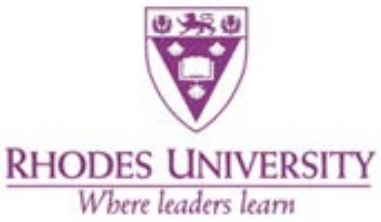
JOURNEYING HOME, EXILE AND TRANSNATIONALISM IN NONI JABAVU AND SISONKE MSIMANG'S MEMOIRS

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of the degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

at



by

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February 2020

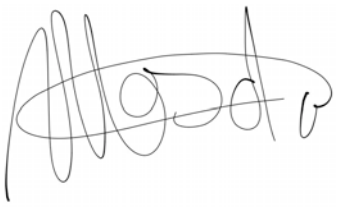
ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the memoirs of two South Africa female writers: Noni Jabavu and Sisonke Msimang. In analysing their memoirs, this thesis sets out to contribute to the scholarship which centres the voices of Black women writers. It explores how both writers interrogate the concepts of home, exile and transnationalism. My focus is on the ways in which the writers theorise questions of belonging, and the extent to which their writing provides the opportunity to give voice to the complex nature of belonging. I read the narratives from these two writers alongside each other, as Noni Jabavu is Sisonke Msimang's literary ancestor. By looking at their works alongside each other, this thesis becomes an intergenerational conversation between the past and the present. Using Black feminist thought and migratory subjectivity, this thesis examines the ways in which these writers connect the personal and the political. Noni and Sisonke navigate the private spaces of home in conversation with the political experience of exile and the nation. In the second chapter, I explore home as ekhaya, isizwe and an imaginary homeland. Ekhaya is the isiXhosa word denoting the family home, where there is a network of family rather than a nuclear family. Home is also isizwe: the isiXhosa word which evokes the nation state, which takes on layered meanings in the context of colonialism and apartheid. Home can also be an imaginary homeland, which is an imagined version of home after a long absence such as exile. In the third chapter, I examine three forms of exile: internal exile, estrangement and political exile. Finally, in chapter four, I analyse transnationalism: a border-crossing which raises questions of power, mobility and kinship. Looking at home, exile and transnationalism together allows for an exploration which challenges taken-for-granted ideas about place and identity. These memoirs illuminate the ways in which Black women constitute and reconstitute their identities according to the places which they access through travel.

CONTENTS

DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

***Most people have a problem with the idea that black women write.* – Lauretta Ngcobo[1]**

This thesis focuses on the life writing of two South African writers – Noni Jabavu and Sisonke Msimang[2] – whose lives and writing explore the tensions of home, exile and transnationalism from a personal and political perspective. At a political level, these writers are concerned about their place in the nation as well as the making and unmaking of a nation – South Africa – which in turn relates to questions of belonging and unbelonging. In this study, I will argue that home is not one place, but rather, for these two authors, it has mutiple meanings which are negotiaited through gender and class. Furthermore, the idea of home is complicated by borders and ideas of nationalism and belonging, which both Noni and Sisonke experience and write about. I also argue that exile has the ability to take on many meanings, and while I look at political exile, I also explore exile as a form of estrangement in the context of colonialism and apartheid South Africa. Finally, I argue that for both writers, their transnational lives offer questions about notions of freedom. This chapter will place the writers within the context of Black women's writing (particularly life writing) in South Africa.

Nontando Helen Jabavu published her first book *Drawn in Colour: African Contrasts* in 1960, and *The Ochre People: Scenes from a South African Life* in 1963. Almost fifty years later, in 2017, Sisonke Msimang published *Always Another Country: a memoir of exile and home*. This thesis examines their memoirs, which depict their travels across various countries and how they constitute their identities in their place of sojourn. Both writers are preoccupied with home as an idea and space which gives meaning. By placing their texts into convesation, it allows for an intergenerational dialogue between two Black female writers. I see Noni as the literary ancestor to the Black women's tradition of life writing in South Africa. Without

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1 Daymond, M. J. (1992) Some thoughts on South Africa: Interview with Lauretta Ngcobo. *Current Writing*: *Text and Reception in Southern Africa*, 4(1): 85-97

2 The academic convention has been to use the surnames of writers when referring to them. In order to reclaim Noni's identity, which is often erased or subsumed into her father and grandfather's identities (as this study will show) I will use her first name when referring to her. As a way of distinguishing these writers from the burden of the patriarchs in their families, it makes sense to use their first names, which they chose to be known by publically: Noni and Sisonke.

an appreciation of Noni's legacy, writers like Sisonke seem exceptional and lack a contextual understanding if they are positioned outside of this tradition. I read Sisonke as Noni's symbolic grand-daughter. Bhekizizwe Peterson describes this kind of textual reading which connects the past, present and future as trans-generational, because it considers the "transmission of a number of recurring tropes across generations" (Peterson 2019, p. 2). Both Noni and Sisonke write about their location(s) and subjectivity in the various spaces and places they journey through. Noni's ideas represent the past which continues in the present, contemporary cultural imagination and is reflected in Sisonke's writing. Therefore, the 'recurring tropes' in Noni and Sisonke's memoirs focus on their experiences and negotiation of class privilege while navigating racial politics in South Africa.

At the core of all the memoirs is memory and memory work. Memory plays a central role in the very nature of memoirs. The way in which Toni Morrison writes about memory in her novel *Beloved* is useful here, as remembering becomes a re-membering: putting back together disparate parts in order to make sense of oneself – "She gather me, man. The pieces I am, she gather them and give them back to me in all the right order" (Morrison 1987, p. 273). Therefore, it is useful to think of memoir as re-membering; as bringing back all the parts of memory together. Re-membering as a feminist practice also harks back to an isiXhosa practice of ukuzilanda, "to fetch oneself and connect oneself to the past in the present moment", which is often done through clan names and telling stories (Masola, 2018). I use this concept extensively in this thesis, and will elablrate on it later. Memory work is at the core of the making of South Africa's historiography and cultural production. Life narratives are at the core of this act of re-membering, because they coexist with forgetting (Gqola 2010). In her writing about slave memory and the making of the 'new South Africa', Pumla Gqola points out the connection between historiography and memory, and in reading Noni together with Sisonke, I highlight the association between the past and the present and the ways in which Black women contribute to how South Africa has been made and remade. While memory is about re-membering, it is contested because it is about history, which is fraught with contestations about truth and whose truth matters. Gqola extends Morrison's idea of re-membering, which evokes the wordplay on re-memory, memorying "where events and knowledge are 'memoried', 'memoryed','remembered' and 're-memoried'" (Gqola 2010, p. 8). Gqola continues by saying that:

> Morrison's word range implies a much wider field than simply collection, recollection and recalling and is itself a commentary on the (dis)junctures between memory and history, working as it does not only against forgetting but also what I call 'unremembering'. Whereas both forgetting and unremembering are inscribed by power hierarchies, unremembering is a calculated act of exclusion and erasure… This filling in, recasting, relooking, reformulating (both of memory and history) outside historiography is Toni Morrison's rememory. (Gqola 2010, p. 8)

Both Noni and Sisonke are engaged in memory work – the act of committing memory to writing – which is a reconstruction of their past lives. Although it is impossible to recreate everything as they experienced it in the past, writing becomes a way of resisting the exclusion and erasure of their experiences. In writing about their experiences, Noni and Sisonke are refusing unremembering. Sisonke is particularly concerned about the connection between memory and truth as she adds a disclaimer in her memoir:

> This book is a memoir… Some events have been compressed and of course the dialogue I quote as verbatim could not possibly have transpired exactly as I have committed it to the page. Still, I have done my best to ensure this book represents the truth as I know it. (Msimang 2017)

This disclaimer is about memory and the contested nature of memory where the truth is concerned. Sisonke's disclaimer is also pointing to the complexity of life narratives where the narrating self recreates a narrative as opposed to being a truthteller. Es'kia Mphahlele and Chabani Mangayi refer to this as the metaphor of the self, because the narrator in a sense says "here is my life story and yet at the same time it's a metaphor rather than absolute fact" (Mphahlele in Coullie et al. 2006, p. 244).

Before I contextualise their texts, it is important to introduce Noni and Sisonke in order to locate their biographical information within their work. Noni was born into a family that was part of the burgeoning African elite of the 19th century (Chapman 2003). Her father was Professor Davidson Don Tengo (DDT) Jabavu, an influential academic at Fort Hare University (Chapman 2003); her mother, Florence Thandiswa Jabavu (neé Makiwane), was part of the welfare movement in the then Cape Colony and had studied music in Birmingham (Great Britain) in 1915 and 1922 (Daymond et al. 2003); her paternal grandfather, John Tengo Jabavu, was the editor of *Isigidimi Sama-Xosa* during the 1800s and was a pioneer who established the first newspaper by owned by an African, *Imvo Zabantsundu*, in 1888 (Shepard 1955); her maternal grandfather, Reverand Elijah Makiwane, was one of the first Theology students at Lovedale College and had a short spell as the assisting editor of *Isigidimi Sama-*

Xosa (Shepard 1955). He also became influential in the Lovedale school leadership in the late 1800s, which sought to learn from the missionaries in order to establish more education opportunities at the time (Davis 1979). Noni's aunt, Cecelia Makiwane, was the first Black nurse in South Africa in 1908[3] and Daisy Makiwane Majombozi was the first Black woman to pass the Cape school higher examination (passing exceptionally well in Mathematics) and wrote for *Imvo Zabantsundu* during the 1880s (Daymond et al. 2003). Noni left South Africa at 13 years old to complete the rest of her education at Mount School in York, Great Britain (Xaba 2006). This move was facilitated by her father's friend, General Jan Smuts (Prime Minister of South Africa 1919-24 and 1939-48), whom she fondly refers to as 'Oom Jan' (Uncle Jan) in her *Daily Dispatch columns* (Jabavu, 1977). She left South Africa not because of exile – as her contemporaries such as Peter Abrahams and Es'kia Mphahlele – but like both her parents, to further her education by studying abroad[4].

Noni returned home for visits throughout her education, but remained in England during World War II, where she worked as an engineer during the war effort. While in England, Noni married more than once and had a child, Tembi, with her first husband[5]. In 1951 she married Michael Cadbury Crosfield[6] (Xaba 2006). She later worked as an editor for a literary magazine *The New Strand* in 1961, and wrote for a variety of newspapers throughout her life. She also worked as a writer and a presenter at the British Broadcasting Commission (Unkown 1955)[7], which further highlights her contribution as a public figure to London's public discourse. In the acknowledgements in her first book, Noni refers to friends who encouraged her to write her book – "Mr Robert Graves… The Baroness Ravensdale... The Hon. Anthony Grigg… The Countess of Clarendon… Sir John Murray" (Jabavu 1960, p. xi). The list offers clues about Noni's colonial subjectivity as someone who has access to a social network in London, which positions her as both privileged and a colonial subject who has infiltrated this social network.

Makhosazana Xaba's work *Jabavu's Journey* (2006) is the most extensive research about

[3] www.sahistory.org.za/people/cecelia-makiwane (Accessed 19 January 2017.)

[4] It is also important to note how her father's political connections are used to pass Noni from her own family into the new family that would look after her in England: Margaret Clarke, who was a friend of Smuts.

[5] According to Xaba's thesis in 2006, which I have used for this biographical information, she had not found the names of the first two husbands.

[6] According to *Ebony* magazine (April 1962) "A member of the wealthy Crosfield family of chocolate, tea and newspaper fame".

[7] According to an article in *Drum* Magazine which is not attributed to an author.

Noni's movement across countries. At the time of publication of Xaba's work, Noni was still alive; she died in 2008. Xaba offers a chronology of Noni's life which shows the various countries she lived in, as well as the reasons for some of her movement across the world. In 1955, Noni had to return to South Africa for her brother's funeral, Tengo Jabavu who had been shot in Johannesburg, where he had been completing his studies in medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand. After her brother's death, she moved to Uganda with her husband, Michael Cadbury Crosfield, to be closer to her sister, Alexandra Nothemba Jabavu-Mulira, after her divorce. She reflects on this experience in her first book *Drawn in Colour.* The publication of her first book introduces Noni into the global literary community as she launches in the United States and has a book tour, and it is translated into Italian, *Il colore della pelle,* in 1961. I have found book reviews of her books written in French, Italian and by a writer in Uganda, which gives a sense of the global reach of her writing. She worked briefly at *The New Strand,* but left in 1962, she then moved to Jamaica in 1967. It was while she lived in Jamaica that her second book was published. Between 1967 and 1976 she lived in Kenya.

In 1976 she returned to South Africa in order to conduct research about her father for his biography, which she was working on. She began writing for the newspaper the *Daily Dispatch* in January 1977. In these columns, she wrote candidly about her life in Kenya, where she had been living since 1967. It is not clear when she divorced Cadbury Crossfield, but in her columns she writes about a lover she is not married to in Kenya. During 1977 she lives between the Transkei, Ciskei, South Africa and Kenya. It is important to make a distinction between living in the homelands, as this informs much of her movements, as well as what she wrote in 1977. Because South Africa was no longer part of the British Commonwealth after it became a republic, Noni's British citizenship caused a bureaucratic problem for her, she became a foreigner in the country where she was born (Jabavu 1982). After living in Kenya, she moved to Zimbabwe (then still Rhodesia) and back to the England during Zimbabwe's political transition.

It is during this time back in England that she had a conversation with historian Brian Willan[8] about the publication of *The Ochre People* in South Africa with Ravan Press. In 1982, she published *The Ochre People* in South Africa and wrote poignantly about the significance thereof in the preface of the publication. Between 1981 and 2002, she lived in Zimbabwe and

[8] Sol Plaatjes's biographer who is based in the UK.

met Virginia Phiri, who helped her return to South Africa. She lived in a frail care centre in East London until her death, where she was buried in Middledrift, the home she had left as a young girl of thirteen. Noni's movements during her lifetime bring into question the extent to which she can even be characterised as a Black British writer, as she did not stay in England after her divorce from Crossfield (Xaba 2006). This raises many questions when trying to 'place' her life and her work historically: is she a South African writer? Is she a British writer? Is she a universal writer? This is not unusual as writers such as Leila Aboulela, Aminatta Forna, Hannah Pool, Dorothy Koomson, Diane Evans, Helen Oyeyemi and Nadifa Mohamed face similar questions as writers of African descent living in the United Kingdom.

Unlike Noni, the literary ancestor of Sisonke, the literary granddaughter's contemporary life is easier to piece together. Sisonke was born in Zambia, while her parents were in exile, and she spent her childhood and adolescent years in Zambia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Canada. After 1994, she chose to pursue her tertiary education in the United States of America, at Macalester College. In 1996, after her degree, she returned to South Africa and began working for AusAid. After a career as a gender activist, Sisonke began her writing career by contributing columns for an online blog, *Daily Maverick,* in 2013. She entered the public sphere alongside other black women who have taken to online political writing through various websites such as the *Mail and Guardian Thought Leader* and *Africa is a country,* including Nomalanga Mkhize, Siphokazi Magadla, Zamantungwa Khumalo and Kagure Mugo, to mention a few.

As a writer for the *Daily Maverick,* Sisonke became a thought leader who wrote political commentary. She has also had her writing published in international publications such as *The New York Times, Al Jazeera* and *The Guardian.* The blurb on her book describes her thus: "Sisonke Msimang writes non-fiction, essays and political commentary. She divides her time between South Africa and Australia". As a non-fiction writer (particularly life writing and essays), Sisonke joins a chorus of young, black women using life writing as a way to write themselves into the new South Africa, such as Bonnie Mbuli, Pamela Nomvete, Malebo Sephodi, Kelly Khumalo and Zoleka Mandela, to name a few. Her writing is largely concerned with race relations in South Africa, the failures of the African National Congress (ANC), as well as the gender intersection. Her links with the ANC are particularly significant, given that her father was a freedom fighter for the ANC. The blurb about her book captures the importance thereof, and of her current position in South Africa:

> She reflects candidly on present-day South Africa, but this is a book about family, romance and motherhood; of childhood jealousies and adult passions, and what it means to be born into a life scored by history. Her memoir is a chronicle of a coming of age, for both a woman and a young democracy.

Sisonke's position as a thought leader places her and her book in an interesting position as someone who is visible and considered a significant voice articulating the problems with the not-so-new South Africa. She is not in the academy and is therefore more accessible to young readers and those who are looking for political analysis. She appears on television, various public platforms and radio interviews, which are looking at issues of gender and race relations in South Africa. Her TED talks are about stories and narratives related to her class privilege in South Africa. Her public persona (and presence on social media) makes her a unique writer as someone who has special links to both the current and past political elite. In her memoir, she writes about her relationship with Lindiwe Mabuza (Gogo Lindi), who was a diplomat on behalf of the ANC in exile and post-1994. Her close proximity to the political elite lends itself to a specialness she embodies as someone who has been estranged from her home and is yearning for it, especially when the dream of democracy begins to fall apart. Both Noni and Sisonke's writing careers are chequered by their elite education, class position, proximity to political circles and ability to travel and live across borders. For this thesis, I will focus primarily on Noni and Sisonke's life writing as opposed to their journalistic essays.

Colonial education and the making of the educated, Black woman

In this section, I will explore the historical context which influenced the emergence of Black women writers in South Africa. It is impossible to write about Black women's writing without making a direct link to apartheid and colonial history. The establishment of formal education – based on Western ideals of what constitutes education – in Africa was a result of colonialism, which in effect introduced European ideas about writing and literature as "Literacy was central to colonisation and inseparable from the various Christian missionary enterprises" (Daymond et al. 2003, p. 2). This is not to suggest that education and literacy did not exist in Africa before colonialism, an example being oral forms of knowledge that were passed down from generation to generation. Africa is a vast continent with an extensive history, different forms of literacy and a range of literatures. For example, it is important to note that in the northern regions of the continent, the influence of Islam and Muslim scholarship meant that a different culture of literacy was established before European colonial influence.

Nonetheless, in Southern Africa, it was with the arrival of the printing press in the 1800s that educated, Christianised, African men emerged as writers of religious texts to enable the Christian missionary conversion of Africans. Later, with the introduction of newspapers, there was an alternative to the religious texts. These processes highlight the "fraught history of intellectual life in South Africa" (Mokoena 2011, p. 2). In Hlonipha Mokoena's exploration of Magema Fuze's work – Fuze being one of the early intellectuals in Natal in the 1800s – she explains at length:

> The history of writing as a vocation in South Africa is as complicated as the history of the country itself. There are simply no neutral terms by which to designate the literary, political and historical writing produced in South Africa over the last three centuries… South Africa's culture of letters cannot be divorced from the history of conquest, subjugation, exclusion and marginalisation. For African literates of the nineteenth century, the confluence of the forces of evangelical activity, modernity and literacy meant that when a writer did become aware of this conflicted condition it became an occasion for questioning not only the implications of literacy, but also the extent to which literates understood the changes that had taken place in their society of origins. (Mokoena 2011, p. 2)

Mokoena's explortion of Magema Fuze highlights the fraught nature of the introduction of writing in the region, as it converged with "conquest, subjugation, exclusion and marginalisation", even though there were moments of subversion in the form of literary texts which were produced by the newly literate Africans. The violent process of colonisation was central to the establishment of publishing by Black writers. The prominent writers were mostly men from the mid-1800s until the 1970s in South Africa. While there were women writing at the same time, especially in newspapers in the late 1800s (Daisy Makiwane began working at *Imvo Zabantsundu* after 1888) and early 1900s, such as Adelaide Tantsi and Ellen Pumla Ngozwana, most of their writing has not been preserved in the same way as male writing. This speaks to the erasure of women's intellectual work, which I will elaborate on later.

The process of African modernity raises questions about how Africans engaged with the introduction of religious texts and the use of newspapers as a form of resistence. Ntongela Masilela's extensive work on African Modernity focuses on what he has termed the "New African Movement (NAM)". The NAM builds on the intellectual histories of the Black Atlantic as "the Africans learned from African Americans the process of transforming themselves into agencies in or of modernity" (Masilela 1996, p. 90). His work shows the conversations happening across borders amongst prominent Black writers and journalists in

the 19th and 20th century, which is crucial for understanding the intellectual history in South Africa. Black people moving and crossing borders in the early 20th century became part of the Black internationalism which can be traced to various historical moments such as slavery and the trade connections between the Arabs and Africans. In the thesis "States of Nomadism, Conditions of Diaspora: Studies in writing between South Africa and the United States, 1913-1936", Roger Phillipe Courau writes about the importance of movement across borders as being an integral part of Black life in the diaspora (Courau 2008). Khwezi Mkhize also does the same in his work "Empire Unbound - Imperial Citizenship, Race and Diaspora in the Making of South Africa", which looks at the ways in which DDT Jabavu was part of diasporic networks which influenced the intellectual culture amongst the educated elite. Masilela (rightly or wrongly) attributes the theorising of African modernities to a small group of writers in the 1920s, which includes writers such as R.V. Selope Thema, H.I.E. Dhlomo, Solomon Plaatje, H. Selby Msimang, Allan Kirkland Soga, amongst others (Masilela 1996). It is glaring that none of the writers in this list are women, even though there has been sufficient evidence of women contributing to the political discourse during this early period, which marks the beginning of an intellectual community built through the reading and writing cultures established through the process of colonisation. Examples of these women include Adelaide Tantsi Dube, Nokuthela Dube, Charlotte Maxeke, Nontsizi Mgqwetho, Florence Jabavu and Ellen Pumla Ngozwana, to name a few.

When writing about the role of colonialism in formal education and the development of literacy, it is helpful to become even more specific in order to consider the education of Black women. In the early nineteenth century, "it is fair to to say that the education of European children was at the expense of Africans and other non-whites, including Indians in Natal, with its dependence on Indian immigration" (Daymond et al. 2003, p. 14). This approach to education also had implications for gender, as it became clear that colonial authorities provided different access to education based on Victorian gender values (Healy-Clancy 2013). Before apartheid's Bantu Education, the formal education Black women had access to was through missionary institutions which "prepared girls to run homes, schools and clinics" (Healy-Clancy 2013, p. 4) and later, "encouraged their association with social reproduction – finding their work as teachers, nurses and social workers power to shape the future of 'the race'" (Healy-Clancy 2013, p. 4).

When one looks at women's education before 1948, there is evidence that the education of Black people was not controlled by the state but rather by independent missionary bodies who catered to a minority elite (Healy-Clancy 2013; Gaitskell 2004). These were elitist institutions which set out to create a political elite who used their education for class mobility. Inanda Seminary and Lovedale Girls' College were the earliest high schools for Black women, and the education focused on producing women who would make good wives for their counterparts at Adams College and similar institutions, with a few considering teaching and nursing alongside being exemplary wives to educated men (Healy-Clancy 2013). This context to women's education highlights the role of women in the Christianisation process, which became pivotal as the missionaries believed that women would "ensure and maintain the Christianisation of whole families and were essentially suited to teaching the young" (Daymond et al. 2003, p. 14). Women were not educated to be intellectuals or get involved in politics. However, outliers such as Daisy Makiwane – who matriculated and had distinguished herself in Mathematics – could not study further, because there were no further institutions for Black women at the time. So, Daisy joined John Tengo Jabavu's newspaper *Imvo Zabantsundu* as one of the early writers (Jabavu 1963). Charlotte Maxeke, Lilian Tshabalala, Mina Soga and Ellen Pumla Ngozwana could be added to this category of women born in the 19th century, educated at colonial institutions and who became educators and partcipants in public discourse later in life.

There are examples of women who chose to be subversive, such as Bertha Mkhize (an Inanda Seminary alumni), who became a prominent political activist in the 1950s (McCord 2000). Before Bertha Mkhize's prominence, there were women such as Charlotte Maxeke and Nontsizi Mgqwetho who chose to leave their homes and participate in public discourse when they became involved in cultural and political production. By including the education of Black women in the early 20th century, I argue that the different expectations created for would-be elite men and women had consequences for the kind of intellectual cultures women developed for themselves later in the 20th century. The gendered nature of intellectual and public work (such as speeches and letter writing) allowed men to be men of politics, educational leaders, clergymen, writers etc., while women took on "paid employment as maids, primary school teachers and… nurses, or took unpaid labour as housewives and mothers within marriage" (Gaitskell 1988, p. 1). While there is sufficient evidence showing that this was the general experience of women in urban areas, women in rural areas are

seldom given the same attention. Belinda Bozzoli's research on *Women in Phokeng: consciousness, life strategy and migrancy in South Africa 1900-1983* is the most extensive historical research that looks at the lives of rural women in a small area, Phokeng. The significance of this study is that it "shows that not only has popular consciousness been forged out of the complex and mobile interplay between race, class and gender ideologies, but it has also been forged in the context of surviving preindustrial worldviews" (Bozzoli, 1991, p. 14). The question of class for rural women becomes more complex because

> the women of Phokeng are and were not simply the objects of the white policies of white government and industrializing power-brokers—but they were affected by the policies of their own black chiefs and elders as well so that their oppositional visions contained within them contradictory forces. (Bozzoli, 1991, p. 14)

When rural women are included in the analysis of class in South Africa this becomes more complex because of the additional layers of the political nature of the lives they lived. Furthermore, it would be false to create a binary between rural and urban women because part of the black experience is that some move seamlessly between the two contexts. While others have some difficulty navigating the rural and the urban which adds to the complex relationship of understanding black women's lived experiences.

While locating this discussion within the role that education played amongst Black women's access to cultural production, it is important to consider these shifts through a nexus that includes education, travel and access to public discourse. There are a few women whose names are relevant because of their own experiences of travel, education and public discourse prior to Noni's emergence as a writer. Much has been written about the men who were peers of the women I listed above. However, it is part of the erasure of women and their stories that little exists about women travelling as extensively as men during the same period. It seems history privileges the narratives of men who travel. Therefore, this study aims to respond to that and address this erasure by foregrounding the narratives of Noni and Sisonke within a male tradition of writers and travellers.

This list of women who travelled and wrote about their travels may not be as long as that of men who travelled in the 19th and 20th century, but it includes Charlotte Maxeke, Lilian Tshabalala, Sibusisiwe Makhanya, Adelaide Charles Dube (nee Tantsi), Nokutela Dube, Katie Manye Makhanya, Florence Thandiswa Makiwane, Frieda Bokwe, Ellen Pumla Ngozwana, Rilda Marta, as well as a host of others whose stories have not been excavated from the

archives. Many of these women travelled because of their educational aspirations, later returning to South Africa and starting organisations in their communities. For example, Lilian Tshabalala – who was a contemporary of Charlotte Maxeke, who remains not as well known – was the founder of Amadodakazi aseAfrika / Daughters of Africa, and had also lived abroad in the USA for twelve years (Curry, 2018). It is important to note that Katie Manye Makhanya travelled as part of the African choir which performed in Britain and the United States of America. There were a few women who were part of the choir, including her sister, Charlotte Manye (Maxeke), Johanna Jonkers, Eleanor Ndwanya (Xiniwe), Anna Gentle, Neli Mabandla and Frances Gqoba (Jaffer 2016, p. 43).

I have used the concept of mobility in other writing to show the ways in which travel for Black women in the early 20th century was a political act (Masola 2018). In 1935, The *Bantu World* newspaper ran a series of articles under the title "Bantu Women on the move", exploring Black women's social mobility. While social mobility was the dominant theme, the series includes a letter by Frieda Matthews (nee Bokwe) who wrote about her trip to London. The series includes a Mrs William Dube (her first name is not included, but a picture is) who had travelled to the following places (using the colonial names used at the time): Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Portuguese East Africa, Mafeking, Plumtree, Bulawayo, Ballaballa, Victoria Falls, Livingstone, Mbembesi, Salisbury, Matoko, Tete, Chileka, Blantyre, Limbi, Zomba, Fort Johnstone, Chindiwo, Chindi, Beira, Masikesa, Umtali and Johannesburg (Masola, 2018). I include this example to show the ways in which women's travel was central to the making of the political and educated elite in the early 20th century, and how women were part of this public discourse, which is crucial for understanding the cultural production by and about Black women.

The emergence of Black women writers in South Africa

With the establishment of African newspapers in the early nineteenth century, Black male intellectuals had the opportunity to publish some of their work outside the constraints of the missionary-controlled press (Jordan 1973). This was a space for men to express their ideas about the role of education and the politics of the time, amongst various other issues. The writing of women appeared intermittently, as in the example of Daisy Makiwane; Adelaide Charles Dube (nee Tantsi) (sister-in-law to the founding president of the South African Natives National Congress, John Dube, and Wilberforce University alumni), whose poem "Africa, my native land" appeared in *iLanga laseNatal* in 1913; Charlotte Maxeke, who wrote

open letters to newspapers such as *Umteteli Wabantu*; and Nontsizi Mgqwetho, whose extensive poetry appeared in *Umteteli Wabantu* during the 1920s. These are some examples of women who participated in the public discourse. These women can be seen as the pioneers of published writing by Black women in the Southern African region. With the exception of Charlotte Maxeke, very little is known about these women, as their writing was obscured because of political context and their gender.

It is worth noting how Noni writes about her aunt, Daisy Makiwane, in the 1982 edition of *The Ochre People*:

> …my mother's elder sister, then in her eighties... lived in an ancient location with her daughters, my first cousins, the youngest of whom was my age-mate. I wrote about this beloved aged aunt in this book: of the splendid link she was between my generation of the family and those that had gone before; of how as a young woman she had been a writer on my grandfather's weekly newspaper at the turn of the century; of her genius as a mathematican; of her wide-ranging interests; her erudition; one of the most inspiring people I have ever known. (Jabavu 1982, p. ix).

Noni's account of Daisy Makiwane Majombozi is probably the most extensive information which exists about her life and work (Victor 2018). While I discuss Daisy Makiwane's significance later in this thesis, it is important to note that without Noni's inclusion of her aunt in her writing, her legacy may have been erased, as is the nature of women's intellectual history. Given this extensive information provided by Noni about her aunt's significance in history – who was also a contemporary of Olive Schreiner – it is useful to see Noni's memoir as an archive which records Daisy Makiwane. Noni's writing on Daisy Makiwane is an archive because it offers "traces of the past collected either intentionally or haphazardly as evidence" (Burton 2005, p. 3). While the idea of an archive is contested, by "archive" I mean that Noni's writing stores and preserves Daisy Makiwane's memory and provides evidence which would otherwise have been excluded.

While Daisy Makiwane is the pioneer of women involved in newspapers, Nontsizi Mgqwetho's poetry in newspapers can be seen as part of the same tradition. Her work has been made prominent through the collection of her work in a poetry anthology edited by Jeff Opland, translated by Abner Nyamende and Phyllis Ntantala, *The Nation's Bounty: The Xhosa poetry of Nontsizi Mgwetho* (2007). Thulani Mkhize's docotral dissertation was the first academic thesis to analyse Mgqwetho's work extensively. Mkhize uses Mgqwetho's poetry as a starting point for analysing "the complexities and dynamics of African literary

production written in African languages" (Mkhize 2016, p. vi). However, it has not been possible to claim that her poetry was part of the intellectual and literary contribution of Black women, as it was not recognised as valuable within the public sphere and history. In spite of the collection of her work, little is known about her life and what happened to her after she stopped writing in *Umteteli Wabantu* in the late 1920s. Scholars such as Precious Bikitsha have continued in Mkhize's vein and continued to resist this erasure by looking closer at Nonstizi Mgqwetho's poetry, in order to examine the ways in which it provides more clues about her biography, as well as looking at her intellectual thought weaved throughout the poetry. Thozama April's PhD dissertation research into Charlotte Maxeke's contribution disputes this dismissal of women's intellectual production by highlighting Maxeke's legacy, which has been erased from the nationalist movement (April 2012).

Women who emerged after Nontsizi Mgqwetho produced speeches and letters which appeared in various newspapers. After returning from Wilberforce University in Ohio, Charlotte Maxeke had a public profile as the only woman who was present when the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was established in 1912 (Jaffer 2016). She also went on to become a social activist who established the Bantu Women's League in 1918. It is interesting to note the ways in which these women were in conversation with each other as peers at this time; this was important for the growth of public discourse and debate. Elsewehere, in my reading of Maxeke and Mgqwetho I have argued that:

> Maxeke's critique is mirrored in Mgqwetho's poetry. This analysis suggests that these two women used their words to speak directly to the problems that people experienced in their times. They were in conversations with the leaders of the time and inadvertently, in conversations with each other as women, who had access to the public domain, and whose voices seemed to matter to the editors of the paper. This level of publicness seems to go against the notion that women were expected to be in the home, while the domain of politics was reserved for men. It seems Black women in the early twentieth century did not have this luxury – given their involvement in the anti-pass laws in 1913. (Masola, 2019: 15).

In 1934, Victoria Swaartbooi's novella *UMandisa* was published, as the first novel by a Black woman in South Africa; however, there is no remaining evidence of the actual text (Daymond et al. 2003). In spite of the early attempts by Black women at becoming writers and contributing to literary production in the early 20th century, Black women do not emerge as writers in the same way that white women were getting opportunities during the 19th and 20th

century[9]. In her thesis "Black South African women writers: narrating the self, narrating the nation" Barbara Boswell makes a clear link between the context of political repression and the lack of Black women writers emerging in the 1940s, until Bessie Head's publication of *When the rain clouds gather* in 1968. She explains that:

> With the majority of Black South Africans excluded from tertiary education and publication, literary production became a domain almost impossible to access for the majority of Blacks. Collectively, the Bantu Education Act, the Suppression of Communism Act, and the Extension of University Education Act largely account for the fact that by the end of the 1980s, only a handful of novels had been published by Black South African women. (Boswell 2010, p. 55).

This shows the direct and structural measures which were put in place not only to suppress the imagination of Black people more broadly, but which made cultural production virtually impossible, especially for Black women seeking to contribute to the intellectual discourse of their time through writing. In an interview in 1992, Lauretta Ngcobo had this to say about Black women as writers:

> Most people have a problem with the idea that black women write. Even in England, this view of black women writers still exists. It was only when Alice Walker and a few other black American women began to publish that things began to change. But England is still a hard market for us. And South Africa is quite unprepared for us… (Daymond 1992, p. 94)

Like Noni, Lauretta Ngcobo published while living abroad in exile in England; she had lived there since the 1960s. What made it possible for Noni's writing to be seen and read in a country which Lauretta Ngcobo describes as a "hard market"? What could have made it possible for Noni to see herself as a writer before the advent of the African Writer's series? What made it possible for Noni to become an established writer at the cusp of African independence, and before the establishment of publishing houses which prioritised women's writing in Britain and North America? These questions raise issues of Noni's visibility and invisibility as a writer living abroad.

Bessie Head became a prolific writer after she was exiled in Botswana with the publication of *When the Rain Clouds gather* in 1969. It is only in the 1970s and 1980s that more Black

[9] It is in this context that white women such as Olive Schreiner emerged as a recognised novelist with the publication of *The story of an African farm* (1883). Schreiner's links to her motherland, Britain, allowed her more recognition as white, British women were also emerging as writers. It is interesting to note Schreiner's visibilty in light of Daisy Makiwane's invisibility, even though they were peers who interacted with each other according to Noni's writing in *The Ochre People.*

women published fiction within South Africa and in exile, in spite of the repression of apartheid. Miriam Tlali published *Muriel at Metropolitan* in 1975 and became the first Black woman living in South Africa to publish a novel written in English. In 1980, *Amandla* was published and banned almost immediately because of the politically subversive content of the novel, which offers a feminist perspective to the 1976 Soweto Uprising (Boswell 2013). While living in exile in England, Lauretta Ngcobo published her first novel *Cross of Gold* in 1981, followed by her second novel *And they didn't die* (1990).

There were few alternative opportunities for women to publish, such as *Staffrider* and *Speak*. In 1978, the literary magazine *Staffrider* was established, becoming a subversive, literary space for Black writers. In 1988, the magazine had a special issue commemorating 10 years of the novel's existence. Unfortunately, this edition did not feature much writing by women (Miriam Tlali and Gladys Thomas were the only women featured, presumably because they were already published and established writers). In her critique of the edition, Boitumelo Mofokeng highlights the erasure of women's writing which was not featured in the edition:

> The near absence of women from the anthology becomes even sadder when we reflect on the true position of women writers in that period of strong political awareness, protest and uprising. Many of those who wrote for *Staffrider* lacked previous experience of writing, but they were a new breed whose work had spontaneity, truth and authenticity. (Mofokeng 1989, p. 41)

She proceeds to name the women, including herself, who made a contribution in the ten-year period but whose work had not been acknowledged in 1988: Getrude Strauss, Carol Mathiane, Alice Ntsongo, Duduzile Ndelu, Jumaimah Motaung and Susan Lamu, to name a few. Mofokeng's criticism brings into question the layered nature of oppression which Black women in particular had to contend with as Black, female and possibly working-class persons. A magazine during the 1980s, titled *Speak*, is described by writer Sana Naidoo in 1990:

> *Speak* is a progressive magazine for women. It is mainly sold in factories and political rallies and meetings. It's now in most bookshops and university campuses too. It's written in Zulu and English, so it reaches a wide readership especially amongst working class women. It encourages women writers – poets and artists – but it doesn't carry adverts. (Naidoo, in Daymond 1990, p. 85)

The comment above suggests that this kind of writing space was not the norm for women, as it also featured stories about domestic violence, women's health, labour problems in factories,

contraception and menstruation, at a time when it was taboo to talk about women's sexuality (Daymond 1990).

Another magazine which has been marginalised from the conversation about women's public writing is analysed in research by Nicolette Ferreira looking at the popular magazines which were circulating in the 1960s, *Grace* and *The Township Housewife*. Ferreira argues that while "seemingly apolitical, [the magazines] grapple with the conditions of urban modernity under apartheid, while at the same time advancing a consciousness of gendered relations and power" (Ferreira 2011, p. 59). Furthermore, these magazines are important to consider given the dominance of men in the press in magazines such as *Drum* during the 1960s. It is interesting to note that *Grace* published fiction work written by black women (which *Drum* did not publish) and women such as Mrs IG Buthelezi, Thandi Zulu, Molly Moreni, Kathleen Mkwanazi, Jo Simpi, Candy Mtetwe, Likhwa CW Mpofu, T Dmbithula, Eileen Sithole, Fato Ngobele and Violet Xolo (Ferreira 2011, p. 61).

The limited opportunities which Black women had to become writers and to be acknowledged as writers speaks to the gender, class and race interplay that Black women had to contend with. Possible reasons for the erasure of Black women's literary production have been attributed to the silencing of Black women, which Marks (1987) avers as follows:

> If, for most of the past in most parts of the world, most women have been 'hidden from history', black women in South Africa have been doubly hidden, both as women and because they are black. (p. 1)

The erasure of Black women as writers is again seen in Richard Rive's article "Books by Black Writers" in the *Staffrider*. He lists the different periods which characterise the writing by Black writers, starting in the 1920s and ending in the 1980s, focusing on both fiction and non-fiction writing (Rive, 1982). It is significant to note that in each period, the writing of women is erased. By starting with the period of the 1920s, he does not acknowledge Adelaide Charles Dube (nee Tantsi), who had published a poem in 1913 in *Ilanga laseNatal*, "Africa my native land". This is a significant poem even though it has been criticised for being "indebted to an English poetic lexicon and tradition" (Daymond et al. 2013: 161). Rive writes about books produced between 1942 and 1970, and erases Noni from the list; presumably he does this because she was no longer living in South Africa. However, it is interesting to note that Peter Abrahams, who had left for South Africa in 1939, is included and Rive notes that "even from abroad his influence was dominant for another decade" (Rive, 1982: 13),

highlighting that one did not have to live in South Africa in order for one's writing to be recognised in South Africa. Even though his essay seems largely concerned with novels and poetry, he refers to autobiographical writing where he lists the contributions by Es'kia Mphahlele, Alfred Hutchinson, Todd Matshikiza, Bloke Modisane and Lewis Nkosi, all of whom were Noni's contemporaries.

Even though Rive does mention Bessie Head, she is mentioned in passing and not as a prolific writer in this period. Gladys Thomas and Jennifer Davids (who were also living abroad) are also briefly mentioned. These glaring omissions in this article are further evidence of women's writing not being taken seriously. Rive's essay highlights Mofokeng's critique of the *Staffrider* mentioned already, which had failed to include the many women who had contributed to the magazine's pages because as Carole Boyce-Davies discusses in her paper about Noni, Ngcobo and Ellen Kuzwayo's work, Black women's writing had been "relegated to the literary (critical) bushes" (Boyce-Davies 1986, p. 121). She continues by saying that "Women remain outside of the networks which facilitate the production of literature" (Boyce Davies 1986, p. 122). This highlights the exclusionary nature of the literary space in South Africa; but even Black writers who could see their racial exclusion were blind to the exclusion of Black women writers because of their gender. Boyce Davies elaborates on this exclusion by explaining that:

> White male and female writers have for years maintained privilege in literature as they do in life: the literary estab1ishment knows Athol Fugard and Alan Paton for example and has some degree of familiarity with Nadine Gordimer and Doris Lessing. Within the African literary tradition, South African male writers like Ezekiel Mphalele, Alex La Guma, Peter Abrahams and Dennis Brutus have visibility. Few have ever heard of Noni Jabavu, Lauretta Ngcobo or Miriam Tlali, whose almost completely unexamined works are the subject of this paper. (Boyce Davies 1986, p. 121)

Boyce-Davies's analysis of the literary context in the 1980s is effective because of the way she lists people's names in order to highlight the erasure. The list of names points to the choices that are made about who is seen and unseen, who is published and who is not published, who is remembered and who is unremembered. These are political and subjective decisions made by publishers who could determine who can participate in public discourse and knowledge production. These choices can be seen in the ways in which literary scholars engaged in South Africa's literary production.

In 1975, the Symposium on Contemporary South African Literature was held at the University of Texas at Austin (March 20-22 1975), which was also the Inaugural Conference of the African Literature Association (ALA) "a scholarly body formed in the fall of 1974 to promote teaching, research and dissemination of information on African oral and written literatures" (Lindfors 1976, p. 1). One of the panel discussions was about South African fiction and autobiography, and Es'kia Mphahlele was part of the panel. A question was posed by June Brewer about the absence of autobiographies written by women when compared to the number of titles by men. While Brewer's question makes mention of Noni as an example of one of the few black women who had published at the time, Brewer did not seem to approve of Noni's writing because it did not "really get at the consciousness" that she was interested in as she explains that:

> One of my frustrations as a teacher of literature by black women writers is that I've found so few autobiographies by South African women. This seems remarkable, considering the number of autobiographies written by South African men… I am aware of Noni Jabavu's works, but they don't really get to the consciousness I am interested in… Can we anticipate factors operating in the future that will encourage women to do more creative literary work?" (Brewer 1975, p. 41)

I quote Mphahlele's response at length to illustrate the structural and domestic context most women found themselves within, which did not give them the space to write, as well as the ways in which Mphahlele does not acknowledge the reference to Noni in his answer to the question, which I read as a form of erasure:

> We do have a few South African women writing poetry outside of South Africa… and we do have women in South Africa who are writing poetry. Autobiography hasn't become a major form of writing for them yet. But I can see we are going through a phase, and I think the time will come when such writing will appear. Look at the jobs that African women in South Africa do. One might be a factory woman and a deadbeat much of the time. Another might be a teacher with very large classes to deal with. A third is a nurse working in overcrowded hospitals. Another is a domestic worker who couldn't have passed more than the sixth grade and therefore will not be the kind of person to produce literature. These are the occupations of women – or else they are housewives. But even the housewives do many other things; they might be seamstresses or they might make things at home that they sell. Given such a situation, I think one will have to wait for some time before a women's literature develops. (Mphahlele 1975, p. 41)

Mphahlele did not even refer to Noni in his response, even though she was a direct peer and someone he would have known while living abroad within a small community of people living in exile (Noni published her memoir in 1960 and Mphahlele published his memoir in

1959). The resignation in Mphahlele's response suggests a lack of urgency for more women to become writers. I include this exchange as it is relevant for explaining the erasure of Black women as writers, but more importantly, the material lived experience which operated to ensure that Black women could not be writers. Noni's privileged class position and access to an international publisher in London is what sets her apart from the writers in South Africa. Mphahlele's answer intimates the subtle process where Noni's work was not taken seriously by her peers, particularly at conferences. This glossing over of her work also raises questions about the ways in which Black nationalist discourse did not make room for voices such as Noni's, and this is seen more pointedly in Dennis Brutus' engagement with her first book.

In 1962, Dennis Brutus wrote "The new un-African" after reading a copy of *The New Strand,* where Noni was the editor at the time. He admits that he had decided against buying a copy of her book *Drawn in Colour* because the reviews were "favourable and faintly patronising" (Brutus, 1962: 15). He continues that reading her book confirmed his initial rejection of it, because he "found it stilted, artificial and critical in the worst down-the-nose white tradition" (Brutus 1962, p. 15). He ends the article that Noni's book is the "voice of the British Establishment emerging surprisingly, and annoyingly, from the mouth of an *African* who has been assimilated into the system" (Brutus 1962, p. 16). This scathing response by Brutus, and Mphahlele's dismissiveness highlight the complex response to Noni's writing given her privilege and distance from South African politics and writing circles.

If Noni's work has been neglected because she is not seen to be speaking on behalf of a Black community (or a South African community), or Pan-Africanism, or advancing Black nationalism (Masola 2019), how do we explore her work? She is not a political writer in the same way that Es'kia Mphahlele and Peter Abrahams have been positioned. She is not part of the early intellectuals who spurred on questions about African Nationalism. She is not part of the *Drum* writers, who were exclusively men. How do we give meaning to her work and contribution as a writer? This thesis responds to these questions by revealing that in spite of the erasure of her work, Noni's "absent presence" (Gqola 2006, p. 48) as a woman who wrote in the 1960s presents us with questions which contribute to current discussions about the politics of writing, the politics of location and the politics of legitimacy. Gqola uses the concept of "absent presence" in her discussion about Sarah Baartman's existence in the South African imaginative and political discourse. This paradox fits Noni as well, in terms of both absence – the erasure of her work which is no longer available in South Africa, with the

exception of second-hand copies in obscure bookstores – and her presence in the form of historical documents and international visibility, such as reviews and coverage in the *Ebony* magazine in 1962, as well as Xaba and Gillfillan's work, which continues to resist the erasure of her memory and work. More importantly, Noni's writing allows writers such as Sisonke to be placed within a tradition of Black, non-fiction, female writers.

Sisonke is part of a new generation of Black woman writers whose significance should be seen in relation to the struggles Black women have faced in being excluded from South Africa's literary history and cultural production. Sisonke's writing emerges from a context of freedom, where post-apartheid South Africa has seen the floodgates open up for Black women to publish their writing more than ever before. Sisonke's visibility as a writer began with columns in the *Daily Maverick.* Publishing online has allowed many women to subvert the politics of publishing which still exist, by either creating their own platforms or contributing to the online blogs available.

