

Somewhere in the Double Rainbow:
Representations of Bisexuality in Selected Post-Apartheid South African Novels

by

Cheryl Stobie



Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy
in the School of Literary Studies, Media, and Creative Arts,
Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences,
Howard College Campus,
University of KwaZulu-Natal.

2005

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own work. It has not been submitted before for any degree at any other university. Where use has been made of the scholarship of other authors, they have been duly acknowledged in the text.

.....*C. Stobie*.....

Cheryl Stobie

As the candidate's supervisor I hereby approve the submission of the thesis for examination.

.....*J. U. Jacobs*.....

Professor J. U. Jacobs

December 2005

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	iii
Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview	1
Chapter 2: Bisexuality: Ontology and Epistemology	33
Chapter 3: Homosexualities in Africa and South Africa	70
Chapter 4: “Biopia” in Biography: The Representation of Bisexuality in Selected South African Lives	104
Chapter 5: Mother, Missus, Mate: Bisexuality in Tatamkhulu Afrika’s <i>Mr Chameleon</i> and <i>Bitter Eden</i>	155
Chapter 6: Fissures in Apartheid’s “Eden”: Representations of Bisexuality in <i>Cracks</i> by Sheila Kohler and <i>The Smell of Apples</i> by Mark Behr	191
Chapter 7: “Who Really Can Follow These Bisexual Variations”: Nadine Gordimer’s <i>The House Gun</i>	235
Chapter 8: Bisexuality and the Queer Celebratory: K. Sello Duiker’s <i>The Quiet Violence of Dreams</i> , Ashraf Jamal’s <i>Love Themes for the Wilderness</i> , and Shamim Sarif’s <i>The World Unseen</i>	274
Chapter 9: Writing in the Interzone: A Queer Postcolonial Reading of Barbara Adair’s <i>In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot</i>	322
Chapter 10: Conclusion: Bisexuality in the South African Imaginary	366
Bibliography	378

Acknowledgements

My supervisor, Professor Johan Jacobs, has been instrumental in my completing this thesis. I thank him for having spurred my thinking with salient questions, for his expertise and for his editorial acumen. I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Thuthuka Programme of the National Research Foundation (NRF), and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which have provided funding for this project. I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to travel to Manhattan, Kansas, to present a paper at the “Sex and the Body Politic” conference in 2004, and to London to attend the “Queer Matters” conference later that year. I thank Professor Michael Chapman for providing funds from his NRF “Postcolonialism: A South/African Perspective” project for me to travel to the “Urban Generations: Postcolonial Cities” conference in Rabat, Morocco, in 2004, and to Dr David Richards of the Ferguson Centre for African and Asian Studies at the Open University, UK, for inviting me to present a paper at the “Self and Subject: African and Asian Perspectives” conference in Edinburgh in 2005.

Family, friends and colleagues have given generous support. Bruce, Connor, Caitlin, Melissa and Blake Stobie have been models of understanding, kindness and encouragement through the process of finishing this work. I would also like to pay tribute to the memory of my parents, Walter Frederick Cheek and Ethel Cheek. I am deeply indebted to Joan Gallagher, Dr Julie Parle and Ann Tohill, and I remember with warm affection friends and colleagues Marie Dyer and Pat Merrett. I am thankful for the friendship and helpful critical comments of the Women’s Narrative Group. I appreciate the discussions with and help provided by colleagues and ex-colleagues: Dr Ashraf Jamal, Dr Catherine Woeber, Dr Jill Arnott, Professor Anton van der

Hoven, Professor Liz Gunner, Professor David Attwell, Dr Kai Easton, Mike Lambert, Professor Duncan Brown, Professor Jenny Clarence-Fincham, Dr Stefan Helgesson, Dr Andries Visagie, Professor Adrian Koopman, Professor Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, Professor Colin Gardner and Bambi Ogram. Assistance has also been provided by Sean Rogers, Karen Bruce and Jean Rossmann. Scholars of bisexuality to whom I am indebted are Dr Clare Hemmings, Dr Jo Eadie, Bobbie Petford, Dr Linda D. Wayne, Dr Paula Pratt and Bernedette Muthien. Authors who were helpful include Barbara Adair, Stephen Gray and Lola Watter. The staff at the National English Literary Museum, especially the director, Dr Malcolm Hacksley, and Cecilia Blight, have been most obliging. To all I extend my heartfelt thanks.

Abstract

This thesis examines the middle ground between dual strands of sexuality/gender and race/ethnicity, which I refer to metaphorically as a fluid space of possibility between the rainbows of the pride flag, which celebrates sexual diversity, and the image of the rainbow nation, which celebrates multiculturalism. I discuss ways in which lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues and rights have been discursively treated in the West as well as Africa, most particularly South Africa. I note that a substantial number of novels which appeared after 1994 and have a South African setting or were authored by South Africans, employ the trope of bisexuality. This new preoccupation with bisexuality is parallel to attitudes towards change, the future, and progressive politics, including gender politics. Representations of bisexuality in each of the texts I examine vary; however, together they form a crucial cartography of a liberalization of the imagination in post-apartheid South Africa: a space of anxiety and hope, a space particularly revealing the ongoing evolution of a national identity, and newly part of a global community. Reading bisexuality accurately contributes to the disruption of binaries and illumination of the interstitial associated with the post-apartheid moment in general, and contemporary South African literature and literary criticism in particular. This method of reading, which I call “biopia,” allows for a fresh understanding of sexuality, gender, race, citizenship and authority.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Overview

In medieval folklore a person might change sex by passing under a rainbow.
Cassell's Encyclopedia of Queer Myth (1997: 278)

[T]he connotation/denotation of the word that's being used now politically by Native Americans is that a rainbow is a way many different kinds of people communicate with each other so there's not a race separatism. It's Native Americans' vision of the red, white, black and yellow communicating and making alliances. [...] Jesse Jackson and company have also borrowed the Native Americans' metaphor of the rainbow bridge, but I don't know if groups in other countries have used that kind of concept. Native Americans claim they were the keepers of the Earth, the ones who would facilitate this rich multialliance, multibridging [...]

I also see lesbian and gay people as exemplars of [...] the rainbow bridge, because we exist in all different cultures. Because we're persecuted we tend to look after each other so that you have more of an interracial mixture among gays than you do among the general population.

Gloria Anzaldúa (2000: 133-4)

Why is there gender? Why do we insist that there's this? The only thing it comes down to is that it gives roughly half the people the chance to be oppressive to roughly the other half. That's the only reason I can see that we keep it in place. There's always an "other" for half the people to oppress. And if it were all fluid, if it were kind of rainbowy kinds of genders, who could oppress whom? Everybody would be an "other."

Kate Bornstein (1990: 49)

As the sub-title of this dissertation suggests, the purpose of this study is to analyse a representative selection drawn from a corpus of at least sixteen novels exploring the trope of bisexuality, which appeared, seemingly out of the blue, after South Africa's 1994 political watershed. In this chapter I will be theorizing the subject broadly, and providing a cultural grounding of various concepts. A link will be made between individual narratives and the national narrative against a global backdrop of discussion around issues of sexuality, a concept which is ostensibly private but always subject to economies of power. The metaphoric title of this dissertation, "Somewhere

in the Double Rainbow,” refers to an imaginary, fluid space of possibility between a primary and secondary rainbow. The primary bow is that of sexuality, particularly bisexuality, and gender, epitomized by the rainbow-coloured Pride flag, celebrating sexual diversity. The secondary bow is the ideal of the rainbow nation, the term used in South Africa to denote racial and ethnic diversity, and equality in the body politic. This usage of “rainbow nation” is associated in this country with Constitutional Court judge Albie Sachs and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, but, as my epigraph from Gloria Anzaldúa makes clear, the term can be traced back through Jesse Jackson to Native American usage. It thus has a global, as well as national, significance.

This metaphoric, curved, interstitial space is a place where images are refracted, a place which represents liminality, diversity, respect and process. In this space I wish to set into motion a dialectic between queerness, particularly bisexuality, and gender, on the one hand, and race and ethnicity, on the other. Although in this in-between space there are many conceptual overlaps, I will tease out some implications associated with each of my “rainbows,” beginning with the one which encompasses queer, bisexuality and gender. Later I will particularize this discussion by applying some insights to the African, and more particularly the South African, situation, thereby focusing on the “rainbow nation.”

I am using the term “queer” fairly flexibly, to imply an umbrella of subcultures opposed to heteronormativity. In its current usage, dating back over the last fifteen years or so, the term “queer” is intended “to mark a certain critical distance” from the terms “lesbian” and “gay,” and a desire to “transgress and transcend them – or at the very least problematize them” (de Lauretis 1991: v). This theory began with an

awareness of historical rifts of sexism and racism within lesbian and gay communities, and it has been claimed that it has the potential to heal these historical rifts (v). The major queer theorists, including Judith Butler (1990), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990) and Michael Warner (1993), base their work on intertwined sources ranging from French poststructuralism (especially Foucault), critical feminism and critical literary studies. Queer theory resists binarisms of gender and sexuality, such as male/female, masculine/feminine, and heterosexual/homosexual. It is not based on identity politics or an ethnic model, as gay and lesbian studies are, nor is it liberationist. It maintains that all identities, including sexual identities, are constructed relationally:

In Foucauldian fashion, all identity categories are deemed cultural and discursive fabrications, regulatory ideals. In other words, identity categories are seen to be falsely unifying, totalizing, exclusionary, and normative constructions that serve to deny ambiguity, contradiction, and difference. Queer, in this context, seeks to expose, affirm, and celebrate what identities are forced to deny. It does this in order to enact a profound destabilization of identity as a social organizing principle. (Angelides 2001: 165)

Instead of the fixities of identity politics, queer theory posits fluid spaces of possibility. Queer strategy attempts to disrupt dominant discourses by means of performativity, the performance of self-conscious, stylized acts which expose the social structuring of gender and sexuality, and hold out the possibility of change and diversity. Queer theory aims to be transgressive, and it makes possible alternative views of representation from the “regimes of the normal” (Warner 1993: xxvi) offered, for instance, in the media and the arts. These alternative readings can disrupt heteronormative discourse. By highlighting distinctions between various cultures or subcultures, queer theory has the potential to be inclusive of race, ethnicity and

sexuality. Queer theory offers the possibility of coalition politics. One possibility, for instance, is for an investigation into areas of common concern between feminist and queer theories (Martin 1994: 101). By providing a platform for the voices of the “non-normative,” in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, body, sexuality and sexual practices, queer theory seems to offer both inclusiveness and the possibility of disrupting a range of normalizing practices.

Complementing queer theory, queer activism arose in the early 1990s, and was exemplified by the suggestively named Queer Nation, based in the United States. This movement employed sixties-style countercultural techniques updated by postmodernist “retro-nostalgia” (Berlant and Freeman 1993: 196), and combined identification with postcolonial nationalisms alongside a political fervour typical of the United States. Queer Nation’s tactics were “to cross borders, to occupy spaces, and to mime the privileges of normality – in short, to simulate ‘the national’ with a camp inflection” (196).

The idealized vision at the heart of queer theory has, however, been contested by critics who point out that race is not given the attention which was initially envisaged. However, to take one example which attempts to remedy this omission, Siobhan B. Somerville’s *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (2000) among other things connects Harlem Renaissance writer Jean Toomer’s refusal to accept available race categories with queer theory’s anti-normativity.

A number of texts have been published which also engage critically with concepts of queer, race, sexual citizenship and nation. One of these is *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities*, edited by David Bell and Gill Valentine (1995). In this volume Clare Hemmings suggests that the bisexual offers a prime instance of a “*subject of dislocation* that is able to recognise other such subjects [...] highlighting the difficulties of existing structures” through the process of writing (1995: 52). A second chapter of particular interest in this volume is an article by Glen Elder, “Of Moffies, Kaffirs and Perverts: Male Homosexuality and the Discourse of Moral Order in the Apartheid State” (1995: 56-65). Elder points out that the regulation of sexuality was a central mechanism of the apartheid government, applied differently with regard to black male and white male subjects. He further notes the privileged position of gay white men in shaping the post-apartheid discourse of sexuality, commenting pertinently that much of this discussion is embedded in essentialist Western frameworks. In a special issue of the journal *Sexualities*, entitled *Stretching Queer Boundaries: Queer Method and Practice for the 21st Century* (Hemmings 1999), Sasho A. Lambevski offers a “queer experiential ethnography” of sexual relations between Macedonian and Albanian men (399). In this article, “Suck My Nation – Masculinity, Ethnicity and the Politics of (Homo)Sex,” he analyses the confluence of hegemonic masculinity, heterosexism, misogyny, homophobia, nationalism and desire in producing rigidly scripted, violent and unhappy relations between sexual partners from different ethnic groupings.

Queer Diasporas, edited by Cindy Patton and Benigno Sánchez-Eppler (2000). *Territories of Desire: Refiguring Contemporary Boundaries*, edited by David Alderson and Linda Anderson (2000), and *Postcolonial and Queer Theories:*

Intersections and Essays, edited by John C. Hawley (2001), all offer a range of specifically sited analyses of queer behaviours or textual representations. Finally, in *The Globalization of Sexuality* Jon Binnie argues that “[t]he relationship between nationalism and sexuality remains relatively under-theorized (2004: 11). He points out that an important project is to examine the changes within nationalisms, and the configuration of sexuality within these transformations. Queer globalization is a racialized, classed, and gendered phenomenon, largely driven by “the American-centrism of lesbian and gay studies” (147-8). The implications of Binnie’s work, which is disappointingly terse, would seem to be an imperative to investigate the critical, simultaneously specific and global subjecthood of sexual dissidents in terms both of their own national contexts and the wider global discourse.

In their introduction to *Queer Diasporas* Patton and Sánchez-Eppler explain this enabling queer methodology in the following terms:

Now, identity is viewed as strategic, rather than essential, contingent on, reproduced, decaying, co-opted, in relation to material and discursive factors that, especially in the context of sexualities, are always a complex lamination of local onto global onto local. Sexuality is always intimately and immediately felt, but publicly and internationally described and mediated. Sexuality is not only not essence, not timeless, it is also not fixed in place; sexuality is on the move. (2000: 2)

In practice, however, there still remains a gap between this ideal and the positionality of specific authors, journals and materials selected for analysis. Two articles dealing with Southern Africa which were published in the moment of interest in the intersection of sexuality and transnationalism which occurred around the turn of the twenty-first century, Neville Hoad’s “Between the White Man’s Burden and the

White Man's Disease: Tracking Lesbian and Gay Human Rights in Southern Africa" (1999) and Ian Barnard's "The United States in South Africa: (Post)Colonial Queer Theory" (2001) reveal tensions between their ostensible purpose and aspects of their inscription. A telling strain is visible between Hoad's sub-title, with its formulaic reference to "lesbian and gay human rights," and his metaphoric title, with its reiterated reference to "the white man," carrier of colonial burden and disease. This agency is intended to echo ironically, yet within Hoad's article no space is allocated to women as agents; almost without exception, the references are to male subjects, objects or commentators. The reference to "lesbian human rights" is thus a hollow one. Further, the title of the journal in which this article appears is *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. Within the specificity of the "complex lamination of local onto global onto local" referred to by Patton and Sánchez-Eppler (2002: 2), Hoad's article enacts a sleight-of-hand in which the unexpanded "Q," suggesting "queer," of the journal's title disappears, to be replaced by a furtive extrapolation of gay concerns, still with the white male as norm, to appear under the rubric of "lesbian and gay." In Barnard's article, again the tendency to pour the old wine of the relatively hegemonic gay white male into the new bottle of representative queer subject can be seen in the choice of subject-matter under scrutiny: in this case, two gay male porn videos. In both Hoad's and Barnard's articles, the unexamined assumptions behind the selection of material and its lack of representativity with regard to the ideal breadth of scope of the theoretical paradigm used calls into question the validity of the authors' representations of a queer South/ern Africa.

A further pertinent critique of queer theory is that certain sectors subsumed under the queer umbrella, namely bisexuals and transsexuals – who in many ways exemplify the

disruption of narratives of sex, gender and sexuality – suffer erasure or stigmatization in queer theory (Hemmings 2002: 10, 111). Queer theorist Diana Fuss, for instance, refers in passing to the “rigid bipolar logic” of the “heterosexual/homosexual opposition” which consolidates itself by assimilating “bisexuality, transvestism, transsexualism” (1991: 2). Although she concedes an outsider status to these practices, she does not explore their signifying potential, either collectively or individually. Writing of transgender, Susan Stryker comments that what she calls “‘queer’ utopianism” could be unhelpful as a result of its “erasure of specificity” and its “moralizing teleology” (cited in Hall 2003: 96). Stephen Angelides cites Barbara Johnson’s comment, “Any discourse that is based on the questioning of boundary lines must never stop questioning its own” (2001: 172) in order to support his own critique of queer theory’s inexplicable elision of bisexuality despite its central position in constructing the hetero-/homosexual difference. For Angelides, bisexuality has simultaneously bolstered and disrupted binary borders (175).

While queer theory potentially offers useful insights, these need to be applied critically. Taking one of the nominally included but structurally repressed signifiers of queer theory, that of bisexuality, as a central focus for my theorizing on sexuality enables me to offer an oblique criticism of contradictions within queer theory, and to explore the potential of theorizing on bisexuality as it has developed internationally.

Bisexuality, as I use the term, accords with Christopher James’s definition: “the sexual or intensely emotional, although not necessarily concurrent or equal, attraction of an individual to members of more than one gender” (1996: 218). Bisexual identity and behaviour may be distinct from one another: in particular, bisexual behaviour

may not be defined as such. Bisexuality implies, however, intimate other-directed sexual desires, acts, connections and behaviours, some of which may be socially approved, while others may be prohibited.

Bisexuality presents difficulties with regard to visibility, as in a dyad-validating society a bisexual may be gauged as either lesbian/gay or heterosexual, depending on her/his current partner. Bisexuality thus raises questions with regard to temporal flux, and determining the most appropriate terms to apply to an individual's sexual attractions and behaviour may often best be done by examining the life history or narrative as a whole. As Ronald C. Fox discusses, various typologies have been proposed for bisexuality, including such qualifiers as transitional (representing a stage between heterosexual and gay or lesbian), historical (in an individual's past), sequential (one partner at a time, but with different sexes), concurrent (simultaneous relationships with men and women), married, ritual (as in Melanesia), equal (where gender is not a criterion for partner selection), "Latin" (where a male taking an active role in anal intercourse with another man is held to be heterosexual), experimental, secondary (where sex segregation occurs) and technical (as part of sex work). These typologies highlight the variants possible, in terms of visibility and temporality, amongst other factors, under the rubric of the term (1996: 22-3). Other terms, such as MSM (men who have sex with men) or WSW (women who have sex with women), are sometimes used of people who display some of the behaviours referred to above. Despite the shortcomings of the word "bisexuality," however, and the varied behaviours which it encompasses, I employ this term throughout this text, although it should not be understood as implying a concrete identity, but should be read provisionally and contingently.

In the West, the middle ground represented by bisexuality is often figured by stereotypes such as “AC/DC,” “fence-sitting,” “batting for both teams” or “switch-hitting,” all of which terms, in addition to being derogatory, presuppose a binary system and betray the anxiety evoked when this system is called into question. Marjorie Garber uses a Freudian basis to argue rather sweepingly that “bisexuality is that upon the repression of which society depends for its laws, codes, boundaries, social organization – everything that defines ‘civilization’ as we know it” (1996 [1995]: 206). Although Western culture has problems with repressing or expressing bisexuality, other cultures, for instance in Melanesia, Australia, China, Japan and Africa, incorporate into their sexual schemata same-sex erotic activity prior to or at the same time as heterosexual marriage (Fox 1996: 9-13).

Where the term “bisexuality” is highlighted in a queer context, there may be a strain between the specificity implying a particular fixed bisexual identity, and the fluidity of the concept “queer.” Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick neatly expressed this tension in a discussion on the Queer Studies Listserv, pointing to an investigation, not of what bisexuality *is*, but what it *does*:

“What’s the relation of bisexual to gay/lesbian?” would be one important question, but “What’s the relation of bisexual to queer?” would be a different one, also important. And bisexuality, as a political concept, could function to break boundaries in the first context and yet to preserve them in the second. (1994a)

Bearing in mind the tendency within queer theorizing to privilege other forms of interstitiality such as drag (see Butler 1990) this crispness may seem surprising – even

biased. However, the point is valid that there is a strain between narrowly defined identity politics and a concept which eschews the notion of identity. Also valid is the point that expanding the binary categorization to contain a third element risks implying that this tripartite scheme of hetero-/bi-/homosexual neatly wraps up all the possibilities.

There are ways of answering Sedgwick's concerns. First, her view of bisexuality here is a narrowly focussed view of the term as a self-conscious form of identity politics rather than the broader (and, arguably, queerer) sense in which I am using the term. Second, it needs to be emphasized that introducing the third element of bisexuality is not intended as a strategy of completion, but of amplification and clarification, and that other forms of viewing and categorizing sexuality rather than in terms of gender of object-choice are respected. Third, Gayatri Spivak in another context, that of deconstruction, refers to the useful notion of strategic essentialism (1988: 205). She suggests, "since one cannot not be an essentialist, why not look at the ways in which one is essentialist, carve out a representative essentialist position and then do politics according to the old rules whilst remembering the dangers in this?" (1990: 45). In queer theory an unacknowledged slippage often occurs between the broader concept of queer and the prior, and less inclusive, categorizations of gay and lesbian. In a context which customarily uses identity frameworks it is utopian to dispense completely with these; however, these frameworks can be used self-consciously, rather than accidentally or cynically. Using Spivak's formulation of strategic essentialism it is possible to oscillate between the concepts of queer and an identity signifier as necessary, while striving to be aware of the critical tension between the two terms. For Spivak, instead of becoming overly fixated on purist theory one should

gauge theory in the light of practice (1991). With regard to this interplay between queer and more specific terms under its rubric, Annamarie Jagose comments, "Instead of theorizing queer in terms of its opposition to identity politics, it is more accurate to represent it as ceaselessly interrogating both the preconditions of identity and its effects. Queer is not outside the magnetic field of identity" (1996: 131-2).

Leading from this, as Frann Michel points out, there is an advantage in preserving the terms "queer" and "bisexual," amongst others:

As long as gender retains its salience as a structuring of power, there is a use for terms that recognize the extant binary constructions of gender. Where the term "queer" displaces the centrality of gender as an axis of sexual object choice, "bisexual" calls attention to both sexuality and gender. (1996: 57)

In addition, Linda D. Wayne points to the usefulness of flexibility, both in choice of category for discussion and within the concept of bisexuality itself, which she terms "a notion in flux [...], a topic-in-process." She comments:

treating bisexuality as an open subject of academic inquiry help[s] us to get past the assumptions and bias that arise out of the heteronormative paradigm so as to understand bi as a particular instance of agency and negotiation, rather than an identity or orientation. (2002: 115)

Jo Eadie usefully connects the concept of hybridity to bisexuality, arguing that contemporary bisexual politics involves a hybrid form of lesbian, gay and heterosexual culture and identity. For Eadie,

the hybrid acknowledges the part that the past has played in constituting new cultures and identities, and then displaces the dominant (and dominating)

culture's attempt to enshrine itself in 'an eternity produced by self-generation', by supplementing it and thereby rewriting the future. (1993: 159)

Bisexuality is one form of hybridity among others within the sex/gender/sexuality matrix which also entail this process of engaging creatively with older, established usages and re-shaping them for the contemporary *Zeitgeist* in a postmodern context. Examples of such biologies, queer practices, orientations or preferences include intersex, androgyny, cross-dressing, drag, transgender, gender blending, genderfuck and genderqueer, all of which could fall under the umbrella of queer. Let me examine each of these in turn in order to show similarities, overlaps and differences between them.

Intersex (formerly called hermaphroditism) is a biological condition which occurs when genital, reproductive tract or chromosomal differences do not conform to medically mediated norms of sexual binarism, thus throwing established patterns of sex and gender into disarray. In Western societies infants born with such anomalies are routinely subjected to surgical procedures to "normalize" them. Recently intersex activists have pointed out the difficulties and lack of informed choice historically involved in such interventions, and have drawn comparisons with these procedures and female genital mutilation (in Eadie 2004: 107). Activists point out the arbitrary nature of the binary system to which they have unwillingly and unhappily been forced to conform, and question its validity. The cruel conflict between the normalizing imperatives of medical science and genetic multiplicity are movingly portrayed by Jeffrey Eugenides in his novel *Middlesex* (2002), through the intersexed character Calliope's adolescent metamorphosis into Cal, who embodies the complexities which are human, and cannot be reduced to a simple either/or scheme. In South Africa a

two-part documentary entitled “The Third Sex” appeared on SABC 3 in November 2003 exploring the position of the intersexed in society through their own narratives and expert opinion (Magardie).

Androgyny refers to the combination of masculinity and femininity in appearance or gender performativity. During the period of second-wave feminism Carolyn Heilbrun (1982 [1974]) and Gayle Rubin, amongst others, suggested the liberatory use of androgyny in transgressing “obligatory sexualities and sex roles” (Rubin 1975: 204), and Sandra Bem devised the Bem Sex-Role Inventory which called into question the traditional rigid polarization in psychology by testing for two dimensions of masculine and feminine, which allowed respondents to be ranked as strong in both categories or low on both, thus making space for the concept of androgyny in specific situational contexts (Kramarae and Treichler 1985: 49). Proponents of the concept of androgyny argue that it may mark an entry into the realm of unrecognizability and instability, demonstrating “a political refusal to take up a place in the hierarchies of gender” (in Eadie 2004: 81). After initial enthusiasm, a hostility to the notion of androgyny grew among various second wave feminists such as Adrienne Rich and Mary Daly, who were of the opinion that androgyny reinforced rather than challenged hegemonic binaries of gender. Rich, for instance, portrays her disillusionment with the concept in her poem “Natural Resources,” showing how she views it as the betrayal of a sacred trust:

There are words I cannot choose again:
humanism androgyny

Such words have no shame in them, no diffidence
 before the raging stoic grandmothers:

their glint is too shallow, like a dye
that does not permeate

the fibers of actual life
as we live it, now.

(1977: 66)

Isabel Knight expands on this viewpoint: “The trouble with [gender-merged androgyny] [...] is that the very constructs ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ are intrinsic to patriarchal ideology [...]; they are not, in short, two cleanly split halves of a whole person waiting to be reunited.[...] Merger does not correct the distortion” (1981: 30).

During the '90s the academic emphasis on androgyny shifted to a consideration of various indigenous groups whose social structures included alternatives to Western models of sexual dimorphism, such as “*berdache*” (the colonialist term) or two-spirit people, who adopt genders which differ from their biological sex, with social sanction, and in some cases the enhanced status of shaman. Mamphela Ramphele makes brief mention of the practice of female husbands in South Africa (1996: 175 [1995]), and the film *Everything Must Come to Light* (Njinge 2000) draws a connection between sangomas and dissonance between sex and gender roles.

Cross-dressing involves adopting the clothes and trappings of another gender, and may have an erotic component. It usually involves men dressing as women, and is often clandestine as a result of social stigma. In *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* Marjorie Garber argues that “one of the most consistent and effective functions of the transvestite in culture is to indicate the place of what I call ‘category crisis,’ disrupting and calling attention to cultural, social, or aesthetic dissonances.” In elaborating on the concept “category crisis” Garber glosses it as “a failure of

definitional distinction, a borderline that becomes permeable, that permits of border crossings from one (apparently distinct) category to another: black/white, Jew/Christian, noble/bourgeois, master/servant, master/slave” (1992: 16). Garber’s notion of category crisis could equally well be applied to each of the terms discussed above: bisexuality, intersex and androgyny, as well as the terms still to be touched on: drag, transgender, gender blending, genderfuck and genderqueer.

Drag has a long history of camp, theatrical female impersonation, but is constantly being reinvented. As Butler notes, “in imitating gender, Drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself” (1990: 31). Drag may be transgressive, but it may equally be offensively misogynistic. The revived form of male impersonation by drag kings has breathed fresh life into the practice of drag. Exponents such as Dréd (Mildred Gerestant), who appeared in *Venus Boyz*, an acclaimed film about gender dissonance, performativity, subversion and the creation of intermediate sexual identities (Bauer 2001), and North Carolina’s drag king troupe, The Cuntry Kings, who gave a public performance as part of the Queer Matters conference in London in May 2004, thoughtfully yet humorously unsettle hegemonic constructions of gender, sexuality and race. They are aware of the intersectionality of oppressions and the power of the erotic, and practise drag as a form of social activism. Yet “[d]rag king performances are neither essentially rebellious and inherently transgressive, neither are they simply a harmless way to dress up the feminine in new garb. [...] Above all, they are contradictory, confusing – and intentionally so” (Volcano and Halberstam 1999: 41). The effect of the performance relies on exposing “what is already perverse in the normal” (152).

Transgender as the word is currently used is an umbrella term referring to a broad group of people who do not subscribe to traditional binarist gender orthodoxies. Such individuals include the categories of self-identified transsexuals, transvestites, intersex, androgynous, transwomen, transmen, butch lesbians, drag kings and drag queens. Transgender aims to destabilize gender through performativity (in Eadie 2004: 231). The prefix “trans-” may imply three meanings: change from one state to another, fluid movement between two genders, and, most radically, a transcendence of the very notion of gender (in Eadie 2004: 230). The term transsexual is used for individuals who perceive a mismatch between their biological and psychological sex. While some individuals use the term transsexual to describe themselves, concern has been expressed that the word carries connotations of medicalization and pathology (234).

Gender blending aims to move beyond these connotations, and refers to the mixing of received gender traits. The word encompasses transsexuality, transgender, transvestitism and androgyny. Gender blending implies a radical impulse to investigate cross-gendering in its socially constructed context (80). Genderfuck refers to strategies of implementing queer theory ideas of performatively deconstructing and transgressing gender categories by sexual expression and the adoption of dissonant identities (82), such as “moffie girl,” a term I heard used as a self-identity at a gender conference in Pietermaritzburg in 1995. Genderqueer is a recent term, mainly used by young people, to refer to a mixing of gender identity and sexuality, resulting in fractured and plastic identities which defy categorization (83).

In the West at present there is a variety of debates and activities around disrupting binary systems of sex/gender/sexuality, and at the heart of these debates the concept of queer has developed “as a rhetorical term, an explicit revalorization of that which has been hitherto denigrated, medicalized, and pathologized by Western regimes of sexuality” (Angelides 2001: 164). There are certain consonances and overlaps between certain terms and concepts within the umbrella of queer, each of which may have the potential for progressive shifts in certain commentators’ eyes, but has also been critiqued by others. In South Africa some ten years after democracy some of these debates are occurring here, adapted to local circumstances. Of all of the terms mentioned above, the concept which has occurred most frequently in a variety of texts and contexts in post-1994 South Africa is bisexuality, which therefore usefully represents a potentially radical sexuality which engages provocatively with queer theory.

It is crucially important to apply theory to specifically grounded material conditions.

As Arlene Stein and Ken Plummer trenchantly comment:

Queer theorists [...] appreciate the extent to which the texts of literature and mass culture shape sexuality, but their weakness is that they rarely, if ever, move beyond the text. There is a dangerous tendency for the new queer theorists to ignore “real” queer life as it is materially experienced across the world, while they play with the free-floating signifiers of texts. (Quoted in Halberstam 1998: 12)

Instead of emphasizing the split which is posited here between the textual and the actual, I want to draw attention to the way in which these comments usefully point to the necessity to foreground both aspects of queer, the material and the textual, in carefully particularized social situations. Judith Halberstam voices the opinion that

“[a] queer methodology, in a way, is a scavenger methodology that uses different methods to collect and produce information on subjects who have been deliberately or accidentally excluded from traditional studies of human behavior” (13). In like vein, although this thesis is primarily a literary analysis it also contains elements of cultural studies, and uses a modified, specific version of queer methodology to bring under the spotlight a range of lives and texts dealing with bisexual issues, which might otherwise have remained in the umbra of disconnectedness.

Bisexuality in this study is a term within sexuality debates which is not alone in throwing into focus the shortcomings of current hegemonic ideas concerning sexuality and gender, but which has inspired a significant number of texts internationally, and now, in the fertile matrix of the double rainbow, is doing so in South Africa. To turn from the image of the Pride flag of rainbow colours, celebrating sexual/gender diversity, which is the first of the rainbows in my metaphor of the double rainbow, towards the second rainbow of the rainbow nation embracing a variety of races and ethnicities, my focus now is to apply international insights on bisexuality to the African continent, and specifically South Africa. The transition to democracy in this country, while peaceful, certainly entailed a category crisis which mirrors in political terms the destabilizations referred to by Garber in terms of sex and gender border-crossings.

In a continent which has a number of leaders claiming that behaviour which is not heterosexual is a heinous Western import, it is necessary to pay particular attention to homophobia, resistance to oppression, and practices and identities as they occur in specific cultural contexts. Despite the claims of some politicians, sexual expression in

Africa is not purely heterosexual, as is clearly revealed in the anthropological text *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities* (Murray and Roscoe 1998), which documents a host of same-sex behaviours throughout the continent. This text is unsatisfactory in terms of its over-ambitious scope, incorporating texts ranging in time from the eighteenth century to the end of the twentieth century, and treating complex practices involving gender, sexuality, age and status in some 50 societies, with inadequate editorial comment from Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe, whose previous ethnographic work was not conducted in Africa. In particular, for my purposes, the elision of the concept of bisexuality is problematic, as I shall discuss in more detail later. However, the text does detail same-sex practices between children, adults, and across age boundaries, revealing that in some cases societies accepted and named such patterns, while in other cases same-sex behaviour was stigmatized; however, speaking about such practices may be a greater taboo than performing them. Marc Epprecht focuses more specifically on the southern region in his *Hungochani: The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa*; the word “*hungochani*” means “homosexuality” in chiShona, the major indigenous language of Zimbabwe (2004: 3). Epprecht examines the organization of gender and sexuality in traditional societies in Zimbabwe; “mine marriages” in the Johannesburg region between the 1880s and the 1910s; sex in male and female prisons; emerging sexualities in early colonial Zimbabwe; colonial roots of homophobia; the filtering of this homophobia into mainstream African opinion, and the role of African nationalist struggles in curtailing same-sex expression within an increasingly heteronormative worldview. It is plain from the evidence presented in both books that variant African sexuality does not easily slot into the categories “gay” and “lesbian” as used in the West. Because of the significant social role which

procreation plays in African societies, many individuals in a range of contexts marry and have children, and also engage in same-sex sexual behaviour. The term “bisexual behaviour” may be applied to these practices, as a convenient shorthand, without implying a widespread acceptance of the term “bisexuality” with regard to behaviour or identity.

Experiences and discourses around queer differ markedly according to context. South Africa is a useful site for entering into discussions of minority sexualities, because of the relative freedom offered by the Constitution and the current debates around human rights issues, sexuality and ethical accountability. South Africa occupies a complex position in Africa: it is both of the continent, and an exceptionally modernized anomaly. It thus offers a fertile both/and, rather than either/or, position from which to theorize, and it serves as a matrix for the creation of narratives which seek alternatives from the binary structures associated with apartheid, illustrated most egregiously in the “white/non-white” dichotomy, but also imposed along lines of gender and sexuality.

During the apartheid era, for various reasons, such as censorship imposed on themes of transgressive sexuality by the Publications Board up until the late 1980s, State-endorsed homophobia, the overdetermination of politics as a theme within South African fiction and a tendency to downplay issues of sexuality and gender, relatively little prose which challenged mainstream values was published. A number of authors, however, such as Koos Prinsloo, Marlies Joubert, Damon Galgut, Joan Hambidge and Jeni Couzyn, writing prose and poetry in English and Afrikaans, did thematize gay

and lesbian issues; almost uniquely, Stephen Gray represented gay and bisexual characters.

In Afrikaans, same-sex desire is first referred to in the poetry of I. D. du Plessis, published in 1937, and in a short story of his, “Die Redder,” published in 1946 (cited in De Waal 1995: 232-3, 245). These groundbreaking, if oblique, references, along with the overt sexual content in the experimental work of the Sestigters, prepared the way for the publication of works such as Jeanne Goosen’s *Om ’n Mens na te Boots* (1975), a novella containing gender-neutral characters, and four prose texts exploring sexual relationships between women: Marlise Joubert’s *Klipkus* (1978), Emma Huisman’s *Berigte van Weerstand* (1990) and *Requiem op Ys* (1992), and Marzanne Leroux-Van der Boon’s *Klaprose teen die Wind* (1992), as well as Joan Hambidge’s collection of poetry celebrating lesbian desire, *Die Verlore Simbool* (1991). Hennie Aucamp’s anthology of Afrikaans writing, *Wisselstroom* (1990), contains a range of writing on homosexual themes by gay and heterosexual writers. Gay sexuality is explored in other texts, such as the poetry of Johann de Lange, specifically in the explicit homoerotic collection *Nagsweet* (1991), in Karel Schoeman’s *Afskeid en Vertrek* (1990), and in Koos Prinsloo’s short stories and novels, including *Jonkmanskas* (1982), *Die Hemel Help Ons* (1988), and *Slagplaas* (1993), which all explore issues of agonized male subjectivity, sexuality, secrecy, confession and scandal.

Writing in English, Damon Galgut handles themes of masculinity, patriarchy, control and transgression, including gay sex, in *A Sinless Season* (1982) and *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* (1991). Stephen Gray’s novels, *John Ross: The True Story* (1987).

Time of Our Darkness (1988), *Born of Man* (1989), and *War Child* (1991b), all explore complex issues of sexual desire, and in some cases bisexuality, as do his short stories from the apartheid era, “The Building Site” (1991a) and “His Name” (1992). Jeni Couzyn’s poetry in the collections, *Christmas in Africa* (1975) and *House of Change* (1978), thematizes lesbian desire.

In 1989, Albie Sachs, in his “Preparing Ourselves for Freedom” paper, urged a shift from the “culture is a weapon of struggle” model to an exploration of personal and intimate themes (1990: 19-29). This call marked one moment in the shift to the personal domain which has enabled an increasing freedom to explore minority sexualities: homosexuality and bisexuality. Fascinatingly, although very little public debate around the issue of bisexuality occurs in South Africa, an efflorescence of creative writing on the issue of bisexuality has occurred since 1994. The transition to democracy, which Homi Bhabha refers to as the “‘hybrid’ moment of political change” when people become “free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities in a discontinuous intertextual temporality of cultural difference” (1988: 13, 22), has allowed the exploration in writing of complex subject positions, one of which is bisexuality. A particularly pertinent example is this poem by Durban poet and lover of the arts, Jillian Hamilton, which recently appeared in *The English Academy Review*:

Coming Out

with time
has come a deviation
from the straight

and the narrow

that which was once
black or white

is now richly rainbowed
 almost magical
 in its diversity
 and limitlessness

as the rainbow
 curves
 i swerve to round
 upon myself

some might say err

and find my need is other
 inclined now toward the distaff
 the more unusual case
 of like attracting like
 (2001: 188-9)

Temporality, both in personal and national narratives, is alluded to here: as the binary oppositions of the “black or white” past have given way to the multiple hues of the rainbow (nation), so has a shift occurred in desire. Heteronormative structures and potential social disapproval are acknowledged, but disrupted by spatial isolation. The proverbial poles of “straight and narrow” are dislodged, as rigid linearity is replaced by curvature and movement. The possibility of social judgment that the persona “err[s]” is contained both visually and by being syntactically displaced from the logical position where it should occur, after “i swerve,” momentarily delaying but not preventing the surprised, amused and delighted recognition of a shift towards desire for “the distaff.” The rainbow imagery functions to bestow colour, vaulting movement and its traditional benison of hope on the intertwined personal and national narratives.

The poem can be read to suggest bisexuality obviously enough through its acknowledgement of a heterosexual past, but also by virtue of its punning use of “deviation,” which implies a connection to previous behaviour rather than a complete

rupture from it. In addition, the emphasis on process, movement, expansion and “limitlessness” imply an unbounded identity. This impression is reinforced by the refusal to use any self-labels, except the jocularly acknowledged attraction to women. The poem stresses openness and fluidity, and benefits most from a similar reading.

Jillian Hamilton’s poem is but one example of an exploration of the theme of bisexuality. A surprising number of books published after 1994, in the context of a more fluid, less polarized, newly democratic society, also highlight this issue. They focus on the axes of sexuality and race from a perspective of hybridity. Along with relatively unknown authors, such well-known figures as Nobel prizewinners J. M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer have included mention of bisexuality in their writing, and Coetzee refers briefly to a homosexual encounter in his autobiographical text, *Youth* (2002: 78-9). Race, ethnicity, gender, and a variety of sexual behaviours are simultaneously subjected to scrutiny in these recent novels. Gordimer has been a barometer of change as she has shifted from her opinions, expressed during the heyday of apartheid, that race must be privileged over gender, and that politics is character in South Africa, to portrayal of a lesbian character in *None to Accompany Me* (1994), and gay and bisexual characters in *The House Gun* (1998).

The representations of bisexuality and the other vectors of subjectivity differ markedly from text to text. However, they represent a significant body of work which represents a shift in writing style and subject-matter, and which calls for a responsive, sympathetic and appropriate strategy of reading, and a reconceptualization of the South African novel as a result, continuing the work begun by Johan Jacobs, who has applied the notion of category crisis in terms of gender-blending and code-switching

to an analysis of selected South African novels, pointing out that “Each of these inscriptions of transgenderism into the national fictional discourse raises questions concerning the particular cultural politics of such sexual equivocation in contemporary South African writing” (2002: 296).

Most of the novelists who have written novels including the trope of bisexuality in the post-apartheid era – Barbara Adair, Tatamkhulu Afrika, Mark Behr, Achmat Dangor, K. Sello Duiker, Nadine Gordimer, Michiel Heyns, Ashraf Jamal, Barry Levy, Antony Sher and Guy Willoughby – were (in the case of Afrika, who died in 2002, and Duiker, who committed suicide in 2005) or are South Africans living in the country. One novelist, Sheila Kohler, is an expatriate South African, while another, Shamim Sarif, was born in England of Indian South African parents and grandparents. Although this group of authors is fairly representative of broad sectors of South African society, in this country black women novelists are generally underrepresented, particularly with regard to examining issues of sexuality. There is a movement towards an increasing awareness of gender issues and sexual explicitness, but this occurs within a heterosexual paradigm; for instance, Sindiwe Magona, in *Mother to Mother* (1998), explores issues of virginity testing, thig sex, unwanted pregnancy and abortion. Zoë Wicomb’s eponymous protagonist in *David’s Story* (2000) is called a “moffie” by certain characters within the text, but this reference functions merely as a slur, without any thematic development. Unsurprisingly, then, South African black women novelists are not found in the group of authors whose work is to be analyzed. It is significant that very few of the texts are authored by women. Within the current South African context, women seem less likely than their male counterparts to explore bisexual or homosexual themes. This is at odds with the

prevalence of exploration of the topic by women in the West, as observed by Clare Hemmings, which she hypothesizes may be associated with developing feminist debates (1995: 52). Historically in South Africa, however, feminism in the apartheid era was subordinate to the struggle for the removal of racial oppression, and feminist debate in a democratic South Africa has focussed more on issues of violence, gendered oppression and the implications of HIV/Aids. A climate of relative reticence with regard to public exploration of sexuality by women, let alone dissident sexuality, doubtless contributes to this imbalance in the representation of bisexuality by South African women novelists.

As a prelude to my literary analysis I need to set the scene in Chapter 2 with a more detailed historical and international analysis of bisexuality as an ontology and epistemology. This will be followed in Chapter 3 by a discussion of the representation of alternative sexualities in Africa and South Africa, in which I point out the widespread rhetoric of homophobia in various African countries, discuss the slippery avoidance of the term “bisexuality” in Murray and Roscoe’s *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands*, and outline some queer cultural productions made possible by the changing climate in post-apartheid South Africa.

In applying the theoretical perspective of a bisexual epistemology to South Africa, it is useful to examine similarities and differences between the apartheid past and the democratic present, with regard to representations of bisexual practices and lives. As there are so few novels focusing on bisexuality before 1994 I begin to establish a cultural history of the term in Chapter 4 by examining the representation of bisexual behaviour in a South African context. Without using an appropriate framework

foregrounding bisexuality these examples of queer life may languish in undeserved obscurity or be relegated to hostile misrecognition. I examine some contemporary treatments of bisexuality in popular culture, and I compare these with accounts in biographies and autobiographies of the past, written about people in the arts, with a South African connection: Beatrice Hastings, Leontine Sagan, Roy and Mary Campbell, Lola Watter, and Stephen Gray. This discussion establishes the common elision of the concept of bisexuality, and difficulties and stereotypes associated with textual representations of bisexuality, complicated by conventional gender expectations.

