead, he finds himself reminded that he is “black” and that he “will always be black” (2001: 343). He laments to readers that

Cape Town never ceases to remind us who we are. When we leave the sanctuary of our Utopia at work we become pigments in a whirlpool of colour. In the centre is lily white. On the edges of the whirlpool the other colours gather like froth and dregs.
(2001: 343-4)

Tshepo begins to question the brotherhood itself once again, wondering why he and Cole “are the only black faces,” and asking why there are no coloured or Indian faces at Steamy

Windows. He begins to realise the degree to which he has been exoticised and othered in his depiction at Steamy Windows as one of their “stallions” (2001: 344). As Marius Crous notes, there is “a false sense of brotherhood and acceptance, but tolerance is merely based on one’s exoticism” (2007:34). In his analysis of Duiker’s novel, Tshepo emerges as an “exotic sexual object” and “as such is considered an economic asset by the management” (2007:34). Furthermore, as Crous writes, Tshepo “draws the conclusion that within the gay subculture it is usually the affluent black men who are able to participate” (2007:34). Tshepo looks back at his experiences in gay bars in Cape Town, realising that the black people he has encountered in these places are not like “the ones [he] would meet in the township or in a squatter camp.” They have been granted access to these bars only because they “were dressed in a certain way and spoke with a certain accent, sophisticated, with manners that everyone probably found charming, endearing.” It is these things that have made them “acceptable” to this particular Capetonian society (2001: 344). While he thought that he would have found a sense of commonality in such individuals he finds that it “has only left me with deeper questions about myself, this thing black men” (2001:331). In them, he had expected to “find comfort” and perhaps “guidance” (2001: 331). Instead, he admits that he has only been met with “schizophrenic dancing queens by night who are rigid grey suits by day,” living “secretive” lives (2001:331). Furthermore, the space of the gay subculture in Cape Town and at Steamy Windows may be read as a problematically misogynistic one. Even in the representation of the cross-dressing character of Sebastian, Dobrota Pucherova notes that the women he emulates only serve as “icons, and not participants in his ideal dispensation” (2007:938). Pucherova also advances that such “discourses, that view the redefinition of masculinity as the primary means of national reconstruction have, in the South African context, the unmistakable ring of Black Consciousness discourse, which similarly celebrated women but did not accord them equality” (2007:938). Cheryl Stobie likewise posits that being “part of a mythopoetic brotherhood enables men to tame feminized qualities through incorporation” (2005:84). She argues that that “the fear of the ‘taint’ of femininity may be particularly pronounced for a gay male subject, and this makes the necessity of asserting masculine values of virility more imperative” (2005:84). Regardless of his misgivings, however, Tshepo continues to work at Steamy Windows and ultimately begins to lose himself further in the process. The most marked example of his identity crisis is by way of his split narrative. At times, Tshepo begins to write as Angelo and switches back and forth between his two identities. As Shane Graham argues, “Tshepo’s feelings of uprootedness and alienation result in an identity crisis, emblemized in the changes to his name” (2009:1220). This is perhaps

indicative of the fact that his blackness and his gayness are not combatable, that the two are at odds with one another as Tshepo cannot be a truly hybrid subject but must instead become a schizophrenic one. Towards the end of the narrative, he loses the distinction between the two and writes as ‘Angelo-Tshepo’ perhaps indicating an even further loss of self. It is only at the very end of the novel, upon his relocation to Johannesburg and more specifically, Hillbrow, that the narrative returns to simply ‘Tshepo’ alone.

Furthermore, it is as Angelo (and as a commodified sex object) that Tshepo is welcomed into the affluent society of Cape Town. In one scene, during an ‘overnight’ stay with a client, Tshepo (as Angelo) finds himself in “a chic nouvelle cuisine restaurant in Camps Bay” where the “décor is black and white” and “the patrons smile with impeccable white teeth, their manner artificial, pretentious” (2001:370). When the meals arrive, Tshepo notes that the portions are “fashionably small but highly decorative” in the European tradition (2001:370). Meanwhile, the crowd surrounding the table talk “about things [Tshepo] cannot relate to, like jet set, obscure artists in vogue whose work sells for millions, English milords, continental aristocrats, yachting, models, stars, penthouses and tax exiles in Mediterranean havens” (2001:370). To emphasise the superficiality of this banter, Tshepo notes further that “their conversations” are “always fleeting” (2001:370). He is also aware of the way in which they are “difficult with waiters as a matter of course, to the point of being childish” (2001:370). When the dinner is over, Tshepo returns to the home of his client, situated as it is in the well-to-do neighbourhood of Llandudno. They “go up a long secluded driveway before [they] arrive at a mansion” (2001:371). Tshepo is somewhat overwhelmed and admires its “unusual European façade” (2001:371). Noticing Tshepo’s awe, his client informs him that the mansion is in “Monaco’s neo belle époque style” (2001:371). When they get to the entrance, the pair is met by a “white butler with a haughty look” (2001:371). Inside, a “chandelier hangs above the billiard table with a red cloth covering it” (2001:371). As such, the spaces that Tshepo is permitted entrance to may be seen as spaces of opulence demonstrative of the influence that so-called ‘First World’ aesthetics hold over Cape Town. However, what is important is that he is only permitted temporary access to such spaces. It is only within his profession as a sex worker that his company is entertained and hospitality extended.