While there has been an array of Black women writing fiction, non-fiction writing (particularly memoir) still remains a popular genre which Black women continue to gravitate towards. It is also important to add that while women are contributing life writing, celebrity writers such as Pamela Nomvete, Bonang Matheba, Kelly Kumalo, Bonnie Mbuli and Redi Thlabi are amongst the authors who have made this genre more popular. The number of Black women who have emerged as writers in post-apartheid South Africa has been as a result of the establishment of publishers who have committed to publishing fiction by women, for example Modjaji Books and Melinda Ferguson Books (Spencer 2014). However, it is unclear whether there is more fiction or non-fiction writing by Black women in post-apartheid South Africa. More importantly, "this first generation of post-apartheid writers has to date received very little critical engagement" (Spencer 2014, p. 11) which is why it is important for me to include Sisonke's writing alongside Noni's in order to highlight the importance of engaging with both historical and contemporary texts by Black women. The prolific nature of the publications suggests that it is important to take note of what Black women are saying about their lives.

Black women and life writing in South Africa

It is important to locate Noni and Sisonke's writing within the development of life writing in South Africa, as alluded to already. Judith Lutge Coullie's definition of life writing is apt as a

starting point for this section: “Life writing refers to that range of representational practices in which the subject seeks to depict the lived experiences of her or his own life or another’s” (Coullie 2004, p. 6). Autobiographies and biographies are texts which have been given more attention when examining life writing, but the range within life writing is wide, as it can include “oral and written texts, non-narrative praise poems, narrative memoirs, letters and diary entries” (Coullie 2004:6). This wide range of texts speaks to some of the complexity one encounters when analysing these texts. While memoir and autobiography are often viewed as interchangeable, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (2010) make a distinction where “memoir is a mode of life-narrative” (274). More specifically, “the term [memoir] refers generally to life writing that takes a segment of a life not its entirety and focusing on interconnected experiences” (Smith & Watson 2010, p. 274). These segments can also be seen as “turning fragments into a significant literary form” (Watts 1989, p. 133) using the thematic links relevant for the narrative. In Noni’s case, the thematic links are family and home; for Sisonke, the thematic link is her childhood in exile in relation to her relationship with South Africa when she returns as an adult.

Smith and Watson (2010) discuss the distinction between memoir and autobiography as a contested debate about how best to understand life writing throughout history. The autobiography emerges out of the eighteenth century as a genre used to define life writing in the West before the Enlightenment. Smit (2015) argues that because autobiography is perceived as a white, male genre, life writing seems like a gender-neutral term for encompassing women’s writing, as well as other texts which are life narratives but are not considered autobiography. Even though the term “memoir” predates autobiography, it is more recently that the term has become more popular “to describe various practices and genres of self life writing… recollections by the publicly prominent” (Smith & Watson 2010, p. 3). Memoirs have now come to be understood as recollections which “often [bracket] one moment or period of experience rather than [focus on] an entire life span” (Smith & Watson 2010, p. 3). Nussbaum highlights the predicament of autobiographical analysis because of the “impossibility of knowing the autobiographical subject while recognising the agency that textual identity enables” (Nussbaum 1991, p. 25). This analysis of autobiographical writing is largely concerned with how to understand South African autobiographical writing, largely written by men, as texts which reveal the lived experience in South Africa. Nussbaum’s analysis also brings into question the credibility of both the author and the text itself. Within

the analysis of life writing, some scholars have looked at the politics of life writing by looking at the autobiographical subject (Smith & Watson 1992). At face value, life writing appears to be simple texts which reveal a narrative about a life; however, there are more questions one can ask about the author's subjectivity, the ethics of memory, and the choices an author makes about what is included or excluded in the text.

Mofokeng's insight into women and life writing is also important to consider:

> Being able to write about and publish our internal struggles is rare for black women. And writing in the first person is so special. Most women use the third person because they don't want to own up. It breaks the silence of women when they can start talking about what affects them personally (Boitumelo Mofokeng interview in Daymond 1990, p. 78)

Mofokeng highlights not only the challenge of writing in a context that values women's writing, but also the rarity of Black women being able to use the written word to articulate their experiences. For Mofokeng, writing in the first person is about owning one's story, but also breaking the silence which Black women face where they can claim their story.

In 1977, Joyce Sikakane published her autobiography *A window on Soweto* while in exile in Britain. In spite of her writing, which appeared in publications such as the *New Coin*, as well as her journalism at *The World* and *Rand Daily Mail*, Joyce Sikakane's work is also largely unknown when considering the writing of Black women. 1977 is also significant for Noni Jabavu's writing, as she was writing columns for the East London newspaper, *Daily Dispatch,* while living in South Africa for a few months. This sustained form of writing has not being engaged with in relation to the journalistic writing that women were doing during this period as a form of intellectual and cultural production. By the 1980s, Black women began emerging as writers within the context of non-fiction writing. Black women began writing autobiographies in the 1980s, with Winnie Mandela (1984), Ellen Kuzwayo (1985), Caesarina Kona Makhoere (1988), Emma Mashinini (1989) and Phyllis Ntantala (1992). Women published their work much later than their male counterparts, who had published as early as the 1950s and 1960s. This highlights how Black women have been "the last group to find a literary platform" (Clayton 1989, p. 1) in South Africa. White women who wrote autobiographies in the 19th century (such as Marina King in 1935, Melina Rorke in 1938 and Petronella van Heerden in 1962 and 1965) have received more scholarly attention than Black

women (Smit 2015). In his analysis of Black literary scholarship, Mkhize makes the following claim:

> The 1980s witnessed a growth in the critical attention that black South African literature and its history received in the aftermath of state repression and the rising militancy of Africans following the student demonstrations of 16 June 1976. Not only did the broader history of black writing gain more critical attention and become the object of extensive research; its historical antecedents were often sought out as a means of explicating the trajectory of black political, literary consciousness and praxis. (Mkhize 2008, p. 100)

This begs the question: whose work has been considered as "historical antecedents"? Boyce Davies, as mentioned already, suggests that women's writing, particularly black women, has not been considered as "historical antecedents", as illustrated above. Rather, it is writing by men which is seen as the legitimate "historical antecedents" in Black intellectual and cultural production.

There has also been writing done by white women chronicling the lives of black women, as seen in *The diary of Maria Tholo*, where anthropologist Carol Hermer interviewed Maria Tholo for an extensive period during 1976 and published the interviews in the form of a book. In 1978, Elsa Joubert produced a book similar to that of Hermer after her encounter with a Black woman, Poppie Nongena (not her real name), thus producing *Die Swerffiare van Poppie Nongena*. In 1995, Margaret McCord published *The calling of Katie Makhanya*, which is Katie Makhanya's biography as told to McCord, due to the close relationship they shared (Katie Makhanya worked for Margaret McCord's father and Margaret referred to Katie as "Auntie", while Katie referred to her as "Ntombikanina"). While white women have been intermediaries of Black women's stories, there is evidence of white men who have done the same. Nokukhanya Luthuli's biography (Chief Albert Luthuli's wife) was written by Peter Rule (with Marilyn Aitken and Jenny van Dyk), *Nokukhanya: Mother of Light* (1993) with a foreword by Gcina Mhlophe. In the preface, Marilyn Aitken explains the extensive work done in compiling the book and how Peter Rule "shaped the final content and form of the book. His skilful writing has breathed life into the flesh and bones of the story" (Aitken 1993, p. 6). Interestingly Rule's name appears as the sole author on the cover of the book in spite of the explanation offered, which suggests a collaborative approach to the book.

In 1986, the Killie Campbell Africana Library, together with University of Natal Press, published a narrative about Paulina Nomguqo Dlamini, which is described as a memoir about

Paulina's life, *Paulina Dlamini: Servant of two kings*. Dlamini had been a servant in King Cetshwayo's household as a young girl. The book's blurb explains that "Paulina Dlamini's memoirs were written down by the Revd(sic) Heinrich Filter, one of her missionary colleagues. The present work, based on Filter's Zulu notes and German narrative, was translated into English and edited by S. Bourquin, an authority on Zulu language and custom"[10]. I include this blurb deliberately, as it highlights the complexities of the print cultures in South Africa, and the ways in which white researchers were intermediaries and invested in the stories of Black women. It would be worth analysing further questions of the ethics and power dynamics in these relationships, given the political context. These books illustrate the privileged position that white men and women have had in being able to publish stories, as well as possibly using Black women in the process, because Black women did not have the same opportunities and resources to publish their own stories during apartheid (Coullie 2001). It is therefore significant that Noni produced her own work in the 1960s. By locating Black women writers in the literary landscape, my aim is to reveal the challenges inherent to locating Noni and Sisonke within this landscape.

Ngcobo's anthology *Prodigal Daughters: Stories of South African Women* (2012) is an example of owning one's story, as it chronicles the lives of women in exile. In the introduction, Ngcobo notes the range of experiences women had in exile, which highlights the importance of Black women writing about their own experiences, because it is largely a narrative dominated by men's stories: "There were as many paths to the solitary, perilous journey into exile as there are contributors to this collection. From a life of privilege or severe hardship from unintended exclusion or conscious escape from the land of one's birth, to a simple decision to support a husband – here you will encounter the whole gamut of life circumstances that precipitated the flight into exile for many South African women" (Ngcobo 2012, p. 10). Ngcobo's work in creating this anthology points to the range of experiences which feature in the book, as well as the range in life writing, as the book includes poetry. The accounts in the book are personal essays which offer a snapshot of the exile experience. The publication of Ngcobo's anthology is significant for its range of voices, as well as the fact that it is one of the few texts which focuses on the voices of women speaking about their exile experience in contemporary South Africa.

[10] This is a quote from the blurb at the back of the book.

This thesis aims to look at the complexity within life writing and the questions it may probe, especially when examining life writing by women. When Noni and Sisonke are located within the genre of memoir, how do we read their work? What are the useful questions we can ask in order to understand their subjectivity? These are important considerations to make, given that Noni wrote when Black women in South Africa were not published or seen as writers, and a popular women's press had not yet been established, even in England (Xaba 2006). When read alongside Sisonke's more recent memoir, the points of convergence which are the focus of this study illustrate the need to challenge the erasure of Black women's writing by placing historical texts in conversation with contemporary texts, in order to enrich our understanding of intellectual history and cultural production.

Theoretical Framework

Migratory subjectivity and multiple identities

Noni and Sisonke's memoirs raise many questions about home, exile and transnationalism. The very nature of writing one's own life story is agentic and I will use Noni and Sisonke's own ideas alongside literary theory to theorise the intersections of home, exile and transnationalism as spaces which raise questions about belonging. Both writers are transnational writers, which raises more questions about agency. Sisonke's position as a writer and a prominent South African woman in the international public sphere offers a fresh perspective on the tradition established by public Black women of the 20th century, like Noni. This study is interested in the location and subjectivity of these writers. This requires a theoretical location which accounts for the multiplicity in the texts in question, and the multiple identities the writers constitute.

Noni occupies a variety of subject positions in her writing, hence an interest in her identity construction and location in this study. Sisonke writes for both a local and international audience in a context ready to receive writing from Black women from across the world. Their multiple identities and multiple locations are what makes their work interesting, as they are constantly negotiating their identities, stories and histories throughout their texts. It is impossible to write about Noni and Sisonke's texts without accounting for the parts of their lives which enable them to become writers. By exploring home, exile and transnationalism in their writing, I am also exploring agency and place in their lives.

The question of class is also central to understanding Noni and Sisonke and the ways in which they experience home, exile and transnationalism. Both writers occupy a privileged class position within historical contexts which offer different and complex meanings of their lives. On the one hand, Noni comes from a family of early converts to Chrisitianity, which gives them access to missionary education and opportunities to travel abroad. On the other hand, Sisonke's class is characterised by her parent's education and political alignment with the ANC. Neither of the writers shy away from their privileged position in their writing as it complicates their experiences of the extent of oppression and discrimination. Noni's family class position may even be considered as upper class because of her her family's educational aspirations, social and political connections. A prime example when she writes about Jan Smuts (former Prime Minister of South Africa) and refers to him as "Oom Jan" in one of her columns in 1977. However, this proximity to political power does not translate to citizenship because of the colonial and apartheid laws which disenfranchised and oppressed black people regardless of their level of education. Equally, Sisonke describes a childhood where her aunts and uncles in exile become the group of firsts (executives, board members, directors etc.) in South Africa's post-apartheid era (Msimang 2017). This positionality also has implications for how race, gender and class form part of a nexus which cannot be ignored. Even while Noni and Sisonke are black women who face discrimination because of their race and gender, the class position complicates some of the experiences that they have. Nonetheless, their class position does not protect them from the indignities of being black and woman in a racist and sexist world. Reading Noni and Sisonke alongside each other also shows the complex ways in which race, class and gender cannot be generalizable because while they are both privileged, they still have varying experiences. Noni and Sisonke occupy different historical contexts which present a complex way for theorising about the positions they occupy which are relevant to this study.

Even while Zine Magubane warns against "the possibility of arriving at a theory about the workings of the "holy trinity" that is generalizable both across time and across geographic, cultural and national boundaries" (Magubane 2004, p. 185) I try to show the complexity of class as Noni and Sisonke write about it in their memoirs. In order to theorise their class, position I find it useful to make a distinction between class and status as "class is based in economic interest, status concerns prestige and honour" (Seekings, 2009, p. 867). Jeremy

Seekings's review of class politics between the 1940s and 1970s is relevant here as it considers the timeframes of Noni and Sisonke's lives. He continues

> [the African middle] class determined to differentiate itself from the African working class, amongst whom they usually lived because of racial segregation. This was also the class that provided political and ideological leadership within the African population, and to whom power was being transferred through decolonisation across the rest of Africa. In South Africa, this class provided the natural allies for liberal or social democratic white opponents of apartheid, whose opposition to racial discrimination stopped short of a commitment to socialism or communism. (Seekings 2009, p. 871)

This highlights the contested nature of class in South Africa and how it shows up in the reading of Noni and Sisonke's lives. It was in the 1950s that there was an interest in theorising the African middle class in scholarly terms as Marxist literature proved insufficient for the ways in which South Africa was being organised as a result of colonialism and the tightening of apartheid policies and laws. Because of the nature of academic scholarship theorising issues of class in South Africa was largely conducted in hisiotrically white univeristies and research institutions which were inaccessible to black people. Therefore, there is very little literature written by black people to account for their class stratification as subjects. Instead it focusses on balck people as objects of study by predominantly white researchers. The emergence of African nationalism meant that black people began to theorise their experiences through the policies established by the movements which became political parties. In South Africa this includes the writing of Pallo Jordan and Joe Slovo amongst others who were also members of the Communist Party. In the working paper "The African Middle Class in South Africa 1910-1994" Roger Southall shows how the African middle class was created through colonialism and throughout apartheid "the overwhelming characteristic of the African middle class was its small size and its limited opportunities for upward mobility." (Southall, 2014, p.2). He continues that the Communist Party of South Africa theorized the black middle class "as an historically progressive class whose interests lay in allying with the black working class in pursuit of nationalist struggle and political freedom." (Southall, 2014, p. 3). This captures the complex class legacies both Noni and Sisonke inherit and describe in their memoirs. The question of upward mobility is important as both writers reflect on the ways in which their status grants them different forms of mobility.

The dearth of scholarship on the experiences of privilege black women who come from educated families highlights the importance of Noni and Sisonke's writing. Because of the

gendered position of black women, it is often difficult to make sense of the ways in which class operates and the ways in which there are moments of privilege in spite of the sexism black women experience. Therefore, I foreground the ways in which Noni and Sisonke theorise their class position in their writing in order to account for the ways in which they theorise their own status. Noni and Sisonke's writing brings into question the performative nature of class which is deployed at various moments in order to destabilise power or to exert power over others. The use of power is seen in particular with working class black people as well as working class white people as shown particularly in Noni's experiences while traveling. In a sense, Noni and Sisonke's writing about their class position highlights the insufficient theorising of black middle-class women because of the overwhelming focus on black working-class women who often bear the brunt of oppression as domestic workers or unemployed mothers. Megan Healy-Clancy's research on the New African woman may be relevant here. Noni's life bears some of the inflections of this New African woman which can be read in the context of the New African man which was popularised by H. I. E. Dhlomo's newspaper columns in the black press in the 1930s. This representation emerges together with discourses around respectability and descriptors such as amakholwa (believers), izifundiswa (the educated ones), amaqaba (African traditionalists who rejected education) and amagqobhoka (believers/Christians) which are useful stratifications when thinking about Black people, class and status. Respectability and racial uplift were closely related to missionary education from insitutions such as Inanda Seminary, Adams College, Lovedale and Ohlange Institute (Healy-Clancy 2013). Noni's life as an educated black woman from an educated and Christian family was part of a social milieu which was small but influential. This influence was premised on the idea that proximity to whiteness and the ideals of colonialism meant that black people could be educated into an elite status which is what Noni and Sisonke's families and status come to represent. Sisonke's background is a merger of the influence of African nationalism and the legacy of missionary education which informs the ways in which to think about their class and status. In post-apartheid South Africa, it is Sisonke's education and experiences of exile which further entrench her as part of the black middle class of the new South Africa. The ways in which both writers reflect about their class position in their memoirs is illuminating about the ways in which they understand the various spaces they occupy and subjectivities throughtout their migrations.

I use the phrase "migratory subjectivity" as espoused by Carole Boyce Davies, because it is useful for reading Noni and Sisonke's agency and recreation of the self in their texts. Migratory subjectivity is the thread that connects the theoretical location of this thesis, as it connects to the idea of the metaphors of self as previously discussed. Memoir is about memory and one's subjectivity in the recreation of those memories in the form of a narrative. Boyce Davies explains:

> Migrations of the subject promotes a way of assuming the subject's agency. I assert, therefore, that the subject is not just constituted, but in being constituted has multiple identities that do not always make for harmony. The subject here is Black women as it is Black women's writing in their many meanings. Migrations of the subject refers to the many locations of Black women's writing, but also to the Black female subject refusing to be subjugated. Black female subjectivity then can be conceived not primarily in terms of domination, subordination or "subalternization," but in terms of slipperiness, elsewhereness. Migratory subjects suggests that Black women/'s writing cannot be located and framed in terms of one specific place, but exist/s in myriad places and times, constantly eluding the terms of the discussion. (Boyce Davies 1994, p. 26)

Noni and Sisonke's writing captures the idea of migratory subjectivities, especially since their narratives are located in different places. Thus they refuse subjugation because through their writing they are able to occupy many places and become different people in each of those places. Through their writing, these writers use what Boswell refers to as "creative revisioning – the ability to re-envision or re-imagine what is possible for oneself to achieve within one's lifetime" (Boswell 2010, p.70). The ability to author their work and lives is central to creative revisioning. The "slipperiness, elsewhereness" of Noni and Sisonke's writing is as a result of the nature of memoir, which allows for embellishing a story "with images, symbol upon symbol" (Mphahlele, in Coullie et al. 2006, p. 244). Their writing is not of or about one place, but it is about many places, times and versions of the self. Because of their international profiles and their border crossing, it seems counter-intuitive to ground them in one place: Noni is a South African writer as much as she is a British writer. Sisonke is a South African writer not because she was born here, but rather because she chooses to identify as a South African even while she lives in Australia.

Writing about so many places brings into question their shifting identities, as Noni and Sisonke disrupt questions about identity because they both "offer opportunities to rethink a variety of categories with which we work and which we identify as "automatic" categories, as if meaning remains constant and understandings of identities never change" (Boyce Davies

2003, p. 13). Through negotiating borders and traversing new places because of exile and many homes, new identities are formed over time. I locate this study within Boyce Davies's work, which challenges the ways in which we read Black women's writing. She posits that reading Black women's writing in "expansive terms and relationally offers ways of responding to some of these discourses of borderlands, creolizations and the critique of nationalist identities" (Boyce Davies 1994, p. 13). In disrupting nationalist identities, Noni and Sisonke highlight "the limits of the confessional mode" (Twidle 2019, p. 97).

Looking at Noni and Sisonke as migratory subjects relates to the ways in which I locate them and their writing within a transnational framework. Studying literature within the transnational framework has largely been in the domain of "commonwealth studies, comparative literature and postcolonial studies" (Jay 2010, p. 5). Jay continues by saying that "while the first often focused much too narrowly on literature written in English in a colonialist context, the other two have covered literature written on every continent and in myriad languages from a point of view increasingly critical of colonialism and the kind of Eurocentricism informing early approaches to the comparative study of literature" (2010, p. 5). While this is not a comparative study, Noni and Sisonke's writing is critical of South Africa from different historical moments: Noni from the perspective of the 1950s and Sisonke from the perspective of the 1990s and 2000s. But central to this criticism is their distance from the country they consider to be home, as they offer their perspective based on their experiences abroad.

The idea of creolization links to Trinh Minh Ha's work, which captures the slipperiness of identity whereby a new identity emerges because one occupies more than one place; one can be both inside and outside and is "[n]ot quite the Same, not quite the Other, she stands in that undetermined threshold place where she constantly drifts in and out" (Minh Ha 1991, p. 74). Noni and Sisonke write as both insiders and outsiders. Minh Ha poses: "Furthermore, where should the dividing line between outsider and insider end? How should it be defined? By skin color, by language, by geography, by nation, or by political affinity? What about those, for example, with hyphenated identities and hybrid realities?" (Minh Ha 1997, p. 418). These questions are relevant to both Noni and Sisonke and how we can read and understand their work, and how they constitute their identities. "[H[yphenated identities and hybrid realities" allow a reading that takes into account multiple identities rather than insisting that the writers are simply Black, marginalised women from a particular location.

While hybridity is a useful starting point, I prefer Gloria Anzaldúa's theory of threshold people who "move within and among multiple, often conflicting, worlds and refuse to align themselves exclusively with any single individual, group, or belief system" (Keating 2006, p. 6). This theory is more expansive and emerges from Anzaldúa's work which uses both Spanish and English interchangeably. She uses the words *la mestizo* – an Aztec word meaning "torn between ways" (Anzaldúa 1987, p. 78) – and *nepantla* – a Nahuatl word meaning "in-between space" (Keating 2006, p. 8) – to account for an interaction of various identities, which are often contradictory but rather need to be embraced. For Anzaldúa, a "racial, ideological, cultural, and biological cross-pollination, an alien consciousness is presently in the making, a new consciousness... It is a consciousness of the Borderlands" (Anzaldúa 1987, p. 77). She continues by saying that "a *mestiza* is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another. Being tricultural, monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual, speaking a patois, and in a state of perpetual transition" (Anzaldúa 1987, p. 78). This provides a way in which to read Noni and Sisonke as they enter and re-enter cultures across borders. Noni and Sisonke occupy many locations and therefore occupy the "in-between" space as they traverse different places which necessitate a constant negotiation with the people they interact with and themselves. It is worth quoting Anzaldúa at length in order to fully grasp the importance of her theorising of a new consciousness, which seeks to hold the complexity of identity construction which I read in Noni and Sisonke's writing:

> The new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode – nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else. (Anzaldúa 1987, p. 79)

Noni locates herself as having "two worlds and two loyalties" (Jabavu 1960: Author's note) which suggests contradictions and "something else-ness", while Sisonke is constantly dealing with being both an insider and outsider as her family travels across this world; thus, their writings pose questions about ambiguity and contradictions in their identities. This contradiction means juggling cultures and ways of being, especially for Noni, who sees herself as both English and African even though she is condescending towards other Africans, such as the Ugandans. It is this "something else" which allows a more expansive reading of Noni and Sisonke. While thinking about this multiplicity in identity, it is important to think about creativity and agency. As writers, both women have created work (and in Noni's case,

work which is still available for analysis decades after she wrote) which reflects upon their lives.

In the same way that Anzaldúa uses Spanish to theorise her experiences in her writing, I use isiXhosa throughout this thesis in order to resist the hegemony of English and its limitations in explaining some of the experiences in the texts. I use isiXhosa in particular, because it is the language which Noni uses in her texts as an isiXhosa speaker[11]. The nexus "between language, literature, culture and nation was also related to geopolitical order and geographical frontiers" (Mignolo 2000, p. 218), which is to say that in writing about home, exile and transnationalism, language becomes a central part of this discussion. I use Mignolo's idea of languaging, which refers to "thinking and writing between languages" (Mignolo 2000, p. 226) which writers from the African diaspora in postcolonial countries have been doing in their writing in order to challenge English, as well as to move "away from the idea that language is fact (e.g. a system of syntactic, semantic, and phonetic rules) and moving toward the idea that speech and writing are strategies for orienting and manipulating social domains of interaction" (Mignolo 2000, p. 226). By extension, languaging becomes translanguaging in this study as I use isiXhosa to theorise Noni and Sisonke's writing and experiences. By using isiXhosa, I am challenging what Gabriella Veronelli refers to as "the coloniality of power at the level of language: how it conditions what a language is" (Veronelli, 2015, p.117). Through colonisation the European languages sought to denigrate African languages as primitive and incapable of communicating complex thought because of "how the classification of people into races that are superior and inferior is accompanied by thinking of the expressive tools that they have also in terms of superiority and inferiority." (Veronelli, 2015, p.117). Like Leketi Makelela, I prefer translanguaging which accounts for the "purposive alternation of languages" (Makelela, 2015, p. 16). This is more than a practice but "a theoretical lens that offers a different view of bilingualism and multilingualism. The theory posits that rather than possessing two or more autonomous language systems, as has been traditionally thought, bilinguals, multilinguals, and indeed, all users of language, select and deploy particular features from a unitary linguistic repertoire to make meaning and to negotiate particular communicative contexts." (Garcia and Vogel, 2017, p.1). Therefore,

[11] When I refer to the language, I will use "isiXhosa" and when I refer to the culture of Xhosa speakers, I will refer to "amaXhosa" or Xhosa people (without the prefix "isi").

translanguaging becomes an effective tool of challenging the supreriority of English by using isiXhosa to theorise Noni and Sisonke's writing.

It is for this reason that throughout this thesis I do not italicise the isiXhosa words I have used. When English is the dominant language, non-English words and foreign words are italicised to mark them as other in order to entrench the hegemony of English; even in the stylistic decisions made when English is disrupted. As a writer, reader and speaker of both isiXhosa and English, it is important for the stylistic decisions in this thesis to reflect the choice to use the language interchangeably and therefore mark the languages as equal in spite of the dominance of English. Noni did the same in the way in which she used isiXhosa, which she explained in her author's note from *The Ochre People* which is worth quoting in its entirety:

> May I have a word surreptitiously with Xhosa-speaking readers – '*bite their ear'*, as we say?... This is the reason why, where I have written out a Xhosa sentence, my spelling is erratic… nothing short of a new script should be devised. The roman is not suitable, and will always make for troublesome – and ugly – reading or writing.
>
> And may I ask English-speaking readers also to forgive me in their turn? For I have here and there unconsciously inflected a word according to Xhosa rules in trying to convey a non-English thought. When my publishers' reader pointed out that it was an invented construction, I decided to risk letting it remain because it seemed to me that the 'new' word came closer to the meaning I hoped to render than one which would have been grammatically correct. (Jabavu, 1963: Author's note)

In this note, Noni is explaining her choices in languaging in both isiXhosa and English. While she used italics to emphasise isiXhosa words and isiXhosa translations, the phrase / idiom udliwano-ndlebe translated to "bite their ear" demonstrates the limitations of English. Noni is staking a claim for both her identities and what it means to have "two loyalties". The limitations of English go beyond the use of Roman letters, which are not suitable for fully accounting for isiXhosa, but it is also a question of translation. There are words in isiXhosa which cannot be translated into English, and rather than trying to translate these words, Noni used them in the text to highlight the limitations of English by inadvertently sharing isiXhosa with her global audience. Noni undermined English by explaining to the English-speaking readers that in a sense, she manipulated English in order to conform to isiXhosa in order to

privilege the meaning of isiXhosa above the meaning of English. This is a bold step considering the context of the publication.

Noni used this strategy in both her memoirs. In this thesis I refer to ikhaya, isiko, isizwe, ilizwe and ukuzilanda as the concepts from isiXhosa to explain Noni's experiences in particular. Noni extended her "two loyalties" into the ways she used languages, as using isiXhosa and English became an example of how she entered both cultures. This form of languaging raises questions about language and territory. As a child born in exile, Sisonke only writes in English, because she has not been in a community where she could learn a South African African language, and her childhood is influenced by English, becoming the dominant language, because she moved to countries where English was the dominant language. Because she moved around, she lost the Chichewa she learnt in Zambia and became a monolingual English speaker. The politics of language are significant in this study, because language points to identity construction, which happens in conversations with the many borders they traverse. Both these writers have been influenced by the nature of globalisation, which is a complex relationship that I will explore below.

Resisting marginality through Black feminist thought

While I use migratory subjectivity as a starting point, a Black feminist theoretical framework underpins migratory subjectivity. Black feminist scholarship informs my choice of Noni and Sisonke's writing as the subject of this thesis, but I am also choosing to look at the ideas their work represents, especially in the case of Noni's writing, as it has been marginalised and erased from South Africa's literary history. Black feminist work has largely been about questioning the position of women in all aspects of life. In my research, my feminist work has been about finding as many voices by Black women writers across the world as possible, and placing them at the centre of my own intellectual and academic project. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty explains:

> Feminist scholarship, like most other kinds of scholarship, is not the mere production of knowledge about a certain subject. It is a directly political and discursive *practice* in that it is purposeful and ideological. It is best seen as a mode of intervention into particular hegemonic discourses… it is a political praxis which counters and resists the totalising imperative of age-old "legitimate" and "scientific" bodies of knowledge. Thus, feminist scholarly practices (whether reading, writing, critical or textual) are inscribed in relations of power-relations which they counter, resist, or even perhaps implicitly support. There can of course be no apolitical scholarship. (Mohanty 2003, p. 19)

Mohanty's extensive quote highlights the importance of feminist scholarship which is political, discursive and seeks to counter hegemonic discourses and confront the power relations which are central to knowledge production. Hegemonic discourses erase Black women's intellectual history, as though Black women have never been participants of knowledge production. Instead, their agency is stripped from them in order to perpetuate the narrow representation of women in local and global intellectual histories. The notion of agency in the context of this study aims to highlight that "[t]he question of agency is inseparable from the question of creativity. Agents are subjects that create, that construct unique combinations of elements in expressive ways. Modernist epistemology dictates that creativity, like agency, necessitates a constituting subject, a prediscursive 'I'" (Hekman 1995, p. 203). A discussion on agency in this study raises questions about knowledge production and the subjectivity of those who are involved in producing knowledge. This study is in response to the historical and current oppression of Black women, whose lives and stories are represented as marginal, and people are still asking the question "Where are the Black women writers?" in 2019. This question points to the power relations in knowledge production and intellectual histories where Black women have been marginalised from spaces where they are credible knowledge producers (Maqagi 1990).

Mohanty's words also highlight the importance of thinking about the erasure of Noni's work, because by making visible the importance of her memoirs, we can begin to have different conversations about the scholarship of Black women such as Sisonke. Thus, writing about a woman whose work has been out of print since 1982 is a political project, because it challenges the power relations which render voices visible and invisible, and highlights the decisions made in the publishing industry which have control over what is published and what is not. The choice of looking at memoirs is relevant here, as it challenges the idea of what is a legitimate body of knowledge. Unlike political biographies, especially those written about the "big men" of history, which are often couched within facts and figures to verify the story, memoirs offer snapshots of a person's life. The author makes the choices about what to include and exclude, which allows them more choices about how to represent their story. These choices disrupt what is seen as a legitimate body of knowledge, because knowledge is about power.

Patricia Hill Collins shows that "[r]einterpreting existing works through new theoretical frameworks is another dimension of developing Black feminist thought" (Hill Collins 2009,

p. 17) and this is what this study aims to do: reclaim Black women's ideas as intellectual work through new theoretical frameworks. While I predominantly use the work of Black feminists located within the academy in the global north, I should add that within the literary landscape in Southern Africa, the writing of women has been at the margins, despite work which has shown that culturally, Black women are in fact repositories of the stories within communities and their families (Nnaemeka 1994). Daymond et al's work has been a response to this position and has challenged the ways in which women's work is read in the anthology *Women Writing Africa: Southern Region.* I also use the work of Pumla Gqola to analyse memory work in post-apartheid South Africa, and Barbara Boswell's work on Black women's writing as a way of engaging with the work by feminists in the global south. The position of marginality is however, a complex space, as it begs the question: marginal in relation to what? Marginality presupposes the centre, and the two positions are seen as binaries. In her exploration of African women's fiction writing, Nnaemeka complicates marginality as she posits that "the so-called margin is an immense heterogeneous space punctuated by boundaries and edges which define the limits of numerous different pockets of realities. The conception of the margin as one end a binary paradigm thus obscures its extraordinary complexity" (Nnaemeka 1994, p. 141). This binary is not helpful, as it removes the complexities that are seen in the works by Noni and Sisonke. While as Black women they are marginalised politically, their class privilege and their access to movement and travel allows them to be at the centre, where their voices can be heard through their published writing. Both Noni and Sisonke's writing requires that we rethink marginality, because they are both "sufficiently mobile (culturally and geographically) and living within the realm of hybridization to traverse these simplistic structural codes" (Borsa 1990, p. 37). Borsa continues by saying that:

> For anyone occupying a place that could be described as marginal or colonial it is important to acknowledge that one does not "naturally" occupy a site outside the larger cultural and representational field as if irreconcilably "other" but that whether in the centre or in the margin one always speaks from a position, a context, a place which offers the possibility of exploring identity, articulation and representation. (Borsa 1990, p. 37)

This highlights the complex nature of positionality and while Noni occupies a marginal space in the current public discourse, historically she enjoyed global acclaim. In the same way, Sisonke currently occupies global acclaim. Both writers occupy the space where there is

always “the possibility of exploring identity, articulation and representation” (Borsa 1990, p. 37).

I choose a feminist perspective because the nature of resisting erasure is feminist work. Taking Noni’s work seriously as a literary scholar means subverting the idea of which writers are worthy of being taken seriously. Sisonke understands this as she explains why she writes:

> I write for myself because women seldom have spaces for themselves and writing is space; it takes up space, it creates space, it gives me space. I write because writing is solitary and women are seldom alone with just their thoughts – their responsibilities intrude. (Msimang 2017, p. 296)

Sisonke’s writing is intricately linked with her own agency, her feminism and a transition not only for herself but for her country. This extract illustrates Sisonke’s understanding of herself as a writer in a world where Black women writers do not always have the space to share their writing. In her writing, she subverts and resists the urge to silence herself any further as a woman who can write herself into posterity. Sisonke’s writing is about how she constitutes her identity as a woman and a mother. She also explains about how her writing has changed her and how she sees the world. Writing is both about identity and agency. Sisonke in a sense theorises about her position as a writer rather than relying on theory to explain her experience. Her experience can inform the theory which explains why Black women like Sisonke and Noni can and do write. As Boyce Davies points out, “The ways in which Black women/women of color theorize themselves often remains outside of the boundaries of the academic context, or “elsewhere” (Boyce Davies 1994, p. 13). Therefore, in using Boyce Davies, Minh Ha and Anzaldúa, I aim to use a tapestry of voices which will inform the theoretical location for Sisonke and Noni’s memoirs.

Apart from various anthologies such as *Women Writing Africa* (2003), *Daughters of Africa* (1992) and *Women and Writing in South Africa* (1989) (where Noni appears as a footnote), intellectual engagement with Noni’s work has been lacking when compared with that of her peers, such as Mphahlele and Abrahams in particular. Xaba’s Masters dissertation from 2006 is the most comprehensive by far, since Gillfillan’s chapter in her PhD dissertation in 1995. Jabavu is also featured in *Black Writers from South Africa* (1989) in the chapter on autobiographical writing. Gqola (1997) also writes about Jabavu’s work in a paper exploring Jabavu’s use of borders and boundaries in her writing. While Mante Mphahlele aims to read Noni alongside Sindiwe Magona, Lauretta Ngcobo and Ellen Khuzwayo in her paper “A

gesture of defiance: Selected texts by Black South African women writers", she flags Noni's work but does not extend her analysis into her memoirs. She merely makes reference to the preface which Noni wrote in the 1982 publication of *The Ochre People.* Together with Boyce Davies in her analysis of Black women's writing in South Africa – which includes Noni – Alice Deck reads Noni's work alongside Zora Neale Hurston. In her analysis, Deck (1990) looks at their works as autoethnographic work which is in conversation with each other. Deck and Boyce Davies's analysis is significant, as it draws on threads which highlight Noni's global significance, as literary scholars from other regions take note of her work. In more popular media, Xaba and I have written essays about Noni's significance in the *Mail and Guardian* and the *Johannesburg Review of Books*, respectively. There is also a short article about Noni on an online blog, "The Journalist", written by Phindile Xaba and Thapelo Mokoatsi. All these explorations aim at resisting the erasure of Noni's writing and life by placing her in conversation with other writers of her time.

Sisonke's writing has received significant public acclaim. Given its recent publication, there has been little critical engagement with her memoir, although there have been many book reviews. Because of her public profile, there has been extensive public engagement with her memoir and second book *The resurrection of Winnie Mandela* (2018), which was published after the passing of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Sisonke has been on numerous national and international public platforms, talking about her memoir in particular, but this has not translated into critical literary analysis. More recently, Hedley Twidle published *Experiments with truth: Narrative non-fiction and the coming of Democracy in South Africa* (2019), which is a reading of post-1994 life writing texts and how they have contributed to the literary landscape in recent South Africa. While he offers an extensive analysis of Sisonke's work and *Always Another Country*, he is more cautious with Noni's work because he believes he is "simply not the right person to write it… because a new generation of multi-lingual scholars are doing it better than their teachers" (Twidle 2019, p. 221). It is significant therefore that this study looks at both Sisonke and Noni's works, as they offer a new way of reading South Africa's historical and contemporary cultural production.

Thesis Outline and Plot Summary of Texts

This section will map out the structure of this thesis. I employ a thematic structure in this thesis, which follows home in Chapter 2, exile in Chapter 3 and transnationalism in Chapter 4. In each chapter I will discuss the texts chronologically, beginning with *Drawn in Colour:*

African Contrasts, followed by *The Ochre People: Scenes from a South African life* and then *Always Another Country: a memoir of exile and home*. Given the thematic nature of the thesis, it is appropriate to provide a plot summary of each book in this chapter in order to avoid repetition. *Drawn in Colour: African Contrasts* is Noni's first book, published in 1960. In the book, Noni writes about returning home for her brother's funeral, who had been shot in Johannesburg, where he had been studying medicine. Noni reflects on the funeral as a rite of passage for her family. After the funeral, Noni travelled to Uganda to visit her sister, who had not attended the funeral in spite of the family's efforts to reach her. Noni traversed Southern Africa and reflected on her impressions of the continent. Upon arrival in Uganda, Noni is confronted with her own perceptions about Uganda in relation to her father's idealism about it. Noni realises that her sister, Alexandra, is in an unhappy marriage and sets about helping to resolve the issue. The book ends with Noni returning back home, with her divorcee sister. While the book begins with Noni describing her life in London, the narrative ends with a scene at home in conversation her father.

The Ochre People: Scenes from a South African Life is Noni's second book, published in 1963. Noni wrote about her visit home a year after her brother's funeral. This trip was a voluntary trip as a result of homesickness. The book is divided into three sections: Middledift, Confluence Farm and Johannesburg, marking the three stages of Noni's travels as well as the locations which hold the thread of her family story, as each place holds significance for her family history. While Middledrift represents the family home, Confluence Farm is her uncle's farm and Johannesburg is where Daisy Makiwane, uMam'oMkhulu, lives with her family. There is no distinct narrative structure, as each section of the book is connected by the thread of family heritage through snapshots connecting the stories Noni learns about her family.

Always Another Country: a memoir of exile and home is Sisonke's first book, published in 2017. Sisonke begins the book by reflecting on her relationship with contemporary South Africa and how the history and the present of South Africa have influenced the ways in which she has constructed her South African identity. The rest of the book follows the journey of exile, eventually coming back to the 'new' South Africa. After the many disappointments of the 'new' South Africa which Sisonke grapples with, the book ends with Sisonke resolving that home is "always another country" rather than one geographical location.

In order to map out the ways in which Noni and Sisonke write about their identities in relation

to place, in Chapter 2 I focus on the ways in which Noni negotiates her identity in relation to ekhaya in *Drawn in Colour*. Central to this negotiation is the idea of isiko and the way in which Noni's family is organised not as a nuclear family but rather a network of families. This chapter will also analyse the ways in which Noni negotiates the public home – South Africa – by exploring the tensions between ekhaya and isizwe and the nation state. *The Ochre People* is concerned with questions of nationalism in relation to South Africa's history. The chapter ends with an exploration of Sisonke's outsider status while trying to make South Africa home after years of exile. Central to this chapter is the idea of belonging and unbelonging.

Chapter 3 analyses exile, estrangement and the pariah status of Black South Africans. In *Drawn in Colour,* I explore the idea of pariahdom as a form of internal exile and a sense of being unhomed. Noni's reflections on the homeland system consider the ways in which the grand politics of apartheid South Africa had an impact on the everyday life as she experienced it. In *The Ochre People,* I analyse how Noni problematizes urban estrangement in Johannesburg. I consider the ways in which Noni explores the tensions of making a home in a place that was not designed to be a home for Black people. Finally, I discuss *Always Another Country* and explore the nature of exile in Sisonke's experience as a form of freedom, as she is able to explore her identity without the oppression of apartheid South Africa.

Chapter 4 explores transnationalism and the ways in which Noni and Sisonke are able to traverse borders, which enables ways of being which foster freedom and strengthen relationships. In *Drawn in Colour,* I explore the ways in which Noni experiences freedom as she journeys to Uganda to visit her sister. Using the concept of ukuzilanda, I explore transnationalism in *The Ochre People* in relation to the illegitimate borders Noni traverses in apartheid South Africa. In *Always Another Country,* I explore transnationalism as a framework which explores the nationalism of the new South Africa, which is premised on xenophobia and exclusion of Black people from other African countries. By exploring the new South Africa in relation to its relationship with the rest of the continent, I explore the tensions around what it means to constitute South Africa as "new", in conversation with an African identity.

CHAPTER 2

Ayikho into egqith'ikhaya: navigating ikhaya, isizwe and the imaginary homeland.

Ayikho into eqgith'ikhaya (There's nothing more important than home)
Xa uxakekile unentlungu zakho (When you're busy and in pain)
Akhuko ndawo (There's no place)
Akhuko ndawo (There's place)
Efana nekhaya lakho (That is like your home)
Apho kukhona uthando (That's where there is love)
Apho kukhona ukonwaba (That's where there is happiness)
Apho kukhona izihlobo zakho (That's where you'll find friends)
Apho kukhona uthando (That's where there is love)
Apho kukhona ukunwaba (That's where there is happiness)
Apho kukhona izihlobo zakho (That's where your friends are)
Ayikho into eqgith'ikhaya (There's nothing more important than home)

- Bongo Maffin[12]

The focus of this chapter is on the idea of home, which I will explore through three concepts: ikhaya, isizwe and the imaginary homeland. The idea of home evokes questions about belonging and this is captured in the lyrics in the epigraph from a song by Bongo Maffin "Kura uone", which is translated from Shona into English as "Grow up and you will see". These lyrics capture the idea of home as a place one yearns for in the midst of troubling times. The song suggests that home is the most important place and that there is no place like it, because it offers respite when the rest of the world is in turmoil. For Noni and Sisonke, navigating home is a central theme in their memoirs because of the amount of time they spent estranged and in exile, respectively. In this chapter, I argue that Noni and Sisonke complicate the idea of home because they approach it through the lens of what it means to be South African. For both writers, the idea of home is closely linked to considering the nation state, South Africa, as home. This is a form of nationalism, but Anne McClintock reminds us that "all nationalisms are gendered, all are invented and all are dangerous" (McClintock 1991, p. 61). I begin this chapter by providing various isiXhosa definitions of home; I will use these

[12] Bongo Maffin, Kura uone lyrics. Available from: https://genius.com/Bongo-maffin-kura-uone-grow-up-and-you-will-see-lyrics

concepts to discuss *Drawn in Colour*, while exploring the ways in which Noni's experience of ikhaya as a space extends her individuality to a network of people and narratives. I will then turn my attention to *The Ochre People* and examine the representations of isizwe and ilizwe. This will explore the history of the Cape and the different nationalities which converge in the region, which Noni explores in conversation with her analysis of isizwe. These convergences highlight the complexity of the making of a nation. In this thesis, I use the concept of isizwe to explore how Noni writes about the politics of creating a nation. In particular, I focus on isizwe in relation to the apartheid state. I argue that memory and resisting the erasure of history is at the centre of the creation of any nation. Like any creation of a nation state, there are various competing historical narratives which have implications for how a nation is created throughout history. Finally, I will discuss *Always Another Country* and the ways in which Sisonke grapples with her South African identity. After returning to the place she has imagined throughout her childhood, when she arrives in South Africa, the place she imagined in fact does not exist. In this chapter, I will explore the ways in which South Africa is an imaginary homeland for Sisonke.

I deliberately use isiXhosa concepts of ikhaya, isizwe and ilizwe, because they capture the complexities of home. In isiXhosa, there are various words attached to home. Home can be ikhaya, endlini, emzini / umzi. Ikhaya is the private home of the family, but it evokes more than the physical space of endlini, which is derived from indlu, a house. Emzini is the home of marriage, which is derived from umzi, which denotes a new home that the married couple builds for themselves, usually after marriage. For women, umzi is a particularly gendered experience, as different behaviours and ways of being are expected depending on whether one is ekhaya[13] or emzini. For the purposes of this chapter, I focus on the ways in which Noni experiences being ekhaya in the context of apartheid South Africa in *Drawn in Colour*.

I also use the word isizwe which is translated into "nation", but Noni uses it to capture ways of being in a community which were disrupted by white settler colonialism and apartheid. Isizwe also evokes the idea of ilizwe. Isizwe is a political word used in relation to isizwe esimnyama, the Black nation, in the context of colonialism and apartheid. This captures the idea behind the Black Consciousness Movement which sought to respond to the onslaught of

[13] There is a slight difference between ekhaya and ikhaya (this is not a typo). Ekhaya means at home; the "e" takes the place of "at" as though it were the preposition. Ikhaya means "the home"; the "i" takes the place of the article the/a.

white racism by humaninsing Black people (Biko 2004). Ilizwe evokes the geographical space which is demarcated for a certain group of people who form isizwe. All these words point to the various ways in which the land is marked as more than just geography but rather, the politics of land. Which is to say, these words point to the geopolitics of territory and the ways in which power is negotiated or asserted through land. I use the concept of an imaginary homeland from Salman Rushdie to explain Sisonke's relationship with South Africa when she returns from exile. As a writer born in exile, Sisonke's writing about South Africa captures this sense of loss and the effort of reclaiming South Africa for herself.