It is understandable that the perception of seismic social shifts associated with the transition to a fully democratic nation, placed alongside a loosening of a previous culture of repression with regard to race and sexuality, should have enabled the publication of a body of novels dealing with bisexuality, which represents a fervid conceptual middle ground. The remainder of this text will be devoted to my literary analysis of these texts. I have divided the novels to be discussed into four sections, broadly based on chronotopes: pre-apartheid, apartheid, the shift to post-apartheid, and, finally, the visionary/celebratory, which transcends the confines of chronology. This grouping will be used to simultaneously examine individual narrative histories and their shifting national and international backdrop, while I have chosen to end with the celebratory as an antidote to depressingly ubiquitous homophobia.

In Chapter 5 I discuss Tatamkhulu Afrika's semi-autobiographical novel, *Bitter Eden* (2002), a love triangle set in the World War II prisoner-of-war camps in Italy and Germany. As I reveal by comparing the diachronic *Bitter Eden* with Afrika's

autobiography, *Mr Chameleon* (2005), bisexual desires and behaviour (although not identities) are common in same-sex settings, both internationally and in South Africa, among a range of communities. However, they cannot be dismissed as therefore being mandatory, representing a second-best option, or emotionally lacking in validity, although heteronormativity, homophobia and sexism make them painful and problematic. The dual time-setting of *Bitter Eden* reveals that such attractions and relationships are part of South Africa's heritage, although a previously sparingly documented part, and that they persist in the present.

Chapter 6 deals with the era of high apartheid. The group of novels set within this time period and dealing with bisexuality includes Antony Sher's *Cheap Lives* (1995) and four *Bildungsromane*: *The Smell of Apples* (1996 [1995]) and *Embrace* (2000), by Mark Behr, *The Children's Day* (2002), by Michiel Heyns, and *Cracks* (1999), by Sheila Kohler. The first three of these *Bildungsromane* form a sub-group, dealing semi-autobiographically with issues such as the construction of hegemonic masculinity under the militarism of apartheid, secrecy, homosociality, homosexuality, bisexuality, homophobia and paedophilia. In Chapter 6 *The Smell of Apples* will be examined as emblematic of the concerns raised in the boys' childhood narratives. Unlike the other texts dealing with rites of passage, *Cracks* is set in a girls' school, where the pupils form crushes on a teacher who is represented as bisexual and a paedophile. Anxieties associated with border-crossing and triangulation feature strongly in this text, which finally functions to endorse heteronormativity. All four of these novels deal with memories of the ways in which the perpetrators of apartheid moulded the country's young whites, Afrikaans and English, male and female. The reader is expected to respond with sympathy to these subjects, as they are high in the

hierarchy of innocence. Bisexuality functions as a marker of desire and corruption in these texts.

Chapter 7 deals with the shift to democracy, as portrayed in Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit* (2001), *Archangels* by Guy Willoughby (2002), *The Reluctant Passenger* by Michiel Heyns (2003a), and Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun* (1998). In *The House Gun* bisexuality is paired with instability, deviousness and criminality, thus exploiting stereotypes associated with this sexuality. However, the text also represents the possibilities represented by inclusivity. *Bitter Fruit* explores atrocities of the past, and their impact on the present, which is characterized by a queer loosening of a number of boundaries, particularly those associated with sexuality. Bisexuality now functions as a choice. In *The House Gun* it is conceived symbolically: partly pathological, ultimately inexplicable, but also containing some degree of redemption, while in *Bitter Fruit* the representation is more matter-of-fact, and in fact the text offers an indigenous term for bisexuality emanating from the coloured community, which itself functions in South African political life as an interstitial term.

The novels discussed in Chapter 8 are K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (2001), Ashraf Jamal's *Love Themes for the Wilderness* (1996), and Shamim Sarif's *The World Unseen* (2001). These three texts in various ways transcend my earlier time-frames, and, however flawed, belong in a separate category which moves beyond viewing variant sexuality as a problem or pathology, or even (in the case of *Bitter Fruit*) in terms of a range of possibilities, many of which are troubled. Instead, this category moves beyond the exploration of danger to a search for pleasure, even epiphany. It is significant that both *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and *Love Themes*

for the Wilderness are set in contemporary Cape Town, South Africa's mecca for alternative sexualities. While *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* ultimately eschews boundary-crossing, including bisexuality, its interest lies in its unselfconscious and rhapsodic pairing of the sexual and the spiritual. *Love Themes for the Wilderness* views both homosexuality and bisexuality positively, and employs the carnivalesque Locker Room Project, based on the Mother City Queer Project, to celebrate queer behaviours and identities. *The World Unseen*, which is set in the Transvaal in the 1950s, is also celebratory in tone. Hybridity and boundary-crossing are endorsed, and the anxiety associated with triangulation is delicately handled as a relationship between a lesbian and a married woman unfolds. Although *Cracks* and *The World Unseen* are set in the same time-period, the contrast between them is shown most clearly through their different handling of bisexuality and race.

In Chapter 9 I discuss a novel by Barbara Adair, *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* (2004a), which moves beyond the borders of South Africa to examine the lives of the expatriate American married couple, Jane and Paul Bowles, both of whom were authors, and who had an open marriage, contracting same-sex *amours* in the bohemian atmosphere of post-World War II Tangier. The novel normalizes bisexuality through its representation of three bisexual characters, although race and gender play a problematic role in the text. The novel offers a bridge between mid-twentieth century Moroccan culture and contemporary South Africa, allowing a fruitful implied dialogue between the two. In various ways it embodies a hybrid text which epitomizes a shift in writing from a historically fragmented, binarist style typical of apartheid-era writing.

It is obvious that variant sexualities, including bisexuality, are exerting an influence on writers' imaginations in the South African context at this time. In relation to these texts I intend to focus on the representation of queerness as opposed to heteronormativity by each author, as well as the subversion or endorsement of dualities. In particular, I intend to focus on the handling of bisexuality, and each author's use of the potential subversion or entrenchment of binaries implied by this sexuality. Through this examination I aim to chart the representation of bisexuality, in the context of a body of fiction that deals with variant sexualities, in order to consider the ways in which this sexuality contributes to debates about how "queer" reflects and shapes notions of emerging South African national identity.

Chapter 2

Bisexuality: Ontology and Epistemology

Rather than embrace an idealist faith in the necessarily, immanently corrosive efficacy of the contradictions inherent to these definitional binarisms, I will suggest instead that contests for discursive power can be specified as competitions for the material or rhetorical leverage required to set the terms of, and to profit in some way from, the operations of such incoherence of definition.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990: 11)

In this chapter I provide a more specific theoretical focus on bisexuality than the more generalized overview in Chapter 1, in order to establish the usefulness of bisexuality as a critical tool to examine the corpus of post-1994 South African novels which include the trope of bisexuality. In order to do this, however, various definitions of bisexuality need to be considered. Four historical phases of understanding bisexuality in the West will be examined: first, a brief look at examples of scholarship examining bisexuality from the classical period to the nineteenth century; second, a period from the end of the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century; third, the 1970s and 1980s; and finally the period from around 1990 to the present. In each period I provide some examples of literature which represents bisexuality, and some critics of this literature. This periodization is a mere convenience in charting trends and does not imply either watertight, discrete time-periods or a simple triumphalist trajectory to the present.

Over time, the term “bisexuality” has changed in meaning. Malcolm Bowie provides a neat summary of the three chief usages:

bisexuality This term has at least three current meanings, and these can easily produce confusion. As used by Darwin and his contemporaries it presented an exclusively biological notion, synonymous with hermaphroditism, and referred to the presence within an organism of male and female characteristics. This meaning persists. Secondly, bisexuality denotes the co-presence in the human individual of “feminine” and “masculine” psychological characteristics. Thirdly, and most commonly, it is used of the propensity of certain individuals to be sexually attracted to both men and women. (1992: 26)

The term “bisexuality” thus refers variously to sex, gender or sexuality, but my emphasis throughout this work will be on the third of these meanings. The first appearance of the concept in English, in the form of the word “bisexed,” referring to the physical embodiment of two sexes, occurred in 1606, according to *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (1973); the word “bisexual” was first used by Coleridge in 1824. At the present moment the history of bisexuality, considering any or all of the three meanings offered by Bowie, is partial. In fact, lesbian author Emma Donoghue enquires, “Who Hid Bisexual History?” (1996a: 75), thus implying some elision of the concept as well as a specific history, along with an ethical imperative to record bisexuality fearlessly and without bigotry.

Some steps have been taken in this direction, a few of which I shall mention to give a brief overview of the history of bisexuality. My first period is a long one, on which I touch lightly: it consists of scholarly re-evaluations of the past from classical times through to the nineteenth century. Although the term “bisexuality” is anachronistic when applied to the era, desires and sexual behaviours which in the present time would be called bisexual were common. If “the past is our mirror” (Derek Jarman quoted in Chedgzoy 1997: 111 and 119) then it is inevitable that contemporary concepts be used to reflect light on the past, and modify our view of the present. Care

must be taken to factor in the prevailing socio-cultural *milieu* to avoid charges of ahistoricity.

Eva Cantarella has written a book on the history of bisexuality in the ancient world which is painstakingly researched and well grounded in the specifics of its social contexts (1992). An Italian scholar of the law of ancient Greece and Rome, Cantarella provides evidence from legal and medical texts, as well as poetry, philosophical treatises and art-works, to examine the implications of same-sex love in a social context which demanded the stability of heterosexual family life. She examines the differences between sexual ethics pertaining in Greece and Rome, and considers the differences in each society with regard to channels available for males and females. She also reveals ways in which homosexuality, and, to a lesser extent, bisexuality, impacted on their particular social contexts. This book valuably provides a historical grounding and a comparison for investigations of contemporary manifestations of bisexuality.

In the realm of literary analysis, Marjorie Garber (1996 [1995]) and Kate Chedgzoy (1997) have explored bisexual tensions in Shakespeare's sonnets and plays. In *Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life*, Garber comments on the representation of bisexuality in a number of the plays, the most obvious examples being *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*, with more camouflaged appearances of the trope in *Othello*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *A Winter's Tale*. In *Othello* bisexual attraction, alongside sexual jealousy, propels the plot (14). Garber also points to the explicit love poetry written by Shakespeare, a married man and father, to the young man he called the "master-mistress of my

passion” in Sonnet 20 (14). She discusses the erotic triangles operating within the Sonnets, and points to the critical reception of these. Some critics, such as Robert Browning, Coleridge, and editors of the Sonnets W. H. Auden (in 1964) and Stephen Booth (in 1977), have veered away from any whiff of same-sex attraction, with the gay Auden surprisingly excoriating a possible reader’s appropriation of “our Top-Bard as a patron saint of the Homintern” (quoted 1996 [1995]: 510). Other critics have realized Auden’s worst fears and highlighted a “gay” Shakespeare, and Garber points out that this act of appropriation reveals the symbolic role the Sonnets have come to occupy in contemporary consolidations of gay identity, and that the word “bisexual” generally disappears from such accounts (511), or the concept is sanitized into a disembodied imaginativeness conflated with androgyny (515-6). Garber examines Eve Sedgwick’s “nuanced account” of erotic attractions in the Sonnets, and comments on Sedgwick’s avoidance of the term “bisexual.” Garber suggests that a bisexual reading of the Sonnets can access an illuminating and open energy appropriate to the form and the subject-matter:

Bisexuality, the radically *discontinuous* possibility of a sexual “identity” that confounds the very category of identity, in which sexual passion elects its subjects and objects across these defining (and self-defining) boundaries, can find its authorization in the sonnets, whose very form, continuous and discontinuous at once (closed fourteen line units, tightly rhymed, with unbridgeable spaces for interpretative fantasy between one sonnet and the next), draws a diagram of its own. The triangles, it appears, are drawn by connecting the dots. But each connection is a reader’s, or editor’s, own narrative supplement. (513-4)

In “‘Two Loves I Have’: Shakespeare and Bisexuality,” Kate Chedgzoy usefully adds to this discussion. Her purpose in writing her chapter is to argue for a bisexual reading of Shakespeare’s texts, and to investigate what aesthetic, historical and political

consequences arise from such a reading. She points out that Garber unproblematically conflates Shakespeare and the persona of the Sonnets. Further, Chedgzoy queries Garber's suggestion that "a bisexual Shakespeare fits no one's erotic agenda" (Garber 515). Chedgzoy likens the homoerotic reading of the Sonnets which arose in the 1890s during the crystallization of "modern homosexual identities and politics" to "the emergence in the 1990s of a theoretically and politically confident discourse of bisexuality [... which] now allows us to read the poems as instantiating a 'bisexual imaginary'" (107). This rather rosy view serves to modify Garber's hermeneutics of suspicion. Chedgzoy urges a view of Renaissance sexual subjectivities which extends beyond binaries of homosexuality and heterosexuality (108). However, she demonstrates that a history of homophobic readings of the Sonnets has problematized bisexual readings, as recuperation of heterosexuality has been used to "purify" Shakespeare from the "slur" of queerness (111).

Chedgzoy discusses unusual features of Shakespeare's Sonnets, which deviate from the Petrarchan model of a male speaker's unfulfilled love for a woman, focusing instead on consummated relationships, and of particular interest, same-sex desires between men. The form as well as the situations described are richly ambiguous and display equivocal sexual meanings in the shape of puns, metaphors and ambiguity (111). Chedgzoy also discusses Shakespeare's use of cross-dressed, gender-ambiguous figures in the plays, and points out that while this playful usage is part of the pleasure of perceiving Shakespeare bisexually for men and women, the privileging of androgyny has functioned to elide the concept of bisexuality (112). Shakespeare's representation of bisexuality is primarily from a masculine perspective, as his Sonnets mirror the Greco-Roman world where men's masculinity is established, not through

gender of object-choice but through dominance, yet this ideal template is disturbed by the complex emotions evoked in the Sonnets (115). Chedgzoy points to the representation of bisexuality as possibly being not only a conflict between same- or different-sexed loves, but also representing different erotic possibilities within one life, or one psyche (116). She also comments on the key sexual distinction in Renaissance times being a differentiation between licit, married, reproductive sex, and other expressions of desire (117). Reading Shakespeare bisexually does not entail finding “bisexual ancestors,” but it can reveal complex desires which have their counterpart in contemporary times, as well as reveal specific differences between Shakespeare’s society and our own (118).

Other literary analyses which focus on the period until the nineteenth century include Louis Crompton’s examination of the effects of Byron’s bisexual attractions (1985), and lesbian feminist Emma Donoghue’s plea for accurate representations of bisexuality in her analysis of eighteenth-century bisexual heroines, who reveal the erotic range open to women of the time (1996a).

My second period stretches from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. In this period bisexuality was established as a problematic concept within the discourses of sexology and psychoanalysis, where it acquired connotations of immaturity or pathology; and in the work of Alfred Kinsey and his collaborators, who focused initially on human male behaviour (1948) and subsequently on human female sexuality (1953), it was demonstrated to be common behaviour.

The earlier part of this period, from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, has been fruitfully examined for its developing medico-psychological discourse which has continued to dominate theoretics on bisexuality. Merl Storr (1997) comments that in the discourse of sexology at the *fin de siècle* the hetero-/homosexual binary was merely one among many taxonomic structures. She investigates seminal texts by two sexologists, Richard von Krafft-Ebing (translated into English 1965) and Havelock Ellis (1897), and persuasively suggests that bisexuality (conceived of in terms of sex and gender) and race were mutually constituted according to imperialist notions of primitivity, civilization and conquest. Bisexuality was seen in terms of ontogeny (the early life of the human foetus) and phylogeny (the racial evolution of plants or animals). Bisexuality was perceived as the primal flux from which adult heterosexuality or homosexuality would develop. Krafft-Ebing also assumed that masculinity, being superior, would conquer femininity, while Ellis, who was an exception in this regard, held that women were the more evolved group and that civilization was becoming increasingly feminine. Either way, the model was one of superiority of one element over its binary opposite. This discussion is of more significance than mere historical interest. It reveals that at the outset of theoretical discussions of sexuality in the West bisexuality was present as a concept, and that it was entwined with notions of race and gender: “the subhuman forms of woman, black and homosexual retained archaic elements of the *originary* human bisexuality” (Angelides 2001: 48). Further, echoes of these ideas still surface today.

The sexologists were the forebears of Freud, whose ideas on bisexuality are still current in some quarters. Freud was at pains to distance himself from his forebears, differentiating his “science” (1905: 7) from crude or lay interpretations. Certainly his

name has become firmly associated with the concept of bisexuality, although on examination his views have a strong flavour of those of his predecessors. Folk memory cites Freud as the source of the notion that “We’re all bisexual really.” What Freud in fact had to say was more subtle than this; the notion of bisexuality was central to his ideas of psychoanalysis, but it mutated over time, it presented him with a number of problems, and it remains problematic today. Among the vast body of Freud’s writing, an early comment in a letter to his friend, Wilhelm Fliess, reveals his understanding of psychical hermaphroditism: “In every sexual act four persons are involved” (1954: 289). Likewise, in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* Freud makes similar claims with regard to object choice:

[T]he sexual object [in homosexuality] is not someone of the same sex but someone who combines the characteristics of both sexes; there is, as it were, a compromise between an impulse that seeks for a man and one that seeks for a woman.[...] [In 1915 Freud added:] Thus the sexual object is a kind of reflection of the subject’s own bisexual nature. (1905: 144)

In the criss-crossings of gendered subjectivity and desire, sexuality takes a specific, pre-ordained form; in Judith Butler’s provocative formulation, “There is no homosexuality, and only opposites attract,” as bisexuality comprises “the coincidence of two heterosexual desires within a single psyche” (1990: 61).

Freud’s most detailed comments on the subject of bisexuality also date from 1915, and are found in a note in the same essay:

[A]ll human beings are capable of making a homosexual object-choice and have in fact made one in their unconscious. Indeed, libidinal attachments to persons of the same sex play no less a part as factors in normal mental life, and a greater part as a motive force for illness, than do similar attachments to

the opposite sex. On the contrary, psychoanalysis considers that a choice of an object independently of its sex – freedom to range equally over male and female objects – *as it is found in childhood, in primitive states of society and early periods of history*, is the *original* basis from which, as a result of restriction in one direction or the other, both the normal and the inverted types develop. Thus from the point of view of psychoanalysis the exclusive sexual interest felt by men for women is also a problem that needs elucidating and is not a self-evident fact based upon an attraction that is ultimately of a chemical nature.[...] In *inverted* types, a predominance of *archaic* constitutions and *primitive* psychical mechanisms is regularly to be found. (1905: 145-6; emphasis added)

The bisexuality which is posited here has clear links with the racist, imperialist and eugenic ideologies exhibited by Krafft-Ebing and Ellis. Moreover, for Freud, bisexuality is particularly associated with femininity (1931: 227-8); he thus displays a similar androcentrism to that of Krafft-Ebing. A number of meanings of bisexuality accrue over the course of his writing, ranging from hermaphroditism to the primordial, undifferentiated matrix from which later heterosexuality or homosexuality would develop. Bisexuality in Freud is associated with immaturity, and is seldom viewed as a fully adult sexual category. In a rare case where this does occur, Freud mentions that generally the result is “an irreconcilable conflict” (1937: 243-4). Freud’s view of bisexuality, although wide-ranging and subtle, remains ambivalent and binarist: despite his best efforts, he admits that it “embarrasses all our enquiries into the subject and makes them harder to describe” (1940: 188). Juliet Mitchell’s assessment is that finally, for Freud, bisexuality “ended by being the unsolved crux of the matter – both in theory and practice” (1974: 49 n. 14). For Angelides, Freud’s binary dynamics of the Oedipus complex preclude a definitive investigation of bisexuality, which is “[r]esistant, liminal, and in-between” (2001: 54).

The habitual Western reliance on binary classificatory schemes ensured that bisexuals were not recognized as a “type” or “species” in the way that Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, documents homosexuals and heterosexuals coming to be perceived (1984: 43). Life and art, however, were more varied than the “juridico-discursive” grid (83), although this grid undoubtedly affected both. At the same time that this grid was being progressively crystallized and formalized, E. M. Forster wrote *Maurice* (in 1914, although it was only published posthumously in 1971), and Radclyffe Hall published *The Well of Loneliness* (1928). Virginia Woolf, who, along with many of the Bloomsbury Group, had bisexual attractions, published *Orlando* in the same year. Both *Maurice* and *The Well of Loneliness* contain representations of characters who have attractions to men and women, but authorial disdain towards such characters is palpable in each case. While homosexuality is endorsed, bisexual behaviour is viewed as lacking in courage. In *Maurice*, the eponymous hero resists the possibility of “converting” to heterosexuality, and is textually validated for fully acknowledging his homosexuality, while his counterpart and one-time platonic love, Clive Durham, is depicted as diminishing in moral stature as he becomes a conventional married man, who conceals his homoerotic past from his wife. He becomes mired in bloodless compromise for the sake of social respectability.

In *The Well of Loneliness*, as is well known, Hall employed Krafft-Ebing’s theories of “inversion” in support of her characterization of Stephen Gordon, the butch lesbian who falls in love reciprocally with the feminine Mary Llewellyn. What has not received commentary is the place in which the two become lovers, conveyed in the famous phrase “and that night they were not divided” (1972 [1928]: 361). The setting, which in this case is a villa in Orotava, on the island of Tenerife in the Canary Islands,

is significant, and connects this novel to the texts which form the main focus of my study. The Orotava setting is seen as liminal, in that the islands “belong” to Spain, yet are not European, but African (363). Further, the villa has “a veritable Eden of a garden” which is fecund and disturbing (353). Even in the midst of the idyll, then, betrayal, loss and separation are presaged. The African Edenic setting which recurs in other texts will be discussed in more depth subsequently.

The Well of Loneliness focuses on Stephen’s motivations, interior life and Romantic creativity, while Mary is infantilized and patronized by Stephen, and accorded no interior life by the author. At the end of the novel Stephen observes that Mary is attracted towards Martin Hallam, and initially honourably fights him for Mary’s affections, then for Mary’s sake dupes her into thinking that she (Stephen) has found another lover so that Mary and Martin may marry and have children. The dramatic contest is thus between what Judith Halberstam calls “female masculinity” (1998) and conventional masculinity, and Stephen is portrayed as being the ethical winner by virtue of her self-sacrifice and courtliness. However, it is noteworthy that the entire tragic ending is precipitated by Mary’s bisexual susceptibility to Martin. Frann Michel comments that “Mary is [...] represented as essentially passive and becomes the precursor to the negative image of the bisexual woman who leaves her woman lover for a man” (1996: 60). In *The Well of Loneliness* masculinity is respected, whether “inverted” or “normal,” whereas femininity is problematic.

In *Orlando*, Woolf conceives of a character to pay homage to her lover, Vita Sackville-West, whose son Nigel Nicolson famously commented:

The effect of Vita on Virginia is all contained in *Orlando*, the longest and most charming love letter in literature, in which she explores Vita, weaves her in and out of the centuries, tosses her from one sex to the other, plays with her, dresses her in furs, lace and emeralds, teases her, flirts with her, drops a veil of mist around her, and ends by photographing her in the mud at Long Barn, with dogs, awaiting Virginia's arrival next day. Her friendship was the most important fact in Vita's life, just as Vita's was the most important in Virginia's, except Leonard, and perhaps her sister Vanessa. (1974: 218)

Yet despite the playfulness and imaginative experimentation with time and gender, the categories of binary sexuality remain sacrosanct. Christopher James points out that *Orlando* can yield fruitful meanings when read from a gay male, a lesbian, a bisexual or a transgender perspective. However, the method he suggests of reading the novel through a bisexual lens is indirect, via the biographies of Woolf or Sackville-West, and not by decoding representations in the text itself (1996: 230).

Generally in literature of the period, then, bisexuality becomes invisible or is viewed as a pusillanimous compromise. One particularly interesting novel of the period, however, Rosamond Lehman's *Bildungsroman, Dusty Answer* (1927), explores bisexual desires as experienced by both the female central protagonist and a male character. The text highlights gender differences by revealing the possibility that exists for queer men to enter a supportive and creative sub-culture, while female same-sex relationships lead to loss of social respectability. Although the main character's romantic desires for both her female and male love-objects are finally thwarted, the novel fully and sensitively handles issues of same-sex love and passion, and matter-of-factly accepts multiple emotional involvements – another way of countering binarism. *Dusty Answer* was well received by the critics, Alfred Noyes praising it as “the kind of novel that might have been written by Keats” (in Hastings 2003 [2002]: 98). Although some readers of the time were shocked by the apparent

feminism and lesbianism in the text, as well as by an explicit heterosexual sex scene, the novel avoided the fate of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, which was prosecuted for obscenity (95-100). Interestingly, Lehmann herself was not a feminist, neither did she intend the intense relationship of two women characters to be read as lesbian passion (95), but the writing exceeds her intentions and the framework of her own biography.

In the genealogy of bisexuality, a pioneer in moving beyond binaries and opening up the space of the “in-between” using the evidence of actual lives is Alfred Kinsey, whose empirical research on human sexual behaviour in the United States begun in the 1930s resulted in the publication of *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* in 1948, and the companion volume, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* in 1953. In the former volume, Kinsey *et al.* claimed:

Males do not represent two discrete populations, heterosexual and homosexual. The world is not to be divided into sheep and goats. Not all things are black nor all things white. It is a fundamental of taxonomy that nature rarely deals with discrete categories. Only the human mind invents categories and tries to force facts into separated pigeon-holes. The living world is a continuum in each and every one of its aspects. The sooner we learn this concerning human sexual behavior the sooner we shall reach a sound understanding of the realities of sex. (1948: 33)

The “realities of sex” suggested by Kinsey’s research were that only 50% of males were exclusively heterosexual throughout adult life, while 4% were exclusively homosexual (1999 [1948]: 36). This left 46% of men, and a corresponding 28% of women, who did not fall into either category (Rust 2000b: 133).¹ Kinsey’s findings

¹ Subsequent surveys suggest that these numbers are much too high. For instance, a 1994 British survey, the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles, yields figures of 2.4% of men and 0.3%

led him to devise a continuum model, a seven-point rating scale, ranging from 0 for exclusively heterosexual histories to 6 for exclusively homosexual experience or response. The importance of Kinsey's work lies in its shifting of bisexuality from the terrain of psychology, where it was usually perceived in pathological terms, to that of behaviour, where it was presented non-judgmentally. This served to validate, but not uncritically celebrate, bisexuality. Kinsey's research revealed that sexuality is flexible, and can alter in varying contexts, and that sexual activity is not necessarily paired to a self-identity. Further, these radical points have still not been fully assimilated by sexual rights movements, from Kinsey's time to the present (George Chauncey, cited in Hall 2003: 40).

Writing of Kinsey, Philip W. Blumstein and Pepper Schwartz point to the limitations of the word "bisexuality":

Even the word *bisexuality* gives a misleading sense of fixedness to sex-object choice, suggesting as it does a person in the middle, equidistant from heterosexuality and from homosexuality, equally erotically disposed to one gender or the other. Our data show that exceedingly few people come so neatly packaged [...] However, *bisexuality* seems to have already become entrenched in our language, and we will have to settle for it [...] Indeed, even though we are indebted to Kinsey for his insistence on a homosexual/heterosexual continuum, we must emphasize that this view also misleads by focusing on the individual, with his or her sexual "place" as a unit of conceptualization, rather than on the sexual behavior (with all of its antecedents and subjective meanings) as a unit for theorizing. (2000 [1977]: 340)

This complaint about the unsatisfactoriness of the term "bisexuality" was voiced by Kinsey himself, and regularly recurs. Donald E. Hall abhors the word, as it

of women having only same-gender attractions, and 3.9% of men and 4.1% of women reporting bisexual attractions (Fox 1996: 17).

“inescapably encodes binarism” (1996: 11). The concept of binarism is opposed not only by many bisexuals, but also by some transgender and intersexual activists (see e.g. Kate Bornstein’s *Gender Outlaw* of 1994). A range of other options, such as “pansexual” or “pansensual” have been proposed (Geller 1990: 105-8), but as they have not achieved wide currency, and as the term “bisexual” has attained a contemporary political profile, I use this flawed but familiar term. (It may also be noted that the words “heterosexuality” and “homosexuality” are equally misleading omnibus terms.) Further, in my opinion it is legitimate to apply the notion of bisexuality to individuals in the past, without implying that one views them as having occupied an ahistorical, reified bisexual position. Instead, one may read their attractions, behaviour or writing from a bisexual perspective, from the present historical juncture.

To return to my consideration of Kinsey: the impartial ethos of the Report dealt a blow to the pathology model for viewing homosexuality, and the concomitant need for psychoanalysis. Other authors, such as C. S. Ford and F. A. Beach (1951) and Thomas Szasz (1970), followed a similar line of reasoning to Kinsey’s. Ford and Beach, in their cross-cultural anthropological survey of sexual behaviour, prove that binarist discourse on sexuality is inadequate to explain actual behaviour:

When it is realized that 100 percent of the males in certain societies engage in homosexual as well as heterosexual alliances, and when it is understood that many men and women in our own society are equally capable of relations with partners of the same or opposite sex [...] then it should be clear that one cannot classify homosexual or heterosexual tendencies as being mutually exclusive or even opposed to each other. (1951: 236)

Szasz, a professor of psychiatry, became one exponent of the movement of antipsychiatry. He held that psychiatry was a replacement of religion which strove to suppress homosexuality, and that it served to validate the practitioner:

Like the inquisitor, the psychiatrist defines, and thereby authenticates, his own existential position by what he opposes – as heresy or illness. In stubbornly insisting that the homosexual is sick, the psychiatrist is merely pleading to be a physician. (1970: 170-1)

Szasz's antipsychiatry helped to bolster the growth of the gay liberation movement of the 1960s (Angelides 2001: 114), which alongside other anti-hegemonic movements of civil rights and feminism which arose, created a fertile ground from which the third phase of commentary on bisexuality arose in the 1970s.

The third historical period under consideration, from around 1970 to the late 1980s, marks the formation of the contemporary bisexual movement in the over-developed world. Initially this was associated with sexual libertarianism, and groups in large American cities were organized by men, but subsequently dissatisfaction with separatist lesbian politics led to the formation of women's support groups (Highleyman 1993). A bisexual ontology and political awareness began to develop. Empirical studies on bisexuality and HIV/Aids were conducted, continuing the pathology model associated with this sexuality. In addition, bisexuality was used as a theoretical metaphor by feminist theorists, such as Hélène Cixous (1981 [1975]).

Key texts which contributed to a resurgence of interest in the topic included Margaret Mead's "Bisexuality: What's It All About?" published in *Redbook* (1975), an impressive body of sociological work by Blumstein and Schwartz (1974; 1976a;

1976b; 1976c; 2000 [1977]), Charlotte Wolff's Freudian-based *Bisexuality: A Study* (1979), and Fritz Klein's *The Bisexual Option* (1978).² Wolff is dismissed by Paula Rust from the category of pioneer in contemporary research in bisexuality because of her reliance on earlier notions of inversion, her slippage between the concepts of sex, gender, gender role and sexual orientation, as well as her lack of criticism of binarist models of sexuality (2000c: 338 n. 1). This is rather a purist line to take, however, and from a more tolerant perspective Wolff's contribution was a meaningful one. A lesbian herself, she shifted from investigating lesbianism, which culminated in her influential *Love Between Women* (1971), a key text for many lesbians of the time, to a study of bisexuality. She collected statistics from a hundred and fifty volunteers, which led her to suggest that only a bisexual society would vouchsafe against sexism and "psychosexual and social suppression" (Wolff 1980: 225). She also pointed out the resentment directed against bisexuals from either end of the sexual spectrum. *Bisexuality: A Study* also contains a number of interesting first-person narratives.

In like vein to Wolff's account, partly based on her anthropological work, and partly on her own sexual history, Margaret Mead said, "The time has come, I think, when we must recognize bisexuality as a normal form of human behavior." While she acknowledged the necessity of changing judgmental views of homosexuality, she claimed: "we shall not really succeed in discarding the straitjacket of our cultural beliefs about sexual choice if we fail to come to terms with the well-documented, normal human capacity to love members of both sexes" (1975: 29).

² This was published under the name Fred Klein.

Also in the 1970s sophisticated French theory was brought to bear on the deconstruction of binaries, for instance in the influential work of Jacques Derrida, and in the work of the French “feminists,” including Hélène Cixous. Derrida has amply demonstrated that an epistemology based upon binaries (as in traditional Western philosophy) is hierarchical, with one term being privileged at the expense of the other. Attempting to disrupt the system by elevating the oppressed term simply inverts the orthodoxy, and continues the impasse. Deconstruction attempts to dismantle the system by disrupting the binaries that underpin it. Derrida muses about the consequences of disrupting “the code of sexual marks,” beyond oppositions. He expresses his desire to “believe in the multiplicity of sexually marked voices” beyond “an implacable destiny which immures everything for life in the figure 2” (Derrida and McDonald 1982: 76).

French theorists of *écriture féminine*, such as Cixous, have employed Derridean deconstruction along with Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis to attempt to subvert hierarchized oppositions such as law/nature, masculine/feminine, public/private, white/black and Symbolic/Imaginary. They have attempted to show that these are not natural and immutable distinctions, but are constructed, provisional and disruptible discursive mechanisms. One way in which such theorists as Cixous have queried hierarchies is by using tropes of pluralism, hybridity and bisexuality. Most memorably, in 1975 Cixous visualizes, as opposed to a traditional, hermaphroditic notion of bisexuality, a “vatic bisexuality.” This “*other bisexuality*” refers to

each one’s location in self (*répérage en soi*) of the presence – variously manifest and insistent according to each person, male or female – of both sexes, non-exclusion either of the difference or of one sex, and from this “self-

permission,” multiplication of the effects of the inscription of desire, over all parts of my body and the other body. (1981 [1975]: 254)

This fluid libidinal economy, “which doesn’t annul differences but stirs them up, pursues them, increases their number,” is associated with women, as men are “poised to keep glorious phallic monosexuality in view” (254). *Écriture féminine*, which opposes phallogocentrism, may be born from this fertile magma.

The vagueness about specifically defining bisexuality, except in rhapsodic terms, suits Cixous’s purpose, but it contributes to a strain of commentary which relegates the concept of bisexuality to the utopian (as Angelides (2001) discusses extensively), and leads to some exaggerated claims being made, which Jonathan Dollimore refers to as “wishful theory” (2001: 37-45). I will discuss this in more detail later in this chapter.

Poetic feminist theorists Trinh T. Minh-ha and Gloria Anzaldúa use similar techniques to those of Cixous as part of their projects to deconstruct the colonized subject and write feminist postcolonial criticism. In Trinh’s *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (1989), she quotes Cixous’s comments on “the *other bisexuality*” as an exemplar of offering plurality rather than oppositionality in women’s writing. Trinh refuses any simple reduction of writing to the domain of sexuality:

[R]educing everything to the order of sex does not, obviously, allow us to depart from a discourse directed within the apparatuses of sexuality. Writing does not translate bisexuality. It (does not express language but) fares across it. (39)

Bisexuality features as a metaphor rather than having an ontological dimension in this account.

Anzaldúa does not explicitly raise issues of bisexuality in her writing, but Christopher James refers to her as “probably the most bi-affirming queer theorist who does not herself identify as bisexual” (1996: 225). In a conference keynote speech Anzaldúa drew parallels between bisexual and multiracial identities (in June Jordan 1992: 192). In her writing, Anzaldúa critiques binaries and employs metaphors of bridges, borderlands and multiple identities:

I am a wind-swayed bridge, a crossroads inhabited by whirlwinds [...] You say my name is ambivalence? Think of me as Shiva, a many-armed and legged body with one foot on brown soil, one on white, one in straight society, one in the gay world, the man’s world, the women’s, one limb in the literary world, another in the working class, the socialist, and the occult worlds. A sort of spider woman hanging by one thin strand of web.

Who, me confused? Ambivalent? Not so. Only your labels split me. (1983 [1981]: 205)

Anzaldúa’s poetic, multiple personae have been cited by bisexuals as being imaginatively compelling (Pallotta-Chiarolli and Lubowitz 2003: 81; Kaloski 1997: 208-9). In the passage cited Anzaldúa evokes a hybrid yet unified mythological creature, simultaneously animal, human and deity, whose creative body connects disparate domains, and who is fragmented only by others’ taxonomies. This image of a bridging figure can also be interpreted as a type of fluidity in sexual relations.

In the field of literature in my third period under discussion, the 1970s to the late ’80s, the figure of the bisexual was explored in such popular and technically innovative novels as Marge Piercy’s *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) and Alice Walker’s *The*

Color Purple (1982). Both authors identify as bisexual, and portray bisexuality and polyamory from an informed, but not idealized, perspective. In *Woman on the Edge of Time* Piercy attempts to disrupt binarism by such means as representing three societies, one of which is a socialist eutopia³ in which individuals appear androgynous, gender-specific roles do not occur, childbirth occurs artificially, groups of three individuals co-parent, and both males and females can breast-feed. Binarist language practices are disrupted by the usage of gender-neutral pronouns, and the distinction between fiction and non-fiction is blurred by ending the text with a fictionalized psychological case-history. Bisexuality is normalized and treated positively in this text, as it is in *The Color Purple*.

In Walker's novel women characters are represented as being empowered to challenge oppressive and misogynistic practices (such as rape, verbal abuse and violence) by supporting one another, discovering their erotic capacity, becoming economically independent and allowing their creativity to flourish. In particular, the alluring bisexual blues singer Shug acts as a catalyst in the damaged character Celie's erotic education and healing. Shug encourages Celie to examine her own body for the first time, and uses language to challenge heteropatriarchal norms; for instance, she re-defines "virginity" as not having experienced sexual pleasure (69). The sexual passion between the two women enables Celie to make choices which end her oppression and transform her life. *The Color Purple* is a novel which explores Walker's vision of womanism, or black feminism, by focusing on establishing a healthy and non-oppressive community which accepts diversity, including sexual diversity. In its simplest form this is illustrated by the affectional and erotic triangle of

³ From the Greek *eu*, meaning "good," an idealized place, the opposite of a dystopia.

Celie-Shug-Albert at the end of the text. The novel subverts fixities of sub-genre by creating a hybrid form based on the epistolary novel (using vernacular expression) and a re-working of the slave narrative. Even the concept of God is queerly reconceptualized from the traditional white patriarch to an all-inclusive, animist vision. In both novels racism, sexism, homophobia, war and the wanton plundering of the earth's resources are revealed to be interrelated systems, and a softening of binaries is shown to be beneficial to all sectors of society, and indeed the planet, not simply to an oppressed individual or group.

In popular culture in this period, rock stars such as David Bowie epitomized alluring, androgynous, cross-dressing glamour on-stage; Bowie's lyrics referred to a split libido (Tremlett 1996: 144), and he caused a stir by referring openly to his bisexuality (163), in the process turning "a shy family man from the London suburbs into a bisexual fashion icon on two continents" (Sandford 1996: 89). Just how startling Bowie's admission was is evident when it is remembered that in the same period even the flamboyant Liberace denied that he was gay; however, popular opinion was receptive to the notion of bisexuality.

Films, including *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* (directed by John Schlesinger in 1971), *Cabaret* (Bob Fosse 1972), *Dog Day Afternoon* (Sidney Lumet 1975), the cult musical *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Jim Sharman 1975), *The Hunger* (Tony Scott 1983), *Desert Hearts* (Donna Deitch 1985), and *My Beautiful Laundrette* (Stephen Frears 1985) explored themes of chiefly male, but also female, bisexuality and triangulation. In *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, while the camp Frank N Furter played by Tim Curry seduces the clean-cut all-American couple, Janet and Brad, and

excess is celebrated in the swimming-pool orgy scene, the film contains a critique of its own excess. As Jo Eadie points out, in *The Hunger* vampirism and bisexuality are mutually reinforcing in their representation of unassuageable appetite, and they embody cultural anxieties (1997: 149-58).

A surge of interest in bisexuality was acknowledged in 1974 by both *Newsweek* and *Time* magazine, which ran articles on “bisexual chic” (“Bisexual Chic”; “The New Bisexuals”). As Angelides points out, however, this representation “is framed less as a form of explicit political practice than as the playful effect of erotic experimentation” (2001: 120), and such representations serve to commodify, trivialize and stereotype bisexuality.

In explicitly political groups of the '70s and '80s, including gay and lesbian and feminist organizations, bisexuality was a problematic concept, and some bisexuals felt alienated or silenced as a result. Deborah Gregory generalizes the experiences of an emblematic bisexual woman:

[S]he is likely to feel like two separate people walking around in the same body. She is likely to feel always slightly cut off from the people around her, slightly out of place everywhere. Put off by the claims of separatists and heterosexists, yet identifying with the rejection each group feels at the hands of the other, she often feels more defined by what she is *not* than by what she is. (1983: 149)

Gregory explains that, in her experience, coming out as bisexual is the only cure for this sense of dislocation, but Brenda Marie Blasingame comments that fear of a loss of support against heterosexism kept her in the closet: “I was so fearful of losing my community, the gay community, my support system and grounding” (1992: 53). She

draws parallels between this fear and her fear of losing her African-American community (51-2), and compares racism to internalized heterosexism (50-3).

In the 1980s one of the groups represented both in the mainstream press and the lesbian and gay press as a vector of HIV infection was bisexuals, chiefly men but also women. While this representation exacerbated lesbian and gay hostility towards bisexuals, it also functioned to mobilize bisexuals – who had already developed support groups – to become increasingly politically organized (Rust 2000b: 540-3).

The fourth historical phase which I will consider began around 1990. Over the course of this period to the present, conceptualizations of bisexuality had a brief moment of celebratory self-confidence, which led to the making of somewhat grandiose claims about what could be offered by theories of bisexuality. This moment of extravagance is currently being challenged by some theorists who are providing a more sober, critical and reflexive view of the epistemological potential of bisexuality, both in illuminating the concept itself, and in offering insights with regard to other concepts. An engagement with queer theory in particular offered a forum for more sophisticated theorizing than previously.

Paula Rust provides an overview of the political, cultural and academic changes that occurred over this time-span (2000b: 545-51). Political groups proliferated on a local and national level, particularly in the USA and the UK, and international conferences were held. Newsletters were published, a USA national bisexual magazine, with the tongue-in-cheek title *Anything that Moves*, appeared, and Haworth Press began publication of the *Journal of Bisexuality*, under the editorship of Fritz Klein. Robyn

Ochs brought out the annually revised *Bisexual Resource Guide*, the 2002 edition of which lists bisexual and bisexual-inclusive groups in 56 countries. Electronic mail listserves increasingly offered a forum for discussion and support for bisexuals. University courses on bisexuality were offered. Ideas of coalitional politics were explored, and similarities with transgender communities in particular were considered. New York City opened the first public high school for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students (Associated Press 2003). While this may smack uncomfortably of ghettoization, a recent news item in the *Times Educational Supplement* cites research from Australia which finds that as bisexuality is invisible in school curricula young bisexuals are prone to depression (“Schools Fail Bisexual Pupils” 2004); similar points about the effects of normative assumptions could be made about gay, lesbian and transgender youth. Some of these young people might welcome a safe haven in which to learn.

In line with the relative increase in bisexual visibility, fiction, poetry and film from the 1990s on featured bisexuality more than previously. This cultural portrayal of bisexual behaviour or identity did not necessarily employ the term “bisexual,” however, and many representations were hostile. Some examples of film from the USA are the notorious *Basic Instinct* (directed by Paul Verhoeven in 1992), with its negatively stereotyped rendition of murderous bisexuality, while varyingly more positive representations include *Boys on the Side* (Herbert Ross 1995), *Bound* (Andy and Larry Wachowski 1996), *Chasing Amy* (Kevin Smith 1997), *The Opposite of Sex* (Don Roos 1998), *Being John Malkovich* (Spike Jonze 1999), *Gaudi Afternoon* (Susan Seidelman 2001), and *Kissing Jessica Stein* (Charles Herman-Wurmfeld 2002). *Being John Malkovich* and *Gaudi Afternoon* in particular imaginatively

explore various types of queer desire and behaviour, and showcase women's sexuality.

In 2004 a number of films appeared which overturned an earlier reticence about revealing biographical subjects' bisexuality, such as that of the eponymous *Carrington* (Christopher Hampton 1995) or of John Forbes Nash as portrayed in *A Beautiful Mind* (Ron Howard 2001). One of these more open explorations is *De-Lovely* (Irwin Winkler), which is explicit about Cole Porter's bisexuality, although it over-sexualizes the Porters' marriage and downplays the passionately sexual component of his relationships with men. Another is *Alexander* (Oliver Stone), which caused a furore in Greece because of its portrayal of a national hero's bisexuality, leading to threats to sue the film-makers. Reaction in the USA to the representation of bisexuality led Stone to complain of "a raging fundamentalism in morality in the United States" (2005). A third example is *Kinsey* (Bill Condon), a well-researched portrayal of a complex bisexual man and driven sex researcher.