3.4 Spaces of Consumerist Culture and Western Hegemony in Duiker’s Representation of Cape Town

As Cheryl Stobie writes, the setting in Duiker's novel may be "seen in terms of privilege and poverty, but the trendy centre consists of brand-conscious consumer culture" (2005:78). Tshepo notes early on in the novel that in Cape Town, when you go out, "no one really cares that you're black and that your mother sent you to a private school so that you could speak well," or "that you're white and that your father abuses his colleagues at work and calls them kaffirs at home" (2001:34). In Tshepo's opinion, the people of Cape Town "only care that you can dance and that you look good" (2001:34). It is important to be seen wearing "Soviet jeans with an expensive Gucci shirt" or "Diesel jeans with a retro shirt and Nike tackies" (2001:34). According to him, the people of Cape Town "want to see how creatively you can fuse mall shopping with flea market crawling and still remain stylish" (2001:34). Ultimately then, the youth of Tshepo's generation are expected to "aspire to the universality of CK One" and to absorb as much consumerist culture as they can until "all you can see on the dance floor are people packaged in a way that brings fire to your loins" (2001:35). With this emphasis on consumerist culture, Cape Town "aspires to be the next best thing," a "New York, London or Paris" (2001:35). There is of course an aspect to this that Tshepo feels is liberatory. He remarks that in a club, "a person will chat you up because you know what drum & bass is and can dance to it while appearing sexy, not because you match the same race group like some arbitrary prerequisite" (2001:34). He feels instead that this new culture is one that encourages individuals "to be hybrid and past gender and racial lines" (2001:35). Shane Graham similarly advances that, in Tshepo's estimation, "race has been supplanted by class and consumer status symbols as the principal mode of social differentiation" (2009:124). The character of Mmabatho likewise describes how she "came to Cape Town so that [she] could run away from the whole race thing" (2001:33). However, as I have discussed above, Tshepo finds that ultimately he cannot escape the issue of his race in Cape Town. For all that he begins to wear the 'right' clothes, designer perfumes and hairstyle, he nonetheless still experiences racism within what he initially perceives as an accommodating gay community in Cape Town. Michael Titlestad likewise suggests that many of the characters within the novel, Tshepo and Mmabatho included, "come to recognise the tenacity of the history and categories they believe they can slough off" (2001:2012). There is a profound superficiality to be found in this emphasis on consumerist culture, and it could be argued that Duiker's novel critiques this as a kind of hypocrisy that conceals issues of race lying beneath the surface rather than confronting such prejudices. Thus, for all it would pretend to be a truly cosmopolitan space, free from racism or gendered constrictions, the

experiences of the various protagonists within the novel ultimately prove that this post-apartheid city remains fraught with divisive prejudices.

The character of Mmabatho is of particular usefulness here. When readers first encounter Mmabatho, she is clearly a character who places a great deal of importance upon appearances. When she visits Tshepo at Valkenberg, he is intrigued by the new “stubborn platinum blond colour” that she has dyed her hair and the “purple nail varnish” on her fingers (2001:33). Her attire is further captivating to Tshepo as she wears “Adidas tackies” with “red laces” and “army fatigue pants with a dark top” (2001:33). He tells readers that he does not “know what look she’s going for but [that] it makes her interesting to look at” (2001:33). Her choice of Adidas sneakers is further noteworthy. It demonstrates that designer labels are of significance to her. Readers encounter this again later when she accompanies Tshepo to a local flea market as he is in search of a leather backpack. She openly expresses her mistrust of the wares that the African immigrants at the market have for sale, believing them to be cheap and as such, poor goods. Thus, she can be seen as highly selective about where and what she buys. Furthermore, Tshepo sees Mmabatho’s sense of fashion as an intrinsic part of her. He finds that he is “always awed at how different she seems to appear by just playing with her clothes” and that he can generally “divine her mood [...] just from the way she’s dressed” (2001:56). He notes that her clothes act as something of a “second skin” and that they are “so much a part of her that it’s impossible for [him] to imagine her naked” (2001:56). Instead, he finds the “truth” about what she would look like underneath her clothes “unsettling,” like “seeing an ostrich but with all its feathers plucked” (2001:56). This may also be seen as indicative of the fact that Mmabatho is a drama student and as such, she is adept at using clothing as a means of ‘playing’ different characters as it were.

However, she is clearly aware of the importance of dressing a certain way in Cape Town as can be seen in her admiration of the French hostess of a Mexican restaurant in Observatory that she frequents. The restaurant is described as a “small, intimate Mexican” place “where the waiters know most of the clients by name” (2001:64). This points not only to the intimacy of the place but to the degree of exclusivity as well. The hostess, Madame Spiers, is depicted as “an oldish charming Frenchwoman who conceals her age behind skilful make-up” (2001:64). Mmabatho admires Madame Spiers as “a lady, of the type of European breeding from a forgotten era, polite and with the sort of manners that make anyone feel welcome, comfortable” (2001:66). She also notes that the French hostess is a woman who “likes the nicer things in life and surrounds herself with amicable people” (2001:66). Watching Madame Spiers at work, Mmabatho even begins to wonder what kind of person she might

have turned out to be had she had a female role model such as her growing up. She wonders if perhaps then she would have been more amicable with other women, more liked by other women. As such, Mmabatho may be seen as admiring what she perceives in Madame Spiers as a kind of worldliness, finding her westernised characteristics appealing and attractive.

A significant shift occurs in Mmabatho, however, when her deceased grandmother appears to her in a nightmare. In her dream, she hears a “scratching sound coming from behind [her] in the kitchen” (2001:309). A shadow appears, “clutching something in its hand” (2001:309). They sit on the couch together, the shadow who is in fact her grandmother, eating a piece of bread while “gnats and midges fly around [them]” (2001:309). When she holds the paraffin lamp to her grandmother’s scalp, she sees that she is “almost completely bald” and has “several ring worms,” some of them “oozing a clear liquid” (2001:309). When she asks her grandmother what has happened to her hair, her grandmother responds that she had “wanted to do something nice” with it (2001:309). Instead, her hair has all fallen out. Her grandmother then says that she has returned so as to tell Mmabatho something important. She informs Mmabatho that she must “stop using those chemicals” in her own hair (2001:310). Mmabatho protests that she does not put chemicals in her hair. However, when she runs to the bathroom to inspect her hair, she finds that it has been “straightened and curled” (2001:310). “So this is what you’re doing with God’s garden?” her grandmother demands as she looks upon Mmabatho’s head (2001:310). She asks her further, “What is wrong with kaffir hair?” She wants to know if Mmabatho is “ashamed” of the hair that she has been naturally given in life (2001:310). Mmabatho is relieved when she wakes from her nightmare to discover that it “was only a dream” because her “hair is not straight” (2001:311). This moment might be read as an instance in the novel where Mmabatho is forced to confront the ways in which she has been influenced by a western hegemonic order and by the consumer culture it manufactures. As she is pregnant, she has similarly begun to question the kind of legacy that she will one day pass on to her child and as such, the warnings of her deceased grandmother as she appears in her dream arguably infer that she needs to embrace that side of herself that is black and African.