The politics of place: ekhaya, isizwe, ilizwe and the imaginary homeland

In this section, I explore the various iterations of home and how Noni and Sisonke find expression in relation to nationalist discourse. In her writing on three South African women's memoirs, Meg Samuelson points out the ways in which the analysis of home has become quite a hackneyed discussion in feminist critique (Samuelson 2005). By combining the discussion with home together with exile through an analysis of Noni and Sisonke's texts, this thesis offers a renewed discussion about home as a place of belonging and unbelonging. By looking at home as ikhaya and isizwe and an imaginary homeland, I explore home as a constant process of negotiation between the self and the world.

Ikhaya refers to home, but there is more to this concept than home as it is understood in English. Ikhaya refers to the family homestead, which takes on a variety of meanings because the notion of ikhaya is more expansive amongst amaXhosa because of the extended nature of family, which is not the same as the nuclear family. While ikhaya suggests the private space of a family homestead, it needs to be seen in relation to the extended nature of family where family means people who share isiduko – clan names. Ikhaya is a place which marks the ways in which ukuzalana –to know and relate to each other – occurs beyond the nuclear family. In her memoirs, Noni describes an elaborate network of families which she is a part of to capture the sense of ukuzalana and the wide net of people who have access to her home because of ukuzalana. In writing about this kind of home and family, Noni is reclaiming different notions of the family when she returns to South Africa in spite of colonialism and apartheid policies which sought to destroy African families through migrant labour and displacement. Ikhaya for Noni is not wholly private, as it is open to a large network of family which is central to the rituals practiced in the home.

Noni refers to these rituals as isiko (Jabavu 1960), and they capture more than ritual but markers which assist the family to heal after her brother's funeral. Isiko is intricately linked to ikhaya, because ikhaya is also the place that connects the family to ancestors. Throughout both memoirs, Noni writes about "going to see" those who are no longer alive where they have been buried. Ancestors occupy an absent presence in Xhosa families, hence Noni's inclusion of them in both her memoirs is significant, because while they are materially absent, they are spiritually present. The location of the gravesites connects ikhaya with the spiritual world of the ancestors, which in turn gives meaning in the rituals performed ekhaya. Central to the notion of ikhaya is the connection to the land, which is discussed in relation to displacement in this study. Ikhaya is linked to land because isiko is connected to the land. Without a connection with the land, there are certain rituals which cannot be performed because of the displacement and dislocation from land. Tshepo Madlingozi captures this disconnection as he explains a triadic community amongst African people more broadly, which finds resonance amongst amaXhosa as well: the living, the yet-to-be-born and the living-dead (Madlingozi 2018). Those who are the living are the custodians of the world for those who are yet to be born, while the living-dead "assure stability and abundance on the material realm and perform ethical and juridical functions to ensure virtuous relations amongst the living" (Madlingozi 2018, p. 28). The disruption of ikhaya through land displacement and dislocation, as seen in South African history, means "more than just physical displacement, the conquered, therefore, experienced metaphysical and existential dislocation" (Madlingozi 2018, p. 35). Noni extends her discussion on this dislocation when she discusses her relationship with isizwe.

The notion of isizwe evokes questions of the nation state, which points to the symbolic and material ways in which humans are governed in certain geographical locations. McClintock points out that "most modern nations, despite their appeal to an august and immemorial past, are for the most part very recent inventions" (McClintock 1991, p. 104), which characterises the history of South Africa wherein the Union comes into being in 1910 and the new South Africa in 1994. However, when Noni refers to amaXhosa, she uses words such us isizwe and ilizwe and I argue that the idea of isizwe is broader than nation. Isizwe samaXhosa in Noni's memoirs suggests the organisation, the culture and the geopolitics of amaXhosa, which is not homogenous, as discussed below. By geopolitics I mean the relationship between geography and politics, which takes into account the contested nature of territories being established

through power. The complex notion of the nation state is explored by Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in *Who sings the nation-state? Language, Politics, Belonging.* The very title evokes questions of belonging and unbelonging, which Noni is also teasing out in her writing. Butler and Spivak's discussion on the nation state is useful for my reading of both Noni and Sisonke's texts, because they capture the notion of the nation as the space which binds and unbinds:

> If the state is what "binds", it is also clearly what can unbind. And if the state binds in the name of the nation, conjuring a certain version of the nation forcibly, if not powerfully, then it also unbinds, releases, expels, banishes. If it does the latter, it is not always through emancipatory means, i.e. through "letting go" or "setting free"; it expels precisely through an exercise of power that depends upon barriers and prisons and, so, in the mode of a certain containment. (Butler 2007, p. 5)

This is the nation which both Sisonke and Noni grapple with in their texts. For Sisonke, the version of the nation state which unbinds forces her father into exile, and this is the nation state which Noni returns to when she visits her family. Noni is particularly aware of the exclusionary nation state in both her books. To borrow from Homi Bhabha's title, Sisonke and Noni are narrating the nation through their memoirs. McClintock describes the state as "elaborate social practices enacted through time, laboriously fabricated through the media and the printing press, in schools, churches, the myriad forms of popular culture, in trade unions and funerals, protest marches and uprisings" (McClintock 1991, p. 104), which relates strongly to the ways in which Noni and Sisonke narrate the nation. By using the idea of isizwe in conversation with the nation state, I argue for the complexity that Noni experiences as she explores South Africa in the 1950s and writes about Hendrik Verwoerd's Group Areas Act of 1950, as well as the Land Act of 1913, while also evoking the histories of violence – such as the Frontier Wars – which mark the ways in which South Africa is constituted in 1910 and 1994.

There is a glaring question that is difficult to answer in both Noni and Sisonke's memoirs: is South Africa isizwe or a nation state? The establishment of the South African nation state happens at the expense and destruction of isizwe of the indigenous people after their encounter with settler colonialism. McClintock (1991) is critical of any form of nationalism as it "invents and performs social difference, enacting it ritualistically in Olympic extravaganzas, mass rallies and military displays, flag waving and costume" (p. 104) as a way to constitute the identity of the citizen. In a similar vein, Noni and Sisonke show that the

nation state is contested at different times in history because of the competing interests and identities which occupy the space. In writing about their experiences of the nation state, Noni and Sisonke challenge the gendered nature thereof because "in the chronicles of male nationalism, women, too, are all too often figured as mere scenic backdrops to the big-brass business of masculine armies and uprisings" (McClintock 1991, p. 105). Therefore, in writing their memoirs, they resist the idea of having their narrative as a backdrop in the history of the making of the nation state.

Although Noni writes about isizwe, isizwe is not necessarily synonymous with the nation state. Isizwe suggests ways of living together – ukuhlalisana – which are documented in African history. While there was war and conflict in precolonial Africa, there were other practices used to be inclusive and adopt people's practices after conflict. Noni cleverly includes as many narratives as possible about the creation of isizwe, as this is the nature of the contested history of South Africa. She does not offer a definitive story, but rather allows the different narratives to sit alongside each other, as is the nature of oral history, which does not present one view or truth but ensures that each story matters. However, the modern nation state of South Africa is formed on the basis of exclusion and dispossession rather than ukuhlalisana. The consequences of the nation state are felt in particular ways in Sisonke's experience, as she inherits the work of addressing the exclusions which resulted in the nation state of South Africa.

Until Sisonke returns to South Africa, home is an idea based on the stories from the adults who share stories about it, and their dreams about going back home. Rushdie's idea of imaginary homelands is relevant here, as Sisonke has an imagined idea of what South Africa will be like, and the memoir is her attempt at confronting the dream she has of South Africa. Rushdie explains that:

> It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (Rushdie 2010, p. 10)

By being physically alienated from South Africa, even at birth, Sisonke cannot fully reclaim South Africa, "the thing that was lost" (Rushdie 2010, p. 10), because she only has the stories of her parents and their comrades to rely upon. Even their stories are not a true reflection of what they consider home, because they left a version of South Africa characterised by oppression which marred their experience of being home and belonging fully in a nation state. Instead, Sisonke only has the future South Africa to craft and become a part of. Like Rushdie, Sisonke is only left with the South Africa of the mind, which collides with her lived experience when she returns to South Africa as an adult. Rushdie points to loss and the need for those who have been estranged from home to re-create their homelands, hence imaginary homelands. This is significant for both Sisonke and Noni, because their memoirs are in response to a sense of loss of their homeland, and writing is their attempt to respond to that loss and perhaps heal from the trauma thereof.

The imaginary homeland is intricately linked to the idea of nostalgia, which has changed in meaning over the years since it was coined in the 1600s. While nostalgia has been associated with homesickness (Batcho 1998), I argue that nostalgia is also about the effect of memory and how memory is used in the creation of the imaginary homeland. Over time, nostalgia became an overused and oversimplified idea (Coullie 2014). In the South African context, writers such as Jacob Dlamini re-imagined the idea in *Native Nostalgia*. The book was not very well received, as it was read as controversial for its argument. Dlamini challenged the grand narrative of apartheid in relation to ordinariness of life amongst Black people. Dlamini's books (including *Askari)* show the complexity of nostalgia which is "complicated in what it looks like, how it works, upon whom it works, and even who works on it" (Scanlan 2004, p. 3). Nedine Moonsamy looks at nostalgia etymologically: "Nostalgia, etymologically speaking, reflects a desire for an idyll (nostos), through an assertion of longing, return or loss (algia). It is, quite literally, the dis-ease of dis-placement" (Moonsamy 2014, p. 3).

The dis-ease of displacement for Sisonke and Noni emerges in their relationship with home and family and the places they yearn for, which do not exist in the ways they either imagined them to be or remembered them to be. For Noni, the home she left behind when she left to study in England does not exist; for Sisonke, the South Africa she imagined as a child does not exist. Both these imaginings are about place and time: the future and the past. In writing about home, Sisonke and Noni reclaim and look back. As Rushdie points out, there's an element of risk in looking back. The risk of looking back is that it does not guarantee that the

sense of loss will be restored. In Sisonke's case, the loss continues as she chooses to leave South Africa and join her husband in Australia, because being in the new South Africa has become untenable. For Noni, the loss is only communicated in the period from 1982 Foreward to *The Ochre People.* The loss she writes about is in conversation with what has been lost as a result of the colonial encounter. She writes about her family and home as though they are on the cusp of a transition, because she writes about the tension between embracing Christianity and missionary education in relation to the local people, who have eschewed these things. Looking back, for Noni and Sisonke, is about acknowledging loss.

In her theorization of nostalgia, Svetlana Boym poses a question crucial for this study, particularly for Sisonke's narrative of South Africa: "How can one be homesick for a home that one never had?" (Boym 2001, p. 20). This question further complicates the idea of nostalgia and homeland, because it points to the connections one forms about homeland. For Sisonke, she is nostalgic for a place she has never been to, yet it occupies her identity and ways of relating in the world because of the nature of her estrangement. Boym continues, "The danger of nostalgia is that it tends to confuse the actual home and the imaginary one" (Boym 2001, p. 25). This is the tension Sisonke finds when she returns as an adult in South Africa. She finds a dis-ease with the actual South Africa, which is in contradiction with the imaginary homeland. Therefore, Sisonke's nostalgia is about the future of South Africa – which is far more nebulous than the present reality – rather than the reality she encounters.

Boym's distinction between restorative and reflective nostalgia is useful as she makes a distinction between two forms of nostalgia which are in conversation with the past and the future:

> Restorative nostalgia stresses nostos and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective nostalgia thrives in algia, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming – wistfully, ironically, desperately. Restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition. Reflective nostalgia dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity. Restorative nostalgia protects the absolute truth, while reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt. (Boym 2001, p. 31)

In this study, I read restorative nostalgia in relation to Noni and reflective nostalgia in relation to Sisonke. Noni's memoirs are a "transhistorical reconstruction", as she osscilates between the narratives of a past before settler colonialism in conversation with the apartheid South Africa she experiences. Noni's writing about isiko in the home relates to the tradition which

she is evoking in relation to nostalgia. Sisonke's narrative is constructed around "the longing itself" and she does not "shy away from the contradictions of modernity", which are plagued by questions of the past in relation to the future. In a context where there has been violence, such as white settler colonialism, the contradictions of modernity are ever present because the process of violence results in the longing for what was lost in war and conflict. Therefore, modernity is marked by a dis-ease in relation to a violent past. Noni and Sisonke's engagement with nostalgia is not simply an "individual sickness but a symptom of our age, a historical emotion" (Boym 2001, p. 26), because nostalgia forms part of the South African psyche throughout the historical moments they both write about.

In this study, I argue that Noni and Sisonke's writing challenges these "flat, monolithic categories and identities" captured in the nexus between place and identity. In writing about home – which appears simple or flat – Noni and Sisonke are writing about the nation. They both complicate the idea of home which "mirrors the problematizing of community / nation / identity" (Boyce Davies 2003, p. 15). For Noni, home is constantly changing and migratory depending on whether she is in Middledrift, Confluence Farm or Johannesburg. For Sisonke, home is migratory because it is always another country; it is an imagined South Africa that she does not seem to find.

Ikhaya as isiko, healing and the extension of self in *Drawn in Colour*

Noni's return home is about isiko as much as it is about returning for her brother's funeral. She refers to the concept of isiko in reference to the passing of her brother. Isiko is a rite marking an important phase in one's life. Isiko is usually accompanied by a set of rituals and traditions which are observed during rites of passage such as, but not limited to: birth, death, marriage and coming-of-age ceremonies. In order to find meaning, isiko is performed in the context of ikhaya, as it is the holding space for the family and the rituals which can only be performed in community. Noni's description of the funeral is not simply to write about the occasion, but she is consistent about seeing the rite as part of the customs; the reference to the family history throughout the funeral speeches is also a matter of isiko:

> Speaker after speaker called on the two families in extraordinary fulsome vein, praising us that we might be consoled. This was according to custom. On another occasion the fulsomeness would have been unbearable but the underlying belief in the ritual was the healing property of it. And judging from the effect it was having on me for one, I could not help feeling how profoundly custom – *isiko* – is based on psychological need… And they referred to us or addressed us direct, by our clan

> names *Jili* and *Gambu*, never by our modern names… Again I thought about how persistent and basic was *isiko.* (Jabavu 1960, p. 17-18)

The isiko which Noni describes here is a form of ukuthuthuzela, which translates to "comforting". Words and speeches play a significant role in the ways in which the family are comforted during their grief. Noni's analysis of isiko is significant because she does not reject it, but rather she aims to show its significance as a practice that links her family to the past. The family's clan names are significant here, as they link Noni to a longer family lineage which has played a role in the progress of the Black community which speakers allude to in their speeches. The constant reference to both her paternal and maternal clan names locates Noni as someone who comes from a network of families linked by ukuzalana. Invoking the names of the ancestors reminds the family that death is not a finality, but rather an entryway into the realm of ancestors. The healing nature in the speeches is interesting to note, as it is people reminding the family about their identity and achievements in order for them to heal from the trauma of losing a loved one. Noni explains that "speaker after speaker called on the two families in extraordinarily fulsome vein, praising us that we might be consoled. This was according to custom" (Jabavu 1960, p. 17), highlighting the link between collective grief and collective healing. By invoking family ancestry, the family gains perspective beyond the moment of the burial. While the funeral serves the purpose of isikhumbuzo – remembering – of the son who has passed, the idea of Ubuntu is evoked because umntu ngumntu ngabantu. In other words, ubuntu is infused in every part of isiko and the speeches Noni describes; it is the healing element infused in the speeches.

Noni continues to remember how the same had been done when her mother passed away in 1951, and her achievements were extolled and referred to because she was born into one of the significant families – Elijah and Margaret (Maggie) Makiwane's daughter. In writing about her mother's funeral, Noni highlights that her mother's achievements were also collectively the achievements of the families. There is very little known about Florence Thandiswa Makiwane, Mrs Jabavu. Interestingly, there is very little information about Elijah Makiwane's wives: Thandiswa's mother was a second wife after the passing of his first wife. I use an article published in *Umteteli waBantu* newspaper in 1930 to provide a broader picture of her. The article was written by H.I.E. Dhlomo with the title "Bantu Womanhood" and was an argument for the need to educate women. Dhlomo uses Mrs Jabavu as an example of the consequences of educating women. He refers to a speech that Mrs Jabavu made at the Bantu

Men's Social Centre, where she was introduced by Dr A.B. Xuma (President of the A.N.C in the 1940s). She is described as "an active social worker, Warden of the women's hostel at Fort Hare, organiser of the (Native) Child Welfare Society, President of the Cape Self-Improvement Society" (Dhlomo 1930). He continues to draw a picture of someone who is a product of the elite missionary institutions, who believed that her social welfare work was to serve the purpose of educating Black people so that Europeans no longer needed to supervise their education.

In her autobiography, Phyllis Ntantala writes about her experience with Mrs Jabavu while she was studying at Fort Hare. She explains that "of all his [Elijah Makiwane] children that I knew, his daughter Florence Thandiswa was the one who inherited his depth and breadth of intellect and outlook: a woman in a man's world! But as warden she was a complete failure" (Ntantala 2009, p. 75). In *The Ochre People,* Noni briefly mentions her mother; instead she focuses on her aunt Daisy Makiwane Majombozi. This silence around the fullness of Thandiswa's[14] character is ironic, given the public life she lived and the fact that there is evidence that she wrote herself into history in an essay, "Bantu Home Life", which was published in *Christianity and the Natives of South Africa: A yearbook of South African Missions* in 1928 (Maqagi 2003). An excerpt of this essay is part of the anthology *Women Writing Africa: The Southern Region*.

Sisi Maqagi shows how Thandiswa critiqued the missionary influence in African life because "home life was being destroyed by African women's incorporation into colonial society and, in particular, by the colonial interference in women's central place in the African home in the context of the migratory labour system for men" (Maqagi, 2003: 189). This is captured in the first line of Thandiswa's essay: "'No people can rise above the standard of its own women' is a saying which is very old, but nevertheless, full of meaning, especially in the present case when the spiritual development of the great Bantu race is under consideration by a combined organisation of missionaries" (Jabavu, in Daymond et al. 2003, p. 190). This line alone suggests someone with a keen interest in the politics of her time. Higgs describes her as someone who "aspired to be more than a wife" (Higgs 1997, p. 55). Noni's representation of her mother's funeral raises questions about the kind of relationship they might have had

[14] I will refer to her as Mrs Jabavu and Thandiswa simultaneously. Mrs Jabavu is how she was known publically during her time, which is in relation to her husband, as seen in Dhlomo's article and Phyllis Ntantala's account in her memoir. I use Thandiswa as a way to distance her from her role as Jabavu's wife, in order to reclaim her independently thereof.

before she left for England when she was thirteen years old. Perhaps because of her mother's public work, which kept her busy, Noni and her mother were not close. I include this information as a way to provide a broader picture of Noni's family and the prominence of both her parents. In writing about ikhaya, Noni is able to write about her mother, albeit in passing, which raises more questions for future research about the influences in Noni's early life.

In writing about ikhaya, Noni is writing about her family as well as the community of Middledrift. It is impossible to write about herself without writing about the family relations and how they are particular to ways of relating ekhaya. Much of how Noni writes about herself is attributed to her family and how it is organised. In writing about herself in relation to her family, she is inserting herself within a larger network of people, but also placing her subjectivity in relation to a network of people. This way of writing about herself highlights the lived experience of the idea of Ubuntu: umntu ngumntu ngabantu. She is a human being because she is a person in relation to a network of people. This does not necessarily undermine her individuality, but rather, she negotiates her own sense of self within the understanding that she is part of a larger whole. While she is an adult who lives in London with a very different lifestyle, when she is ekhaya she becomes the older sister and daughter who has returned to observe isiko. Noni negotiates her identity in relation to how the family and community interact with her. At times, she is an observer on the outside looking in and at times, she is a participant. This insider-outsider status captures a sense of "not quite the Same, not quite the Other, she stands in that undetermined threshold place where she constantly drifts in and out" (Minh-Ha 1991, p. 74). It is this threshold place that Noni occupies throughout her writing where she seems to be grappling with her identity.

Ikhaya is also about the world of ancestors who appear in both books in the form of the rituals and stories which place Noni's family within a historical narrative. Noni makes reference to the oldest family relation who is present for the funeral rites, Henry Sakuba, her father's malume – male mother (Jabavu 1963) – and "last remaining brother of our paternal grandmother who had died in 1898" (Jabavu 1960, p. 8). She continues to write about her paternal grandmother who "to us as children was that beautiful almost imaginary lady in huge Edwardian dresses with mutton-chop sleeves whose pictures had hung on walls of our house ever since we could remember, fading daguerreotypes" (Jabavu 1960, p. 8). The reference to the Edwardian dress and the availability of pictures of her grandmother is one of the ways in

which Noni is pointing to her family lineage in terms of its relationship with the colonial encounter and missionary influence.

In the chapter “The Family”, Noni expands on her lineage as the funeral speeches are in part commemorating her brother, but are also about placing him in relation to his family’s history, because he was the only son in her immediate, nuclear family. Noni’s recollection of the speeches centres the family narrative, and the funeral becomes a moment of positioning the family in order to explain why the death of her brother is so significant. For the benefit of her readers, Noni explains the work of her grandfather, and how they chose the surname Jabavu when surnames became obligatory with the slow intrusion of colonial authorities (it was the great-grandfather’s name). She explains her family’s early conversion to Christianity and how this influenced the educated lineage of Jabavus. It seems, the grief of the family cannot be understood without the understanding of the family’s history. By connecting the family to a longer family narrative, Noni is able to see her family in relation to a history which she becomes more curious about in *The Ochre People.* Without an appreciation of family history, it is near impossible to participate in isiko because it relies on the knowledge and connection to ancestors through reciting iziduko – clan names – which locates the family within a broader spiritual network. Throughout the speeches, the family is referred to by their clan names – Gambu and Jili – which invokes the history of the family.

The description of the funeral and life after the burial are described as “isiko of olden days” (Jabavu, 1960: 19), traditions from the past. Noni does not translate the word isiko into English; above I have included my explanation of isiko. It matters that she does not offer a translation for isiko because even the translation I offer is inadequate. The word encapsulates traditions, a worldview and a way of being in the world which is expressed through practices, custom and rituals. This is the limitation of English which she captures in the author’s note, as discussed already. In coming home, Noni has to contend with her family past which remains as part of their present, even though as a family they had chosen Christianity and western education. It seems they cannot fully distance themselves from the past because of their rural location in Alice and Middledrift. Their location in the Cape is central to the family’s identity, even though many of them have lived abroad and in Johannesburg. Noni has grown up watching both her parents, who negotiated their own positions in their local community in light of their own travels abroad. Especially since both her parents had studied abroad and her grandfathers had international links through their work.

This negotiation is seen in the ways in which Noni uses language to explain her experiences. Language highlights the limitations with English, even though Noni is at pains to keep the essence of isiXhosa through translanguaging – which refers to speaking across different languages – and direct translation of words. In trying to explain one of the post-funeral rituals, Noni writes "In old-fashioned Xhosa parlance still current, the family were still 'in the forest', meaning ritual seclusion. We were not supposed to go about among other people until a final ceremony had been performed to purify, release, bring us out of the forest" (Jabavu 1960, p. 19). Ritual seclusion does not fully capture the practice and it is important to note that Noni is referring to being in the forest metaphorically. The direct translation of being in the forest comes from the isiXhosa expression "Ukukhutshwa ehlathini", which writer Ezra W. M. Mesatywa explains in isiXhosa in his book of proverbs and sayings: "Le yinkonzo yokhuzo eyenziwa yinkosi emva komnyaka umnini-mzi wafayo. Kukuza kuvelana nabo abantu, nokubayaleza kulowo uza kuba yintloko; nokuba babe nakho ukuhamba phakathi kwabanye abantu, nabo bahanjelwe" (Mesatywa 1985, p. 87). This proverb means: this ritual is performed by a chief after the head of the home has passed away. The purpose of the ritual is to emphathise with the bereaved as well as share their grief with the new head of the family. This ritual also gives permission for the bereaved to join society again and receive visitors. This is not a perfect translation, as the Xhosa explanation is embedded with cultural meanings which cannot be fully expressed in English. I include the translation to explain why it makes sense that Noni would use the expression "in the forest", as there does not seem to be an English equivalent. This form of languaging as Noni's negotiation with language is peppered throughout her writing and forms a thread for how she relates with being ekhaya, particularly amongst Xhosa people, and being immersed in the culture and the language after many years of being abroad. By using isiXhosa and English in the ways she does – which she explains at length in the Author's note in *The Ochre People* – Noni is critiquing "the idea that civilisation is linked to the 'purity' of colonial and national monolanguaging" (Mignolo 2000, p. 250). Noni seems to reject the idea of monolanguaging, because it would be a dishonest representation of who she is and the people she is writing about.

This negotiation with language also points to Anzaldúa's *la mestizo;* a consciousness of the borderlands (Anzaldúa 1987). In Noni's case, this consciousness is a result of the artificial borders created by colonialism, as well as the negotiation she does in terms of both isiXhosa and English cultural identification, as she states in her author's note; she belongs in two

worlds. This new identity brings together Noni's history as well as her family's response to colonialism, which she attributes to modernity, which has implications for how they negotiate amasiko[15]. Noni ends this explanation of rituals by defining another ritual. The following extract further highlights this identity negotiation in relation to the rituals observed and how the family is released from the period of mourning:

> The final ceremony to 'release' would, because we were modern, consist first of a private service that our minister of religion would hold in our house followed by *isiko* of olden days: the 'felling of an ox, the spilling of blood', the ritual provision of meat to be ceremonially tasted by family, friends and all passersby without favour.
>
> During the seclusion we were all supposed to try to deal with our incommunicable thoughts and memories. The observance of the custom seemed to be another of those instinctive ways of expressing a basic need. (Jabavu 1960, p. 19)

This extract highlights Noni's understanding of isiko, as well as the ways in which the family have observed the ritual in relation to the negotiated identity of being modern Africans. The private ceremony is an interesting adaptation, as it points to African modernity's bent towards the privacy of the nuclear family, which is associated with the Victorian concept of family. The minister of religion who visits the home indicates the ways in which the church plays a central role in the lives of the modern African family, as intimated in Thandiswa's critique above. The slaughtering of an ox is associated with the olden days, while the service with the minister is linked with modernity. The slaughtering of the ox seems to be more communal and expansive as family, friends and passersby can participate in recognising that the family is no longer mourning. In the same way that the funeral observed isiko, which was communal, ending the mourning period is also communal, so that the community can be the witnesses that the family has performed the necessary rituals to mark the loss, as well as acknowledge their process of healing.

The family and ikhaya which Jabavu has described are not an enclave of immediate family – the nuclear family. In his explanation of how Xhosa people organise family in his book *Introduction to Xhosa culture* under the heading "Kinship and affinity", Peter Mtuze explains that "African society as a whole is both communal and familial. Relationship plays an important part in it. Nations could be divided into tribes which in turn, could be divided into clans, which could be divided into lineages" (Mtuze, 2004: 85). He contrasts this with other indigenous groups such as the San, who "tended to be cognatic – giving weight to kin in all

[15] Amasiko is plural for isiko

directions as they were less interested in inheritance than in optimising relationships and hunting rights" (Mtuze, 2004: 85). This kind of organisation assumes practices and a way of being in the world which seals these relationships.

Noni seems to be comfortable with the tensions between tradition and modernity because the family chooses the ritual in order to respond to the basic need for mourning. Noni tries to expand on these tensions because she is aware of the essentialism that comes with cultures:

> Like so many so-called Westernised southern Bantu families, we were bound to behave in a proper manner, according to the dictates of the life old and new, the essence of our African life which outsiders tend to interpret as 'spoilt by Europeanisation'. In fact it is neither spoilt nor improved, it is simply different from what it used to be because of elements from English and Boer life which have impinged on us. (Jabavu 1960, p. 31)

This extract is a continuation of Noni's commentary about being in two worlds, as well as the choices the family has made in response to colonialism, threshold people who have integrated their African heritage with the new influences of Christianity because "they move within and among multiple, often conflicting, worlds and refuse to align themselves exclusively with any single individual, group, or belief system" (Keating 2006, p. 8). The choice of the word "essence" suggests that Noni is questioning the tensions around pure identities which have not been influenced by other factors. For Noni, identity is about agency in a context where the English and the Boers have impinged on the African way of life. Rather than surrendering to the imposition of settler colonialism, Noni explains that something different emerges which is "neither spolit nor improved, it is simply different". This becomes a third option which sits between the binaries and the third space[16] that is constantly in flux because it is in conversation with other ways of being.

As the oldest sister – umafungwashe: the "eldest of the umbilical cord" (Jabavu 1960, p. 49) – Noni is required to visit her sister, Alexandra Nothemba Jabavu-Mulira, who lives in Uganda and who was not able to attend the funeral. The purpose of the trip is for Noni to go "and act as if [she] had been her eyes. It is [her] duty to tell [her] mother's child everything word for word, enable her to re-live every phase of [their] tragedy" (Jabavu 1960, p. 49). Secondly, the journey is undertaken to help Alexandra heal from the trauma of losing her brother and not being at the funeral in order to participate in the rituals of healing the grief. The nexus

[16] I do not mean third space in the same sense as Homi Bhabha uses it, but rather I am pointing to the space which is between the binaries.

between travel and isiko sheds light on the assumptions that Black women did not have as much freedom to travel because of the limitations placed on their gender and race. The connection and isiko is also important here, as it shows the dynamic nature of isiko, which prioritises the need for healing for the person who was not able to attend the family gathering. In travelling to visit her sister, Noni is extending the work of isiko to her sister in spite of the geographical distance. Noni becomes an envoy on behalf of her family, and her visit is in response to the family's concern about her sister's absence. Noni describes her family's approach to isiko and ways of being as taking on a "formal African manner" (Jabavu 1960, p. 49), which invokes family discussions and meetings and a way of decision making within the family. The mention of the elders and the role they play during the funeral rites establishes Noni as a child ekhaya, as she defers to isiko where the role of the elders and oomalume[17] is made explicit. The role of the older sister ekhaya is further highlighted in Noni's description of a family meeting:

> My father called me to his study to a representative group of my mothers and fathers to be once again addressed on my duty as the elder daughter to go to my sister on my way back to Europe, 'to bind her'. Their brown eyes and much-lined faces were all turned on me while one of my uncles spoke for my father, for them all, to remind me of the duties incumbent upon me in my position in the family. I thought how with my people, you are not often left to be merely your private self; you represent others, or others represent you, so that you are ever conscious of relative status, classification, interdependent relationships. (Jabavu 1960, p. 51)

The meeting is significant as it further expands the concept of Ubuntu and its consequence in a practical, value-laden context, because Noni's role in relation to her sister is about being "conscious of relative status, classification, interdependent relationships" (Jabavu, 1960: 49). The role of the uncle (though it is not clear whether it is her paternal or maternal uncle speaking because of the use of English: isiXhosa makes a distinction in the words it uses for maternal and paternal relations) who speaks on behalf of her father and the rest of the elders in the room brings into question the idea of the patriarch in African homes, who has control in the family. Instead, Noni writes about a democratic and shared sense of authority in the family based on seniority and classification in the form of the uncle, who is selected to share authority with Noni's father and the other elders in the home. Noni is also aware of her own 'position in the family', which highlights the importance of seniority as a way for organising the family. Finally, Noni deliberately mentions that the meeting was attended by mothers and

[17] Plural for umalume

fathers. This debunks the myth that women were not privy to family decisions because this was the role of the men in the family. The idea of the family which Noni writes about is not a nuclear family, but rather a network of relationships amongst people who share in the meaning-making process taking place in ekhaya.

Noni's writing about ekhaya is central to how she writes about her family and her position therein, as discussed already. Noni raises questions about the particularities in her own family and how they relate to the generalised ideas about African families, which have been characterised as patriarchal in organisation. She positions herself within an understanding of what it means to be the elder sister, umafungwashe, in light of her brother's death. This is highlighted in how she recounts her relationship with her father, who refers to her as "My support always, I rely on her in everything that requires common sense" (Jabavu 1960, p. 41). This sentiment challenges the generalised narrative that daughters are simply the possession of the father until they are passed onto the husband. Noni's role in her family is not diminished because she is married. Furthermore, her role as the eldest daughter in her family does not seem to be diminished because of her gender. This brings into question the particularities of Noni's family and their ways of being which can be read as a deliberate socialisation which challenges the use of gender as a way to determine how family members are valued. This can be read in conjunction with Oyeronke Oyewumi's critique of Western feminism and gender norms, which organises social norms according to what she refers to as "bio-logic" where "Social categories like 'woman' are based on body-type and elaborated in relation to and in opposition to another category: man; the presence or absence of certain organs determines social position" (Oyewumi 1997, p. x). Pamela Maseko extends on Oyewumi's work by looking into social stratification amongst amaXhosa and explains that "the words that name members of society are linked to responsibility, seniority, rank and status of that member, and not their physiology of the person bearing that name." (Maseko, 2018, 38). Much like Oyewumi and Maseko's analysis of the social organisation amongst the Yoruba, Noni's writing raises the same questions amongst Xhosa people. It seems that seniority and one's title in the family is an organising category in Noni's case. It would be dangerous to apply this to all Xhosa families, but there is clearly an urgent need for more research about these categories that are used in contemporary African cultures, in order to account for the complexity of organising families. While Maseko's work tries to account for the historical threads which relate to the ways we understand social organisation in families

and society (with a particular focus on amaXhosa and Nguni related groups), she challenges that taken for granted ideas about gender because "the present understanding and articulation of social roles and responsibilities in an isiXhosa speaking society could possibly be traced back to colonial power, which sought through the naming and engineering of indigenous languages to dominate and erase the experience and knowledge of the native population" (Maseko, 2018, p. 38). Maseko draws on many linguistic examples which have historical traces that challenge the ways in which family, gender and social organisations have been disreupted and remade because of the colonial influence. What is significant in Noni's writing is that her work was published in the 1960s and she was already challenging ideas about Western gender categories used for organising families.

Noni explores the gendered and classed nature of family, and this offers a complex picture of family which she unearths through the thread of isiko. Underlying this thread is the lived experience of Ubuntu and how it finds expression in the family, which is not a nuclear unit but rather a network of families. There is always a negotiation between the private and the public, and Noni's memoirs show this negotiation clearly.

Representations of isizwe, ilizwe in *The Ochre People*

While I have focused on the intricacies of the private family life in *Drawn in Colour*, in this section I focus on the broader politics of being home in relation to isizwe in *The Ochre People*. In her second book, Noni is concerned with not only her family history, as alluded to above, but she is also interested in the history of the place she calls home, which used to be part of the Cape Colony, but is now the Eastern Cape. This is significant in terms of thinking about ekhaya. She is simultaneously writing about the private family homestead, and the geographical location which influences how she thinks about South Africa as a nation. Throughout this book, Noni explores South Africa as a nation, based on exclusionary politics that were created by apartheid. This section will explore Noni's exploration of these influences to provide a picture of the complexity of South Africa.

The major political moment that influenced the making of South Africa was the arrival of settlers in the form of missionaries and traders. Noni does not give a chronological account for this encounter, but she writes from the position of what she observes in apartheid South Africa and explains it according to her lived experience. Noni's reflections are also in connection with why she has decided to visit ekhaya in spite of the political climate, which is

increasingly becoming repressive. Noni returns to South Africa because of "the influences that pulled" her (Jabavu 1963, p. 8); in a sense, she returns ekhaya as the epigraphs allude to because "ayikho into egqith'ikhaya": there is nothing more important than home. In spite of the years spent abroad, Noni still yearns to be connected with the place despite its fraught geopolitics. She is concerned about the changes which are happening in South Africa, which are contrary to the "atmosphere that prevailed when [she] was growing in a small town. Its inhabitants were of the various modern South African races: Africans, English, Jewish shopkeepers, Boers (who now wish to be called "Afrikaans" but we cannot get used to it), Coloureds. There was even the isolated Indian shopkeeper" (Jabavu 1963, p. 8). These racial groups account for the convergences of people in South Africa who form part of what it means to be a South African. These racial categories each symbolise the various historical and cultural threads that Noni explores throughout her book. She continues by saying that "If you grew up in such personal contacts you liked to feel that even *apartheid* is only another framework, a transitory one – like other policies that had framed people's lives in other times" (Jabavu 1963, p. 8).

Her views on apartheid suggest that she has not fully experienced its consequences because she has been away from home for so long. However, she sees it as a way of life which is so incredulous that it is "a transitory one" (Jabavu 1963) because it is a historical moment that is at odds with the experience of sharing space amicably in spite of difference. Instead she yearns for the South Africa of her childhood, which is fading away with the more repressive apartheid laws which are being introduced. While she is aware of apartheid's consequences, she holds onto what it meant to grow up in a small town that seemed largely shielded from the grand politics of the state, even though it had its own regional politics influenced by settler colonialism. However, Noni's naiveté is what shields her from being able to see the racial schisms which already existed in her childhood. She remembers her childhood with fondness, but her memory belies the truth about the ways in which apartheid laws were set in motion with the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910.

Noni writes about the apartheid laws in relation to how they have influenced her family and close community. In reminiscing about Frieda and Z.K Matthews, whom she refers to as Aunt Frieda and Uncle Zac, she invokes the Treason Trial and the Group Areas Act of 1950. While her uncle was a Professor of Law and Social Anthropology at Fort Hare, as well as Acting Principal of the college, he was arrested by the police who "swooped upon [him] in bed at

night" (Jabavu 1963, p. 19). While the incident happens while she was abroad, the trial was key to the narrative of resistance in South Africa. She continues:

> …my first knowledge of it was through banner headlines in newspapers abroad. He and his son, my brother's age – and former playmate – were imprisoned, then later charged in the famous Treason Trial together with one hundred and fifty other people, the ordeal that was to last for years. It was then that our small world saw the stuff my aunt was made of, and saluted her as a 'modern African'. As a matter of fact her generation and branch of the family were partly English and Scots, but Xhosa people have no complex about 'miscegenation'. (Jabavu 1963, p. 19)

The Treason Trial of 1956 was a major political moment in South Africa's history, where a countrywide raid saw the arrest of "the premier leaders of the Congress Alliance arrested on charges of high treason and an alleged conspiracy to overthrow the state" (Mandela 1995, p. 200). Noni juxtaposes this political moment with her aunt's reaction to her husband's arrest, as the moment when the small world of Alice witnessed the effects of the trial on the family. The effects of the Treason Trial were spread over fours years, but the judges found the accused not guilty. Nonetheless, the state continued with its repression over many years.

Whereas Noni is writing about the Treason Trial, she is also writing about another seemingly benign historical moment of miscegenation between Black people and settler communities. By invoking her aunt's heritage as "partly English and Scots" she highlights the nuances of the arrival of the missionaries in the 1800s in the Cape. While this history is recorded as a grand narrative of the arrival of the 1820 settlers, Noni is showing the unwritten stories wherein there were intimate relationships between the settlers and the Black people in the process of creating the nation of South Africa, which is formally established in 1910[18].

Noni continues to explore the influence of apartheid laws on their everyday life by invoking "Dr Verwoerd's Group Areas Act" which created "European Ethnic Areas" (Jabavu 1963, p. 20). This law decreed that "inhabitants had to move to 'black' ethnic areas. In some cases no decision had been declared as to where people were to go" (Jabavu 1963, p. 20). Although the effects of displacement and landlessness are discussed extensively in Chapter 3 of this thesis, it is worth noting the fear of the apartheid state's laws and the disruption to normal life. Noni

[18] A well-known example is Tiyo Soga's marriage to a Scottish woman, Janet Burnside, while he was studying in Scotland (Shepard 1955). They returned to South Africa where Soga's life unfolded as "the first internationally educated black South African and priest, a pioneer of African literature, and a seminal intellectual" (Ndletyana 2008, p. 17). This issue of miscegenation is the hidden history of South Africa's story, which Noni also does not elaborate upon extensively.

shows how the Group Areas Act may have disrupted their private lives while considering a visit to her Aunt Frieda's house, which is in an area designated for white people. Noni continues by saying that "Nowadays a wire fence surrounds the village for it is now an 'enclosed location' as they will all be eventually, under *apartheid,* Dr Verwoerd's policy of 'good neighbourliness'; the better to police and control" (Jabavu 1963, p. 29). This is the crux of the apartheid state which Noni returns to when visiting her family: policing and control.

The apartheid laws which Noni writes about are linked to the history of the Dutch settlers, who have reinvented themselves as Afrikaners who created Afrikaner nationalism. The history of the Afrikaners is fraught, given the relationship they had with both the English and the indigenous people whom they found when they arrived in South Africa, as well as with the slave trade that they were involved in. Noni invokes the history of the Afrikaners briefly in a childhood memory, where as children, they used to pretend to be Dutch Voortrekkers because "such scenes were depicted in the school books where we had read how 'the brave Boers formed wagons into a laager (strong point) at nights for safety. From there they shot down the savage natives'. So we played and shouted '*Basopani, siyeza singama Bhulu!* Look out we're the Boers and will get you'" (Jabavu 1963, p. 21-22). Insomuch as these are childhood games, they speak to the nature of cultural imagination that even children formed around South Africa's history and present reality of the influence of white settler colonialism. This image of Black children pretending to be Dutch Voortrekkers suggests the ways in which the cultural imagination in South Africa was altered by the arrival of settler colonialism, which played itself out in simple taken-for-granted ways such as children's games. Noni's allusion to the knowledge from her school books highlights the ways in which the school curriculum and knowledge production more broadly infused the narrative of the settlers on the education of Black people. Instead of being taught a broader history about life before white settler colonialism, Noni learns about a history which justifies the oppression of Black people. I will elaborate more on the consequences of this education in Chapter 3, when I discuss the ways in which education played a role in dislocating Black people from their history.

While Noni refers to the miscegenation between the Scottish, English and the Xhosa people, she also refers to the influence of indigenous people in her family. While referring to her mother and aunts, she explains "My mother, like many Makiwanes had, as they said, '*rotten Hottentot hair',* tinged with ginger and knobbly, needing tremendous preparation to make it

presentable – '*wretched Bushman stuff!*'" (Jabavu, 1960: 18). Considering that Noni is seemingly using offensive language[19] to explain the miscegenation which is also part of her family, which occurred between the Khoi-Khoi people and Xhosa people, she is also pointing to the history of the connections between the Khoi-Khoi people, which are characterised by war and conflict. In his book *The House of Phalo: A history of the Xhosa People in the days of their independence,* Jeff Peires explains that in the 1700s, the Xhosa people encroached on territory in what is now the Western Cape and were met with resistance by the Inqua Kingdom of Hinsati (Peires 2003). Eventually "The Inqua kingdom of Hinsati, most powerful of all the Khoi rulers, fell to the Xhosa around 1700… the Inqua were shattered and assimilated into the Xhosa nation as the Sukwini, Gqwashu and Nkarwane clans" (Peires 2003, p. 27). Noni refers to AmamGqunukhwebe "the Xhosa clan of Middledrift and district, noted more than most for their Hottentot blood, which their name suggests" (Jabavu 1963, p. 23). These clashes and cultural connections are part of the story of isizwe, where indigenous groups formed bigger groups over time as a result of war and geopolitics. In writing about the making of South Africa, Noni draws attention to the complex nature of how racial groups interacted historically, which had a subsequent impact on the South Africa she returns to in the 1950s.

Though the making of isizwe is as a result of war and white settler colonialism, Noni introduces the idea of ilizwe by recounting stories about amaJingqhi, amaMfengu, amaGcaleka, amaGqunukhwebe and amaNdlambe. Although these groups are typically referred to as Xhosa people more broadly, the idea of Xhosa people is contested, as it emerges from the colonial and apartheid impetus to remove differentiation amongst African groups in order to control Black people as a homogenous group. Each of these groups had their own chiefs, but this political system was disrupted by the frontier wars and conflicts with British and Dutch settlers. By referring to each of these groups by their original descriptors distinctly, Noni is inadvertently reclaiming the contested identity of what it means to be Xhosa, and problematizing the idea of the nation and isizwe. In a sense, the establishment of the South African nation state meant the destruction of isizwe of indigenous people.

[19] In contemporary times, referring to Khoi San people as Bushmen and Hottentot is regarded as offensive, as these were colonial names to refer to a variety of groups amongst the Khoi San. Christa Kuljian's Book *Darwn's Hunch* tracks the politics and treatment of the Khoi San in 20th century South Africa. Kuljian explains in 'Notes on Language': "Today the terms KhoeSan, Khoisan, or San are most commonly used. However, the term "Bushmen" is still used by some people to identify themselves and the term "Hottentot" is considered an insult."

Walter. B. Rubusana highlights this disruption in his book *Zemk'inkomo Magwalandini* (1906/1911), which has chapters dedicated to the history of amaGqunukhwebe, amaGcaleka, amaRarabe, AmaJingqi, amaNdlambe, abaTembu, abaMbo, amaMpondo, amaBomvane, amaMpondomise, and abeSutu[20] (Rubusana 1906), highlighting the distinctions amongst these groups. After the frontier wars, the British established the Cape colony; in the process, they sought to destroy the distinct groups, which they collapsed into what eventually became the Xhosa. Therefore, by referring to ilizwe lamaJingqhi, Noni is pointing out the connection between ilizwe of the Xhosa people who were confronted by white settler colonialism and Afrikaner nationalism, which were a danger to African nationalism, isizwe esimnyama. A significant example in the book is the inclusion of amaJingqhi, as the Jabavus were part of this group. Noni reflects on this during her trip with her uncles when the visit Ntselamanzi: "'*Ilizwe lama Jingqhi,'* Uncle Cecil murmured sighing deeply, 'The country of the Jingqhi people'. He said it again and again, '*The people of Chief, Maqoma'"* (Jabavu 1963, p. 24). Maqoma is one of the well-known chiefs who resisted white settler colonialism. After fighting in the frontier wars against British soldiers, he was convicted and "sent into exile on Robben Island. Released in 1869, the Chief attempted to settle on his stolen land and was rebanished to the infamous island prison, where he died in 1873" (Stapleton 1994, p. 10). This narrative of Maqoma is significant for Noni, as she meets the descendant of Maqoma during her trip. At Ntselamanzi they pay respects to the gravesite, and her uncles defer to custom by going to greet the chief who lives nearby, who is a descendant of Maqoma, who has taken on his ancestor's name, Chief Maqoma. Noni sits silently while listening to the conversation between her uncles and the chief, which connects the past and the present and the significance of land. In the process, she is able to glean the history of dispossession and oppression in South Africa. She explains that Chief Maqoma

> …went back to the Hundred Years War, his people's struggle against displacement, dispossession, to their final conquest and subjugation, to the beginning of the removals from pillar to post, a review in which he contrasted the freedom and nobility of the cattle pastoral life, its splendid horizons physical and spiritual – with the present 'bare existence' in fixed and enclosed villages. He talked about the expiration of nationhood when those thousands upon thousands of cattle became the spoil of the victorious harrying English. Now the harriers were the Boers. Verwoerd had decreed yet another removal for the remnant of his tribe, his people. (Jabavu 1963, p. 40)

[20] I have used the early orthography of isiXhosa Rubusana uses in his book, which excluded "t" to indicate aspirated sounds. For example, Sutu has evolved to Sotho.