Examples of films representing bisexuality from other countries include *The Crying Game*, from the UK (Neil Jordan 1992), *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, from Australia (Stephan Elliott 1994), *When Night Is Falling*, from Canada (Patricia Rozema 1995), and *Gazon Maudit*, from France (Josiane Balasko 1995), a delightfully humane and comic twist on the *ménage-à-trois* farce. Particularly interesting are two films from India and Guinea respectively: Deepa Mehta's *Fire* (1996), a film with mythical resonances, about the love affair between two sisters-in-law, and Mohamed Camara's *Dakan* (1997), which examines the attractions of two male schoolmates to women, and their eventual recognition that their primary bond is

to each other. Both of these films stem from social contexts which are not receptive to explorations of alternative sexualities, and in fact riots greeted the screening of *Fire*, leading Mehta to abandon her proposed trilogy of films.

Two poets who deal explicitly with bisexuality, amongst other issues, are Michelle Clinton, in *Good Sense & The Faithless* (1994), and M. S. Montgomery, in *Telling the Beads* (1994). Contemporary depictions in novels include E. Lynn Harris's *Invisible Life* (1994), which, as Grace Sikorski (2002) reveals, entrenches binaries of race, gender and sexuality by treating bisexuality and bi-racial identity as potentially tragic. Sikorski contrasts this portrayal with the openness and multiplicity of representation in Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar*. Sikorski concludes:

Walker's characterization of bisexuality as one within a complex web of sexual desires which can be and sometimes are enacted by a singular psychological subject who is also paradoxically a plural physical subject collapses the divisions between identity and behavior, between heterosexuality and homosexuality, and between self and other. The very mechanisms of identity formation and textual representation are subverted in [one of the characters]. Perhaps such a speculative and fictive characterization of sexuality forecasts future conceptualizations of desire and identity in the new millennium. (70)

Further example of novels treating bisexuality, from the other side of the Atlantic, are Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), the narrative of the bisexual son of an English mother and Indian father, set in London; Emma Donoghue's *Stir Fry* (1994) and *Hood* (1996), both set in Ireland; and Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (1992) and *Gut Symmetries* (1997). *Written on the Body* disturbs the reader's mental equilibrium by its refusal to name or provide a gender for the narrator, who is having a relationship with a married woman, and who speaks of previous experiences

with men and women. *Gut Symmetries* sympathetically traces the development of a triad between a married couple and a woman. Although bisexuality is not a central focus of Kate Atkinson's *Case Histories*, a character matter-of-factly declares, "Everyone's bi these days" (2004: 292), suggesting a degree of acceptance of the concept in the United Kingdom in the time-setting at the end of the twentieth century.

A notable sub-category of writing about bisexuality which has recently come to the fore is the fictionalized life-story of well-known figures. Erica Jong's *Sappho's Leap* (2004 [2003]) gives the historical Sappho an epic treatment and portrays her as devoting herself to eros without regard for the gender of her partner, and *The Inner Circle* by T. Coraghessan Boyle (2004) explores the life of Alfred Kinsey, although this is an unsatisfactorily oblique account, and Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy's biography, *Kinsey: Sex the Measure of All Things* (2004 [1998]) provides a much more rounded and interesting portrayal.

The vanguard of a relative flood of non-fictional texts on the subject of bisexuality was the Off Pink Collective's *Bisexual Lives* (1988) and Sue George's *Women and Bisexuality*, published in the UK (1993), and *Bisexuality: A Reader and Sourcebook*, edited by Thomas Geller and published in the USA (1990). Compared to the output by lesbian and gay writers and feminists, work produced by and about bisexuals and bisexuality was small; however, especially in the USA a substantial amount appeared. Towards the beginning of this period the emphasis was on the narration of bisexual life-stories; the consolidation of a bisexual identity and community (reminiscent of the early phase of second-wave feminism); analyses of bisexual erasure, stereotypes

of bisexuality, and biphobia;⁴ and discussions of political activism. Common myths which were angrily rejected were perceptions of bisexuals as frivolous, hedonistic, untrustworthy or fence-sitters, en route to, but in denial of, a gay or lesbian identity, sheltering behind heterosexual privilege, or hypersexual disease-carriers (e.g. Udis-Kessler 1996). Tones of defensiveness and pride were frequent in such accounts, such as *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out*, edited by Lorraine Hutchins and Lani Kaahumanu (1991), and a successor to *Bisexual Lives*, edited by the Off Pink Collective: *Bisexual Horizons: Politics, Histories, Lives* (Rose, Stevens *et al.* 1996).

Drawing on experiences of feminist activism, women were particularly well represented. Elizabeth Reba Weise clearly expresses this dominant strand in bisexual writing and activism:

Those of us who consider ourselves feminist are excited about the possibilities of a bisexuality informed by the understanding that sex and gender are classifications by which women are oppressed and restricted. We see bisexuality calling into question many of the fundamental assumptions of our culture: the duality of gender; the necessity of bipolar relationships; the nature of desire; the demand for either/or sexualities; and the seventies' gay and lesbian model of bisexuality as a stage in working through false consciousness before finally arriving at one's "true" sexual orientation. (1992: ix)

Groups only for women are in the majority of USA and UK bisexual support groups and political organizations (Hemmings 2002: 17), as well as e-mail listserves. Some writing on men has appeared, most significantly two recent special issues of the *Journal of Bisexuality*, edited by Brett Beemyn and Erich W. Steinman, *Bisexuality in*

⁴ According to Marjorie Garber, "biphobia" is a neologism often attributed to San Francisco bisexual activist Maggi Rubenstein (1996 [1995]: 530). The word is obviously modelled on the word "homophobia," and refers to "hostility towards the fact of bisexuality in the abstract, and the lives of bisexual people in particular" (Eadie 1997: 142).

the Lives of Men: Facts and Fictions (2001), and *Bisexual Men in Culture and Society* (2002).

Around the mid-1990s there was a shift away from the general emphasis on personal accounts; a lengthy and influential book on bisexuality appeared, Marjorie Garber's *Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life* (1996 [1995]). In this tome Garber discusses bisexuality in mythology, sexology, psychoanalysis, culture, politics, history, film and literature. Garber is an established author with a crossover appeal from an academic to a general audience. After the publication of *Vice Versa* she popularized the concept of bisexuality on the talk show circuit (Rust 2000b: 548). Garber was also an expert called upon by *Newsweek* to evaluate the significance of the resurgence of bisexuality in the 1990s (546; Leland 1995: 46). Unlike the focus on trendy experimentation and celebrities found in the representation of bisexuality in the popular press in the 1970s, the 1990s version was of a "revolution not in sexual behavior but in the conceptualization of sexuality" (Rust 2000b: 545). This promised revolution is, however, frequently vague and utopian, as subsequent commentators looking for intellectual stringency, as opposed to exhaustive scholarship and readability, have pointed out with regard to *Vice Versa*. Merl Storr, for instance, points out that "[m]any of Garber's major theoretical claims [...] are not set out rigorously or at sufficient length, and tend to be reiterated rather than elaborated" (1992: 105-6). Despite this shortcoming, Clare Hemmings applauds the fact that by virtue of its breadth *Vice Versa* "distance[s] bisexuality from a specific link with identity per se" (2002: 21).

Certain differences in writing about bisexuality can be discerned according to geographical situation. The USA approach has generally been dominated by empirical work: sociological, psychological and political. Questions around identity have been quintessential to this work. In contrast, “[w]hat characterizes the British contribution to bisexual theorizing is an interdisciplinary approach drawing more heavily on critical and cultural theory than on empirical sociological approaches” (Hemmings 19).

It is clear that there is no transhistorical, universal phenomenon of bisexuality, as it manifests differently both in ontological and epistemological terms depending on context. Moreover, although I have concentrated on the USA and UK in my discussion, writing on bisexuality has appeared from authors in other countries too. In *A History of Bisexuality* Australian Steven Angelides (2001) makes brief reference to his home country, and *Plural Desires: Writing Bisexual Women's Realities*, edited by the Bisexual Anthology Collective, emerges from Canada (1995), and particularly highlights the concerns of women of colour. A recent edition of the *Journal of Bisexuality* edited by Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio focuses on *Women and Bisexuality: A Global Perspective*, and this was also co-published simultaneously as a book (2003).

After the appearance of *Vice Versa*, a number of books and articles on bisexuality appeared, including *Queer Studies: A Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Anthology*, edited by Brett Beemyn and Mickey Eliason (1996), *RePresenting Bisexualities: Subjects and Cultures of Fluid Desire*, edited by Donald E. Hall and Maria Pramaggiore (1996), and *The Bisexual Imaginary: Representation, Identity and*

Desire, edited by Bi Academic Intervention (1997). In the influential and inclusive *Queer Studies*, Christopher James discusses ways in which much queer, lesbian and gay scholarship avoids treating bisexuality as a valid epistemological site. He discusses the dismissal and appropriation of bisexuality in theory, and emphasizes the personal and political importance of acknowledging complexity in sexuality (1996: 217-40). In Amber Ault's chapter, she adapts the sociological concept of "techniques of neutralization," comprising suppression, incorporation, marginalization and delegitimation, to lesbian feminist responses to bisexual women (204-16). In a chapter by Ruth Goldman, "Who Is That *Queer* Queer? Exploring Norms around Sexuality, Race and Class in Queer Theory," she discusses the potential of queer politics to be inclusive and flexible (169-82), but she concludes that "bisexuality, along with race, continues to be one of the 'constructed silences' within queer theory, as it is within lesbian and gay studies" (175). In all of these authors' opinions, bisexuality is largely invisible.

In *RePresenting Bisexualities* and *The Bisexual Imaginary* a number of chapters render visible tropes of bisexuality in literary texts. For my purposes, however, the most suggestive chapter is that by Jo Eadie, "'That's Why She Is Bisexual': Contexts for Bisexual Visibility" (1997: 142-60). In this elegantly argued piece Eadie analyses two films, a New Zealand film, *Crush*, directed by Alison Maclean in 1990, and Tony Scott's *The Hunger* (1982), portraying them not as instances of biphobia, but as sources which reveal significant social tensions around excessive desire, appetite and its regulation, and monogamy. These anxieties are played out in the representation of bisexual characters. This is a fruitful line of enquiry, which moves beyond blame-casting and a victim mentality to a more nuanced and critical position.

A debate around the issue of naivety and “wishful theory” has recently occurred. This can be seen in the writings of Merl Storr (1999), Clare Hemmings (2002) and Jonathan Dollimore (1996; 2001). The debate centres around the tension between ontology and epistemology: in Storr’s words, “the reification of bisexuality as an identity is incompatible with the allegedly transformative potential of bisexuality as an epistemological force” (1999: 167). To extend this argument to the area of queer theory, there is a tension between the desire for bisexuals in the overdeveloped world to engage in identity politics, and their wish to deconstruct categories of gender and sexuality. This strain puts them in an ambiguous position with relation to queer theory, which aims for the “disruption of sex and gender identity boundaries and deconstruction of identity categories” (Gamson 1995: 393).

For Dollimore, an undue emphasis on the epistemological value of bisexuality has led to a defensive use of postmodernism. He contentiously criticizes work by Eadie and Hemmings as displaying theories of bisexuality “passing, if not closeted, as postmodern theory, safely fashioning itself into a suave *doxa*” (1996: 526-7). Singularly unfair though it may be to target two of the most subtle commentators on bisexuality, Dollimore has aptly highlighted a tendency to complacent and grandiose claims in current bisexual theory, which he terms “wishful theory” (531-3). This is “a theoretical narrative whose plausibility is often in inverse proportion to the degree to which it makes its proponents feel better. To that extent, wishful theory is also feel-good theory” (532-3). He points to overblown metaphors used to support these claims of subversiveness, such as the revolutionary double agent, the infidel and

miscegenation (527). He offers a bracing call for a grounded perspective in considering bisexuality:

It is difficult to be against fashion; as someone once said, you have to forgive it because it dies so young. But what, in the context of wishful theory, has died with it is the theoretical commitment to engaging with the cultural real in all its surprising diversity and mysterious complexity. (533)

Bearing in mind this appeal to remain ethically aware of material culture, and not to sacrifice ontology to a trendy epistemology, I turn to a lesbian philosopher who wrote an influential article towards the beginning of my fourth historical period. Elisabeth D. Däumer's "Queer Ethics; or, The Challenge of Bisexuality to Lesbian Ethics" appeared in the feminist philosophy journal *Hypatia* in 1992 (91-105). This article carefully analyses the radical potential of bisexuality in responding ethically to alterity. Däumer points out that bisexual visibility and identity politics would not subvert homophobia, sexism or heterosexism (97). She suggests, therefore, that bisexuality be employed conceptually not as an identity but as an epistemological and ethical vantage point (98). One of the potential advantages she lists of adopting bisexuality as a perspective is that,

[b]ecause the bisexual perspective enacts within itself the battle of contradictory sexual and political identifications, it can also serve as a bridge between identifications and communities, and thus strengthen our ability temporarily to "forget" entrenched and seemingly inevitable differences – especially those of race, gender and sexuality – in order to focus on what we have in common. (99)

In this passage it is clear that Däumer is not simply providing a utopian, marginal ideal which automatically, in some unspecified way, destabilizes the hegemonic

order. What she proposes is far more realistic, complex and contingent than the “wishful theory” which Dollimore derides. Däumer perceives the imaginative bisexual *perspective* (which is not necessarily adopted solely by bisexual persons, either in terms of behaviour or identification) as a battle-zone where warring possibilities play themselves out. This self-reflexive terrain is a space where various binaries of social positioning may briefly be united in dialogue. Conflicts of race, gender, sexuality, class and religion will not miraculously be healed in this dialogue, but focusing on commonalities and alliances between postcolonial and queer theories may lead to increasing tolerance, inclusion, and progressive behavioural changes.

As I have previously mentioned, gender has been at the forefront of much discussion on bisexuality. Race has also been much discussed, although sometimes the rhetoric of celebrating diversity in the bisexual community has been more in the abstract than in practice (Hemmings 2002: 5). Yasmin Prabhudas, however, is one of a number of authors who offer a personally grounded analogy between bisexuality and mixed-race heritage. She appeals for a challenging of stereotypes by “embracing a philosophy of unity,” to which bisexuals and people of mixed race in particular may contribute by “bringing together the frequently very separately perceived realms of ‘gay’/‘straight’, ‘black’/‘white’, through our experience of each of these realms as interwoven threads of one world” (1996: 30). June Jordan, too, highlights similarities between bisexuality and interracial or multiracial identities, and urges the transcending of binarist paradigms. She claims: “The positive, politicizing significance of bisexual affirmation [is] to insist upon complexity, [...] to insist upon the equal validity of all the components of social/sexual complexity”. She locates this potential in a politics of

“the middle ground,” which “invalidates either/or formulation, either/or analysis” (1992: 192).

Similar to this vision of a productive, deconstructive middle ground is Homi Bhabha’s validation of the hybrid. He admonishes:

[W]e should remember that it is the “inter” – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of “the people”. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves. (1994: 38-9)

In keeping with the appeals of theorists of bisexuality to challenge boundaries and search for coalitions, a productive and mutually illuminating dialogue could occur between bisexual epistemology, queer theory and postcolonialism. Although there is a growing body of writing on homosexuality and colonialism from a postcolonial perspective, much postcolonial writing has not engaged in sufficient depth yet with issues of sexuality – let alone bisexuality, despite the explorations of this link by writers such as Gloria Anzadúa and June Jordan. Bhabha, for instance, perfunctorily dismisses feminist and gay struggles as having occurred in the past (175), rather than investigating ongoing sites of contestation in the present. Bhabha would not necessarily applaud my adaptation of his notion of the Third Space to a sexuality which occupies a similar middle ground, but his interstitial space offers me a platform both for comparison and critique. Just as postcolonial studies seldom explores issues of heterosexism, homophobia, or same-sex desire, so too can queer and bisexuality studies be critiqued for a pervasive focus on the First World, which further supports

homophobic rhetoric of same-sex relations being foreign imports to Africa (Spurlin 1999: 218-37).

Chapter 3

Homosexualities in Africa and South Africa

It is in this agonistic space of representation, crisscrossed by mutually exclusive orders of terms, that identity has often been negotiated [...] [I]ntercultural representation is the space in which the supposed bearers of light [colonialists] themselves felt the slippage of cultural certainties in a place of difference – I mean this literally – and they debatably felt the psychic ambivalence consequent upon not being quite what one thinks one is.

Leon de Kock (1997: 223-4)

Following my overview of the history of bisexuality in the West in the previous chapter, in this chapter I examine some implications of current homophobia in relation to the existence and visibility of variant sexualities, including bisexuality, in Africa. I then focus specifically on South Africa, and provide a critical analysis of ways in which international theorizing about bisexuality can be of use in this country in the twenty-first century.

As I point out in “Reading Bisexualities from a Bisexual Perspective” (Stobie 2003: 36-8), a number of African leaders have expressed forceful opinions on variant sexualities. In 1995, Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe, banned the organization Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) from the country’s International Book Fair. Terming homosexuality a repugnant Western import, he branded homosexuals as lower than pigs or dogs (*Mail and Guardian* 1995: 15), and stated that “sodomites and perverts” had “no rights at all” (Welch 2000: 12). In 1996, Namibian president, Sam Nujoma, urged the condemnation and rejection of homosexuals (Murray 1998b: 252). In October 2000, Namibia’s Minister of Home Affairs, Jerry Ekandjo, called upon 700 new police officers to “eliminate” gay men and lesbians “from the face of

Namibia.” He categorized homosexuality as unnatural and un-African (Amupadhi 2000: 13). Nujoma subsequently reiterated demands for the police to arrest, deport and imprison gays and lesbians, even though the country has a liberal constitution (“Namibia ‘Does Not Allow Gays’” 2001: 4). Zambian then-president, Frederick Chiluba, called for the arrest of lesbians and gays, as they fell foul of sodomy laws. Botswana too has sodomy laws, and a recent law prohibiting lesbian sex. In 2000, Ugandan president, Yoweri Museveni, ordered police to locate, charge and jail homosexuals. Kenyan then-president, Daniel arap Moi, declared that homosexuality was un-African and un-Christian (Luchsinger 2000: 23).

The widespread scapegoating that has recently occurred in African countries is revealed in Museveni’s warning: “Homosexuals are the ones provoking us. They are upsetting society. We shall not allow these people to challenge society” (*The Natal Witness* 1999: 5). It has been suggested that homophobia is a useful weapon for leaders beleaguered by problems such as waning support, conflict, economic crises and the horrifying effects of the HIV/Aids epidemic. Kamal Fizazi of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission claims, “Homophobia is a cultural campaign these leaders can initiate to detract attention from serious issues” (Luchsinger 2000: 23-4).

This “cultural campaign” has, however, triggered international protests and local activism. In Zimbabwe, despite harassment, blackmail and arrests of its members, GALZ membership has grown. GALZ activist Poliyana “Tsitsi Tiripano” Mangwiwo, internationally known for her speaking tours, received recognition by being named one of Amnesty International’s 50 Human Rights Defenders in 1998. Mangwiwo’s

“*nom de guerre*” was chosen with care: “*Tsitsi* means ‘mercy,’ *tiripano* means ‘we’re here.’ Everyone must have mercy with gays and lesbians because we’re here” (Welch 2000: 13). In response to the claim that homosexuality is un-African, Mangwiro pointed to the existence of the Shona word, *ngochani*, which she translated as “homosexual” (12-4), thus revealing the existence of same-sex relationships in Zimbabwe before colonialism.

As well as being homophobic, societies in Africa are patriarchal, so lesbians and bisexual women particularly challenge the *status quo*, and face social reprisals. For instance, when another GALZ activist, Tina Machida, came out to her parents as a lesbian at the age of 18, they arranged for her to be raped in the hopes of “normalizing” her (Luchsinger 2000: 24). However, the strength of survivors and activists acts as an inspiration to others. Mangwiro escaped from an unwanted arranged marriage with a man 40 years her senior, taking her two children with her. She proudly claimed a lesbian identity (Welch 2000: 15). Other Zimbabwean women, inspired by her example, came out to her, “but most of them are married. They say that they can’t leave their husbands because of financial reasons. So they stay with their husbands because of that but some are bisexual now” (Rodgerson 2000: 29). Sadly, Mangwiro died of Aids in 2001 (Rodgerson 2001: 23).

Other African countries that have successfully organized against homophobia include Namibia, Zambia, Botswana and Uganda. In Namibia, women such as Elizabeth Khaxas of the feminist collective Sister Namibia have been particularly effective. In 1997, the collective launched the Rainbow Project, a pressure group for gay, lesbian, transsexual and transgender rights (Luchsinger 2000: 24). In 1998 a report appeared

of the inception of a Zambian group, Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual and Transgender Persons Association (Legatra), to counter harassment and victimization (Kunda 1998). It is noteworthy that one of the constituent elements, “bi,” disappears in the chosen acronym, although the inclusiveness of intention in both the Rainbow Project and Legatra is significant. In Botswana, newspaper stories based on the lives of men and women have challenged the myth that homosexuality is un-African (Murray 1998b: 253-4). An anonymous British/Ugandan bisexual woman gives an account of participating in a live radio broadcast in Uganda about homosexuality, and the risks this entailed (“Out in Africa” 2002: 25, 27).

In a number of African countries, then, homophobia, threats, victimization and oppression have to an extent had the reverse of their intended effect, and have served to mobilize as well as stifle opposition.

In 1998 an ethnographic account appeared, *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities*, edited by Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe. The concept and title are tantalizing, but unfortunately the book promises more than it delivers, because of a Western bias and a prevailing binarism which does little justice to practices which are complex and do not slot into an either/or paradigm. The book does offer extensive evidence that homosexualities are not un-African. It contains a range of texts from the eighteenth to the late twentieth centuries, which examine a considerable number of sub-Saharan cultures, and it provides ample evidence of variant sexualities being indigenous over a long period. There is much fascinating material, including translations of ethnographic accounts of pre-colonial and colonial times, court records of male homosexual “crime” in early colonial Zimbabwe, same-

sex marriages, the concept of “male lesbians” in Hausa, adolescent same-sex sexual behaviour, cross-dressing, role reversal, and women who love women in Lesotho. Also of interest is a list of 50-odd African cultures with same-sex patterns, most of which have local terms for same-sex sexual practices or roles.

There are a number of problems with the text, however. The authors are overwhelmingly Western, and Africans are the objects, not the agents, of study. Women are also dramatically underrepresented. A further omission is glaringly apparent in the light of the constant emphasis throughout the text that, in Africa, heterosexual marriage and procreation are strongly enforced social obligations. A husband’s clandestine affairs with women or men may be tolerated in various cultures, and there is evidence for same-sex erotic relationships between co-wives, and between married women in Lesotho. It is striking, however, that despite the use of terms such as “gay” and “lesbian” by contemporary authors, there is an avoidance of the term “bisexual.” In such a case, as Paula Rust points out, “bisexuality is only invisible because it is not seen [...] The failure to see bisexuality lies in the observer” (1992: 305). In *Boy-Wives*, individual authors and the editors fail to see bisexuality, and the word does not occur in the index (a classic means of rendering a concept invisible).

The effect of this avoidance seems to be consonant with Amber Ault’s discussion of “techniques of neutralization”¹ (1996: 207-208) used by one relatively powerful discourse to neutralize another. In this case, the discourse of “homosexuality” or “gay and lesbian” enquiry suppresses a more nuanced account which includes other variant

¹ A term used in another context by sociologists Gresham Sykes and David Matza (1957) in “Techniques of Neutralization,” *American Sociological Review* 22: 664-70.

sexualities. Ault discusses four strategies employed in this process: suppression, incorporation, marginalization, and delegitimation. These strategies, which rely on a system of binaries to achieve their effects, provide a useful framework through which to analyse the representation of bisexuality in *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands*.

Suppression refers to the way in which one discourse silences another. While mainstream society assumes that subjects are heterosexual and imposes Adrienne Rich's "compulsory heterosexuality" (1980: 631-60), in a manoeuvre designed to escape the tyranny of this heteronormativity, gay and lesbian writers deliberately attempt to overturn the centre/margin binary. In so doing, however, they have a tendency to centralize their own experience as lesbians and gays, inadvertently suppressing other categories of queers in the process. They do this by substituting the flip side of the coin of heteronormativity, still insisting on a single gender of object choice. As lesbians and gays use the tyranny of compensatory "compulsory" monosexuality (James 1996: 222), they privilege same-sex relations above opposite-sex relations sanctioned by heteronormativity. This results in the suppression of the category of bisexuality. This suppression is distressing for, and disrespectful towards, those whose behaviour transgresses these either/or paradigms.

There are a number of examples of this myopia in *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands*, resulting in distortion. Rudolf P. Gaudio, in "Queer Lesbians and Other Queer Notions in Hausa," uses the label "gay" to describe men who marry and have children, and who have sex with men. He acknowledges that their construction of their behaviour differs from that of Western gay men, but applies the term because of his subjects' self-conscious behaviour. He comments, "Hausa people generally refer

to homosexuality as an act rather than a psychological drive or predisposition, and homosexual men are more often described as men who *do* homosexuality than as men who *want* other men sexually” (1998: 117-8). Behaviour, then, is the yardstick employed in Hausa society. However, Gaudio declines to use the concept of bisexuality:

I have chosen not to use the term *bisexual* to refer to married gay Hausa men because I understand bisexuality to refer to an individual’s acknowledged capacity to be sexually attracted to both women and men and to the assertion of one’s prerogative to act on such attraction; this implies a degree of choice regarding sexual matters that is not recognized in Hausa society. Specifically, most Hausa people do not see marriage as a choice but rather as a moral and social obligation. (118)

However, if these people’s emphasis on behaviour, rather than choice, were heeded, and if bisexuals’ own definitions of bisexuality – such as Christopher James’s “bisexuality is [...] the sexual or intensely emotional, although not necessarily concurrent or equal, attraction of an individual to members of more than one gender” (1996: 218) – were applied, bisexuality would seem to come closer to describing the behaviour of these Hausa men, and that of many other people described in *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands*.

It is not only Gaudio, however, who suppresses the concept of bisexuality. The editors, Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe, ignore the concept in their four overview sections of the book and their conclusion, except in parenthetical reference. However, anthropological studies, such as those of C. S. Ford and F. A. Beach, as well as Margaret Mead (all of whom I have already referred to), provide a number of examples of bisexual behaviour in various cultures worldwide (although the term

“bisexuality” is not always used as an organizational framework). This evidence ruptures easy binaries.

Given the general reluctance of anthropologists to employ bisexuality as a conceptual category, even when the evidence would make its use logical, and even when writers point to the need to examine the totality of sexual expression within a given culture (Fox 1996: 13), it is perhaps not entirely surprising that Murray and Roscoe remain loyal to the homosexual-heterosexual binary. However, where logic is abandoned, and professional requirements of evidence and accurate labelling are ignored, quite obviously a high degree of denial is revealed, and the end result is to further entrench theoretical binaries which do not adequately address subjects' lived experience.

A second technique of neutralization referred to by Ault is incorporation, which is discernible in a fascinating chapter by Kendall, “‘When a Woman Loves a Woman’ in Lesotho: Love, Sex and Female Husbands” (223-41). Kendall describes observing women exchanging erotic kisses, and she learns of a range of sexual practices between women. These are not, however, referred to as having sex, as the Ur-signifier in a sexual act defined as such is the penis. She discovers that (heterosexual) marriage is universal, but that around 1950 socially endorsed relationships between pairs of married women were common, although this practice is now waning. Incorporation refers to the practice by which lesbians and gays appropriate bisexual-behaving people as members of their own groups (1996: 208-9). For instance, Sue George (1993: 38) and Emma Donoghue (herself a lesbian) refer to the incorporation techniques of ground-breaking author Lillian Faderman, who ignores evidence of different-sex relationships as she “pressgang[s] clearly bisexual women into the all-

star exclusively-lesbian history pageant” (1996a: 75-6). In “‘When a Woman Loves a Woman’ in Lesotho,” Kendall does not once consider the framework of bisexuality to examine the experiences of (heterosexually) married women who have erotic relationships with other women; instead, she refers to “lesbian or lesbian-like behavior” (p. 237). Given the fact that to call these women lesbian does them the injustice of privileging part of their experience at the expense of another, and given the fact that Kendall’s attempts to explain her own lesbianism to women in Lesotho were met with incredulity, this use of incorporation mars an otherwise fine paper.

A third technique of neutralization, marginalization, occurs when bisexuality is mentioned, but on the sidelines of the main discourse. In an article translated from the German in *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands*, Kurt Falk’s “Homosexuality among the Natives of Southwest Africa” dating from the 1920s, this claim is dropped: “My opinion is that the percentage among the natives able to consort with both sexes and (according to the evidence of many natives questioned about it) feel the same desire for both is around 90 percent” (196). The editors of *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands*, Murray and Roscoe, make no reference to this staggering opinion, although they discuss Falk in some detail. Without contextualization, Falk’s claim recedes into the margins.

A fourth, and final, type of bisexual erasure occurs through the process of what Ault refers to as delegitimation, which occurs when gays and lesbians discredit bisexual experience (1996: 211-3). This is clearly seen in the interview of Kamau, a young Kikuyu, by Stephen Murray (1998a: 41-62). Murray appears edgy whenever Kamau talks of women, and refuses to validate his range of experiences. For instance,

Kamau's comment about his relationship with his girlfriend, "We both enjoy it, the sex," provokes the Himalayan conversational leap of, "So, there are no gay bars in Nairobi" (62). The absence of a question mark highlights what appears to be a desperate attempt to wrench the conversation away from an unpalatable track. There are a number of attempts to show that while marriage is a social obligation, the partners (and the focus is more specifically on the male partners) may have no desire for their spouses or the other sex in general. However, Kamau attests to his emotional and sexual response to both sexes: "I love being with men and I love girls" (53). This message, however, is not one that the book as a whole endorses.

Boy-Wives and Female Husbands is a useful, but flawed, first book on the subject of African homosexualities. When I first read it in 1998 it seemed obvious to me that further texts about sexualities in Africa needed to pay more attention to the experiences of women and to the use of bisexuality as a conceptual framework, which might unsettle stultifying binaries in a context where they are especially inappropriate. This is not to propose the use of the term "bisexual/ity" in a universalizing or essentializing way. It needs to be applied with respect and care, bearing in mind the differences between identity, behaviour, and potential. However, it must be remembered that some people of African descent, both within and outside the continent, themselves claim the term, and that some writers about African sexuality have displayed disrespectful techniques of incorporation and delegitimation by ignoring the evidence and imposing such terms as "gay" and "lesbian" on behaviour that does not warrant it. Bisexualities in Africa generally may differ from the concept elsewhere in the world, but they need to be accorded respectful treatment along with other African homosexualities.

In 2005 a ground-breaking ethnographic text appeared which focussed on same-sex relations between women in Africa, thus redressing the gender imbalance in *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands*. This book, *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-Sex Practices in Africa*, edited by Ruth Morgan and Saskia Wieringa, has three main purposes:

It demonstrates that there are traditional and institutionalised ways in which African women contracted same-sex relations. Secondly, it proclaims the right of African women engaged in same-sex practices or relations to their identities as Africans, for as several interviewees state: “We, lesbian women, are born here in Africa, we belong here. Who can say we are unAfrican?” Thirdly, it gives a vivid portrait of the lives of African women engaged in same-sex relations and practices, portraying the joys of having found love, the pains of betrayal and the hatred encountered in their communities, as well as the many shades of emotions in between. (2005a: 22)

Interestingly, the text as a whole contains a number of references to bisexuality, although these are not unproblematic, as I shall discuss in some detail later. Suffice it to point out for now that in the quotation above there is scrupulous reference to “same-sex practices or relations” rather than “lesbianism,” yet when a number of interviewees’ words are editorially collapsed into one rhetorical voice, the identity claimed is that of “lesbian women.” This slippage which erases bisexuality is telling, and the particularity is not consonant with the spirit of multiplicity suggested at the end of the quotation.

The project which culminated in the publication of *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-Sex Practices in Africa* was conceptualized as an ethnographic survey of seven countries: South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, Namibia,

Swaziland, Tanzania and Uganda, with regard to various forms of same-sex practices and relations between black women in Africa. Researchers from these countries were trained to interview respondents from their home countries by Morgan, a South African anthropologist who has been the director of the Gay and Lesbian Archives in Johannesburg since 2002, and Wieringa, a Dutch anthropologist affiliated to the University of Amsterdam. The local activists asked their respondents questions about such topics as female bond friendships, women marriages, transgender and same-sex identified healers, erotic play amongst girls at boarding schools, initiation rites including elongation of the labia, and contemporary phenomena such as butch-femme relationships and political lesbian organizations. The research which ensued was presented at the fourth conference of the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society, with the theme of "Sex and Secrecy," held in Johannesburg in 2003. The edited collection of papers which appeared as *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives* is taboo-breaking, frank and riveting.

One particularly interesting chapter is the piece by Nkunzi Nkabinde, with Ruth Morgan, on ancestral wives among women sangomas in South Africa. Having interviewed five women sangomas who love women, ranging in age from 18 to 58, the youngest of whom identifies as bisexual, Nkabinde explains that because of their powerful position at the heart of African culture, sangomas involved in same-sex relationships are not subject to social disapproval, and need not fear rape as other lesbians do (2005: 232). However, in their concluding overview chapter of the book, the trainers and organizers of the project, Morgan and Wieringa, comment that because of these sangomas' special status they cannot be considered queer in a Western sense, as they "ostensibly do not invert or even subvert gender or sexual

behaviours, as they (aim to) fall mostly within these categories” (2005b: 310). Although I am not suggesting that the same-sex practices of some women sangomas could be considered quintessentially queer, Morgan and Wieringa seem to be adopting an absolutist and binarist line. In the first place, the way in which the sangomas negotiate their subject positions and relationships varies markedly from case to case, depending on context, suggesting that there is not some simple gender/sexuality template into which they fit. Second, the way in which women sangomas with a sexual affinity for other women attract acolytes with similar preferences suggests that there is an undertow of social knowledge that such sangomas offer a haven for women who are sexually nonconformist. Third, increasingly amongst this group of women, as with the others studied, terminology and strategies adapted from the global LGBT movement are becoming known. In the light of these points, it would appear more satisfactory and accurate to consider cases of women sangomas who are erotically attracted to other women as liminal sites in which the convenient but misleading binaries of tradition/modernity, ancestor worship/Christianity, body/mind, man/woman and heterosexual/homosexual are blurred and called into question, a queer project indeed, although specific to the African contexts in which it occurs.

With regard to the representation of bisexuality in *Tommy Boys*, *Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives*, there are a number of allusions to the concept, but also some degree of Ault’s techniques of neutralization in comparison to the privileged representation of lesbianism and respectful representation of female masculinity. A comment by one of the trainee researchers is revealing: “I think totally differently now about, for instance, sexuality in general. I don’t put people in boxes so easily now and find labelling less important. I no longer have those prejudices of bisexual women I used

to have!” (13). The enthusiasm of the trainee is clear; however, it is questionable whether prejudices are so quickly expunged, especially in the context of the more cautious usages, “so easily” and “less important.” Further, one wonders whether the previous prejudices against bisexual women have been replaced by different prejudices, rather than being eliminated entirely. Significantly, this comment by a trainee is followed by the authorial observation by Morgan and Wieringa: “For us it was fascinating to see how naturally and quickly the women began to shift their thinking and their own categories of what *a lesbian* may be” (14; emphasis added). In the context, one would have expected a more inclusive set of words, embracing bisexuality and transgender. Their absence suggests a conscious or unconscious (Western) privileging of lesbianism, which in view of the frequent references to heterosexual relationships and behaviours, often leading to pregnancy, amongst the respondents, may not be the most appropriate blanket term to use. The shift of terminology can be interpreted as illustrative of Ault’s categories of suppression and incorporation.

The concept of bisexuality as potentially useful in ethnographic studies in Africa is raised in the work of Judith Gay, who investigated “mummy-baby” relationships between girls in Lesotho in the 1970s. Morgan and Wieringa refer to Gay’s work (296-7), but fail to develop her suggestion of using bisexuality as an illuminating theoretical lens through which to analyse same-sex behaviours in African contexts. Although the term does occur within *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives*, across a range of associations, the lack of authorial development marginalizes the concept. In the chapter on female marriages and bisexual women in Kenya, the respondents prefer to identify as bisexual rather than lesbian “in order to take the

focus off their same-sex desires” (47). The word is portrayed as a relatively respectable cover, without any suggestion that individuals might be attracted to men as well as women, or that they might adopt an identity as bisexual for reasons other than fear or cowardice. This authorial portrayal smacks of the neutralizing technique of delegitimation, as elsewhere in the volume other associations than negative ones are suggested, by women who use the term to refer to themselves (83, 107, 111, 233, 250), or by a Namibian Damara “lesbian man,” who naturalizes bisexuality by citing it as a sexual preference with which s/he is familiar in women partners or potential partners (187).

One particularly interesting thread concerning bisexuality occurs in the chapter on same-sexuality amongst women in Swaziland. An interviewee comments that she loves her male partner, but is attracted to women, and muses, “*in a way I think I wouldn't mind being with a woman and my man as well. Would you consider me bi?*” (269). Yet some pages later the interviewer mentions the early “mummy-baby” relationships experienced by this woman, “who identifies as straight and who is at present involved with a man” (275). This slippage from the questioning of a bi identity to a categorization as heterosexual reveals some degree of authorial bias against bisexuality, and embodies the technique of suppression. However, even if there is a degree of elision, prejudice or lack of amplification regarding bisexuality, the concept is much more visible than in *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands*. Despite my problem with terminology, the book as a whole breaks cultural taboos in its explicit discussion of sexualities in Africa in women's personal narratives. *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives* may well act as inspiration for more African women to write frankly about issues of gender and sexuality, including in fictional

form, much as personal narratives about bisexuality stimulated fictional representations of this trope in the West.

Another book appearing in 2005 which examines a range of sexualities in various African contexts, including the South African context, also springs from a conference, in this case the “Versions and Subversions” conference held in Berlin in 2002. The book is *Body, Sexuality, and Gender: Versions and Subversions in African Literatures I*, edited by Flora Veit-Wild and Dirk Naguschewski (2005). It contains a collection of chapters dealing with literary and film representations of the body, and narrative strategies of inscribing the body. Body, sexuality and gender are not treated as separate entities, but as closely related and mutually questioning and illuminating categories: “bodies and sexualities that are transgressing concepts of gender, gender that is probing body and sexuality” (x). As the editors point out, in Africa the three intertwined concepts form a highly contested space, as body and sexuality are constructed in terms not only of gendered power relations, but also of race, ethnicity, and the legacy of colonialism. The book is divided into four sections. “Gifted Bodies” and “Queered Bodies” examine the body and sexuality as expressive, creative powers, while “Tainted Bodies” and “Violated Bodies” examine the effects of violence and other trauma.

The section “Queered Bodies” contains five chapters: my piece, “Between the Arches of Queer Desire and Race: Representing Bisexual Bodies in the Rainbow Nation,” Drew Shaw’s “Queer Inclinations and Representation: Dambudzo Marechera and Zimbabwean Literature,” Elleke Boehmer’s “Versions of Yearning and Dissent: The Troping of Desire in Yvonne Vera and Tsitsi Dangarembga,” Unoma N. Azuah’s

“The Emerging Lesbian Voice in Nigerian Feminist Literature,” and Alexie Tcheuyap’s “African Cinema and Representations of (Homo)Sexuality.” This last chapter is particularly interesting for its analysis of Mohamed Camara’s film *Dakan*, which I have already referred to, and its reference to a book by Daniel Vangroenweghe, *Sida et Sexualité en Afrique* (2000), which according to Tcheuyap “offers a clear and almost exhaustive history of homo/bisexuality in Africa (2005: 153). Looking at Zimbabwean texts, Boehmer shows evidence of desire between women in the work of Vera and Dangarembga, while Shaw examines short stories by Nevanji Madanhire and Charles Mungoshi, arguing that the queerest Zimbabwean author remains Marechera, whose work ranges across a variety of inconsistent representations of sexuality, which is portrayed as having the potential to shift and transgress or destabilize the normative. Shaw concludes that Marechera’s portrayal of a strict border between heterosexuality and homosexuality as being nothing more than a fiction raises key questions for LGBT and queer studies: “if a consistent sexual identification can never be taken as a foregone conclusion, then how can one construct a politics around sexual orientation?” (110). This is the tension which I have already raised in this thesis, arguing that examining bisexuality offers a crucial means of answering this question, particularly in the African context.

In my chapter in *Body, Sexuality, and Gender: Versions and Subversions in African Literatures I*, I examine Sheila Kohler’s *Cracks*, Shamim Sarif’s *The World Unseen* and K. Sello Duiker’s *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, arguing that bisexuality is a key site of destabilization in literary representation. Anxieties associated with change and the broaching of cultural boundaries may lead to its being authorially foreclosed; other authors are more open to accepting and celebrating the in-between ground.

Azuah's chapter, "The Emerging Lesbian Voice in Nigerian Literature," usefully complements my argument from a Nigerian perspective. Azuah points out that in Nigeria there is an emphasis on motherhood, and the feminist position in this country emphasizes the complementarity of men and women. For both these reasons emerging lesbian voices are at odds with mainstream social values, and a variety of recent texts illustrate bisexual behaviour as a resolution of the conflict between social acceptability and same-sex desires. *Body, Sexuality, and Gender: Versions and Subversions in African Literatures I* is a text which, amongst other things, fruitfully explores issues of queer desire as represented in African literature and film.

The situation in South Africa is a particularly interesting one, as the country occupies an interstitial space on the continent. It is simultaneously typical and singular, and may be thought of as occupying Bhabha's Third Space. In certain ways, as Alexander Shaw maintains, "SA Is Different" (2003). This country is anomalous in the continent because, in terms of infrastructure and capital markets, as well as medically and educationally, its systems are more akin to the First World than the Third: "With more than half the continent's railways, more than half the continent's telephones and 90% of the continent's Internet users, it becomes difficult to classify South Africa as African" (10). This is to use technology as a yardstick, but the examples of slavery and the current debate around homosexuality and the church are even more germane. In addition, while the rest of Africa mourns its history of having lost part of its populace to the slave trade, South Africa was on the receiving end; however, the majority of the population later experienced political "enslavement." A long history, including struggles over the freedom of the press and the liberties of gender and sexuality enshrined in the Constitution, has led to the exceptional position adopted by

the Archbishop of Cape Town, Njongonkulu Ndugane, who has nailed to the mast the colour of tolerance with regard to sexuality in the current crisis in the Anglican church. Across Africa the call has been against the acceptance of practising homosexual priests, after the ordination of “openly gay” Bishop Gene Robinson (formerly married, with two daughters) in the USA. Yet Archbishop Ndugane has urged: “We must respect the integrity of our brothers and sisters who experience themselves as gay or lesbian, and their honest attempts to grow and mature in Christ” (Shaw 10). With respect to the issue of ordination, the Archbishop has enjoined tolerance and open communication.

This is a useful measure of how far South Africa has moved since the era of the apartheid Nationalist government. During this time, homophobia, threats, victimization and oppression prevailed in South Africa, as they still do elsewhere on the continent. In a society that was not only homophobic, but racist and sexist, the most vocal and well-organized sexually nonconformist sector during this period consisted of white, middle-class, urban gay men. The relative privilege of this group of homosexuals did not, however, protect them from the normalizing power of “Christian National” hegemony. For example, the *Mail and Guardian* newspaper has recently brought before a wide audience research on human rights abuses in the South African Defence Force. In an effort to stamp out “deviance,” individuals who were mostly white male conscripts, but also including women, were subjected to electric shocks in the process of aversion therapy, as well as chemical castration, and gender reassignment surgery, some of which was not completed (Kirk 2000a: 4; Kirk 2000b: 4-5; Kirk 2000c: 5; Barrell 2000: 5).

As revealed in the two main apartheid-era texts on variant sexuality, *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa* (Krouse and Berman 1995 [1993]) and *The Invisible Ghetto: Lesbian and Gay Writing from South Africa* (Gevisser and Cameron 1995 [1994]), which appeared during the death throes of apartheid and the shift to democracy, men and women across the spectrum of South Africa established social spaces to be queer, despite institutionalized pressure and prejudice. In these two texts there is little theorizing, as their purpose is historical recovery, documentation and liberation.