3.5 The Noisy Hospitality of Hillbrow

Returning to the protagonist of Tshepo and his search for an alternative identity, it is only in his relocation to Johannesburg that he begins to reclaim a sense of self, that he begins to imagine another life for himself. He imagines that in Johannesburg, he might “finally pursue

[his] dream of being an artist” (2001: 418). When he thinks upon his life in Cape Town, he admits that he has “had to be well behaved, to toe the line a bit to make ends meet in Cape Town” (2001: 418). In spite of this, Tshepo feels that even he has “looked [his] best and spoken in [his] best private school accent, [he has] confronted the harshest, the crudest prejudice from whites” (2001: 418). He notes that when he and his friend, Mmabatho, speak of Johannesburg and their experiences growing up there, they seem only able to speak in Sotho. However, when they speak about Cape Town, they immediately find themselves talking in English. This is a phenomenon that occurs in his opinion because Cape Town is itself “very white,” a place where “the influence of European traditions like coffee shops and bistros is inescapable” (2001: 420). Ultimately, Tshepo believes that Cape Town “looks too much to the West for inspiration when there is enough inspiration in Africa” (2001: 420). It does not seem coincidental that Tshepo’s third psychotic episode in the narrative results in a sense of homelessness for him in the city of Cape Town. He finds himself simply “moving” with no idea of where it is that he is going, feeling “lost” and unable to recall where it is that he lives (2001: 426). He further loses his sense of orientation as he becomes surrounded by “too many roads, too many turns, too many forks” (2001: 426). Meg Samuelson writes that as “he strolls across the nightmarish divisions that continue to scar urban geography, Tshepo rejects narrowly defined racial identities in favour of identification with Africa, and beyond,” thus signalling that the novel’s “final call is for a world beyond borders” (2007:255). She suggests further that such “movements through the city, and the multiple transgressive selves these movements produce, testify to the passing of the temporal boundary as the borders segregating the apartheid city are erased by the footsteps” of our narrator (2007:255). Lost and disorientated, it is Tshepo’s initial instinct to catch the first available train to Khayelitsha. So doing, he arguably undertakes a journey into the underbelly of Cape Town, the place where the otherwise disenfranchised and poverty-stricken are forced to reside.

The next day, Tshepo purchases a Greyhound ticket to Johannesburg. He does not “feel nostalgic about leaving Cape Town,” telling readers that it is a place where “[s]ome people have eaten [his] dreams” (2001: 447). Once he has arrived in Johannesburg, the narrative returns to being Tshepo’s alone. We are told that he “left Angelo behind in Cape Town, still roaming the streets and exploring the underworld” (2001: 452). The implication here is that the Tshepo of Cape Town was so very alienated as to being forced to operate in secret, in camouflage. When Tshepo attends a party in Johannesburg, he notes that even though it “reminds him a little of Cape Town [...] the people are different, the mixture is better” (2001: 452). Thus already, Tshepo finds that Johannesburg is a far more integrated city than Cape

Town. In this regard, Samuelson argues that both the novels of Mpe and Duiker “display a persistent preoccupation with confronting and combating xenophobia directed at Africans from across the border who have taken up residence in South African cities” (2007:252). He takes up residence in “Hillbrow with all its decay” and finds a job at a children’s home (2001: 452). It is in this space that Tshepo seems to find for himself a sense of home, a place where he does not feel so objectified or judged. While the pay is not very much, the job affords him free accommodation and meals, giving him a “small room in the back” in which to stay (2001: 452). He also gets on well with the owner of the children’s home because she does not “treat [him] like a child” (2001: 453). These are important moments in the text for Tshepo. His choice to stay in Hillbrow and to work at a children’s home demonstrate that he has left the superficial life he led in Cape Town behind him. They mark a sense a departure too from the problematic aspirations to be more ‘First World’ that had ultimately affected him. Furthermore, to work in a children’ home is to have a job with meaning, to perform a task that adds to the greater good of the community. This is in stark contrast with the work that he had performed at Steamy Windows in Cape Town, a job which ultimately entailed the commodification of sex.

The fact that the owner of the children’s home treats Tshepo as an equal and an adult is similarly important. While in Cape Town, Tshepo had often found himself belittled, with others thinking him naïve. Similarly, at the institution of Valkenberg, Tshepo had found his autonomy and sense of agency taken away as they had notably treated their patients as children. This newfound respect that Tshepo experiences is also indicative of the changed man that he has become. Working in the children’s home, Tshepo must learn to act as an example for the children. They call him “uncle” and must learn to “respond to [him] appropriately” (2001: 453). It is Tshepo who must teach them “what a responsible adult is like and how you speak to him” (2001: 453). Tshepo’s task is also to instil a sense of order and structure into the lives of children who have never known them before. The rules that Tshepo enforces are what “hold the home together” and “prevent [them] from getting sloppy with each other,” thereby creating a sense of harmony (2001: 453). Tshepo himself must live by the rules and where he used to smoke marijuana in Cape Town, he now believes that “[g]anja has led too many down the wrong path” (2001: 453). While the children may arrive with “defiance” in their eyes, Tshepo tells readers that all it requires is patience before “they start loosening up” (2001: 453). At times, Tshepo even finds that he is rewarded by an “awkward, strangely beautiful” smile that is “better than all the apologies and niceties put together” (2001: 453). This suggests that his experience of Johannesburg is also marked by a

sense of hope and redemption in his providing an example of reliability for the children at the home. Not only then is the service that Tshepo provides at the home beneficial for the community, it is also indicative of a significant shift that has occurred in his life. Where he had lacked a sense of home and belonging in Cape Town, it is now his job in Johannesburg to create a sense of home and belonging for others. Ironically then, it is this decayed and inner-city 'slum' of Hillbrow that offers Tshepo this newfound sense of home and belonging in providing it for those who are otherwise abandoned and marginalised in the urban environment.