By harking back to this history, Noni subversively includes the history of resistance and infuses it with narratives of nationalism. For Noni, it becomes clear that Afrikaner nationalism and British imperialism are closely linked and gave rise to African resistance. Apartheid South Africa exists because of the expiration of the nationhood of black people – isizwe esimnyama – through violence, theft of cattle and new laws to entrench the dispossession of Black people. In order for white settlers to create a home – a nation state in 1910 – they displaced indigenous communities and dispossessed them through the 1913 Land Act, which will be elaborated upon in the next chapter. The project of white settler nationalism and Afrikaner nationalism must be seen in conversation with "vanished nationhood" (Jabavu 1963, p. 41).

By including this history through seemingly mundane conversations, Noni highlights the ways in which resistance and oppression were infused in the daily life of her experience at home. More importantly, this experience illustrates the importance of memory and the role it plays in keeping the history of dispossession alive for Noni's generation (and later generations), who have either been estranged from home or only experience South Africa as apartheid South Africa. The memory of her uncles and Chief Maqoma can be read as a form of resistance which refuses to accept the new laws which continue to entrench displacement and oppression. They refuse to forget the past of freedom which has been passed down to them through oral history, which Noni describes as the "archives that they carry in their heads" (Jababvu 1963, p. 130). By returning to these archives, Noni and other earlier writers such as S.E.K. Mqhayi, Tiyo Soga, I. Wauchope and W. B. Rubusana, to name a few, refused to forget and unremember through their writings, resisting the erasure of this history in order to reclaim their dignity as Africans.

Noni memorialises a less-known writer, James Ntshona, who worked with her grandfathers in the newspapers. He wrote "a weekly literary article to our paper for decades" and urged others to "write down what they know" (Jabavu 1963, p. 113). This was the impetus of early writers who felt the urgent need to remember the past through the tool that the missionary education was using against them: writing and publishing their own stories. Without knowledge of their history, these writers know that African people would not be able to fight the existential battle of imperialism, which relies on loss of memory in order to convince those who are conquered that there was no civilisation before they were conquered. It is this epistemic violence that reinvents the words from the title of Rubusana's book – *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* / defend

your heritage – as a reminder to protect one's heritage as a form of resistance. Rubusana's title harks to a poem written by Isaac Wauchope in 1882, which was published in the Lovedale newspaper *Isigidimi SamaXhosa* (Mkhize 2008). The poem begins:

> Zimkile! Mfo wohlanga, (Gone are your cattle! Countryman,)
> Phuthuma, phuthuma; (Hasten, Hasten;)
> Yishiy'imfakadolo, (Leave the musket,)
> Phuthuma ngosiba (Take to the pen)
> Thabath'iphepha neinki, (Take paper and ink,)
> Likhala lakho elo. (That's your armour.)

I include this poem as an example of the ways in which the narrative of the loss of cattle was both material and existential and forms a cultural motif of African resistance, which is referred to by Chief Maqoma as well when Noni visits Ntselamanzi. Noni's reflections on the loss of cattle are more than just a telling of a story as she is participating in a conversation which captures the essence of isizwe in the context of white settler colonialism. This idea of cattle and isizwe continues to find expression in contemporary culture where Caiphus Semenya's song "Ziph'iinkomo" (where are the cows) and Sibongile Khumalo's rendition of "Yakhal'inkomo" (the cow bellows) which have found expression in cultural production. I find the most recent adaptation of this idea by singer, Simphiwe Dana, more useful in this discussion. Dana uses this idea in her album "Kulture Noir" in the song "Zobuya nin'inkomo" which means "When will the cattle return?" The first verse of the song also echoes Wauchope's poem, as she has responded in writing a song to capture the loss of heritage which continues to mark the contemporary South African public imagination amongst Black people:

> Zobuya nin'inkomo (when will the cattle return)
> Emathafeni (from the fields)
> zobuy'ekuseni… (they will return in the morning) (Dana 2010)

I include these references to show the significance of Noni's discussion on cattle and their connection to isizwe. Cattle is seen as the wealth which was stolen as part of the land dispossession; as Noni explains, "cattle spelt prestige, children, continuity, happiness" (Jabavu 1960, p. 25) which are lost through the arrival of the Dutch and British settlers.

Noni's inclusion of these narratives shows that "history was not dead but alive" (Jabavu 1963, p. 130), as she does not write about Xhosa people and their history as though it should remain stagnant. She acknowledges the migrations and conflicts which were happening before the arrival of settlers which influenced the ways in which the groups listed above negotiated space. While traveling in a bus to visit her uncle, Noni is caught in conversation with ordinary people who are interested in the history of the regions they traverse on their trip through the Transkei and Ciskei. Here she realises that

> …the history of 'the migrations' of tribes and the encounters that these had brought; and naturally, by the structure of society, since that had been the root cause of the movements of populations… The migrations had been of course, the only way in which a polygynous nation could solve the political problems that accompanied royal succession; the whole thing an expression of the patriarchal family system. (Jabavu 1963, p. 130)

The tribes that Noni is referring to relate the list of groups mentioned above. The use of the word "tribe" is problematic because of the ways in which Noni imagines Africa through the lens of her colonial education. Elsewhere Archie Mafeje observes, "is it not significant that the term [tribe] occurs when English is spoken? In South Africa the indigenous population has no word for 'tribe'; only for 'nation', 'clan', and 'lineage' and, traditionally, people were identified by territory- 'Whose [which Chief's] land do you come from?'" (Mafeje 1971, p. 254) This highlights that the word tribe emerges from a colonial gaze on Africa rather than an African gaze at the continent. Mafeje asks "Might not African history, written, not by Europeans, but by Africans themselves, have employed different concepts and told a different story?" (1971, p. 253) It is these ideas that Noni problematizes when she writes about Xhosa people by referring to them in general as isizwe, and particularly to iziduko, their clan names. While Noni's use of the word tribe is problematic, the significance thereof in this discussion is the way in which she accounts for a dynamic "structure of society" before the colonial encounter, where populations moved according to the conflicts encountered by any group of people looking for places to settle. The "political problems" existed before the colonial encounter; this is important because it removes the romanticism often associated with the history about the way Africans lived before the colonial moment. This romanticism emerges in a conversation between Noni's father and James Ntshona, which highlights the complexity of the settlers' arrival and the ways in which isizwe was created and recreated. This conversation expands on the notion of isizwe:

> This white man has made a problem of his presence here in South Africa… The white man has not the faintest idea how to "live-with-others". His attitude is that of dog in manger, do you hear… Yet we black people, here-before-they-came, made an art of how tribes should "live-side-by-side, *ukuhlalisana*". When new people arrived in a locality during the great migrations, did not Africans allot the strangers a space in which to live? ...Our chief exchanged a gift of cattle with their chief, then pointed to an area and said "Graze there, settle, live your life. Your people and mine will confer – when matters arise that have to be discussed; will rejoice together – when matters for rejoicing arise". We did not war for the sake of warring, no! If the newcomers were refugees, as in the time of those northern despots – oTshaka who turned their nation into despoilers, savages, scattering people for no reason – we welcomed the refugees; for that was our code. We "*adopted them: Sabangenisa"*…And they lived in peace; became part of us; added their strength to ours; domestic and political security…" (Jabavu 1963, p. 115)

This conversation offers a reading of how to understand the conflicts, migrations and movements which influenced the ideas about how isizwe is formed in relation to ilizwe, which existed before the arrival of settlers. The focus in Ntshona's analysis is "the problem of the white man" who has disrupted an otherwise idyllic existence of isizwe before his arrival. This idea of an idyllic past is part of the romanticism that needs to be challenged, as it does not offer a critical understanding of life before the settler's arrival in South Africa. Ntshona describes a state of affairs that is peaceful, even though there is historical evidence such as the conflict with the Khoi-Khoi as already mentioned, as well as the war between Ndlambe and Ngqika, which Rubusana writes about in his book under the title "Imfazwe kaTutula" (Tutula's war / The war over Tutula)[21] (Rubusana 1911). There is also the famous Battle of Amalinde, where Ndhlambe "had tried to displace his young nephew Ngqika Gaika, the true right hand heir who had removed to what is now called the Ciskei" (Jabavu 1963, p. 131). The inclusion of Tshaka's[22] narrative tries to acknowledge some of this complexity; however, it is shallow in terms of explaining the reasons for the wars and conflicts Shaka was waging. The refugees he refers to become the group known as amaMfengu[23]. In fact, it is the bus trip to Confluence Farm which highlights the contested nature of history in spite of the picture that Ntshona presents.

In this section I have argued that Noni cleverly includes as many narratives as possible about the creation of isizwe, as this is the nature of the contested history of South Africa. She does not offer a definitive story but rather, allows the different narratives to sit alongside each

[21] This is the story of Ngqika trying to take Ndlambe's wife, Tutula, as his own.

[22] Tshaka refers to Shaka, as the spelling has changed over time.

[23] The word Mfengu comes from the word ukumfenguza, which means "to roam around as refugees do".

other as is the nature of oral history, which does not present one view or truth but ensures that each story matters. This idea of isizwe can be seen in relation to more contemporary discussions about South Africa and the contested nature of the narrative of the nation, which I will explore next in the discussion of how Sisonke experiences South Africa decades after Noni's experiences.

The imaginary homeland and reality of the new South Africa in *Always Another Country*

In the last section of this chapter, I turn to Sisonke's *Always Another Country* to discuss the ways in which she has imagined South Africa and the consequences of an imaginary homeland. I will then discuss how she experiences South Africa when she realises that the country she imagined does not exist. The tension of this version of South Africa is that she imagines a South Africa that does not exist, and she spends her time in South Africa trying to make peace with the reality of South Africa after growing up in exile. At the core of Sisonke's imagined homeland is "the dream of freedom" (Msimang 2017, p. 3). She admits that "The South Africa I imagined as a child was a place of triumph, a crucible out of which a more dignified and just humanity would emerge" (Msimang 2017, p. 3). It is this imagination which collides with the reality of being in a South Africa that is riddled with violence, and an ANC that cannot make South Africa a place of triumph.

To help me analyse this text, I draw on Salman Rushdie's idea of an imaginary homeland, as it is useful for explaining Sisonke's relationship with South Africa. Rushdie points out that an imaginary homeland refers to an imagined homeland which one develops after years of exile or being estranged from one's home country (Rushdie 2010). He describes an imaginary homeland as a "fiction(s), not actual cities or villages, but invisible" (Rushdie 2010, p. 10). Rushdie connects this idea to memory and the ways in which memory and writing are linked. In writing about her imaginary homeland, Sisonke is writing "of memory and about memory… a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of millions of possible versions" (Rushdie 2010, p. 10). Because of the nature of memoir and life writing in general, as discussed in Chapter 1, Sisonke's version of South Africa exists amongst many versions of what it means to understand this country and its history. Rushdie continues to contest memory by using an evocative metaphor where "human beings do not perceive things whole; we are not gods but wounded creatures, cracked lenses, capable only of fractured perceptions" (Rushdie 2010, p. 12). In his discussion around Indian writers in England, Rushdie describes himself as translated because "the word 'translation' comes, etymologically, from the Latin

for ‘bearing across’. Having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling obstinately to the notion that something can also be gained” (Rushdie 2010, p. 17). This is to say that Sisonke’s position as an exile who writes about her imagined idea of South Africa is also a translated woman who is characterised by gaining a different perspective about South Africa rather than a loss.

Sisonke is “bereft of a physical place in this world [she] could call home, exile made [her] love the idea of South Africa” (Msimang 2017, p. 4). This idea of South Africa is a constant negotiation for herself. Eventually she has to make peace with the realisation that her idea may not have a place in South Africa. At the core of the imaginary homeland is an imagination of how one should exist in a country that they have been estranged from over time. An imaginary homeland is formed out of memories and nostalgia as a result of those memories. While nostalgia is associated with romanticising the past (Coullie 2014), Sisonke romanticises the future South Africa. Sisonke imagines that she is coming home to the country she imagined as a child, but instead finds a country in flux and transition. The homeland she imagines does not exist because the “new South Africa” does not exist; South Africa cannot be made anew by simply adding a descriptor. Newness suggests a break with the past, and in the case of South Africa, newness suggests that unremembering needs to take place in order for the “new South Africa” to become a reality. This idea of a new South Africa is predicated on moving on from the past in ways that do not acknowledge the trauma wrought on Black people during the old South Africa. The problem of the new South Africa is captured in the idea of the rainbow nation, which Sisonke herself admits to be one of the disappointments because “we knew South Africa was a complicated and brutal place and not just a country for dreamers, but this did not stop us from dreaming” (Msimang 2017, p. 3). It is this dream of South Africa that is the imaginary homeland which fuels Sisonke’s need to make a home in South Africa, even while she lives with its disappointments. This dream is captured in the rainbow nation – the place of triumph and freedom – which Chikane describes as:

> …a political metaphor meant to give South Africa an international identity and a sense of purpose… a bid to make a fractured society whole again and reconfigure its national identity. This off-the-cuff phrase ‘rainbow nation’ evolved into a fully fledged political mindset. It provides a heuristic tool – a mental shortcut – to disjoin within the psyche of South Africans the old from the new. It represents a racially

> harmonious society as opposed to the apartheid past, which found its logic in the dis-union of people. (Chikane 2018, p. 26)

However, the new rainbow South Africa is insufficient for the reasons Chikane points out, as it is a "mental shortcut" in order to appease the psyche of South Africans who want to reconcile the old with the new. Chikane expands on Gqola's idea about rainbow-ism where the rainbow nation becomes synonymous with South Africa. When the idea of the rainbow nation is invoked it "stifles rigourous discussions of power differentials" (Gqola 2001, p. 98). In a sense, the discourse of the rainbow nation "foregrounds racial variety, even as it does not constructively deal with the meanings thereof" (Gqola 2001, p. 99). The very premise of the rainbow nation and the new South Africa is flawed, which is part of the problems that Sisonke writes about as she tries to explain her complicity therein, and the ways in which she has to negotiate her outsider status in a place she believes to be home.

One of the important instances of realising that her idea of South Africa is imagined comes in the symbol of Nelson Mandela. In 1990, Nelson Mandela was released from prison; Sisonke was sixteen years old. Sisonke experiences the release of Nelson Mandela via CNN while living in Nairobi. She writes about her Aunty Angela and Uncle Stan crying through the moment. Her position in the moment requires her own imagination to make up for the geographical distance between home and Nairobi: "I am imagining the smell of the place and wondering whether it is cold. I am trying to imagine myself into the moment" (Msimang 2017, p. 113). It is through her imagination that the experience can become fully meaningful, because she knows that not being in South Africa is a loss that she has managed to fill with the ideas she has held onto about herself and the future home she will return to. While she imagines herself into the moment, she is confronted with the man who "is not the Mandela of the T-shirts. This man is so lean; so old. He is relying on his wife more than he ought to" (Msimang 2017, p. 113). The Mandela of her dreams does not exist either, because he is an imagined figure she heard about during her childhood.

Nelson Mandela's release is a moment of rupture for Sisonke, because it is this image of the old man Mandela which will be the driving force behind the rainbow nation which he uses to find peace in South Africa. The Mandela of T-shirts cannot be the Mandela of the new South Africa, because he was a symbol that was needed to keep the struggle alive in places where his image was not banned. Such is the power of what the new South Africa means, as it is built on the symbolic power of the ANC and Nelson Mandela, whose symbolism continues to

be contested. In her reflections on the release of Mandela, Lebohang Pheko admits that upon returning from exile (she was also born in Zambia) she "found the Mandela hype infuriating… and I wondered if decades of struggle, bloodshed, sacrifice and the kind of trauma that many people of my parents' generation had undergone could possibly be reduced to one human being" (Pheko 2012, p. 159).

Sisonke returns to South Africa after the release of Mandela, during the transitory period to democracy. She describes her position in relation to impending freedom which has not quite arrived yet because "Mandela has guaranteed us safe entry into South Africa, even though apartheid is still alive. They do not smile or welcome us but they let us in" (Msimang 2017, p. 114). The reality of apartheid is part of the shock of returning to South Africa, as Sisonke imagined freedom. The realisation that apartheid continues to be "still alive" is the ongoing disappointment, which Sisonke continues to face the longer she stays in South Africa. The "they" in question refers to the immigration officials she encounters at the airport, who are the symbol of apartheid South Africa's resistance to the changes that have begun happening with the release of Nelson Mandela. The image of the unsmiling immigration officers hints at the dissonance that is to follow, as Sisonke never feels quite at home in South Africa. She has to negotiate her own sense of belonging rather than return back to a country that has made space for her. It is as though she is returning to a house that she wants to live in, but it does not have a room where she can sleep; she has to create that room herself.

Sisonke is aware of her subjectivity as someone who was not born in South Africa, but regards South Africa as home. This tension finds itself in her perceptions of what influences her first job at the Australian High Commission (AusAid) as a programme officer. Sisonke "speaks English in a way that suits them and yet [she] is local. Nevermind that [she is] South African in name only – simply because [her] ID book says so and that, in reality, there is very little about [her] beyond [her] DNA, that is local" (Msimang 2017, p. 197). Being South African in name only suggests that Sisonke begins to realise that while she is South African, she is not local. Even though she is a citizen of South Africa who can vote and participate in the project of rebuilding South Africa after apartheid, citizenship does not necessarily mean that Sisonke is local, of the place.

Sisonke's working life is characterised by this need to become local, even though she is clearly an outsider who has to explain her accent and why she does not speak an African

language. Her exile experience means that she is global and therefore she has to do the work of becoming local in order to belong to the new South Africa. This is the disillusionment which Sisonke reflects upon in her writing as it poses the question: who belongs to South Africa? Even though political freedom happens in 1994, after the first democratic elections, the question of belonging looms large in the cultural imagination of all South Africans. For others, the land dispossession and poverty which continues in post-apartheid South Africa begs the question of political freedom in relation to economic freedom. Sisonke's experience of South Africa clashes with the idea of the "new South Africa", which cannot be made entirely new because of a history that will not allow South Africa to be born anew; history is always lingering in the present questions about reconciliation.

While attending one of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings, Sisonke's sense of being an outsider is heightened since she is "attending as an observer and the word suddenly feels like an accurate reflection of who [she] is: an outsider" (Msimang 2017, p. 213). She continues:

> Being home means bumping into mirror images of myself everywhere after a lifetime of being in African countries but never quite looking like an archetypal Kenyan or Zambian. Being home, I am acutely aware of the dissonance between being *of* a place by virtue of physiological heritage and being *from* a place by virtue of memory and experience. I look like I belong, but I don't. (pp. 213-214)

This outsider status reinforces the notion that belonging is more than being in a place but rather, there is a depth that Sisonke is lacking because she has memories of exile and an idea of the "new South Africa". The distinction between being of a place and from a place highlights the paradox that Sisonke is grappling with as she tries to make sense of her subjectivity in relation to being a South African.

It is through the TRC process that Sisonke inserts herself into the South African narrative. The TRC is one of the historical moments in the "new South Africa", which was a political attempt at addressing the country's past. Nonetheless, it was a contested process which has been written about extensively. The contestation and the tensions lie in the words "truth" and "reconciliation" because, as Gqola observes, it is "naive to imagine that having revealed some truths, the South Africa populace would then be able to move ahead embracing new ways of relating to one another. Rather, the task of' reconciliation' is more ambitious than it is often framed to be" (Gqola 2001, p. 97). Therefore, it seems equally naïve that Sisonke would use

the process of the TRC to find herself in the new South Africa through a process marred by inconsistencies, because it cannot offer the full extent of the story about South Africa's past and future. The TRC was a public performance of South Africa's memory, which Gqola refers to as the "project of memory-making" (2001, p. 97). This contestation is captured by Antjie Krog, who reported on the TRC extensively, and subsequently wrote *Country of My Skull*. She explains that:

> For the first time these individual truths sound unhindered in the ears of all South Africans. The black people in the audience are seldom upset. They have known the truth for years. The whites are often disconcerted: they didn't realise the magnitude of the outrage, the 'depth of depravity' as Tutu calls it. Where does the truth lie? What does it have to do with reconciliation and justice? (Krog 2009, p. 45)

Even while Sisonke witnesses the TRC, she seems to gloss over these tensions because she seems to be interested in the memory-making project rather than the truth. Sisonke uses the TRC in order to be able to participate in this project, which has implications for what it means to be a South African in post-apartheid South Africa.

While she was observing the TRC for work purposes, and in turn writing a report, her notes and memos become "a blueprint for how I will make myself South African" (Msimang 216). It is through writing about the horrors of apartheid for a foreign audience that Sisonke consciously deals with her outsider status. The process of making herself South African is about stories of the past which she did not experience because she was in exile. It is through the narratives of the collective trauma that she can find a better understanding of what the country's history means in order to become South African. She continues:

> I will work my way into the heart of this country. This job will help me go to places I would not go on my own – to townships where I know no one and to rural parts of the country where I am a stranger. It will be awkward everytime I introduce myself, when I appear lost, when I have to give a long backstory to explain why I don't speak the language, how I am still learning. The TRC makes me want to be South African even as it shows me how lightly I got off – how lucky my childhood was. It eases the longing I had as a child, even as it ignites a curiosity that I know will never fully be satisfied – a longing for answers about how people survived and how they would make it into the future without tearing themselves apart. (Msimang 216)

It is ironic that it is through working for an international organisation that Sisonke is forced to traverse parts of South Africa that she would not go to on her own. She makes new memories and experiences where she can insert herself into the heart of the place she imagined throughout her childhood. It is through the active process of travelling to places beyond her

comfort zone that Sisonke chooses to become a South African. She has to endure the small humiliations of not being able to interact in a fluid way in certain places because she is a visitor and a stranger who has to explain herself. She recognises the longings of her childhood and how being in exile meant that she was sheltered. Sisonke uses the strength of what it means to be a Black South African – surviving – in order to make a place for herself. Her choice of using the TRC to make herself South African suggests that the moment of political transition allows Sisonke the opportunity to remake her identity. This new identity is in conversation with her childhood curiosity that she realises will never be satisfied, even though she has finally arrived home to the place she has always imagined.

In spite of the disillusionment and the dis-ease of being South African "in name only", Sisonke becomes part of the young generation of Black people who can own the freedom because "This country is already ours and we know it so we are basking in one of those moments kissed by the gods: it sparkles and shines and so do we. We are young and freedom is in front of us and heartbreak and pain are yesterday's heroes" (Msimang 2017, p. 116). However, this state of euphoria is constantly in flux because freedom is not a permanent state even in a free, post-apartheid, new South Africa. This lack of freedom is captured in the iterations of the Black experience which complicate the notion of freedom. Because of the stark class distinctions in the new South Africa, Sisonke has to reckon with her own privilege as a family which returns educated and ready for freedom. Sisonke writes about Black people who do not have the same privileges she has:

> Then there are others: the friends Zeng never really made, the ones whose parents aren't anyone special. These are the black kids who are bussed in to the suburbs from Atteridgeville township or Mamelodi who attend the high school down the street from our house where Zeng is initially enrolled in school. These kids can't relate to Zeng and she can't relate to them. They think she is stuck up because her English is perfect and her isiZulu faltering and her seSotho is non-existent. They think she is stuck up because she lives in a house down the street and doesn't need to wake up at the crack of dawn to catch a bus to be around white children who scorn them and laugh at their hair and their noses and the way they speak. (Msimang 2017, p. 205)

The class politics Sisonke describes above speak to questions of belonging and unbelonging and how they are reflected amongst Black people in a different class in the political moment, where Black people have been promised that they all finally belong to a free, new South Africa, the rainbow nation. Atteridgeville and Mamelodi are Black townships which were created by apartheid legislation that rendered Black people pariahs in the old South Africa.

The nature of apartheid spatial politics was to exclude Black people from citizenship, which is linked to my discussion of Noni, where this was in the creation of native reserves. These can be contrasted with the townships that were produced by the Group Areas Act of 1950. These two acts entrench the sense of ukuba phandle, outsider status, of Black people in South Africa. While I discuss this idea of ukuba phandle in the next chapter, it is important to flag at this point of the discussion as it shows the synergies between how Noni and Sisonke write about the politics of space in two different historical moments.

Apartheid spatial politics continue to linger and make life difficult for the "new blacks" such as Sisonke's family, who are ready to take their place in the "new South Africa" and occupy space in the suburbs. The Black people from Atteridgeville and Mamelodi are a reminder of the incomplete transition into democracy and the elusive nature of freedom when inequality persists. Sisonke uses her sister Zeng to highlight this difficulty. In watching how her sister negotiates her place in South Africa, how she relates with the poor, Black children whose parents "aren't anyone special" (Msimang 2017, p. 205), she is able to explore the difficulty through language. The fact that Zeng speaks English fluently and the other children do not highlights the role language plays in who belongs and who does not. Interestingly, Sisonke makes little comment about Afrikaans, which is the other dominant language in Pretoria, where they initially settle. English is her mother tongue, which provides social capital as a result of being raised abroad and returning as middle-class Black people. They do not have to deal with Afrikaans because even though it is the dominant language in Pretoria, it is a language associated with South Africa's past. Zeng's faltering abilities in South African indigenous languages do not necessarily exclude her from the new South Africa, but rather mean that she cannot fully relate to poor, Black people whose English is weak or non-existent. Zeng is called a coconut[24] by her peers who do not occupy the same social class, which is a marker that she belongs to the white world of the new South Africa, and those who tease her know that they belong to the Black world of the new South Africa. Choosing to live in the suburbs and not the townships highlights the kind of choices middle-class Black people make in order to own their new status as privileged in the new South Africa.

[24] This is a derogatory term that refers to a Black person who has assimilated into whiteness through a privileged education at former white schools: black on the outside, white on the inside. This word became popular in the mid-1990s and has become even more popular through the novel *Coconut* (2007) by Kopano Matlwa, as well as Panashe Chigumadzi's Ruth First speech in 2015. More recently, Rekgotsofetse Chikane writes about "coconuts" in his book *Breaking a rainbow, building a nation: The Politics behind the #MustFall Movements* (2018).

The class politics become untenable a decade after the 1994 moment, because the rainbow nation does not become a place of freedom for everyone, as “in the future, a new and arrogant black will emerge. This new black will not be interested in the stories of the poor” (Msimang, 2017: 207). The stories of the poor are what begin to make the rainbow nation fade after the euphoria of 1994, because South Africa cannot hide its cracks, the unfulfilled dream of a country where there is economic emancipation. The relationship with the poor is contrasted with white middle-class people who “are angry and resentful” (Msimang 2017, p. 208) because Sisonke and the blackness she represents become the enemy: “We represent everything whites in Pretoria fear they will lose with the end of apartheid” (Msimang 2017, p. 208). The racial tensions Sisonke experiences are conflated with class politics, because middle-class Black people are a threat to whiteness because they have the ability to occupy the place of privilege, albeit based on the tentative economic freedom which is only a reality for a few Black people after 1994.

Sisonke’s imaginary homeland is intricately linked with her class position, which emerges while in exile and becomes the special group of educated Black people who will take their rightful place in the new South Africa. Frantz Fanon complicates the middle-class of a transitioning African state because it “refuses to follow the path of revolution” and instead it falls into a “deplorable stagnation” (Fanon 1991, p. 150). The stagnation is seen in the ANC’s demise, as well as Sisonke’s complicity in what she calls South Africa Inc, when she moves into a home in the suburbs (Msimang 2017). It seems Sisonke never imagined herself participating in the class project of the new South Africa because she is a child of a freedom fighter, a child of the revolution against apartheid. While she tries to be an activist in the new South Africa, she falls short and instead finds herself complicit in the “deplorable stagnation” (Fanon 1991) of a middle-class existence in South Africa Inc.

Sisonke returns as a young person who is idealistic about the role she can play in building the “new South Africa”, but over time, the idealism is marred by the realities of becoming an adult in an unequal society. Part of the promise of freedom is choosing where one can live; because of her class position, Sisonke and her husband buy a house in the suburbs, which unravels Sisonke’s project of making herself South African as she realises she is complicit in the parts of South Africa which undermine freedom. Sisonke realises that “suburban South Africa is more than geography. It is a place as haunting as it is manicured; a place lacking in

soul and propelled by fear even as it is splashed in sunlight by day and bathed in streetlights by night" (Msimang 2017, p. 245).

The haunting element of the new house in the suburbs is a realisation that the inequality in South Africa is fuelled by the choices made which place one in a position of complicity. Sisonke is haunted by the suburbs because she realises that there is something hollow about the domestic bliss of being therein, because it cannot shield her from the disappointment of the reality of South Africa. In the same way that South Africa is her imaginary homeland, buying a house in the suburbs is an imaginary home because "the house on Congo Road is supposed to be the final stop in a life spent wondering… It's supposed to be the nest my sisters and I never had" (Msimang 2017, p. 246). The private and the public collide as Sisonke is confronted about her feelings about South Africa in the privacy of her home, as she is not able to recreate what she lost as someone born in exile. South Africa becomes the place where the things she hoped would happen do not, in the same way that the home she buys in the suburbs was supposed to be the home she never had. Instead of making a home in South Africa, Sisonke is confronted with what she cannot have by virtue of the fact that she is constantly negotiating what it means to come to a place she cannot recognise and therefore, cannot fully occupy. Part of the reason Sisonke cannot fully participate in building the "new South Africa" is because of the race and class relations she has to navigate:

> The house makes me complicit. Suddenly I hold shares in South Africa Inc., and my participation in a firm whose business I loathe makes me anxious. It takes me a long time to figure out that this is the core of all the troubles we experience in the house on Congo Road: it places us firmly in the heart of whiteness. (Msimang 2017, p. 247)

Being at the heart of whiteness is the price privileged Black people have to pay for their middle-class status. Instead of choosing to live with the masses of Black people in townships, Sisonke, like many others in her class position, chooses to occupy the heart of whiteness because the promise of freedom allows them to navigate the places apartheid barred from Black people. The heart of whiteness is the lingering residue of apartheid; in relation to how space is configured, this continues to exist in the new South Africa. Instead of challenging this aspect of the new South Africa, Sisonke finds that she capitulates because she wants to recreate what she never had in her childhood. The heart of whiteness is where she imagines she can build a home for her children, because it presents a façade of safety and stability. Unfortunately, it is in the suburbs where the violence of South Africa threatens her private space, and her new baby's life is at stake after an attack. The violence becomes one of the

markers of the imagined homeland because "a decade into our democracy, South Africans have learnt to live with crime and violence. We all know better than to panic about small events. Alarm is for extreme situations" (Msimang 2017, p. 253).

A new dissonance emerges in Sisonke as her private world is shattered by violence, because believing in the dream of South Africa cannot protect her from the reality that the South Africa of her dreams and of her childhood does not exist. The only South Africa she has is the one where people live in fear of each other, and the failures of the state result in the dead bodies of the Marikana Massacre[25]. The home on Congo Road and the home which is South Africa mirror each other in ways that Sisonke could not have anticipated. She had built dreams around what it would mean to return home and what it would mean to have a stable family life in the suburbs. She admits that "The house no longer feels like home but the stoicism of Johannesburg has settled itself into our bones and we ignore the fact that we have been betrayed by our dreams… we question not just the country but the entire enterprise. South Africa has failed. Our sense of who and where we are is in flux" (Msimang 2017, p. 264). Sisonke's admittance that they have been betrayed by the dream is part of the consequences of having an imaginary homeland.

Sisonke's need to hold onto the idea of the South Africa she imagined while growing up in exile creates an anxiety of holding onto something which does not exist, while having to live in a reality which is a contradiction thereof. The disjuncture between the imaginary homeland and the lived reality seem to cause anxiety in Sisonke, which ends with the decision to eventually leave the country because the failures of the new South Africa are debilitating and cause harm in her family. The new South Africa does not exist but rather, a "new nation is stillborn because its midwives are men and women who are themselves not yet home because they are not yet reborn" (Madlingozi 2017, p. 121). It is impossible for the new South Africa to be a reality, because the newness is predicated on denying what existed before and on South Africans themselves being reborn and seeing themselves anew. Therefore, the new South Africa Sisonke comes back to as an adult is a country that desperately wants to make peace with itself, but cannot. The unintended consequence of the new South Africa is that if it must be new, it cannot engage with its history for too long, as this will jeopardise the sense of newness. By being rebranded as the new South Africa, the country that Sisonke returns to as

[25] In 2012, 34 miners were shot after a protest which happened at Lonmin in Marikana (small town near Rusternburg, North West Province).

an adult finds itself reeling from its past but leaping into the future simultaneously, hence the contradictions which characterise the post-apartheid experience. Sisonke is therefore left with the opportunity to imagine herself and South Africa anew when she is able to contemplate leaving the country of her own volition. She realises that it is untenable to continue yearning for the South Africa of her dreams while she experiences the reality of the country.

Part of Sisonke's realisation that the new South Africa is an imaginary homeland means coming to terms with the African National Congress (ANC). Grappling with South Africa as home means seeing the ANC for what it truly is: yet another structure which makes her complicit in the injustices which continue in the country. The most jarring experience is the Marikana Massacre, which is the largest massacre in post-apartheid South Africa since the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre. In a small mining town called Marikana, "the South African police opened fire on a crowd of striking mineworkers… Thirty-four miners were killed and seventy-eight were wounded" (Msimang 2017, p. 289). The massacre is intricately linked to the politics of the ANC, because it captures the way in which state-sanctioned violence becomes a firm part of South Africa's reality in tangible ways. She explains that:

> The ANC is not just a party, it is home… this is the story I have told myself about my obligation and commitment to the party. But as its politics worsen, I begin to understand that I must stop this language. The ANC is not in my blood, it is in my memory. There is a paternalism built into the way I talk about the ANC designed to silence me… I realise the claim of being a child of the ANC is one that is bursting with prestige; it is a profound form of entitlement. Buying into it at any level makes views of others less important. I am guilty of the very cronyism I abhor in the leadership of the ANC. (Msimang 2017, p. 291)

Sisonke begins to question the story she has held about the ANC, home and South Africa, especially when she witnesses the ANC failing and falling apart as the new South Africa begins to deteriorate into a country that is "politically adrift" (Msimang 2017, p. 3). Sisonke's detachment from the ANC mirrors her disconnect from South Africa. The two seem to be inextricably linked for her. While she writes that the ANC is not in her blood but in her memory, the nature of memory is questionable here, because the ANC of her memory also does not exist. The ANC of her reality has never been anything other than a political party prone to compromises like any other. In recognising the paternalism in the ANC which silences her, Sisonke is pointing to the nature of the ANC which is dominated by patriarchy and toxic masculinity in the form of prominent leaders who protect the party in order to protect their own self-interest. Sisonke recognises her own complicity if she continues seeing

herself as a child of the ANC. It is through disassociating herself with the party that she is able to recognise South Africa for what it is and the role the ANC has played in destroying the ideas she held about South Africa. Sisonke is able to reach the point of breaking ranks with the ANC when she can claim that "I am a grown woman and I am not beholden to the ANC. I am a citizen of a country that I love" (Msimang 2017, p. 292). This declaration allows her the agency she needs in order to imagine new possibilities about the kind of relationship she can have with South Africa. She begins to realise that she can leave South Africa as a geographic space and the process unfolds through writing. Her writing subjectivity allows her the freedom to use her voice in order to make sense of South Africa now that she is no longer a child of the ANC.

She describes living in South Africa after the Marikana Massacre as "living in a haunted house" (Msimang 2017, p. 290), which is a complete shift from the place that was full of triumph that she had imagined as a teenager in exile, and as a young adult returning home to take her rightful place as the new elite which will change South Africa. The inextricability of home, the ANC and South Africa means that Sisonke uses familial metaphors to describe her process of undoing her ideas about home. She describes South Africa as "a father who can never return [her] love" (Msimang 2017, p. 294) and continues "I love this place so deeply yet I am not of it so there is always a level of superficiality in what I can know in my bones about this place. I am the observer – the outsider who can see precisely because she stands apart" (Msimang 2017, p. 294). This is a shift from the young adult who used the TRC process to insert herself into the South African narrative. The knowledge in her bones about her position in South Africa is also significant, given that this speaks to what her intuition is telling her about who she is in South Africa; this is an embodiment of her identity negotiation. In spite of the many efforts of trying to belong in South Africa, she finally relents that she is in fact an outsider because she was born in exile. It is in accepting her position as an outsider, and that she cannot become what she had hoped for when she returned to South Africa to build the country, that she is able to contemplate a life where she no longer has to be in South Africa in order to show her commitment to justice. These choices will be explored further when discussing Sisonke's relationship with transnationalism, which offers her other ways of thinking about herself as South African. Sisonke admits that "I was bottle-fed the dream: that South Africa was not simply about non-racialism and equality, it was about something more

profound" (Msimang 2017, p. 4). It is this profundity that has not been fulfilled, which leaves Sisonke with the realisation that the South Africa of her imagination perhaps does not exist.

In this section I have discussed they ways in which Sisonke's memoir is a result of a shattering dream, because South Africa is not a place of triumph now that she is experiencing it and seeing it with adult eyes. Writing becomes the space she uses to reckon with the traumas of her reality. I have argued that the imaginary homeland Sisonke has created collides with racial and class tensions in the "new South Africa". The lack of memories and experiences Sisonke has about South Africa fuels the disconnection and the dissonance. The only memories she has are of exile, which do not translate as memories which can legitimate her place in South Africa. For Sisonke, memory and experience seem to be inextricably linked to identity construction. The problematic idea of the "new South Africa" is part of what highlights the anxiety and dissonance Sisonke feels because the imaginary homeland and the reality of the country are in contradiction.

This chapter has been an exploration of home in its various iterations. I have used languaging and translanguaging to argue that home is not the same as ekhaya. While home suggests a nuclear family, ekhaya is a network of family relations which Noni uses to draw a complex picture of her family structure. Through *Drawn in Colour,* I discussed the ways in which Noni writes about the private life of her family; through *The Ochre People,* I looked at the ways in which Noni writes about the public, which is the nation. I explored the complex ways in which the making of the South African state is part of a larger story about people from other nation states converging on the Cape. Noni's analysis of the history of her region offers many narratives. By invoking the ideas of isizwe and ilizwe, she complicates the idea of the nation state in the context of apartheid South Africa. Finally, I discussed the ways in which Sisonke writes about her relationship with South Africa as an imaginary homeland. Sisonke has to grapple with the idea of South Africa which she created while growing up in exile. This imaginary homeland seems to be in contradiction with the reality she experiences when she returns to South Africa. Instead of finding a place which she imagined would be home, she finds that she has to navigate class and racial politics, which make it difficult for her to fully identity with what it means to call South Africa home.

CHAPTER 3
Ilizwe lifile: Interrogating pariahdom, estrangement and political exile

Thina sizwe, thina sizwe esimnyama, (We the nation, we the Black nation)
Sikhalela izwe lethu (Are crying for our land)
Elathathwa ngabamhlophe (That was taken by white people)
Mabayeke umhlaba wethu (They must leave our land alone)
Mabayeke umhlaba wethu (They must leave our land alone)

Abantwana be-Afrika (Children of Africa)
Bakhalela i-Afrika (Are crying for Africa)
Elathathwa ngabamhlophe (That was taken by white people)
Mabayeke umhlaba wethu (They must leave our land alone)
Mabayeke umhlaba wethu (They must leave our land alone)

Anonymous[26]: South African Struggle Song

In Chapter 2 I looked at the various experiences of home and the negotiation of identity both Noni and Sisonke participate within. In this chapter, I extend the analysis of the public and private nexus between the home and the nation state by looking at the iterations of exile and estrangement and the ways in which both Noni and Sisonke negotiate their insider outsider status. I will turn my attention to questions of unbelonging captured by the idea of pariahdom, estrangement and exile as complex experiences emerging out of Noni and Sisonke's writing. I juxtapose Noni's experience of pariahdom and urban estrangement with Sisonke's experience of exile, which is characterized by freedom. I read *Drawn in Colour* in relation to the idea of pariahdom, which I discuss in relation to the political system which produces the homeland system. I argue that the ways in which Noni writes about the homeland system show the ways in which apartheid South Africa systemically unhomed Black South Africans, not only through the capturing space but also in the ways in which land was appropriated through displacement from indigenous people who were already occupying the land. In *The Ochre People*, I will focus on estrangement, which I read as a form of exile. During Noni's visit to Johannesburg, she witnesses the various ways in which urban experiences contribute to the discourse of ilizwe lifile. Finally, in *Always Another Country*, I argue that Sisonke

[26] While this song has been made famous by former President Jacob Zuma and a variety of choirs, it is not possible to find the original writer of the song as it forms part of South Africa's oral history.

experiences political exile as freedom from apartheid South Africa. Through these texts, I argue that these writers challenge the narrow understanding of exile, their writing demonstrates that exile is a material, spiritual and political experience.

The experiences of being a pariah, estranged and politically exiled are connected to the tensions both Noni and Sisonke experience in relation to their relationship with land and space. In South Africa's cultural imagination, exile has often been limited to political exile, which affects freedom fighters who are men. The image of the male freedom fighter is the dominant narrative in the political imagination, and Noni and Sisonke's writing challenges this by showing the ways in which women and children are also part of the narrative. Like Ngcobo does in her anthology *Prodigal Daughters: Stories of South African Women in Exile*, Noni and Sisonke show the myriad of ways in which place and land can be seen "as something that is tangible, symbolic and possibly with a spiritual significance" (Masola and Xaba 2017, p. 55). The question of space calls into question the ways in which the urban and rural spaces in South Africa become the backdrop for understanding the politics of exclusion in apartheid South Africa. I use "Thina Sizwe" from the struggle song above as a starting point to locate the conversation about land within a cultural symbol, because it also connects to the way Noni and Sisonke write about the land. The struggle song laments the loss of land, and dispossession by Black people. This song also evokes Miriam Makeba's famous song "Mayibuye", which captures the pain of dispossession and unbelonging and the call for Mayibuye iAfrika, which was the rallying cry during colonialism and apartheid. Mayibuye iAfrika means "come back Africa" which is a response from those who lost the land through white settler colonialism.

Mayibuye iAfrika – much like Thina Sizwe – is a plea "to 'resurrect', 'restore,' 'return,' remember the world" (Madlingozi 2018, p. 12) after the experience of being disconnected from the land. Madlingozi also defines Mayibuye iAfrika as "'return Africa'/'re-member Africa'/'resurrect Africa'" which is in conversation with pariahdom, estrangement and political exile. I use ilizwe lifile in the title of this chapter, which is an expression in isiXhosa meaning "the world/land is dead", because I find it useful to explain the disconnection from the land that Black people experience as a result of the loss that made them feel like exiles and pariahs in the land of their birth. Mayibuye iAfrika and ilizwe lifile invoke another expression, which is the slogan of the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania: Izwe lethu, iAfrika, which means "Africa, our land". This slogan is a combination of claiming Africa for Africans,

as well as evoking the idea of Africa being returned to Africans as expressed in the song above. These expressions capture the conversations about what it means being an African in the context of land dispossession and political oppression, which is explored in the three memoirs.

The politics of dislocation: Exile, pariahdom, estrangement and nostalgia

I will explore the notion of exile in relation to pariahdom and estrangement. Noni and Sisonke's texts complicate the idea of exile, as their memoirs illustrate that it is more than political exile; it is a material, existential and spiritual experience underpinned by questions of being unhomed. Using Edward Said's work on exile, I show how exile can also provide for different kinds of freedom. Using Homi Bhabha's work, I analyse the ways in which being a pariah relates to questions of being unhomed, which evoke the isiXhosa words ukubaphandle / amaphandle. I will also explore exile using concepts such as Mayibuye iAfrika, ilizwe lifile, and izwe lethu iAfrika, as the language used to explore the consequences of displacement which produce pariahdom, estrangement and political exile.

Noni's memoirs are concerned with an internal exile, which is in conversation with the political exile in Sisonke's memoir. By "internal exile" I refer to the pariah status which was identified by Sol Plaatje at the advent on the Land Act of 1913. In response to the law which legislated the dispossession of Black people in South Africa, he wrote the book *Native Life in South Africa*. He begins the book with the statement: "Awaking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth" (Plaatje 2007, p. 21).

What Plaatje is describing is the liminal condition of still being in a country but living without the protections of what it means to be in a country as a citizen. In his book, Plaatje maps out the ways in which the Land Act of 1913 became legislated dispossession, a denial of human rights, a denial of citizenship and a loss of sense of being in the world for Black people. Others have furthered this analysis by showing that this internal exile also meant spiritual destitution, as the loss of land is deeply spiritual in the African context, as Noni shows in her memoirs. I use this word "pariah" and refer to pariahdom as Madlingozi (2018) does in his work to show the extent of alienation which takes place in the version of South Africa Noni returns to during the 1950s. Noni also explores notions of estrangement which Sara Ahmed indicates is

> a process of transition, a movement from one register to another. To become estranged from each other, for example, is to move from being friends to strangers, from familiarity to strangeness. The term is suggestive precisely because it names the process of moving from one to the other, rather than referring to different states of being" (Ahmed 1999, pp. 343-344).

In the case of pariahdom, Black people moved from a place of being familiar and connected to the land to a strangeness with the land because of dislocation. This transition is captured in various historical moments, particularly conquest and white settler colonialism. Thomas Mzozoyana's[27] question in 1883 captures this transition when he asks "How come they take our name and call us kaffirs – when they arrived Africa was already standing?" (Odendaal 2016, p. 68). These words capture the misidentification of Black people by the colonialists who saw Africa as an open place with natives who needed to be civilized. Said's work expands this discussion and alludes to the project of imperialism as geographical violence:

> Imperialism after all is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control. For the native, the history of his or her colonial servitude is inaugurated by the loss to an outsider of the local place, whose concrete geographical identity must thereafter be searched for and somehow restored. (Said 1990, p. 77)

Thus Black people's status as the indigenous people who were custodians of the land through a communal system shifts to alienation through a political process of dispossession and wars; examples of the geographical violence Said refers to. Noni discusses this transition in her writing about native locations and native reserves, which had the Land Act of 1913 as the precursor. The native reserves evoke the concept of ukuba phandle: to be outside. This is to say ukuba phandle, pariahdom and estrangement are the epitome of geographical violence. Native Reserves are outside of the colonial and apartheid nation state created in 1910, 1913 and 1948. The native reserves become a geographical location as well as a political position, which says that Black people do not belong to South Africa. These native reserves form the rural areas within Bantustans which entrench the exclusion of Black people during apartheid South Africa. Ukuba phandle also evokes the colloquial word used for these native reserves: emaphandleni, which translates to "the places on the outside", on the periphery.