These texts give evidence of the lives of same-sex lovers of varied ethnic backgrounds, ranging from, amongst others, cross-racial working-class couples, “coloured” schoolchildren and drag queens, white intellectuals, black youths from the townships, sex-workers, mine-workers, and lesbian sangomas. Their personal narratives additionally confound claims that homosexuality is un-African. Despite this variety, however, women are significantly less represented than men. Bisexuality is poorly represented, with some notable exceptions. One of these exceptions is a number of references to same-sex “mine-marriages” between older and younger miners, and glancing allusions to the wives or girlfriends of these men. A second exception is a poignant story about a threesome consisting of two women and a man, “Bye Bye, Forget Me Not,” by Welma Odendaal, from *The Invisible Ghetto* (1995 [1993]: 184-91). A third account of bisexuality occurs in *Defiant Desire*, a brief autobiographical sketch by Zubeida, in which she discusses her bisexual identity, the oppression she experiences, and her perception of prejudice in gay and lesbian organizations (Sam 1995 [1994]: 190-1). It is noteworthy that in a rare instance where the word “bisexual” actually occurs, in the name of the organization ABIGALE

(Association of Bisexuals, Gays and Lesbians), no evidence occurs in the text of actual bisexual individuals in the group: only gays and lesbians are referred to. Conversely, when bisexual behaviour is described, it is generally not referred to as such.

Over the apartheid era, a shift occurred from social/supportive groups to gay activism, the tempo increasing as the apartheid machine was dismantled. At the same time, such influences as a growing democratic movement and feminism led to expressions of dissatisfaction and feelings of exclusion from blacks and women within the queer community, and a number of organizations underwent radical transformation. Queers also worked for rights within political groups.

After South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994, much gay and lesbian activism, spearheaded by the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE), centred around staving off pressure from religious fundamentalists and ensuring that the Constitution of 1996, uniquely in the world, enshrine rights on the basis of "sexual orientation." This success provides grounds for confidence but not complacency.

Significant gains have been won. The climate of opinion is more open, and there is less overt homophobia. Political triumphs for the NCGLE include a successful challenge of the sodomy laws, the Constitutional Court declaring same-sex laws unconstitutional, and achieving policies of non-discrimination in the Defence Force and equal rights for homosexuals at work. Discrimination is illegal on a range of grounds, including sexual orientation. In 1999 the Constitutional Court overturned the ban on same-sex partners of South Africans settling in this country ("Immigration

Victory” 2000: 23). A number of gays have sought asylum in South Africa because in their home countries (including Ghana and Uganda), their safety is jeopardized. A recent South African law makes sexual orientation sufficient grounds for political asylum (ILGA 1999). In 2002 one Constitutional Court ruling gave same-sex couples the same workplace financial benefits as married heterosexual couples, and another provided same-sex couples with the right to adopt children legally. A decision in 2003 ruled in favour of the legitimacy of same-sex partners’ children born by means of artificial insemination. Further Constitutional Court decisions in 2003 ensure the same domestic partner benefits for same-sex couples as their heterosexual counterparts (Myers 2003), and allow transgendered people to correct their officially documented sex (“South Africa Passes” 2003).

It is noteworthy that South Africa is the only country on this continent that is allowing rights to the LGBT community which are being granted in other countries worldwide, but which are not contemplated elsewhere in Africa. Alongside these legal gains have been occasional defeats, such as the refusal of a lesbian couple’s appeal to be allowed to marry legally (“Marriage Rejected” 2003); however, the Constitutional Court established a principle on 1 December 2005 that same-sex marriages should be allowed after the twelve month period provided for Parliament to make the necessary changes to the Marriage Act (“Govt to Act on Gay Marriage Ruling” 2005: 1). South Africa will then join other countries, currently Belgium, Britain, Canada, Spain and the Netherlands, which allow same-sex unions. Despite the increasing implementation of the liberal principles underpinning the Constitution, though, there are still various grounds for concern, such as the discrepancy which exists between the age of consent for heterosexual acts (16 years) and same-sex sexual contact (19 years). Further, there

is still a gap between the liberal democratic ideals enshrined in new laws, and a reactionary vigilantism in certain sectors of society. To cite one instance, Gail Smith narrates harrowing accounts of lesbians, especially in the townships, being raped, terrorized and killed (2003: 2-3).

Freedom of expression has improved since the overturning of the Obscene Photographic Matter Act, which banned the possession of visual depictions of various sexual acts (ILGA 1999). The stringent censorship of the past has been lifted, and television programmes such as the film of Vito Russo's *The Celluloid Closet* (directed by Epstein and Friedman in 1995) and local productions such as *The Man Who Drove with Mandela* (Greta Schiller 1998), *From Sando to Samantha* (Jack Lewis and Thulanie Phungla 1998), *Apostles of Civilized Vice* (Zachie Achmat 1999), *Metamorphosis: The Remarkable Journey of Granny Lee* (Luiz DeBarros 2000), and *The Soweto Gaieties* (Sophia de Fay and John Bonham Carter 2002) have been aired. In addition, there has been the sleazy Baroness Coral von Reefenhausen exploring "adult" entertainment and services, and pruriently interviewing celebrities, in *Below the Belt* (Schwinges 2003).

In the last few years, other cultural productions of interest to the South African queer community have appeared. These include *Gaze* (2003), a book of photographs of gay men and lesbians who are portrayed by the heterosexual photographer Michael Meyersfeld in a "quasi-anthropological" way which glamorizes or iconizes the subjects (De Waal 2003: iv). The representations and especially the text are problematic, but this is a groundbreaking work.

Also in the visual realm, the “Out in Africa” film festival has expanded in the decade of its existence. One particularly thought-provoking film which it showcased in 2004 was *Proteus* (John Greyson and Jack Lewis 2003). This film, a Canadian and South African collaboration, is set on Robben Island and is based on the transcript of a sodomy trial in 1735. While the title refers visually to the protea flower it also has resonances of shape-shifting, and the film deals sensitively with changing sexuality, specifically bisexuality, as well as male homosexuality in an interracial love affair. The directors use a Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt* of anachronism to emphasize the ubiquity of heteronormativity, homophobia and racial oppression in times other than the setting of the film. As well as being beautifully made this is an important film, as it excavates historical material but jolts the audience into seeing this material as part of a developing archive, instead of seeing it as remote and merely romantic.

In the field of dance Steven Cohen continues provocatively to question sexuality, gender, religion and their place in South African society. In theatre, Pieter-Dirk Uys continues with his satire and activism around issues of HIV/Aids, sexuality and race relations in South Africa. His *Elections and Erections: A Memoir of Fear and Fun* appeared in 2002. Ken Cage has documented local gay argot in his book, *Gayle: The Language of Kinks and Queens: A History of Gay Language in South Africa* (2003).

For those in South Africa who have Internet access (a relatively small sector of the population, something to the order of 10%), the exchange of ideas is stimulating and provides support. E-mail lists, in particular, provide virtual communities which transcend geographical boundaries. Specifically South African queer websites are thin on the ground, but *Behind the Mask*, a website on gay and lesbian affairs in

(Southern) Africa at <http://www.mask.org.za>, the *Mail and Guardian's* queer site at <http://www.q.co.za>, Mamba online at <http://www.mambaonline.com>, Gay South Africa at <http://www.gaysouthafrica.org.za> and the *Gay and Lesbian Archives* website at <http://www.wits.ac.za/gala/> are available.

Generally, gay men have a higher profile in the media than lesbians. Gail Smith observes:

Lesbians in South Africa exist in an invidious nether world of hyper-visibility and total invisibility. Unlike gay men who can claim at least two prominent political figures as icons – Supreme Court of Appeal Judge Edwin Cameron and Treatment Action Campaign head Zachie Achmat – lesbians have no standard bearer or a public champion. Lesbians in high profile positions tend to remain in the closet, even if they are out in their immediate communities. (2003: 2)

Judge Anna-Marie de Vos, who with her lesbian partner Suzanne du Toit successfully petitioned the South African High Court to secure rights for lesbians and gay men to co-parent in 2001, and who both appeared in a television programme entitled “Two Moms: A Family Portrait” (2004) may be something of an exception in this regard, although their names are not household currency in the same way Cameron’s and Achmat’s are. Beside De Vos and Du Toit, however, there is general evidence of a growing visibility of lesbians in the media. One example is the newspaper profile of Zodwa Shongwe of the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, who has achieved a balance between being out of the closet as a lesbian and having a traditional African belief system (Coleman 1999). Another black woman who proudly claims her lesbian identity is Phumi Mtetwa, ILGA co-secretary. She has said,

The rights of women not to be discriminated against on the basis of sexuality are, and should be seen to be, indivisible from the goals of the broader women's human rights movement. The struggle for equality, peace and democracy cannot move forward whilst particular groups are stigmatised, marginalised and rendered invisible with little or no recourse. ("Threat to Women's Freedom" 2000)

Mtsetwa also rebuked opponents of gay rights at the Beijing+5 United Nations conference, including high-ranking government officials from other African countries. She maintained, "To penalise people for being what they are is profoundly disrespectful," and she scotched the old refrain that lesbianism is un-African by proudly affirming, "I am an African" (Haffajee 2000).

A national campaign to combat overt hostility against lesbians and bisexual women, "The Rose Has Thorns," was launched in 2003, and has been widely reported (Gail Smith 2003: 1-2). Queer women were the target audience of the magazine *Womyn* (initially *Women on Women*). For the period that it existed, between 2000 and 2002, this venture supplemented *Exit*, *Outright* and *Gay SA*, which cater mainly if not exclusively for men. Interestingly, the editor, Sharon Cooper, made an appeal for the healing of divisions caused by discrimination and prejudice within the community of queer women, such as racism, and antagonism by "real" lesbians towards bisexuals (2000: 2).

In terms of the visibility of bisexuality, one of the problem areas in South Africa is the ubiquity of the heterosexual/homosexual binary. Often precise terms are eschewed in favour of the binarist either/or, which leads to the erasure of individuals such as bisexuals. In the "Directory of Bisexual and Bi-Inclusive Groups" section of the 2000 edition of the *Bisexual Resource Guide*, edited by Robyn Ochs, four local groups are

listed: the Gay and Lesbian Organization of the Witwatersrand, based in Johannesburg, which does not include “bisexual” in its name; Cape Town’s Association of Bisexuals, Gays and Lesbians (ABIGALE), which focuses mainly on gays and lesbians; Durban’s Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Collective; and Johannesburg’s Fata Morgana, billed as a “support group for married gay men” (157).

This reluctance to name as bisexuals men who act in a bisexual manner is fairly common. A typical reference is one by Mark Gevisser, who refers to “‘Phil,’ a gay man who lived with his wife and children in Soweto” (2000: 16). In the circumstances, the adjective “bisexual” might be more appropriate. Unproblematically claiming “Phil” as gay would seem to be an example of incorporation and suppression, two of Amber Ault’s “techniques of neutralization” by which a relatively powerful discourse neutralizes or renders invisible another (1996: 207-15).

Moving from popular culture to academia, a number of recent conferences have provided a platform for ideas about sexuality, including queer sexuality, to be expressed. One of these conferences was the “Gender and Colonialism” conference at the University of the Western Cape in 1997, a highlight of which was Johan U. Jacobs’s paper on “Gender Blending and Code-Switching in the South African Novel – A Postcolonial Model,” where he pays attention to process, provisionality and border-crossing, and notes that

[a]s South Africa has finally moved towards nationhood, transsexualism, transvestism and bisexuality have become much more explicitly centred in recent fiction in various ways that need to be distinguished from the kind of androgyny Nadine Gordimer had in mind when she claimed that “all writers are androgynous beings.” Each of these inscriptions of transgenderism into the national fictional discourse raises questions concerning the particular cultural

politics of such sexual equivocation in contemporary South African writing. (2002: 296)

Another fruitful conference was the “Versions and Subversions: International Conference on African Literatures” at the Humboldt University of Berlin in 2002, during which several papers discussed narratives with themes of minority sexualities from African countries including Zimbabwe, Nigeria and South Africa. As I have discussed, *Body, Sexuality, and Gender: Versions and Subversions in African Literatures I*, edited by Flora Veit-Wild and Dirk Naguschewski, appeared as edited conference proceedings after this conference. Issues of gender, sexuality and nationhood were analysed in several papers delivered at the “Region, Nation, Identity” conference at the University of Natal, Durban, in 2002. At the “Sex and Secrecy” conference at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER) the focus was strongly anthropological and historical, but some papers dealt with the representation of homosexualities in South African literature or film.

In chapters of books and in journal articles, authors have explored similar issues. In “Queer Identity and Racial Alienation: The Politics of Race and Sexuality in James Baldwin and the ‘New’ South Africa,” William Spurlin (1999: 218-37) examines the cultural lenses and rhetorical practices used to read novels of James Baldwin, *Another Country* (1962), *Giovanni’s Room* (1956) and *The Fire Next Time* (1963) by African American critics in the 1960s. He analyses the backdrop of the interconnected discourses of homophobia, sexism and black nationalism, and draws comparisons between the example of Baldwin and homophobic discourses in Zimbabwe and South Africa. He appeals for sexuality to be viewed as a valid site of decolonization. Significantly, however, Baldwin’s representations of bisexuality go unnoticed, except

in a pejorative quotation. In other words, Spurlin's attention to the way in which "discriminatory practices of the nation-state 'map out' queers as 'Other'" (231) does not extend to a realization of his own techniques of erasure and Othering, and the false unity which his use of "queer" involves. This is at odds with the rhetoric of difference espoused throughout the article.

In his chapter, "Institutionalizing Sexuality: Theorizing Queer in Post-Apartheid South Africa," Vasu Reddy discusses imagery of pathology in connection with homosexuality, the potential of queer to affect change, the dire warnings of African leaders about homosexuality being un-African and un-Christian, and the need for South African queer activism to foreground race and gender (2001: 163-84). While I have no argument with any of these points, where I would diverge from Reddy is in his unproblematic acceptance of the term "queer" as being coterminous with "gay and lesbian"; in my view, the potential of queer theory lies in its critical examination of difference.

Flora Veit-Wild examines *Defiant Desire* (Gevisser and Cameron), the case of Mark Behr and subversive uses of the carnivalesque in Afrikaans comics as examples of the return of the repressed in the "new" South Africa (1998: 19-21). She views this period as being "the age of mixing, of being obscene, syncretic, impure" (19). Veit-Wild quotes Etienne van Heerden on this time when rigid boundaries dissolve:

As the Master Narrative of apartheid slips away, we are becoming aware of the multiplicity of voices in our country. [...] In South Africa writers find themselves within that "unstable point", that site where the unspeakable stories of subjectivity, the private histories – the his-stories and her-stories – meet each other, oppose each other, interrupt each other, rewrite each other, silence each other, evoke each other. (19-20)

Christell Stander (1999: 148-60) and Andries Visagie (1999: 184-90) examine two texts by Afrikaans authors through a queer lens. Stander interrogates the power of the lesbian subject to create a “signifying scandal” (1999: 158) and disrupt phallogocentrism, while Visagie examines Koos Prinsloo’s imperative of self-dissolution in gay male sexuality and his scorn towards Christianity (the ultimate Master Narrative).

Lannie Birch (1998: 58-71) examines the historical record of James Barry and argues that s/he may have been a “hermaphrodite.” This article serves to unsettle gender dichotomies. In Judith Coullie’s interview with Stephen Gray, who revealed his bisexuality in his autobiography *Accident of Birth*, she returns several times to this issue (2000: 236-53).

For my purposes, the most interesting article is one by Tim Trengove Jones: “Fiction and the Law: Recent Inscriptions of Gayness in South Africa” (2000b: 114-36). This article negotiates between three poles: the continuing homophobia and prejudice in South African society, the rhetoric of triumphalism whereby the freedoms accorded gays and lesbians act as a litmus test for change in the entire society, and the representations of gay males which Trengove Jones charts in popular culture and short stories by Brendan Cline and Stephen Gray, representations which he finds reactionary, although short stories by Shaun de Waal meet with more approval. Trengove Jones ends with a claim which smacks of wish-projection:

A gay voice, schooled in the pressures of negotiating an identity, might be crucially illuminating in a postcolonial, postmodern, postapartheid world. If this is true, rather than being positioned – and positioning themselves – as pampered reactionaries, white gay males might indeed come to contribute something rich and new to our cultural and political life. (134)

In my view, a number of contradictions are significant within this article. There is a certain narcissism or purism in examining only examples of texts concerning what Trengove Jones portrays as white gay male speaking voices. Although he notes that no newspaper reviewers saw fit to mention Coetzee's use of lesbianism in *Disgrace*, he himself does not comment on the significance of this representation. Further, he concentrates only on white authors, even though he mentions a short story by a black writer in a footnote. One wonders what the grounds were for providing no elaboration on this story. There is also an instance where he naively conflates author (Stephen Gray) and narrator of his story, thus remaining oblivious to potential distance, irony and social critique (129). In addition, Trengove Jones uses only the term "gay" to refer to Gray and his text, even though he notes a character who is clearly behaviourally bisexual, and even though, as I mentioned earlier, Gray himself has claimed a bisexual identity. An overly narrow focus weakens an otherwise perceptive article, which paradoxically calls for social and political responsibility.

Aside from these articles and chapters, in 2005 three important non-fiction books dealing with sexuality in South Africa were published. They are Edwin Cameron's *Witness to AIDS*; *Sex and Politics in South Africa*, edited by Neville Hoad, Karen Martin and Graeme Reid; and *Performing Queer: Shaping Sexualities 1994-2004 – Volume One*, edited by Mikki van Zyl and Melissa Steyn.

Edwin Cameron's *Witness to AIDS* is a courageous and timely text which powerfully combines a personal narrative and an analysis of the political handling of the epidemic in the South African context. This work is particularly interesting for my purposes for two reasons. First, although Cameron's courage as a judge and public figure in disclosing his Aids-positive status is undeniable, it is noteworthy that he explains that he contracted the disease through unprotected gay sex, and repeatedly proudly claims a gay identity, but elides another portion or dimension of his life, as can be seen in a fleeting reference to "my sexually active post-divorce life" (2005: 50). This guarded narrative in the midst of a wider dynamic of disclosure, along with the binarist division between heterosexuality and homosexuality it implies, seems to flatten the contours of the author's life, and also does not do justice to the marriage. A second interesting reference in the text is to Professor Malegapuru Makgoba's provocative public allusions to the ancient sePedi term, "matanyola," meaning sex between men: "he asserts that the role of homosexual transmission of HIV in Africa is significantly under-recognised and understated" (83). What is not made clear, however, is that this sex may occur in a context of bisexuality as well as homosexuality.

Sex and Politics in South Africa, edited by Hoad, Martin and Reid, contains a number of personal testimonies about sexuality and the struggle for liberation, as well as a section on the Equality Clause in the Constitution, and a guide to GALA resources. Bisexuality is not mentioned in this text, even in the case of Ann Smith, who discusses being married, with three children, when she fell in love with a woman, and therefore instantaneously became a lesbian (2005: 58). On the other hand, *Peforming Queer: Shaping Sexualities 1994-2004 – Volume I*, edited by Mikki van Zyl and

Melissa Steyn, is much more inclusive in its representation of a fluid spectrum of sexualities, including bisexuality. A number of references to bisexuality are found within the index, one of which alludes to the call for full membership within the queer community by bisexuals in the United States, quoting as support for a similar viewpoint within the South African situation Paul Rabinow's gloss on Foucault that demands on the one hand for a rigid identity, and on the other for rupturing that identity, are both abusive, "because they assume in advance what one is, what one always must be closed to, which side one must be on" (Leatt and Hendricks 2005: 316). In addition, one chapter, "Playing on the Pavements of Identities," by Bernedette Muthien, explores bisexuality as one aspect of her identity interacting with other vectors: race, ethnicity, culture, nationality, class and spirituality (2005: 41-73). This chapter takes its place against a backdrop of chapters exploring issues of sexuality from a range of positions, across the social spectrum of South Africa.

In the culture of democracy since 1994 in South Africa, human rights have been expanded and gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered individuals have more legal protection and freedom of expression than ever before. However, prejudice and ignorance obviously still exist, within and outside the queer community, as do legal anomalies. HIV/Aids is an escalating, desperate problem for everyone in this country, regardless of sexual orientation or preference, requiring an increasing openness with regard to discourse about sexual behaviour. Some ten years after democracy, then, although violence, prejudice and homophobia still oppress those who are part of sexual minorities, there is the potential for new insights into sexuality. The improved culture of rights accorded to sexual minorities stems from a more general culture of human rights which now pervades South African life. In addition, minority sexuality

rights and debates contribute significantly to South African society's democratic transition.

At this moment in South Africa's history, the country stands as a beacon of hope on the continent in terms of LGBT rights. It is vital, however, that differences as well as similarities between sectors under the umbrella of queer be analysed. Despite protestations by various homophobic politicians in Africa, variant sexual practices involving members of the same sex occur. Further, alongside the emphasis on marriage and reproduction on this continent, bisexual behaviour occurs. In examining this behaviour, both as it occurs and as it is represented in cultural artefacts, it is useful to employ a realistic epistemology of bisexuality tailored to local circumstances, based on the debates around the topic in the West. Learning from the recent critiques of grandiose "wishful theory" will ensure that modest claims are made. The tension that exists in the West with regard to an over-emphasis on ontology leading to a devaluing of epistemology is extremely unlikely to occur in South Africa. Bisexuality occurs as behaviour in this country, and to a much lesser extent as an identity, but a Western-style bisexual activism is inconceivable. This, however, frees up the concept on the epistemological plane. Bisexuality has become visible in a surprising number of novels in the post-apartheid period. An analysis of the significance of this phenomenon against a background of the dissolution of rigid, binary structures of race, gender and sexuality needs to occur. Before this occurs, however, I need to examine the representation of some figures in the arts, with a South African connection, known for their bisexual behaviour, in order to give a cultural history and context for my literary analyses to follow.

Chapter 4

“Biopia” in Biography:

The Representation of Bisexuality in Selected South African Lives

The structures of (in)visibility and hegemony producing the trope of bisexuality and the semiotics of biopia reveal the physically read subject as a palimpsest whose body not only imprints upon and displaces metaphysical possibilities for identity but is in turn written over by social fictions. [...] A queer symbolic predicated on an unstable dependence of the visible upon what it represses designates the mirrored and multiplying border as the site of contest for definitional control and thus cultural positioning. Nothing less is at stake than disrupting and rendering visible the inequity of culture’s blinding equation of an eye for an I.

Brian Loftus (1996: 230)

“Biopia” is a neologism, by analogy with “myopia.” It is a critique of a certain type of myopia: a short-sighted refusal to perceive, or a misrepresentation of, bisexuality. The effect of this myopia is an externally imposed secrecy which distorts our vision of the gamut of sexual relationships and practices. One of the causes of this myopia is a habitual recourse to a binarized epistemology of categories such as straight/gay or lesbian/gay. In terms of a more open-minded, complete and accurate vision of sexuality, the concept I am endorsing is the “biopia” of this chapter’s title, which recognizes bisexuality as a discrete and significant category of sexuality. Along with bringing bisexuality to the forefront of the gaze, I aim to reveal certain stereotypes associated with the concept, and show that alternative readings – including ones relating to national identity – are possible and illuminating.

This chapter proceeds from the understanding that the trope of bisexuality is significant in cultural studies, literary studies and intellectual life in South Africa. It contextualizes the contemporary popular discussion of bisexuality in this country, and

it examines the biographical representation of bisexuality in the national context, in order to begin establishing a cultural history of bisexual behaviour which can be examined in the light of signifying practices. This examination, of six subjects with some connection with South Africa, and the world of the arts, constitutes the bulk of this chapter. Scrutinizing this biographical evidence reveals a plethora of interstitial spaces: between the global and the local; between the present and the past; between the cultural artefacts of historical lives and contemporary biographical commentary, with its narrative trajectory; between the literal and the metaphoric; between sexuality and national identifications; and between bisexuality as an absence and a value-laden representation. These interstitial spaces form the terrain in which I pursue my investigation.

As I have discussed in Chapter 2, Western critics have pointed out that in theoretics, as well as academic writing, journalism, films and film criticism, bisexuality tends to become invisible, be sensationalized or stigmatized, or to reveal significant social tensions, particularly around issues of limit, restraint, pleasure and untrustworthiness. Other critics point to the potential offered by a bisexual epistemology. In addition, in the West a significant number of biographies or autobiographies have appeared which highlight subjects' bisexuality. Some figures of particular literary or cultural significance are: Josephine Baker, Simone de Beauvoir, Elizabeth Bishop, Jane Bowles, Paul Bowles, John Cheever, Samuel Delany, H.D., Margaret Mead, Anais Nin, Eleanor Roosevelt, Muriel Rukeyser, Vita Sackville-West, May Sarton, Mary Shelley, Gore Vidal, Oscar Wilde and Virginia Woolf.

Against the backdrop of an emerging international bisexual identity, scholarship and activism, South Africa appears both reticent and rigidly binarist. However, historical circumstances explain why this should be so. When there was an upsurge of interest in matters of sexuality in the West, beginning in the 1960s, relatively little attention was devoted to such issues in the South African context, as the prevailing intellectual climate was sexually conservative and punitive of dissonance, and the primary goal of activism was political, to overthrow apartheid. Further, in gay and lesbian circles there were struggles around racial and gender issues. In such a fragmented and disputed terrain it is understandable that minority sexualities, such as bisexuality, were not investigated.

Since 1994, energies previously devoted to the struggle have been diverted elsewhere, and, especially with the catastrophic consequences of HIV/Aids in South Africa, much energy has been devoted to dispelling ignorance, myths and taboos around issues of sexuality. The guarantees of the Constitution have further opened a safe place for the discussion of sexual practices which were formerly outlawed. In this climate, South Africa is well placed as a site to investigate both the practical, concrete past and present of bisexuality and its representation, as well as its significance in the light of other vectors of identification, such as race, class and gender. As bisexuality in South Africa has never solidified into a generally recognized identity or a specific community, a greater possibility of dialogue exists.

At this moment in South Africa's cultural history, the abstract trope of bisexuality is particularly suggestive. It has been systematically ignored or co-opted into inappropriate categories because it is perceived as potent and threatening. The

assumed instability of bisexuality provokes anxiety, leading to the policing of binarist borders. Bisexuality represents a challenge to identities which are less certain and stable than many would like to believe, and it represents a challenge to narratives which repress alternatives. It thus offers a means of viewing the heterosexual/homosexual system of which it is a complex part. Viewed from a sympathetic – some might say, utopian – perspective, it represents a potential for change, a loosening of boundaries, a possibility of multiplicity which all signify a fruitful cultural and national pathway beyond the rigid binaries of the past. It is usefully illuminated by, and in turn illuminates, other contemporary theories such as postcolonialism. Both postcolonialism and bisexuality in the abstract function to disrupt binary systems.

In 1986, Njabulo Ndebele pinpointed the need for a paradigm shift in thinking in order to effect social change:

The greatest challenge of the South African revolution is in the search for ways of thinking, ways of perception, that will help to break down the closed epistemological structures of South African oppression, structures which can severely compromise resistance by dominating thinking itself. The challenge is to free the entire social imagination of the oppressed from the laws of oppression that have characterized apartheid society. (1994: 67)

I would agree with Ashraf Jamal (2002b: especially Chapter 2) that, despite the transition to democracy, the epistemological structures of South African life are still founded on the same binary oppositions that underpinned the ideologies of apartheid and colonialism. These lingering, deeply entrenched binaries are discernible, for instance, in the sexism and heterosexism of our society. Finding Ndebele's "new ways

of thinking [... and] perception” presupposes liberating the “social imagination” by a multi-faceted deconstruction of these binaries.

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, critics such as Elisabeth D. Däumer and June Jordan, both writing in 1992, thoughtfully examine the epistemological potential of bisexuality. Däumer visualizes the bisexual perspective as a bridge with the potential for seeing commonalities within and between categories such as gender, race and class, and Jordan emphasizes the consonances between bisexual and interracial or multiracial identities. These theorists vouchsafe the bisexual perspective a privileged role in deconstructing the “closed epistemological structures” referred to by Ndebele, which continue to pervade and pathologize South African society; this bisexual perspective functions as an embodiment of Bhabha’s “Third Space.”

For this potential to be realized, however, it is necessary for “biopia” to occur. This entails employing a specific optic or lens, not simply to “write bisexuals in” to an expanded framework of sexuality, but seeing how, at different stages, bisexuality has been read, and with what biases and effects; in addition, and crucially, it implies adopting a viewpoint which is sensitive to the potential represented by bisexuality as posited by such writers as Däumer and Jordan. As part of this process bisexuality in specific, concrete examples, not mere abstraction, must be brought under the spotlight. Very little cultural production around the trope of bisexuality is to be found in South Africa; however, three recent discussions around the issue of bisexuality are useful in plotting some co-ordinates in the South African context.

The first of these texts is a brief autobiographical account by Zubeida, a Muslim woman who self-identifies as bisexual. This account is to be found in *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa* (Gevisser and Cameron 1995 [1994]). Zubeida stresses her openness and receptivity to men and women, and the benefits of the position she occupies in this regard. More particularly, however, her account focuses on the difficulties she has encountered as a result of her bisexuality. She muses:

I guess I feel oppressed as a bisexual person. Most lesbian and gay organizations don't really cater for bisexuals – I think largely because bisexuals are even less visible than homosexuals. There is also so much distrust of bisexuals in the homosexual community. Sometimes we are seen as sitting on the fence and enjoying the best of both worlds; usually we are seen as being unable to come out of the closet.

I'm not out at work. Even though the people I work with would call themselves progressive, I find them incredibly homophobic. Can you imagine how they'd react to a bisexual in their midst? And I'm also not out to my family. They would not be able to cope. (Sam 191)

This quotation usefully reveals a number of pertinent issues: the relative invisibility of bisexuality, prejudices and stereotypes associated with bisexuality, the pressures of homophobia, even in progressive circles, and the pressures of biphobia, that sub-set of homophobia, which emanates from heterosexual society and from gay and lesbian society. Sadly and ironically, but unsurprisingly, this dual barrage of biphobia leads to internalized biphobia, which results in behaviour (in this case, not coming out at work or at home, and an unwillingness to use her full name) which corresponds with popular stereotypes of bisexuals, and hence re-entrenches prejudice.

The second instance I want to touch on is the representation of bisexuality in two short documentary films which were screened as part of a recent South African Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, called "Out in Africa." One of these films, *Unmasking*

Mavis, directed by Stelana Kliris (2002), includes comments by male sex workers that all of their clients are straight men, and are either married or have girlfriends. One sex worker states categorically, however, in the only reference to the word in the film, “The term ‘bisexual’ doesn’t appeal to me. It’s either you’re straight or either you’re gay – and you can’t be both.” Aside from the ubiquitous, exclusive usage “Gay and Lesbian” for the film festival (and, indeed, for the sub-title of *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa*), *Unmasking Mavis* clearly reveals popular binarist attitudes to bisexuality. The concept is either not mooted, although the clients referred to behave bisexually; or the term is used moralistically, in terms of confusion or denial myths (bisexuals are confused, or are denying their “real” gay identity). The second short film, *Everything Must Come to Light*, was directed by the late Mpumi Njinge (2000). This film tells the story of three women who, as part of being called to be sangomas, were instructed by the ancestors to marry women. When examining the life histories of these women, it is clear that in some cases bisexual behaviour has occurred. The term is not used in the film, however, and in the promotional material for it, the terms “lesbian” and “same-sex identified women” are used.

The third contemporary case I want to mention concerns nationally renowned pop diva, Brenda Fassie, who died at the age of 39 on May 9, 2004. For at least a decade Fassie was labelled as bisexual in the media; this was generally part of a discourse of excess which, reminiscent of the media treatment of Janis Joplin and Madonna, was applied to her. So, for instance, *Time* magazine trumpeted: “Fassie is the protagonist of countless tabloid stories involving drug use, bisexuality and tantrums of diva proportions” (Philadelphia 2001). Closer to home, a Zimbabwean take on Fassie was a censorious comment that “she is not just a lesbian but a bisexual” (Hatugari 2002) –

a clear example of homophobia with superadded biphobia. In the immediate aftermath of Fassie's death, the triple accusation which originally appeared in the *Time* article was repeated locally: the Radio 702 news report announcing her death paid tribute to her musical talents, then referred to her drug-taking, bisexuality and diva-like tantrums, and the web-site allAfrica.com posted an article which repeated this litany ("Mabrr's music legacy will continue to live on" 2004: 2). Another article on the same site comments that after Fassie confessed that "she was a drug-addict and bisexual – a social taboo in South Africa's townships – her reputation started to spiral downwards" (Hennop 2004: 1-2). The reference to "a social taboo" in the singular makes it clear that the author perceives bisexuality to be less socially acceptable than drug addiction in township culture.

While hostility to or demonizing of bisexuality can be discerned in such instances, another reaction is to elide the category. Matthew Krouse, ironically enough editor of *The Invisible Ghetto: Lesbian and Gay Writing from South Africa*, wrote an article entitled "Brenda the Lesbian Icon," which appeared in the *Mail and Guardian*. This article quotes Fassie as claiming to be bisexual, but the words "bisexual" and "bisexuality" occur only once each in the article, while "lesbian" occurs 15 times, and "gay" 10 times. Slippage between one concept and another, leading to the rendering invisible of the concept of bisexuality, can be seen in Krouse's claim that "Fassie's talent and her open bisexuality have stood as proof that black lesbians can make an enormous contribution to popular culture, and can play the field of love on equal terms" (2004: 12).

Further commentary on Fassie's life has focused on various lovers, three of whom I will touch on. Mention has been made in the press of her lover, Poppie Sihlahla, who died as a result of a drug overdose in 1995, and this commentary serves to continue linking bisexuality with drugs, excess and tragedy (Krouse 2004: 12; Hennop 2004: 1; Sylvester 2004: 2; Lategan 2004: 2). Another lover who has received press coverage is Sindisiwe Khambule, who returned to her mother's home in Pietermaritzburg in 2003 after the break-up of her relationship with Fassie (Regchand 2003: 1; Khumalo 2003: 4; Jubasi 2003: 3). In all the accounts at the time of Khambule's return home she denies being a lesbian, but nowhere does the term "bisexual" appear. Despite some progressive comments regarding the gay and lesbian community from Khambule, the dominant trope of the reports is that of the returned prodigal, who is begging forgiveness for her sins against God and her mother, and who craves forgiveness from a community whose norms she has transgressed. Even in a context where the concept of bisexuality could have been raised, it is elided. After the death of Fassie, one year after these reports, Khambule is represented as "someone whose reputation was tarnished by the media" during her relationship with Fassie, but who has managed to salvage her image by dint of hard work and belief in her own values (Olifant 2004: 10). The representations of Khambule and Fassie reveal the polar extremes of response to bisexuality: either an absence or an intolerable excess. One headline refers to "The unfussy life of Brenda Fassie" (Mogoatlhe and Kakaza 2004: 6). Obviously this is a play on the singer's name, but it is also an allusion to her lack of "proper" discrimination, which, it is implied, led to her demise.

Conflicting reports are found with relation to Fassie's collapse some two weeks before her death. Her lover, Gloria Chaka, claims to have been with Fassie at the time,

and furnishes details of their last hours together, of her arranging a lift for Fassie to the hospital, and of her expulsion from the hospital by Fassie's family, as well as from the home they shared (wa Afrika, Geldenhuys and Mofokeng 2004: 3). As opposed to this rendition, however, Fassie's brother claims to have been in the house with her when she collapsed, and to have taken her to hospital (Philp, Shota and Mahlangu 2004: 3). When such opposed narratives are found it is impossible to adjudicate between their relative truth claims, but the possibility exists that individuals have sought the limelight themselves, or that attempts have been made to manipulate events to create an official sanitized version. The official post-mortem results were that the pop diva died of a cocaine overdose, not an asthma attack as was at one stage suggested (Steenkamp 2004: 1), in a reprise of the story concocted as an attempted cover-up after the death of Poppie Sihlahla (Muli 2001: 2). Interest in Fassie's life and the circumstances of her death remains high, and articles such as those by Tholang Tseka (2004a and b) and Bongani Madondo (2004), highlighting her drug-taking and sexual appetite, will doubtless be joined by other salacious accounts of her excesses.

In contemporary South African culture, then, bisexuality, despite its potential for insights in the personal, political, social and symbolic domains, is characterized by invisibility, denial, stigma and associations of pathology. As postcolonial criticism points out ways in which imperial discourse constructs its others as possessing certain undesirable personality traits, such as untrustworthiness and lack of morality, so too have feminist and gay critics made similar observations about representations of gender and gay sexuality respectively. Similar comments could equally well be applied to bisexuality, which may be ignored or demonized by straight society or by unsympathetic gay and lesbian critics. In each of the cases above a hegemonic identity

attempts to bolster its own power, self-esteem and sense of natural superiority by rendering an other as debased.

In an effort to chart this process of othering backwards in time, I now turn to some biographies and autobiographies of subjects associated with the arts, and with South African connections, spanning the twentieth century. This shift to the past, as mediated through recent writing, is similar to feminist historical reclamation projects to unearth forgotten voices, and only becomes possible once an adequate critical or theoretical language has been developed to conceptualize it. I particularly focus on tactics biographers have adopted when confronted by evidence of bisexuality, and reveal how autobiographical writing can offer evidence at odds with biographical accounts. The figures I discuss are Beatrice Hastings (1879-1943), Leontine Sagan (1890-1974), Roy and Mary Campbell (1901-1957 and 1898-1979, respectively), Lola Watter, (1925-2003), and Stephen Gray, who was born in 1941. Examining the evidence reveals that in the past, people have lived as bisexuals, although there have been difficulties associated with their behaviour, including a culture of secrecy which raises problems for biographers. A close reading of the biographies and editorial commentary reveals similar responses to those of the contemporary accounts already discussed: either erasure or stereotyping, with a gender dimension. Where bisexuality is sympathetically treated, even the choice of terminology is problematic.

Beatrice Hastings, who was born in Port Elizabeth in 1879, and who left South Africa as a young woman, subsequently making a name for herself in England and France, ended up committing suicide in 1943. She is best known in South Africa through the research of Stephen Gray, who has written affectionately of his “wild colonial girl,”

whose reputation he has attempted to reconstruct in a journal article (1994: 113-26), a chapter of a book (1999), and, most recently, a weighty tome of some 700-odd pages, *Beatrice Hastings: A Literary Life* (2004). Gray bemoans the fact that Hastings, who wrote prolifically – progressive journalism, novels and poems – has not been subjected to literary scrutiny, and that her story is narrated in the interstices of other, more famous lives to which she was connected. Robert Frost was intrigued by the notches Hastings claimed to have on her bed for every man she had slept with (Sichel 1967: 274). These lovers include A. R. Orage, editor of the progressive journal, *The New Age*, to which she contributed, Amedeo Modigliani, who has given us 17 paintings and a number of sketches of her (Gray 2004: 315), and Raymond Radiguet, who was 16 to her 39, and who was at the same time in a gay relationship with Jean Cocteau. Gray also notes the inaccuracy of the mythography that has accrued around her, and the difficulty even of establishing her full name, let alone sloughing off the stereotype of wild, witch-like lush, and hearing Hastings’s own voice.

One of the points of interest in evaluating Beatrice Hastings’s life, for my purposes, is the degree of mystery surrounding her relationship with another famous figure, Katherine Mansfield. Certainly this relationship soured later, but Gray refers categorically to a “passionate affair” (1994: 114), although before the publication of *Beatrice Hastings: A Literary Life* finding evidence for this required reading between the lines of the documentation found in John Carswell’s *Lives and Letters: A. R. Orage, Beatrice Hastings, Katherine Mansfield, John Middleton Murry, S. S. Koteliansky 1906-1957* (1978), and Pierre Sichel’s *Modigliani: A Biography of Amedeo Modigliani* (1967). Carswell refers to a quickly-burgeoning close friendship

and collaboration between Hastings and Mansfield in 1910 and 1911 (1978: 52, 58-9, 60, 62, 64). There is, however, no explicit reference to an affair.

In 1915, Mansfield wrote a letter to her husband, John Middleton Murry, in which she described a crucial rift with Hastings:

At B's this afternoon there arrived "du monde," including a very lovely young woman, married and *curious* – blonde – and passionate. We danced together. I was still so angry about the horrid state of things.

[...] It ended in a great row. I enjoyed it in a way, but B. was very impossible – she must have drunk nearly a bottle of brandy and then at 9 o'clock I left and refused to stay any longer or spend the night there. She flared up in a *fury* and we parted for life again. (Quoted in Sichel 1967: 287)

A slightly later letter referred to Hastings having been "drunk and jealous" on this occasion, and mentioned Mansfield's sense of superiority (287). Her actions of dancing with the "*curious* – blonde – and passionate" young woman, and her refusal to spend the night, paired with her glee at Hastings's perceived jealousy, would seem to give substance to claims that Hastings and Mansfield were involved in an affair.

Additionally, in 1920, Mansfield wrote to Murry:

Yes, it is true I *did* love B.H. but have you utterly forgotten what I told you of her behaviour in Paris – of the last time I saw her and how, because I refused to stay the night with her, she bawled at me and called me a *femme publique* in front of those filthy Frenchmen? She is loathsome and corrupt and I remember very well telling you I had done with her, explaining why and recounting to you how she had insulted and abused me. I should have thought you would not have forgotten these things. (Quoted in Carswell 1978: 166)

The final piece of evidence which would seem to indicate an affair is hypothetical.

Some confusion surrounds the sender of a letter Mansfield received, who Carswell

speculates must have been Hastings. In her *Journal*, Mansfield referred to her fear of this correspondent in the present and the past: “There was a peculiar recklessness in her manner and in her tones which made me feel she would recognise no barriers at all. At the same time, of course, one is fascinated” (quoted in Carswell 181). Significantly, the image of the alluring yet dangerous border-crosser is a common representation of the bisexual (Eadie 1997: 145-8, 155-6). Mansfield is also flooded with anxiety that her correspondent must “have a large number of letters of mine which don’t bear thinking about” (Carswell 1978: 181).

All in all, then, based on my comparative reading of various biographical studies, there is evidence to suggest some sort of erotic relationship between Mansfield and Hastings, although biographers have difficulties in finding appropriate language to describe this. The closest Carswell comes to the explicit is towards the end of his biography:

The relationship and ultimate fates of Katherine and Beatrice are particularly interesting. Both of them intensely, over-consciously feminine, they both also had an ambi-sexual side which drew them to one another yet was a source of horror and embarrassment. (273)

Gray, too, uses the term “ambi-sexual” to refer to Hastings’s sexuality (1994: 121). This term, coined as part of Masters and Johnson’s sex-research discourse of the 1960s (1966), is discussed in their later work, *Masters and Johnson on Sex and Human Loving* (1985), which devotes a mere three pages of 600 to this sexuality, judgementally attaching the term “ambisexual” to people indiscriminately attracted to men and women (373). As Marjorie Garber wittily observes, this connotation was self-mockingly adopted by the editors of the journal *Anything that Moves* (1996

[1995]: 265). The label has not become accepted terminology by the international bisexual community. Aside from the word itself, as Clare Hemmings points out, the use of a hyphen in such a context has the effect of “isolating ‘sexual’ and making it a question of numbers (the desire for two)” (2002: 74), instead of stressing flexibility and openness. It seems more understandable for Carswell, writing in 1977, naively to use this strained term than it is for a writer in the 1990s, especially one who identifies as bisexual in his autobiography, as I shall discuss later. This quibble aside, Gray is to be applauded for bringing the life and work of Beatrice Hastings out of obscurity.

Gray’s labour of love finds its fullest expression in *Beatrice Hastings: A Literary Biography*, in which the author, firmly placing his subject centre-stage, thoroughly contextualizes her life and analyses her work. Despite the exhaustive scope of the text, however, Gray is still forced to resort to speculative and unsubstantiated claims with regard to Hastings’s possible bisexuality. He refers to a schoolgirl “‘pash”” (2004: 80); to possible intimacies with “a showgirl named Daisy” in New York (132), later multiplied, in a partial tally of her boasted “forty devoted lovers” acquired by the age of forty, to “various unnamed showgirls in Dublin and New York” (284); to a “fling” (206, 336) – a word used elsewhere in the text to denote a sexual relationship (423) – or “spectacularly sparky affair” (541) with Katherine Mansfield; to a steamy scene in a pornographic text, featuring a Beatrice and a Katherine, which he conjectures may have been authored or partly authored by Hastings (22); to possible sexual relationships between Hastings and the Baroness Hélène d’Oettingen (419) or Charlotte Mew (498). Gray also points to a poem written by Hastings about Sappho (477-9). Now it would be understandable, in a social climate where the dedication of “Sappho” is to “two Englishwomen condemned to two years of prison for being

lovers of one another” (479), that anyone with sexual feelings for members of the same sex would keep them discreetly hidden. Although Hastings was nothing if not courageously outspoken in other areas, and displayed her interest in the topic of lesbianism by writing the poem “Sappho,” she explicitly dissociated herself from lesbianism: in 1912 she firmly declared ““by all such physical perversions I could no more be touched than by an invitation to bathe in mud”” (133), and in 1921’s “Sappho” she clearly stated,

I am also as free of that lesbian passion as Felicia Hemans
and Lisbeth Barrett, those homely songstresses. (479)

The evidence, then, is speculative and inconclusive that Hastings had women lovers, and her only direct comments on the topic refute personal experience of “lesbian passion.” Many axes have ground her reputation, and their wielders have had their own motivations, some antagonistic and some tending to wish-projection. In the final analysis I turn again to Hastings’s own creative writing. In one of her favourite poems, “The Lost Bacchante,” she identified herself with the inspired votary (Sichel 1967: 291), and an examination of the poem provides clear evidence of an ability to empathize with a bisexual sensibility. When Hastings published this poem herself some decades after its initial appearance, according to Sichel she omitted the last two stanzas:

And I’ll leap the meadows toward the city,
Where the mortals dance tonight,
And wrench from the breast of the loved one pity,
And fill it with mad delight.