Readers find that where Cape Town had 'eaten' Tshepo's dreams, Johannesburg is replenishing them. He tells readers that he "believe[s] in children," that he "believe[s] in people, in humankind, in personhood" (2001: 454). Where he had begun to lose faith in humanity before, he now begins to find it restored. Hereafter, where he had been alienated and abused by housemates in Cape Town, he now "feel[s] at home" with the African immigrants in his neighbourhood "because they are trying to find a home in our country" (2001: 454). As Tshepo himself has experienced both racism and homophobia in Cape Town, he is able to readily identify with these African immigrants. To Tshepo, these "foreign guests" are "so fragile, so cultured and beautiful" (2001: 454). "In their eyes," Tshepo reiterates that he "feel[s] at home" because he is able to "see Africa" (2001: 454). Where Cape Town had ascribed to Western ways of being, Tshepo now tells readers

I feel like I live in Africa when I walk out in the street and hear dark-skinned beauties rapping in Lingla or Congo or a French patois that I don't understand (2001: 454)

He remarks that while he was "suffocated in Cape Town," Johannesburg has "given [him] space, time to think" (2001: 455). Samuelson similarly notes that it is in this relocation that Tshepo "finds belonging (a home) in Africa by welcoming (offering hospitality to) the foreign languages he encounters on the streets" (2007:252). In so doing, she posits that both Duiker and Mpe "encourage us to think also of those who continue to inhabit the cracks even in this post-apartheid present: the immigrants who have crossed the national border into South African cities and the homeless and destitute figures – those who have no borders marking their domestic presence in public space" (2007:255). Such fictions might be seen then to detail the "ways in which class and xenophobia, along with gender and generation, are emerging as newly divisive regimes in post-apartheid city-space" (Samuelson 2007:255). In conclusion, Samuelson argues that while "the images of Duiker's characters strolling across

physical and social boundaries may suggest the liberatory potential of and within cities, their appalling experiences of abuse remind us of the realities of city-space today” (2007:255). As Tom Penfold suggests, “[d]iscrimination and exclusion on the grounds of gender, sexuality, class, race and nationality continue and render the nation a free society in name only,” instead signifying a country that is in fact “inaccessibly open” (2012:1006). Contrary to readers’ expectations, it is ultimately in inner-city Johannesburg that Tshepo finds a sense of what it means to live and feel at home in an African city.

Dobrota Pucherova further advances that the “foreign other becomes the site of Tshepo’s new African identity, articulated in the language of hospitality, desire, and being-through-another” (2009:938). Pucherova argues that the “idea of hospitality – accepting another within me – is central to the novel’s discourse of individual freedom, and instances of hospitality always figure as moments of transcendence” (2007:939). Such an “idea of limitless hospitality” is, in Pucherova’s view, “politically and ethically radical in implying that the bounds of state and citizenship do not fully contain our infinite obligations to each other, and is thus unsettling to Western notions of selfhood as autonomous separation from other people” (2007:939). Pucherova posits hereafter that such “hospitality means that the other is not absorbed by the self (as in the case of immigration practices that require integration into a host society), but is allowed to remain ‘other’” (2007:939). It is significant here that the “foreigners speak languages Tshepo does not understand” (2007:939) but that he finds beautiful all the same. As Pucherova concludes, in “such pessimistic times,” Duiker’s novel seeks “a political direction for post-apartheid society in the private encounters of love, hospitality and friendship” (2007:943). The “political position” that emerges then “from these affective impulses is radical cosmopolitanism – a limitless openness to difference” like the “Epicurean *philoxenia* or love of strangers” (Pucherova 2007:943). As Leela Ghandi summarises, the Greek term of *philoxenia* amounts to “a love of for guests, strangers, foreigners” and as such acts in direct opposition to xenophobic impulses (2003:18). Duiker’s novel may also be seen to present a cosmopolitanism that “interrogates Western hegemony” (Pucherova 2007:943). Shane Graham suggests that the “if Duiker sees any promise in the new South Africa, it lies not in the political transition and the embrace of neoliberal capitalism – the book repeatedly rails against corruption and opportunism of the new government – but in the shifting and opening up of spaces so that people can reclaim a space for their own communities and work together to form new provisional, nonexclusionary identities” (2009:127). Cheryl Stobie advances that the “ethos that the novelist establishes amounts to an ideal of inclusiveness, and the abolition of stereotypes and bigotry” (2005:80).

She posits hereafter that in “terms of race, the novel is at pains to affirm blackness over white normativity, as well as to censure narrow ethnicity or xenophobia” (2005:82). The implication here is that Cape Town prescribes to a western urban model and as such, cannot be considered be a truly African city but rather, as noted in the introduction, presents itself as a ‘Little Europe’, an ‘inaccessibly open space’ as Penfold would describe it.

The form of the novel is further noteworthy as it is entirely polyvocal in its inclusion of narrative perspectives that, as Cheryl Stobie has recognised, gives “voice to a range of different characters, of different races, ethnicity, sexuality and gender” (2005:80). As such, the structure of his narrative emphasises the degree of inclusivity that his overall message arguably wishes to articulate. Furthermore, Stobie advances that his use of “altered states of consciousness, myth, and the metaphysical subverts the conventions of traditional, linear, rational discourse” (2005:80). In so doing, the text might also be seen as resisting a westernised and hegemonic structure, employing as it does a “spiritual realism” which Stobie distinguishes as a term for “African authors’ combination of the visionary and the realistic form” not unlike the South American counterpart of magical realism (2005:78).

It is in Johannesburg that Tshepo finally begins to set into motion his dream of one day being an artist. He purchases an easel and while he does not yet paint, he “stands it in the middle of the room” (2001: 454). At times, he narrates, “I walk around it,” “stand near it,” and “lie underneath it” (2001: 454). He is not despondent that he has not yet used it as he is “waiting [...] absorbing, remembering, deciphering” (2001: 454). We are told that he is “making love with all the images that lie fecund in [his] mind, waiting to be released into life” (2001: 454). In this way, Tshepo has begun “[q]uietly [...] nurturing [his] talents” (2001: 454). Thus Johannesburg has finally provided Tshepo with the artistic inspiration he had otherwise found wanting in Cape Town. Towards the end of the novel, Tshepo admits that he finally “feel[s] close to whom [he] is supposed to be, the person behind the smile” (2001: 456). This person is a “dancer, a painter,” someone who must “create and delight” (2001: 457). Tshepo now knows that his “greatest treasures” lie “within [him]” (2001: 457). The Tshepo that readers encounter in Johannesburg is thus a far cry than the Tshepo of Cape Town that had lost his sense of self and purpose. It is in Johannesburg, and specifically Hillbrow, that Tshepo is able to reclaim his sense of self, to begin to define himself as the man he wants to be.