[27] A member of Imbumba Yamanyama, an early nationalist movement established in the Cape in 1882. This quote is from an article in the newspaper *Isigidimi* 18 July 1883, "Intlanganiso yomanyano" (A meeting for a movement).

The establishment of the native reserves and the native locations happens in tandem with white colonial settlements which mark the land as captured. Jeff Peires quotes Sir Harry Smith's declaration of this dispossession which captures the ways in which estrangement, pariahdom and ukuba phandle were politically established through violence:

> Your land shall be marked out and marks placed that you may all know it. It shall be divided into counties, towns and villages bearing English names. You shall all learn to speak English at the schools which I shall establish for you… you may no longer be naked and wicked barbarians, which you will ever be unless you labour and become industrious. You shall be taught to plough, and the Commissary shall buy of you. You shall have traders, and you must teach your people to bring gum, timber, hides etc. to sell, that you may learn the art of money, and buy for yourselves. You must learn that it is money that makes people rich by work, and help me to make roads. I will pay you. (cited in Peires 1981, p. 166)

These words capture the project of turning Black people into pariahs. Central to this idea was making Black people turn away from their own practices and ways of being in the world, and through violence force them into Englishness, but not into becoming humanized, but rather through dehumanisation. Part of colonial discourse was that white settlers encountered "barbarians" rather than humans and therefore could justify the dispossession of land, which they saw as a commodity which can be captured, rather than a spiritual entity which could not be bought and sold, as the Africans dealt with land.

The missionary education is central here, as being part of the tool used to further dehumanize African people, thus making them pariahs. Noni and her family occupy an ambivalent position in this process as they became the African elite through their education and establishing institutions which aided the process of colonial education. Noni's father and grandfather were involved in the politics of establishing the African elite, which gave them proximity to white settler politicians such as General Jan Smuts and Cecil John Rhodes (which Noni writes about in her memoirs and columns). However, even their proximity to white colonial political figures cannot protect them from the indignities of being pariahs when the Union of South Africa is officially created. On the eve of the establishment of the Union, Noni's grandfather, John Tengo Jabavu, wrote his response to the clauses that threatened the citizenship of Black people who had a selected franchise in the Cape with the impending establishment of the Union: "There now remains nothing for Africans and their sympathisers to do but don their armour and go on with the fight to the end. The feelings of Africans have not been heeded in their own country so now they have to take the matter further" (Jabavu, in

Odendaal 2016, p. 415). This illustrates someone who was deeply invested in the process of resisting the establishment of the Union because of the consequences it had for Black people, even while he had been complicit in the process of establishing institutions (such as Fort Hare University) which enabled the estrangement of Black people who were not as privileged as he was as a member of the African elite.

Additionally, Jabavu's political involvement was about resisting pariahdom, but only for a select few privileged Black people like himself. I include this context as it shows the complex ways in which the pariah status of 1913 would have affected people like the Jabavus, who had strongly advocated for the establishment of the African elite who could be seen as worthy citizens (Odendaal, 2016). In a sense, this is the legacy that Noni is a part of when she writes about the dispossession of land in her memoir, decades after her grandfather had been a core part of the political moment of resisting ukuba phandle. This shows the complex nature of the ways in which the internal exile played itself out both publically and privately in Noni's life.

This ambivalence in Noni's family history and South Africa's history more broadly – in the politics of the African elite who resisted the establishment of the Union – can be captured by the words Mayibuye iAfrika and ilizwe lifile. Mayibuye iAfrika was a slogan used in the late 1800s and early 1900s and throughout the advent of African nationalism in South Africa with the establishment of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-African Congress (PAC) in particular. Mayibuye iAfrika literally means "Come back Africa". In 1923, Nontsizi Mgqwetho wrote a poem with the title "Mayibuye iAfrika" and while she expresses the need for Africa to be returned to Africans who have been displaced, she writes "Buya M'afrika yaqengqelekana yonke iminyaka umindaweni nye / Hleze zingatotywa kwanemvula kuwe hleze nezibeto zifise usapo", (Come back Africans! Or will rolling years / leave you marking time / while rain falls elsewhere and plagues strike your family?) (Mgqwetho 1923, p. 4). Mgqwetho's poem is a directive to African people themselves, pointing to the existential and spiritual nature of Mayibuye iAfrika.

It is useful to add Bhabha's notion of the unhomely here, as it extends the existential nature of pariahdom and estrangement. Being unhomely is not necessarily about homelessness but rather it is about teasing out

> …the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world – the unhomeliness – that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations.

> To be unhomed is not to be homeless nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres… The recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement, the borders between the home and the world become confused and uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is divided as it is disorienting. (Bhabha 1994, p. 9)

This experience of the unhomely can be seen in both Sisonke and Noni's writing as they both share an uncanny sense about being home; they are divided and disorientated. Their private home lives are caught up in the "extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations" (Bhabha 1994, p. 9) which capture the sense of being caught in shifting political and cultural moments which are geopolitical and deeply personal, as they have an impact on their private lives. For Noni, it is apartheid and colonialism; for Sisonke, it is being in exile as a result of apartheid South Africa's repression and later, the political shift towards democracy that has an impact on her life when she returns. The experiences of being in exile, being a pariah and being estranged collapse between the domestic space and how it is influenced by "history's most intricate invasions" (Bhabha 1994, p. 9). When the "borders between the home and the world become confused" (Bhabha 1994, p. 9) there is no place one can hide and they are confronted with dealing with this invasion of the external world into their private worlds. Bhabha uses the word "disorienting" to explain the emotional consequences of the private and public worlds becoming confused. I liken this disorientation to a dis-ease and an anxiety that is a part of the experience of modernity, as Noni and Sisonke experience it.

In his essay "Reflections on Exile", Said offers an expansive discussion on exile to capture the various ways of accounting for the experience. While he does not offer a succinct definition of exile, he analyses the ways in which those in exile negotiate their existence, which he describes as one being "cut off from their roots, their land, their past" (Said 2000, p. 183). The image of being cut off suggests a finality of sorts, but throughout the essay Said offers a myriad of choices available to those in exile, showing how they might fashion a life for themselves in spite of being cut off from the place they identity as home. This image of being cut off suggests that exile is not simply about geography, but is also about an existential condition and sense of being. Said links exile with nationalism, where nationalism often results in the exile of others because "all nationalisms in their early stages develop from a condition of estrangement" (Said 2000, p. 182).

In the South African context, Afrikaner nationalism results in Sisonke's exile and Noni's estrangement. Both exile and nationalism are about groups and how people are organised by the state and the decisions people make in response to the ways in which the state chooses to organise people. As Said explains further, "nationalisms are about groups, but in a very acute sense exile is a solitude experienced outside the group: the deprivations felt at not being with others in the communal habitation" (Said 2000, p. 183). In the context of land dispossession in South Africa, this solitude experience is the estrangement from the land as part of the exile experience. Exile is also about a recreation of life elsewhere in response to the political structures which produce the exile experience. While in exile, people choose to recreate their lives while waiting to return home. As such, "exiles feel, therefore, an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people" (Said 2000, p. 183). The aim of this, as Chinua Achebe reminds us, is to restore their dignity and sense of self as the very nature of exile is to diminish one's existence (Achebe 2000). Exile thus becomes a negotiation of the self and a guarding against dehumanisation because "an erosion of self-esteem is one of the commonest symptoms of dispossession" (Achebe 2000, p. 81).

In writing about exile, Sisonke is also writing about home as the two locations and concepts are seen within a paradox which is the subtitle of her book: *A memoir of exile and home*. Said poses the question "But if true exile is a condition of terminal loss, why has it been transformed so easily into a potent, even enriching, motif of modern culture?" (Said 2001, p. 139). This is the question Sisonke seems to be answering in her memoir as she writes about political exile as a form of freedom because it offers her and her family a different reality, and therefore a freedom she would not have had if her father had stayed in South Africa. For Sisonke, it seems "exile is sometimes better than staying behind or not getting out: but only sometimes" (Said 2000, p. 184), because even though she has freedom in exile, she still experiences racism, she still has to deal with being an outsider, and she has to deal with coming home and finding ways of making meaning in the new South Africa with no memories and no local language to access certain parts of it. Sisonke's experience of exile shows that exile is "an existential and epistemological condition, as a spatial and temporal state of being, belonging, and becoming" (Zeleza 2005, p. 2).

The assumption throughout Sisonke's childhood is that when they return from exile, they will find a South Africa which is home, a place where they belong. This experience of coming

home and remaining unhomed is in fact pointing to a conversation about nationalism and its relationship with exile. Said elaborates, “Nationalism is an assertion of belonging in and to a place, a people, a heritage. It affirms the home created by a community of language, culture and custom, and, by so doing, it fends off exile, fights to prevent its ravages” (Said 2017, p. 139). The paradox alluded to above also raises questions about exile being a “desired location” (Boyce Davies 2003, p. 114) when home becomes oppressive, as is the case of South Africa during apartheid. Sisonke’s writing about exile is about her sense of belonging across the world, because being away from South Africa offers different ways of being in other countries which give her the room to experience freedom which she would not have had under apartheid.

As Boyce Davies points out, “discourses of home and exile are central to any understanding of the politics of location. But it is the way both home and exile are constructed as flat, monolithic categories that demands the multiple articulations of class, race, gender, sexuality and other categories and identities” (Boyce Davies 2003, p. 14). Noni and Sisonke challenge these monolithic categories of home (as shown in Chapter 2) and exile (which will be discussed in this chapter). The multiple articulations which Boyce Davies lists highlight the complex nature of exile, as it is not simply about geography but rather, about negotiating class, race, gender and sexuality.

The dislocation that Noni and Sisonke write about is strongly related to nostalgia, which is characterized by a sense of loss and longing. While I have discussed nostalgia in relation to home in the previous chapter, it continues to be relevant when discussing exile. While nostalgia has been defined “from nostos return home, and algia longing [it] is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy” (Boym 2001, p. 20). The distinction which Boym makes is still relevant as reflective nostalgia highlights the sense of longing which exists in spite of the delayed homecoming in some instances. Restorative nostalgia on the other hand is concerned with questions of belonging which are at the core of the “contradictions of modernity”. (Boym 2001, p. 31)

For Sisonke in particular, the longing is more acute as she is born in exile and her identity as a South African is formed through longing for a home she only gets to experience as an adult. For Noni in particular, “nostalgia appears to be a longing for a place, but it is actually a

yearning for a different time" (Boym 2007, p. 7), the past of her childhood and life before apartheid. These concepts are useful for the analysis which follows, as they show the complexity of exile and the ways in which Noni and Sisonke navigate their experiences.

Pariahdom and being unhomed in *Drawn in Colour*

I draw on Plaatje as a starting point, as the concept of being a pariah is useful for reading Noni's writing about South Africa in *Drawn in Colour*. Plaatje provides an analysis of what it means to be a pariah, which is legislated dispossession. Through the law which was established subsequent to the development of the Union of South Africa, Black people "were to be deprived of the bare human rights of living on the land, except as servants in the employ of the whites" (Plaatje 2007, p. 31). It is this deprivation and its consequences which Noni's book interrogates. Being a pariah means that not only are Black people dispossessed of their land, they are not citizens of South Africa even while they continue to live on the land. This is a form of internal exile. As discussed already, I link the idea of pariahdom with ukuba phandle, being outside, which captures the consequences of land dispossession both materially and spiritually. Being outside a place even while one lives on the land is a form of psychic violence, because people have to contend with the land dispossession which has generational consequences. Ukuba phandle also highlights the political exclusion of Black people as a result of the establishment of the Union of South Africa, which is consolidated by the Land Act of 1913. The act also creates emaphandleni, the native reserves on the periphery of the Union of South Africa, where Black people are apportioned land, the 10% of the land which is designated for them. These native reserves form the rural areas which are consolidated by the establishment of the homeland system, and continue to be rural areas in South Africa today. The language of emaphandleni shows the ways in which new words are created to account for the new experience of landlessness. This is the status of being a pariah (which I will use interchangeably with ukuba phandle): being given the illusion of self-governance in a context which constantly reminds those who are oppressed that they lost.

Therefore, being a pariah also means spiritual destitution, which is the height of ukuba phandle, because without a connection to the land at birth and a connection to the ancestors' burial sites, how do amaXhosa – and perhaps more broadly, Africans – make sense of who they are existentially? Birth and death amongst most Africans is deeply connected to the land, because at birth inkaba, the umbilical cord in isiXhosa, is buried in the family homestead to connect the newborn with the land and the ancestors, while at death, the ancestors are buried

in the family homestead rather than a far-off gravesite away from the family (Mtuze 2004). While Xhosa people use inkaba, amongst the Zulu people, according to Ngcobo "the placenta is the bond between you and the baby and the earth. It will always draw you together… it is the tie that binds [the baby] firmly to her place of birth. It will always draw her back to her home, no matter how far she travels" (Ngcobo 1990, p. 74).

In spite of land dispossession, Black South Africans did not cease to identify with their geographical location as home, even though the Union of South Africa was created as a space to exclude them, but rather the establishment of the Union gave birth to a new wave of African nationalism which sought to challenge the ways in which Black people had been unhomed in the establishment of the Union, as well as through the Land Act. Prior to the organisations of African nationalism, wars had been fought, which provides more evidence for the ways in which Black people resisted being unhomed. Noni's narrative in *Drawn in Colour* points to the tension between home as discussed in the previous chapter, and being unhomed as discussed in this chapter.

When Noni returns for her brother's funeral in 1955, she returns to a country which has made laws to disallow her citizenship, human rights and a sense of belonging in spite of the fact that this is the country she considers to be home. Implicit in Noni's homecoming is the reality of coming home to a country which was conquered by white settler colonialism, this state having been entrenched in law in 1910, 1913 and 1948 – the last of these being a significant year for Afrikaner nationalism because of the National Party's electoral victory. The nation state which Noni returns to was established not as a way to create a place of belonging but rather, the establishment of South Africa as a country with borders, later becoming a republic which was no longer a colony of the British Empire. Even when South Africa became a republic, this was not a celebration for Black people, as it still meant that they did not belong in a state based on Afrikaner nationalism. Therefore, Noni's return home is about belonging and unbelonging in South Africa at the same time. This disorienting sense of both belonging and unbelonging is characteristic of Black people's subjectivity, particularly the elite, like Noni's family, who participated politically with the hope of being recognised as citizens by the state.

The language which Noni uses to describe the land expresses the extent of the pariahdom which Black people experienced during apartheid. Noni travels from Johannesburg to East London, which are parts of the Republic of South Africa. From East London, she travels

“seventy miles by road to Middledrift, our village in the Ciskei Native Reserve which lies across the Kei River from the better-known Transkei Native Reserve” (Jabavu 1960, p. 5). Noni describes the area between East London and King William’s Town as “the land of Ama-Ndlambe and Ama-Ntinde” (Jabavu 1960, p. 6). In referring to the Native Reserves, she is pointing to the ways in which apartheid legislation governs place and belonging by imposing borders and new names where none existed before. Borders are the epitome of establishing ukuba phandle, because they mark the land, and lines are drawn to show where people belong and where they do not. While Noni does not offer an explicit political analysis of what the borders mean, by invoking the names of the apartheid legislation, white settler colonialism and the words Xhosa people used to refer to the land, she is commenting on the politics of the land, which is not neutral, but rather is a result of war and violence. The naming of King William’s Town is significant here, as it is a tangible example of the ways in which land was named after figureheads of the empire who wanted to stake their claim to their colony; it was named the capital of the Province of Queen Adelaide, who was King William IV’s queen (Peires 2003). More importantly, Noni does not reference the word Qonce, which is used amongst Xhosa people for the town. East London on the other hand, evokes images of London, as the main street continues to be referred to as Oxford Street, harking back to England. In renaming and marking places with colonial names, white settler colonialism began to create a sense of unhomeliness for Black people, thus deepening the sense of ukuba phandle and distancing them from the land they identified as home through another language. By invoking Ama-Ndlambe and Ama-Ntinde, Noni is reminding us about Ndlambe, who was one of the powerful regents in the 1700s who absorbed “smaller Xhosa chiefdoms such as the Dange, Ntinde and Gqunukhwebe” (Stapleton 1994, p. 21). For Noni, the power relations and politics of the white people who occupy the land give it new meanings where Black people are pariahs; however, the memory of Ndlambe and Ntinde cannot be extinguished in spite of the places being renamed according to English names.

When Black people lost the land and became pariahs, they had to make decisions about alternative ways of becoming human. For example, one of the ways was to choose missionary education, which provided a semblance of protection in a system which recognized humanity in relation to its proximity to whiteness. This however, had its disadvantages, because it created a sense of alienation amongst Black people from their history, language and culture.

While Noni writes about the achievements of her family in *Drawn in Colour*, her description of her great-grandfather and grandfather's trajectory highlights this quandary:

> My great-grandfather (who took his father's given name Jabavu, 'warrior-like', as a surname for himself and his children when the white man's law made surnames obligatory) had set his progeny's course in becoming a Christian convert; had been the first in the region to fit his hut with glazed windows; had educated my grandfather who became a teacher then journalist, then editor and owner of the first African newspaper in the land (as people kept reminding me, 'way back in 1884') and was 'the finest English speaker in this Border province', and politician associated with the great parliamentarians of the Cape Colony, Schreiner, Merriman, Rose-Innes, C.J. Rhodes. In turn he had educated his sons, my uncles, sending my father, his eldest, 'to London, England whence', as people said proudly, 'he had returned with a degree'. My father had later 'reared the young men and women of our people' in his capacity as a foundation member of the lecturing staff at Fort Hare, the college for higher education for which my grandfather lobbied and campaigned while my father studied overseas that he might serve at such a great seat of learning; and the campaign had succeeded, the college materialised soon after my father returned. (Jabavu 1960, p. 14)

This account of her family history is intricately linked to the country's history, which is about the self-making of the African elite in the context of settler colonialism and missionary education. Her great-grandfather's conversion to Christianity is the crucial decision of wanting to participate in the changes brought upon by the arrival of missionaries. This led to the embrace of the English language and her grandfather's rigorous participation in setting up institutions which created the Black elite. His association with the Cape Colony parliamentarians in a colonial government structure meant that he had proximity to power and proximity to whiteness. Her father's journey to England and return to teach at Fort Hare meant that Noni's family history is about the negotiation which took place as white settler colonialism was beginning to morph into a state that would exclude Black people in spite of their efforts to prove their worth as educated and Christianised, English-speaking gentlemen who were embracing their colonial subjectivity. Even though Noni experiences non-racialism as a child growing up on the Fort Hare Campus, this world is curated to be an enclave rather than a place where their citizenship and belonging are taken seriously by the state, given the context of the establishment of Fort Hare as well as the political machinations happening in the background.

To illustrate this point, it is worth quoting Nelson Mandela's account of Fort Hare as an alumni. In *Long Walk to Freedom*, he explains the history of Fort Hare, which is intricately linked to the history of the Frontier Wars in the 1700s, which lasted for one hundered years.:

> Fort Hare had been founded in 1916 by Scottish missionaries on the site of what was the largest nineteenth century frontier fort in the Eastern Cape. Built on a rocky platform and moated by the winding arc of the Tyume River, Fort Hare was perfectly situated to enable the British to fight the gallant Xhosa warrior Sandile, the last Rharhabe king, who was defeated by the British in one of the final frontier battles in the 1800s. (Mandela 1995, p. 43)

He also likens Fort Hare to Oxford, Cambridge, Havard and Yale (Mandela 1995) to further highlight the elitist nature of the institution for Black people who sought to assimilate to whiteness in order to gain access to colonial education, even while they were grappling with what it meant for their own culture and changing identity, which is seen in the writings of William Gqoba, Isaac Wauchope and S.E.K. Mqhayi, to name a few. This highlights that Fort Hare is not a neutral space as Noni would have us believe.

The experience of being a pariah shows itself in the private world of the Jabavus and the ways in which the private cannot be shielded from the public world. Together with this tension between the private and the public world is the quotidian nature of how Black people were reminded of what it means to be a pariah. The arrest of Noni's cousin on the eve of her brother's funeral captures the nature of ukuba phandle. Even in the moment of the family's grief, the state apparatus reminds the family of the power they wield when Noni's father has to use the word "baas" to appeal to the policeman to release the young man (Jabavu 1960). This illustrates how D.D.T Jabavu, a seasoned professor who is a friend of General Jan Smuts, is regarded as a pariah by a young policeman who represents the state in this instance. Because the family's prestige and influence are invisible to the policeman, Noni's father is forced to participate in the performance of power and powerlessness.

This sense of powerlessness continues when Noni and her step-mother visit town; there are no toilets for them to use because "in Alice there was only one ladies' lavatory and it was a 'European's Only' although strangely enough there were two for men, a Non-European as well as a European. So we had to walk to a deserted part of town close by and squat in short grass, overseas gloves and all!" (Jabavu 1960, p. 47). The lack of toilet facilities for Black women in public spaces is a denial of dignity and of belonging. This denial is the material experience Noni faces of ukuba phandle. The small indignities which Noni writes about form a broader picture about how belonging and unbelonging are constituted and remind Black people of their internal exile in their own homeland. The availability of a toilet for Black men signifies the gender dynamics and hierachy that deems Black women the least important, even

when considered alongside their male counterparts. The lack of space is both symbolic and material and is central to being a pariah, because space is an existential and material measurement of one's value.

After the funeral, as previously mentioned Noni is scheduled to visit her sister who lives in Uganda. Her father reflects on his own trip to Uganda where he "saw Africans, black fellow Africans living in paradise… In Uganda, black people *own land!* ...Their land is theirs, by title deed, there is no alienation in that country" (Jabavu 1960, p. 50). Jabavu's comments about Uganda highlight his own awareness of his pariah status – an alienation – as someone who does not own land in his own country. The alienation was not only about the land but also about

> …how our beloved cattle can no longer roam; not only that, but how the Law requires that we reduce their numbers to a handful each man in place of the great herds of which ritual, prestige and sheer love of animals rendered the possession a glittering ambition. 'Natives must cull their stock' proclaims the Boer Government, while we gaze with frustrated longing on the 'Europeans Only' areas that once were ours and where now may graze and fatten only cattle that belong to that other race. (Jabavu 1960, p. 50)

Part of the land dispossession which Black people experienced was also about their cattle wealth. In the previous chapter, I discussed *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* where Rubusana writes historical fragments of histories pertaining to Xhosa people. The title evokes the literal and metaphorical by conflating the loss of cattle with the loss of heritage and with dispossession (respectively). The cattle were not only a form of wealth, but they also facilitated rituals such as marriage, which needs cattle for lobola, and death, which includes rituals called ukukhapha and ukubuyisa, where spirits are accompanied by the slaughter of a cow in order to send them to the spiritual realm (Mtuze 2004). The laws ensuring the loss of cattle began as early as the 1700s, including stock theft by white farmers which Maqoma, a chief of the Jingqhi people, retaliated against and was sent to Robben Island for his resistance, where he eventually died (Stapleton 1994). In proclaiming that "Natives must cull their stock" (Jabavu 1960, p. 50) the apartheid laws were legalising the dehumanisation of Black people, in a sense, culling their sense of being. The trauma of losing cattle and land and then watching Europeans relocate themselves onto "areas that once were ours" highlights the extent of the geographical violence which has been inflicted on Black people. Noni is therefore being subversive by including these conversations from her elders, as she is highlighting the ways in which ukuba phandle affected ordinary people.

In this section, I have argued that *Drawn in Colour* is concerned with internal exile and dispossession, with a particular focus on rural life. Noni extends this theme in *The Ochre People* by looking at dispossession in the urban context when she visits Johannesburg. Internal exile in the native reserves cannot be seen outside of urban estrangement, as people who experienced pariahdom in the native reserves would be forced to move to cities such as Johannesburg in search for work, only to be subjected to the urban estrangement Noni witnesses when she visits it.

Urban estrangement and nostalgia in *The Ochre People*

In this section, I read estrangement alongside alienation and nostalgia in the city. I will look at the ways in which the spatial politics of Johannesburg contribute to the estrangement which is an extension of the internal exile already discussed. Apartheid legislation such as the Group Areas Act will also be discussed as the dehumanizing system which further destroys Black families in the urban context. Estrangement "is suggestive precisely because it names the process of moving from one to the other, rather than referring to different states of being" (Ahmed 1999, pp. 343-344). This transition can also be seen in relation to the sense of being homed and being unhomed. Sara Ahmed tells us that estrangement and nostalgia are connected, as nostalgia suggests a loss; usually a loss of home or an era which promised something more wholesome than the present. In a sense "nostalgia is a form of deprivation, whether felt on the cultural or the psychological level" (Vallis 2000, p. 120).

In the context of Noni's memoirs, nostalgia is evoked through the sense of loss of a former time before white settler colonialism, which results in the loss of land. This loss results in a strangeness and in-betweenness which is both material and existential and characterized by the choices people make, such as moving to urban centres like Johannesburg. It is nostalgia which makes people like Daisy Makiwane try to recreate the home they once had in the Cape when she moves to Johannesburg, even though she recognizes that it is impossible to recreate what has been lost. In the context of *The Ochre People*, I am interested in the sense of strangeness and in-betweenness which Noni writes about because she finds that Johannesburg is a place where people attempt to make home, yet the political condition is a reminder that it is not home, therefore Black people are strangers in the city. Johannesburg epitomizes ilizwe lifile, as it is a place where people have moved to because of migrant labour predicated on the mining industry, which extracts resources from the land using exploitative and dehumanizing

labour practices. In the context of land dispossession, Black people were forced to move from rural contexts to an urban context, which also had an impact on their sense of being.

In a sense, there is an out-of-place-ness in Johannesburg which Noni cannot seem to reconcile for herself. This experience exists alongside nostalgia. Boym's restorative nostalgia is relevant here as it highlights the need to focus on the complexity of home and the loss of home. Nostalgia is also about living with the memories of the past where there is a longing for the past, because the moment of apartheid South Africa is unbearable in light of further dislocation and the unhomed nature of the townships in Johannesburg. Nostalgia is about the ways in which memory plays a role in how people remember the traumas of the past and try to recreate them whilst they are dealing with urban estrangement. Noni writes about nostalgia in relation to urban estrangement, with a care that does not render the people she writes about as victims of apartheid. By "urban estrangement" I refer to the geopolitics of Johannesburg in relation to the ways in which it was designed to dislocate Black people and distance them from themselves and the land. In spite of the loss which they have experienced, Black people are still able to make choices about the lives they can live in the designated townships in Johannesburg. Noni writes about the everyday experiences of ordinary visits and conversations which come and go in Mam'oMkhulu's house. In a sense, she restores "agency, creativity and dignity to ordinary South Africans" (Twidle 2019, p. 76). Noni uses nostalgia to write about experiences of apartheid brutality in relation to the ordinariness of life without romanticizing the past of life before urban estrangement.

In Johannesburg, Noni is visiting her aunt – Big Mother – Daisy Makiwane, her mother's older sister. At face value, Noni experiences the rural-urban binary which is a core part of the South African political history. With the discovery of gold in the 1890s, by 1896 Johannesburg "was bigger than Cape Town" (Odendaal 2016, p. 189). It quickly became the centre of urban expansion and "was linked by railway to all major port cities of South Africa and from there, by ship, to the wider world" (Odendaal 2016, p. 189). In order to ensure the industrialisation of the burgeoning city, migrant labour became its trademark, with workers from all over Southern Africa converging on the mines, and the economy developing around the mining industry. The migrant labour from the rural areas to urban centres meant that Black people performed dehumanising labour in the mines, and other forms of labour while living in squalor. The migration to urban centres such as Johannesburg is a result of the

dispossession of land whereby migrant labour becomes the main form of sustenance for people who no longer have access to land which gives them dignity and a livelihood.

Noni grapples with these ideas as she enters Johannesburg. While she is still gripped by the sense of longing for the Cape landscape, she compares the "High Veld – vast, enormous bareness" (Jabavu 1963, p. 183) with the Ciskei and Transkei which were more familiar to her, because it reminded her of people she knows. It is interesting to note that she uses the names of the Bantustans rather than the indigenous names of the land, as she had done earlier in the book. Being far from the Cape, from home, makes her long for the reserves even though they are reminders of land dispossession. She describes the High Veld as "harsh, hostile, and made [her] feel ill at ease" (Jabavu 1963, p. 183). Noni does not feel like she belongs to this harsh and hostile land because of what it represents as the key node of the capitalist project of South African nationalism, which relies on exploitative labour done by Black people in order to make money from the minerals in the land. In spite of the dislocation which is characteristic of the native reserves, as discussed in the previous chapter, the hostile environment makes Noni nostalgic for the home which she has left behind, which connects her to nature in ways that the Johannesburg landscape cannot.

Being far from home means musings on the politics of land, and the politics of dominance which mark the history of the Transvaal and the making of Johannesburg. Noni is captivated by the

> …conflicts the uncles had talked about in the car, when black and white 'Cattle-keeping tribes' had wrestled over pastures and living room; of the equivocal role that 'the second white tribe' had played when dominant; and of its policies of expediency. These had doubled back on the British. Now they found themselves dominated by Transvaal Boers. Even their splendid English language was demoted to a secondary status. (Jabavu 1963, pp. 183-184)

It is interesting to note that she refers to the English and the Boer conflicts (the Anglo-Boer clashes over land where they were both settlers) as tribes in the same way as she refers to the Black people as tribes[28]. The state of the British being dominated by the Afrikaners is interesting to note, as Noni's tone in the extract above raises questions about her "two loyalities" between South Africa and Britain. Her allegiance to the British is ambivalent here, as she tries to explain their compromised existence in South Africa. The history of the wars

[28] This highlights the negligible numbers of the Afrikaners and the British and yet they have contributed to the conflicts in order to create their version of South Africa, through wars.

between the white settlers further highlights the tensions of dislocation in South Africa. While precolonial history has evidence of wars and conflict amongst indigenous people, the question of dislocation through white settler colonialism complicates the history of South Africa. It seems bizarre that dislocation happens as a result of outsiders fighting over land where they are new arrivals.

Noni's impressions of Johannesburg are also formed by the fact that this trip is the third visit to the city (Jabavu 1963). She recalls her first visit in 1928 "with a deep disquiet" (Jabavu 1963, p.184) because of the stark contrast she experienced in the living conditions she witnessed. She explains that:

> …our hosts lived in a house that was on the edge of a native location and I was forbidden to leave their yard and go into the location as I longed to do and play with the children. I could see them swarming in the streets all day, never apparently going to school while I had to submit to morning lessons from my mother. My baby sister's nurse who came with us from the Cape and watched that I should not escape, told me of unnamable terrors that went on inside Jo'burg locations; of dirt, disease, robbers and gangsters and squalor and of *'the language'* that I would pick up…it seemed everybody was frightened of the very word 'location, *elokishini'*, and I trembled, dreading it yet wanting to go… (Jabavu 1963, p. 184)

While Noni's nurse tells stories about the life in the locations, which seem exaggerated for the young Noni, the imagery she invokes is echoed by other writers who describe life in the locations during this time period[29]. Life in the location captures the consequences of dislocation, dispossession and estrangement from the land, as there is no place for children to play with freedom. There is "dirt, disease, robbers and gangsters, squalor" and seemingly bad language which characterises the psychic violence of being in a place that has been created to control Black people in urban areas. The native location evokes the restrictions placed on Black people who live in Johannesburg. This image evokes the extent of estrangement Black people experienced in the urban context, because they were on the peripheries of the cities with little to no space compared to the land they once occupied. Black people seem to be doubly dislocated, as they are restricted to native reserves in the rural areas and native locations in the urban areas. This highlights the levels of indignity and therefore estrangement from the land. The lack of space for Black people in South Africa is mirrored in Noni's experience as a young child, who felt the restrictions placed on Black people in the form of

[29] For example, Trevor Huddleston does in *Naught for your Comfort* (1956) and Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country* (1948)

restrictions placed on her as she was not allowed to go and play outside with the other children. While the memory is of a childhood, the yearning to play outside can be seen as the yearning for freedom. Noni describes the children as swarming outside in the street, which evokes their numbers and sense of dislocation, as they are unsafe in the streets.

In *Johannesburg: The Making and Shaping of the City*, Keith Beavon examines historical factors that contributed to the experience of estrangement that black people felt in Johannesburg.

> By 1900 almost all the aspects that until the 1990s were to characterise the apartheid city of Johannesburg were already in place. Africans had to carry passes, they were prohibited from walking on the pavements, they were excluded from public places, they were not permitted to use the regular intra-urban public transport, and they were largely confined to single sex "barracks" of the mines, the access to liquor had been constrained, they laboured long and hard for very low wages, and they had no political rights. (Beavon 2004, p. 68)

This description highlights the long history of dispossession even before 1948, which is seen as the beginning of apartheid. Whereas 1948 ushers in Afrikaner nationalism at the level of the state in the form of apartheid legislation, it is an iteration of what was established with white settler colonialism which begins in the 1600s and strengthens in the 1700s. The control of public spaces and the role of locations was to accommodate the Black people, providing cheap labour rather than establishing communities with the kind of amenities and services needed for families. In response to this picture of neglect, Noni's experience of Johannesburg in 1928 is from the perspective of being kept away from the dangers of urban life. The image of young Noni being cloistered in the privacy of the home and protected from the outside world evokes the symbolic restriction of what acquiring a Western education meant in order for Noni's family to maintain their status as elite Africans. This form of education is also a form of estrangement and a prime example thereof can be seen in the establishment of two colonial institutions for Black people: Zonnebloem College and Lovedale College. These are examples of institutions which isolate Black people in order to turn them into English colonial subjects. Zonnebloem College is described as "Eton in Africa" (Odendaal 2012, p. 49), as a school established by Bishop Gray in 1858 in Cape Town. The College was established as a joint project between the Anglican Church and the British Government for "the children of Native Chiefs and their Councillors" (Hodgson 1975, p. 1). In an official letter between Sir George Grey and the Bishop Gray in 1860, the purpose of the school is mapped out more clearly:

> In no other place could native children under our care be so thoroughly removed and kept apart from Heathen and barbarous influences as near Cape Town. In no other place could females be so secure from being taken away and disposed of to some Heathen husband, whom they had never seen, and for whom they had no regard. In no other place could all the force and appliances of civilization be brought to bear with the same uninterrupted effect upon the Children of barbarous and Savage Chiefs. (In Hodgson 1975, p. 3)

These children's fathers were Maqoma, Mhala and Xhoxho, who were imprisoned on Robben Island, where their children could not visit them (Odendaal 2012). This is but one example of the many colonial institutions which were established on the foundation of estranging Black people. Particularly those in power and influence in the indigenous communities from their people in order to fashion them into Black Englishmen and women in order to use them to extend the colonial project.

The model of schooling Noni describes, which takes place at home, highlights the tensions between the private and the public world and the extent to which the education Noni received prepared her for a public life and a gendered life in the home. The image Noni describes of her education, whereby her mother and the nurse are responsible for Noni's restrictions, highlights the ways in which the socialisation of middle-class and upper-class femininity happens through the mode of private education and seclusion from the world. Noni's private life is one of respectability, while the public world of the township is one of indignity and crassness. This form of education becomes symbolic of the contradictory nature of education which was used to both alienate Black people from themselves by civilising them, as well as acquire an education which would give them the means of negotiating power through creating an African elite. This elite would later organise into the South African Native National Congress in 1912. Catherine Higgs explains that this educational philosophy "was the belief in the capacity of Africans for progress through education. What Africans were progressing toward was the civilised society idealized by the Cape liberal tradition – a society that would judge them on their merits and not by the color of their skin" (Higgs 1997, p. 32).

Noni's education was therefore two-fold: the aim was to socialise in relation to her gender and her elite class, both of which are framed by the idea of British civilisation. However, it is important to note that Black people participated in this project themselves, as organisations such as the South African Native Congress (the precursor to the SANNC) which was established in 1898 "started collecting funds in 1902 for an African college to be built as a memorial to Queen Victoria" (Higgs 1997, p. 33). All of Noni's parents and grandparents

were intricately involved in the establishment of the churches and the schools from as early as the 1800s, which firmly establishes her in a tradition of Black people who actively participated in the missionary project of civilising Black people through British education.

Even as a child, Noni understood the freedom implicit in having land, and that living in the Cape was better than living in Johannesburg. Returning home to the Cape meant returning "back to grass, veld, mountains. No more dirt, disease, fear of robbers. No more barred windows or locked doors" (Jabavu 1963, p. 185), which evokes images of freedom in relation to restrictions and the lack of freedom she experiences in Johannesburg. The descriptions of nature – trees, veld, mountains – highlight the psychic effects that even a child can understand as being important for well-being, which are not available in the locations where Black people stay in urban areas.

It is ironic that the two trips to Johannesburg, which Noni takes as an adult, are as a result of visiting her aunt, uMam'oMkhulu – Daisy Makiwane – and Noni points this out in the rhetorical question "would I *ever* come to this place otherwise?" (Jabavu 1963, p. 185). It seems cruel that the only way she can see uMam'oMkhulu is by coming to Johannesburg, even though she symbolises someone who keeps the family together as the family elder. One wonders what had kept uMam'oMkhulu living in Johannesburg in spite of its indignities and the estrangement she experienced as someone coming from an elite Cape family.

Noni is concerned about the psychological effects of living in Johannesburg which, in turn, is an analysis of the psychological effects of being Black and landless in South Africa in the same way Nompumelelo Mzamane – whom she visited while in Alice earlier in the book – analyses the effects of Bantu Education on young people. She does this by evoking the memory of her brother, who has become the symbol of loss for her family and a representation of being young and Black in apartheid South Africa:

> How had my young brother adapted himself and managed to live, let alone study in such surroundings? He had had difficulty I knew, and could understand, looking at the metropolitan spread. Towards the end of his course he had been afflicted by bouts of what was diagnosed as narcolepsy, a condition of the nerves of which we had never heard until then. It made him drop off to sleep anywhere, often during lectures, or at sports, even at times when driving his motor car. In my case just to sit and look at Johannesburg was making me wish I could fall asleep, and wake up to see Middledrift again or Tsolo. (Jabavu 1963, p. 186)

I read Tengo Jabavu's condition of narcolepsy as a metaphor of the condition of Blackness, which is a result of the indignities of landlessness, dispossession and living in a city characterised by material and psychic violence. Noni is linking psychological and spiritual well-being with the nature of place and estrangement. The effects of being dispossessed and landless mean that conditions like narcolepsy are not surprising when "looking at the metropolitan spread" (Jabavu 1963, p. 186). I read her brother's condition as a result of the trauma of being in a place like Johannesburg, while he too perhaps was hoping to wake up in Middledrift or Tsolo, places which she relates to as providing dignity and social safety, which Johannesburg does not.

It seems for Noni, Johannesburg is a wilderness, the epitome of estrangement, a place which removes the possibility of dignity and personhood. Noni's experience of Johannesburg describes both internal exile and dehumanisation: a loss of land and having no rights in apartheid South Africa. She continues in her analysis of Johannesburg by including a description of the faces she encounters on the platform as the train slows down at the station: "I noticed that even Africans were unsmiling with dour expressions. They were not passing the time of day by joking with those standing next to them as people did at country stations. This was the cold anonymity of the Golden City, *eGoli, eRautini;* I had arrived" (Jabavu 1963, p. 186). While this description of the Black people at the station is underlined by the binary between happy Black people in the country versus unhappy Black people in the city, underlying that binary is a question of Ubuntu and humanity that seems to be lacking even in the way people relate towards strangers in Johannesburg. This moment of arrival in Johannesburg, while seemingly insignificant, highlights the ways in which humans interact in Johannesburg, showing an atmosphere that is not as free as life in the country because of the fear underlying life in Johannesburg.

The theme of cattle and loss of land emerges again when Noni is in Johannesburg. Upon arrival at Mam'oMkhulu's house, Noni notices the entrance has been designed in the same manner as back home, where cow dung is used on the floor, which is called ukusinda. She arrives asking "'*Mam'oMkhulu*, how do you *sinda* this entrance, where is the kraal? Who does it for you?" (Jabavu 1963, p. 193). It is interesting to note that Noni uses translanguaging, as no English word exists for ukusinda. Mam'oMkhulu's response is interesting, as it is infused with nostalgia and political commentary:

> Of course we ought not to keep cattle in the location, Verwoerd forbids it. It has always been forbidden; even under sly Smuts. But since the location is uncared for, the municipality surrounding it with open sewage farms that serve the Europeans suburbs and are disgorged here, since our roads are never made up, what difference in hygiene does the presence of a cow or two make. And people's children must eat. Besides, it is good for these townbred youngsters to know that milk does not come out of tins only, condensed. And since some of them never *go* to the country, *emaXhoseni,* or Basutoland, Portuguese East or wherever their people are from, would they ever *know* cattle except from hearsay if they did not see them in the location? We are lawbreakers, sinners, and you are looking at your mother who "is an accessory after the fact", I suppose." (Jabavu 1963, p. 193)

The restrictions in the location highlight the ways in which the loss of land has consequences for life in urban settings such as Johannesburg. Verwoerd and Smuts[30] are invoked as the political figureheads who have continued with the loss of land of Black people through apartheid policies. While the uncles spoke about the pride and spiritual effects of Xhosa people being cattle owners while Noni was visiting Middledrift, Mam'oMkhulu is showing the inhumanity of the loss of cattle generations after the laws, particularly in relation to living in the city. The image of living amongst sewage from the surrounding suburbs highlights the extent of indignity whereby Black people are subjected to living amongst faeces because the government does not deem them worthy of humanity. The indignity of living in an environment surrounded by faeces further highlights the kind of estrangement Black people experienced in the city, which is unlike the natural environment they have left behind in the rural areas.

However, in spite of the healthier natural environment in the rural areas, the economic hardships forced Black people to seek employment in the city in order to earn a living, making the rural life untenable, particularly for those who were not educated and could not become teachers and nurses in the small centres in rural areas. While Mam'oMkhulu is commenting about the ways in which people keep cattle in the location, she is in fact pointing to the consequences of the loss of land and the effects of being in a location. She is describing the lived experience of being a pariah, estrangement from the land and the effects it has had on a younger generation of children. She mentions *emaXhoseni,* Basutoland and Portuguese East as the places from which African people living in Johannesburg are estranged. These places symbolise the widespread effects of migrant labour whereby Johannesburg becomes the urban centre for people who cannot find a means of living in the rural areas and so

[30] General Jan Smuts, who was D.D.T. Jabavu's friend who assisted in getting Noni to England when she was thirteen years old.

converge on the cities to earn a living. The children born in Johannesburg are estranged not only from the land, but also their ancestral homelands. This speaks to the erasure which happens as a result of migrant labour, as well as the effect of exile whereby the next generation has no memories of life other than existing in Johannesburg and experiencing estrangement from the land. Johannesburg is the only home they know, which is an erasure of other forms of living that are not associated with land dispossession. Mam'oMkhulu describes herself as a lawbreaker and an accomplice to breaking the law, which is the nature of Black life in a state that does not recognise your humanity and refuses the right of citizenship. White settler colonialism, Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid state are iterations of a system that has turned Black people into the problem, hence the laws and the pariah status which ensure that they remain a problem that needs to be solved, often through violence and more oppressive laws.

The constant threat of removal and dislocation, even in Johannesburg, highlights the experience of an urban estrangement, of an "internal exile and existential exile, thereby not feeling at home even when home" (Ling 2007, p. 136). This is felt acutely when Noni's cousin, Sis'Tandi, recounts the choices people make in how they live:

> It is difficult for people to build or live in a settled state with all this talk of being moved from towns. But they hate to endure the squalor while they wait; so although they know that all will presently be razed to the ground, they try, some of them, to make the so-called houses as presentable as they know how. They say: "We may be here a year, two, five, twenty before these Europeans carry out their threat; so why be on tenterhooks, squatting on haunches? We may as well live decently since we have children to bring up. (Jabavu 1963, p. 206)

Sis'Tandi's words highlight the precarious nature of being Black and landless in Johannesburg. The liminal space of not knowing how long one will settle and when one will be removed raises more questions about the psychological effects of this on Black subjectivity. In spite of this in-betweenness, Black people seem to find ways of humanising themselves while waiting for the government to disrupt their lives. This reflection shows the ways in which Black people would choose to live decently as a form of resistance against a dehumanising system. This suggests an agency in the ways in which they try to live their lives, in spite of the overwhelming presence of state brutality which disrupts the private family structure. While Johannesburg was not designed for communities based on a collection of families, but rather migrants coming to the city, those who choose to live as families with their children are attempting to grasp at the little promise of agency and humanity which is

still available to them by resisting apartheid's plan of estranging Black people even in the context of family. The choice in waiting and setting up homes even though destruction is looming has a direct consequence for the next generation, who are being born into apartheid to parents who have become adults during a political transition, being the establishment of the Union of South Africa. Tandi's words paint a picture of the generational effects of dispossession.

In this section I have discussed Noni's experience of estrangement in Johannesburg, highlighting the nature of the everyday life in conversation with the grand politics of laws. Estrangement in the home and communities is a result of said politics and their influence on the private world. In the same way that Noni writes about pariahdom in the native reserves, estrangement in Johannesburg is a form of internal exile which restricts the freedoms of Black people. Estrangement has psychological, spiritual and material effects. I have also discussed Noni's class position and how it aids us in understanding the role education played in not only estranging Black people from their indigenous culture, but also participating in the project of "civilising the natives". The kind of urban estrangement Noni describes is contrasted with nostalgia for life in the rural areas, where Noni was travelling from. Noni is at pains to show the material and psycho-spiritual effects of both nostalgia and estrangement. In the following section, I discuss Sisonke's experience of being in a state of political exile, which offers freedom because she is protected from apartheid South Africa.

Exile as freedom in *Always Another Country*

This section will explore the ways in which Sisonke experiences exile as a place of freedom. I will focus on her experiences in Zambia, Canada and Kenya[31]. I discuss how Sisonke's experience of exile gives her some kind of freedom, because she grows up outside the restrictions of apartheid South Africa. In exile, Sisonke experiences different exilic identities: in Zambia she is a refugee; in Canada she is an immigrant; and in Kenya she is an expatriate. In this section, I will also analyse the gendered nature of exile.

In the prologue, Sisonke begins by making a list of all the places where they have been exiled in relation to her birth in the 1970s:

[31] Sisonke and her family move to Kenya after living in Zambia and they return to Kenya after living in Canada. I discuss both experiences of Kenya in this chapter.

> My sisters and I are born in the 1970s, when my parents live in Zambia, where the African National Congress (ANC) has its headquarters. From there we move to Kenya, and then to Canada, then back to Kenya and after that there is a brief stint in Ethiopia. Eventually, after Nelson Mandela is released from prison in 1990, we come home. (Msimang 2017, p. 2).

This extract provides a summary of the migrations of the family, and locates home in relation to exile, which will be the focus in this section. While in political exile, Sisonke longs for a place she has never been, but which she has experienced through her parents' memories. Home exists because of the promise that exile will come to an end and there will be freedom in South Africa. But before Sisonke can return home, her narrative suggests that for her, "inability to return home is both a personal tragedy and an enabling force" (Boym 2001, p. 621). It is this "enabling force" which I focus on in this analysis.