I’ll work in the milky heart of the maid
With magic I’ll ripen her bosom scanty,

Till her lover gasp nor know that he clasp
 No mortal maid, but a lost Bacchante.
 (Quoted in Sichel 291)

In these stanzas the narrating Bacchante, who has lost her tribe, performs her work of magically conjuring love where previously there was unrequited passion. In a headily erotic triangulation at the culmination of the poem, the male beloved is filled with desire and embraces his mystically transformed female partner, who is a hybrid of mortal woman fused with the power and physique of the Bacchante. My reading of the poem differs radically from Gray's dismissal of the Bacchante as a "selfish, vengeful predator" (2004: 535). In a climate of opinion intolerant of bisexuality it is hardly surprising that Hastings, despite her fondness for the poem, later decided to censor this explicit expression of bisexual desire.

To compare Carswell's and Gray's representations of Hastings and bisexuality from a biopic perspective, Carswell is somewhat patronizing, and uses loaded terms, such as his claim that both Mansfield and Hastings were "over-consciously feminine," and their attraction for one another was a source of "horror" (1978: 273). Bisexuality is represented in rather a lurid light in this account. In contrast, the self-identified bisexual Gray seems to long to present Hastings as bisexual based on various life-experiences, but there is a disjuncture between his claims and the evidence he produces to substantiate them. This would seem to fit in with Dollimore's category of the wishful (1996: 531-3). Yet, surprisingly, in the one instance where Hastings herself articulates bisexual passions Gray ignores this evidence, taking instead a stern literary critical line on the poem. He appears torn as a literary biographer: he seems to wish to reveal his subject as bisexual, but is forced to "sex up" his case; however,

where poetic evidence does exist his reading is not biopic. Occupying a subject position as a bisexual man does not automatically mean being able to enter imaginatively into every dimension of a bisexual woman's experience, even if she has long been the object of his fascinated gaze. As Jo Eadie says, "there is a set of hegemonic conceptions of what bisexuality means which structure for all of us the perception of bisexuality, but which may be inflected, according to the different agendas in which they find themselves, in very different ways" (1997: 143). Becoming biopic is not necessarily any easier for a bisexual person than for anyone else, especially in a climate in which there is little discourse on the topic.

Like Stephen Gray, Loren Kruger is to be thanked for bringing her subject, Leontine Sagan, to the attention of a wider public. Like Beatrice Hastings, Leontine Sagan (1890-1974) spent part of her younger life in South Africa, then made a name for herself overseas in acting and directing, as recounted in *Lights and Shadows: The Autobiography of Leontine Sagan*, edited and introduced by Loren Kruger (1996). Unlike Hastings, however, Sagan periodically returned to and worked in South Africa, and died here. Sagan is best known as the director of the 1931 German film, *Mädchen in Uniform*. Set in a Prussian boarding school, this melodrama focuses on a schoolgirl whose crush on a teacher leads her to attempt suicide. Tony Rayns praises Sagan for bringing "an exceptionally warm touch to her depiction of female friendships," and commends her "subtle imagery" (*Time Out Film Guide* 1998: 525).

Aside from being a cinematic classic, *Mädchen in Uniform* has generated commentary from a lesbian perspective, by film critics such as B. Ruby Rich. Kruger notes the significant absence of discussion of Sagan's own sexuality in relation to the analysis

of the film, and a tendency to appropriate her as a lesbian, summarily dismissing her marriage. The publication of the autobiography complicates, but far from fully elucidates, the issue of her sexuality. In her personal life, there are references to adolescent “inner confusion” with German girls whom she “hated and loved” (13), a rapturous and erotic adolescent response to Bernini’s statue of Saint Teresa, a youthful infatuation with two actresses (37, 41-2), and a later crush on Jessica Tandy (125). In her professional life, there were a number of associations with lesbian roles and texts, chiefly *Mädchen in Uniform*, but she also acted as the “tragic lesbian” (82) Countess Geschwitz in Wedekind’s play *Pandora’s Box*. In addition she was interested in directing a film of Rosamond Lehmann’s *Dusty Answer* (118), which I have already in Chapter 2 commented on as a text representing bisexual behaviour. Occasionally the professional and the personal coalesce, as in the case of anguished mail she received when appearing as the teacher in the play version of *Mädchen in Uniform* when it toured South Africa. Interestingly, parallel syntax reveals an identification and empathy with these coming-out confessions (136). Kruger applauds Sagan’s powers of performance, and comments: “Moving her audience as a lesbian, she speaks and acts as one. This acknowledgement of lesbian desire is oblique but, in this place and occasion, it is remarkable” (xl).

While Kruger’s background commentary and her critical perceptions are subtle and detailed, I feel that she errs in belabouring a lesbian reading of the autobiography. In my reading of “the drama of a life” (xli) presented by Sagan, I am guided by her own early-expressed “desire to transcend all limitations” (19). In the context of reliving a crush she had on an actress in early adulthood, she appeals for a holistic rather than a fragmented view of an entire life: “It is good to carry in one’s heart and mind the

living past, because it helps to enrich the present and makes it more consistent. Do we not carry our body with us throughout our whole existence?" (38). Viewing Sagan's life-account from the perspective of bisexuality would, in the circumstances, seem a more sympathetic rendition of the references, both explicit and coded, to her affections. In this view, one can take at face value her repeated expressions of tender regard for her husband, which include her account of their falling in love, and her comment that the theatrical circle in which she met him was not very helpful for her career, but it did bring her "the most happiness of my life" (84). Although she prizes her profession and pursues career opportunities avidly, she acknowledges her husband as the chief of her blessings (95). She regrets the partings occasioned by her career, and only finds solace in leaving South Africa after her *Mädchen in Uniform* tour in 1933 by determining to return with her husband. She values him as "an unfailing counsellor who is able to restore my equilibrium" (169), and after his death in South Africa in 1950 she sadly muses, "with the death of a beloved person, the colours of one's life fade like plants in barren soil" (229).

A biopic perspective would give due weight to these comments, instead of suspiciously viewing them, as Kruger does, as a possible "concession to dominant heterosexual institutions in response to prevailing social norms, especially in the conformist environment of mid-century South Africa" (xxxix). This implication of bad faith does not do justice to the representation of the relationship between Sagan and her husband. Interestingly, Kruger reproves B. Ruby Rich and German lesbian commentators for appropriating Sagan as a lesbian at the expense of her professional activity (231), yet she fails to see the parallel with her own appropriation of Sagan as a lesbian at the expense of her relationship with her husband. Further, Kruger

considers that “Sagan’s autobiographical persona traces a more complicated trajectory than that allowed by any simple dichotomy between German and English, European and African, North and South” (xi); she also refers to “mutability” (xii). However, Kruger fails to consider the appropriateness of similarly breaking down simple dichotomies of homosexuality and heterosexuality, despite the evidence to support this reading in the autobiography. It may be that Kruger had further evidence beyond that provided by the autobiography which led her to place Sagan so firmly within lesbian space; if so, this does not appear. Based on the available evidence of Sagan’s own words a refusal to view her in terms of a middle ground of sexuality is reminiscent of Emma Donoghue’s comment about lesbian historians who “pressgang clearly bisexual women into the all-star exclusively-lesbian history pageant” (1996a: 75-6).

A binarist view of sexuality, signalled by the reference on the back cover to “the particular concerns of women, heterosexual or lesbian,” is at odds with Sagan’s own inclusive, generous and unbounded discourse. I am not claiming that Sagan *was* “clearly bisexual.” I am maintaining that the openness of a bisexual perspective is a more suitable space from which to respond to her life and work.

The term “bisexuality” has been attached to the next figures whom I want to consider, although somewhat problematically. It is well known that Mary Campbell (1898-1979) was bisexual; however, what are the implications and consequences of the representation of her as bisexual, and what is the evidence about the sexual history of Roy Campbell (1901-1957)? The case of the Campbells is a complex web of facts, interpretations, distortions, omissions, sensationalism, secrets and myths, and trying to

unravel these discourses and present a coherent account in a brief space is no easy task.

The undisputed facts would seem to be that Mary Campbell was responsive to both men and women in her youth. When she met Roy Campbell, in London in 1921, their lifestyle was Bohemian: in later life, Mary delighted in referring to herself and Roy as “the first hippies” (Alexander 1982: 33).¹ After her marriage to Roy Campbell, they spent some time in South Africa, where Roy stirred up controversy by his left-wing views and critique of colonial South Africa. On their return to London, trouble erupted between Roy and Mary: she was revelling in a memory of a woman lover, and this so sparked Roy’s ire that he suspended her from their flat window (32). In 1927 the Campbells met Vita Sackville-West. Mary enjoyed the contact with the Bloomsbury set, but Roy increasingly loathed them and England. He had begun to drink excessively, and Mary was deeply concerned about the effects of his irresponsibility on their two daughters and herself. In despondency, Mary sought comfort with Sackville-West, and they soon began an affair. When Mary told Roy, he went on a drinking spree, and encountered C. S. Lewis, to whom he confided his story. Lewis’s response was, “Fancy being cuckolded by a woman!” (Alexander 83). This comment spurred a violent rage in Roy. For some period Mary remained in love with Sackville-West, but the marriage survived. Roy wrote the scathing poem, *The Georgiad*, denouncing the values and aesthetics of Bloomsbury, and this seemingly groundless and vicious act rendered him a literary *persona non grata*. The Campbells lived in Provence and Spain; they became Roman Catholics, and Mary in fact became

¹ I use first names in this account to illustrate an attempt to treat both subjects as equally as possible. The general biographical usage is to refer to Roy Campbell as “Campbell,” while his wife becomes “Mary.” This disparity, while understandable, has the effect of rendering her as junior or less central than her husband. Although using first names might come across as offensively chummy, it was a less cumbersome alternative than using both first name and surname for each reference to the subjects.

a Carmelite Tertiary. Politically, Roy turned to the right, supporting General Franco and Mussolini. Artistically, he increasingly turned to translation in preference to original work. After World War II, in which Roy served, he and Mary lived in London and Portugal. Roy died after a car crash in 1957, and Mary died 22 years later.

These bald facts are interpreted in different ways by various commentators. However, a staple in Campbell criticism constructs a mythography of a power dynamic in which a devious Mary attempts to impose her will on her husband. This reductive and essentialist argument misrepresents bisexuality and portrays Mary, by means of her “deviant” sexuality, as a villainous and untrustworthy figure.

Thus Peter Alexander, in his 1982 biography of Roy Campbell – a scholarly, readable, sympathetic and humane text, if somewhat guarded – refers to Mary’s affair with Vita Sackville-West as a cataclysmic event, “which all but wrecked the Campbells’ marriage, which changed the course of their lives, and scarred the poet’s mind and affected his verse to the end of his life” (82). The hyperbolic sentence rolls through its tripartite waves, ending by crashing resonatingly through the psyche and art of Roy Campbell. To Alexander, the affair led to Mary’s assumption of dominance over her increasingly dependent husband. Alexander invokes visual iconography to corroborate his point:

A photograph of the period says it all: Campbell, seated, looks with mute appeal at Mary who, standing hand on hip, stares unsmiling down at him. Their relationship henceforward was one which recognized and accommodated the feminine elements in Campbell’s personality, and the masculine in Mary’s. (100)

The representation of Mary's sexuality is blurred with her gender identity. Her bisexuality functions as a taint, a corruption superadded to her infidelity. The tactless comment which precipitated Roy's violent response to Mary, it will be remembered, was "Fancy being cuckolded by a woman" (Alexander 83), which clearly implies a sense of gender superiority. (Incidentally, gender bias in language is revealed by the fact that the term "cuckold" has no feminine equivalent; from this, one might infer that a husband's "unfaithfulness" is unremarkable or socially condoned.)

Once established, this line of dreadful damage done by Mary to her husband has become entrenched in most of the literature commenting on the Campbells. Douglas Livingstone claimed that the revelation of the affair "knocked seventeen kinds of shit out of Roy" (cited in Akerman 2003: 16). Anthony Akerman's play *Dark Outsider* (2000) was written after he had read Alexander's biography six times, and "start[ed] to know it off by heart" (2003: 14). That he is steeped in Alexander's formulations is visible, both in the play, and in his article about the process of writing it. He comments:

I knew Mary's affair with Vita would be central to the play. It was the symbolic castration of Roy's He-man persona. Peter Alexander has also emphasised that this affair was a major event in Roy's life, a turning point. It was a fulcrum; it profoundly affected his writing and his beliefs – both religious and political [...] Mary's affair [...] all but destroyed him, as well as her continuing infidelities. (8, 15)

Nicholas Meihuizen argues along the same lines, imputing culpability to Mary's bisexuality, and suggesting that in *The Georgiad* Roy wishes to prove that Mary's bisexuality, embodied in Androgyno, does not exist. In my view, there is considerable

authorial investment in the persona of Androgyno, and conceiving of him as representing Mary wilfully ignores the evidence provided by Alexander not only in the biography but also, more explicitly, in a later article (2000: 107) of Roy's bisexuality. Meihuizen places the primary focus on Mary's role, while making a fleeting reference to the possibility of "a sexual ambiguity within [Roy's] own nature" (203), glossing this in a footnote as referring to speculation about Roy's having had male lovers. Meihuizen concludes that Roy "remains disturbed, I would hazard, until his last days because of the conflict catalysed by this 'sordid and silly period'" (203), a reference taken from *Light on a Dark Horse* (1951: 255); and because of Meihuizen's focus the implication is that this lasting misery is attributable to the agency of Mary.

In all of the examples cited above, the chain of narrative impulse would seem to associate Mary's bisexuality with infidelity and implied blame, while Roy is represented as sinned-against. Partly, this occurs because he, not Mary, is the subject of the biographies, and because attempts have been made to exonerate him from charges of unprovoked violence made by earlier critics. However, other evidence also needs to be considered in order to give a more balanced picture.

First, a letter written by Roy to Mary in 1924 contains admiration for her virtues; he praises her for being "far above me in most things," and fondly calls her "a kind of mixture of Sappho and Saint Teresa" (quoted in Pearce 2002 [2001]: 57). In theory, then, at this stage Roy clearly accepted Mary's combined traits of bisexuality and spirituality, although in practice her reminiscence of a previous woman lover led to his over-reaction of dangling her out of a window – and his delighted recounting of

the event in his autobiography, *Light on a Dark Horse* (1951: 248). The sexist discourse here is that of silencing by violence an unruly woman, as part of the contest for supremacy in the marriage, leading to his wearing “the pants for good” (248). A gap thus exists between the early theoretical and worshipful statement of acceptance and the practice in marriage, as Roy recounts it, where he wished to prove himself her lord and master. Interestingly, Mary is portrayed by Roy more as an object to control than a subject in her own right: Judith Coullie notes that “Mary’s textual insubstantiality is due [...] to the fact that she is hardly ever named, and on those occasions when she is named she is *never* the subject of the sentence” (2001: 9). Further, Roy’s enjoyment of homosociality is unconsciously revealed through the fact that even though the title of the relevant chapter in the autobiography is “Marriage,” male characters figure more substantially than the “ghostlike” Mary (9). The narrative of the relationship between Roy and Mary is shaped by unacknowledged assumptions about gender and sexuality; this can be seen both in Roy’s writing and in that of subsequent biographers and critics.

Second, evidence exists that Roy himself was bisexual, although this is contested. Peter Alexander sensitively refers to “at least two” homosexual affairs when Roy Campbell was at Oxford, around 1918, before he met Mary in 1921 (1982: 21; entire period covered 20-6). Alexander does not make explicit the names of the men with whom Roy had affairs at this period, although by examining the relevant pages one can conclude who they must have been. There is, however, a footnote which cites the source for the claim of same-sex affairs at this period as “Rob Lyle, RC’s closest friend in later years, to W.H. Gardner, unpublished letter, June 1958; also interview

with Mary Campbell, Portugal, 3 Jan. 1975" (251). Mary's claims need to be taken seriously; I shall return to the question of Lyle shortly.

In the main text Alexander claims that "[t]hese seem to have been his first homosexual attachments" (21), thus implying that there were others, although these are not specified. Alexander does, however, refer to love (whether physical or not) that Roy felt for his sergeant in the army during the War (192-3). Interestingly, Roy referred admiringly to the way in which this sergeant embodied combined oppositions, such as severity and kindness, and called him a "walking paradox" (192). This reveals that Roy valued the reconciliation of apparent opposites. Alexander perceives bisexuality as being a key to interpreting Roy's character; however, he views it as embodying an internal rift: "His bisexuality was yet another facet of his divided character, its roots deep in his background" (21). Alexander does not comment on these roots, but it seems significant that in his autobiography, Roy mentions that an early love, Gwen, and his male best friend both looked exactly like Mary (1951: 133).

It is important that Alexander raises the issue of Roy's bisexuality, but it is noteworthy that although he views it as so significant his evidence for its existence is presented in veiled terms, whereas the evidence for Mary's bisexuality is much more specific in all accounts. Instead of allowing a fully comparative biopic vision, such an imbalanced representation places the gendered burden on Mary. In addition, Alexander portrays bisexuality as a condition, implicitly pathological, which exists in the individual, without examining its social reception. He suggests it as a means of analysis, while at the same time blurring any possible clear vision of its manifestation

in the particular case of Roy, comparatively between Roy and Mary, or as a valid sexuality. For Alexander bisexuality is a shorthand for confusion, division and conflict. There may even be an implication in his allusion to “its roots deep in his background” that it is an atavistic condition. It is necessary to observe that bisexuality does not necessarily imply division, but could have other implications, such as creative juxtaposition, akin to bilingualism, or a holistic reconciliation of oppositions.

A later biographer than Alexander, however, Joseph Pearce (2002 [2001]), casts doubt on the earlier suggestions of bisexuality, thus reducing even further the possibility of biopia, and focusing the “fault” more narrowly on Mary. He is less than honest in his refutation (as indeed he is in umpteen unacknowledged liftings from various sources, including Alexander), maintaining that Alexander “makes no effort to justify the claim” of Roy’s youthful bisexuality (22). He utterly disregards Alexander’s citation of Mary’s evidence in this regard, instead focusing on Rob Lyle, whose letter I have previously referred to. According to Pearce, an emphatic Lyle states that he knows “*nothing* of any ‘homosexual attachments’” (22). In the light of this *volte-face*, which Pearce accepts without demur, he suggests treating Roy as staunchly heterosexual. It is worth pointing out that the wealthy and influential Lyle, in addition to being a friend of the Campbells, became a Roman Catholic, with Roy as his godfather (288), and married the Campbell daughter, Anna, after Roy’s death. Anna Campbell-Lyle, in her autobiography, goes so far as to claim that Mary had a platonic relationship with Vita Sackville-West, not a sexual one (cited in Akerman 2003: 7), although to mention just one piece of evidence, a note written by Mary and sent to Sackville-West is unambiguously explicit, asking, “Is the night never coming again when I can spend hours in your arms, when I can realise your big sort of protectiveness all round me,

and be quite naked except for a covering of your rose-leaf kisses?" (Glendinning 1983: 184). Pearce relies uncritically on Lyle and the two Campbell daughters, who all have a stake in a dissembling, revisionist hagiography in which a Roman Catholic hero, unbesmirched by the taint of sexual "deviance," is valorized. Pearce points out that when the couple converted, Roy chose St Ignatius Loyola, famed as a soldier and founder of the Jesuits, as his patron saint, while Mary chose the arch-penitent Mary Magdalene as hers (170). Pearce's satisfaction with the choice of these saints would seem to signify approval of appropriate gender models, especially in the light of Mary's earlier "transgressions." In this sanitized narrative, Mary ends up repenting for her sins and under the domination of her heroic husband. This version stresses heteronormativity and sanctity as intertwined discourses.

An earlier deliberate choice of Roy Campbell's is crucial to this discussion, but its significance has been overlooked by critics, who have not thought to examine it in the light of what it reveals about Roy Campbell's own representation of bisexuality. In an attempt to gain revenge for Mary's affair with Vita Sackville-West, he wrote his scathing poem, *The Georgiad*, which savaged Bloomsbury sexual, aesthetic and critical practices (1931). Fascinatingly, the character Roy chose to lead the charge against Bloomsbury was a potent bisexual, Androgyno, an ambiguous figure who embodies yet transcends the attributes of Bloomsbury. This character is partly a parodic re-working of Virginia Woolf's Orlando, based on Vita Sackville-West. However, the poet's attitude to his triumphant alter-ego is a complicated one.

Several references are made to Eden, a significantly recurring fictional site for the production of bisexuality. Although Androgyno is portrayed in part satirically, as a

“hybrid Cow,” (10), an imaginative process is described in which he comes into being through identification with a woman who is part of him; in fact, is Muse to his Poet:

“Already I can feel the awful change
 Insensibly through all my members range:
 My manhood, with unfeeling sensations,
 Is changing into ladies’ combinations,
 This hairy thigh, which pants enclosed before,
 Now shivers in a flimsy silken drawer,
 Half of your corset round my ribs is locking,
 Along my shin there crawls a long blue stocking,
 Bang on your nose my spectacles appear
 And (Wow!) an ear-ring slits my tender ear;
 These cami-knickers are too tight, I vow,
 But it is you must ‘wear the trousers’ now.
 Once I was One: but now, it seems, I’m two,
 And can’t make out which one of me is you,
 But what care we, so happily in tune,
 And off to Georgia for our honeymoon!”

(11)

The references to muse and poet, gender metamorphoses involving both of them, a contest for supremacy and a honeymoon in Georgia (symbolizing Vita Sackville-West’s home) suggest a unit, a married couple, who are forced to identify with each other’s perspectives. The place of trial, Georgia, a place of sterile sex-in-the-head and effete writing, provokes a shift in power in the relationship. However, the cross-identification only goes so far. The elements of Andogyno are physically welded together, and impressively bisexually potent, but the male element is still shown as hegemonically superior:

This was no neuter of a doubtful gender,
 But both in him attained their fullest splendour,
 Unlike our modern homos, who are neither,
 He could be homosexual with either
 And heterosexual with either, too –

A damn sight more than you or I could do!
(12)

Thus, in contrast to the viciously and repeatedly lampooned “tough old suffragettes and ageing nancies” (36; see also 16, 32, 42, 43, 52, 58), discursively revealing Roy’s deeply ingrained hegemonic homophobia, sexism and ageism, Androgyno is represented in the language of wish-projection as an integrated unit which is bisexual in both of its constituent parts, and highly sexed. The emphasis on hypersexuality could be interpreted as a salve to Roy’s wounded masculine ego, but the choice of a *bisexual* hero to wreak this literary revenge suggests his recognition of a radical potential of this sexuality, as well as an acknowledgement of his own sexual identity. Further, in *The Georgiad* Roy attempts to write bisexually, from the perspective of a place which is neither heterosexual nor homosexual, but both. He uses this perspective to re-write the script of Mary’s relationship with Vita Sackville-West. Androgyno is revealed to be irresistible both to Georgiana and Mr Georgiana (Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson); he has mythically rapturous sex with Georgiana, then flies from bed to bed shattering all his partners with his sexual prowess “in love’s broncho-busting game” (61). This usage shows the poet attempting to re-establish discursive control over events; it also reveals the androcentrism of his alter-ego. Androgyno’s bisexuality is materialized by eliding Bloomsbury’s bisexuality, and figuring its members sexually in hegemonic binary terms. Discursively, Roy’s use of bisexuality is revealed as anomalous and mythic, as it is detached from its possible context. In addition, it is presented in terms of self-aggrandizement by a cruel misrepresentation of Bloomsbury’s painful attempts to cope with complex emotional and sexual relationships, which he perceived as perverse and cerebral.

Roy's sexism, braggadocio and homophobia flourished in the ancient Mithraic mythology in which he subsequently steeped himself. This pagan male cult worshipped war and the sun, and entailed the ritual killing of a sacred bull; it also had some degree of influence on Christian imagery. Bull-killing rituals, which Roy delighted in, represented glorying in rampant, animal, competitive masculinity, and the death of the bull symbolically conferred its phallic mystique on its killer. Over the course of his sonnet sequence, *Mithraic Emblems* (1936), Roy charts the progress of a soul attracted to potent paganism, but steadily in transit to Christian salvation (Pearce 2002: 158-60). Increasingly, he turned to political, mythological and religious fundamentalism, absolutism, moralism and control, which served to mask his sensitivity and vulnerability.

A further factor to bear in mind when considering relative culpability in the representation of Mary's affair with Vita Sackville-West concerns Roy's actions at this time. According to Sackville-West's biographer, Victoria Glendinning, when Roy discovered that Mary and Sackville-West were lovers, he was himself having an affair, with Dorothy Warren (1983: 183). He can thus hardly be perceived as purely the wronged party in the circumstances. In addition, at a later stage Mary and Roy were simultaneously involved in affairs, each with one of a pair of sisters (Alexander 1982: 126-8; Pearce 2002 [2001]: 146-7). This attempt at a Bloomsbury-style accommodation was short-lived; however, it reveals Roy and Mary condoning each other's polyamory. There is also evidence of Roy's boasting about his (heterosexual) affairs in an unpublished section of his autobiography (Alexander 1982: 258). Thus to continue to view Roy as damaged for life by Mary's affair with Vita Sackville-West.

as a chain of biographies, critical material and creative interpretations of the lives of the Campbells – all written by men – tend to do, is to perpetuate a sexist, distorted and misleading discourse. Interestingly, a thorough article on race and gender in Roy's autobiography, *Light on a Dark Horse*, by South African critic Judith Coullie does not take up the issue of bisexuality (2001). Coullie limits herself to the guarded comment, "His relationship with his wife is rumoured to have been extremely problematic (she is reputed to have had lesbian affairs)" (13). While this elision does not allow biopia to occur in reading the article, it is significant that it is a woman critic who chooses not to follow the received version followed by male commentators. Male critics tend to identify with the male subject under scrutiny, and to use gendered discursive practices.

A final piece of evidence which suggests that it is a distortion to view Roy Campbell as a victim of the wanton licentiousness of his wife, instead of an agent in his own right, is based on an open secret in circles of Campbell scholarship, concerning his self-emasculation. One of a few explicit references to this occurs in Peter Alexander's biography of Alan Paton; Alexander mentions

threats of legal action from Rob Lyle, as a result of which part of the Campbell biography had to be cut, in particular that part in which I told the extraordinary story of Campbell's self-castration while tormented by sexual temptation in 1952. (1994: 379)

As Nicholas Meihuizen notes (2003: 205), Alexander refers to this sad episode in more detail in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 225: South African Writers* (2000). Alexander notes that Roy's last years in Portugal were soured by his financial reliance on Lyle, and "[t]here were pressures too in Mary's attraction to Lyle

and in a woman friend's attraction to Campbell" (116). When Lyle and Mary were unexpectedly some days late in arriving in Portugal, Roy concluded that they had gone off together.

Campbell, tormented by the fear that Mary had left him for Lyle and his fear that he might give in to his desire for the woman friend, decided on drastic measures. One evening, extremely drunk and feeling under intense pressure, he locked himself in the bathroom and castrated himself. A few days later, Lyle and Mary Campbell arrived, having broken an axle [...] and having been forced to wait [...] for the repair.

This self-maiming, perhaps the most remarkable incident of its kind in the history of art since Vincent Van Gogh, casts an ironic light on Campbell's lifelong pose as the he-man, hunter, bullfighter, soldier, and lover.

Campbell wrote no love poems after this terrible time [...] In several of the late poems his theme is impotence [...] (116-7)

Discussing this act clearly has the potential for sensationalism, which I wish to avoid. A prurient dwelling on the scandalous is far from my intention, and such a desperate act elicits empathy and pity. However, in my view it is preferable to air this issue, in the context of an affair where so many other intimate details are already known, rather than stoop to innuendo and scandal. Oblique references to "castration" and "self-castration" are found, for instance, in Anthony Akerman's play based on Roy Campbell's life, *Dark Outsider* (2000). For those who are aware of this open secret, the obvious conclusion would seem to be to juxtapose Roy's suffering and Mary's later devout practice of Catholicism, and perceive the couple as a latter-day Abelard and Heloise, both of whom were desexualized, one by castration and the other by her vow of chastity as a nun. Without access to further details it is impossible to move beyond speculative mythic resonances to a more accurate and nuanced rendition of events and their significance. All that one can infer from this shocking self-mutilation is that Roy's sexuality had become a torment to him, and that he had shifted from

visiting his extreme jealousy on the body of Mary to purging his own desires from his flesh, in the most literal and absolute way imaginable. The censorship and veiled allusions around this issue are frustrating to researchers; they also function to foster a climate of furtiveness, scandal and taboo. Further, there is an air of superiority about Alexander's comments with regard to the "self-maiming" throwing "an ironic light on Campbell's pose as the he-man, hunter, bullfighter, soldier and lover," reduced to expressing themes of "impotence." The secrets of Roy's sexuality – his bisexuality and his self-castration – combine to render him, in this telling account, a freak, an unmasculine failure, an ox "galled by impotence and the yoke" (116-7).

Bisexuality clearly had an important role to play in the lives of Roy and Mary Campbell. However, critics and biographers have either elided the concept in one or other subject's life, or have adhered to the dominant discursive model proposed by Alexander. I would argue that it is mistaken to employ the concepts of negative conflict and pathology as self-evidently suitable to encapsulate complex events and emotions. It would seem simplistic to view Roy's bisexuality as an emblem of a divided self, and moralistic to view Mary's bisexuality as the catalyst for disaster. In my view, the problems were not inherently related to bisexuality, but to other factors. Androcentrism in Roy (and various critics) has a part to play, as does machismo, seen in Roy's emphasis on besting others in contests, and in his Mithraism. Allied to these are other factors associated with the construction of masculinity, such as traditional gender roles connected to marriage, and homophobia: binary hierarchies constitute the masculine subject, who is "not-woman" and heterosexual, not homosexual. Roy's internalized homophobia can be seen, for instance, in his slighting references to "nancy-boys," despite his Oxford experiences; his sour allusion to "the homosexual

and yiddish freemasonries” (Campbell 1951: 241); and his heroic depiction of himself as “the wicked, cruel, Mephistophelian, swashbuckling, anti-Freud of the smug little Sunday School world of Bloomsbury ‘queerness’” (257). A further factor is the traditionally sexist, anti-sex and homophobic precepts of the Campbells’ Roman Catholic religion. After Mary became a Carmelite Tertiary, on the advice of her spiritual director she destroyed all of Vita Sackville-West’s love letters (Pearce 2002 [2001]: 170). A final factor is the lack of a queer space which could offer them refuge, an option which was foreclosed after the rift with Bloomsbury.

The Campbells are a particularly significant case in that both of them seem to have been bisexual. The biographical record, however, reveals a tormented wrestling with sexuality and bisexuality on the part of the actors in the drama, as can be seen in Roy’s autobiographies and *The Georgiad*, as well as in some references made at the time by Mary. Biographers and critics, as well as creative writers using the Campbells’ lives as source material, either minimize the issue (Pearce and Coullie), thus preventing a biopic vision, or re-write a hackneyed script (Alexander, Livingstone, Akerman and Meihuizen), thus perpetuating negative readings of the creative possibilities of bisexuality. In time, one hopes, a fuller account will appear, which fills in crucial lacunae, critically engages with the mythography surrounding the couple, is sensitive to issues of gender and sexuality, and allows both Mary and Vita Sackville-West more interiority. An analysis of Mary’s paintings, as well as her love-diary written during the time of her affair with Sackville-West, and her letters to various correspondents, would make for a more balanced account,² as would a more sympathetic portrayal of Sackville-West. The veil of secrecy shrouding delicate

² The recently published biography of Mary Campbell and her sisters disappoints in this regard, as it fails to do more than trot briskly over ground already well trampled (Connolly 2004).

matters needs to be lifted so that the conclusions reached are less biased and distorted than at present. A lack of openness regarding queer issues in the discourse of the time, allied to a relative lack of awareness around gender issues, contributed to the early difficulties in this regard, and in contemporary biographical and critical discourse a degree of censorship caused by threats of legal action made by Rob Lyle, and a specific lack of understanding of bisexuality, have led to a stereotyped and crass representation of the significance of bisexuality in the lives of the Campbells.

The penultimate subject to be considered, Lola Watter, a South African art critic, lecturer and poet who was born in 1925 and died in 2003, seems to have embraced rather than wrestled with her sexuality. Her autobiography, *Snippets of Time: Memoirs of a Maverick*, appeared in 2001. As Dirk Klopper points out in a brief discussion of the book printed on its back cover, Watter recounts her attempts to attain a sense of identity in the light of her multiple categorizations as a maverick: as a Jew, an English-speaker in an Afrikaans environment, a woman, an artist, and a spiritual quester in a profane world. However, Klopper makes no reference at all, surprisingly, yet significantly, to the issue of Watter's frank discussion of her bisexuality, which obviously places her in the category of an outsider. Speculating about the reason for this omission, one might surmise that it could be due to a squeamishness about mentioning something as private as sexuality alongside the more public identity categories which occupy the first four positions in Klopper's list. However, as he ends his list with the private category of spirituality, this leads one to imagine that the reason for his elision of Watter's bisexuality is because he perceives this category as unimportant or even embarrassing. Conceiving of an older woman as an explicit narrator of her sexual history entails confronting a number of social taboos.

which Klopper seems unable to do. Whatever the reason for this omission, the effect is to de-sexualize the content and significance of a text which contributes inspiringly towards a chronicle of a queer South Africa, instead flagging other issues. However, Watter's sexuality is represented as intimately connected to her identity as a maverick.

Watter locates her earliest memories and the well-spring of her being in the "Eden [...] flowing with milk [...] and [...] honey" of a farm in Potchefstroom (iii). In this "demi-paradise" (iii), however, sexuality is not represented as sin or a problem. The child Lola had sexual experiences with an Afrikaans girl and a coloured boy which left her with no sense of guilt. She formed a number of crushes on women, including one on a nun teacher, and she insisted on being a boarder in order to be closer to this idol, whom she remembers bidding the girls goodnight in a scene reminiscent of a similar one in *Mädchen in Uniform*. She cross-dressed as a child, most memorably as Little Lord Fauntleroy. This male persona enabled her to imagine the fulfilment of her fantasies without being hampered by her gender. After adolescence she had an affair with a young man, and also came under the sway of a cultured young couple:

Despite my involvement with Peter, I became even further embroiled with them. This time I was enchanted on an emotional level. I had known of my bisexual tendencies. From my adaptation of male clothing, including my precocious but intense "pashes", I acknowledged this aspect of my nature. Now I was confronted by an epitome of womanly charm and beauty. That beauty entrapped me. (110)

This representation of developing bisexuality is striking in its lack of angst and its matter-of-fact acceptance of the validity of a breadth of sexual attraction, despite having no role models. The seventeen year old was inspired to write free-verse love

poems to her idol, but never showed them to her (215). The production of writing is linked to her sexuality.

Around this time she went to Johannesburg, where she studied art, and her earlier maverick impulses were further validated instead of being suppressed. She became *avant-garde* in appearance, wearing boys' clothes again (119), and encountered a community of gay men and lesbians. Watter comments that her horizons were broadened by being at this particular place at this time:

Perhaps because of the liberating presence of so many political refugees in Johannesburg, who did not have gender or colour-bar agendas, that 1940s admixture of races, ages and sexual preferences presented no social problem. This was an agreeably heady mixture for a receptive Potchefstroomer. (121)

In this climate which entrenched Watter's earlier openness she met a young man who fortuitously combined the looks of her former male lover with the cultured mien of the woman she found so alluring, and she decided to marry him although he had been invalided out of the army for latent homosexuality. She was understanding because of her own "sexual ambiguity" (129), and the pair enjoyed a highly successful sex life. Despite her relative lack of culture as perceived by her refined Belgian parents-in-law, they accepted her as they had feared that their son was gay. After some years living in Europe Watter was called back to South Africa to tend to her sick mother, but her husband remained behind, thus ending their marriage. This takes the reader to Watter's early 30s.

The pace of the first 150 pages of the autobiography is comparatively leisurely, followed by a much more kaleidoscopic and condensed 90 pages, with the

abandonment of linear progression. There is a reference at one point to her many lovers (195), but the named partners in the latter part of the text are both women, with whom she had long-lasting and happy (sequential) relationships. Less detail is given of the social texture of these relationships than of her marriage, but this is partly explained by the accelerated pace and the more thematic nature of the chapters. Watter refers to a brouhaha in a poetry circle to which she belonged in the 1960s, resulting in the writing of an offensive poem by Walter Saunders in which he compared Watter to Getrude Stein and her partner to Alice B. Toklas. The relationship foundered as a result of the unpleasantness, and Watter wrote a number of poems about this loss (228). Even if a woman has a heterosexual marriage in her past she is as vulnerable to homophobia as a lesbian.

Watter also refers to a long relationship in the 1980s with a headmistress of a school; this relationship was committed and fulfilling, only being sundered by death. Watter refers to a retirement party for her partner, Ethne Phillips, which the latter called “[t]he wedding I never had” (232). It is noteworthy that although the main reference here is to a grand-scale celebration, there is also an implication of a community acceptance of the relationship between Watter and Phillips, although in South Africa of the period many lesbian, gay or bisexual teachers were too afraid to be out of the closet. Phillips’s death led to the writing of poems of mourning by Watter, and these poems, along with the ones written after the collapse of her previous relationship, are important because of the paucity of same-sex directed poetry written by women in South Africa (1988, 1998).

Watter uses an interesting technique which has relevance to the question of a biopic reading of the representation of the relationships with the two partners she concentrates on in the last third of *Snippets of Time*. She begins by mentioning that “my partner, my housemate Ethne, had passed on” (151) and continues this chapter by discussing her own mourning process. After a number of brief chapters she mentions “Pat, my partner at that time” (216). Pat’s gender is not mentioned until page 228, thus causing the reader to wonder what it is, whether this is important to Watter, what the social consequences of having a male or female partner are, and to what extent the reader is invested in gender binaries. Instead of encouraging a reading of the life as a series of transitions from early openness to bisexuality, to heterosexual marriage, to a lesbian identity, the discursively ungendered Pat functions to keep alive the concept of bisexuality. Further, at the same time as Pat is revealed to the reader as a woman the relationship is shown to suffer the social consequences of prejudice and vicious use of the medium of poetry, which was meant in the poetry group to be a unifying factor. The fact that the obviously gendered name of Ethne frames this narrative functions to enclose the earlier occurrence, forcing a comparison and contrast between the two. The earlier bond with Pat is shown to be weaker because a malicious piece of writing could lead to its dissolution, while the later bond is seen in terms of “marriage,” death and madness, queer versions of those quintessential endings for Victorian heroines in novels, but leading in this case to a series of quests for spiritual enlightenment. These are explored in Watter’s poetry (1998) as well as her autobiography. Rainbow imagery recurs, and the poems combine sharply focussed observational skills with an integrative vision of the physical and the spiritual, the natural world and the mythological realm, shifting states and the power of unconditional and unbounded love.

Watter's collection, *Insights and Idylls, Including Selected Images from Africa: Poems* (1998), read in conjunction with *Snippets of Time*, allows a queer, biopic reading of a life as revealed and re-worked poetically. The collection is dedicated openly: "In joyous memory of Ethne Phillips," and several poems deal with the sorrow associated with Phillips's illness and the grieving occasioned by her death. There are poems which celebrate women, such as "Woman-Talk," which revels in the sound of some women's voices in sensuous terms containing a trace of eroticism, in much the same way as several contributors write in the wittily titled *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology* (Brett, Wood and Thomas 1994). Women's bodies too are celebrated in a similarly subtle and combinational style:

The new year unharnesses her breasts
 filled with waiting from tip of nipples
 to tender cleft as fearless she steps into our time.
 (Watter 1998: 28)

Yet in addition to the woman-identified poetry there are also poems symbolizing a tender masculinity, like "Unicorn" (14), or addressing boys or men, and some poems play with crossing gender boundaries. The poems are queer but inclusive. A poem from *Insights and Idylls*, "Idyll. Spring 1997, Johannesburg," also appears in the autobiography, where it is glossed as referring to a Nefertiti-like woman who, although living in another country, has come to act as a muse to Watter. The poem is clearly a love poem, but it also deals with city and nature; anger and hope; fusing, celebrating and blessing:

You on the other side of our planet

are slumbering now, your green eyes closeted
 within caverns of rest. And I presume
 to enter your sweet repose

to sing this idyll through your sleep
 trusting that my soul's bliss,
 so gentled in its construct,
 will softly suffuse you with radiance.

(1998: 36; 2001: 236)

In contrast to the braggadocio of Roy Campbell's autobiographical writings and poetry, Lola Watter's autobiography and poetry are sensitive, unafraid of exposing personal gullibility and failures, and generous. What harsh words there are, are directed against bigotry, opportunism and meanness of spirit, as opposed to Roy Campbell's vituperative attacks on his perceived enemies. The serenity which characterizes Watter's writing may be allied to the Buddhism of her later years, which values mindfulness, patience and compassion; this serenity may be contrasted with the anxiety resulting from the Christian emphasis on the eradication of sin which so troubled the Campbells. Although Buddhism does not explicitly validate homosexuality, it generally espouses tolerance, and enables Watter to integrate her spiritual and sexual identities; her bisexuality functions as a bridge, a unifying force, rather than the reflection of a "divided nature," which Alexander perceives in Roy Campbell (1982: 21). Lola Watter offers a positive model of the self-representation of bisexuality in the South African context. Bisexuality is represented as a viable life-long identity, and is portrayed in relationship with other sexualities. It is not unproblematic, but it is potentially integrative, and Klopper does Watter and queer sexualities a disservice by his refusal of a biopic vision.

Like Lola Watter, renowned South African scholar, editor, novelist, poet and literary biographer, Stephen Gray, who was born in 1941, frankly but briefly discusses his bisexuality in his autobiography. Gray is the last in my list of auto/biographical subjects, as they have been ordered chronologically; however, as his autobiography appeared in 1993, eight years before Watter's, and before the legal transformation associated with democracy occurred, the timing may have led to a more guarded approach than Watter's. Gray's title, *Accident of Birth*, is interesting, as it suggests contingency, the unexpected, which in the context of the autobiography can be applied to national identification, sexuality, and the art of writing itself. His account is much more problematized with regard to its representation of bisexuality than Watter's. He remembers and evokes instances of secrecy, scandal, desire and shame, in a quest for catharsis through what he presents as an uncharacteristic "attempt to tell the truth" (10). His struggle to live an unconventional life and to limn its contours are revealed in a number of representational practices.

Gray recounts his childhood sexual experiences with girls and boys, but the power of heteronormativity is revealed by his obvious difficulties in discussing his same-sex experiences. Even when he is asked by his psychotherapist to discuss a particular boy, he uses a technique of deferral, prefacing his account by referring to clandestine activities with a female playmate. He recounts being aware at an early age that sexual activity with girls was prohibited, but "doubly so with boys" (39). The discursive power of heteronormativity is shown by his male friend's thrilled warning that what they are doing is "called something terrible" (39). Like Watter, Gray presents memories of gender ambiguity, such as a "little Lord Fauntleroy tidiness" (27), and his account of participating in rock and roll dances at a single-sex boarding school as

Although the text is pervaded with examples of attraction to and sexual and emotional attachments to members of both genders, obviously enough socially legitimated heterosexual experience is revealed as easier to elaborate on. For instance, while there is a fuss when his family discovers through evidence in his diary that he has had sexual intercourse with a young woman whom he terms “the love of my life” (70), the autobiographer shudders at the thought of the response had his family known that if he had not on that occasion had sex with the young woman he would have had sex with a young man instead. However, the youthful Gray took the precaution of not writing about “[t]hat side of my life” (72), as besides being illegal the discursive history was practically non-existent, and the lexicon of “‘queer’, ‘coot’, ‘moffie’ or pouf” (72) was pejorative and unappealing. He did, however, enter into a liaison with his young man, although, meeting him some years later, and finding him a flamboyant queen, he cut him dead (73), thus revealing his assumption of heterosexual privilege and his socialized intolerance of the homosexual performativity of effeminacy.