3. 6 The Chimeric Potentiality of New Urban Subjectivities in Johannesburg

I suggest therefore that various spaces are able to influence the movements and development of the characters who inhabit those spaces. While Tshepo had regressed into almost a schizophrenic state in Cape Town, he is able to come to better terms with his identity as a black, gay male in Johannesburg. He is able to redefine himself as a caretaker at a children's home and a potential artist. In Cape Town, he had often been unable to escape either his gayness or blackness as his sole defining characteristics. In Johannesburg however, he is arguably able to embrace a more fluidised sense of self and identity. Similarly, I argue that the characters of Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* operate along more fluidised lines. Beyond this, the text itself comes to represent a more fluidised space in its representation of the equally hybrid and mutated space of Johannesburg.

Turning to Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* then, as I have argued in Chapter Two, Zinzi's style of detection does not steer the 'elementary' course of Holmes' tradition. She has no recourse to the Cartesian model in which earlier detective literary figures have been able to apply a rationalist logic in pursuit of illumination. Instead, Zinzi must follow the string-like pull of lost things as they take her deeper and deeper into the labyrinth. Unlike the mythical Theseus, however, the threads guiding her investigation cannot help her in an eventual escape from the labyrinth. Rather, they form a tangle that is, in fact, the labyrinth itself and from which there can be no escape. In another twist on the Greek myth, I suggest that the legend of Theseus corresponds with Beukes' narrative when Zinzi's labyrinth similarly leads her to a mutated centre. Yet, where Theseus triumphs by killing the mutant Minotaur, Zinzi can only triumph if she embraces the chimeric dimensions of mutation.

According to the *Collin's Dictionary*, in Greek mythology, the chimera is a monstrous fire-breathing creature figured with a serpent's tail, goat's body and the head of a lion. This definition can also be expanded to refer to any "fabulous beast" comprising a range of different animal body parts. Furthermore, in biological terms, it is often used (particularly in the context of cultivated plants) for an organism that contains at least two genetically different kinds of tissue via grafting or mutation methods. Thus, in creating a fictional world filled with aposymbiots (individuals who are ultimately part human and part animal), Lauren Beukes lends her characters a chimeric dimension. The characters who are aposymbiots cannot survive without their animal familiars. Also, the animal familiars are able to feel their hosts' physical pain and emotions. In this way, the animal familiars can be read as intrinsic to their hosts' being and sense of self. While these aposymbiots are ostracised and othered in the novel by those without animal familiars, they are often better equipped to deal with the demands of city living. Their animalled status provides them not only with an animal familiar

but with an inherent power as well. Thus, the text may be seen to suggest a certain empowerment that comes with mutation, with embracing the chimeric potentialities of the urban environment.

Furthermore, the character of Zinzi particularly is a highly adaptable individual. In part, this is somewhat in keeping with her character's representation as a *noir* protagonist as it allows her to remain evasive at times. However, it also denotes a fluidity of identity inspired by her equally fluidised urban environment. When she dresses in a "vintage navy dress with a white collar, match[ing] it up with jeans and slops, and finish[ing] it off with a lime green scarf," she describes her attire as "Grace Kelly does Sailor Moon." She blames her wardrobe on her current economic status, noting that her past self was a more "outrageously expensive indie boutique kinda girl" (2010: 2). This indicates the degree to which Zinzi has adapted as her circumstances change, and the degree to which she uses clothing as a kind of costume. This is reiterated again later when she pretends to be a refugee and dons a "white shift [...] with clunky beads and a *shweshwe* headwrap," adding the "perfect refugee touch" with a "red-, blue-and-white-checked rattan carrier" (2010: 34). Thus Zinzi is clearly able to explore with a wide range of different styles and traditions, blending them as she pleases. When she is later preparing to further her investigations at a bar, Zinzi remarks that "slipping back into Former Life is as easy as pulling on a dress," with "[f]ashion [being] only different skins for different flavours of you" (2010: 123). Again, this emphasises the highly adaptive nature of her character. It is also indicative of the fact that it is the space of Johannesburg that provides Zinzi with the conditions to explore these fluid dimensions of her character. Just as Tshepo discovers of Hillbrow in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, so Zinzi's Johannesburg proves to be a city that is able to accommodate difference, to allow its inhabitants to blend in to its diverse mix.

Zinzi is not the only character who demonstrates this kind of adaptability. When Zinzi first investigates the home of the missing twin, Songweza, she finds traces of her person in the second bathroom. From the "punky black bottle" of perfume called "Lithium," the extensive amount of eyeliner and mascara, and the eyeshadow in "jewel colours," Zinzi assumes that Songweza is a "Gothpunk Princess Barbie" (2010: 97). However, when she opens up Songweza's cupboard, she discovers an "array of pretty preppy clothing," "[w]hite sundresses and Afro-chic numbers by Sun Goddess and Darkie and Stoned Cherrie." While these outfits might be "[p]erfect for a hip teen kwaito queen," they are hardly what Zinzi would expect of a "Gothpunk Princess Barbie" (2010: 99). When Zinzi finally finds Songweza, she further discovers that her estimation of the teen pop star was wrong. She is not

in fact a “Gothpunk princess,” but rather a “nu ’80s indie mod rocker” which entails a “[m]ore colourful wardrobe” with the “same amount of eyeliner” (2010: 218). This way, Songweza can be seen to be living something of a double life, presenting a certain image of herself to the media while expressing herself otherwise when she is out of the limelight. Also, the compound nouns gain significance in these moments, demonstrating the extent to which identities have been fluidised in the text. The terms ‘Gothpunk’ and ‘Princess Barbie’ for example, would usually be two terms completely at odds with one another. However, for the sake of the text, they are seamlessly drawn together to form one description. It also suggests the way in which fashion and subculture is arguably used in cities such as Johannesburg as a means of expressing one’s self in a post-apartheid society outside of the confines of racial categorisation.