Said's work on exile is the most pertinent here, necessary in order to be able to read Sisonke's experience of exile. He poses a question which highlights the ways in which exile can be about freedom:

> If true exile is a condition of terminal loss, why has it been transformed so easily into a potent, even enriching, motif of modern culture? We have become accustomed to thinking of the modern period itself as spiritually orphaned and alienated, the age of anxiety and estrangement. (Said 2000, p.180)

Sisonke's book is an engagement with Said's questions, as through her writing she transforms exile into "a potent, even enriching, motif of modern culture". As part of the generation of those "born-in-exile" (Ngcobo 2012, p. 6), the motif of exile remains into adulthood and Sisonke's reflections are a part of "the age of anxiety and estrangement" (Said 2000, p. 180). Exile is also about nationalism because "nationalism is an assertion of belonging in and to a place, a people, a heritage. It affirms the home created by a community of language, culture, and customs; and, by so doing, it fends off exile, fights to prevent its ravages" (Said 2000, p. 182). While Afrikaner nationalism is the reason for Sisonke's political exile, the nationalism emerging from the exile's host countries is about belonging to the broader African continent. Exile is about waiting to go home and "this condition of waiting means that the exile's whole being is concentrated on the land he left behind, in memories and hopes" (McCarthy 1972). Sisonke makes this distinction in her experiences in Zambia, Kenya and Canada, wherein she oscillates between belonging and unbelonging. Although Sisonke has no memories of South Africa, since she was born in Zambia, she lives vicariously through her father's memories and her own hopes about what will happen when South Africa is free.

Sisonke's experience of freedom is also characterised by the tension between longing and belonging. While she longs to return home to South Africa where she imagines she will belong, she also yearns to belong in exile. Sisonke is aware from a young age that she is an outsider in the countries her parents choose. She continues by saying that, "although I had all the hallmarks and memories of an insider, I wasn't one" (Msimang 2017, p. 9). This awareness from a young age brings into question how Sisonke remembers her subject position as a child. Freedom as it is experienced in exile does not necessarily guarantee belonging, even though they are not mutually exclusive. While exile provides a sense of freedom, the private space of the home provides belonging. Home in exile becomes the place where she can be brave, while she is cautious on the playground, where she is aware of her outsider status (Msimang 2017). This dual relationship between the outside, political world and inside world of the private home is crucial for understanding exile, because the home becomes a safe place where one believes they are an insider in spite of the external reality of not belonging.

Throughout her childhood, Sisonke experiences different exile conditions: she is a refugee, an expatriate, an immigrant. Sisonke explains this change in relation to her father's choices, as he "now had a place of employment and was not a full-time member of the ANC… We went from being refugees in Zambia – a country whose entire foreign policy was built around our protection and emancipation – to being expatriates in a city [Nairobi] concerned with feeding its rich and distancing itself from its poor" (Msimang 2017, p. 61). According to Said, "the word 'refugee' has become a political one, suggesting large herds of innocent and bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance, whereas 'exile' carries with it, I think, a touch of solitude and spirituality" (Said 2000, p. 186). In a sense, this describes the experience of South Africans in Zambia, who represent a group of people who left en masse and settled together in a new place, which explains how Lusaka became a haven for ANC exiles. Being an expatriate denotes a position of privilege for Sisonke and her family while they live in Kenya. While it has largely been associated with American and English people in developing countries, in the context of Sisonke's experience, they become expatriates because of her father's job at the United Nations, which allows them privileges such as a private school education at Nairobi Academy with "a sound British education" (Msimang 2017, p. 65). Sisonke begins to refer to herself as an immigrant when they move to Canada, because of the experience of negotiating the mores of what is expected from her as a child who is an

outsider, “an African, a girl who came from a faraway place filled with black people” (Msimang 2017, p. 88).

While Sisonke uses these concepts to describe her experience of exile, they are only useful insofar as explaining her parent’s choices in relation to the geopolitics they have to navigate. Sisonke is in a unique position because her varied experience of exile changes over time and location, whereas literature on exile suggests a fixed experience. For example, in “A Guide to Exiles, Expatriates, and Internal Emigres” Mary McCarthy makes clear distinctions between these categories as though they cannot shift and change over time. However, I am interested in the ways in which McCarthy makes a distinction between these categories which is useful for my analysis. McCarthy describes an expatriate as the reverse of an exile, where their “main aim is never to go back to his native land or, failing that, to stay away as long as possible” (McCarthy 1972). McCarthy’s analysis does not consider Sisonke’s experience of exile, which is in conversation with apartheid which created expatriates, exiles and refugees in one lifetime.

For Sisonke, exile is about being born free, because she is born while her parents are in exile in Zambia. Sisonke describes exile as her “parent’s greatest gift” because exile made her “love the idea of South Africa” (Msimang 2017, p. 4). Describing exile as a gift seems counter-intuitive; however, in Sisonke’s case, exile means growing up in places that recognise her humanity in ways that apartheid South Africa does not. Nonetheless, the idea of creating an idea of South Africa is the problematic aspect of Sisonke’s imaginary homeland, as discussed in Chapter 2.

The memoir begins with the early memories of exile in Zambia. Sisonke foregrounds the identity of being a child in newly independent Zambia in order to locate herself within the exile narrative, as well as Zambia’s independence:

> Like most kids in newly independent Zambia, I was born free and so carried myself like a child who had every reason to believe she was at the centre of the universe. Our parents also conducted themselves with an unmistakable self-assurance. They behaved as though the ground beneath their feet was theirs and the sun in the sky had risen purely for their benefit; as though the trees were green simply to please them. (Msimang 2017, p. 7)

Exile is a place of freedom for Sisonke and her parents, even though they are refugees. This freedom is not the political freedom which they lack in South Africa, but rather a freedom

which recognises their human right to self-assurance. Their identity is constituted around the knowledge of living a life free of oppression and therefore living with the freedom to make choices while in exile. Sisonke's identity is formed as a child who understands freedom and is raised amongst adults who live freely in a free Zambia. This example of adults with self-assurance is in contrast with what it would have meant to have been adults in apartheid South Africa. The freedom of being a South African in Zambia is part of the gift Sisonke alludes to in the prologue. Exile gives her parents the opportunity to re-imagine themselves anew, beyond the shackles of apartheid. The freedom she experiences as a child who "was at the centre of the universe" (Msimang 2017, p. 7) also hints at Sisonke's class position, which allowed her to find space for herself even though she was an exile far from home.

A Pan-African exile experience allows Sisonke to see herself outside of the narrow, Black identity predicated on inferiority in South Africa. Her childhood is expansive and free. Her parents' ability to model what it means to live outside of the oppression of being Black in South Africa allows Sisonke a different kind of representation of what it means to be Black. Being Black is also in relation to Zambia's independence, where freedom is palpable, rather than being Black in relation to whiteness as it is created in apartheid South Africa. For Sisonke, being born in Zambia means that she was "born free" (Msimang 2017, p. 7), because she is born in a post-colonial context where the personhood of Black people is no longer dictated by colonialism at the state level. Instead, the Zambia where Sisonke is born is a country in transition and flux during the post-independence political and cultural moment. It is possible to contrast Sisonke's experience of being "born free" with the ways in which this idea has been used in post-apartheid South Africa. While children born post-1994 have had the experience of being born in a politically free South Africa where there is a progressive constitution and citizens can vote, there has been a critique about what this means in relation to the lived experience of freedom. The born-free discourse in contemporary South Africa "[reduces] freedom to political liberties… ignores the structural socio-economic inequalities reproducing a racialised, capitalist social order" (Mabasa 2017, p. 96).

This notion of "born free" is contested, as it highlights the complex nature of freedom. At the social level, Sisonke is "born free" because she is born in a country that has declared its freedom from colonialism even while it grapples with the everyday work of undoing the systemic nature of white supremacy. By describing herself as "born free", Sisonke is claiming the agency to author her life, which she does through her writing. However, this is not without

acknowledgement of the complexity of her freedom when she returns to a "South Africa that is free but not just" (Msimang 2017, p. 4). Whereas Sisonke can claim her agency for herself, she does so in the context of an adult reflecting from the location of a South Africa where "suffering and poverty – once noble – are not only commonplace (they have always been), but acceptable" (Msimang 2017, p. 3), which compromises the experience of freedom in contemporary South Africa.

Although Sisonke's experience of exile begins in Zambia, it continues in Kenya as she grows older. The two countries offer different experiences of exile because "Kenya never owned us the way Zambia did" (Msimang 2017, p. 61). Sisonke continues, "while Lusaka had been our home because it was the headquarters of the ANC, Nairobi was our home because Baba had a job there and his job had nothing to do with the revolution" (Msimang 2017, p. 61). Breaking away from the headquarters of the ANC is the first experience of what it means to have new possibilities in exile, and possibly establishes Sisonke's family in the burgeoning middle-class. "We went from being refugees in Zambia – a country whose entire foreign policy was built around our protection and emancipation – to being expatriates in a city concerned with feeding its rich and distancing itself from its poor" (Msimang 2017, p. 61). The distinction between Kenya and Zambia highlights the geopolitics on the continent, where there is no homogenous experience shared by African countries.

Sisonke's experience of exile gives her the opportunity to delve deeper into the class politics of being an expatriate. Kenya allows a different kind of experience with freedom as it is an independent country which has a "bloody recent past" (Msimang 2017, p. 62) which influences the pace of living. This is part of the mystery – the illusiveness of Kenya which offers privilege and comfort but also a precarious political reality. Living in Kenya is different from Zambia, because her father's new job in Nairobi offers class privileges they did not have in Zambia. Even while they leave Zambia, the family finds a way to maintain their links and way of life which they established in Lusaka through building a community with other South African families. Sisonke reflects on the varied experiences of existence and belonging in a country which silences its recent history in the post-independence moment, which is characterised by gross inequality. Sisonke continues, "The children of Nairobi's underclass knew their place, and the children of the upper classes expected them to stay there. Kenya's leaders were not planning for growth. Their strategy was premised not on building the middle classes, but on empowering the elite" (Msimang 2017, p. 64). In spite of the similarity of

independence, Kenya and Zambia have had different trajectories in terms of how they respond to inequality as a result of colonialism. The Msimangs benefit from the protection of the upper classes in Kenya, as they have an askari posted at the gate who protects them from the harsh realities in Nairobi because their "polished shoes and [their] pan-African aspirations" had no place "seeing Nairobi's gaunt and pock-marked buttocks" (Msimang 2017, p. 65). Much as there is still freedom in Kenya, the experience is also about a compromised freedom which is readily available to those who are seen by the new state and therefore can participate meaningfully. The poor people which the state distances itself from do not experience freedom in the same way that Sisonke experiences it as an expatriate.

The experience of exile in Kenya is marked by a tenuousness that did not exist in Zambia. In Zambia there was a certainty because "His Excellency – Dr Kenneth Kaunda – had given all these revolutionaries special status in the country. Dr Kaunda was a dreamer who believed that Africa belonged to Africans. He had said that independent Africa had a responsibility towards the parts of Africa that were still in chains" (Msimang 2017, p. 19). This was reflected in the country's foreign policy, which made room for South Africans, Zimbabweans and Mozambicans who were not yet free. However, in Kenya, "President Moi was not invested in the future of black South Africa, so our fate was not inextricably linked to the fate of his own country" (Msimang 2017, p. 67); this results in the ANC's "tenuous presence in Kenya" (Msimang 2017, p. 67). Sisonke attributes this precariousness to the politics of the 1980s, wherein African leaders are consumed by money and power: "Kenya pulsed with money. It was East Africa's regional financial nerve centre, yet it had no real political heart. Mummy and Baba knew that unlike Zambia or Tanzania or Mozambique – countries where Big Men understood the power of ideas – Kenya would not protect them if times got rough. It would offer nothing on the basis of solidarity" (Msimang 2017, p. 67). The difference between Kenya and Zambia allows for a different narrative to emerge about the various experiences of being in exile; it is dependent on the place, the people and the politics of the place.

Inasmuch as exile promises a hope of freedom because it is not South Africa, Sisonke's memory of exile highlights that she remembers Kenya both as the child who lived through it, as well as the adult who remembers the tensions as "It was a dark and difficult time, yet it was imbued with a spare sort of hope" (Msimang 2017, pp. 67-68). The political moment in Kenya and South Africa leads to Sisonke's conclusion that "This Africa held nothing in store

for us" (Msimang 2017, pp. 67-68). Without the revolutionary spirit from Zambia, which protected South African exiles, Sisonke wrestles with the notion of freedom, safety and belonging in exile. The kind of safety which is about citizenship comes in the form of moving to Canada and getting Canadian passports. It is ironic that it takes leaving Africa and going to the global north to find the potential for citizenship. The pan-African ideals and post-independence Africa cannot hold their contradictions and therefore cannot hold Sisonke's ideals of belonging, because post-colonial Africa is not yet politically stable. While Zambia, Kenya and Canada are the countries where Sisonke spends time in exile, they all represent different forms of exile and freedom, because of the politics specific to each country.

The global north presents a different iteration of exile. Citizenship in Canada rather than Kenya or Zambia means access to an American education and an accent that presents different opportunities later in Sisonke's life, when she returns to South Africa as an adult. Sisonke positions the move to Canada as a practical decision which was her mother's choice because "Baba was technically stateless" (Msimang 2017, p. 69). Canada becomes a different form of exile while waiting for home, because it presents the kind of safety they could not have in Kenya: citizenship. It is also a place of respite "while the drums of war beat elsewhere" (Msimang 2017, p. 70). In spite of the sense of respite, Canada is "liberating but unsettling" (Msimang 2017, p. 70). The most unsettling aspect of the move is that they are firmly no longer the centre of the universe as they were in Zambia, because no one "was all that interested in us" (Msimang 2017, p. 70). In Canada, they become immigrants who can be ridiculed. The fervour of Pan-Africanism does not exist in Canada. She has to navigate this tension of exile because in Canada, she learns about the impact of being seen as an immigrant while balancing the solitude of being in exile.

Part of the loneliness of exile is marked by the experience of racism. Moving to Ottawa provides more space and opportunities, but Sisonke begins to be aware of the unfamiliarity which characterises the otherness she experiences. Her family is one of the few African families settled in the city and their presence "was as conspicuous here as that of the Rhodesians we had seen striding across Independence Avenue in Lusaka in our childhood" (Msimang 2017, p. 72). This form of otherness is unfamiliar to Sisonke as a child who had been raised in African countries pulsating with possibilities and people who looked like her. It is in Canada that the race relations begin to form a part of what it means to be Black for Sisonke. Her early racial identity had been formed as a result of the glamorous freedom

fighters who came in and out of her house in Zambia. In the absence of their presence, as Sisonke grows older, she has to contend with whiteness – and becoming the other – in a different country. Sisonke's life is disrupted by the banality of racism because "one day, in the middle of everything that was becoming mundane and ordinary, on a day just like the ones that had come before it, I was called an African monkey" (Msimang 2017, p. 74). The memory is vivid "because it was brutal and [she] was the only one who cared. Perhaps it was because [she] was the one he intended to wound" (Msimang 2017, p. 74).

This memory is central for Sisonke because in the midst of forgetting herself in a new country, she dared to craft a normal childhood with her sisters. Being called an African monkey means they cannot be shielded from the everyday nature of racism. Sisonke writes about the wound which remains from the incident, and continues to be a scar as an adult. Sisonke includes this incident because "some hurts we nurture to guard against forgetting" (Msimang 2017, p. 74), because of the visceral and embodied nature of memory. It is ironic that she experiences racism while living in exile in spite of her parents' efforts to shield her from it by leaving South Africa. This experience of racism is important to Sisonke, as she is able to relate to why her parents would leave South Africa in order not to endure racism. Sisonke's treatment of this wound and memory forms part of her identity as a mother with mixed-raced children. She does not have the luxury of forgetting this memory as an adult, because she knows that racism will find her children in the same way that it found her as a child. She uses this memory as preparation for how to prepare her children, rather than as a wound that festers. There is a certainty about the racism which she learned as a child in a foreign country, that she knows she cannot protect her children from years later, after her encounter.

This otherness is expressed in the anxiety to do with fitting in and learning how to be normal in Canada. For Sisonke, the unfamiliarity of Canada came in moments and experiences that seemed "innocuous and I would stumble and recover quickly. Other times though I felt as though the air was too thin and I would gulp, vertiginous and sick with worrying about fitting in" (Msimang 2017, p. 73). Sisonke's anxieties – which feel like dizziness and sickness – are the embodied experiences of being in exile. She likens the overwhelming senses to not "finding a vocabulary for my out-of-depthness" (Msimang 2017, p. 73), making belonging a vocabulary, or a language one develops in order to be part of a place and experience. Sisonke writes this as an adult reflecting on the emotions she experienced as a child. Her reliance on

memory to make sense of the embodied experience of otherness is the very nature of memoir writing. Memories are credible even while they are suspicious. Sisonke's writing about these experiences highlights "the tension between the 'then' of event and the 'now' of recollection as a way of drawing out the complexity of individual experience over time" (Coullie et al. 2006, p. 213). The distance between then and now is the very art of memoir.

While in Canada, she encounters racism; Zambia and Kenya give her the opportunity to develop a consciousness about a kind blackness outside the gaze of whiteness. In Zambia and Kenya she is an African; in Canada she is Black. All these places play a role in the kind of identities Sisonke learns to negotiate. Part of the negotiation is realising the visibility of her blackness in Canada, which she had taken for granted in different ways in Zambia and Kenya. The new place makes her realise that "I was different without trying to be – I didn't know what to do and I didn't know how to be so my words failed me and I became a coward" (Msimang 2017, p. 76). Sisonke's lack of vocabulary to explain the overwhelming sense of being new morphs into not having the words to defend her difference. In the absence of words, Sisonke does not seem to know what to do with herself, even though she had been a self-assured child in post-independence Zambia.

The reality of hypervisibility in Canada begins with the realisation of racism, because Sisonke has no choice but to come to terms with being visible, even if it is against her will, because "here in this flat country I stuck out. I was an anthill on a prairie. Here, I had to be brave because everybody was always looking at me. They were looking at me even when I hadn't seen them" (Msimang 2017, p. 77). The new country demands that she develops a language in order to survive, and her reluctance makes her a coward. The racism in Canada is a disruption of the freedom which exile presents. Being an immigrant whose identity is under scrutiny means that while Canadian citizenship has been granted, it comes with the crude reality that citizenship is not a guarantee of belonging and dignity.

The decision to leave Canada is unexpected for Sisonke; it begins yet another change in her exile experience, which necessitates that she see herself anew. As a child who desperately wants to belong, leaving is not easy for Sisonke as she is "tired of always being the one who has just arrived, tired of leaving just when I am starting to feel like I finally belong" (Msimang 2017, p. 101). While she feels rage about leaving Canada and moving to Kenya, it begins to lessen upon arrival because in seeing Black faces like hers, Sisonke knows that "I

belong here in a way that was impossible in Canada" (Msimang 2017, p. 101), even though she desperately wanted Canada to be home. Each move raises questions about belonging and unbelonging, because the move does not bring her closer to home, but rather is a reminder that they are waiting to go back home.

Going back to Kenya has a different ease because Sisonke and her family are protected from the realities of poverty in post-colonial Kenya. They live as expatriates because of their Canadian citizenship, while their father is a director of an international agency and they live "a carefree life as if the misery he seeks to eradicate each day does not exist" (Msimang 2017, p. 102). A carefree life in Kenya is a luxury that is afforded to few, allowing Sisonke to think that "Canada was a nice dream that gave [her] a passport and an accent and a place to go to every summer holiday" (Msimang 2017, p. 103). Being an expatriate in Kenya means a different kind of freedom, where she is protected because of the class position she occupies.

Going back to Kenya allows Sisonke to delve deeper into class politics which revolve around her awareness of her own privilege in a country she recognises and has returned to with a new consciousness and the material symbol that marks her privilege: a bicycle she bought in Canada. While riding to visit a friend – the Zimbabwean ambassador's daughter – a young, poor boy tries to steal her bicycle, and she is helped by strangers who are aware of her class position, given the neighbourhood where the encounter happens. Sisonke's middle-classness in Kenya operates as a form of protection. Like the racism she experienced in Canada, this encounter becomes another embodied lesson for Sisonke, because unlike the poor boy who has no options because of his poverty, Sisonke's life moves on largely undisturbed after this encounter, because of the freedoms which are a result of her middle-class reality. Sisonke is also confronted with her own privilege, even though she is living in a country which is not quite home. Nairobi is a place that shields Sisonke from poverty while exposing her to the complexity of social interactions in post-colonial Africa.

I deliberately include that Sisonke's friend is the Zimbabwean ambassador's daughter to highlight the social network Sisonke is part of in Kenya. Sisonke adds that on weekends, they go to the "Silver Springs Hotel where Mummy goes to the sauna and we splash around in the pool with the children of Kenyan professors and bankers and managing directors" (Msimang 2017, p. 102). Sisonke's family is firmly ensconced in Kenya's postcolonial elite social class, who have drivers and maids at home. This social status offers Sisonke and her family a

different kind of protection because “no one will call us monkeys or come snooping in our house looking for evidence that we don’t belong” (Msimang 2017, p. 103). While Canada gave them citizenship and a different kind of social security, it also meant enduring humiliations which she does not experience in Kenya. Sisonke describes her friend’s house as a “soulless mansion” (Msimang 2017, p. 103), as though it were an extension of the atmosphere she describes in Nairobi, which is impatient with poor people who are a blemish on the economic growth happening in Kenya.

Growing up in exile meant that Sisonke was exposed to other adults who had also experienced different forms of freedom in exile. Sisonke describes these South Africans as people who possessed a kind of self-assurance. She contrasts the South African women with the Zambian wives who live at Burley Court. She notices that the Zambian women were conservative compared to “the other women who populated my life when I was a girl” (Msimang 2017, p. 15). The South Africans who had links to the liberation struggle were simultaneously free and not free in the same way that Sisonke’s childhood promised freedom but under the burden of being in exile: “free in one sense, you see, but not free at all in the ways that mattered” (Msimang 2017, p. 16). Even for these women who drink and smoke freely, exile does not allow them all the freedom they can have, because they are in another country as a matter of consequence rather than as a matter of choice. Sisonke offers a gendered lens on freedom and exile, where women’s experiences of exile are often narrow and women are reduced to struggle wives:

> The notion of the supporting role operates on several levels. It primarily makes the “struggle” of these women dependent on their husbands’ political engagement, with the word “struggle” being a mere descriptor (adjective) for the noun “wife” or “struggle wife”. This patriarchal narrative of a male struggle… and the female suffering of their wives/mothers of the nation clearly plays into gendered binaries of male agency and female passivity. (Moji 2014, p. 94)

While Polo Moji is referring to struggle wives in general, her analysis is useful here for showing the gendered narrative of exile wherein women can be reduced to supportive roles. Sisonke challenges this construction by not even mentioning the women’s marital status and instead referring to them as “new girls stepping out of old skins” (Msimang 2017, p. 16), suggesting that they are new women who disrupt the notion of Black womanhood which is often narrowly ascribed to them. They are able to step out of their old skins particularly because they are experiencing freedom in exile. She compares these women to the men who

"were just as glamorous" (Msimang 2017, p. 16) because "these men were all 'firsts'… Because of this, they had an air of invincibility and supreme confidence about them – even when they were falling-down drunk" (Msimang 2017, p. 17).

In escaping the South Africa which oppressed them, these men and women were able to imagine themselves anew in liberated Zambia. Sisonke refers to them as the new breed of Africans who were "possessed of the secret of freedom, a sort of inner spirit that propelled them forward and made them look – to my wide eyes at least – as though they were soaring" (Msimang 2017, p. 17). This ability to fashion themselves according to the liberated Zambia highlights the possibilities exile has for freedom, imagined freedom and performed heroism. Sisonke does not characterise her mother as a struggle wife either, because her mother is an accountant who works and is financially independent, even while her father is a student when he first arrives in Zambia. Sisonke juxtaposes her mother's position with the conservative women at Burley Court in order to highlight the different examples of women she is exposed to while growing up. The gendered narrative in exile considers the experiences in the privacy of the home, as well as the political expressions amongst the women who are freedom fighters.

The kind of freedom Sisonke describes is only in relation to what these political exiles have left in South Africa; racial segregation in all aspects of life. Nonetheless, in exile, freedom from apartheid is one thing, because exile is marred by its own kind of struggle of self-making, which is reliant on a hunger for survival. Sisonke continues:

> In exile, they created themselves as though from mud and ochre. Upon leaving South Africa, they had shed their old skins and become the men they had been born to be. Their backs straightened as they descended into Moscow's frigid embrace; their muscles lengthened as they marched across bush and mosquito-infested swamps in Angola; their spines elongated as they squelched through bog and marsh. Nonsense may have spewed from their malarial lips in Kongwa but they were free. They marched across Africa singing freedom songs until they lost their voices. (Msimang 2017, p. 18)

The fact that they could recreate themselves is admirable, given that they could have died in South Africa, or died on their journey escaping it. They are recreated from mud and ochre because that is what they encounter in the wilderness while running away from home. Mud and ochre invoke images of the earth and dust, which is an allusion to the words from a Christian burial liturgy "ashes to ashes, dust to dust", which is adapted from the Biblical text

which says “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast though taken; for dust though art and unto dust shalt thou return” (Bible, Genesis 3: 19). Creating themselves anew “as though from mud and ochre” provides an image of being born again in a new place, because of the journeys they have travelled to reach exile. This reference to mud and ochre also resonates with the connection to the land that Noni writes about in *The Ochre People*. Noni is inadvertently writing about the people of the land, her homeland, who are characterised by their use of the ochre and therefore their connection to the land. The symbolism in both Sisonke and Noni’s references to ochre highlights the importance of land as an entity that people can reconnect to for healing.

The potential for freedom relies on the place these men find themselves. In Moscow, Angola and Kongwa they have the opportunity to remake themselves into a different image than the one South Africa would have them become. It is interesting to note that Sisonke only refers to the men – albeit nameless men – in this analysis, and neglects to mention women, although there were women in the ANC such as Thandi Modise, Gertrude Shope and Ruth Mompati (to mention just a few), who were part of Umkhonto Wesizwe. Being away from home allows these women the opportunity to see themselves anew in relation to the world, where some places embrace freedom fighters and other parts of the world reject them as terrorists. By leaving South Africa, exile promises the agency they yearn for, which allows them movement and control over their lives. The very notion of a freedom fighter is agentic, as it is ascribed to someone who is fighting for freedom. Sisonke lists the dangers of exile in relation to the self-definition which is also possible through it: straightened backs, muscles lengthening, spines elongating, all of which are as a result of freedom. This is the embodiment of freedom, where the body is an extension of what freedom looks like for these men.

In this section, I have discussed the ways in which Sisonke’s reflections on Zambia, Kenya and Canada suggest an identity construction that is constantly in negotiation with the place and its politics. She is not simply a child growing up, but rather, she is a child learning how to be in a complex world that requires that she learn certain rules while trying to be free. Each place where Sisonke experiences exile offers her the opportunity to construct her identity and experience of freedom anew. In Zambia she is a child of the revolution because she is “born into an Africa that was waiting for [her] and into a movement that needed children as emblems of the future” (Msimang 2017, p. 149). She is part of something that symbolises a new Africa that is emerging after colonialism’s grip on the continent. In Kenya she is not part

of a movement but rather, she sees the underbelly of postcolonial Africa which is not about justice, but the enrichment of the middle-class. In Canada, Sisonke gains citizenship, but this sense of political security (which was not available while living in Zambia) through citizenship does not translate into belonging. Instead, Canada becomes the place of being othered through racism, and knowing that they do not belong. Throughout these experiences there is the existential waiting for home, South Africa, which finally becomes a reality when Sisonke is much older when she returns to South Africa for the first time before the elections and finally after being in university in America she returns to South Africa to take her rightful place in her imaginary homeland.

This chapter's focus has been on the various iterations of exile. Noni and Sisonke's experiences of exile differ because of time and place. In Noni's memoir *Drawn in Colour*, I read exile as pariahdom which is a form of exile where one is unhomed even while living on the same land where one has been dislocated. The status of being a pariah is a result of the creation of the native reserves, as well as laws which legislate the dehumanisation of Black people. In *The Ochre People* I looked at urban estrangement through Noni's experience of visiting Johannesburg. I discussed the ways in which she experiences the spatial politics of Johannesburg and the consequences they have in terms of the lack of dignity Black people experience in spite of their own efforts to humanise themselves through education and establishing homes. Visiting Johannesburg makes Noni nostalgic for the native reserves she critiques in her first book, because of the othering she witnesses and experiences while in Johannesburg. For Sisonke, exile is a form of freedom. In spite of the constant reminders of being away from home, Sisonke is able to enjoy the freedom of not growing up under apartheid laws; but rather her life in exile affords her the freedom of movement and association.

CHAPTER 4

Ukuhamba kukubona: Re-imagining freedom, ukuzilanda and curating fictive kinship

Umhlaba wakithi bo (Our land)

Usemi ndawo'nye (Is still in the same state)

Akukho mehluko kule lizwe (There is no difference in this country)

Qhawul'amakhamandela (Break the chains)…

Bakhona'abanye abakithi abazibona sesikhululekile (The are some who think that we are already free)

Kodwa umthetho phantsi, uthi not yet uhuru (But the lived reality is that we are not yet free)

Letta Mbulu: "Not Yet Uhuru"[32]

In Chapter 3, I analysed the different iterations of exile such as pariahdom, urban estrangement and political exile. This chapter focuses on transnationalism. I read transnationalism as border-crossing, which is a thread throughout Noni and Sisonke's memoirs. I will begin by exploring the illegitimate borders in apartheid South Africa and the ways in which Noni navigates them. I argue that in spite of the repressive political system, Noni is able to subvert the illegitimate borders through travel, thus expressing her freedom in *Drawn in Colour*. Then I discuss *The Ochre People* and the ways in which Noni travels in order to trace her family heritage through the practice of ukuzilanda. Finally, I will argue that Sisonke uses her transnational experience to critique the nationalism of the "new South Africa". Because of her affinity with people from other parts of the continent, Sisonke is able to see the dangers of South Africa's nationalism through the experiences of her friends who are from other African countries. In this chapter, I note that transnationalism is about negotiating power, and that it offers Noni and Sisonke the possibility of freedom and kinship. Ukuhamba kukubona captures the sense of transnationalism as it means "to travel is to see". Which is to say, to travel is the ability to see the world through a lens that challenges narrow boundaries and imagines the kind of expansiveness which Noni and Sisonke embody, and which in turn shapes their memoirs. I observe that freedom, for Noni and Sisonke, is intricately linked to travel, their class position and border-crossing experiences: the more they

[32] Letta Mbulu lyrics "Not yet uhuru". Available from https://genius.com/Letta-mbulu-not yet-uhuru-intro-lyrics

travel, the closer they hope to get towards freedom. It is these ideas that I would like to take into account as I discuss Noni and Sisonke's experiences as writers who wrote across borders, who lived across borders, and who re-claimed and re-asserted their identities through their writing.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Noni and Sisonke are transnational writers whose writing captures the sense of ukuhamba kukubona, which means "to travel is to see". These are two Black women whose life stories are marked by South Africa's politics of oppression, restriction, homelessness, landlessness and dehumanisation in relation to their access to the rest of the world. Their lives at home (South Africa) have been disrupted by exile and estrangement, so writing and travel offer an opportunity to continuously disrupt and reconstitute their identities according to the places they occupy. Through their writing, we see what Boyce Davies refers to as a "migratory subjectivity" which exists in multiple locations (Boyce Davies, 1994: 3). Central to crossing borders is the question of subjectivity and self-making. I also use Letta Mbulu's song "Not yet Uhuru" as a way of interrogating notions of freedom, as both authors traverse different borders, negotiating freedom and their subjectivity. Mbulu's song speaks to the unfulfilled promises of freedom that both writers are preoccupied with. For Noni, travel arises from her lifestyle and a search for herself. While Sisonke's condition is slightly different, she initially travels because her parents are in political exile, but when she is older she makes choices about which borders she will traverse. She too is searching for her sense of place and sense of self. Noni and Sisonke's writing explores "consciousness of expansiveness and the dialogics of movement and community" (Boyce Davies, 1994: 3), because central to transnationalism is the relationship between identity and place. This chapter further argues that transnationalism offers a different imagination about the kind of access Black people can have in the world, which does not mean their enslavement but rather a constant negotiation with questions of agency and self-making. After providing a theoretical framework in which to read the three primary texts, I divide the chapter into three sections discussing each book.

Writing the world: Noni and Sisonke as Transnational writers

Transnational literature is a broad field that takes into account the ways in which cultural flows happen across borders globally. While much of the recent conversations in this field link the transnational literary studies with globalisation, Paul Jay argues that this is a shallow understanding of transnational literary studies:

> …especially if we define globalisation as a relatively contemporary phenomenon related to new technologies of travel and communication and the complex intersection of national economies and cultures. The transnationalising of literary studies has to be understood as the effect of a more complicated set of intersecting forces dating back to the late 1960s, forces operating both within and outside the academy. (Jay 2010, p. 17)

This is an important perspective of transnationalism within literary studies, as it connects Noni to the significant literary production of the 1960s. Noni first published *Drawn in Colour* in 1960 and again in 1963, which corresponds with Jay's analysis of the significance of the 1960s. Noni can be seen as part of the first wave of transnational women writers. Transnationalism in literary studies is about the rupture of the focus on literature that is determined by the writer's national boundaries, and it is concerned with "the historical legacy and continuing mutual impact of metropole and colony, modernity and tradition, Africa and Europe" (Lewis 2011, p. 21) in writing. For transnationalism in literary studies to be fully appreciated, it is imperative to understand literature as a multicultural object of knowledge with social and cultural information, and as expressive of a whole range of different experiences and identities. I have used Noni and Sisonke's writing in this study to explore "social and cultural information" (Lewis 2011) in order to explore their multiple identities.

While Noni wrote and published her memoirs while living in England, Sisonke writes from two locations: South Africa and Australia. As transnational writers, both have an ambivalent relationship with South Africa, since they feel estranged from the country they identify as home. In the context of this study, I use three positions to show the nature of transnationalism: Noni and Sisonke are both writers who travel(ed) the world; secondly, they wrote about their experiences of traveling the world; and finally, as a result of their global experience and the global reach of their writing, they are part of the global, cultural and knowledge flow in two different historical moments. I use these three positions in this study to account for the complex nature of their transnational experience, as it is not simply one definition that can account for their position as writers who have access to the global audience. In *To Turn the Whole World Over: Black Women and Internationalism* Keisha Blain and Tiffany Gill show the importance of taking seriously the ways in which black women not only traversed the world but demonstrated the need to foster international links with other black women. While Blain and Gill's research focuses on black people in the United States and parts of the African diaspora, their definition of black internationalism is relevant in understanding transnationalism as well as reading Noni and Sisonke as it places

them within the conversation about the complex ways in black women traverse the world. Blain and Gill explain that black internationalism

> Captures their sustained efforts to forge transnational and transracial collaborations and solidarities with people of color from various parts of the globe. More specifically, black internationalism is framed within most historical scholarship as a global political, intellectual and artistic movement of African-descended people engaged in a collective struggle to overthrow global white supremacy in its many forms. (Blain & Gill 2019, p. 2)

Noni and Sisonke's experiences abroad capture the complexities of what it means to be black abroad during a context where there was "collective struggle to overthrow global white supremacy in its many forms" (Blain & Gill 2019, p. 2). Over time, the idea of black internationalism become more expansive and it relates to the ways in which I wish to discuss Noni and Sisonke's transnational experiences which are "in response slavery, colonialism and imperialism" (Blain & Gill 2019, p. 2). They argue that there were "political and cultural ways in which black communities collectively raised questions of struggle and liberation on a global scale; and to capture the various ways black people built relationships with other communities across the globe." (Blain & Gill 2019, p.2). Sisonke's transnational experience in particular captures the questions of collective struggles which will be discussed in this chapter.

Transnationalism is about colonialism, postcolonialism, decolonialisation, and globalisation and in the context of literary studies, it allows for a complicated reading of texts which is not limited to a "nationalist paradigm" (Jay 2010, p. 1). Jay continues that transnationalism has "transformed the nature of the locations we study, and focused attention on forms of cultural production that take place in the liminal spaces between real and imagined borders" (Jay 2010, p. 1). Transnationalism is also useful when thinking about agency, especially for the ways in which it will be discussed in this thesis. While agency is often viewed as the ability to have autonomy and make decisions or protect one's cultural identity, in this context agency is seen as "the intelligent and imaginative negotiation of cross-cultural contact than with avoiding such contact" (Jay 2010, p. 3). The word "negotiation" is crucial, as the writers being examined are forced to negotiate their identities across borders and especially in the process of writing about their experiences. Therefore "[t]he question of agency is inseparable from the question of creativity. Agents are subjects that create, that construct unique combinations of elements in expressive ways. Modernist epistemology dictates that creativity,

like agency, necessitates a constituting subject, a prediscursive 'I'" (Hekman 1995, p. 203). Much like exile, transnationalism is intricately linked to ideas of the nation, of who belongs and who does not. In writing about their homes, Noni and Sisonke are also writing about the nation because "transnationalism challenges the rigidity of national boundaries" (Duvivier 2006, p. 4) and in turn, complicates the idea of home as discussed in Chapter 2.

Transnationalism is a longer tradition which takes into account the cultural flow which has been happening in the world of words for as long as literature has been a tool for sharing ideas across cultures and borders. Noni and Sisonke's travels are an active process of taking up physical space in the world, but also creating a space for themselves in the writing world. The nexus between women and the ability to travel is an important one, considering the kinds of mobility women have experienced throughout history. Khwezi Mkhize explores this longer tradition of transnationalism by looking at Black internationalism in his thesis "Empire Unbound - Imperial Citizenship, Race and Diaspora in the Making of South Africa". In his thesis, he dedicates a chapter to John Tengo Jabavu, Noni's grandfather, as one of the intellectuals who were part of Black internationalism and the exchange of ideas, particularly in the establishment of the Union of South Africa after World War I. In her thesis "Imperial Travelers: The Formation of West African Urban Culture, Identity, and Citizenship in London and Accra, 1925-1935", Jinny Kathleen Prais looks at the transnational connections between London and Accra in the development of public spheres amongst young West Africans who were studying in London. In his recent book *Grounds of Engagement: Apartheid-era African American and South African writing* (2015), Stephane Robolin writes about the transnational conversations amongst writers such as Langston Hughes and Richard Rive, as a way of looking at the cross-border connections in literary history.

Therefore, when Noni and Sisonke write about the ways in which they have travelled the world, as Black women they are following a tradition within Black internationalism, as well as a tradition that dates as far back as slavery and its slave narratives (Duvivier 2006). Many black women writers have explored transnationalism as a theme in fiction writing, and there has been a focus on the transnational nature of writing by women in the third world, and on making their work accessible in other parts of the world (Amireh and Majaj, 2000). For example, slave narratives by women are some of the earliest examples of transnational non-fiction writing, such as William L. Andrews' work *Six Women's Slave Narratives* (1988) and the well-known work of Phillis Wheatley, *Phillis Wheatley: Complete Writings* (2001).

Wheatley's essay "On being brought from Africa to America" was published in 1768. She was a "domestic servant in the household of John and Susanna Wheatley, who taught her to read and supported her interests in poetry" (Marable & Mullings 2009, p. 8). While this is a tradition established in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, one could make connections with the longer tradition of women writing about their transnational experiences across the globe.

Both Noni and Sisonke's books have had a global reach, as Noni's books were made available in America, Britain and Italy. Sisonke's book was first published in South Africa and was republished in Australia as well. This is why I refer to their writing as transnational, because their ideas have traversed the world (in Noni's case, through translation as well), which further disrupts the perceptions of Black women's place in cultural flows and intellectual production. As discussed above, Noni enjoyed an international visibility which Sisonke continues to enjoy, through her other work as a speaker and columnist for international publications. Sisonke has had book launches in Canada, the United States of America, England, Australia and South Africa. These locations matter insofar as the reception of these books and the conversations about cultural flows between first-world countries and developing countries is an important one, because cultural production is "governed by the balance in power relations" (Amireh & Majaj 2000, p. 3); this is a secondary focus of this study. I am primarily interested in the ways in which the writers locate themselves through their writing.

Both Noni and Sisonke are ambivalent about how to best locate themselves in the discourse around nationalism. They resist the need to be read purely as South African writers, given their global reach. Both writers grapple with their South African identity throughout their writing, because it is impossible to be a transnational writer without being concerned about questions of nationalism and national identities. Noni and Sisonke both write about their experiences of being in different nation states and how this influences their subjectivity. This is not a new tradition that their work is responding to; however, most research concerned with transnationalism in literary texts has largely been focused on the Americas, the Caribbean, as well as the binary between the West and the rest of the world (Duvivier 2006). When it comes to writing about Africa, border crossing has largely been explored in relation to travel writing and colonial texts which memorialise conquest. However, what does writing by Black, middle-class women offer us in terms of understanding discourses about the continent, as well as the varied positions which Black women occupy when they have access to travel and

mobility? Noni and Sisonke offer a reading into the politics of location and identity that has not been explored from the perspective of Black women. Their work provides "a context for studying the production of subjectivity (and culture) in a historical and geographical space that foregrounds the sometimes arbitrary and syncretic, improvised and hybrid nature of personal and social forms of expressions" (Jay 2010, p. 77). Even while travel and mobility have the potential for freedom, Noni and Sisonke are constantly negotiating their own freedom in the various countries they travel to. As Black women in a patriarchal and racially divided world, their subjectivity is precarious in spite of their own efforts to assert their humanity.

Given the nature of white settler colonialism and apartheid, Noni finds herself traversing the illegitimate borders between the Ciskei, Transkei and South Africa. I refer to these borders as illegitimate because they are a result of land dislocation and the process of dispossession in South Africa, which results in the pariah status of Black people which I discussed in Chapter 3. Noni traverses these borders in *The Ochre People* in order to trace her family history. I use the concept of ukuzilanda to read this form of transnationalism. Ukuzilanda is a Xhosa word which means "to fetch oneself"; however, this process is both metaphorical and spiritual, as we see in *The Ochre People.* At the core of the concept is the idea of making sense of one's identity in relation to the past, and choosing which aspects of that past are important for the present and the future. Given the time spent living abroad, when Noni visits home, I read this as a form of ukuzilanda. While the word itself can be translated to mean fetching oneself, it is about connecting "oneself to the past in the present moment" (Masola 2018).

Ukuzilanda also captures a practice amongst Xhosa people wherein one is able to trace one's heritage. It refers to a variety of practices and rituals; for example, it is used during death to fetch a spirit which has been estranged from home in order to reconnect it with the family and help it find its resting place through a family burial. Ukuzilanda can also be done through listing clan names, which is referred to as ukuzithutha (which literally means "to pick up oneself") (Magoqwana 2018); family names being both poetic and serving to list the ancestry for each individual. In an interview, singer and songwriter Msaki (Asanda Mvana) explains ukuzilanda as a cultural act which she employs in her music to enable healing. For example, she describes "little deaths" which need to be revisited as the moments where she negated her sense of self as a child. She continues "where did I stop seeing myself… I must revisit that place and revisit that little girl" (Mvana 2019) as a practice of healing past hurts through

ukuzilanda. Msaki also attributes family history as ukuzilanda because "just learning about my family kuzilanda because you don't think it's an important thing to do because of the spaces we are raised in and you're given other people's histories to behold instead of your own" (Mvana 2019). Visual artist Lunga Ntila uses ukuzilanda in her photography exhibition, which captures the idea that:

> There are parts of ourselves that we don't know well enough to recognise but they are still very much part of us. Like our ancestors. That's what ukuzilanda is about: fetching the fragments of myself that I have discarded and imagining the various forms that I can take on with them. (Hlalethwa 2019).

This journey is a continuation from the trip Noni describes in *Drawn in Colour;* however, the idea of ukuzilanda is more pronounced in *The Ochre People* as Noni is involved in a process of making and remaking herself. While ukuzilanda is about retracing narrative, for Noni, she is retracing her family as well as travelling, which makes her experience of ukuzilanda site-specific as it is bound up with traversing geographical spaces. By visiting Mam'oMkhulu (which is the isiXhosa word for the aunt who is older than the mother; meaning "Big Mother"), Daisy Makiwane, who is the elder and custodian of family history amongst the Makiwane and Jabavu families, Noni travels as a form of ukuzilanda so that she can trace her lineage and heritage through the stories which Mam'oMkhulu tells her. Transnationlism in this case is about traversing the borders created in South Africa to keep Black people subjugated and dislocated from their sense of self, but Noni uses her class position to travel and subvert apartheid South Africa's restrictions in order to make meaning of identity through stories from the past.

As mentioned, Sisonke's border crossing is a result of her parents choosing exile. She is born in Zambia and lives in Kenya, Ethiopia and Canada before returning to South Africa. Sisonke experiences exile as a child, which has implications for how she writes about it as an adult who spends her time living in South Africa and Australia. The ways in which Sisonke writes about place highlight that "Geography is linked deliberately to culture, language, the ability to hear and a variety of modes of articulation" (Boyce Davies 2003, p.15). Place is not just a tangible, physical place but rather, it is also the intangible aspects about culture. Both writers experience a variety of these intangible aspects as they cross many borders and experience place in terms of people and how they exert power over each other. In her memoir, Sisonke links her transnational experience with her experiences of the new South Africa. Her experiences of growing up in a variety of countries across the African continent are

juxtaposed with attitudes towards the continent in the new South Africa. This juxtaposition raises questions about nationalism's need to exclude and include. While the new South Africa is created through democratic elections in 1994, it is created in relation to its relationship with the continent. This plays itself out in nation building moments such as Thabo Mbeki's "I am an African" speech delivered in 1996, when he was the deputy president. Unfortunately Mbeki's vision of South Africans building their identity as Africans collides with xenophobic attacks in South Africa. I use the idea of fictive kinship from Melissa Harris-Perry's book *Sister-Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes and Black Women in America* to read the relationships Sisonke forms with friends from The Democratic Republic of Congo (the DRC), thereby highlighting the tragedy of South African's nationalism, which is based on xenophobia, the fear of the foreigner. By "fictive kinship" I mean:

> …connections between members of a group who are unrelated by blood or marriage but who nonetheless share reciprocal social or economic relationships… This imagined community of familial ties underscores a voluntary sense of shared identity that maps onto the historical construction of race… There is a sense in which we are all family. (Harris-Perry 2011, pp. 102-103)

Sisonke forms fictive kinships with people from other African countries, which gives her the insight to critique the shadows of the new South Africa, which create a problematic and dangerous identity around being an exceptional African country. For Sisonke, transnationalism becomes the framework which helps her analyse the problematic nature of South Africa's nationalist identity, which is formed through the hatred of the African other.