Interestingly, Gray visited Mary Campbell in Portugal as he travelled to various parts of the globe. He viewed himself as a successor in a line of writing, but regarded his return to South Africa as essential to keeping the writing rooted and the reception informed. Although Gray mentions reading at this stage of his life a number of autobiographical works by authors who were either themselves bisexual or involved in polyamorous bisexual relationships, such as Samuel Delany, Jack Kerouac and Henry Miller, he does not refer to this element of their lives at all. Thus, although he read of bisexuality, he does not align his experiences with those of any other writers, instead presenting himself misleadingly as an anomaly. He does, however, refer to his experiences (or the aftermath of his experiences, in the form of a rash) at a transvestite

brothel in Chile (108), and to a visit to a legal male brothel in Sydney, where the sex worker he is with insists that he is not gay, and Gray responds that he is not either (149). Beyond this common denial, however, what they *are* is not discussed.

Although conditions were more sexually repressed in South Africa than in many other countries in the late 1960s, and Gray felt unable to greet a male neighbour who habitually posed in a pink nightie, he repeated his assertion in an intimate conversation with a lodger at his parents' home who made a pass at him:

“Just want to find out if you’re...one of us or not, brother.”
 “Well...I am and I am not; I like women as well, you know.”
 “Why don’t you come out? Your parents wouldn’t notice.... You look butch enough; they’d never ever guess.” (119)

Again, after this the conversation skitters off on another tack, thus avoiding the difficult issue of coming out, hard enough for a gay or lesbian subject, but more so for a bisexual subject with so few role models. Marriage, as has been seen in the case of the Campbells, further complicates the dynamics. Gray does not refer to his bisexuality at all with relation to his own two marriages, which is a striking lacuna. It is not apparent whether his women partners knew of his relationships or experiences with men. However, he does mention wanting to seek advice in another context from the poet, Charles Eglington, who, without his wife’s knowledge, was conducting a surreptitious affair with a man. Eglington’s juggling act was less than successful, though, and before Gray could talk to him he had hanged himself. In the text this example is unglossed; however, it can be inferred that it would reinforce a pre-existing tendency to secrecy. The social imperative to be respectable and “normal” is shown to be at odds with furtive and unspeakable desires.

It is noteworthy that Gray mentions details, including painful and intimate details, such as the waning of physical desire, related to his first heterosexual lover and his two marriages. His same-sex behaviour, however, is presented much more obliquely and anonymously, both in the sense of types of encounter and in terms of naming practices. The effect is to imply the co-existence in one individual of two disparate styles of behaviour: relatively stable, emotionally involved heterosexual relationships, and relatively uncommitted same-sex encounters, including paid sex. The reality may have been different, but the evidence in the autobiography suggests this split.

Aside from general and legally enforced homophobia prior to the period of democracy, which would have influenced Gray's weighting of material and relative freedom of disclosure, race was also a major factor which is touched on glancingly. For purposes of comparison, it needs to be borne in mind that heterosexual marriages across the colour line only became legal in 1985. Gray makes one fleeting reference around this period to a "live-in lover who was working at the slaughter-house, paid R12,00 a day" (161), and although gender, race and class are not specified, a South African reader who has some life experience of apartheid would imagine that this person was a working-class black man. Gray represents himself as without role models, and in a dangerous, racist and homophobic environment, which validated some of his object choices (white women) while castigating others (black men); this fraught environment, however, was necessary to the fulfilment of his literary aspirations. Gray worked out a personal way of handling the disparate threads of his life, devising a plain-spoken, radical style of writing poetry which

corresponded with the playing of dangerous sexual games which slowly leached through my body and into my perceptions. I no longer experienced any terror of male or female, black or white; only certain joy at transgression. The poems are transgressive too, of all decorum and syntax. To whom they are dedicated remains private. The point about them is not how they came into being, but how they may be used by others. (161)

Gray thus claims to attain a hard-won sense of unity and catharsis in terms of his poetic style, his sense of national identification and his transgressive sexuality, and these insights he offers as a personal and national gift to others. However, this act of beneficence is presented in terms of a rhetorical flourish, without substantiation. Despite the ideal which is being presented, of a transgressive personal and politicized vision, much remains unsaid, particularly with regard to the “dangerous sexual games” which led to his poetic epiphany.

This leads me to another silence, with regard to the circumstances leading to the writing of the autobiography. In the first chapter Gray explains that he was threatened by three black intruders, who stole his possessions and who debated killing him. One of these men was a friend of “Sam, who lived in the back yard” (1). It is odd that no relationship to Sam is specified, and this lack of contextualization is unsettling. Is Sam employee, gardener, lodger, friend, occasional sexual partner, or lover? Why can Gray not explain him? If “dangerous sexual games” can lead to transgressive poetry, have they also led to a flirtation with danger which might have led to death, as in the case of Richard Rive, with whom Gray compares himself, although he does not elaborate on the fact that Rive’s death was part of a pattern of “gay murders” which “[t]ypically [...] involve gay men picking up sexual partners who kill them and then take any [goods] they can lay their hands on in the victim’s apartment” (Retief 1995 [1994]: 108)? This is all speculation, but the point is that while in the quotation above

Gray refers to a loss of fear and a blurring of race and gender boundaries, in the autobiography as a whole black male partners are not fleshed out in any way, so, contrary to Gray's avowed purpose of countering racism, he in fact inadvertently reproduces it to an extent by only elaborating on black people in the roles of criminals, as they appear in the frame narrative, or domestic service.

Male bisexuality as portrayed in *Accident of Birth* is very different from female bisexuality as represented in Watter's *Snippets of Time: Memoirs of a Maverick*. While my intention is not to generalize from only two instances, Gray's text is characterized by anxieties about masculinity, seen in the notion of testing; by anxieties about being part of a sexual and literary history; and by significant silences, which work against his ideal project of expanding the possibilities of meaningful erotic contact within the space of the double rainbow of queer sexuality and race.

In this chapter I have alluded to some theoretical issues, especially the connections between Bhabha's postcolonial Third Space and the conception of a bisexual perspective, which bear further investigation. The concrete examples I have provided from contemporary South African culture prove that silence, inappropriate use of binary categories or the othering hostility encapsulated in the reaction to Brenda Fassie, "she is not just a lesbian but a bisexual" (Hatugari 2002), are common identity-consolidating responses to bisexuality. Similar responses are displayed by sophisticated biographers and editors to instances of bisexuality. Bisexuality disappears, is oddly named, or is used moralistically to suggest betrayal or excess. Gender prejudices add to the scandal. The effect is to re-entrench a binary

sex/gender/sexuality system – not necessarily endorsing the hegemonic, as in the case of Loren Kruger, who emphasizes a lesbian reading of Leontine Sagan's life.

Bisexuality is neither transhistorical nor a panacea. As a lived reality, as my examples make clear, it is contingent, produced under specific socio-historical circumstances, only one signifier of subjectivity amongst others, and fleetingly glimpsed. As sexuality is increasingly a matter of debate in South Africa, bisexual subjects, such as Zubeida, Lola Watter and Stephen Gray, are becoming more visible. Occupying the interstitial space between more established sexualities, bisexuality is the site of scandal and taboo. All of the biographical or autobiographical subjects discussed: Beatrice Hastings, Leontine Sagan, Roy and Mary Campbell, Lola Watter and Stephen Gray, have grappled with the implications of occupying the sexually problematized Third Space, as have commentators on their lives. "Biopia" offers a way to view these subjects' complex subjectivities beyond the habits of silence or stereotypes, and opens up a potentially useful domain for considering sexuality and national identifications beyond the constraints of binarist discourse.

Chapter 5

Mother, Missus, Mate:

Bisexuality in Tatamkhulu Afrika's *Mr Chameleon* and *Bitter Eden*

Bisexuality marks the spot where all our questions about eroticism, repression, and social arrangements come to crisis.

Marjorie Garber (1996 [1995]: 368)

The discourse of the body is not a matter of Lawrentian ganglions and suave loins of darkness, but a *politics* of the body, a rediscovery of its sociability through an awareness of the forces which control and subordinate it.

Terry Eagleton (1983: 215)

[I]f I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country.

E. M. Forster (1972 [1951]: 68)

I begin my examination of novels handling the trope of bisexuality with a comparative analysis of the autobiography of Tatamkhulu Afrika, which spans some 80 years spent in Southern Africa, and which provides a link with my previous chapter on the necessity of viewing appropriate lives through a biopic lens, and his novel, *Bitter Eden* (2002a), mainly set in the pre-apartheid era of World War II. This is the only South African novel I am aware of which is set in this first time period in the national narrative which I will examine. Both the autobiography and the novel reveal narratives which can best be analysed with regard to bisexuality, as they explore the implications of heady same-sex attractions between men which are problematic according to codes of masculinity and religion in heteronormative, patriarchal settings. The tormented selves depicted epitomize not only inner, psychological conflict, but also highlight the difficulties of attaining full sexual citizenship for unconventional queer subjects. Bisexuality thus serves as a metaphor

through which to gauge the national capacity to provide a home for interstitial subjects during a time of transition.

Tatamkhulu Afrika is both a singular anomaly and a typical measure of shifts within the body politic in South Africa. His autobiography, recently published, is entitled *Mr Chameleon* (2005), and this image of cryptic coloration according to surroundings, simultaneously providing disguise from predators and possible prey, is suggestive in considering the facts of his life. In attempting to unearth these facts it becomes clear that inaccuracies, both deliberately seeded and inadvertent, have become part of the mythography attached to the persona. *Mr Chameleon*, the original typescript of which is housed at the National English Literary Museum (NELM) in Grahamstown, South Africa, was typed by Robin Malan from the original version, consisting of a nearly-blind man's handwriting on a range of surfaces: partly-printed newsprint, used envelopes, and the backs of old manuscripts (2002b). An examination of the autobiography, which Afrika beguilingly promises to write truthfully, enables one to settle the issue of some of the contradictions, myths and queries surrounding the man, but the old shape-shifter is wily, and gaps, inconsistencies and ambiguities still remain.

Under a different name, Mogamed Fu'ad Nasif, he was born in Egypt on 7 December, 1920 (Gottschalk 2003: 7; further details from *Mr Chameleon*). His mother, a Turk, and his father, an Arab, brought him to South Africa at a young age, but they soon died in a flu epidemic. The two-year old child was adopted by white Methodists, re-named John Charlton, and not told of his parentage until adulthood. Under this name, at the age of 17 he wrote a novel, which was published in the UK, but all the stocks

bar a handful¹ were destroyed by a Luftwaffe bomb hit on a warehouse storing copies of the book. Charlton volunteered for service in the Second World War, and was captured during the second fall of Tubruq (Tobruk). He was a prisoner of war in Italy for a year, and in Germany for two years. During his period of imprisonment he wrote a “surreal” novel about life in the prisoner-of-war camps. This novel was found by a guard and destroyed, a traumatic experience for the author, who later likened it to “killing my own child” (Horler 1994: 17). Disheartened, Afrika was not to write for another forty years. However, given the homoeroticism dealt with in the narrative in its later incarnation as *Bitter Eden*, “no publisher in the United Kingdom on VE Day would have dared touch it for fear of prosecution and outrage” (Gottschalk 2003: 8). In fact, even at the end of the twentieth century publication was a problematic affair; in *Mr Chameleon* Afrika rejoices at the then-imminent publication in London of *Bitter Eden*, “after six long years of lying in that sad limbo where hunch the Quasimodos of our minds” (2005: 332). He particularly rues the fact that no South African publisher was prepared to accept the book, as, according to him, it was “te goed en nie Suid-Afrikaans genoeg nie” [“too good and not South African enough”] (Van Zyl 2002: 13). Whatever the truth of this assertion, the fact remains that a number of his works do remain unpublished, and this is an indictment of South African publishing. Further, *Bitter Eden* explores the taboo topic of love between men who do not identify as homosexual, and this is part of the history of men in South Africa, not only during World War II, but in other circumstances such as men-only hostels and jails.

¹ Chris Dunton refers to three surviving copies that he knows of: in the British Library, the Johannesburg Public Library, and NELM in Grahamstown (2003), while Sandra Lee Braude refers to her successful attempt to find a copy for Afrika himself (in Afrika 2000: 71); I would surmise that this would also now be housed at NELM, as this institution acts as Afrika’s literary executor.

Afrika's third metamorphosis occurred after his return to South Africa after the war. He was accepted as a son by a politically conservative Afrikaans family, and after his adoptive mother died he assumed the name (and politics) of this new family, now being officially known as Jozua Francois Joubert, although he was still known by the diminutive of his earlier middle name, Charlie (2005: 148, 168). He became, however, increasingly conscious of his racial heritage and his ambiguous position *vis-à-vis* apartheid politics. In order to escape financial problems, he moved to South-West Africa, where he spent more than a decade, working as a barman, a drummer and on a copper mine. He formed an intense, but non-sexual, friendship with a black man, and also befriended a "coloured" man who was passing for white, and who later committed suicide.

Afrika moved to Cape Town, in South Africa, where he worked as an accounting clerk. For a time he lived in District Six. He had become politically progressive and joined the ANC. He also became a Muslim, assuming the middle name Ismail, and had himself re-classified in terms of race as "Malay." After his political acts were discovered by the apartheid authorities, he was twice imprisoned, and began to write poetry as a form of catharsis. As an affiliate of uMkhonto weSizwe he was later given the praise name Tatamkhulu Afrika, which translates as grandfather or great father of Africa (Morris 2003: 1). He was proud of the name, and in an acceptance speech for a poetry award bestowed on his first volume of poems he formally begged the English Academy to accept his honorary name and persona (Afrika 1991b: 146).

Afrika's personal narrative is one of constant mutability in terms of name, religion and politics. His first of eight books of poetry (each of which was recognized by an

award) is called *Nine Lives*, highlighting his ability to survive and adapt (1991a). The poems in this volume deal with ageing, metamorphosis, magic, transformation and entry into different realms of consciousness. The poet considers questions of identity, alter egos and home. The demands of the body are juxtaposed with the promptings of the mind and will. Issues of pain, responsibility and culpability are explored. Shifts of perspective allow insights into and identification with aspects of nature, mavericks (such as a Rasta dancer), prey, and earlier selves. Moments of poignant tenderness occur, as in “The Woman at the Till,” where an unexpected moment of connection occurs between a surly shop assistant and a customer. The persona of the poems frequently ponders over dilemmas of ethical behaviour, feels compassion, and articulates a desire for connection with others. Most significant, for me, is the poem “Death of the Tooth Fairy,” which alludes to a child’s binarist vision of the battle between “good and evil, dark and sun,/ Lucifer and Gabriel.” In contrast to this vision, the adult recognizes that this myth of dichotomous forces was a projection of a spectrum of psychic possibilities, the responsibilities of which must be acknowledged: “Everything is in me now./ I am Lucifer and Gabriel” (24).

In addition to the well-received poetry, Afrika wrote a novel, *The Innocents* (1994), and four novellas published together as *Tightrope* (1996). In 2002, *Bitter Eden* appeared, the novel based on his war-time experiences, and on his earlier novel which was destroyed (2002a). Shortly after this Tatamkhulu Afrika died, of complications after being knocked over by a vehicle in Cape Town (Ferguson 2003: 1). He left a number of unpublished works, including his autobiography *Mr Chameleon*, two novels, four short novels, two plays and poetry (Van Zyl 2002: 13; “Tatamkhulu Afrika” 2003: 3). In his 82 years, Afrika assumed a range of personae and names,

Although Afrika enjoyed a warm relationship with his foster mother, he writes with loathing of his foster father, who scorned him as a “sissy” and useless, which affected his confidence that he could become a writer (22). Afrika, who as a child was in search of a sympathetic male role model, recounts a bizarre story of literally making a fetish of the accidentally amputated finger of a friend of his foster father of whom he had become fond. While I find this episode significant, I do not intend to milk it for psychological symbolism. Afrika’s ambivalence in terms of gender roles and relationships is highlighted by his contrasting clear sense of pride in his identity as one of the few who has willingly crossed the colour line (22).

Over the course of the autobiography Afrika refers to a number of intense relationships with other men, although these are not referred to in terms of consummated sexual intercourse. Direct sexual approaches generally elicit reactions of revulsion. Interestingly, women barely feature as romantic partners. Deep bonds with men are forged at various stages of his life. One that Afrika made during the Second World War forms the emotional bedrock of *Bitter Eden*.

Using the example of a gay pick-up leading to furtive oral sex, Afrika generalizes the blood-link between men thus:

I do not think that male bonding is the rugged, virginal affection between males that many books and the cinema screens would have us believe. In fact, the relationship is as lushly suggestive of intercourse – please note my careful phrasing – as a serious whore’s bed and is, in addition, a barely covert celebration of masculinity and a sharing, as barely restrained, of a hunger to once again run in packs and, together, rape and rend. Or did you really think that gay rape was a phenomenon of this day and age alone? And an adolescent, swinging between his Yin and his Yang ... would such a bonding benefit or harm him?

I cannot speak for everyone, but if everyone were me – not unloved yet not loving and no skin as a skin shared – he will surely know the whispered urging into alley or lane, the fellatio that is as much a chewing as a suctioning, the roaring of a pleasure that is akin to pain, the coming in a flood of blood and sperm. Should I not then know? For such, even a going overboard in a howling under the moon, a saturnalia for the hooved, a revelling in a dangling of cock and balls, would be preferable, would swing them to either Yin or Yang, bury either in their all-too-shallow graves. (2005: 49-50)

In this atavistic, mythopoetic vision the reference to gay rape makes it plain that men are perceived as predators, prey and objects of desire. While polar gender oppositions of Yin and Yang exist within the psyche, the oscillation between the two states is emphasized, and even when one pole predominates its counterpart is not far from the surface.

Both in the fictional *Bitter Eden* and in the autobiographical *Mr Chameleon* a triangular relationship arises between three men in World War II prisoner-of-war camps in Italy and Germany. One of these men is despised by the object of his affection, while the other two revel in each other's company and friendship. The terms used in *Mr Chameleon*, "seducer" and "cuckolding" (102), lay bare the intensity of the relationship, the desire portrayed at its most raw in the passage above. Afrika skitters away from terming the affinity "love," however, either in personal or in general terms. He recollects his personal sense of abandonment when his friend grew distant, and recounts the cause of this withdrawal: the friend had been "cuckolded" by his wife, "kicked in the one place that no man can stand, the pride that a man has in his balls, and every time I think back to these two weeks of stunned and shattered masculinity, today's raucous feminists leave me cold" (115). It is ironic that Afrika has no sympathy for the wife, as he has acknowledged "cuckolding" his first friend in the camps by swiftly shifting his allegiances to more congenial company, but his

empathy is reserved for his second friend and the wounding of his male ego. The first friend is perceived as less significant, partly because his effeminate looks (despite the fact that he is not gay) revolt Afrika (86). It is clear that Afrika's sense of masculinity contains elements of homophobia and misogyny, because of his own complex and unspeakable desires and anxieties. In general terms he acknowledges that for men from different countries who were involved in such intimacy, separation after the war was "akin to the cutting off from one's self of a living flesh" (121), a Platonic vision of a primal unity.

A subsequent deep friendship, across lines of colour and ethnicity, with a black man with whom Afrika worked in the former South-West Africa, is also represented in terms of purity, which extends again to reticence or scrupulosity of language. After commenting on this relationship, Afrika explains his choice of word to describe it:

So Simon's friendship with its sterling qualities of loyalty and genuineness – qualities, these, which I so brutally demanded be in others but did not always myself display! – was (for me) a *profoundly* significant event and I remember him with an affection that cries out for reunion even now. And, no, I would not use the word 'love' instead of 'affection' here because I have always felt that using the word 'love' in the context of my relationship with another male reduces the maleness of both of us and it was his maleness that drew me to him in the first place as, hopefully, did mine him. (266)

The lavishness of feeling seen in the stress on "*profoundly*" and in the heartfelt yearning of "cries out for reunion" is reined in in the second sentence, yet, whatever the word used, it is clear that the emotion is extreme and erotic. Internalized codes of masculinity are used as a template to police the appearance, behaviour and discourse of both the self and the other, and it is necessary for the critic to observe these codes

and analyse ways in which their use by the author functions both to fetter and to enable.

A period in Afrika's life which is shrouded with so much shame that it nearly dissuaded him from writing the autobiography is explored in the chapter entitled "Walpurgisnacht." The devil in question is one Bertie M----, whom Afrika acknowledges he pursued (177). After going to live with Bertie and his wife, Afrika spied on their lovemaking, a confession which, although he finds difficult, he deems necessary to explain his sense of a "desperation of the flesh" (189) which he had in common with Bertie. Even more difficult to write, however, are the confessions of numerous instances of troilism between Afrika, Bertie and Bertie's female lover (of whom his wife was unaware), although there was no sex between the two men. The first such incident is viewed as propelling Afrika into "the domain of the satyr and the wolf," as well as resuscitating "the friend for which I had hungered since the war ended" (194). The word "which" in place of "whom" seems to imply longing not so much for an individual but a needed institution. The most shocking of all the revelations of this period concerns a young woman whom Bertie deflowered in Afrika's presence. After exulting at the luck that rupturing the hymen of a virgin would bring, Bertie urged Afrika to take his turn, but he declined (198-9). Although Afrika professes to have been disgusted by Bertie's callousness, and wonders whether the sex act described might not be construed as rape, he nonetheless remains silent and continues to be Bertie's friend (201).

Interestingly, Afrika offered to marry both of Bertie's lovers, but was rejected. In addition, he had dreams of becoming the brother-in-law of his black friend in South-

West Africa. For Afrika, a formal connection with a woman can be interpreted as an adjunct to the greater institution of masculine friendship. However, in the eyes of society at large a man needs a wife as a sign of maturity and legitimacy, and Afrika gives two contradictory accounts in *Mr Chameleon* of his promulgating the fiction of having been married, but divorcing after having sired a son (173; 195-6). This myth frequently appears in interviews and in the bibliographical information in his books. It is significant that this account fraudulently conjures up social acceptability through an idealization of the Oedipal family triangle which so far back in his Imaginary was dissolved by death, a loss made the more incomprehensible and poignant through only being acknowledged very belatedly. The role of child has been replaced by the role of father, but this is a mere pose, signalling unappeasable lack.

Afrika's friendship with Bertie was later succeeded by one with Paddy Deane, a singer in a band and a Lothario, with whom Afrika felt the most corporeal of kinships. On seeing him naked, Afrika realized that Deane's black penis meant that he was "coloured," and the two also shared the torment of haemorrhoids. Afrika was warned against repeatedly "choosing albatrosses as friends" (312), and this time attempted to remain distanced from his friend's sexual shenanigans, although the relationship, based on identification, pity and pride, lasted some years into the move back to South Africa.

At the time when this friendship dissolved Afrika came into contact with a wider circle of queer people. His landladies were, he assumed, two lesbians, one of whom complicated matters by making a pass at him. He somewhat prissily queried the nature of her relationship with her friend to shame her, and received the answer,

“Most of the time I am [a lesbian], but there are times when nothing but lust wants the real thing to be pounding me into the bed again!” (362). Such a comment confounds rigid binarist categorizations of sexuality. A further grey area arose when Afrika was befriended by a gay couple, who concluded from the histrionic parting from Paddy Deane, and from Afrika’s knowledge of gay argot (familiar to him from the PoW camps’ theatrical circles) that he was himself gay. He was faced with the quandary of how to respond, part of him mentally hissing, “Don’t fence me in, you goddam buffoon! I’m a shiftless drifter that needs room – lots of room – to do my hyenaing in!” (355). Significantly, here Afrika does not claim a heterosexual identity, even though he resents the straitjacket of being placed in a category. Also significant is his use of the term “hyenaing,” obviously used as a synonym for furtive but aggressive sexual scavenging, but as the term refers to a species in which the female is dominant, this gives the effect of unsettling gender stereotypes.

Afrika quickly acknowledges a warmth of feeling for the gay couple, even going so far as to use the forbidden word: “I had got to love these two free spirits that yet, like me, must cling to some kindred other or be damned” (358). They were lovable because of their kindness, and acceptable because they did not exhibit flamboyant campness, which continued to raise his hackles. A shift in perspective is marked by the fact that, even when they tried to set him up romantically and domestically with a disturbed soul, Afrika’s objection was to the quality of the potential partner rather than his gender (361). He also recounts the episode where a stranger fellated him, and his penis became caught in the passion gap between the man’s front teeth (364-5), an episode which forms part of his “saturnalia” credo on masculinity quoted earlier (49-50).

The last 45 pages of the total of 424 pages of *Mr Chameleon* deal with the last 40 years of Afrika's life. They chronicle his move to District Six, and his agonized preoccupation with his pale skin, leading to his colouring it with Coppertone to appear darker. He also discusses his conversion to Islam, his name change to Ismail Joubert, his establishment of Al Jihaad, his political activism and his experiences in detention, which spur him on to begin writing again, under his uMkhonto weSizwe *nom de guerre* of Tatamkhulu Ismail Afrika. He speaks modestly and sparingly of his writing, claiming that it entails "no change of colour for the chameleon," and commends its analysis to "whichever academic layabout can find nothing better to do" (380).

One of the final images in the text is of the brief relationship of father-son male bonding between a young rent boy and Afrika in prison. The entire autobiography is pervaded with images of male bonding, of which this is the last, while women barely feature. In terms, then, of this academic layabout's specific focus, as Afrika becomes more exposed to queers and more tolerant of them, he also becomes more radically religious. He uneasily reconciles his belief in Islam, which is vehemently opposed to homosexuality, with his personal softening towards queer people:

[A]t my age, I do not argue the toss with God any more than I do with the Laws it is claimed originated with Him.

Is that a cowardly stand? Maybe so, but better safe than sorry now that the hole gapes. And I do, at least, map out my own route when it comes to the tricky bit between the seen and the Unseen, the flesh and the Light which we now know are all one, anyway. So it is that, if you are 'nice' to me regardless of what I am or what I believe, then – whether you are homo or hetero or even bi – I will be as 'nice' to you, even be your friend, and let us wait to see who is in the lemming-rush to the Dark other side of the dark and who – surprise! surprise! – is sneaking through that little wicker-gate into Light upon Light. (359)

After the typing of *Mr Chameleon* by Robin Malan, Tatamkhulu Afrika was interviewed by Johan van Zyl in *Die Burger* (2002). In this interview he referred to his “warts and all” autobiography, and he also made some spontaneous and revealing comments about the issues raised in *Bitter Eden*, and his own sexuality:

“Maar ek wil terugkom by die sentrale punt van die boek, die ding wat mense nie wil verstaan of glo nie, waarvan hulle wegduik. Liefde tussen mans. Liefde wat geen grense ken nie. Daardie Engelsman sou sy lewe vir my opgeoffer het. Hy sou ook gesterf het as hy onder my gewig gestruikel het. Wat anders is dit as liefde?

“En ek praat nie net van liefde in buitengewone omstandighede soos die lyding in ’n kamp vol mans nie. Ek glo mense word homoseksueel gebore. En dit bring my in geweldige stryd met my geloof, wat sê dis ’n verskriklike sonde. [...]

“Nou is daar mense wat my vra of ek homoseksueel is. En ek antwoord ek het liefde geken vir vroue, ek het liefde geken vir mans. Ek het my lewe lank deur ’n menslike landskap sonder grense beweeg. Dis ook hoekom ek dink hierdie uit-die-kas-klim-stories is sommer ’n klomp nonsens. Kan enige mens hom so beperkend wil kategoriseer?” (13)

[“But I want to come back to the central point of the book, the thing that people don’t *want* to understand or believe, from which they duck away. Love between men. Love which knows no bounds. That Englishman would have sacrificed his life for me. He would also have died if he had stumbled under my weight. What else is that but love?

“And I’m not only talking of love in exceptional circumstances like the suffering in a camp full of men. I believe people are born homosexual. And *that* brings me into violent conflict with my faith, which says it is a dreadful sin. [...]

“Now there are people who ask me if I am homosexual. And I answer that I have known love for women, I have known love for men. I have lived my life long moving through a human landscape without boundaries. This is also why I think these coming-out-of-the-closet-stories are a load of rubbish. Can any person *want* to categorize himself so restrictively?”] (My translation)

Juxtaposing the previous quoted passage with this one throws into focus the irreconcilable stresses of the tussle between absolutism and binarism, on the one hand, and an impulse towards openness and the flouting of boundaries, on the other.

Afrika's body, history and instincts favour fluidity and oppose regimentation, yet at this stage of his life, facing the looming boundary of death persuades him, despite his experiences, to place his faith in his binarist, intolerant religion. In the light of *Mr Chameleon*, the syntactic parity of "ek het liefde geken vir vroue, ek het liefde geken vir mans" ["I have known love for women, I have known love for men"], and the gender order given, are misleading, unless the reader perceives a slippage in meaning of the vast term, "love." The most significant relationships in Afrika's life were with other men; descriptions of passionate involvement with women are non-existent. Sexual experiences with women are mentioned in the autobiography and in the poetry, but the overriding emotional connections in his life were erotically charged, profound bonds with men. To impose the label "bisexual" on such an individual's life-experiences would seem crass and imprecise, yet this is the nearest shorthand term which fits the facts. Instead of labelling Tatamkhulu Afrika "a bisexual." however, I intend to analyse his complex representations of sexuality and gender in *Bitter Eden* and show how the conditions of the prisoner-of-war camps enabled the formation of unconventional bonds which could best be discussed in a post-apartheid South Africa, and through a biopic lens.

Bitter Eden has two time-schemes: a brief frame narration set in South Africa, in the present of writing, and a narrative set in North Africa during the Second World War, then in Italy and Germany in prisoner-of-war camps, followed by a section immediately after the war in England. The backdrop, and the first political condition of the text, chronologically, is the Second World War. The nature of this conflict – no matter how many participating countries or individuals, no matter how many issues

involved – is, as with any war, ideologically binary. Elaine Scarry elaborates on this notion:

[T]he multiplicity or unitary nature of the issues will during the course of the war also subside into the double, for what will be “at issue” is each side’s right to its own issues. Until the end of the war, the state of doubleness will reign. The distinction between “friend” and “enemy” – identified by Carl Schmitt as the fundamental distinction in politics equivalent to good and evil in moral philosophy and beautiful and ugly in aesthetics – is in war converted to an absolute polarity, whether that polarity is registered in some version of the us-them idiom (what Henry Kissinger calls the “our side-your side formula” visible in the familiar military pairs of offense-defense, aggressor-defender since no participant in war ever identifies itself as the aggressor) or instead in the more neutral naming of pairs (the colors of the red and the white or the blue and the grey; the East and West of cold war; the North and South of the United States, Korea, Vietnam; the Union and the Confederacy; the twofold coalitions of the Allied and Central powers, or the Allied and Axis powers), and the doubleness will also become an extensive world view applicable not only to all persons in the universe of friends and enemies, but to all objects and all places, as in Paul Fussell’s description of the omnipresent binary categories of World War I, the visible friend and the invisible enemy, the normal (us) and the grotesque (them), the division of the landscape into known and unknown, safe and hostile. This insistent duality will reign until the end of the war when it will become clear that the concussive state of doubleness was all the while in the process of eliminating itself, the condition of two was moving forward to the condition of one, the belligerent equality transforming itself into the peaceful inequality that entails the designation of one as “winner.” (1985: 88)

This strictly binarized world-view occupies but little space in *Bitter Eden*, but it provides a foil against which to evaluate the rest of the text in terms of the representation of issues and technique. A mere glimpse is judged sufficient to sketch in the conflict of war:

A bomber, pregnantly not ours, lumbers over the wadi on its way to the sea, its shadow huge on the ground, its belly seeming to skim rock, scrub, sand. I dutifully pump the gun’s last exotic rounds at it, marvelling that, for once, the gun does not jam. But there is no flowering of the plane into flame, no gratifying hurtling of it into the glittering enamel of the sea, and I stare after it

as it rises into higher flight and am drained as one who has milked his seed into his hand. (2002a: 4-5)

This brief passage functions as a set piece of familiar binaries: us/them, sky/earth, desire/frustration, fantasy/reality, art/nature. The feminized and lethal enemy bomber is opposed to the masculine but impotent gunner. The attempt at shooting down the plane is related in graphically sexual terms: the gunner is denied a joyful consummation of bloodlust, and instead feels the disgust and lack of connection of masturbation.

As opposed to this stark either/or dance of death, life in the prisoner-of-war camps, while hazardous, is much more gradated. As in the poem “Death of the Tooth Fairy” (1991a: 24), a shift occurs from existing in a state of simple, externalized binaries, to a knowledge that within each individual exist multiple possibilities, enacted at their most extreme as bestiality or altruistic heroism. As is revealed in *Bitter Eden* and Maxwell Leigh’s factual account, *Captives Courageous: South African Prisoners of World War II* (1992), the PoW camps in Libya, Italy and Germany were places of deprivation, near-starvation (alleviated only by the occasional Red Cross parcels), infestations by bedbugs and lice, tedium and purposelessness. Prisoners were subjected to psychological pressure, and were at the mercy and whim of their guards, some of whom were humane, but others of whom were senselessly sadistic. The Geneva Convention theoretically ensured the rights of the PoWs, but was flouted as much as observed. In *Mr Chameleon*, Afrika comments, “At the psychological core of every prison experience, *wherever* it may occur, is the same three-headed monster of stasis, abandon and despair” (2005: 100).

In response to this psychological pressure, some prisoners succumbed to psychosis or neurosis. The majority sought ties with their fellows, from a number of countries and a variety of backgrounds. An economy developed around trading cigarettes for other commodities, prisoners performed services such as washing laundry for remuneration, and entertainment such as plays was organized. People adapted as best they could to a life they had never envisaged, and created a body politic within the pressure cooker of this physically closed but socially fluid system. In his autobiography Afrika explores the imaginative shift which could occur:

Prisons are places in which lazy and unquestioningly held views are slowly eroded into something else – and sometimes even into something the reverse. The tides of prejudice and preference that previously stabilized into a general pattern of minimum flux begin to hive off into a radicalism and chaos that are a freeing of the psyche, strangely akin to a space traveller's bursting out of orbit into the limitlessness of the void.

In short, not only does the lion lie down with the lamb, but the murderer with the holy man, and the love that at another time and place would have fled the stares of righteously affronted men, swans with but a flimsy covering through our sad dormitories for the lonely and deprived. (99)

Afrika is obviously here referring to the affection, love and sexual relationships which developed between men in the flux of the PoW camps. These bondings are at the heart of *Bitter Eden*. The question that arises is: to what extent do these altered perceptions discursively and behaviourally enter into the prisoners' home societies when they return? I would argue that the structures and habits of prejudice and the construction of gender are strong, and that these feelings go underground, but that the seed remains, and in a later changing climate may blossom.

The frame-narrative of *Bitter Eden* is set in such a moment of social change. The rigid binarism of apartheid has been replaced by a new, multiple, "rainbow" nation. In the

transition to a post-apartheid South Africa, gay and lesbian lobbyists ensured that Constitutional guarantees were given on grounds of sexuality. At the beginning of *Bitter Eden* the narrator, Thomas Aloysius Smythe (who alters his name to the demotic version, Tom Smith, on occasion), is at home with his wife, Carina. The heterosexual pairing is, however, not represented as an idealized norm. The love which remains between the two is a far cry from a “grand passion” (2002a: 2). Carina is Tom’s second wife; she is pallid, nervous and “unsettlingly male” in manner (2). She is simultaneously a marker of heterosexuality and its unsatisfactoriness for Tom, who notes that her portrayal may help to “explain [...] why, in those years of warping and war, an oddness in my psyche became set in stone” (3). This “oddness” could refer to an inability to express love, or to experience love wholeheartedly and reciprocally; or “oddness” could suggest “queerness.” Certainly the letter which has arrived has had a profound effect on Tom. It was written by his wartime friend, after 50 years’ silence, shortly before his death. The emotion Tom attaches to this friend is that word which sticks in Afrika’s craw when used between men: “love” (2). The strength of this resurgence of repressed emotion is revealed through the rapid shifts in tense from present to past to pluperfect, the frequent introspective parenthetical asides, the disintegration of functioning categories, and the grotesquerie of the imagery.

The shift back 50 years to the war years is typographically marked. However, the jump is not to the chronological beginning of the narrative, but some months into it, and the abrupt segue back to the beginning is unmarked. Shifts between these two time-schemes create a sense of fragmentation, and prevent a simple reading of a then/now binary. Within a few pages a triple skein is being untangled by the reader.

Stable dyads or dualities are refused in *Bitter Eden*. The heterosexual couple of the frame-narration is haunted by the previous intense relationship between the “mates” from the PoW camps which is represented in the central of three narrative strands. Even within one narrative time three tenses are used. The figure three is a crucial usage within the text in a variety of ways. As Marjorie Garber comments, the introduction of a third figure is a signal of psychic or cultural shift:

The “third” is that which questions binary thinking and introduces crisis [... T]he “third” is a mode of articulation, a way of describing a space of possibility. Three puts in question the idea of one: of identity, self-sufficiency, self-knowledge. [... The third] reconfigures the relationships between the original pair, and puts into question identities previously conceived as stable, unchallengeable, grounded and “known.” (1992: 11, 13)

The emphasis on triangles in *Bitter Eden* leads me to examine the text in similar terms, focusing on the intertwined tropes of mother, missus (wife) and mate. The prime means of triangulation in *Bitter Eden* is the gender-inflected erotic triangle involving Tom and two of his “mates” in the PoW camps. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick warns against false universalism in analysing erotic triangles. She urges the use of

analytical tools for treating the erotic triangle not as an ahistorical, Platonic form, a deadly symmetry from which the historical accidents of gender, language, class, and power detract, but as a sensitive register for delineating relationships of power and meaning, and for making graphically intelligible the play of desire and identification by which individuals negotiate with their societies for empowerment. (1985: 27)

Tom’s attitude towards other men is grounded in a complex web: he has been traumatized as a child by father-son incest, he bears the prejudices of the time

concerning homosexuality and especially effeminacy, yet he is conscious of and attracted to certain men. One attraction is noted before he enters the camps, and strangely enough is to the German driver who has the task of guarding the newly captured Allied prisoners:

The driver, unsleeping, is standing there, on guard and armed. His shape is very black, very tall, against the nearing, plunging, shower of the stars; his face, in profile, has a noble flow. Enemy and killer, yet there is a grace in him, a youthfulness and urgency that is as beautiful as it is animal and male, and I fall asleep against my will, knowing that he is there. (2002a: 16)

In the flux of the shift from the binaries of war to the “category crisis” (Garber 1992: 16) of being prisoners of war, unwilling attraction to the enemy, across boundaries of enmity and nationality, becomes possible: Tom perceives the driver as “more captive than conqueror and a *kind* man” (15). In this liminal state old certitudes no longer obtain: an Allied lieutenant is suspected of betraying his men to the Germans, and a new us/them dynamic is conceived: “Are the Jerries, the Ites and us all that is left of humankind? Where are the *wogs* to whom this soil belongs?” (14). Despite the use of the derogatory term *wogs* to refer to the Libyans, a sense of respect towards their cemetery and religion is expressed (18, 27).

Tom expresses the same ambiguous response towards his new mate, Douglas. Although Tom has appreciated the German driver’s kindness, his visceral antipathy towards Douglas is so pronounced that he fails to appreciate his many acts of kindness and thoughtfulness. Tom resents Douglas’s soulful eyes, his dancing movements, his expressive hands, his peacetime occupation as a male nurse – in a word, his

effeminacy, or as Tom complains, “mothering” (11, 14, 20, 25). Douglas bristles at this charge, and defends his masculinity by reference to a wife and son (26).

It is a truism that masculinity (in the abstract singular) is constructed in opposition to femininity and homosexuality. Michael Kimmel sketches in the background in the United States in the years between the World Wars. He refers to a “pansy craze” which embodied anxieties about homosexuality and effeminacy (1996: 204), the Charles Atlas cult of the self-made muscle-man (210-2), and the binarizing effects of the Terman and Miles “M-F” psychological scale (206-10). In the UK, the queer energies associated with gay or bisexual poets of the First World War, with D. H. Lawrence and the Bloomsbury Group, had dissipated by the beginning of the Second World War. Maxwell Leigh, in *Captives Courageous: South African Prisoners of War World War II* erases same-sex experiences from his account, merely stating in passing, in a heterosexual context, “sex was of minimal significance to most prisoners of war, for, as Wally Wolhuter says, ‘A hungry man’s thoughts are concentrated on the area around the belt, not on that below the belt’” (1992: 90). American novels of the 1950s on the topic of wartime gay relationships include Dennis Murphy’s *The Sergeant* (1958) and Allen Drury’s *Advise and Consent* (1959) (in Edelman 1992: 281 n. 22). However, the topic has received little attention.

In *Bitter Eden*, Tom very quickly acknowledges an attraction to Danny. Danny’s opening gambit after asking permission to sunbathe next to Tom is a question about Douglas, “‘He one of the funnies?’” (26). When Tom does not reply, Danny follows up with an emphasized, “‘He your mate?’” (26). The concept of mateship is a slippery one. On one reading it is simply a less formal synonym for “friend.” However, the

emphasis used by Danny highlights the erotic edge that the word can imply, as does the usage of the terms “funnies,” “queer” (40) and “poof” (43-4) alongside “mate” in this conversation. While this first dialogue between Danny and Tom ostensibly lays down the ground-rules between them, that their friendship will be non-sexual and uncontroversial, the variable manifestations of mateship are also emphasized.

E. M. Forster’s notorious dictum, “[I]f I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country” (1972: 68 [1951]) is relevant to the trope of mateship in *Bitter Eden*, and the novel’s weighing up the competing claims of patriotism, personal ties and individual needs. Forster’s words were first published in 1938, just before the first time-scheme of *Bitter Eden*. At this stage male homosexuality was a criminal offence in the UK (it was partially decriminalized in 1967) (Lane 1997: 178). Forster’s comment needs to be viewed in the context of a state system which he regarded as unjustly repressive (Reed 1997: 82), and in which gay men such as himself were rendered marginal and duplicitous. For Forster friendship “could signify the homosocial, homoerotic, and the homosexual” (Piggford 1997: 105). A range of intimacies can thus be implied by the terms “friendship,” “comradeship,” “brotherly bonds” (Bristow 1997: 128), or “mateship,” on a continuum ranging from straight to queer. George Steiner comments on the pressures that need to be read into Forster’s personal circumstances and the degree of wish-projection that needs to be perceived in some of his claims:

In the light of an intensely spiritualized yet nervous and partly embittered homosexuality, a number of Forster’s most famous dicta – it is better to betray one’s country than a friend, “only connect” – take on a more restricted, shriller ambiance. (Steiner 1971: 169, quoted in Lane 1997: 178)

Steiner's reference to a "shriller ambiance" smacks of a coded slur on Forster's homosexuality. However, the point that the dramatized choice between friend and country depends on the author's view of the relations between the citizenship and autonomy offered by the state to queers, and the emotional value derived from the idealized connections offered by friends, is a valid one. Forster's fiction goes against the grain of his desire to portray the triumph of passionate male friendship (Lane 188-9).

A similar tension can be observed with regard to the representation of mateship, national affiliation and machismo in *Bitter Eden*. In this novel the dynamics are even more fraught than in Forster as Afrika's attitude towards his sexuality is so complex and contradictory, and all three main characters are self-proclaimed heterosexual men who find it difficult to deal with their vexed emotions.

Desire is apparent in Tom's first appraisal of Danny, and it is not coincidental that Danny is naked to his scrutiny:

Covertly, I study him, slewing only my eyes. His hair is black, springy, tightly curled, capping his head like a Renaissance cherub's or an old Greek bust of a beautiful boy. Blessedly, though, his face is neither beautiful nor a boy's. The nose is pug, the chin a shade pushy, the lips yielding and mobile, yet wholly male, the brow low – which last, I have long since learned, has nothing to do with intelligence or the lack of it, is merely the reverse of high.

Lower down is the body of a man who works at it – the breasts at the apex before masculinity becomes womanishness, the nipples pert and clear, the hair in the armpits tufting and lush, as lush a body-hair flowing with the flat belly down into the generous crotch, the tautly powerful thighs.

It is only then that I articulate it to myself that he has been lying beside me in the nude. Christ! I think [...] (2002a: 38-9)

Tom's *regard oblique* encounters a hybrid figure: the hair reminiscent of portrayals by Leonardo da Vinci or Michelangelo, both of whom were sexually attracted to men, or an ancient bust evoking the sexual relationships between Greek men and boys; the face "[b]lessedly" a peasant's face. Had Danny been too attractive this would have signalled inadequate masculinity and caused the same problems Tom experienced with Douglas's feminine behaviour and gestures. The second paragraph is a paean of erotic attraction to the man who works on his physique, that heroic figure of the time. (Tom soon discovers that Danny was a boxer before the war.) However, there is again a suggestion of ambiguity: the pectorals are so developed as to approach the fullness of femininity, or, as Tom puts it disparagingly, "womanishness." Only after revelling in the sight before him does the narrator belatedly acknowledge the disturbing fact of his companion's nudity (a term more usually applied to women in art than to men). Desire and conventional outrage are quite clearly warring in this passage.