3.7 Genre Mutation for a Mutated Johannesburg

The city of Johannesburg itself is also presented as a mutated entity, borrowing from all different cultures and blending an array of influences to make for a heady amalgamation. Beukes herself has stated that “Joburg represents the future” in so much as it can be seen as a “mad city with an extraordinary mash of cultures and economics” (2010: n.p.). When Zinzi is at the Biko Bar, she watches “an all-girl Afrikaans/seSotho glam punk electro-rock number called the ‘Nesting Mares’” perform (2010: 129). Later, when she visits Odi Huron’s nightclub, Counter Rev, she describes it as “twenties decadence meets electro glam [...] Great Gatsby by way of Lady Gaga, in shades of white and silver” (2010: 193). The Johannesburg of Beukes’ imagining is “all about the cheap knock-off” (2010: 7). It is an ever-changing, ever-adapting urban environment. As such, it might be read as a loosened terrain. As Franck and Stevens argue then, “[t]he indeterminacy of loose space [...] opens the space to other possibilities.” Furthermore, “[f]reedom” becomes not only a “prerequisite” but a “consequence” of loose space as well as people are “able to pursue possibilities of their choice” (2007: 17). To live then in such a hybridised and multicultural city arguably demands of its urban actors a certain fluidity of identity.

Equally pertinent to this presentation of the city as a chimeric amalgamation is the novel’s form and use of genre itself. As I have discussed in Chapter Two, the novel draws extensively on the genre of *noir* fiction. As has also been noted in Chapter One, the novel employs magical realism in its creation of a familiar and contemporary Johannesburg setting peopled with aposymbiots. As the winner of the Arthur C. Clarke Award, the novel likewise aligns

itself with science fiction and speculative writing. *SFX Magazine* summed it up when it reviewed the novel and called it an “imaginative fusion of sci-fi, fantasy and noir thriller.” In the interview that follows the Jacana Bonsella edition of *Zoo City*, Beukes declares her admiration for those authors “who skip across genres [...] who play where they want to play,” unconfined by any one particular style of writing (2010: n.p.).

The novel’s use of intertextual elements is further indicative of this playful fusion. Beukes admits to being inspired by Alan Moore, the highly-acclaimed writer of graphic novels such as *The Watchmen*. This adds yet another generic element to her novel, that of the graphic novel or comic book. Another element is that Beukes did not write all of these intertextual elements herself. Sam Wilson contributed in the form of the prison interviews that feature in the novel, while Charlie Human authored the psychological paper on the nature of aposymbiots. To add to these, readers also find the text peppered with internet extracts, emails, newspaper clippings, and a music review featuring Odi Huron. Finally, the text itself was released with its very own soundtrack, potentially allowing for readers to have an aural urban experience of Johannesburg city as well.

3.8 Conclusion

The chapter has considered the urban spaces of Cape Town in relation to those of Johannesburg, particularly the inner-city area of Hillbrow. It has provided an analysis that posits Cape Town as a potentially damaging and fraught space, still rigidly divided along lines of class and race. I have suggested further that, as a tourist capital of South Africa, the city of Cape Town has sought to define itself as a supposedly cosmopolitan city but a decidedly ‘unAfrican’ city. As such, the characters that live within the urban spaces of this overtly westernised city struggle with their senses of identity. This is most notable in the character of Tshepo who so desperately longs to be loved, to be included, to carve out a space that he can call ‘home’. However, in every attempt, he is met with urban enclaves that are either exclusive or thoroughly inhospitable in their make-up. It is because of this that he eventually resolves to relocate and return to the city of Johannesburg from whence he initially came.

Thus, the city of Johannesburg emerges in both texts as that space that allows for adaptability and hybridity. In that particular urban space, the characters are able to enjoy a sense of comfortable duality. For Tshepo, he finds himself beyond the xenophobic, homophobic and racial practices of Cape Town, in a Hillbrow where he is finally able to

redefine himself as the artist he always wished he could be. He is also able to fulfil the role of both a maternal and a paternal figure for the children under his care at the shelter in Hillbrow. In this way, he is able to provide the empathetic and hospitable space that was denied him in Cape Town, most notably in the rigid and constrained mental institution of Valkenberg. For the characters of *Zoo City*, they similarly find a space in Hillbrow where they are able to come to terms with their mutations, with the state of being half animal and half human essentially. As the city itself begins to play host to such diversity, the differences that mark the characters become no more than quirks and nuances. In this way, both Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* and K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* offer representations of a South African city space in Johannesburg that potentially might provide readers with a new understanding of what a more fluidised and mutated African city might indeed look like.

4. Conclusion

The primary concern of this dissertation has been to question the ways in which we perceive of our post-apartheid South African urban spaces. I have suggested, drawing on such critics as Jennifer Robinson and Garth Myers in my introduction, that we, as an African country, still pander to the notions of supposed and so-called ‘First World’ modernity and developmentalism. As such, we continue to scar the urban landscape with damaging neo-apartheid infrastructures that only continue the legacy of classist and racial segregation. Gated communities and suburban enclaves are set up in opposition to those urban spaces that are seen as ‘slums’. Furthermore, inhumane gentrification projects act as just another means to push those whom society has deemed abhorrent to the margins of the city. I suggest that literary works such as Phaswane Mpe’s *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, K.Sello Duiker’s *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, Nadine Gordimer’s “Once Upon a Time” and Lauren Beukes’ *Zoo City* provide a different lens with which to reinterpret our contemporary urban spaces. All of the selected texts draw attention to the prevalence of racial and classist divisions persistent in our society today. Furthermore, the novels of Mpe, Duiker and Beukes make a powerful statement in their individual attempts to re-imagine the Johannesburg inner-city area of Hillbrow. In so doing, they arguably rescue the space from its current position in the South African imaginary as a denigrated community. Instead, I posit that their respective re-imaginings offer readers deeper insight into such communities, potentially creating a sense of shared humanity and emphasising notions of inclusivity and hospitality.

To begin with, I consider the re-imaginings of Hillbrow in the works of Mpe and Beukes. I argue that Hillbrow is an urban space that has been abjectified and come to be viewed as abhorrent. The danger herein is that those who live within the area are similarly other-ed and forced into positions of marginality within society at large. This impetus can be found particularly in South Africa’s shocking instances of xenophobia. I posit that Lauren Beukes employs magical realism so as to create a phantasmagoric urban space of Hillbrow in its re-imagining as *Zoo City*. Magical realism, as a genre, often writes from the position of the Other and the marginalised. So doing, her use of magical realism forces the reader to confront the processes involved in the making of Other, and destabilises the terms by which we as a society demarcate otherness. Instead of denigrating the space of Hillbrow her novel celebrates the sense of chaos, the diversity and difference that abounds in such an urban space. Mpe’s novel similarly challenges processes of othering, particularly in relation to

xenophobia and the taboos and stigmatization surrounding the disease of AIDS. His novel employs an omniscient narrator that speaks, as it were, from the perspective of heaven. As such, the narrator offers a vision of shared commonality locating the space of Hillbrow within a larger, global network, thus suggesting that we are all part-and-parcel of a far greater human community. In this way, his novel may be seen to dismantle the categorical separation between self and Other. It similarly re-envisages Hillbrow as an ordinary space, a space that is comprised of everyday people who are simply attempting to survive in their daily lives. The repeated use of the pronoun 'our' in such phrases as 'Welcome to Our Hillbrow' also emphasises a sense of culpability on the part of the reader in redressing the processes of abjection that manifest in other-ed spaces and subjectivities as in the case of inner-city Hillbrow. I ultimately argue that both novels act as a call to reconsider Hillbrow as a significantly human space.