The nexus between South Africa's relationship with the rest of the continent, together with Sisonke's relationship with South Africa and the rest of the continent, offers a complex picture of transnationalism, as it highlights the personal and political nature thereof. Noni's ability to re-imagine freedom speaks to issues of spatial politics and identity. Spatial politics raises questions about insider-outsider status, which are captured in a question Trinh Minh Ha poses: "Furthermore, where should the dividing line between outsider and insider stop? How should it be defined? By skin color, by language, by geography, by nation, or by political affinity? What about those, for example, with hyphenated identities and hybrid realities?" (Minh Ha 1991, p. 73). These questions are relevant to both Noni and Sisonke, how we can read and understand their work, and how they constitute their identities. "[H[yphenated identities and hybrid realities" (Minh Ha 1991, p. 73) allow a reading that takes into account

multiplicity and multiple identities, rather than insisting that the writers are simply Black, marginalised women.

Much as hybridity is a useful starting point, I prefer the idea of threshold people who "move within and among multiple, often conflicting, worlds and refuse to align themselves exclusively with any single individual, group, or belief system" (Keating 2006, p. 6). This theory is more expansive and emerges from Gloria Anzaldúa's work, which uses Spanish and English interchangeably. She particularly uses the words la mestiza and nepantla (as discussed already) to account for an interaction of various identities which are often contradictory, but need to be embraced. For Anzaldúa, a "racial, ideological, cultural, and biological cross-pollination, an alien consciousness is presently in the making, a new consciousness, una conciencia de mujer. It is a consciousness of the Borderlands" (Anzaldúa 1987, p. 77). I return to Anzaldúa in order to emphasise the importance of her theorising of a new consciousness which seeks to hold the complexity of identity construction in the context of border-crossing and border exchanges. For Anzaldúa the new mestiza is about juxtapositions and the ability to sit with the discomfort between binary positions. She uses her own identity which is influenced by Indian, Mexican and Anglo cultures simultaneously. Anzaldúa uses the word plural repeatedly (Anzaldúa, 1987) to account for the all encompassing nature of plurality where "ambivalence into something else." (Anzaldúa 1987, p. 79)

It is this "something else" which allows a more expansive reading of Noni and Sisonke's transnational experience. While both occupy the privileged positions of being middle-class with access to public discourse through writing, they are also Black women, also born during a time where they cannot be fully at home. Noni and Sisonke's writing and lives allow us to think about the complicated nature of subjectivity because "while subjects may use auto/biographical accounts to situate themselves, these accounts of themselves are also placed in relation to other accounts and in relation to larger narratives, which are in turn embedded in social relations and struggles" (Coullie et al. 2006, p. 4). Both Noni and Sisonke account their stories in relation to their collective, which comprises the family, their community and the nation, and the rest of the world they traverse. Their individual identities and subjectivity are constituted in relation to the collective identities, with which they are in constant negotiation. Travelling allows them the freedom they need in order to have control over their lives, even though they are not able to be in the place they call home. In leaving home, Sisonke's father

is able to fashion his life and his family's life in relation to freedom. It is in exile that Sisonke understands what freedom and agency look like, because through her parents and the men and women of the struggle who walk in and out of her life, she is able to develop a different understanding of subjectivity in spite of the version which apartheid would prefer for Black people, particularly Black women.

I locate Noni and Sisonke within a broader conversation about the gendered nature of travel and transnationalism, as seen in *Deterritorializations: The Rewriting of Home and Exile in Western Feminist Discourse* (Kaplan 1987); *Virgin Territory? Travel and Migration by African women in Twentieth Century Southern Africa* (Barnes 2002); as well as *Bantu Women on the move: Black women and the politics of mobility in The Bantu World* (Masola 2018), which explores the ways in which women have negotiated borders and their own subjectivity in the process of travel. Some theorists, such as Janet Wolf, looking at women and travel have pointed out that "Histories of travel make it clear that women have never had the same access to the road as men" (Wolff 1993, p. 339). She elaborates by quoting Cynthia Enloe:

> In many societies being feminine has been defined as sticking close to home. Masculinity, by contrast, has been the passport to travel. Feminist geographers and ethnographers have been amassing evidence revealing that a principal difference between women and men in countless societies has been the license to travel away from a place thought of as home. (Enloe in Wolff 1993, p. 339)

Noni's ability to travel extensively and write about her travelling seems to be a unique and possibly exceptional position to occupy as a woman who published in the 1960s. The nexus she occupies brings into question her erasure as she participates in two things women were not seen to do: writing and the kind of travelling which expands her world. It is important to note that Noni's travelling is unlike the dominant narrative about travelling during the early 20th century. Noni did not travel as an anthropologist, a missionary, a colonial administrator, an immigrant, or an exile. In spite of her parents' hopes that she would return as a doctor from being educated in England (Jabavu 1982), Noni instead became estranged from a home to which she could not return for many years. When she tries in 1976, Noni becomes a "foreigner in [her] country, permitted entry only as a visitor on holiday for a stipulated few months" (Jabavu 1982, p. viii). There is a longing to come home and an awareness of what she has missed given the context of South Africa in 1982, when *The Ochre People* was being published in South Africa. In spite of not being able to come home as often and when she wished, Noni's adult life was spent travelling out of necessity. This form of estrangement

from home has consequences for how she relates to home in her memoirs.

Hill Collins refers to the importance of theorising Black women's lives across borders because "[i]n a transnational, postcolonial context, women within new and often Black-run nation states in the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia struggle with new meanings attached to ethnicity, citizenship status and religion" (Hill Collins 2009, p. 13). When Noni does visit home, she travels in spite of the harsh reality of what it means to travel within Southern Africa as a Black person, such as enduring separate carriages and sitting at the back of the bus. This form of travel brings into question Noni's subject position throughout her journey, as well as the gaze she adopts when relating to people and cultures during her travels. This subject position is also important to discuss as someone who had to spend most of her adult life living in Britain instead of coming home after her studies in York (Xaba, 2006, p. 39). In the preface of the 1982 edition of *The Ochre People*, she attributes the events in her life which have prevented her from coming home to fate, places them "in the lap of the gods":

> The reasons I've lived away from home all these years – veritable life-times they seem to me, yet I still feel South Africa is my home – is to do with unexpected vicissitudes of anybody's life… In 1976 I was so homesick, so tired of this state of affairs that I tried to defy their celestial decrees and take personal control of my fate. I flew to South Africa, 'came home' as I thought, 'to end my days in my own country'. Alas, 'they' up there had not willed it; being capricious, unreasonable, they blocked my attempt at independent action. And this was how: during my absence the South African government had withdrawn from membership of the Commonwealth (formerly the British Commonwealth of Nations, formerly the British Empire on which the Sun Never Sets) so that I now counted as a *foreigner* in my country, permitted entry only as a visitor on holiday for a stipulated few months. I listened to the Immigration Officer in stupefaction. A foreigner in the land of one's birth? A contradiction in terms if ever there was one. (Jabavu 1982, p. viii)

Noni claims South Africa as home because she is aware of the politics of location which mark home as a national homeland. Her experience of home in South Africa is complicated by migration, which she describes as "unexpected vicissitudes of anybody's life" because migrations "complicate home and complicate nations and national boundaries and reveal the fluidity of national cultures, communities and homelands" (Duvivier 2006, p. 10). In Noni's experience, migration has forged the multiple identities she holds as a daughter, mother, wife, writer, editor, journalist, sister, British citizen and African. Noni's invocation of the gods raises questions about agency and structures which influence her choices. There is a tension between her own will and the structural reality of not being allowed back into South Africa, even when she has made the decision that she wants to return home. The gods she invokes

here are in fact the apartheid structures that make it impossible to come home, because as a British citizen she became a foreigner in South Africa. While Noni finds a way to remain in South Africa for that year, she is aware that her agency has been curtailed. Noni's insistence that South Africa is home in spite of the many years of absence challenges the idea of home being a space which one has to physically occupy. What is most illuminating in this extract is the contradiction she points out, being "a foreigner in the land of one's birth". This border crossing highlights Noni's unique position as someone who wanted to come back as being an example of agency; while she was not in political exile like her contemporaries, she may as well have been in exile because she was "a foreigner in the land of one's birth". This kind of exile is a precarious one, as she is reminded that she no longer belongs to her country by the state's rules and thus, has to negotiate her agency with the state. The bureaucratic decisions which exclude her from being able to permanently return to South Africa as a citizen render her stateless – even though she herself still regards South Africa as home – the scheme she devises to remain in the country while traveling between the homelands and South Africa indicates her insistence on subverting the law in order to remain in South Africa as long as possible.

By looking at Noni and Sisonke as transnational writers, this thesis argues that Noni's transnational experience allows for a re-imagination of freedom. Noni experiences freedom in different ways as she is travelling through South Africa and the continent in both her books. Her British passport allows her to traverse borders and assert herself as a British citizen throughout her travel. Through travelling, she subverts apartheid's restrictions on Black people's livelihood and movement through a litany of laws. Noni's transnational experience is breathtaking considering the extent to which she travels in her life (in her columns alone, she makes mention of 16 countries); however, when looked at in relation to the border crossing of people in her own family, I would argue that the extent of her travels was not out of the norm for her. She was simply following in a tradition of travel established by those in her family. Therefore, travelling is one of the legacies that Noni and Sisonke inherit from their families. For Noni and Sisonke, their license to travel sets them apart as South Africans. Once the reality of Black women globally is taken into account, it seems that "Black women's traveling [is] as a direct resistance to the power relations over their lives" (Barkty 1995, p. 184). As writers and travellers, Noni and Sisonke are resisting power relations which would rather they remained silent and immobile, as demanded by apartheid South Africa. This ability to resist

has been through the process of writing (and at times, translating that writing). Transnationalism has been in the form of exchanging ideas in order to advance ideas over a group of people. Sometimes there has been a mutual interest in the cultural flow, but in the case of Africa, the cultural flow has been part of the imperial project. Noni and Sisonke's access to the world is in direct response to the history of colonialism and imperialism. By traversing borders and marking the territory they traverse through writing, they are responding to what Said refers to as geographical violence. Geography – in its material and symbolic form – is about power and imagination, and the ability of Black women writers to occupy space challenges the history of imperialism, as Said explains:

> [If] there is anything that radically distinguishes the imagination of anti-imperialism it is the primacy of the geographical in it. Imperialism after all is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control. For the native, the history of his or her colonial servitude is inaugurated by the loss to an outsider of the local place, whose concrete geographical identity must thereafter be searched for and somehow restored. (Said 1990, p. 77)

I return to this idea of geographical violence, as it remains relevant in this discussion on transnationalism. Sisonke and Noni explore and chart the world through their travelling, and through their writing they are able to control their experiences by creating their own narratives. Because of the loss of land and home to the white settler colonialists who are outsiders (as discussed in Chapter 3), Noni and Sisonke seem to be restoring this loss through their writing. They are able to use their words to mark the extent of this loss and the ways in which they have experienced it. By writing their memoirs, they restore their own narrative as well as the narrative of the nation.

As mentioned above, in this chapter I will examine how border crossing has the potential for freedom, even while there is a perpetual struggle over space and place, and how this relates to the question of belonging and unbelonging. In writing about how they locate themselves in each place they travel to, Noni and Sisonke emphasize the gendered ways in which women traverse the world. Because of their privileged class position, Noni and Sisonke become aware of the ways in which they have access to the world, and they use their own power in various ways to resist the restrictions which are expected of Black womanhood.

Re-imagining freedom in *Drawn in Colour*

Noni is writing at the height of apartheid, when Black South Africa is searching for political freedom; it is "not yet uhuru" as Mbulu's song reminds us. Through her writing, Noni shows the ways in which she imagines freedom for herself in spite of being in a political context which seeks to restrict it. Because of the absence of political freedom – which suggests freedom of movement, citizenship, voting rights, human rights and a myriad of other symbolic and material gestures – Noni creates her own freedom by claiming her right to mobility. She uses her British passport in order to get easier access at border entries and exits, and claims her South African national identity even though she is not a citizen in apartheid South Africa.

I borrow the concept of mobility from geopolitical discourse, which explores the philosophical connections between time and space as they appear in Noni's writing. Cresswall explores mobility as

> …progress, as freedom, as opportunity, and as modernity, sit side by side with mobility as shiftlessness, as deviance and resistance… It is a kind of blank space that stands as an alternative to place, boundedness, foundations and stability. (Cresswall 2006, p. 1-2)

This definition of mobility captures the contradiction inherent therein, which is about freedom, resistance and shiftlessness and an alternative to stability. Mobility can also be seen as "an analytic barometer of gender, class, and other sociopolitical relations" (Hyndman 2004, p. 169). Furthermore, mobility is not simply about agency but also takes into account homelessness, dislocation as a result of those who have power using mobility against those who are dispossessed. However, in Noni's case, mobility becomes a source of freedom because she is able to subvert apartheid politics of restriction by using her British passport to traverse the world. By invoking freedom and mobility alongside each other, power relations become central. It is through access to mobility that Noni is able to construct her freedom throughout her transnational experience. Noni's choices during her travels highlight the political nature of her mobility because "one's mobility is an expression of power relations, but mobility also shapes power in a recursive manner" (Hyndman 2004, p. 170). In spite of the apartheid government's attempts to restrict Black people to the homelands, Black people found a way to traverse the country to find employment, or simply visit family and friends. Even though the pass laws sought to further entrench restriction, Black people resisted this through claiming their mobility.

Noni begins *Drawn in Colour* by describing the effects of the cable she received from her father, announcing the death of her brother, Tengo Jabavu. She received it while she was in her home in London. Tengo's death is a disruption not only to the family, but also to the plans she had been making a week prior to the announcement of his brutal death. His murder in South Africa is juxtaposed with the freedom his sisters are experiencing as they live outside of the country, as well as the freedom he sought by trying to travel to visit them. Noni writes that:

> A week before, I had had a letter from him outlining plans he was making for when he would qualify in a few months' time. My sister and I hoped he would take a holiday abroad after the long years of training, stay with her in Uganda, East Africa, where she had married and gone to live, then come on to stay with me in London where I had married and lived. He would thus see both countries of his sisters' adoption. (Jabavu 1960, p. 1)

While this is seemingly a simple reflection on holiday plans which do not materialise, underlying this is freedom of mobility, which is unavailable for Tengo because of the violence in South Africa that leads to his death. The juxtaposition of death and the potential for freedom through mobility highlights the tensions in Black life where freedom is precarious, as it is always in relation to death. Whereas the death that Noni writes about is a material and physical death of her brother, apartheid South Africa becomes a place for Black people who can be seen as the walking dead because of their pariah status in an oppressive system that seeks to destroy them mentally, physically and emotionally. The idea of the walking dead evokes the work of Orlando Paterson in his book *Slavery and Social Death: A comparative study* (1982), as well as Saidiya Hartman's work in *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and self-making in nineteenth century America* (1997). Hartman discusses the precarious nature of freedom in the context of reconstruction after the end of slavery. Even in the context of the kind of individualism Noni was negotiating as someone who did not live in apartheid South Africa, the kind of individualism which allowed her to act as though her brother was free to travel highlights "a precarious autonomy since exploitation, domination and subjection inhabit the vehicle of rights" (Hartman 1997, p. 117). The exploitation, domination and subjection highlight the limitations on freedom which Noni had to negotiate not only for herself, but especially for her brother, who subsequently dies while she is planning his holiday. Even though Noni lived her life as someone who was free to plan her life and exercise her agency, this was within the tension of what Hartman refers to as the "contradictory experience of emancipation" (Hartman 1997, p. 117).

When Noni refers to Uganda and Britain as countries of adoption, she is emphasising the ways in which mobility allowed the choices that she and her sister (Alexandra) had made in their countries of adoption. Even though she has lived in Britain for many years, she chooses to experience it as a country that she has adopted, because she does not think of it as home in the same way that she does South Africa. The choice in using adoption as opposed to "new home", perhaps, raises questions about the extent to which Noni and Alexandra can fully belong to these countries because of the circumstances in South Africa further highlighting their "contradictory experience of emancipation". More importantly, implicit in the word "adoption" is the idea of choice: they both choose to be in other countries and they identify with these countries from a place of choice, which affirms their multiple identities.

Noni dedicates a chapter to crossing the Central African Federation. Although traveling has given her a semblance of freedom because she travels as a Black woman in territories which are anti-black, she reflects on the political decisions which have ensured that Africans cannot be free on the continent. Noni writes about the "Cape to Cairo Railway" (Jabavu 1960, p. 71) which was the symbol of colonial conquest and "the efforts of our white settlers in linking up these far-flung countries. The railway was an idea of Cecil Rhodes" (Jabavu 1960, p. 72). This reflection on the relationship between the territories she is traversing – Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland[33] – together with Great Britain highlights the questions of freedom and the political machinations which saw the dispossession of Africans in other regions. It is also an exploration of notions of nationhood and the imperial imagination of forming an empire and mini-nations from the far-flung countries they found on the continent, while simultaneously refusing citizenship to African people. It is crucial that Noni mentions that "[Rhodes] had invited my grandfather to ride on it when it was inaugurated" (Jabavu 1960, p. 72). By referring to her grandfather's prominence in Cape politics in the 19th century, she shows his close proximity with political figures such as Cecil John Rhodes, Prime Minister of the Cape. While this is a comment made in passing, it unmasks class positioning. In other words, Noni's family was connected with the ruling elite, which is also evident in her father's friendship with General Jan Smuts (Jabavu 1977). This proximity to political figures

[33]It is important to note the nature of naming in this chapter. When writing about Noni and her travel, I use the names of the countries as she experienced them before independence. She refers to Rhodesia and Central African Republic, for example. This is in contrast with Sisonke who uses the post-independence names, particularly when referring to Zambia. This contrast is important to the question of freedom and the ways in which both writers experience these countries at different historical moments.

who are intricately linked to the making of the Union of South Africa is part of what places the Jabavu family within the African elite. This tension is not overt in Noni's writing but rather, it emerges from one who is aware of her class position which continues to give her mobility and social capital as it did for her parents and grandparents. The relationship her family has with the likes of Rhodes and Smuts raises questions about imperial citizenship and universal citizenship for Black South Africans under apartheid and colonialism. By "imperial citizenship" I mean the possibility of a universal citizenship through the expansion of the British Empire.

Inasmuch as mobility presents the potential for freedom, there are visible racial tensions as Noni travels across Southern Africa. Noni uses the train compartments allocated to Black people and even though she uses her British passport, it does not protect her from the racial indignities faced by Black South Africans. For example, she encounters a "Rhodesian Immigration Officer" (Jabavu 1960, p. 73) who is rude to her because he sees her as nothing more than "this munt, Rhodesian for the South African kaffir" (Jabavu 1960, p. 74); she asserts herself by talking back, saying "I knew that my tongue had lashed this white trash" (Jabavu 1960, p. 74). Noni's class position, her assertiveness and British citizenship allow her to think of the officer as "white trash" because he is merely a lowly cog in the wheel of political power. Noni and the couple she is sharing a compartment with are reminded of their status as Black travellers who are seen with suspicion. However, this racial encounter is contrasted with the South African Immigration Officer who engages Noni in respectful conversation in spite of her own mishap at Jan Smuts Airport, where her passport was accidentally not stamped upon arrival. Noni's inclusion of the South African immigration officer's treatment of her seems to be an effort to humanise her existence because the "Rhodesian Immigration Officer" had made them feel unwelcome. Noni reflects a humane experience with someone she has preconceived ideas about because

> …with the Nationalist Government in power, one looks on every official as representative. You hardly expect them to be civil. But the Nationalist uniform had evidently not bullied this particular Boer into acting like a bully. He was behaving like a normal human being, prepared to treat us as ordinary people too. (Jabavu 1960, p. 75).

The contrast between these experiences of two immigration officers highlights the nature of the potential for self-making, which Noni negotiates with those in authority. Noni is also

confronted with her own ideas about how she perceives those in power, beyond the uniform which they represent.

While visiting Uganda, Noni is further confronted with questions of freedom and her perceptions about Black people in other African countries. Noni is shocked by her sister's country of adoption because her father's stories had painted a picture of freedom, yet she experiences the country as not free, and behaves as though she were a British tourist. Noni's middle-class values are intricately linked to how she perceives Uganda, as she is concerned about the politics of location and class. Noni's encounter with her brother-in-law highlights her disapproval of him, stripping his home of its significance by referring to it as a house because she "could not think of it as 'home', in a location as it was, and furnished in the way my sister had yet to explain" (Jabavu 1960, p. 106). Noni seems to have standards about what constitutes a home beyond the relationships she describes when writing about her own family, as discussed in Chapter 2. Noni makes a value judgement based on her middle-class upbringing, where geographical location matters because a middle-class home should be located in the appropriate place, with all the props and furniture that mark it as a respectable middle-class home. And it seems the brother-in-law falls short of this standard, because she does not feel welcome. Her brother-in-law is not home to welcome her, even though she expected him to be there to show her respect as umkhozi.

Umkhozi is an isiXhosa word used to describe the relationship formed with the family which has married into Noni's family. Before leaving for Uganda, Noni's father was at pains to explain the significance of the relationship between the two families because "The people among whom she married are our people. They are Bantu like us. Again like us, they are Westernised Africans. More than that, my co-parent, *umkhozi wam*, is a Christian and a Chief" (Jabavu 1960, p. 82). For Noni's family it matters that Alexandra is married into a family with equal status, so that she maintains the material conditions that she is accustomed to from growing up in a privileged family. Noni consistently refers to the aesthetics of Alexandra's house and is concerned that when she reports back to the family about her sister's living conditions, her family will not approve.

Her family's idea of Uganda is that it is an advanced African country where "their houses, furnishings, their farming methods must be the best in Africa. And what men they must be, not emasculated by alienation of land and pastures, holding title deeds to square miles"

(Jabavu 1960, p. 83). Noni's comparison between Uganda, which is a British Protectorate when she visits, and South Africa is centred on the question of freedom. She writes about the Ugandan students she met who studied at Fort Hare who missed home because "ours was hardly an enviable country for Africans. What could you do here? Up there they were free" (Jabavu 1960, p. 85). Therefore, if Alexandra lives in a free country with the possibility of owning land, her family assumes a particular kind of lifestyle for her. Noni is constantly comparing Uganda to South Africa, which means she cannot fully appreciate that "it's different here" (Jabavu 1960, p. 96), as her sister tries to explain. However, Noni explains, "a location was the last thing I expected to see in Uganda. And this was not like Bochabela outside Bloemfontein; it was like Pimville outside Johannesburg, one of the worst which I knew of" (Jabavu 1960, p. 98). For Noni, one's home is a reflection of status and the ways in which one can humanise oneself in a context of "not yet uhuru". Noni is forced to reconcile her own perceptions of the country with the reality she encounters.

It is through an encounter with tourists that Noni asserts her sense of space and notions of freedom, which are at stake for both her and Alexandra. During a seemingly mundane experience at home, the Estate Office brings people to see how people live, as Alexandra explains, "They bring visitors from overseas to see Naguru Township and to this house I'm living in because they say it's the best furnished in the Estate. As if this could be called furniture… These horrible Asian-made tables and chairs that my husband bought without consulting me, just because it's not the custom here to consult your wife!" (Jabavu 1960, p. 113). Alexandra is distressed by this invasion of her privacy, as well as the relationship with her husband, who does not consult her before making decisions. Her situation highlights that her freedom is under threat as she says "Do you know, they come at any time. Sometimes I'm out and the Housing man lets them in with a key from the Estate Office across there. Just look at them now, examining everything" (Jabavu 1960, p. 113). The Estate Office goes further than invading her privacy, but they enter her house when she is not home, without her permission, as though she does not own the house. It is useful to link privacy and freedom as having ones own space, in the form of a private home, evokes the idea of freedom of space (hooks, 2004). Noni's response to the situation highlights the ways in which she constructs her freedom as she confronts these people and chooses to stand up for herself and her sister in order to assert their sense of privacy. She explains that

> I dashed out and hurled verbal bricks at the first European I ran into outside. They were a party of men… I was terribly angry and let off a tirade about their rudeness, patronising, governessy attitude in letting themselves into somebody's house when she was out to examine how she managed it, just because she was black and supposed to be backward and learning. (Jabavu 1960, p. 114)

Noni does not inhibit herself from speaking to a European in authority in the same way she confronted the immigration officer while she was on the train. Even while she is aware of the power dynamics at play as a Black woman confronting a party of men, this does not stop her using her voice to address their "rudeness, patronising, governess attitude" (Jabavu 1960, p. 114). The image of foreign visitors coming to examine the homes where Black people live evokes the image of people visiting the zoo. This practice of viewing Black people as though they were in a zoo is part of colonial discourse, and Sarah Baartman therefore comes to mind. Sarah Baartman was taken from South Africa and publically exhibited in London and Paris, where she eventually died under "mysterious circumstances" (Gqola 2010, p. 61). The ways in which her body was used and displayed, stored in a museum after her death and eventually returned to South Africa centuries after, highlights the colonial gaze on African bodies. It is a racialised activity that is embedded in the making of racial politics. Zine Magubane also writes about the ways in which the white gaze was indifferent to the "interiority of black life" (Magubane 2004, p. 103), where Black bodies are constantly on display for the white gaze and their sense of self is not important to said gaze. The ways in which these foreigners come to view Alexandra's house evokes the ways in which the privacy of African people did not matter, because they were othered and therefore did not deserve any privacy. The racism in this scene is vivid and reminds the residents that they do not deserve privacy or dignity. They are seen as objects which can be observed for the purpose of being an example to the Europeans of the success of colonialism.

This incident becomes the catalyst where Alexandra finally opens up to Noni about how she is living and the problems in her marriage in response to the intrusion of the tourists. The personal politics of the home are intermingled and exacerbated by the external public politics of the world creeping into Alexandra's home without her permission. She confesses to Noni that she is not seen and valued in her home as her husband will not treat her as an equal. This treatment is mirrored in the way that the Ugandan officials are encroaching on her private space without her permission. I would argue that Noni is able to use her status as a British citizen, older sister and outsider, because she has less to lose than her sister, who is silenced

by her position in the family and by someone who is not Ugandan. Noni's outsider status allows her to challenge these power dynamics because she does not have a vested interest in Uganda, because she knows she can leave. Noni's mobility in this context allows her the freedom to confront the issues she notices. As a visitor, she has the benefit of shiftlessness rather than stability, which means she is not bound to the rules of politeness and "keeping the peace" in the same way as her sister.

Noni's ability to travel must be seen in relation to assumptions made about Black women's access to the world. The nexus between Noni's travel and identity sheds light on the assumptions that Black women did not have as much freedom to travel because of the limitations placed on their gender and race. However, for Noni, she is sent by her family to another country in order to see her sister because of her absence at the funeral. As the oldest sister – umafungwashe, the "eldest of the umbilical cord" (Jabavu 1960, p. 49) – Noni is required to visit her sister who was not able to attend the funeral, as she lives in Uganda. Noni becomes an envoy on behalf of her family, and her visit is in response to the family's concern about her sister's absence. She discovers that her sister has had some problems within the marriage, and Noni decides to act on her behalf. She wrote a letter to her sister's father-in-law

> Addressing him, African style, as 'my father'. I wrote how I had been sent as envoy to my sister on the matter of our only brother's death; that having come, I had, being a woman, noticed that certain things concerning his son and daughter and grandchild were in need of adjustment; that since, in my country, an older sister shares the responsibility with senior members of families joined by a marriage to adjust matters if possible when they go awry in the link between them, so I was therefore approaching him as head of his side, in my capacity as envoy and representative, to ask him, although I was indeed only a child, to come and hold council. (Jabavu 1960, p. 145)

Noni's fluid identity as a child, envoy and elder sister highlights the nature of mobility as opportunity and freedom. Noni uses her position as umafungwashe to intervene on behalf of her sister who has a different temperament to her; even while she is unhappy in the marriage, it seems she will not use her agency in the same way that Noni does because of the constraints she is under, such as being far from home and possibly being a mother to a young child.

In writing about her mobility, Noni writes about how she negotiates who she is in order to find a place for herself – and inadvertently, also her sister – in order to express who she is. In writing about her experience in Uganda, she questions the varied nature of the African experience. Her writing shows the danger of the idealised version of Africa in the eyes of

those who had not yet experienced freedom, and the tenuous nature of freedom even when people have land, as is the case in Uganda.

In this section, I have argued that Noni's ability to travel across the continent highlights the ways in which she owns her freedom. Noni contrasts her ability to travel with her brother's death, highlighting the ways in which travel is an expression of freedom which is curtailed for her brother because of the reality of living in South Africa. Noni's ability to use her British passport gives her more freedom in spite of the irony that it presents because she is a Black woman who is seen as an unlikely British citizen. Instead, she is viewed with suspicion because of the racist discourse which is embodied by the immigration officer who is rude to her. Noni's proximity to privilege as a British citizen and her family's connection to political leaders challenges the notion of freedom and complicates Noni's class position, as her class position allows her to see herself as someone who has access to the world. Noni's experience of Uganda further highlights the ways in which freedom is not something that is simply given but rather, something that is constantly negotiated, as Noni does with the estate officer, as well as in the intervention she creates for her sister. Noni's multiple identities are crucial for the ways in which she is able to exercise her freedoms as someone who consistently advocates for herself and her sister. In the next section I will explore the ways in which transnationalism became a way for Noni to trace her family heritage, which is crucial for her own sense of self.

Reading ukuzilanda as transnational i*n The Ochre People*

While *Drawn in Colour* explores the ways in which Noni negotiates borders and freedom, *The Ochre People* explores more travelling which is connected to Noni's exploration of her heritage. In *The Ochre People,* it seems there has been a shift as the second trip to South Africa, which inspires her second book, is voluntary rather than a family obligation, as was the case in the first book. This second visit is a result of homesickness and is located around three homes which Noni visits: Middledrift, Confluence Farm and Johannesburg. These places represent the many homes which Noni identifies with. In visiting these three homes, Noni is explicitly interested in her heritage and family lineage, which I read as a form of ukuzilanda, as her travel revolves around unearthing her family's stories in order to better understand herself in relation to the legacies thereof.

Ukuzilanda is intricately linked to the notion of nostalgia, as Noni is searching for stories she

has lost because of the distance between her and her family, as she spent her teenage years and adulthood abroad. While the idea of nostalgia came into use to explain a psychological condition attributed to "young people living in foreign lands who could not adjust to their new environment" (Batcho 1998, p. 411), over time the word took on other meanings such as "'homesickness', only later becoming identified with vague feelings of longing" (Valis 2000, p. 117). More pointedly, Boym's use of restorative nostalgia is relevant to the ways in which Noni uses her travel to reconstruct the loss of home. Restorative nostalgia is relevant here, even while I have used it in Chapter 3, as it highlights the complexity of reconstructing a lost home across time (Boym 2001). At the same time, she is returning home in order to understand herself better, which solidifies the link between nostalgia and ukuzilanda. As much as she is visiting the three homes in order to understand her family heritage, it also seems that she is searching for herself, because making sense of her history will help her makes sense of who she is becoming.

The Ochre People begins in Middledrift, which is in the Ciskei (a Bantustan), and moves to Confluence Farm in the Transkei (also a Bantustan), ending up in Johannesburg, which is designated the urban hub of apartheid South Africa. While these are illegitimate borders created by the apartheid state, they have material consequences for questions of citizenship and identity. Noni's constant reference to the historical names – "territory of AmaGqhunukwebe…territory of the Jingqhi clan" (Jabavu 1963, p. 23) – of the areas she traverses, she further highlights the illegitimacy of these borders, as each territory can be marked by names which invoke a past before apartheid. Noni juxtaposes the apartheid borders (which mark the land) with the territories which suggest life before white settler colonialism to highlight the ways in which South Africa denied Black people citizenship through the Bantustan system, as I have discussed in Chapter 3. Noni's access to travel means that she challenges these borders that were created to restrict people from moving freely unless they had documents, such as passbooks, designating them to a homeland.

Ukuzilanda is about both the physical territory Noni traverses and the metaphysical world which is ever present as the world of the ancestors, who are evoked through the stories she collects. Communing with the ancestors can be seen as a form of ukuzilanda in order to get access to ancestral spirits whose existence has consequences in the material world. In Middledrift, the daily routine includes the elders walking to the gravesite after breakfast. Noni explains that "On my first few mornings home I had gone too, 'to see my mother' where we

had buried her five years previously. And since the year before when I had last been back the walk was also to 'see' my young brother where he now lay beside her" (Jabavu 1963, p. 10). The practice of "seeing" her brother and mother is not meant literally but rather, it highlights that while they may be physically dead, their presence is still alive. It is important to note that the proximity between homestead and gravesite is not far apart; this is so that the dead do not feel far removed from those living in the home. This ritual of seeing the dead extends to the visit to Ntselamanzi, which is a village where the Makiwane family gravesites are situated. This visit to Ntselamanzi highlights the extended nature of Noni's family, as her uncles are part of the Bokwe family and the Makiwane family:

> Uncle Roseberry had suggested that during an off-duty period from his surgery he would take Uncle Cecil to visit the cemetery at Ntselamanzi, beyond Alice, where his mother was buried. She had been one of my maternal grandmothers, a 'classificatory' one. They would also stop at his sister Frieda's and her husband at Alice. I was a 'niece' of the Bokwes because their father and my (real) maternal grandmother shared an AmaBamba clan relationship… I was well and truly back in the setting of relations which anthropological experts call 'fictitious siblings'. They were decidedly not fictitious but factual in our eyes; although so slightly related to us Uncle Roseberry and Aunt Frieda are among those with whom we share drops of blood that can be traced and therefore may not intermarry. (Jabavu 1963, p. 17-18)

In this passage, Noni is at pains to explain the importance of visiting the burial site of the dead in another village. In the process, she shows that family cannot be regarded as nuclear for Xhosa people. Instead, the isiXhosa word ukuzalana, which describes family relations because of clan names, is a form of relation that is deeply embedded amongst Xhosa people. These relations baffled missionaries and anthropologists who did not have the vocabulary to define them, so they chose to refer to them as ficitious siblings, but this form of classification does not capture the significance of the family structure that was built amongst traditional amaXhosa.

Noni challenges this anthropological gaze by claiming the relations as "factual in our eyes" (Jabavu 1963, p. 17-18), as they are governed by rules of engagement and ways of being. For example, one of the rules stipulates that people of the same clan are not allowed to marry because the clan names signify that they are part of the same family and share the same bloodline, symbolically and biologically. This idea of ukuzalana highlights the spiritual nature of building community, as the blood and relation of ancestors can bind future generations to each other in spite of the missionary influence, which attempted to break these bonds. By claiming the bonds created by ancestors, Noni is challenging the colonial discourse, which

tended to insist on the value of the nuclear family at the expense of the extended family. For Noni, the nuclear family is a conduit for a larger support structure. Furthermore, even though Noni's family has embraced Christianity and missionary education, which has placed them in a position of privilege as the African elite, they choose to resist some of the colonial socialisation. This resistance is seen in how they continue with the practice of extending their family as well as acknowledging their ancestors as having a spiritual significance therein. This analysis is interspersed throughout Noni's writing as she seems to be at pains to explain the family structure to her readers who are unfamiliar with her life in South Africa. Therefore, I read ukuzilanda as more than a physical return to home, in order to be closer to family, it also about connecting with her ancestors.

During her stay in Middledrift, Noni also visits the nearby town of Alice. This visit evokes her memories of Fort Hare University and Lovedale, which I argue can be read as yet another form of ukuzilanda. Both these institutions are intricately linked to Noni's identity, since she grew up in Alice within the confines of the world created by her parents at Fort Hare University. Noni remembers a world where "the atmosphere had been different in my young days and because of that I tried to describe to my cousin the pleasure that the sight of my home-town brought me. Their intricacies drew a smile from him. I had the impression that he understood, but he made no comment" (Jabavu 1963, p. 79). Noni describes the world of her childhood to her cousin while visiting Alice, even though they are en route to a political court case highlighting the injustices of settler colonialism and apartheid legislation. This seems to suggest that the Alice of her childhood no longer exists. Her cousin's response to her musings – "he makes no comment" – offers a contrast to her nostalgia as he has no romantic notions about Alice. His experience is grounded in the experiences of apartheid South Africa while a student activist at Fort Hare University. Noni describes a world where her parents had friends and acquaintances across all racial groups, relationships which she insists transcended racial categories and became simply South African. While describing the world of her childhood, she is aware that her cousin is not convinced by her memories:

> And I talked about the *predikant* of Alice's (Whites Only) Dutch Reformed Church on the slope of the hill on the west, an ardent musician. Once when on holiday from school in England where I had learnt to play the violin, I took my fiddle and bicycled across this square to his house. In those days I had caused no sensation in the town when he invited me to come of a morning and practise the Double Concerto by Bach with him. Mzimkhulu pretended to be shocked to hear it. (Jabavu 1963, p. 78)

Noni's naivety is glaring in this memory, as she remembers her relationship with the predikant as though white settler colonialism did not exist. As a child from the African elite who went to school abroad, she was unaware of the proximity to whiteness that she enjoyed. Her class position seems to have protected her from some of the realities of being a Black person who did not play violin, speak English and come from a politically connected household. The memory of Fort Hare University is closely associated with her connection to Lovedale. While I have discussed the history of Fort Hare and its connections to Noni's family in previous chapters, Lovedale is equally important and its relevance is demonstrated in *The Ochre People.* Noni explains that "all my elders were part of the net of people linked by professions, business, blood, and for many of them Lovedale was the *alma mater*, the cradle where they had shared a social and political background inherited from earlier generations of Bokwes, Jabavus, Makiwanes and others" (Jabavu 1963, p. 21). From this passage, one can see that her family is part of the African elite, who were created by their proximity to missionaries and the institutions they created.

Established in 1841 by Scottish Presbyterians, Lovedale "became the most famous educational missionary school and training college in the subcontinent" (Odendaal 2016, p. 12). It was amongst a host of other missionary institutions dotted across the Cape Colony with the aim of extending Christianity amongst Africans. The growth and popularity of the school meant that by "1887 more than 2000 Africans had received a secondary education at Lovedale alone. They became teachers, ministers, law agents, magistrate's clerks, interpreters, carpenters, storemen, transport riders, blacksmiths, telegraph operators, printers, clerks and journalists" (Odendaal 2016, p. 13). It was only in 1868 that a girls' department was opened at the school and according to the headmistress, Dr Jane Waterston "her aim was to turn out, not girls, but women, and for this purpose she tried to give the school the air of a pleasant home. She reasoned that homes were what the land needed, and that African young women would never be able to make homes unless they understood and saw what a home was" (Shepard 1955, p. 79). Like most of these institutions, girls were educated with the purpose of being teachers or "good homemakers" (Shepard 1955, p. 88). Out of the establishment of Lovedale, a need for an institution to support further study amongst the educated Africans became necessary. This saw the establishment of Fort Hare College which "was the brainchild of Dr James Stewart, principal of Lovedale from 1872 to 1905" (Ntantala 2009, p. 74). This

account highlights the ways in which Lovedale was part of the missionary project and white settler colonialism.

The Jabavus were a core part of both Lovedale and Fort Hare College as D.D.T. Jabavu was the only Black staff member when the College was opened. His wife, Florence Thandiswa Jabavu, was the warden at both Fort Hare and Lovedale and had graduated from Lovedale in 1911 (Higgs 2004, p. 122). While I have discussed Ntantala's recollection of Fort Hare in relation to Florence Thandiswa Jabavu, I include it here as it bears a different experience to the one Noni has as she reflects about what it meant to be part of the Lovedale and Fort Hare network. Thandiswa's attitude towards her work at Fort Hare begs the question about what it meant for her to be part of the African elite but to view the institutions with disdain, as Ntantala's writing suggests. Ntantala highlights the ways in which Thandiswa may have resisted the restrictions placed on her to become a symbol of what the institutions would have her become, a respectable wife to a prominent figure, rather than pursuing her own career as a social worker.

The importance of Lovedale, for the three families listed by Noni, highlights the ways in which her heritage is performed and established through missionary institutions. Through their education, these families established a legacy for themselves and the generations after them. Noni is more aware and curious about the families and places which inform who she is and how her families became so prominent in South African history. Noni is pointing towards more than just place but rather, a culture shared amongst her families. Place is what binds Noni to her family because of what she has inherited from her elders.

Although Middledrift is a small town with a mixture of people, both educated and uneducated, Confluence Farm is a rural experience which connects Noni to her family through her maternal uncle, umalume, which denotes the male mother (Jabavu 1963). Her visit to Confluence Farm preceded her visit to chaotic Johannesburg, which makes the rural place a foil for the chaotic urban experience which will be discussed shortly. Noni consistently writes about the landscape in both her books, as she spends many hours travelling which gives her an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the land. Visiting Confluence Farm extends these reflections as she writes about the different pace of being in a rural community, where she is surrounded by nature. Noni describes the rural scene at length, as well as the effect the rural landscape had on people who believed that "to be at a height, to

gaze on scenery so grand, enabled our people to breathe freely and be at peace with themselves and with creation" (Jabavu 1963, p. 143). This is an embodiment of the possibility of life that is not disrupted by landlessness and the country's apartheid politics. The gravesite is evoked again during this visit as she accompanies her uncle "to see my late aunt" (Jabavu 1963, p.152), as she is visiting the family she has to visit her aunt's gravesite to pay respects to her.

Noni is introduced to a different way of life, which includes cattle and sheep being part of the everyday rhythm. Noni meets young men who are the herders in the family, whom Noni's uncle describes as "these young people may not read or write. But this Transkei countryside is an open book to them. They can tell you from your Ciskei suburbia, things you never knew… They read the signs of the veld; have eyes like hawks; can see for huge distances when out on these ridges and hill-tops" (Jabavu 1963, p. 163). It seems that life on the farm invites Noni to reconnect with the land and nature in ways she is not familiar with, in contrast to Middledrift or London where she has made a home for herself. The uncle is making commentary about the ways in which nature can be read and how it requires the same, if not more intellect than that which is seen as being for books.

The contrast between the world of books and the world of nature highlights the different knowledge systems in operation. The herd boys are part of an indigenous knowledge system which they learn while being in nature, while Noni's life in Ciskei, which is more urban than the farm, relies on book knowledge. Their knowledge is as a result of being in tune with nature and having the ability to listen and read it carefully in order to survive. When it is overcast and there is no sun, the boys listen for a bird to inform them that it is time to take the sheep home (Jabavu 1963). Her experience of watching and talking to the herd boys also stretches Noni's understanding of language and the ways in which it is connected to a rural way of life. Noni is reminded of the expression "The cattle of him who lacks a herdsman are herded by the shrike. Indoda engena malusi inkomo zayo zoluswa yintengu" (Jabavu 1963, p. 161). Noni is unable to find an English equivalent of this sentiment and offers a direct translation instead. Being at Confluence Farm requires that Noni not only listen and pay attention to nature, but her status as a middle-class woman is irrelevant in this context, as she relies on the lessons and conversations with the herd boys who help her understand the ways in which nature teaches them about cattle, the weather, birds and so on. Noni suspends her middle-classness as it has little to no relevance in an environment that seems to be operating

according to different rules. Noni's father had explained to her "that such people are held in awe and are said to be gifted in a way that defies analysis" (Jabavu 1963, p. 166) because of their vast knowledge of nature.

Noni learns about nature while she is at the farm, as well as about stories to do with her great-grandfather Makiwane Lujabe. Even if much has been written about her grandfather, Elijah Makiwane, his father is only mentioned in passing[34], with no reference to his identity. Noni's need for stories about her family unearths unknown facts which are buried in family stories, such as the one her malume reveals to her, which are not in the history books but rather in family records, in the form of a picture he kept in his personal records. This trip highlights the nature of the archive which exists in the home rather than in institutions such as museums, newspapers and universities, which are precarious because they can get lost, destroyed, stolen etc. as is the case with the picture malume shows her.

The importance of family photographs is significant here, as earlier in her narrative Noni wrote about finding a picture in her father's records of the staff members of *Imvo Zabantsundu.* The family photographs and other records were kept in a chest of drawers. Noni describes the photograph at length, as it provides her the opportunity to read history in the image. She writes at length about Mam'oMkhulu as she was

> …the only woman in the group. She wore a dimity dress belted with a wide band round a handspan waist. The skirt reached to her boots; they looked to me elegant for those days, pointed at the toe and buttoning up at the side. Her high-necked collar was picked out with a narrow lace band; and there was a cameo brooch at her throat. Her small Makiwane face was framed by huge mutton-chop sleeves, and a neat head of short, cropped hair… I loved poring over old photographs. They revealed unexpected likenesses recurring in the family. (Jabavu 1963, p. 106)

The detail which Noni uses to describe the picture is an example of how she reads the image as a message from the past. The detail in the clothing provides an image of a Daisy Makiwane who was self-assured, who understood the significance of her presence in the picture, and who was a pioneer as the only woman in the staff. This image, together with the image of her great-grandfather, Makiwane Lujabe, are important archives for Noni as she attempts to recreate them for readers through words. The faces in the pictures seem to speak to Noni as

[34] Barbara Manning's publication *Three Lives: The story of three early African intellectuals from the Eastern Cape,* as well as R. Hunt Davis's article "School vs. Blanket and Settler: Elijah Makiwane and the Leadership of the Cape School Community" published in 1979 are the most extensive writings about Elijah Makiwane. Both mention that he came from a pologymous family but do not mention his parents' names.

she is able to see the ways in which their stories and faces recur in the likeness she finds amongst relations who are still alive, who resemble the elders she is referring to.

While I have mentioned the significance of Daisy Makiwane in the family, I now turn to the significance of the stories she shares with Noni as a way to historicise her, as well as show the nature of the archive she shares with Noni through stories about her family. In the process of ukuzilanda, Noni invokes Daisy Makiwane, further highlighting that ukuzilanda is the creation of a personal archive. By using "Mam'oMkhulu" from isiXhosa uMom'Khulu (senior mother), Noni is using language to historicise the significance of Daisy Makiwane not only as the matriarch in her family, but also the matriarch in South Africa's historiography. I borrow this idea from Babalwa Magoqwana's work, which theorises uMakhulu by using language to "assert(s) isiXhosa as a source of knowledge" (Magoqwana 2018, p. 76). In theorising uMakhulu, Magoqwana argues that uMakhulu should be seen as "also a body of indigenous knowledge that stores, transfers and disseminates knowledge and values" (Magoqwana 2018, p. 76). I would argue that Noni does the same by invoking Daisy Makiwane, as this is the role she plays in the Jabavu and Makiwane families.