The burgeoning friendship between Tom and Danny pushes at the bounds of homosociality. It is revealed through flirtatious comments, favours and deliberate moves on Danny's part: an embrace after Tom has appeared in a play (81), and a shared moment listening to a nightingale sing – a moment which is more poignant for excluding Douglas (85-90).

Tom is painted by an artist, who explains his metaphorical vision of Tom:

'The squint eye is your evil eye. We are both devil and angel, you know. And there is no skin on your face because I am not painting your skin. I am painting what is *under* your skin – the real you that you are not wanting me to see.' (59)

This triangular vision of a complex individual who consists of juxtaposed binary impulses, and who at the same time has a secret, hidden dimension is an apt depiction of Tom. No matter how scrupulously or dubiously he behaves, he provides a running commentary on his own brutally honest evaluation of his words and actions. This self-reflexivity, along with the immediacy of the present-tense narration, the emphasis on agency, particularly the range of acts performed by hands, and the titular trope of a lapsarian world of changing states from innocence to experience, from bliss to expulsion, result in a humane text of integrity.

The ever introspective Tom queries the meaning of his attraction to Danny:

Already my mind, recalcitrant rebel that it is, has framed such unspeakable questions as, ‘Am I one of *them*? Am I in love with a *man*?’ But I beat these questions back with the desperateness of one under siege, then with a deliberate crudeness dwell on the mechanics of sex between males. ‘Comes out all covered with shit!’ I think and shudder with a quite genuine disgust, yet am none the less still uncomfortably aware that the question of love itself stays unresolved, is being linked by me to the sexual act in the simplistic and grubby-minded manner of adolescents in order that I may frighten myself back into the cosy straitjacket into which I was born and raised. (95)

This physiological fastidiousness is given further motivation within the text as Tom is represented as having been molested by his father as a child. However, as he realizes, the shift from the domain of the naturalized norm of heterosexuality is more to do with emotions than actions. As far as the emotions go, he is fully and publicly committed when he chooses to sleep sharing a blanket with Danny rather than Douglas when a group of PoWs are being de-loused. Both Tom and Danny have previously stated their limits: Tom hates being touched (9), and Danny will not have anyone but his wife touch his penis (40). The deepening intimacy between the two is

marked not only by their acknowledgement that they are now mates (106), but by their dropping of these physical boundaries: under the narrow blanket the two lie cheek by jowl, and at one stage Tom cradles Danny's genitals (107-8).

After this establishment of mateship with Danny, Tom breaks up with Douglas (111-4). Soon after this the Italians surrender, and in the carnival atmosphere Tom and Danny kiss (117), then, facing the thought of possible separation, they "sleep, entwined" (118). The next day Danny acquires two guns from the decamping Italian guards, one of which he gives to Tom. They discuss suicide, and Tom asks what Danny would do if Tom were to commit suicide. Danny says that he would follow suit; he explains that he would think of his wife and mother, but his real "other half" is his mate. Wives and husbands are interchangeable, but mateship is an absolute, mystical and unique bond. Despite fearing this fervour, Tom vows that he too would follow his friend into death (120-1). For Tom, it is clear, mateship is more practical: when the PoWs are transported to Germany, he shares the unexpected gift of a piece of bacon with Danny (125). Despite the differences in their notions of friendship, however, it is clear that they are both simultaneously aroused by and anxious at the homoeroticism this friendship affords. Tom jocularly claims to be "the woman" in the relationship, and Danny suggests, "Pity it's the wrong waterworks or we could have us a ball" (130). Their notions of machismo, sex, gender and sexuality are shifting. In the cold weather they routinely chastely share a bed in the camp in Germany (131-2).

A further shift in their relationship occurs when Tom acts as Lady Macbeth in the play put on to entertain the PoWs. After donning the costume he is possessed by the persona of the phallic mother in a transformational epiphany. The "[w]itch of my

womb” (146), who is both a successful invocation of the character and a galvanizing of the previously repressed feminine qualities in Tom’s psyche, bursts into dangerous life: “she [...] is ripping *me* wide from the instant of my first entrance, is a snarling tigress of malevolent cunning between my thighs” (148). The “play of desire and identification” (Sedgwick 1985: 27) entails a Lady Macbeth-like “unsexing” (I.v.41), a symbolic metamorphosis into androgyny. This boundary-crossing results in a revitalization of the libido: the next morning, “for the first time in I don’t know how long, I have an erection as pushy as a tusk, and I slip out to the nearest toilet and slyly masturbate before I piss, persuading myself that, Queen or no Queen, I am still as much of a male as I ever was” (Afrika 2002a: 152). The key word here is “persuading,” which highlights the anxiety attending the exciting shift into the liminal domain between representation and identity, and between genders and sexualities, marked by the play on Queen/queen.

Although, as Afrika reveals in *Mr Chameleon*, he himself acted as Lady Macbeth in a production of the “bitter play” (Ashton 2004: 11) in a PoW camp (2005: 105-7), no more apposite character could have been found to serve his purposes in *Bitter Eden*. In various ways she exceeds social categories and any simple binaries of sex and gender. She is an interstitial figure who mocks her “milksoy” husband’s lack of masculine resolve, and who invokes the spirits to “unsex me here, / And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full / Of direst cruelty” (I.v.41-3). Lady Macbeth can be perceived as embodying a Freudian phallic mother or the Jungian archetype, the Terrible Mother, as is seen in her invocation to the “murth’ring ministers” to “Come to my woman’s breasts, / And take my milk for gall” (I.v.47-8), and in her graphic variant on the Abraham/Isaac story:

I have given suck, and know
 How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
 I would, while it was smiling in my face,
 Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,
 And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn
 As you have done to this.

(I.vii.54-9)

As the signifier of Lady Macbeth's breasts is used to reveal the liminal ground between nurturing body and indomitable will, between feminine and masculine, between passivity and aggression, and between humanity and inhumanity, so too does the signifier of Tom's phallus reveal both his virility and his anxieties about his manhood.

It is noteworthy that Tom has intimations of possession by the character he is portraying only after he has donned the garb for the role: the wig, make-up, chest padding, gown and crown. This cross-dressing invokes the *afflatus* which possesses him. Renaissance anxieties around cross-dressing on the stage are pertinent to a consideration of the catalytic effects of Tom's portrayal of Lady Macbeth. Laura Levine meticulously documents the arguments of anti-theatrical pamphleteers who were vociferously antagonistic to boy actors portraying women characters. She points out that the fear expressed by these authors is of a "magical" transformation from physiologically male to feminine (1994: 10). The concept of the self posited is a contradictory one: "both inherently monstrous and nothing at all" (12). From such a perspective, "the male actor, dressed in women's clothing, seemed to lack an inherent gender, and this seemed to make him monstrous" (12). So too could the audience, equally pliable, be swayed by the drama into the realms of the monstrous (13-6). In

such a climate of corruption, the pamphleteers warned, sodomy is the likely outcome (22-3). Policing the boundaries of proper manly behaviour is what is at stake here, and the dynamics are strikingly similar to the situation portrayed by Afrika in *Bitter Eden*. What is also striking is “the relation between the cultural prejudice and the personal pathology, the way that the pathology is never only ‘personal,’ but an index to the culture’s system of beliefs and values” (25). While in the case of the Renaissance tracts and *Bitter Eden* the similarities between both personal antipathies and social prejudices are clear, what is even more surprisingly clear is the extent to which notions such as instabilities of gender and sexuality, liminality, the constructedness of gender, and performativity were under serious consideration (although within a different framework) over 400 years ago. Then, as now, repositionings within the prevailing sex/gender/sexuality system were a site of anxiety and scandal.

Certainly for Tom, releasing his previously repressed feminine qualities is crucially significant, and it marks a turning point in his relationships with Danny and Douglas. Danny now treats Tom like a woman, and Tom agonizes, “*Does his nakedness wake me in a forbidden way?*” (154). A change of register also occurs in Tom’s interior dialogue: in one paragraph, for instance, he resorts to the emphasis of italics six times, thereby attaching a certain excess or flamboyance to the prose which is the textual equivalent of the fluid hand gestures which earlier so riled him about Douglas (154-5). Douglas too has been inflamed by the thought of Tom appearing as Lady Macbeth. He has become outrageously camp, and after he makes innuendos about a sexual relationship between Tom and Danny, Danny savagely punches him (151). Douglas attempts suicide, and a friend of his persuades Tom to speak to him. Douglas suggests manual sexual activity with Tom, “like women play when there are no men” (164),

and Tom verbally lashes out in disgust. At this final rejection Douglas sinks his teeth into Tom's cheek, almost severing the flesh (164) – a clear and literal dramatization of the betrayer being betrayed, the biter being bitten – after which Douglas is confined to the psychiatric block.

All three main characters have undergone metamorphoses. Douglas's nascent homosexuality has erupted into dementia. Tom has come to a realization of his gender and sexual ambiguities, but the straitjacket of his conventional upbringing and the internalized homophobia that he and Danny share prevent him from acting on his desire. Danny has become less homophobic than previously (171, 173-4). He is, however, anxious about his slackening libido, and Tom attempts to comfort him, assuring him that his wife will understand; women are unlike men as they are mothers, which ensures their adopting a nurturing role towards their men (178-9), a statement heavily laden with dramatic irony. On hearing Danny's subsequent struggle to experience orgasm as he masturbates, Tom manually stimulates him so that he can attain release. This intimacy is represented both as an act of mateship and as an act which Tom secretly relishes, although his complex attitude is revealed by his finding Danny's ejaculate less disgusting than he would his own (183), betraying his own sexual nausea and self-disgust. He allays Danny's fears about how satisfactorily he climaxed by wildly exaggerating, "Just about blew my hand off" (184). He views the success of this burlesque comment as a victory over "the phantom woman" (184), who simultaneously represents a character in a play, Danny's wife and the heterosexual other against whom he is pitted in his knotted desire for Danny.

In *Mr Chameleon*, the person upon whom the character Danny was based receives news that his wife has fallen pregnant by another man and left her husband. In the *Bitter Eden* version the character of the wife is referred to by Tom as “perfidious Bessie” (188), a telling phrase which cannot but evoke thoughts of “perfidious Albion” and its ruler, Good Queen Bess, the Virgin Queen. As the heartless mother country has betrayed her sons by sending them to war and deserting them, so too on the level of the microcosm women are untrustworthy betrayers. However, Tom at heart is delighted that Bessie is “a bitch and a whore” (189), as this clears emotional space for his “forbidden” desires (154).

Yet Tom still has his own lurid betrayed wraith trailing him. Towards the end of the war, as the prisoners are forced to leave the German prisoner-of-war camp on a gruelling march, Tom sees an imprisoned Douglas “coquettishly” (190) waving at him, and instead of ignoring him he initiates an exchange of insults, which provokes the SS guards to shoot all the psychiatric prisoners. In *Mr Chameleon Afrika* makes plain that the real-life equivalent of Douglas did not share “the dramatics of his deterioration and death” (2005: 86). The fictional counterpart’s end highlights Tom’s culpability and human tendency to betray. Unlike Jean Genet, who as Leo Bersani points out makes a case that betrayal, which is specifically linked to homosexuality, “is an ethical necessity” (1995: 151), Afrika reveals a world which is riven with betrayal and guilt.

Conversely, acts of courage and self-sacrifice also occur within the sacred space of mateship. Danny’s finest hour occurs during the ghastly march, during which those

who fall by the wayside are summarily shot. When Tom falters, Danny carries him, as Tom comments, like a mother her child, thus saving his life (2002a: 196-200).

Afrika's vision of a world which is not neatly categorized in binaries is conveyed in terms of nations as well as individuals. Tom is initially prejudiced against "poms" (40), but overcomes his aversion with regard to Danny, and towards the end of the text he accepts being categorized as British (204). A German guard is viewed not as the enemy, but as "a lost and redeeming friend" (22), and another is viewed as a decent, humane man, helping to save Tom's life (196-7). An American officer, on the other hand, is represented as a callous killer in contravention of the Geneva Convention; he shoots Tom's German saviour without compunction, viewing him as a sub-human "cocksucking Kraut" (208).

After liberation by the Americans, Tom and Danny make a further move in their slow, ritual dance of attraction. Their matey jokes about gender and dating (202, 204) give way to a bout of wrestling which evokes the Gladiatorial section of *Women in Love* (212-3). Both of them have an orgasm, but Tom brushes off the significance of this to Danny, although he privately feels the act was more significant than he is allowing (213).

The two are parted when they are sent to England. While Tom is waiting for a flight back to South Africa, a "whore who could have been my mother" (215) explains to him that his poor sexual performance is typical of prisoners of war, who are still bonded to their "boyfriend[s]" (215). The other side of the coin of this caricature of the hooker with the heart of gold is provided by Danny's mother, when Tom belatedly

visits his friend at his home. She is another vicious, devouring mother stereotype, who is icy towards Tom and explicitly voices the expectations of society that the two will not sleep together, and that Danny must re-establish his social credentials as an adult by finding a woman as quickly as possible (220-4). Just as Danny and Douglas function as split off good object and bad object, so do these antithetical figures both urge social integration, revealing the difficulties in adopting a queer identity.

The final encounter between Tom and Danny occurs after a swim in the nude (230-1). Tom promises to return, and Danny finally makes the move towards unambiguous sexual contact. Significantly, his first action is to stimulate Tom's nipples, which conjures up all the textual echoes around breasts, milk, nurturing and betrayal. Tom makes to hide his erection, but Danny urges him to

“[f]ace up to it, mate! All that time back there, you were lying to yourself about what was going on, saying this, saying that, pretending that nothing had changed, but he,” and he flicks my penis into full erection with a finger and thumb, “is telling you what you and me always knew.” (230)

Again, the echoes of Lawrence are strong. As Tom prepares for the final consummation of intercourse, however, they are interrupted, and he leaves for South Africa. In the frame narrative at the end of the text he reads Danny's final letter in which he discusses his imminent death (232-3). Tom scrutinizes his conscience as to why he did not, as he had promised, return. In addition, he analyses the possibility that Danny misled him about also having been sodomized by his father, in order to forge a bond with Tom. He considers Danny's insistence on exchanging binding vows as indicating a pathology. No matter what the truth, though, he knows that the bond is durable. Upon opening the parcel which accompanies the letter, he discovers the gun

that Danny gave him during the war, and which they vowed to use if the other died. The text ends at this point, although the implication is clear that Tom eschews the romantic impulse to join his mate in a death pact.

The end of the text circles around in typical quest form. Instead of privileging and romanticizing male erotic friendship or death, it looks to another time, another location, in which to plant the seed of the story. In this setting, post-apartheid South Africa, Tom's alter ego, Tatamkhulu Afrika, unfolds a mesmerizing tale which insists that, queerly enough, people have lived and can live beyond binary structures of sex, gender and sexuality, although it reveals quite starkly the price that has to be paid in flouting cultural norms. To return to E. M. Forster's aphorism, "[I]f I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country," the choice that Afrika makes is to have the guts to bear witness to his friend within the country which he has helped to transform.

Bitter Eden reveals the depth of mateship between men in World War II, and the impossibility of negotiating this primarily emotional bond in the civilian body politic. In addition to this, while the text explores multiple ways in which binaries are unsettled and shifts of consciousness can occur, the personal and social sexism and heterosexism ensure that transformational models of gender and sexuality cannot be visualized. While Tatamkhulu Afrika underwent significant metamorphoses over the course of his life, he could not negotiate his way out of the morass of desire for men and simultaneous repugnance towards homosexuality; neither could he divest himself of a sense of gendered superiority. His work displays the profound contradictions within the South African psyche, and helps to underscore Benedict Anderson's

conception of the nation as “a deep, horizontal comradeship,” a “fraternity” (1983: 7) or, in my term, mateship, which is ambivalent towards the femininity and queerness which it encompasses. *Bitter Eden* is an imaginative and poetically compelling forerunner to the spate of novels, almost all of which were authored by men, written around the trope of bisexuality after the transition to democracy in 1994.

Chapter 6

Fissures in Apartheid's "Eden": Representations of Bisexuality

in *Cracks* by Sheila Kohler and *The Smell of Apples* by Mark Behr

While signs mean by their difference from other signs, the binary opposition is the most extreme form of difference possible – sun/moon; man/woman; birth/death; black/white. Such oppositions, each of which represents a binary system, are very common in the cultural construction of reality. The problem with such binary systems is that they suppress ambiguous or interstitial spaces between the opposed categories, so that any overlapping that may appear, say, between the categories man/woman, child/adult or friend/alien, becomes impossible according to binary logic, and a region of taboo in social experience.

[... A]ny activity or state that does not fit the binary opposition will become subject to repression or ritual. For instance, the interstitial stage between child and adult – “youth” – is treated as a scandalous category, a rite of passage subject to considerable suspicion and anxiety.

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (2002 [2000]: 23-4)

[T]he presence of a bisexual figure in film [or other texts] is an indicator that a cultural tension is being broached, whose contours the bisexual enables the audience [or reader] to negotiate, and whose dangers the bisexual always embodies.

Jo Eadie (1997: 142)

We leaned against her as we went down the aisle and felt her breath on our cheeks and the soft swell of her boosie. Our hearts fluttered, and we saw the light streaming in aslant through the narrow, stained-glass windows: red and blue and yellow like a rainbow.

Sheila Kohler (2001 [1999]: 27)

While Dad and I stood up there, watching the red sky, Dad said that that was why we can never go back [to Tanzania]. The blacks drove the whites away and all we have left is here, Dad said, sweeping through the air with his arm.

“And this country [South Africa] was empty before our people arrived. *Everything, everything* you see, *we* built up from nothing. This is our place, given to us by God and we will look after it. Whatever the cost.”

When we got back into the car, you could smell the apples everywhere. I turned round to look at the crates, but it was too dark to see them.

“Dad, do you smell the apples?” I asked in the dark.

“Ja, Marnus,” Dad answered as he turned the Volvo back on to the road. “Even the apples we brought to this country.”

Mark Behr (1996 [1995]: 124)

In this chapter I examine two novels by white authors, both South African by birth, dealing with rites of passage from the innocence of childhood to the experience of adulthood. The space where this shift occurs is the taboo and scandalous domain of adolescence or “youth,” as discussed by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, characterized by developing sexual awareness and socialization into adult roles. *Cracks* is set around the time the Republic of South Africa came into being in 1961, while *The Smell of Apples* is set in 1973, with in each case a later time-setting in adulthood providing implicit commentary on the earlier one. Different though the personal situations of the authors, Sheila Kohler and Mark Behr, are, and different though *Cracks* and *The Smell of Apples* are, both novels can usefully be examined in the light of Fredric Jameson’s comment that “all third-world texts are necessarily [...] allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call *national allegories*” (2000 [1986]: 319). While Jameson’s suggestion has been critiqued as being totalitarian, in my view it is particularly suggestive when investigating a form, the novel, which as he points out has traditionally privileged the private over the public, the poetic over the political, and sexuality and the interior life over class, economics and power on a grand scale: in his formulation, “Freud versus Marx” (320). In the specific context of apartheid binarism is particularly ideologically evident; however, from a post-apartheid perspective it is incumbent on novelist and critic alike to note and respond to binaries of content and technique, as well as their implications for the nation, in the past, present and future.

The allegorical or mythic dimensions of the novels surface most clearly in the utopian and ironic references to hope implied by the rainbow imagery in *Cracks*, and the ironic reference in *The Smell of Apples*, quoted above, to Edenic apples – symbols of

dangerous knowledge, temptation and a fall from grace – imported to Africa by the colonizers. Susan Vanzanten Gallagher likens the period when both novels (and Tatamkhulu Afrika's similarly symbolically titled *Bitter Eden*) were published to Frantz Fanon's imagined postcolonial "zone of occult instability" when cultural producers re-examine the past in order to visualize a new national culture (1997: 376-7). *Cracks* and *The Smell of Apples* reveal the texture of everyday life as experienced by adolescent white children, both female and male, English and Afrikaans, in apartheid South Africa, as they were inducted into the binarist discourse of apartheid and their future roles within the institutions of the school and the family, while faced with the seductive power and rifts within the hegemonic order embodied by an adult, paedophile, bisexual figure. As I shall discuss in more detail later, these bisexual figures can be viewed as displaying cultural anxieties which transcend the narrow limits of the individual and psychological.

Changes in perceptions of gender, sexuality and race, both in South Africa and globally, are illustrated in the backward looks at apartheid found in both texts. *Cracks* forms part of a number of thinly-veiled autobiographical accounts of relatively privileged white girls growing up under apartheid; other examples of this group of *Bildungsromane*, which, fuelled by the spread of second-wave feminism, appeared in South Africa from the 1970s on, include *The Virgins* by Jillian Becker (1976), *Home Ground* by Lynn Freed (1986), E. M. Macphail's *Phoebe and Nio* (1987), and *Frankie and Stankie* by Barbara Trapido (2003). These white women novelists' accounts of adolescence in apartheid were complemented by their male counterparts' texts at a somewhat later stage, catalysed by a changed perspective on militarism after the shift to democracy, as well as an international interest in masculinities studies.

Examples of these novels include Antony Sher's *Cheap Lives* (1995), *Embrace*, by Mark Behr (2000), *The Children's Day* by Michiel Heyns (2002), and Barry Levy's *Burning Bright* (2004), all of which employ the trope of bisexuality; *The Smell of Apples* is emblematic of the issues raised in these novels. *Cracks*, however, stands alone in representing female bisexuality in apartheid-era South Africa. These South African authors' compatriots from other ethnic groupings, when writing accounts of apartheid in the form of autobiographies, memoirs or novels, tend to focus on adulthood or the life as a whole, rather than using the shift from the innocence of childhood to the experience of adulthood as a trope of induction into a binarized, racist, sexist culture. This may be partly because of a less binarized and sentimentalized view of childhood, resting less on Romantic idealizations than on pragmatic considerations.

Sheila Kohler was born into an extremely wealthy family in Johannesburg in 1941, but left South Africa when she was seventeen; seeing before her a choice of heroic action against apartheid or emigration, she chose the latter course (Henderson 2002: 2-3). She has degrees from the Sorbonne and Columbia University (Magwood 2001: 10). For a considerable period she has lived in New York. She has written a number of novels and short stories, for which she has garnered several honours, including the selection of *Cracks* by *Library Journal* and *Newsday* as one of the most impressive books published in 1999 ("Hudson Valley Writers' Center" 2004: 1-2). Her narratives are frequently set in South Africa, "a location that provides the proper atmosphere for her decadent characters and their sinister pursuits" ("Sheila (May) Kohler" 2000: 2). These narratives characteristically explore issues of corruption, sexuality and guilt,

and often figure a lost child, based psychologically on Kohler's sister, who Kohler believes was murdered (Henderson 2-5). *Cracks* contains all of these elements.

Novels which are evoked by *Cracks* are *Lord of the Flies* (1954), Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961), *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt (1992), and Alan Warner's *The Sopranos* (1999 [1998]). In *Lord of the Flies* William Golding revisits the optimistic nineteenth-century children's story by R. M. Ballantyne, *The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean* (1977 [1858]), from a much darker perspective on human nature, as a group of boys stranded on an island regress into barbarity and murder, thus calling into question ideas of childhood innocence and humanity's moral progression. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* deals with a dangerously charismatic teacher at a girls' school in Edinburgh, who teaches her band of favourite pupils about art, love and politics. In *The Secret History* a group of elitist students, who consider themselves beyond society's rules owing to their superior intellects, murder an individual who disrupts their bacchanalian revels. *The Sopranos* is lighter in tone, detailing various rebellions engaged in by the members of a convent school choir who travel from their small town to Edinburgh, and retailing their poignant stories. In addition to being reminiscent of these novels, *Cracks* is evocative of the atmosphere of the film *The Children's Hour* (directed by William Wyler in 1961)¹, in which two schoolteachers at a private boarding school are accused of lesbianism. *Cracks* is also laced with the heady emotional and erotic atmosphere of Peter Weir's film, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975), which has echoes of homoeroticism as a party of teachers and schoolgirls go on a picnic in the Australian outback, while this dominant tone is replaced by horror as several of their number

¹ This film, based on the play by Lillian Hellman (1934), was entitled *The Loudest Whisper* in the UK.

disappear. In *Cracks* these ideas of the capacity for evil displayed by an enclosed group of young people, the responsibility expected of their teachers, the effects of homoeroticism, and the significance of the wider setting, are all in evidence.

The novel is a thriller which shuttles between two time sequences: the post-apartheid present, when a group of middle-aged white women gather at their old boarding school for a reunion; and the apartheid past, some four decades back, when they were schoolgirls on the swimming team, and one of their number vanished. The exact time of the earlier sequence is blurred, as references to Ava Gardner, Gregory Peck and Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog" suggest the 1950s (Kohler herself matriculated in 1958), but there is also a reference to the girls' pride in their "new country's independence" (22), which would place the earlier section of the text in 1961 or slightly later. This stretching of temporality emphasizes that these schoolgirls, unlike their mothers, are no longer umbilically attached to their European heritage; they are in the process of becoming African. The title *Cracks* suggests rifts in the social fabric; it also has a slang connotation of the female genitalia. However, the primary use of the term in the novel is schoolgirls' crushes on their teacher:

Miss G was our crack. When you had a crack you saw things more clearly: the thick dark of the shadows and the transperence of the oak leaves in the light and the soft glow of the magnolia petals against their waxy leaves. You wanted to lie down in the dark in the music room and listen to Rachmaninoff and to the summer rains rushing hard down the gutters. You left notes for your crack in her mug next to her toothbrush on the shelf in the bathroom. If you accidentally brushed up against your crack and felt her boosie, you nearly fainted. [...]

We took turns fainting in chapel. Before communion, while we were on our knees and had not had any breakfast, we breathed hard a few times and then held our breath and closed our eyes. We sweated and started to see diamonds in the dark. We felt ourselves rush out of ourselves, out and out. Then we came back to the squelch of Miss G's crepe-soled boots as she strode

down the blue-carpeted aisle to rescue us. She made us put our heads down between our knees, and then she lifted us up and squeezed our arms.

We leaned against her as we went down the aisle and felt her breath on our cheeks and the soft swell of her boosie. Our hearts fluttered, and we saw the light streaming in aslant through the narrow, stained-glass windows: red and blue and yellow like a rainbow. (26-7)

The overblown prose successfully evokes the narcissistic, hyperbolic passions of ripening girls in a single-sex boarding school. In the past of the text, the twelve schoolgirls on the swimming team vie for the fickle attentions of their swimming teacher, Miss G. Aged around thirteen, they are susceptible to her idiosyncratic philosophy of life, that desire alone is sufficient to achieve success in any field, and also to her masculine erotic attraction. Into this hothouse atmosphere swans a quintessential outsider: an Italian princess, elegant, sophisticated, and a natural swimmer, who becomes the object of desire and obsession of the predatory Miss G. The new girl's name is Fiamma Corona. As a corona is a disc of prismatically coloured light, and "Fiamma" means "flame," Fiamma is symbolically surrounded by a nimbus, and is portrayed in rainbow imagery in the text:

She was more at ease in water than on land. She was not good at any of the land sports we played: hockey and netball and rounders, but we had often found her in the pool at dawn, as though she had been there all night, beating back and forth, sending up a rainbow spray into the air, while the sun striped the sky pink and orange and red. (63)

This rainbow imagery is natural, unlike the artificial light filtered through the glass of the chapel as the girls play their erotic games with Miss G. Fiamma is seen as an innocent, virginal, mythical, even saintly presence: she was delivered to her father by her mother in a basket on a lake, like Moses (52), she looks like Botticelli's Venus (40), and a teacher calls her Ariel (63). Fiamma tests the ravening Id which is Miss G,

and her tribe of favourites. The term "*fiamma*" is also the equivalent Italian word for a schoolgirl "crack" or "crush" (Garber 1996 [1995]: 302), but in this case the usual direction of the crush, from adolescent to adult, is reversed. Although Fiamma is cast as a type, she is also atypical in her colouring: one of the girls notes disapprovingly that "'Italians aren't blond'" (80). Her pallor thus distinguishes her from the dark and desirable Miss G.

The group of twelve girls includes one who shares a name with the author, Sheila Kohler. Instead of first-person singular narration for this character, however, Kohler uses third-person narration, while using an allusive first-person plural narration for the group of twelve. These usages imply an inability to distinguish members of the group from one another in terms of moral culpability, and some degree of consonance between author and characters. The group of twelve functions as a unity, and a major triangulation is set up between it, passionately adoring Miss G; Miss G, increasingly cool towards the group as her infatuation with Fiamma escalates; and Fiamma, yearning for her home and father, and unimpressed by Miss G or the twelve girls.

After a drunken, cross-dressing, orgiastic play-acting sequence, during which the girls enact Keats's "The Eve of St. Agnes," the pack delivers Fiamma up to Miss G, who rapes her. The denouement of the mystery of Fiamma's disappearance is harrowing. The tribe of swimming team members, jealous and hypocritically disgusted that Fiamma had been "a lezzie with Miss G" (245), take advantage of a walk in the veld to torture Fiamma, hitting her, gagging her and inserting sharp objects "into her tight, child's orifices, while she gagged and tried to scream" (163). Unable to use her asthma pump, Fiamma dies, and the other girls place her in a used tomb. There is a

suggestion that Miss G may have surreptitiously observed, and hence been complicit in, Fiamma's death, and the disposal of her body.

An analysis of the pivotal figure of Miss G is central to any queer reading of *Cracks*. What traits epitomize her character, and what do these traits denote? What is her relationship to her pupils? Miss G's name is shortened to an initial, it represents something beyond itself; it is, to some extent, generic, and implies the need for expansion. One obvious aural echo is that of Muriel Spark's Miss Jean Brodie, who indulges her passions at the expense of her charges' well-being. Like Miss Jean Brodie, Miss G has a particular philosophy of life: she believes in the capacity of will-power to achieve what one desires – even if these desires transcend the boundaries of the “natural,” the socially acceptable, or the ethically proper. A chain of signification is employed which demonstrates Miss G's embodiment of her own philosophy. In various ways she is represented through imagery of fluidity and the blurring of boundaries. She is Welsh, but has crossed the sea to South Africa. Her class status and her own narrative of her history are subject to ambiguity: she claims to be an autodidact from a working-class background, but this is disputed by another character. In terms of appearances, Miss G crosses gender boundaries. She has a masculine haircut, voice and clothing: militaristic khaki jumpsuit and polished boots. She is therefore coded as a stereotyped butch lesbian of the 1950s. However, she transgresses even the homosexual/heterosexual boundary. Early in the text, Miss G tells a pupil of falling in love with a man when she was a nurse, and demonstrates how she “massaged his privates” (28) for him. Miss G can therefore be conceived of as bisexual, in a context which elicits stereotypes of excess and inappropriateness. Both in her past and in her present around 1960 she is seen to breach the boundaries

of professional behaviour. This representation is intended to encourage a judgemental response on the part of the reader.

The girls of the swimming team are obsessed with their bodies and with the physical aspects of their transition into womanhood:

We rarely listened. We had difficulty just keeping still. We bit our nails, the skin around our nails, the ends of our pens, the ends of pencils; we sucked our plaits and sometimes even smooth stones; we craned our necks to check for period stains; we scratched, picked, and peeled, at our scabs, our teeth, and our noses. (20)

These girls are portrayed as yearning for physical gratification which is denied them. In an attempt to assuage the emptiness they turn to oral gratification and the monitoring of their own bodies. Miss G too monitors the girls' bodies and behaviour, suggesting treatments for blackheads, cleanliness, posture, and weight, as a means of attracting boys, thus endorsing heteronormativity, although she does mockingly raise the issue of same-sex attraction. She also requires the girls to inform her when they are having their periods, and urges them to share their libidinal secrets with her (36). Within the text leaky, secreting, unbounded female bodies are viewed with a frisson of distaste, suggesting Julia Kristeva's reading of women's bodies as threatening to collapse the borders between human and animal, civilized and uncivilized, or Michèle Montrelay's view that women in Western discourse signify "the ruin of representation" (in Creed 1999: 111).

This ruinous yet seductive fluidity is demonstrated most clearly in Miss G's affinity for water, when she urges the girls of the swimming team to join her in a naked night swim:

In the dim light and the warm water, we slipped back to a timeless time: we were small again, swimming through water to catch Miss G's phosphorescent, shining body. Soon we were swimming around her, under her, Fuzzie at her feet, Di at her head, Meg at her waist. Like minnows around the mother fish, we circled her, we brushed against her smooth body; we touched an arm, a leg, a toe; we felt her all over us in the water. She was swimming fast, turning her head back and forth, breathing in and out, beating the water evenly, surging beside us, and then she was lying still on her back, arms outstretched, staring up at the swirl of stars in the deep blue sky. We too lay on our backs and stared up at the stars. We thought we could hear the music of the spheres; the stars were singing to us; our mothers were chanting to us, we could hear the beating of Miss G's heart. Our heads spun. We floated on beside Miss G in the moonlight and the mysterious quiet of the night, the lights of the school glimmering faintly in the distance, only the crickets chirping.

We saw our mothers waving to us from afar; we saw them coming toward us in starlight, their silver skirts blown against their bodies; we heard them calling our names with surprised delight. We watched them bending over and reaching out their arms and catching us up and swinging us through the air. We were flying. We were light as air can be. We left our bodies behind and flew, free through the air. We could smell the chlorine and the mysterious verbena scent of Miss G's skin. We felt the water ripple against our naked bodies like air, and we watched our mother's heads come down over us in the half dark to kiss our foreheads, or cheeks, our noses, our chins, and our lips, and their voices whispered, *Good night, good night*. The slapping and the splashing of the water kissed our faces, and the beating of our hearts said, *Good night, good night*.

Miss G was calling us softly. She made us get out of the water and stand by the edge of the pool in the pale white light. Water dripped down from our hair. The moonshine was as warm as sun on our faces and on our new breasts. We stared at Miss G's strong, brown legs, the shadow of her shaved hair at the tops. She told us we were her girls. Otherwise she felt far away, removed. She paused. A blankness had come over her face. She said, "I feel at such a distance from the rest of the world." (64-5)

In the amniotic waters of this epiphanic, symbolic birth scene Miss G serves as a substitute for the girls' mothers, their original love-objects. The nakedness, water, rhythmic movement and heightened emotional atmosphere allow the girls to summon

the phantasmagorical simulacra of their longed-for mothers. Alongside the transcendental vision of mothers, stars and the music of the spheres, however, the call-and-refrain repetition of Ophelia's words, "Good night, good night," is chilling, and presages a tragic end to the delirious fantasy enabled by Miss G. A further reminder that the dissolution of physical and psychic boundaries is temporary and illusory is revealed by Miss G's melancholia and alienation on land. Female fluidity is revealed to be alluring yet ultimately unfulfilling.

In addition to being encoded as woman, Miss G is encoded as a lesbian through her appearance and clothes, as already mentioned. Barbara Creed discusses three stereotypes of the lesbian body which are particularly threatening, beyond the horror of the woman's fluid body. These are "the lesbian body as active and masculinized; the animalistic lesbian body; the narcissistic lesbian body" (1999: 112). Certainly these elements are discernible in Kohler's representation of Miss G. She is shown as eschewing socially endorsed feminine passivity and propriety through her appearance and love of sport, and she will neither conform nor be domesticated. She is revealed to be narcissistic in her attempts to create a docile female discipleship who will all mimic her. Creed suggests that such lesbian mirror-images are conceived of as threatening by society as they involve circularity and regression, rather than linear progression (121). Miss G is also represented as increasingly abject, degraded and animalistic in her developing obsession with Fiamma.

Over and above these representations of Miss G as fluid, female body and masculinized, narcissistic, animalistic lesbian body, the chief import of her structural significance as, in Creed's formulation, "ideological litmus paper" (122) in *Cracks* is

as bisexual body. Jo Eadie offers an analysis of the representation of bisexuality in films which is particularly illuminating when applied to Kohler's representation of Miss G in *Cracks*. In his chapter, "'That's Why She Is Bisexual': Contexts for Bisexual Visibility" (1997), Eadie is at pains to avoid claiming that specific representations of bisexuals are biphobic. Instead, his focus is on the social meaning attached to the body of the bisexual:

As an outsider s/he is the one who is seen as going beyond the limits, and who thereby serves to teach a lesson about what those limits are. The bisexual is therefore a marker, whose bisexuality signals that there is something – or rather, something else – of interest about them. (142)

Eadie discusses the implications of a comment made by Paul Verhoeven, director of *Basic Instinct*, about the bisexuality of the killer, Catherine Tramell, in the film. Verhoeven views the character as the devil, and thus she needs to be bisexual; in other words, to be effective, the ideal representative of temptation must be desirable and available to men and women (144). Similarly, in Kohler's apartheid Eden, the appropriate embodiment of temptation and sin is the bisexual Miss G.

Eadie analyses a film, *Crush* (Alison Maclean 1990), which has resonances (not least in title) with *Cracks*. He points out that the chief protagonist in this film is a bisexual woman who defies boundaries, "geographical, proprietary or sexual" (1997: 146). Her bisexuality is associated with restlessness, fickleness, selfishness and intrusiveness (148), and because of her own pathological lack of respect for boundaries she inflames similar, obsessive, unassuageable passions in others. Eadie points out that the film does not set out gratuitously to demonize bisexuality; the film is actually about cultural anxieties for which bisexuality is a convenient metaphor, and these

anxieties centre around heterosexual monogamy. Eadie analyses another film, *The Hunger* (Tony Scott 1982), a vampire film, and analyses the anxieties around unquenchable appetite which the bisexual incarnates in this text. All three films, then, explore the erotic yet horrifying frisson of excessive desire, rootlessness, instability and alienation, all of which attributes, particularly alarmingly, both masquerade as normality and are seductive enough to corrupt even the most steadfast. “A dangerous outsider, the bisexual carries the stigma of passions for which there is no place in anyone, and yet which [in the Freudian schema] find in everyone a place prepared for them” (156).

Similarly, in *Cracks*, Miss G is represented as a bisexual who contaminates other teachers at the school, at the very least in the form of gossip. Miss G tells the twelve swimming team girls that her former “particular friend” at the school, a married woman, has turned against her. Miss G refers to her former friend as a lesbian, and claims to have seen her kissing another woman teacher. Miss G is pictured as being fickle, spiteful, and manipulative in word and deed. The atmosphere which she epitomizes is slack and decadent, and the generalized malaise is represented by imagery of disease – as Merl Storr notes, bisexuals are stereotyped as “carriers and spreaders of disease” (*Routledge* 2000 Vol. 1: 111). Miss G has a “skin malady, something mysterious with a Greek name, contracted as a child, that made her scratch from time to time” (30), and her Welsh terrier contracts a disease and dies.

Most notably, however, Miss G is portrayed as exerting a contaminating or corrupting influence on her charges. They are innocently searching for a mother-substitute. She, however, inducts them into her world of experience, which is one without boundaries.

She encourages them to indulge in her favourite drink, mixed red and white wine, “glassful after glassful” (31), to smoke, and to explore fluidity by swimming in the nude with her. The indulgences which she permits and encourages in the process of “flout[ing] convention” (33) escalate in a slippery slope of degeneracy. In an orgy of excess the girls gourmandize and quaff fermented fruit juice at a midnight feast; they re-create a carnival in which they assume disguises to enact the illicit passion of Keats’s “The Eve of St. Agnes,” and, when Miss G appears, drunkenly deliver up Fiamma, Miss G’s structural opposite, to her as a sacrifice. Miss G pays no heed to taboos regarding age, consent or teacher/pupil boundaries, and similarly, the corrupted girls feel no concern or empathy for Fiamma, even when they see evidence of the trauma she has been subjected to by Miss G. The violation has plainly been a painful penetration, a representation of paedophile abuse which is statistically more associated with men than with women, and which brings home the virile vampirism of Miss G, who regains her strength and health after the abuse of Fiamma. In a perversion of Blake’s intent of visualizing a revolutionary, ideal city in “Jerusalem,” the tyrannical abuser lustily sings:

Bring me my Bow of burning gold:
 Bring me my Arrows of desire:
 Bring me my Spear: O Clouds unfold!
 Bring me my chariot of fire.
 (137)

Miss G’s sexuality is seen as excessive, bursting beyond appropriate boundaries, and contaminating. In addition to being portrayed as bisexual, she is a paedophile and a rapist. She takes no responsibility for her actions, and much later she rationalizes her behaviour with the typical excuse of the paedophile: she was seduced by an

experienced Fiamma. She shows no remorse for her actions, or for her part in unleashing the torment of Fiamma by the rest of the swimming team, who make her the scapegoat for their viciousness and end up demanding the truth from her, which they hypocritically find disgusting, and end up mimicking the tortures inflicted by their mentor, resulting in the death of their victim.

The Gothic superfluity of textual negativity associated with Miss G around the issue of lack of proper restraint demands an interpretation. If boundary-crossing is deemed to be so dangerous, what is posited as the ideal? If Miss G represents depravity and pathology, what would represent purity and health? The palpable anxiety embedded in the text requires allaying by reference to an unexpressed norm. The norm which is implied as the polar opposite of Miss G's destructive behaviour is that of stable, marital, heterosexual, procreative monogamy. As Eadie comments: "the demonization of excessive desire has its roots in the regulation of the couple" (148).

None of the characters is granted the benison of this idealized state, however. As a result of having been disciples of Miss G they have transgressed the bounds of society, and now suffer the pangs of guilt and various forms of punishment. One character is psychologically disturbed; another is subjected to unwanted sadomasochistic practices on the part of her husband; a third is unable to have children, and so on. Within the text the ideal of the faithful married couple with children is a mythical lacuna, to be inferred through deduction. However, in her acknowledgements page Sheila Kohler ends by paying tribute to her daughters, and she dedicates the novel to her "beloved husband Bill, without whose fortitude, intelligence and hard work none of this would have been possible." Reproductive

heteronormativity is thus established as an ideal state enjoyed by the author, Sheila Kohler, and it is one which the rest of her text endorses, chiefly through the demonization of the figure of the boundary-crossing Miss G.

An allegory such as *Cracks* functions on various levels. The demonization of Miss G extends even to the metaphysical domain where, because of her function as tempter and role model, she appears as evil personified, or the snake in the garden of Eden who represents Satan. Yet she is also tempted, and succumbs to temptation, thus she is simultaneously Satan and Eve. In addition to this representation, however, she also has a band of twelve disciples for whom she functions as a deity; the indeterminate signifier of Miss G's name therefore suggests the orthodox Jewish usage of writing the name of God as G--. In this reading, Fiamma, the haloed one, is the equivalent of Jesus, while Miss G is a female version of Blake's tyrannical God. Besides re-gendering *Lord of the Flies*, Kohler re-genders the Ur-myth of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and she also attains the maximum effect of horror for the conventionally religious by splicing together good and evil, instead of keeping them as polar oppositions.

Parallel with the representation of sexuality as a marker of excess in the text is an even more repressed representation of race. The dormitory formerly called Kitchener may now be called Mandela, but this is no more than a gesture towards political correctness. Black people hardly exist in the novel. In the past there is a shadowy night-watchman who inhabits the margins of the text, armed with a phallic torch and hose-pipe. The spectre of black male "hypersexuality" which so exercised conservative whites in a series of moral panics in the 1950s is evoked through this

character, whose latent threat is confined to the margins and quelled through killing him off.

The clearest evidence of boundaries between black and white characters is revealed through the description of the marriage of one of the women at the reunion. Her husband is a black politician, who is unfaithful, and who returns to his home village over weekends, wears a loincloth and smokes dagga. He refuses her permission to accompany him, as she does not belong (104). Cultural boundaries are still shown to occur, despite the demise of colonialism and the advent of democracy. Moreover, in Kohler's view, the husband relaxes by reverting to his traditions and indulging his appetite for mind-altering drugs. Even the text's ideal of heterosexual marriage is insufficient to paper over the cracks between the races.

Miss G, too, is relevant with regard to Kohler's representation of South Africa's narrative of nation. Miss G is suggestively mobile, having been born in Wales and having spent some time in the USA. At one level of the allegory, then, she represents the relationship between South Africa and the hegemonic orders of the former mother country and the American superpower, both of which she knows, but from an outsider, observer position. If one were to search for a correlative for her initial, the name Gloriana would spring to mind. Yet in addition to representing to an extent Anglo-American hegemony, Miss G, as a Welsh woman, embodies the marginalized original inhabitants of England who were dispossessed by the invading Anglo-Saxons, and driven ever westwards, eventually clustering in Wales and Cornwall, from where they constantly attempted to claim their cultural and political rights. Miss

G, as a white woman, is simultaneously oppressor and oppressed, and this interstitial siting is uncomfortable and compromised.