Hereafter, I consider the subversion of the *noir* genre in the case of Beukes' *Zoo City* and of the fairytale in Nadine Gordimer's short story, "Once Upon a Time." The truly dystopic nightmare generally found within the urbanscape of the *noir* genre is not to be found in the space of Hillbrow in Beukes' novel, but rather in the space of the gated community. In so doing, Beukes arguably thwarts readers' expectations while simultaneously interrogating those spaces we believe to be 'safer' and more 'First World'. Similarly, Gordimer presents the space of the suburban enclave as a damaging and paranoid one. Her story begins after the couple of the fairytale is already enjoying their supposed dream of 'happily ever after', living as they do in marital bliss with a little boy and the necessary serfs that work to maintain their proverbial kingdom. However, the lengths that it takes to maintain the sanctity of their kingdom are soon shown to be problematic as the little boy of Gordimer's story becomes viciously ensnared in the wiring they have installed to secure their home. As such, her story reads not only as a warning of the kinds of segregated spaces that we erect in our cities, but also of the kinds of stories that we tell ourselves, the narratives that only further reinstate practices of exclusion and othering. In direct opposition to these potentially sinister and tightly regulated spaces, Beukes' novel re-imagines the space of Hillbrow as one full of the potentialities for truly integrated and diversified urban living. In so doing, these works act collectively to interrogate the hierarchical terms of the suburban enclave vs. the 'ghetto'. They suggest that such spaces require a radical rethinking if we are to foster a hospitable and democratic nation.

Finally I turn to the representation of Cape Town in Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* in relation to his own re-imagining of Johannesburg as well as that of Beukes' novel.

The Cape Town of Duiker's novel is presented as an entirely inhospitable and unaccommodating space, fraught with racial, gender and classist prejudice. As such, its characters, particularly the protagonist of Tshepo, are seen to suffer with their respective senses of identity as they seek to find a community in which to belong, a place to feel at home. It is only upon Tshepo's relocation to the inner-city area of Hillbrow in Johannesburg that he is able to find a place that he can call home, a place that truly welcomes him in its accommodation of difference and diversity. Similarly, I argue that the spaces of Johannesburg as they are re-imagined in Beukes' novel offer her characters the opportunity to embrace more fluidised and hybridised identities. I posit further that their mutual experimentation of genre is important to their literary efforts and the issues that are addressed within the narratives. In the case of *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, the polyvocal nature of Duiker's novel suggests an ethics of inclusivity attempting as it does to give voice to a number of characters across racial, class and gender lines. Furthermore, its use of the genre of African spiritualism (or in broader terms, a kind of magical realism) seems to make a case for the break from more westernised narratives in communicating the experience of living in African cities. Likewise, Beukes' *Zoo City* draws on elements of science fiction, *noir*, magical realism and the graphic novel in creating a mutated genre that speaks to the current reality of our multicultural and mutated cities such as the city of Johannesburg. In this comparison between the textual spaces of Cape Town and Johannesburg (and specifically Hillbrow), I ultimately posit that while the former may seek to be an 'antidote' to Africa (and as such an alienating space for many of its inhabitants), the latter represents a dynamic and diversified 'afropolis' signifying the future of what our African cities might aspire to be.

In closing, I hope with this dissertation to make the case for the radical re-imagining of those urban spaces that have been otherwise marginalised and denigrated in the current South African imaginary. I argue that such re-imaginings are imperative if we are to foster integrated and diversified cities that celebrate and welcome difference. As such, the texts that I consider here may be seen as increasingly relevant to our society as they challenge and destabilise the hierarchical terms within which we so often view our so-called African 'slums' and 'ghettoes'. Instead, we might come to glean something from them as they represent spaces of dynamic potentialities. So doing, South African cities might be able to redraw and reconfigure themselves in ways that do not necessarily ascribe to western models of modernity. Thus we might one day be able to find in the South African present a truly post-apartheid society.