Noni's father had described Daisy Makiwane as "the last surviving individual who has authority in this union of families, Makiwane with Jabavu" (Jabavu, 1963: 103). Noni's father continues to explain her significance not only in the family but also in the country's history as the "first African girl in this country to sit for the matriculation, which was a tough examination in those days. And passed with distinction in mathematics. She wished to train and become a mathematician, but in our country there is no such career for a black woman. In fact in the 1880s it was thought a miracle that a woman of her race should sit for any examination!" (Jabavu, 1963: 103). Jabavu continues to tell Daisy's story, but it is impossible to relay the story without talking about the relationship between the two families as he explains that:

> Sis'Daisy did not let that frustrate her. She trained to be a teacher. But after my father started his weekly paper in 1884, *Imvo Zabantsundu* – again another "pioneer venture for an African in our country" – her father allowed her to join the staff as reporter and feature writer. *Kaloku* the old men were friends; very adventurous; united by love of country and nation; and of progress, advance. (Jabavu 1963, p. 104)

He continues:

> She held the job until she married – grew skilled in all sections of the paper; became a leader-writer. But marriage removed her. The husband, Mr Majombozi, worked far-off, up in the Transvaal; a school teacher. She was widowed more than 30 years ago but has stayed on up there. (Jabavu 1963, p. 105)

Together with Noni's preface for the 1982 publication of *The Ochre People* (Ravan Press), Noni's writing contains the most extensive information which exists about Daisy Makiwane. It seems that in writing about herself and her family, Noni has ensured that Daisy Maikwane's legacy does not disappear, as is the fate of many Black women who were pioneers alongside their male counterparts. In the same way that marriage removed Daisy Makiwane from her pioneering work (though she remains in Johannesburg in spite of the fact that she was widowed for more than 30 years), the ways in which history is preserved have meant that the removal of Daisy Makiwane from the grand narrative of history privileges men. In writing about Daisy Makiwane, Noni relies on her memory as an act of ukuzilanda in order to resist the erasure of one of the pioneer women who has disappeared from South Africa's historiography.

For Noni, Mam'oMkhulu is a representation of family history as she stands for "much that had gone, was going, for ever" (Jabavu 1963, p. 188). This poignant reflection on loss highlights the way in which Noni writes about Mam'oMkhulu so that her memory is not wholly lost in the cultural imagination and exists in the archive in the form of her books. The trip was about reconnecting with her in order to get more information about her heritage, as well as to see herself in relation with another pioneering writer in her family, as she herself was the next generation of writers, even though she was based abroad. One of the ways in which Mam'oMkhulu managed to stay connected to her niece and nephews, which connects further with the idea of ukuzilanda, is her "aunt's industry as a letter writer – Victorian journalist background perhaps transmuting itself in old age" (Jabavu 1963, p. 189). This suggests Mam'oMkhulu's own sense of writing herself into the lives of her family members in order to maintain a relationship with them, but also to leave a trail of evidence behind about her existence. This suggests that there are piles of personal letters which have possibly been discarded, which would have been able to piece together more of who Daisy Majombozi was as "the anchor of all those linked through the Makiwane navel" (Jabavu 1963, p. 189).

While the trip to Johannesburg places Noni in unfamiliar territory, as discussed in Chapter 3, Mam'oMkhulu's house feels familiar to Noni because it was "reminiscent of both my home at Middledrift and my uncle's for intangible reasons, one of them because it felt lived in; the

family had been long established. It was well built, as ‘our’ others were; indeed seemed more so, after the sight of others around it. My aunt lived in the same style as we in the country” (Jabavu 1963, p. 193). The ways in which Mam’oMkhulu designs her house suggests the material ways in which she herself chooses ukuzilanda. While Mam’oMkulu has spent many years in Johannesburg, her home resembles her own heritage, which suggests her own nostalgia in relation to what it means to live so far from her family home in the Cape.

The thread of Noni’s trip and her journey of ukuzilanda is summarised in one of Mam’oMkhulu’s recollections that “*Kaloku* Christians, school people, mingled pagan and Western tradition. The old ran into the new” (Jabavu 1963, p. 220), which captures the kind of hybrid identity that Noni’s family began to forge for themselves in their encounter with Christianity. However, Anzaldúa’s concept of la mestizo is relevant here. For Anzaldúa a “racial, ideological, cultural, and biological cross-pollination, an alien consciousness is presently in the making, a new consciousness... It is a consciousness of the Borderlands” (Anzaldúa 1987, p. 77). She continues, “a *mestiza* is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another.” (Anzaldúa 1987, p. 78) which embraces plurality and complexity in identity construction. This is the experience Noni finds in her family history as she listens to Mam’oMkhulu’s reflections and stories about the Maikwanes and the Jabavus. Noni’s own curiosity about her heritage is based on her awareness of the gaps in her knowledge about her family. It seems for as long as the gaps persist, Noni will remain unsettled in who she is in spite of the widespread knowledge about her family because of their historical significance.

The process of filling in the gaps is a communal affair, as Noni remarks that “these and other things were told to me over days, interrupted by the household routine, and by callers when they dropped in, some old enough to corroborate what she was saying and being of her generation approved and smiled when she remarked, ‘*Kaloku* these gaps in the young people’s knowledge have to be filled’” (Jabavu 1963, p. 243). This nature of community is part of how Mam’oMkhulu has curated her life in Johannesburg. While there is a perception that there is no sense of community when people move to urban spaces, because cities are seen as the binary opposite of village life, Noni admits that this is not the case for Mam’oMkhulu as “Down in the Colony we imagined life was ‘all anonymity in Joburg’. I was having to revise that notion” (Jabavu 1963, p. 243). Seeing Mam’oMkhulu in a different context which still allows her to live the values she is familiar with in the Cape, Noni is

forced to change her mind about her own perceptions of urban life, even though she is constantly being reminded of how jarring the two spaces are.

In asking about her heritage, Noni inadvertently writes about Mam'oMkhulu's own historical significance, as well as that of people such as Dr Mary Malahlela, who became Mrs Xakana. Dr Malahlela had been a student at Fort Hare during Noni's childhood and later became the first Black woman to become a medical doctor. The stories of women such as Mary Malahlela remain on the margins, though in writing about the everyday experiences in Mam'oMkhulu's house, she writes about the prominence of the women she encountered, as well as the ordinary experience of friends dropping in on each other to say hello, as Mary Malahlela does for Mam'oMkhulu.

Alongside Mary Malahlela's name, Mam'oMkhulu also recalls the memory of Noni's unknown grandmothers; MaBiyashe, Noni's paternal grandmother who is seldom mentioned alongside her grandfather, John Tengo Jabavu; as well as MaBamba, Elijah Makiwane's second wife (and Mam'oMkhulu's stepmother). While Mam'oMkhulu refers to these women by their clan names, their identities are not lost, as it was custom (and continues to be so) for people to refer to each other by their clan names as a sign of respect. MaBamba is Maggie Mtywaku, who was from a mission station near King William's Town. Historian, Jill Millard, includes the names of Makiwane's wives – incidentally, they shared a first name, Maggie, in her writing about Elijah Makiwane. This is unusual given the erasure of women's names in history, even for those who were the wives of prominent men and lived public lives at times independently of their husbands, as they were teachers and missionaries. According to the stories Mam'oMkhulu tells, MaBiyashe came from the Sakuba family near Peddie. Her first name is not used, as Mam'oMkhulu would not have referred to her by name because of the deference she paid her as someone whom she regarded as her other mother, as she spent some time living with the Jabavus while she was working for *Imvo Zabantsundu.*

One of the stories Mam'oMkhulu includes is a story about Olive Schreiner's visit at the Jabavu home. I include this anecdote as it highlights the nature of the Jabavu home and the way life was constructed, which would have made a public life impossible for women such as MaBiyashe. When Olive Schreiner visited the Jabavu family, she made comments about MaBiyashe's "constant childbirth" (Jabavu 1963, p. 255). Mam'oMkhulu continues and refers to Schreiner as a feminist because she made this value judgement to John Tengo Jabavu's

face. Mam'oMkhulu tells the story in fragments, highlighting the ways in which Noni's writing tries to evoke the relaxed conversation they had. Mam'oMkhulu adds that Schreiner "had discussed my job with me at the office (kaloku I "made history"!) then went to meet uMamBiyashe and found her surrounded by small children" (Jabavu 1963, p. 255). This anecdote is layered with commentary that highlights Mam'oMkhulu's connection with Olive Schreiner, who showed an interest in Mam'oMkhulu's career as the first woman working at the first newspaper owned by an African. This story raises further questions about the role MaBiyashe played as the wife of a prominent man such as John Tengo Jabavu. It is no surprise that there would have been a stream of people in and out of their home, and MaBiyashe would have met colleagues and friends such as Rudyard Kipling, who paid Jabavu a visit while visiting South Africa, as well as "these Rose Inneses and Weirs and other King Williams's Town notables" (Jabavu 1963, p. 255). In sharing this anecdote with Noni, Mam'oMkhulu is ensuring that Noni has a record of her grandmother which is not recorded in the history books.

In writing about MaBiyashe's influence in the family, Noni is resisting the erasure that comes with being the wife of a prominent political figure. However, in hearing more about MaBiyashe, Noni is curious about her links with that side of the family as she poses the question "What had I inherited from the Sakuba group?" (Jabavu 1963, p. 256). While she knows about the Makiwane and the Jabavu family, there is more to be known about her maternal relations. This question points exactly to the notion of ukuzilanda particularly in relation to the matrilineal lineage which is lost because of the patrilineal surnames which were adopted. Together with inheriting an education at missionary institutions, Mam'oMkulu tells many stories about the ways in which the family inherited Christianity. While Noni's maternal grandfather was one of the first theology students at Lovedale, her maternal great-grandfather had also been part of the clergy as Reverend James Bashe Sakuba (Jabavu 1963). Noni's ancestors were Presbyterians and Methodists and "MaBiyashe's family had become Christian a generation later than Makiwanes and Jabavus" (Jabavu 1963, p. 257). This link between education and religion is significant as it shows the ways in which ancestry provides a broader picture of the complexity of what it meant to be an early convert in the 1800s.

In this section, I have discussed transnationalism as ukuzilanda. Through ukuhamba kukubona across the illegitimate borders of apartheid South Africa, Noni is able to explore her family heritage. By travelling she gains access to a family archive which did not exist in

the public sphere in spite of the prominence of the families she is connected to. Through ukuzilanda she is able to see herself anew through the stories Mam'oMkhulu shares with her. In the course of crossing borders, Noni is able to get a better sense of who she is as she traces the names and stories about her ancestors. It is this tracing that makes Noni's writing an archive, as the stories about her family are also the stories of the nation because of their prominence in South Africa's history. By telling their stories, Noni and Mam'oMkhulu evoke the names of MaBiyashe and MaBamba, in the process highlighting these female family members whose narratives have been erased from broader history. In writing about her visit to Mam'oMkhulu, Noni too is resisting the erasure of Daisy Makiwane. While this section explored the ways in which Noni uses ukuzilanda in *The Ochre People*, I now turn to Sisonke to explore the ways in which she experiences transnationalism. At the heart of ukuzilanda is the nature of relationships and the role they play in Noni's life as she tries to make sense of herself. For Sisonke, relationships are also central to her experience of transnationalism.

Fictive kinship in the new South Africa in *Always Another Country*

In this section, I explore the ways in which Sisonke explores questions of nationalism and transnationalism through the friendships she forms after she moves back to South Africa. It is through her friendship with The Guys – young men Sisonke befriends who are from the DRC – that she offers a critique of the new South Africa's relationship with the rest of the continent. I view this discussion through a transnational lens that calls into question the artificial boundaries which are a legacy of colonialism and apartheid. Transnationalism challenges these borders in the same way that Sisonke challenges South Africa's exceptionalism and nationalism which places Africans from other part of the continent in danger. Sisonke's writing is transnational as not only does she cross borders in her own life, but her writing speaks to a cultural imagination that challenges nationalism. Transnationalism offers a new imagination which "transcend(s) traditional nation-state boundaries" (Jay 2010, p. 74) in order to answer Bhabha's question, "Do we need to rethink the terms in which we conceive of community, citizenship, nationality, and the ethics of social affiliation?" (Bhabha 1994, p. 172). Sisonke's transnational experience in other African countries is marked by freedom while growing up in exile, yet as an adult, Sisonke grapples with South Africa's response to Africans, and the failure of Pan-Africanism in the new South Africa. In this section, I argue that the friendship with The Guys reveals the tensions of transnationalism in the new South Africa, which are intricately linked with xenophobia. By including this

narrative, Sisonke explores the complexity of South Africa's relationship with the rest of the continent, offering a critique of how it is marred by xenophobia, which is arguably a form of afrophobia.

Harris-Perry's concept of fictive kinship is useful here to explain the relationship Sisonke forms with The Guys from the DRC. Fictive kinship refers to:

> …connections between members of a group who are unrelated by blood or marriage but who nonetheless share reciprocal social or economic relationships… This imagined community of familial ties underscores a voluntary sense of shared identity that maps onto the historical construction of race… There is a sense in which we are all family. (Harris-Perry 2011, pp. 102-103).

Because of her experience of growing up in Zambia and Kenya, she feels connected with these men as they come to find refuge in South Africa while running away from conflict in their home countries, in the same way her family found refuge in other African countries during apartheid. By including this narrative about The Guys, Sisonke raises questions about nationalism in the new South Africa and the harmful effects it has on the people who are deemed as other. Within a short history of being a democratic country, Black South Africans choose to forget how they too were othered by colonialism and apartheid South Africa, as they inflict otherness on Africans who live in South Africa. While South Africa is still negotiating its new identity as a country, it destroys the possibility of the imagined community with other African countries. Msimang shows that The Guys from the DRC become "a brotherhood to match our sisterhood" (2017, p. 236), in order to highlight the kind of kinship they shared. Much like the experience of those who left South Africa to seek refuge in other countries, The Guys left what was Zaire as "the country was becoming nothing more than a series of territories no longer protected by Mobutu's strong hand" (Msimang 2017, p. 237). The friendship with The Guys holds the promise of the new South Africa as a haven for those who are leaving or fleeing their countries in search of stability, threatened by war and conflict in their home countries. A consequence of the failure of fictive kinship whereby Africans from other parts of the continent find that they are not welcome in South Africa arouses feelings of shame for Sisonke. The shame Sisonke experiences is described as social shame by Harris-Perry, who explains that:

> Individuals feel ashamed in response to a real or imagined audience. We do not feel shame in isolation, only when we transgress a social boundary or break a community

> expectation. Our internal moral guide may lead us to feel guilt but shame when we fear exposure and evaluation by others. (Harris-Perry 2011, p. 104)

This definition of shame is useful here, as it permeates the relationship Sisonke has with The Guys, who inform her that they have never been invited to a South African's home until they visit her sister's house. Sisonke's reaction to this realisation is shame and tears, which she hides from The Guys. The shame is also a result of use of the derogatory word "amakwerekwere", used by black South Africans to show their hostility towards "people 'from Africa'" (Msimang 2017, p. 239). The use of the word amakwerekwere is reflected in the attitude by South Africans that "Africa began beyond South Africa's borders but did not include our very own country which sits firmly on the African continent" (Msimang 2017, p. 239). While Sisonke critiques the fractures in the pan-African ideal in South Africa, she makes a generalisation about South Africans as her observations beg the question: which South Africans? Is it all South Africans? Is this opinion classed or racialised? In the same way that Sisonke's 'South Africans' undermine the heterogenous nature of the continent, Sisonke falls into the similar traps of generalisations. Sisonke has to confront South Africans' active disconnection, which they create from the places where she grew up and which she considered home. There seems to be very little that Sisonke can do to challenge the xenophobia she notices in the new South Africa, other than to continue her friendship with The Guys. The helplessness and the shame are part of a larger experience of being South African, whereby she watches how the triumph of the new South Africa erodes.

Sisonke's narrative about xenophobia in South Africa is shaped by her class position as she refers to the middle-class status of The Guys, who study at Wits University and have access to similar lifestyles because of their education. While The Guys' experience of xenophobia is their exclusion from dinner tables in South African homes, Sisonke contrasts this with the "national rage (which) is often imprecise" (Msimang 2017, p. 241) and results in the murders, looting and injuries across Johannesburg townships, which become known as the xenophobic attacks. Sisonke experiences the extent of these atrocities through television and the newspapers, like most middle-class people. In writing about the xenophobia in South Africa, Sisonke is writing about the many failures of the new South Africa, which are characterised by inequality. In a sense, she is writing about the pitfalls of nationalism which Frantz Fanon also writes about in *The Wretched of the Earth*, where "African unity takes off the mask, and crumbles into regionalism inside the hollow shell of nationality itself" (Fanon 1991, p.158).

Like McClintock, Sisonke is writing about the dangers of nationalism. Instead of fully exploring the possibility of being the new South Africa, democratic South Africa relies on old tropes of the nation and uses the oldest trope of exclusion. By falling into this trope, I argue that part of the construction of the new South Africa is premised on amnesia – a psychic and political condition that relies on what Gqola refers to as unremembering (2001). The tension between forgetting and memory is contested in South Africa, because the politics of memory are central to the making of a nation (Coullie 2014). In order to create the new South Africa, the relationship with the rest of the continent is erased and an identity of exceptionalism and narrow-mindedness characterises the new South Africa.

In the new South Africa, Africa begins beyond the borders of South Africa (Msimang 2017). This is a form of erasure of precolonial histories which denies the ancient migrations across the continent (which incidentially, Noni writes about in *Drawn in Colour*). Sisonke begins to realise this when she is asked where she grew up and the response is always the same:

> ‘So you grew up in Africa.’ The word ‘Africa’ was enunciated carefully, the last syllable drawn out and slightly raised as though the statement were actually a question. Then the inevitable, softly sighed, ‘Shame.’ Sympathy and muted horror playing at their lips. (Msimang 2017, p. 240)

The “sympathy and horror” with which Sisonke is met can be seen as the emotions which characterise afrophobia, which Tshaka describes as the “fear of a specific other – the black other from north of the Limpopo River” (Tshaka 2016). It is ironic that this form of South African exceptionalism happens in the context of Thabo Mbeki’s time as deputy president and president, and became the representation of the African Renaissance. In 1996, Mbeki delivered the famous “I am an African” speech, which was a political and cultural moment of introducing South Africa to the possibilities of a new identity of being African after many years of apartheid isolation. Mbeki’s speech was the precursor to his African Renaissance project, which strengthened during his presidency. Mbeki’s speech was a political attempt at pre-empting South Africa’s ignorance of its position in relation to the rest of the continent. Given Sisonke’s proximity to ANC politics and the idealism of the 1990s and 2000s, it is ironic that she does not engage with this political moment in relation to Mbeki’s attempts at creating a vision centred on an African identity. Sisonke’s erasure of this moment highlights the challenge with Mbeki’s African Renaissance, which seemed to be out of sync with the constructions of Africanness which the general population create, or the lack thereof.

This disconnect between Mbeki's vision of the African Renaissance and the lived reality of xenophobia forms part of the disorienting sense of the nationhood in South Africa. There is a mismatch between a vision which seeks to humanise South Africans and the lived reality of continued dehumanisation. In a sense, the xenophobia in the new South Africa becomes "disjuncture between, on the one hand, the goals of Thabo Mbeki's "African Renaissance" and "unity-in-diversity" constitution-making and nation-building projects; and on the other hand, contemporary lived experiences of pariahdom, unhomeliness, and worldlessness (Madlingozi 2018, p. 53). In a sense, the new South Africa based on the African Renaissance cannot exist in a context where pariahdom and unhomeliness continue in the form of poverty and continued displacement. Even Sisonke writes that while South Africa is free, it remains unjust (Msimang 2017). These injustices are inflicted on poor South Africans and are reproduced in the creation of the other through the language of "amakwerekwere, people from Africa" (Msimang 2017, p. 239).

At the heart of the new South Africa is a "flattened and stereotypical view of Africa" (Msimang 2017, p. 240) which is without a historical context because of the amnesia alluded to above. If the view of Africa is without nuance and without historical context, this has implications for what it means to be a South African. The new South Africa is built on a precarious foundation because it is a contested identity which Gqola describes as "one that is necessarily contradictory, in flux and analytical. The languages / words we use to describe provide perhaps an insight into the repressed uncertainties of our South African psyche(s)" (Gqola 2004, p. 104). The psyche which Sisonke is pointing to suggests repressed self-hatred in the new South Africa because, in the absence of an embracing of Pan-Africanism (which other African countries embraced upon independence), I argue that 1994 did not give Black people the love and healing needed in order to see themselves as part of the rest of the continent.

Sisonke draws an analogy between the ways in which whiteness operates and the nature of South Africanness:

> Just as whiteness means nothing until it is contrasted with blackness as savagery, South Africanness relies heavily on the construction of Africa as a place of dysfunction, chaos and violence to define itself as functional, orderly, efficient and civilised (Msimang 2017, p. 240)

While this seems to be a jarring comparison, it is accurate given the reality of the xenophobia and afrophobia which become the norm in the new South Africa. These constructions of Africa are part of the pathology of the new South Africa, which Sisonke has to grapple with as someone who also has to grapple with her own South African identity. The nationalist project of South Africa relies on the irrational fear of what lies beyond the borders of South Africa, even while the borders are a result of white settler colonialism.

This is the dark side of the transnational experience, which meant freedom for those in exile, but this freedom cannot be extended to those who come from other parts of the continent to settle in post-apartheid South Africa. The xenophobia in South Africa becomes the dark side of nationalism and citizenship which is predicated on the idea of insiders and outsiders. The nature of the violence in 2008, and subsequent violence as recent as 2019, becomes characteristic of the new South Africa, which is established on the violence of white settler colonialism and apartheid, which made violence a culture in the new South Africa. Whereas Sisonke had to contend with home being another country, she watches how the new South Africa reminds Africans that "home is always another country" (Msimang 2017, p. 242) because they are not welcome in South Africa.

Fictive kinship in the new South Africa is marred by violence and crass class politics which make it impossible for freedom and justice to become a reality. Sisonke has to grapple with the meanings of xenophobic violence, and she has to contend with the violence that her middle-class existence cannot protect her from. Inasmuch as the journey home was supposed to end in the new and free South Africa, Sisonke is confronted with a South Africa that is "free and not just" (Msimang 2017, p. 4). Coming home to South Africa has meant reflecting on the nature of freedom through the transnational journey, and realizing that the disappointments of the new South Africa mean that perhaps the freedom to roam is the only saving grace that people like Sisonke can hold onto.

It is worth ending this chapter with extracts from both writers, and how they end their books[35].

> In her quiet and steady way, Mummy spent her whole life teaching us that it was having a map; rather than belonging to a country, that would make us free; that it was those we loved, and not where we lived, that would make us belong, and that it was

[35] I use Noni's second book, which resolves some of the issues she explores in *Drawn in Colour*.

> open hearts, rather than closed fists, that would help us navigate the world. (Msimang 2017, p. 308)

> My cousins and I and all those who make up that life pattern share certain denominators: hesitations, prevarications, obduracies, steps forwards, steps backwards. One hacks a path out of the wood and considers alternative routes within the systems that now exist. For the moment, all that members of our generation can say to one another is what everyone said when my father and his contemporaries took their leave of us: '*Ndlela ntle, Fare Well'* – and that from the bottom of our hearts. (Jabavu 1963, p. 261)

Noni and Sisonke's experiences with border crossing allow for a serious engagement with notions of freedom. For Noni, her expression of freedom is in the ways in which she negotiates her privilege as she crosses borders as a Black woman travelling in the 1950s, with a family legacy that has given her access to the world from a young age. The extract above highlights the extent to which she is aware of these negotiations as part of her inheritance. For both Noni and Sisonke, it seems that the access to travel – for whatever reason – is the freedom itself. Noni stakes a claim to the world by travelling as someone who has the right to do so. As someone who has been traveling abroad since she was thirteen years old, her memoirs reflect someone who understands the loss that has come with this privilege, as she is forced to piece together the gaps in her family history as a result of the years spent away. Both writers are gripped by freedom. At the end of her book, Sisonke reflects on her mother's death as a way to resolve some of her own questions about freedom. She writes that "freedom wasn't simply about the end goal"; her mother knew "that the journey itself was freedom" (Msimang 2017, p. 308).

In this chapter I have shown how both writers develop a relationship with the continent beyond South Africa, which is unique given the ways in which apartheid South Africa was isolated in order to maintain the façade of white supremacy, which was unlike the rest of the dark continent which was "Conradian and densely forested" (Msimang 2017, p. 239). Both writers have to negotiate their African identity in relation to the lived experience of being in other African countries. Noni occupies a historical time on the cusp of independence from a position of being a British citizen, while Sisonke is born into an independent Zambia. This has consequences for both writers' subjectivity and the narrative they construct about how they negotiate their identities.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

These are just some of the epic poems I wish to write
about women of our world, in the tongues of their mothers.
I will present the women in the forms that match their foundations
using metaphors of moments that defined their beings
and similes that flow through our seasons of eternity.
But I am not yet ready to write these poems.

Makhosazana Xaba[36]

I would like to end by evoking Makhosazana Xaba's poem "Tongues of their Mothers" because it is relevant to the overall argument of this thesis. In this poem, the persona expresses a desire to preserve women's stories in "seasons of eternity". From the first line "I wish to write an epic poem about Sarah Baartman", Xaba wishes to write about Sarah Baartman in order to "[conjure] up her wholeness" as well as the wholeness of the other women who are invoked in the poem: uMnkabayi kaJama Zulu and her sisters Mawa and Mmama, Daisy Makiwane, Cecelia Makiwane, Princess Magogo Constance Zulu, Victoria Mxenge, and Nomvula Glenrose Mbatha (the poet's mother). Each of the women listed in the poem is a woman who has been erased, silenced or marginalised in South Africa's historiography, literary history and public archive. It is significant that the poem begins with Sarah Baartman, as Xaba seems to suggest that Baartman is the first ancestor who had to contend with the erasure which came with dying in a foreign country. While in South Africa's recent history, Baartman has become more visible since her remains were returned to South Africa, in 2002, it took Diana Ferrus' poem "I've come to take you home"[37] to resuscitate Sarah Baartman's name and memory. However, as the poem highlights, Sarah Baartman's story in the public imagination is about her "capturers, torturers and demolishers… the experiments in the laboratories and the displays… the diplomatic dabbles that brought her remains home, eventually". For Xaba, a fitting epic poem for Baartman would be about the narrative we do not know about Baartman: her family, her friends, her community, "her voice,

[36] Xaba, M. (2008). *Tongues of their Mothers.* Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

[37] Ferrus, D., 1998. I Have Come to Take You Home: A Tribute to Sarah Baartman. *Ink@ Boiling Point: A Selection of 21st Century Black Women's Writing from the Southern Tip of Africa*.

dreams, emotions and thoughts". Writing an epic poem about these women would mean challenging the ways in which history wishes us to remember.

The poem highlights the ways in which the marginalisation of women's stories and wholeness happens because of the patriarchal gaze, which refuses to make space for complex narratives that include the stories and names of women. The final stanza of the poem, which I have used in the epigraph, shows the ways in which literary work can create and recreate a more complex picture of Black women whose stories have been erased from history. The last stanza of the poem is the most striking, relating to the work of preserving Black women's stories and names; however, it seems that Xaba would have the reader pose the question, "why are you not yet ready to write these poems?"

In a conversation with Xaba (in 2019), she explains that the epic poem is a genre which requires one to have extensive information about someone in order to form a sustained picture of someone deserving of an epic poem. Whereas all these women mentioned in the poem lived complex lives and some left a trail of evidence as their archive, such as Princess Magogo's music, there is a paucity of information available which might help form a more complex picture of these women's lives, their intellectual labour and cultural production, because the stories of women are not valued. Xaba alluded to the recent publication of Mongane Wally Serote's epic poem for Oliver Tambo, *Sikhahlel'u-OR: A praise poem for Oliver Tambo* (2019). Xaba points out that Serote is able to write this poem because there is no shortage of information about Tambo which Serote can augment with his own experiences in order to create a full picture of who Tambo was. Therefore, without enough information, it is impossible to write a fitting epic poem for the women Xaba mentions. The irony in Xaba's poem of course, is that she inadvertently writes an epic poem to these women even though she dedicates only a stanza to each one. This is the nature of researching Black women's stories: we begin anyway in order to make inroads through the erasure.

While Xaba writes "But I am not yet ready to write these poems", I see this thesis as a response to this line; and while I do not write an epic poem about Noni and Sisonke, this study has been an exploration of their memoirs in order to resist the erasure of Black women's writing, ideas and significance. I have tried to analyse the ways in which they negotiate place and identity in their writing. In writing their own stories, Noni and Sisonke are also resisting the erasure of their experiences, because without providing their own narratives

which contribute to the literary culture through life writing, the historical narrative suggests that they are always in a precarious position of being ignored in literary history, as I discussed in Chapter 1. Without the feminist ethic of taking Black women's lives, voices and creative labour more seriously, women's writing is always in danger of being ignored and silenced.

I came to this study when I discovered Noni Jabavu, whom I began to read about after a conversation wherein I was told by a university professor that "Black women aren't really writers". At the time, I had started writing opinion pieces for the *Daily Dispatch,* the same newspaper Noni had contributed columns to in 1977. I found an article announcing that usishiyile, akasekho – she had left us, she was no longer here – in June 2008. I subsequently found Makhosazana Xaba's Masters in Creative Writing on "Jabavu's Journey". Over time, I became curious about why Noni's memoirs were not readily available in bookstores, similar to Ellen Khuzwayo's *Call me woman* and Phyllis Ntantala's *A life's mosaic,* which were reprinted in 2006 and 2009, respectively. Almost ten years later, after first reading a borrowed copy of *Drawn in Colour,* I purchased my own copies which I found in obscure, antique bookshops, Ike's Books in Durban and L'Elephant Terrible Bookshop in Johannesburg. At the time, I did not think I would look at her writing in relation to a contemporary writer such as Sisonke, but I was interested in what her writing posed about the ways in which we can understand the subjectivity of a transnational Black woman. I came to Sisonke's writing when I began following the online blog *Daily Maverick.* When her memoir was launched, I was curious about her story as I had begun thinking about which women I could include in my study alongside Noni. Unlike my difficult experience with finding Noni's books, it was easy for me to find Sisonke's writing – we have met a few times and I have even presented on her work at a colloquium with her present in the room. These different trajectories of finding each author's work mirrors how my awareness of Noni, the literary grandmother, paved the way for me to recognise the importance of Sisonke, the literary granddaughter, as worthy of literary engagement.

When I decided to put Noni and Sisonke's writing alongside each other, I was curious about how it was that two women from different historical moments were preoccupied with questions of belonging and trying to make sense of what it means to be a South African. Like Peterson shows in his work, I was curious about the "understandings and potentialities that the myriad of contradictory, ironical, paradoxical and melancholic experiences of different generations of black people need to be engaged with" (Peterson 2019, p. 16) in South Africa's

literary history, particularly when it comes to women's writing. I include my positionality as I conclude this study, in order to show the influence of my own personal narrative of coming into the public sphere and finding Noni's work in the *Daily Dispatch* and reading Sisonke's columns in the *Daily Maverick.* In writing about Noni, I have tried to make sense of her ideas and thoughts in her memoirs, which continue to be inaccessible in South Africa; for example, *Drawn in Colour* has never been reprinted for a South African audience other than the original publication in 1960, while *The Ochre People* was last reprinted in 1995. In a sense, in writing about Noni, I have written the epic poem that she deserves, the one Xaba asks us to write.

Lewis Gordon cautions against the ways in which autobiographical and biographical texts have been used to analyse black intellectual thought. He argues that:

> My aim is not to discount the use of autobiography nor biography in the study of black intellectuals or black intellectual production. What I would like to raise here is the question of *relevance*… My concern is with the implications of the ongoing practice of locking black intellectuals in the biographical moment. (Gordon 1998, p. 51)

Rather he proposes that biographical texts be used for interpretation rather than simply seeing the text as an experience (Gordon 1998). This is what I have tried to do in this text. I have approached Noni and Sisonke's memoirs as texts where I can go "beyond the biographical and autobiographical moment" (Gordon 1998, p. 59) in order to consider what it is their writing offers us in terms of how the conversation about identity and place can be stretched. In the wake of public debates about land redistribution, ever-present questions about heritage and history, xenophobia, the relevance of African languages, it seems that Noni and Sisonke have something to offer. Their memoirs offer historical and present contemplations about the question of who belongs in South Africa. When I began this study, I wrote an essay in the *Mail and Guardian* "Reading Noni Jabavu in 2017". The essay was focused on explaining the relevance of Noni to an audience who was curious about her work, but had not read it. In the essay I conclude that:

> Jabavu's work isn't significant because she's one of "the first"; her work is relevant because it continues to ask difficult questions about what it means to be human beyond the limitations and impositions of identity. (Masola, 2017)

This study is the culmination of the intention which I began with in 2017, and which was extended when I added a contemporary writer who extends the conversation Noni began writing in the 1960s. This study was an exploration of Noni and Sisonke writing together as intergenerational writers who explore questions of place, home, exile and transnationalism in their attempts to construct an identity for themselves. In looking at their texts alongside each other, this study foregrounds the ways in which Black women's writing continues to complicate the gendered nature of home and the nation. The exploration of exile and estrangement which both Noni and Sisonke experience in different ways highlights the complexity of belonging and unbelonging. The theme of transnationalism offers Noni a sense of freedom, while for Sisonke, she is confronted with the creation of the new South Africa being created based on the exclusion of Africans from other countries. While it is possible to dismiss life writing as descriptive work which simply recounts experiences, this study shows that "description itself is a political act" (Rushdie 2010, p. 13) because of the contested nature of history and narrative in public discourse, political imagination and cultural production. This is to say that in writing their memoirs, Noni and Sisonke are responding to this contestation because "redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it" (Rushdie 2010, p. 14).

Reading Noni and Sisonke alongside each other has begun to inform the ways I think about how narratives are shaped. I use narrative here in the same way that Peterson tries to tease out how it has come to be bandied about in South Africa's public discourse. While he does not offer a definition of narrative (and neither will I), I use narrative here to point to the ways in which stories are created and recreated in public discourse in relation to memory, history and contemporary public discourse. Noni and Sisonke's memoirs form part of the narrative of what constitutes the cultural and political imagination in South Africa because:

> Narrative and the imagination, then, even in their flights of fantasy, are important catalysts in the production of knowledge, ideology and identity, especially because of the dexterous ways in which they allow for complex calibrations of the articulations between time, space, social life and action. (Peterson 2019, p. 5)

Noni and Sisonke's writing allow for the complexity that Peterson alludes to here. The fact that Noni's writing is undervalued in South Africa's literary history can be seen in the various ways in which women's stories are not included in the broader public discourse. It was while reading Bongani Ngqulunga's biography of Pixley kaSeme, *The Man who founded the ANC*

(2017), that I noticed the glaring omission of Charlotte Maxeke in Pixley kaSeme's narrative, leading me to consider how to best read and locate Noni in relation to Sisonke's writing. In my review of Ngqulunga's book, I pointed out that he offered a "flattened narrative" (Masola, 2017) of Seme's story, as it excluded the names of Seme's contemporaries who were other women who had studied and travelled abroad as he had. It seemed odd to me that Ngqulunga would blatantly erase Maxeke, who was Seme's contemporary. During this time I was drawn to reading Maxeke alongside Mgqwetho, as women in the same historical moment writing about the political climate of their time. Thus I began thinking about what it means to read narratives in relation to each other in order to show that "black intellectual and creative archive is an empirically and theoretically substantive and rich one that is deeply underestimated or underutilised (whether out of ignorance or coloniality)" (Peterson 2019, p. 2). Thus, reading Noni and Sisonke together was an extension of this research and an experiment in reading texts in relation to each other, rather than a traditional comparative study. Looking at these writers together was also a contrasting exercise, as Sisonke's contemporary visibility can be juxtaposed with Noni's invisibility in South Africa's public discourse, in spite of her historical global visibility. This methodology of reading texts in relation to each other is useful for further research on literary texts which can offer a richer perspective, as Stephane Robolin sets out to do in his work *Grounds of Engagement: Apartheid-Era African American and South African writing.*

Using Mignolo's idea of languaging, I used isiXhosa to challenge the hegemony of English and highlight the limitations of English in fully expressing the Black experience which Noni writes about in her memoirs. The inclusion of isiXhosa in this analysis places isiXhosa in a position where it is worthy of further analysis as a language that can be used to locate the Black experience within languages other than English, because of the obvious limitations of English as I have discussed in the study. Noni's use of language in both her memoirs shows the kind of creativity that has not been fully extended in more contemporary texts which opt for an English-only approach, even though the South African audience is multilingual.

In Chapter 2, I explored ikhaya as a place that is not reserved for the nuclear family, as is the case with the idea of home in English. For Noni, ikhaya is a place in relation to the network of family which includes the spiritual world of the living-dead in *Drawn in Colour.* In *The Ochre People,* Noni goes beyond ikhaya and explores isizwe as a representation of belonging in South Africa as her homeland. *The Ochre People* explores the history of South Africa's

formation as a nation state and the consequences of establishing a nation through destroying isizwe for African people, thus creating a nation based on exclusion. Noni's use of language highlights the ways in which language is indeed central to identity construction, as there are words which are impossible to translate into English. In *Always Another Country* I explored the idea of the nation further through the imaginary homeland Sisonke contends with when she returns to South Africa after years of exile. I argue that the home she longs for does not exist and she occupies the position of being an outsider in the place where she had hoped she would gain belonging. Sisonke's idea of South Africa highlights how she grapples with nostalgia because in the absence of growing up in South Africa, she creates her own version of South Africa to compensate for what she lost by being raised in exile.

In Chapter 3, I showed that the nature of exile is more complex than political exile. By looking at exile as internal exile and urban estrangement, the idea of exile for Noni raises tensions about being unhomed in South Africa in spite of her childhood memories of multiracialism in the small university town of Alice. I argued that even in South Africa, Noni has an exile experience because of the illegitimate borders created by white settler colonialism and apartheid, which created native reserves. This internal exile extends into urban estrangement which continues to displace Black people further by creating native locations and disrupting African families through migrant labour. Noni's ability to write about "native reserves" and "native locations" challenges some of the silences about the psycho-spiritual effects of white settler colonialism and apartheid. With the marking of 200 years since the arrival of the 1820 Settlers in what is now the Eastern Cape, I read Noni's work as one of the historical texts which needs to be revisited in order to understand the effects of displacement and landlessness. Sisonke's experience of exile offers a different perspective, as she finds freedom in exile, even while she confronts racism in Canada. The freedom she has in exile means she has other models of what it means to be Black as she grows up in Zambia and Kenya at the cusp of independence. Through this analysis I show that exile can be more complex than the monolithic image of a freedom fighter in political exile. Sisonke's experience also raises questions about thinking about children in the context of exile, which have largely been ignored.

Chapter 4 looked at the nature of transnationalism and the ways in which Noni and Sisonke occupy a threshold position as people who encounter borders throughout their lives to challenge the tropes about nationalism in South Africa. Noni's experiences with

transnationalism enable her to reimagine freedom through travel, which is largely enabled by her British passport. Travelling also gives Noni the opportunity to see her present reality in relation to her family history through the process of ukuzilanda. Using the concept of ukuzilanda, border crossing becomes a process of piecing together a family narrative in order for Noni to get a better understanding of who she is in the context of her mother's death and her brother's death. I tried to show the link between ukuzilanda and nostalgia as ways in which Noni attempts to find more stories about her family and inadvertently, about herself. In writing about her family, Noni uses the public narrative to make sense of private narratives of her family members such as Daisy Makiwane, MaBiyashe, and her grandfathers Elijah Makiwane and John Tengo Jabavu. By visiting uMam'oMkhulu, she is able to form a better understanding of her heritage. Sisonke writes about the complicated nature of rebuilding South Africa after apartheid. Even though it is dubbed the "new South Africa", it cannot purge itself of the politics of exclusion established through centuries of white settler colonialism. Through friendships with people from other African countries, Sisonke is able to see the dangers behind the nationalism of the new South Africa. Beyond locating Noni and Sisonke as transnational writers, I try to show the glaring questions about what it means to understand the current cultural, political and psycho-spiritual conditions in South Africa.

Like their writers, *Drawn in Colour, The Ochre People* and *Always Another Country* are travelling texts. While travelling texts have largely been seen in relation to the translation of texts in order for the ideas to reach people across language barriers (Kell 2017), I use travelling texts to refer to writing which addresses the kind of texts which travel across borders (as both Noni and Sisonke's books are published in other countries). But beyond the text itself, I see their books as travelling texts because they address ideas which centre the complexity of borders and nationalism. They complicate the nature of travel and centre the politics of travel as something that is deeply human and deeply complex. Noni wrote her books while occupying an interesting position of being a South-African-born British citizen. Unlike most travelling texts by Black women, she does not occupy the position of writing from the "peripheries to the center" (Amireh & Majaj, 2000, p. 3) but rather, she occupies both positions because of her relationship with South Africa and the other countries where her work has been accessible. The engagement with her work raises questions about the power dynamics involved in the cultural flow of ideas between the former coloniser and former empire. This is part of what makes Noni a transnational writer, because she traverses many

worlds not only as a subject, but also in the content of her writing; she embodies the content of her writing. *Always Another Country* is Sisonke's debut book, which also launched her into a literary culture as a writer based in both South Africa and Australia. She is not writing for a South African audience alone, and she too does not neatly occupy the space of being a so-called "Third World" writer because of her access to many worlds. This context is important for the reading of both these writers' works, as they complicate the taken-for-granted positions about writing subjects and travelling subjects.

The ability to cross borders as Noni and Sisonke are able to brings to the fore questions of freedom. For Noni, who has been traveling abroad since she was a young girl, she has access to border crossing through the privileged position of her family's access to travel. It seems that for Noni, border crossing is her birthright. However, being in South Africa highlights the contested nature of that birthright because it is in constant conversation with the apartheid politics of restriction. Through border crossing, Noni has more options available to her.

One of the threads which further connects Noni and Sisonke as writers worthy of being seen in relation to each other is related to class politics. Noni and Sisonke consistently navigate their class position throughout their narratives. Noni makes sense of her class position in relation to her access to the world, as well as rural areas such as Middledrift and Confluence Farm in a village called Tsolo. Sisonke's experience of class is felt throughout the countries where they settle, in particular Kenya, where her father's job places her family in a social milieu made of ambassadors and directors of international organisations. Sisonke's class privilege continues once they return to South Africa and become part of the educated elite, who is able to occupy positions in organisations that build the "new South Africa".

This thesis finds that there is a continued need to read Black women's writing and take seriously the intellectual contribution which comes in the form of life writing. Noni and Sisonke's narration of the nation offers more questions about the nature of South Africa's history and present. Exploring life writing poses questions about how Black women are experiencing the nation, and their imaginings on how to make sense of the nation state can emerge from their writing. Furthermore, the genre of life writing allows for a contestion of truth and the relationship between truth and memory; in a sense, it asks whose narrative matters in the process of making and remaking the nation. Given the paucity of analysis on Noni's memoirs, there are opportunities for further research exploring the nature of the

relationship between the converted, Christianised and educated elite with those who rejected missionary education, and the consequences this has for contemporary public discourse. This is a thread which continues in South Africa's contemporary cultural production. Noni's writing lends itself to explorations in interdisciplinary research, which could look at the use of isiXhosa in music and pop culture and how it has been influenced by the historical narrative, an example being Thandiswa Mazwai and Simphiwe Dana's music. Noni's work could also be explored alongside Joyce Sikakane's memoir *A Window on Soweto,* which has also been erased from South Africa's public discourse, as well as her male counterparts who enjoy more visibility, such as Mphahlele and Abrahams.

Finally, this research has led me to pose more questions for my own future research, which will be examining more of the women I mentioned in this thesis who have not been written into South Africa's literary history, in spite of the efforts they made to write themselves into it. I am particularly interested in writing about Daisy Makiwane Majombozi and exploring her significance in relation to her sisters Cecilia and Thandiswa. I am also interested in Ellen Pumla Ngozwane Kisosonkole: a South African woman who married Christopher Kisosonkole from the Baganda royal family and moved to Uganda. She became involved in the Uganda's women's movement and became the first African woman in the Ugandan Parliament before independence. Upon independence, she was the only woman who was part of Milton Obote's delegation to the United Nations in 1962. She also became a literacy expert for the United Nations in the 1960s. Before leaving South Africa to live in Uganda, she was a writer in the newspaper *The Bantu World* and continued to write when she lived in Uganda. Her life story raises so many questions about transnational women from South Africa, who are Noni and Sisonke's predecessors.

Ellen Pumla Ngozwana's story remains hidden because she disrupts the narrative of the significance of women in African politics. The information I have of her thus far has been pieced together from two articles on the internet; from reading Aili Mari Tripp's work on the women's movement in Uganda; her former student's autobiography, Ellen Khuzwayo's extract about her in her autobiography *Call Me Woman* (1985); as well as her writings, which remain buried in the archives of *The Bantu World*. There is no information about her early influences and family; however, the newspaper archive may be useful in providing clues for her significance. Her story would also be useful for contrasting with a more contemporary global South African woman, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, who also started her career as a

teacher and ended up working in women's rights, eventually becoming the first woman to be the Deputy President. Her trajectory to the United Nations Women raises questions about the ways in which life writing could assist in preserving her work and story as another transnational Black woman.

While I did not include Noni and Sisonke's journalistic essays due to the focus I wanted to give to their memoirs, there will be an opportunity for scholars to extend this research by looking at Noni's *Daily Dispatch* columns, as they will be published in a book with the title *Stranger at Home* to be launched in 2020. After many conversations with the family and rejections from publishers, NB Publishers expressed an interest in the project. The compilation is flanked by an introductory essay written by Makhosazana Xaba, and I have contributed the afterword. The compilation is our attempt at honouring Noni's legacy and showing the ways in which her work can inspire more conversations on the other themes Noni writes about: travel, politics, family and music.

This research on resisting erasure is part of a broader conversation which many Black feminist scholars are part of. In her book *Beyond respectability: The intellectual thought of race women*, Brittney Cooper uses the analogy of listing to explain the significance of this work. She refers to the listing that African-American women who were the contemporaries of 'the great race men' whose names she evokes in her work. These women used to create their own lists to announce the public work they were participating in as though they were anticipating the erasure they would have to endure if they did not write about their work. Cooper explains that

> I do not merely think of these lists as mere lists. Instead, this intentional calling of names created an intellectual genealogy for race women's work and was a practice of resistance against intellectual erasure… These lists situate Black women within a long lineage of prior women who have done similar kinds of work and naming those women grants intellectual, political, and/or cultural legitimacy to the Black women speaking their names…Black women's long traditions of intellectual production constitute a critical edge, without which, the broader history of African-American knowledge production would unravel and come apart at the seams (Cooper 2017, p.2).

The work of researching and writing about Black women's public lives, their cultural production and intellectual contributions is an "intentional calling of names" which is a "practice of resistance against intellectual erasure". In writing about Noni and Sisonke this study has been a "resistance against intellectual erasure."

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