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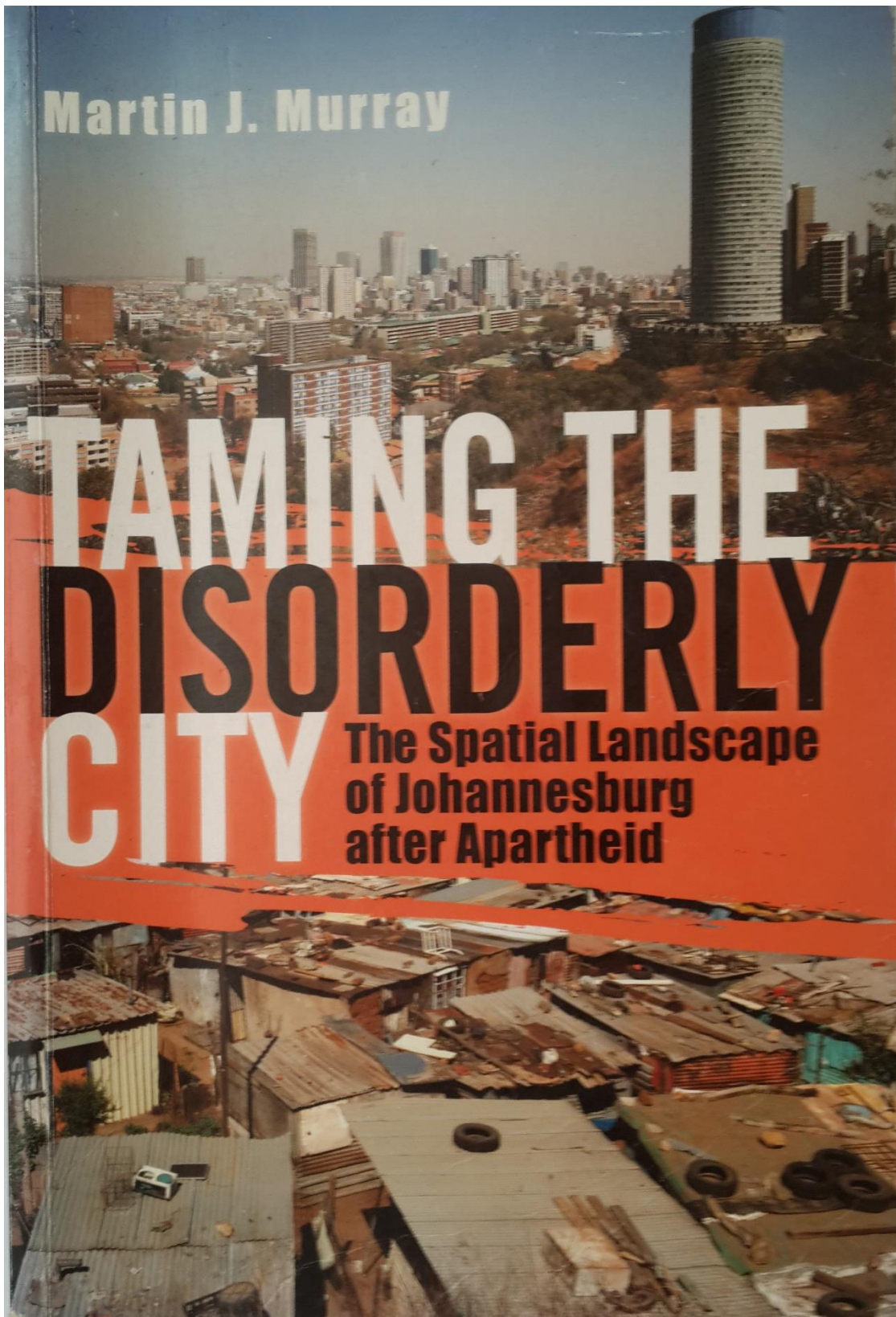
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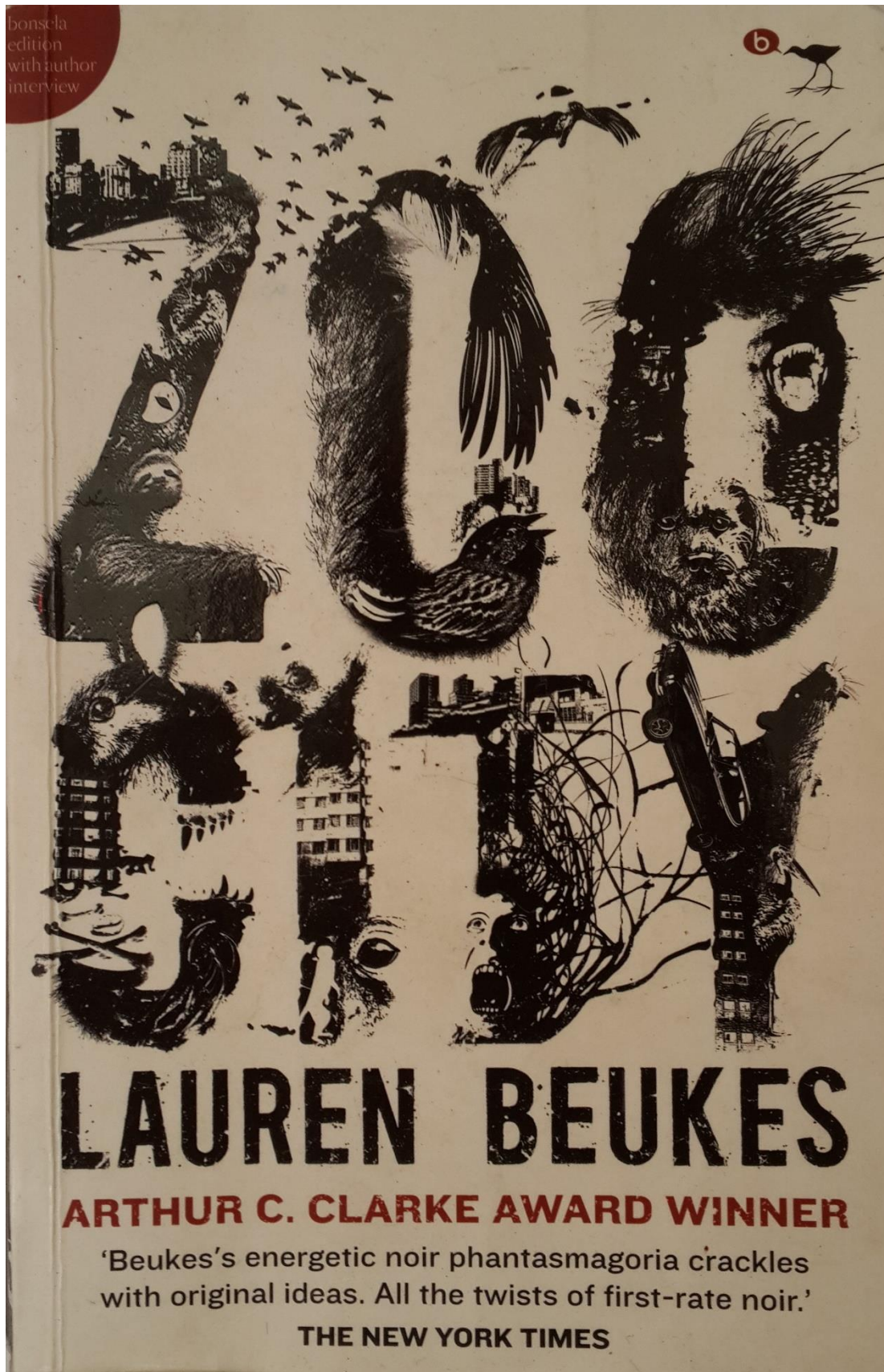
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6. Addendums:

Addendum A





LAUREN BEUKES

ARTHUR C. CLARKE AWARD WINNER

'Beukes's energetic noir phantasmagoria crackles with original ideas. All the twists of first-rate noir.'

THE NEW YORK TIMES