Both in terms of gender/sexuality and race, *Cracks* reveals profound discursive anxieties. Stereotypes are employed as cautions against excess of appetite, fluidity, or crossing of boundaries. Stereotypes function, according to one commentator, to “insist on boundaries exactly at those points where in reality there are none” (Dyer 16). The characters in *Cracks* are mainly white girls and women, but there are also a few black men. In each grouping, however, a stereotyped figure is subject to textual critique: Miss G, a single, white, “bisexual” woman, and her polar opposite, a married, black, promiscuous, heterosexual man. What each character represents is excess, unbridled appetite, desire without bounds. These stereotypes of fluidity and boundary-crossing embody the perceived dangers to the social structure, and serve to reinforce the ideologies of heteronormativity and racial incompatibility.

In keeping with the genre of the thriller, this is a sombre text, which chillingly represents the savagery and tribalism of young white girls towards the Other, even one of the same race and sex, culminating in her becoming a blood-sacrifice. While it is interesting to encounter a text which raises the issue of schoolgirl crushes, the novel pathologizes non-normative sexuality by presenting stereotypes of lesbianism, by using bisexuality as evidence of lack of control and misuse of authority, and by conflating queerness, paedophilia, rape, and possibly condonation of murder.

Using queer theory as a lens through which to analyse *Cracks* reveals that sexuality and race are sites of anxiety in the text, which reinstates, rather than disrupts,

“regimes of the normal” (Warner 1993: xxvi). Instead of celebrating the liberatory potential of the subversive or transgressive, the novel reflects deep disquiet at subversion or transgression. Miss G’s liminal siting in the text is apotropaic; she represents the seductive allure of lack of boundaries and excess of sexuality. She wards off evil by embodying it. In terms of the text, she represents pathology, a warning that excess will lead to disaster. *Cracks* employs discursive regulatory procedures that endorse regimes of restraint and separation in gender, sexuality and race. Aside from personal authorial preference and the dramatization of specific, historical social tensions, there are a number of reasons for the use of these boundaries. These include the subject position of the author, a privileged white South African who herself attended such a boarding school as the one she uses as the setting for her novel; her emigration to the USA; her positioning herself within the Great Tradition of English literature through intertextual reference; the self-deprecatory allusions to the character Sheila Kohler as a “mere” writer of thrillers; and the requirements of this sub-genre for stability and closure. Most importantly, however, the ideal vision implicit in *Cracks* is a nation not compromised or polluted by scandalous interstitial spaces, but one where absolutes and certitudes provide stability and ethical *gravitas*. The problem in such a vision, however, is that the author is not considering the nation as a whole, but merely one segment which is ethically compromised. A combination of such factors leads to the depiction in *Cracks* of the space which I have called the double rainbow of gender/sexuality and race as a site of anxiety and boundaries.

The second text which I shall discuss in this chapter, *The Smell of Apples*, reveals similar anxieties and boundaries, from an Afrikaner perspective. Author Mark Behr,

who was born in Tanzania in 1963, subsequently came to live in South Africa. He was a pupil at the Drakensberg Boys' Choir Music School, performed military duty, partly in Angola, and was a student at the University of Stellenbosch. In the 1990s he worked at the Peace Research Institute in Norway, and wrote the Afrikaans version of his first novel, *Die Reuk van Appels* (1993), which he translated into English as *The Smell of Apples* (1995). Behr also studied and taught as a graduate student at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. After its initial appearance in Afrikaans the book received little attention, but in its English incarnation it has been awarded prizes: the M-Net Award, the Eugene Marais Prize and the CNA Literary Debut Award in South Africa, the Betty Trask Award in the United Kingdom, and in the United States the *Los Angeles Times* Art Seidenbaum Award. The book has also been placed on school and university syllabi, and has generated critical attention by scholars such as Michiel Heyns (1996, 2000), David Medalie (1997, 2000), and Rita Barnard (2000).

Following the success of *The Smell of Apples* Behr was invited to deliver the keynote speech at a writers' conference, *Fault Lines: Inquiries Around Truth and Reconciliation* in Cape Town in 1996, and in this speech he confessed to having been a spy at Stellenbosch University for the state security apparatus between 1986 and 1990. He further claimed that at the end of this period his handlers grew to believe that instead of furthering their cause he was in fact politically conscientizing students. They informed him that military groups were about to denounce him on political grounds and because of his "history of closeted gay experiences" (1996: 14). This reveals the power of the threat of having had same-sex sexual experiences, and the fear of being exposed to a conservative, homophobic family, circle of friends and community. The fear of this threat of personal exposure of variant sexuality would

seem to be on a par with the anxiety associated with political exposure as a spy. As a sequel to this attempt at blackmail, and Behr's departure from Stellenbosch, he claims that he decided to inform the ANC of his actions, and for some two years he provided the ANC with "whatever information I gained access to" (13); in other words, he became a double agent, a concept to which I will return later.

Aside from the confessional narrative content of the edited version of the speech, which appeared in *Common Sense*, the journal of Notre Dame University, three points are worth noting. First, there is a string of signifiers, including the words "shame," "duplicity," "fundamental fault" and "a secret life," which are allied to the notion of confession. These concepts are connected to the power of language in terms of dirt or taint: "Once it [language] has been wilfully abused the hands of the abuser are never again clean" (16), the inversion of the usual English word order at the end of this comment attesting to remorse and the yearning for some degree of absolution. Further, in the paper there is explicit acknowledgement of the need to accept full responsibility for his actions. Second, there is an interrogation of his own motives for spying: he had his fees paid, there were militarist/political motives, and "[t]here could also have been a misguided design at imitating and becoming part of the masculinist [*sic*] codes which I, since childhood, had both loathed and adored" (13). Third, as in the case of the conflicted emotions surrounding the South African version of machismo just referred to, Behr repeatedly refutes simple either/or formulations in this speech. Instead, he raises notions of "multiple truths," "multiple voices and testimonies," and refers to the texts which he encountered as part of his spying activities which "shattered any belief in absolutes" (14). While it is possible to view the entire piece as an exercise in cynicism, in my view both the context of the Truth

and Reconciliation Commission hearings which frames this confession, and its broadening of debate beyond the polarities of previous discourse, demand respectful consideration of the writing and its social significance.

Behr's confession has understandably evoked a spirited and antagonistic reaction. As the confession has become a kind of appendix or coda to *The Smell of Apples*, and affected its subsequent reception, as well as that of his second novel, *Embrace* (2000), it is worth lingering over some of the initial points made. There is the outraged letter to the editor of *Common Sense*, by a lecturer from Argentina with whom Behr had struck up a rapport, and who felt personally betrayed by the "duplicity," "deviousness" and "mask" Behr had assumed with him, and as part of his activities as an informer (O'Donnell 1996: 4). O'Donnell is particularly incensed as, he says, Behr's motives were merely pecuniary (5). There is Nic Borain's complaint that Behr's confession is "an audacious attempt at seduction" in which he constructs such a "totalitarian" and "monolith[ic]" defence, or "shutout," that "[w]e are left unable to engage with the truth. We can do nothing but acquiesce or reject him outright" (1996: 17). Sarah Nuttall quotes Borain approvingly, and accuses Behr (as does Borain) of shamelessness and manipulative opportunism because of his construction of truth as relative (1998: 86-7). In reviews of *Embrace*, Jane Rosenthal raises again the spectre of spying (2000: 1), while Tim Trengove Jones refers with censorious relish to a "treasonous," "compromised past" which culminated in Behr's confession of having been "both politically and sexually aberrant" (2000a: 1). Trengove Jones rues an opportunity lost on the altar of ruthless, ambitious opportunism: "As artist, homosexual and spy, Behr might be triply marginalized. But, as truth-teller, he will re-assert his cultural centrality" (2). Thus, despite coming from opposing positions,

Nuttall and Trengove Jones reach the same conclusion. For a period of some years, then, Behr has been vilified, even though

[m]ost acknowledge that Behr committed no crime, and probably provided little information to which the state did not already have access. But the outcry has been harsher than the reaction to former soldiers and cops who, hoping for amnesty, have gone to the Truth Commission to tell of committing murder and torture in the service of apartheid. (“Proof that Truth Hurts” 1996)

In the same article just quoted, Jane Taylor, the organizer of the *Fault Lines* conference, is cited as suggesting that because of Behr’s “ordinariness” South Africans find it more difficult to forgive him, as his confession reveals how widespread the corruption of apartheid was.

Perversely anticipatory though it may seem to begin this discussion of *The Smell of Apples* with Behr’s later confession and critics’ subsequent comments, this is useful as a number of concerns which are raised in this regard are germane to my reading of the novel. In general, the discourse which arises is absolutist, judgemental and binarist. Without wishing to exonerate Behr’s actions, I feel it is significant that the claims made against him are frequently exaggerated and inaccurate. For instance, to claim that he is “shameless” is untrue, as the concept of shame is painfully threaded throughout the *Fault Lines* keynote speech. Borain’s conclusion that one can only exculpate or excoriate Behr, obviously favouring the latter action, offers a rigid either/or choice from the position of the moral high ground. Even when the texture of the speech itself is examined, it is dismissed for being seductive. Behr is cast in the role of scapegoat, bearing the sins of the community, not only of Afrikaners but also of all white South Africans. Instead of being evaluated through the prism of a careful

examination of the pressures to conceal same-sex sexual behaviour in apartheid South Africa, Behr is cursorily dismissed as a gay man who has lacked courage. In fact, his reference to “closeted gay experiences” does not necessarily mean that he identified as gay. In the case of one of Behr’s characters, the focalizer of *Embrace*, he is attracted to others regardless of gender and age, and this refusal of mandated binary divides is consonant with Behr’s writing style. In the context of the place and time, the phrase “closeted gay experiences” could refer to a man who has open relationships with women and clandestine ones with men, or it could refer to someone whose sexuality is indecipherable. These three words, cramped though they are, open up a range of queer possibilities – even behavioural bisexuality. While his formulations are carefully chosen and subtle, his critics tend to disregard nuance, both in his writing and their stereotyped responses.

To return to the concept of the double agent, which is part of the narrative of Behr’s confession, this notion is explored usefully by Clare Hemmings. Discussing the bisexual woman’s body as emblematic, Hemmings comments:

Perhaps what is needed is a metaphor for bisexual bodies that signifies both the specific cultural interpretation of bisexuality and its potential for political and theoretical subversion.

Butler describes the process of identity formation as “the mode by which Others become shit”. Taking this “shit” analogy together with the familiar coding of the bisexual as the “missing link”, the figure of the *double agent* may serve a particularly useful function here. A double agent appears to be part of one camp but is also strongly identified with another. The implication is that one can never be quite sure where her allegiance actually lies. Cixous’ bisexual bridge links the straight and queer worlds. The double agent, by contrast, is set up as a link between the two worlds, yet actually disrupts the very boundaries of the world we assume to be separate.

The double agent is the figure of political shame and personal amorality. She embodies personal and general confusion, with an often frightening and sinister knowledge of both the inside and the outside. It is as if the double agent becomes both the expellor and the expelled, the excreting and

the excreted. The double agent is metaphorically covered in filth, is inseparable from that filth. (1993: 129-30)

Linking this suggestive reading of the bisexual body as contaminated double agent to Jo Eadie's insistence on interpreting the representation of the textual bisexual as the embodiment of specific cultural anxieties proves a fruitful way of examining *The Smell of Apples*. This framework allows a reading of the novel beyond binarism, determinism and pessimism, thus distinguishing it from the critique of binarist, unhistoricized repetition which I levelled against *Cracks*.

The contaminated and contaminating bisexual double agent in *The Smell of Apples* is Johan Erasmus, the youngest major-general in the SADF in the 1973 chronotope of the novel. He is the father of the focalizer, eleven year-old Marnus Erasmus. On the surface Dad, as he is called in the novel, is the ideal, upstanding epitome of the patriarch, military man and conservative Afrikaner hero. Dad's word is law in the household, although he prefers not to use violence to enforce it. Both Mum and Dad have socialized Marnus and his sixteen year-old sister, Ilse, by repeating pithy aphorisms which draw a line between the acceptable and the unacceptable, us and them, Christianity and barbarism. Mum's opinion is that pop music is unacceptable, and the reasoning that is filtered through Marnus's consciousness is the absurd slippery slope argument that "[p]op music can cause you to become a drug addict. Before Lucifer was thrown out of heaven he was the angel of music, and so it's only logical that the Communists will use pop music to take over the Republic" (67). Despite this dire warning, however, Marnus and his friend Frikkie listen to pop music in secrecy. Dad's line, however, is an even stricter one.

At home Dad doesn't like us listening to jazz. Dad likes classical music, so Mum doesn't want us to tell him about the jazz in the car. Dad says jazz is just one step away from pop music. It belongs in nightclubs like Charlie Parker's at Sea Point, not in a Christian home like ours. Frikkie's father and mother went to Charlie Parker's once, but that was just because they had to go with some of their English friends. (101-2)

In the musical hierarchy represented, Dad's purist, religion-backed stance is set against Mum's broader tastes (ironically, for a form developed by black musicians) which she indulges in without her husband's knowledge. The novel thus sets up a discursive tension between official sanctions (which differ according to the view of the authority figure), desire or appetite, power and secrecy. In Behr's account, the Afrikaner folk has a proud history which as a sacred duty must be transmitted through the generations. While people in other countries are indoctrinated (81) and brainwashed (80), this tribal chronicle is presented as innocent and open: "Dad says you can say a whole lot of things about the Afrikaners, but no one can say we're dishonest. We don't hide our laws like the rest of the world" (66). However, the extent to which the historical account has been manipulated and sanitized is evident in one of the doublings which are employed throughout the text. Frikkie recounts his great-grandfather's account, which has been passed down through family lore, of Bushmen being shot for sport at twenty pounds a head. The teacher immediately corrects this account, and says that the Xhosas, not the Boers, killed the Bushmen, maintaining that "the Xhosas are a terrible nation and that it was them that used to rob and terrorize the farmers on the Eastern frontier. long before the Zulus in Natal so cruelly murdered Boer women and little children" (8). As part of the mythopoeia of the Volk other groupings are reduced to stereotypes: the English "always run away" (163); all Jews are "stinking rich" (120); and "[o]f all the nations in the world, those with black skins across their butts also have the smallest brains" (38-9).

The novel highlights the contradictions, rationalizations, slippages and inconsistencies in constructing myths and ideologies about race, nation, religion, masculinity, gender and sexuality. There is heavy irony in the fact that in the Erasmus family words are carefully chosen to indicate approval or disapproval, while behaviour may be at odds with the terminology. Thus Ilse, aged about seven, is beaten for the only time in her life by her father for calling a visiting black man an “ugly black kaffir” (53); she has exceeded the bounds of polite discourse. Dad, in showing slides to his counterpart and alter-ego, the visiting Chilean general, who is known by the generic pseudonym “Mr John Smith,” refers to a picture as “détente.” This foreign political term occludes the tit-for-tat atrocity as a result of which, horrifyingly, “a soldier hold[s] up a black arm with pink meat hanging out where it was cut from the body” (172).

Dad’s occupation as a general, in addition to its connection to the military, as a prime metaphor for white South African induction into adult masculinity in the apartheid era, suggests representativity. He is Everyman in this tightly structured and highly stylized allegory. His initials are JE, while Marnus, who as his scion is seen as his “carbon copy,” “photocopy” or “blueprint” (35), has the initials ME; each is a generational variant on typical Afrikaner masculine identity of the era, and of the state. (In addition, Marnus’s sister’s name, Ilse, is an anagram of the Afrikaans word “siel,” or soul. The three of them function as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.) As Robert Morrell summarizes the deployment of power at the time:

The South African government was made up of men – Afrikaans-speaking, white men. They espoused an establishment masculinity which was authoritarian, unforgiving and unapologetic. This kind of masculinity was forged in the Afrikaans-medium, all-white schools, and reinforced in such

institutions as the *veldskole* (schools for field craft) and in the commandos. After 1961, when the Sharpeville shooting pushed South Africa to become independent and leave the Commonwealth, the military was already an important force within government. A system of commandos bound white men living in the rural areas to active involvement on a yearly basis in the military, while at the end of the 1960s all white men were eligible for conscription into the army, airforce or navy. A passive white population accepted these developments not only because it believed government propaganda about “*swartgevaar*” (the danger posed by blacks) but also because the idea of becoming a man – being a protector, a wage-earner and knowing the right thing to do – made such steps seem perfectly logical. By 1970 South Africa was a highly militarised state with a panoply of repressive instruments to deal with those who did not agree with the direction of government policy. (2001: 17)

Yet in *The Smell of Apples* political expediency leads to the bending of the absolute rules and pronouncements which were part of the official discourse of race of the time. The Chilean General is actually of mixed race heritage, and thus although he is a similarly reactionary political ally, he is on the wrong side of the racial binary divide. Moreover, since Dad and the General are so physically similar, and since Marnus learns to his shock that their coloured domestic worker’s surname is an Afrikaans one, Malan, a question is implicitly raised as to the racial purity of those who appear to be white, and are therefore privileged under the system of apartheid.

As part of the discourse of masculinity, Frikkie and Marnus decide to join the army rather than the navy when they are of age, as according to Frikkie “all the poofters” go to the navy (71). The absolutism of this claim is queried by Marnus, as his paternal grandfather was in the navy. On a subliminal level this serves to raise the question of sexuality and the paternal lineage of grandfather, father and son. After Marnus breaks with his maternal heritage of singing,

[f]rom then on we called everyone who sang poofters. Except when Mum's around, because she says it's disgusting to call someone that just because he sings. She says you aren't a poofter just because you sing, but Dad laughs and says he's not so sure. (104)

Michiel Heyns, in his article "Fathers and Sons: Structures of Erotic Patriarchy in Afrikaans Writing of the Emergency" (1996), refers to the fact that in a parental role the state can criminalize sexuality which deviates from the norm; however, "such homophobia is perfectly compatible with a strong homoerotic tropism" (84). Thus in addition to the family's jocular references to "poofters," which reflect the official discourse of the wider community's homophobia, the novel reveals a *frisson* of mutual taboo desire as Dad monitors Marnus's body and evidence of potency in the shower:

Dad's whole chest and stomach are covered with hair and his John Thomas hangs out from a bushy black forest. [...]

Between soaping and washing our hair, Dad asks: "So tell Dad, does that little man of yours stand up yet sometimes in the mornings?"

Whenever Dad asks me that I get all shy, so I just laugh up into his face without really answering. I saw Frikkie's standing right out of his pyjama pants one morning, but mine doesn't really do it yet. (63)

Dad also indulges in horseplay during which he tucks a naked and vulnerable Marnus under his arm and charges into the freezing sea with him, an action which combines tenderness and roughness on his part, and which Marnus receives with a mixture of terror and joy as he is inducted into Spartan masculinity: "Dad says we're bulls who can't be scared off by a bit of cold water" (50). Despite initial reluctance, Frikkie is also persuaded to participate in this ritual. His claim to be scared of the seals reflects his anxiety about the animality of the encounter, but Dad gentles and grooms him into succumbing (50-1), in a prefiguring of the later rape scene.

The reader is compelled, even at an early stage of the text, to respond to simultaneous and mixed messages. On the personal level Dad is clearly both the upholder of traditional values in that he is a loving, playful father, and a double agent, in that he is also a potential predator. Bearing in mind the number of doublings of characters (Marnus and Frikkie, Marnus and Ilse, Dad and Marnus, Mum and Dad, Dad and the General, to name a few), the dual time-scheme, the parallel plot incidents, and the number of issues aired, the reader is forced to respond with an unsettled, multiple oscillation rather than a simple bifocal effect, as suggested by David Medalie: "it is [...] difficult for the reader to do much more than register the pronounced ironies. Reading *The Smell of Apples* is, in this regard, much like wearing bifocal lenses: one sees what the young Marnus sees, then, with a quick shift of perspective, one sees what the boy, enclosed in his false education, cannot see" (2000: 51).

One of the ways in which Behr precludes the possibility of a simple binarist vision is through his use of triads, such as the Dad/Marnus/Frikkie triad. At the stage when Marnus and Frikkie are developing sexually, their friendship is sealed with a ceremony of blood-brotherhood, which is portrayed in clearly sexual terms:

He gives me his hand to hold in mine. With my free hand I push the compass against his finger that's looking like a mulberry.

"You'll have to push harder, else nothing will come out. Stick it in."

This time I shove harder and Frikkie jumps back when the point goes in too deep. "Ouch!" he groans. "That's too much." Almost at once, there's a drop of blood on his fingertip.

"Let me do yours quickly," he says. "Before the blood falls off mine."

I hold out my finger to him. I close my eyes as he comes towards me with the compass. I feel the jab and when I look again, there's a drop of blood, pushing up from the skin. Then we rub our fingers together until it's sticky. [...]

"Take the elastic off! Your finger's going to fall off." (78-9)

The overt sensuality of the descriptions of engorged flesh in this scene, which is structured around the need to trust each other with secrets, implies a strong homoerotic connection between the two boys, although the blood-connection is shown to combine danger as well as desire: Frikkie comments that “David and Jonathan were blood-brothers, and I think Cain and Abel as well” (77). The deepening attraction between the two boys is threatened by secrets, chiefly Dad’s rape of Frikkie, who acts as substitute for Marnus. A further triangulation, however, that of Marnus/Frikkie/Zelda Kemp, reveals that Marnus’s desires are polymorphous, as he responds to Zelda’s sleeping vulnerability: “Looking down at her with her legs across mine, she suddenly looks so pretty to me” (149). Marnus, like his father, is thus structurally bisexual. Further, in a broadening of the gender-dichotomy of the Freudian Oedipal drama, he is shown to desire and wish to kill both of his parents: he guiltily ogles Mum’s breasts (16), and also observes Dad’s penis, in a sexually heightened atmosphere (62); on one occasion he “hated Mum so much, I wished she would die” (89), and on another he wishes his father were dead (98).

In addition to triads of characters, Behr disrupts simple binaries with a triptych of spying scenes through the two knot-holes in Marnus’s floor, dual liminal spaces which allow slightly different views of the guest-room below. In the first of these spying scenes, Marnus and Frikkie observe the General naked, and marvel at the snake-shaped scar on his back (99-100), symbol of his courage and survival of the tests of violence of manhood, as well as of the evil of experience lurking in the Eden of family life and nation. The next two scenes split Freud’s taboo of the primal scene into two, involving first Mum and then Dad in sexually charged vignettes. In the first

of these two scenes, Marnus desires a last viewing of the fetish scar which so fascinates him, but is thrown into confusion when he sees a red reflection in the mirror, an unidentifiable presence at whom the General is smiling. Assuming that the scarlet figure is his sister, Marnus is appalled at his “filthy thoughts” (156). Only later does he come to acknowledge that the figure is in fact his mother, who has inculcated such absolutist notions of sin in him, and who is, judged by her own belief system, a hypocrite and a dirty sinner.

The last of the three spying scenes occurs in two phases, during which Marnus comes to realize that the figure who is abusing Frikkie is not the General, as he at first assumed, but his father. This climactic epiphany is full of combinations of contradictions, mainly focussed through the character of Dad: he is cast initially in the role of saviour, then is perceived to be the violator; although he is revealed not to bear the symbolic mark of sin, his actions of masturbating Frikkie and later raping him show him to be embroiled in sin himself, as well as contaminating his child victim, according to his remembered warning to Marnus that masturbation is “a terrible sin” (175). More than his wife, he is revealed as a hypocrite of the highest order, or in Clare Hemmings’s term, a double agent, who acts as a libertine while mouthing the ascetic pieties of purity. Unlike the representation of excess through the character of Miss G in *Cracks*, Behr represents Dad’s bisexuality in terms of duplicity, which can be discerned in dual impulses which he enacts simultaneously. He presses a resisting Frikkie against the wall, and kisses him, revealing contradictory urges to violence and tenderness (175). He “rub[s] something into Frikkie’s bum” (177), the use of a lubricant indicating some degree of compassion towards the child, yet the act of non-consensual pederasty and its later revealed effects of pain, the following day,

indicating the physical aftermath of his actions, and suggesting obliquely what the emotional ones would be in such a case. The opposed impulses towards kindness and the exercise of power are further revealed by the way in which the one hand literally does not seem to know what the other hand is doing: “He uses his one hand to hold himself up on the bed,” thus bearing his own weight, but “[w]ith the other he keeps the pillow down over Frikkie’s head” to stifle cries of pain or protest (177).

Dad shows similar dual impulses when he beats Marnus into submission, after he has realized the horror at the heart of his family as a result of viewing the secret, primal scenes, and has attempted to revolt by refusing to have the General’s epaulettes, insignia of militaristic manhood, screwed into the sleeves of his camouflage uniform. Dad picks Marnus up and hits him “on my bum and across my back” (196), and subsequently cries along with his son. The image of Marnus, who is beaten into dutiful and duplicitous filial behaviour, is linked visually with the image of Frikkie, who is subjected to the power of the phallus by being raped by Dad, and Little-Neville, who has been deeply burned on the back and buttocks by racist whites as a punishment for stealing. The systems of sexual violence, family violence, gender oppression, racial oppression, fascism and religious bigotry are shown throughout the text to be interlinked systems with similar effects, which do not only dehumanize and degrade their victims, but are also an assault on the integrity and humanity of their perpetrators.

In *The Smell of Apples*, the morning after the abuse of Frikkie and Marnus’s anguished inability to help him or speak to him, there is a second scene in which apples figure:

“These apples are rotten or something,” says Frikkie, and he turns his apple around in his hand after sniffing at it. “They stink. Smell this,” and he holds the apple to my nose. I smell the apple in his hand. It smells sour.

“Ja,” I say. “There’s something wrong with it. Take another one.” I sniff at my own apple to make sure it’s OK.

Frikkie brings the new apple to his mouth, but he pulls a face, and says: “This one, too.”

“Let me smell,” I say, and take it from his hand. It smells like ordinary apple.

“No, this one’s fine,” I say. “It’s not the apple, man. It’s your hand,” and I take his hand and sniff the inside of his palm. It smells sour. He pulls his hand back.

“What smells like that?” I ask. But he shakes his head and pushes his hand under the open tap.

He takes some Sunlight liquid from the window-sill, and pours it into his palm. Then he wipes his hand against his PT shorts. He sniffs again, but shakes his head and says it’s still not gone. We stand in front of the sink, staring at each other.

“What did you touch?” I ask, but he only shakes his head and says he doesn’t know.

There’s some Dettol in our bathroom cupboard, and I say we should go and wash his hand with that.

I pour some of the Dettol into his palm, and he rinses it until it has all dripped through his fingers. He sniffs at his hand.

“What do you think it was?” I ask.

Frikkie’s eyes fill with tears, and he looks down at his bare feet and shakes his head, and now I know what it is. (179)

The bond which previously existed between the two boys is now broken, and the smell which Frikkie notices is the evidence of the taint of experience which he has acquired. Previously Marnus’s father proudly boasted that apples were brought by the white settlers to South Africa (124), the unconscious irony suggesting that the settlers brought certain goods but also temptation and sin to an Edenic world. So too, in the heart of the Christian family boasted of by Dad (185) lurks the voracious, insatiable beast whose bisexuality reveals the corrupt and corrupting malaise which cannot be concealed.

Thus, even though Marnus congratulates himself that, as he and Frikkie are blood-brothers, and Frikkie has not told him of his rape at Dad's hands, he will surely confide in no-one, others seem to know of Dad's secret life. In an equivalent scene to that of the reek of corruption permeating the apples, a disaffected Marnus encounters two seamen who ask him if he is General Erasmus's son. His former pride in and hero-worship of his father are replaced now with embarrassment as the seamen, who are catching angel fish, snigger at him (184). Both scenes convey a sense of the dirt and contamination embodied in the general, as emblem of patriarchal control, the Afrikaner volk, and apartheid South Africa. The tension, duplicity and impossibility of maintaining the rigid, absolutist doctrines of Calvinism, apartheid, patriarchy and heterosexual monogamy, all of which are naturalized and rationalized as being ethical systems emblematic of civilization, are revealed in the riven consciousness, actions and body of Marnus's Dad. As Jo Eadie suggests (1997), bisexuality functions as a marker by which, in this case, the cultural anxieties of high apartheid era white South Africans can be gauged. Dad's claim of political transparency is spurious. The bisexual figure of Dad reveals that the white male Afrikaner, and by extension apartheid South Africa, cannot live up to the onerous strictures at its heart. Behr reveals not only the secret excesses of the ruling elite, but the stresses and fissures within the system, and the inevitability of its demise. He also allows the possibility of a combinational, rather than an either/or, reading strategy.

Having acquiesced in his symbolic induction into masculine militarism, Marnus becomes sexually mature, and as a result is promised that he may join Dad in tiger-fishing, thereby entering the fully-fledged world of killing. In the 1988 chronotope he has made the choice to be a professional soldier in the South African Defence Force,

part of the illegal and secret group of soldiers fighting across South Africa's borders in Angola. In the segments of this narrative, which interleave the 1973 time-scheme of the novel, he is revealed to be representational failure, victim and sacrifice. The tests of manhood which he faces as squadron leader reveal him to be unmanly, a coward, and the inferior of his black subordinate, whom in his panicked state he takes to be the enemy. In a place where black camouflage painted on faces obliterates the racial differences between South Africans, the differences between South Africans and Angolans, and the differences between friends and foes, the certitude of binaries disappears, and some of the soldiers, like Marnus, discover "*the enemy tangled in their own entrails and heads*" (178). The very existence of the troops in Angola is repudiated in a radio broadcast by his father, and all Marnus is left with is a detached, solipsistic examination of the signifier of his own fragile masculine identity:

With my R4 slung over my shoulder, I relieve myself against the smooth stem and stare up at the strange branches sticking into the sky like open roots.

When I look down again, I realise I'm still holding my dick. The head, enfolded by the soft foreskin, is half flattened from the pressure of thumb and index finger. Curling through the opening of my fly, are long dark hairs. I stoop forward against the tree-trunk, and push my pelvis up and forward. The object between my fingers is light brown and covered with tiny wrinkles. When I flatten it slightly by pulling it further out through the fly, the powder-blue vein, which runs from the base right up to the head, stands out clearly. I can see the blood pulsing on the inside of the vein, but I'm not sure. I pull back the foreskin and the damp pink head moves out into the light. With the foreskin completely back, the dark pink encirclement of the head turns darker till it's almost purple. At the front I can see the opening clearly, and when I pick it up and squeeze it slightly, it resembles a small mouth with tiny lips in the act of yawning. When I turn it around, underside facing up, as if in fine stitches a shaft runs from the base to where the drawn-back fold of the foreskin begins and it disappears into the softer tissue. I undo the fly's remaining buttons. I push my hand through the cloth and lift out the balls. From the upward tension they are smooth and without wrinkles, like shells of abalone, and in minute tracks the network of veins colour the skin in different colours. Here, the sparse hair is lighter. At the base of each hair, there is a slight mound – miniature walls around young trees to retain the feedwater. Beneath the weight in my sweaty palm, I feel the coolness flowing through the skin, and I move them gently back through the fly. (64-5)

In this upside-down world of war, where the vegetation marks the difference from home, it becomes clear that the paternal lineage of grandfather, father and son will not continue into the future. Marnus has undergone the rite of passage into adulthood, but the implication in this passage is that he will not reproduce a further Erasmus. Marnus's "dick" is not a phallus, signifier of phallogocentrism. It is flaccid, a homunculus with "tiny lips in the act of yawning," the only baby he will ever procreate. The dark hairs connect him to his father-line, but the lighter hairs are reminders of his childish self. Even though Marnus is an adult and technically possesses a "mister," like his father, his organ functions as a "little man." Marnus lacks potency; he has no stake in the future. Through his thwarted fertility he marks the cul-de-sac of his father's belief-systems and the futility of an unjust war. The SADF's failure to capture Cuito Caunavale, a town which is mentioned in the second chronotope, was crucial in leading to the withdrawal of the SADF from Angola, and the subsequent independence of Namibia. Marnus has been co-opted into a doomed military enterprise to defend South Africa's borders by interfering in a neighbouring country's politics. His impotence prefigures the loss of this particular military endeavour, and the ultimate demise of apartheid. Through his death, which is implied towards the end of the text, Marnus becomes a blood-sacrifice.

Various critics have commented on what they perceive to be the bleak determinism of *The Smell of Apples*; for instance, Rita Barnard refers to its "moral airlessness" (2000: 208) and its "overwhelming pessimism" (211); Michiel Heyns comments on its "hopelessly compromised ironies" (2000: 63); while David Medalie refers to its "ruthless" "determinism," and complains that "[h]istory, too, is seen in morbidly

deterministic terms” (1997: 513). I would argue, however, that while according to the logic of the text Marnus must pay for his *choice* of entering with open eyes the corrupt domain of militarist masculinity by surrendering his life, there are other narratives which suggest less violent alternatives. These alternatives are associated with hybridity, femininity and the resilience of the natural world.

Hybridity in the text is primarily associated with being of mixed racial origins, which as mentioned in Chapter 2, has been discussed by commentators such as Yasmin Prabhudas (1996: 30) and June Jordan (1992: 192) as having consonances with bisexuality. In *The Smell of Apples*, the interstitial ground of a coloured identity is perceived in terms of scandal and marginality: “Botswana’s [...] president married a white woman and she had coloured kids who can’t fit in anywhere” (162), comments the child Marnus. Yet in the novel coloured characters act as clear mirrors of the shortcomings of their white counterparts as individuals and as members of the “superior” race. As Rita Barnard points out, the coloured fisherman, Jan Bandjies, instead of forcing his sons to follow unquestioningly in his footsteps (as Dad coerces Marnus to do), encourages them to look for alternative forms of employment as a result of commercial fishing having depleted the ocean of its natural riches. This sense of entropy is suggestively set against the static chronicle of apartheid (2000: 220). The fact that apartheid’s compartmentalizations are not absolute, but can be bridged by common interests, respect and affection, is revealed through the delighted drama of mutual recognition when Marnus shouts at Jan from a train. On the other hand, when the rigid structures of apartheid are enforced, as in the case of the coloured gardener, Chrisjan, who is dismissed on suspicion of thieving, connection cannot occur. Chrisjan reveals the Erasmus family and in particular Marnus to be lacking in

Christian charity when he refuses to acknowledge Marnus's Christian name, despite Marnus's anxious existential question, "*Who am I!*" referring to him in exaggeratedly polite terms as "my Crown" (165), ironic symbol of sovereignty.

Questions of authenticity are revealed through the representation of the character Gloria, a coloured domestic worker employed by Frikkie's family, who confounds the Erasmus family by acting both like a "real madam" (2), and like a "real floozy" (4). Unlike her, Doreen, who works for the Erasmus family, is stable. The boy Marnus speculates about their chances in the hereafter, which in his mind mirrors the hierarchical conditions under apartheid: "But Doreen, she's a good girl and she might go to heaven. In heaven she'll live with other Christian Coloureds in small houses and the Lord will reward her for never boozing it up like the rest" (39). Gloria's "type," however, "will *never* inherit the Eternal life" (39).

The distaff side of Marnus's family reveal alternative takes on life compared with the strict code passed down the spear side. These views are not uniform, but multiple. Mum's sister, Tannie Karla, who has come into contact with English liberal views, flouts the colour bar and opposes the government. Although Mum, Ilse and Marnus continue to see her, in secret because of Dad's disapproval, a final rift occurs when Karla criticizes Dad's patriarchal oppression of Mum, and her willing sacrifice of her singing career and a voice of her own. The specific instance is one example of Karla's generalized, principled revulsion against systems of domination. Her credo is contained in a letter which she sends to her sister from London, where she is in self-imposed exile (110-1). This letter is not read by its intended recipient, but is secretly read by the children. Karla refers to the fear and paranoia of her and her sister's

upbringing, which continues now Mum has exorcized Karla from her life. However, using an example from the world of music, she shows the relativity of belief systems, by reminding her sister that in the Middle Ages it was considered a sin to sing in parts. The letter is couched in the language of moderate, reasonable, humanist values, and evokes an alternative vision of women's community, as it implores Leonore to embrace her daughter Ilse for Karla.

Like Karla, Ilse goes overseas, although briefly, and here she too gains a wider perspective on the univocal message of her ideological background. She becomes her aunt's standard-bearer of decent values, but from within the society she critiques. She simultaneously accepts the accolades of her society by becoming head girl of the Jan van Riebeeck High School, bastion of conservative mores, and at the ceremony satirizes the patriotism and piety of the audience by excess: she plays all four verses of the national anthem, "Die Stem van Suid-Afrika," leading to a bewildered and garbled polyphony representing multiplicity and dissent. She acts as the voice of conscience within her community.

Although Mum is the most conservative member of this triad of women, she too resists the system insofar as she is able. In her anger at Marnus she echoes her sister's assessment that she has sacrificed herself for her children (89), thus acknowledging the presence of patriarchal power; she listens to jazz music, which relies on variation and spontaneity, performed by black singers; and she enters the General's room with the intention of having sex with him. This last rebellion can be juxtaposed with her husband's rape of Frikkie, against which it must be judged as a minor peccadillo, despite the absolutism of the religious claims in the text that all sins are equal, and

that one lapse will lead to a descending pit of consequences. This again opens up a space of relativism in the novel. The last word which Marnus has from her is a letter, which he cherishes. In this letter she describes an atmosphere of progressive political resistance in South Africa, and she suggests that the war in Angola is near an end. The system of apartheid is slowly unravelling. The emotional heart of the letter, however, concerns a sighting from the liminal space of Marnus's window of a whale, which as a child he loved, in False Bay. Mum and Doreen went under the railway line separating the realm of culture from the realm of nature, and observed the creature, together remembering Marnus. The marine world which was previously described as being under threat is now rejuvenating, and women from two socio-economic and racially segregated sectors of society are observing and talking with common purpose and affection.

In addition to these oppositional and multiple viewpoints, and connections across artificial divides, the novel allows for the possibility of same-sex desire alongside opposite-sex desire, as experienced by Dad and Marnus, in a context where homosexual acts were illegal, and in an atmosphere which viewed any sexual expression outside marriage as sinful. It simultaneously castigates non-consensual pederasty and inscribes tenderness between males, most luminously and poignantly through the bond between Marnus and Frikkie. Rita Barnard sceptically comments that

[w]hile Behr might be sincere when he says that he intended the novel as a challenge to homophobia [...], his strategy is clearly a risky one. His revelation of a homosexual act at the very heart of apartheid's darkness flirts with a sensationalism similar to that deployed by the government itself. (2000: 210)

Here again there is the imputation of possible bad faith on Behr's part. To my mind, this is a misreading, employing binarist techniques rather than the specific, multiple and comparative reading strategies which do greater justice to the text. The weight of the critique is not based on the act being homosexual – a crude and lurid reading – but on its coercive nature, which overturns conventions of paternal protectiveness, age taboos, hospitality and decency.

The Smell of Apples clearly reveals the fissures in apartheid's Eden. It represents the dangers of absolutism in social, personal, political and religious terms. The name of the family which it examines is Erasmus, the name of the Renaissance scholar and theologian who stressed the necessity of an open and pure mind. Calvinism as it came to be practised in South Africa was characterized by dogmatic bigotry. It emphasized post-lapsarian hereditary corruption, the unconditional election of those pre-destined to be saved, and the eternal damnation of those outside the select group of the elect. In contrast, Erasmus's vision was a tolerant, humanist one, in which each individual was responsible for the negotiation of his or her spiritual destiny. By setting up this dialogue between differing theological paradigms, Behr again questions absolutism and espouses the virtues of openness and toleration.

Cracks and *The Smell of Apples* offer complementary visions of *Bildung* in apartheid South Africa, within the specific contexts of white English-speaking girlhood and white Afrikaans-speaking (but bilingual) boyhood. As the children in each text enter adolescence they come face to face with the sexual, political and metaphysical realities of their lives, previously concealed under the cloak of innocence. In both

cases the figure of the bisexual adult disrupts the comfortable fictions of their lives. Kohler's text is more binarist, circumscribed and pessimistic, while Behr's offers readers an understanding of the anxieties, hypocrisies, choices and complicities which soiled all under apartheid; however, it also offers fragments of discourse which bode well for the future. This multi-layered allegory is more grounded in socio-political realities, far subtler and more socially significant than Sheila Kohler's *Cracks*.

Within *The Smell of Apples* Behr does indeed, as he had hoped, “show how one is born into, loved into, violated into discrimination and how none of us were, or are, free from it” (quoted in Heyns 2000: 50). It reveals the seductive surface and corrupt underbelly of a pathological system which is destined for extinction. It shows that in a myriad of ways South Africans were corrupted by apartheid, and that this legacy will continue, although oppositional ideologies will change the country. The novel does not follow either of the common patterns of white writing of the time, of heroic resistance or confession based on a conversion narrative from complicity to enlightenment (based on Nuttall and Coetzee 1998: 6, elaborated by Heyns 2000), each of which rests on a binarist vision. Instead, *The Smell of Apples* implicitly offers a confession which moves beyond the merely personal or sectarian; it reveals how the corruption of the system creates pressures from within which when combined with resistance from without will inevitably lead to a shift of power; it shows the connections between a range of pathological systems; and it offers oblique hints of a revitalized future.

Chapter 7

“Who Really Can Follow These Bisexual Variations”:

Nadine Gordimer’s *The House Gun*

The bisexual deviate occupies a unique niche in the annals of sexual crime. The confused passions aroused by his double deviation make him an all the more dangerous killer, when the delicate balance that contains his mental aberration within reasonable bounds becomes tipped toward the side of psychopathic criminality.

George Bishop (1964: 90)

Where did her daughter, just turned sixteen, get language like that from? A “rapacious older woman” indeed. She winced, remembering how Ferial had recently asked her whether she was a “double adapter”. Telling her that the word was “bisexual” had made it worse. “You mean you are?” she had responded, her heavily pencilled eyebrows held in a perfectly stern, straight line, evidence of the fact that she was growing up [...]

Achmat Dangor (2001: 66)

In the postcolonializing world after apartheid, sexual, familial, and racial identities enter into cross-cutting and simultaneously displaced (replaced) combinations.

Stephen Clingman (2000: 155)

This chapter focuses on the post-apartheid era. A number of South African novels set in this *milieu* employ the trope of bisexual relations between consenting adults. These include Achmat Dangor’s *Bitter Fruit* (2001), Guy Willoughby’s *Archangels* (2002), and Michiel Heyns’s *The Reluctant Passenger* (2003a). Fascinatingly, *Bitter Fruit* and *Archangels* both contain characters called Michael, young men who are other-worldly and allegorical, embodying both the angelic and the demonic, the transcendental and the retributive, and who also epitomize the future. Both fly out of the imaginations of their authors in the hybrid moment after apartheid, a time characterized by the fusion of oppositions. Although neither Michael is bisexual, each novel contains other characters who are bisexual.

Bitter Fruit is set in Johannesburg in 1998. It deals with the lingering and disruptive effects of the past – pre-apartheid and apartheid – on the present in the South African nation. In particular, these effects are portrayed through the microcosm of a coloured family, Silas and Lydia Ali, and their son, Mikey, who stands on the brink of manhood, which sees him insisting on being called by his full name, Michael, and later adopting the Muslim name Noor. Traumatic events of the past include the castration and killing of Michael's gay uncle, and the rape of Lydia some twenty years before the textual present. Both Silas and Lydia are connected with healing work: he is involved with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and she is a nurse researching HIV transmission; however, a chance sighting of her rapist by Silas shatters the brittle façade of their lives, leading to the revelation that Michael is the white rapist's child. This revelation culminates in Michael's killing of the father of a friend of his who has had an incestuous sexual relationship with his daughter, and in Michael's killing of his own father. In this state-of-the-nation novel, set at the end of Nelson Mandela's presidency, Dangor examines various issues regarding gender, race, ethnicity, religion and sexuality. He is particularly interested in interstitiality, hybridity, flouting taboos, hypocrisy and the festering effects of secrecy. The physical setting is described as liminal in a range of ways: "the grass verge, the border between the past and the future. Where the township joins the suburbs, where Africa has come home to roost" (2001: 133-4). The coloured community suffers most markedly from the problems associated with being in between: "Here we are, in our twilight zone between black and white, trying to be both and ending up as neither" (76), thinks one of the characters. Shifting states between old and new, good and evil, body and spirit

are treated in *Bitter Fruit*, and this interstitial content is emphasized through the boundary-blurring technique of magical realism.

One of the prime ways that Dangor uses to explore transformation is through a frank exploration of taboo topics related to sexual intimacy. Interviewing Dangor, Elaine Young observes: “[T]he theme of transgressive sexuality allows you to explore the historical hybridity of the nation, the burden of the past in individuals’ lives and the development of the self (especially of the female self) in bold new directions” (2002: 58). I am less certain than Young of the gender-specificity of sexual metamorphosis in *Bitter Fruit*, but a number of sexual practices are touched on: rape, incest, sex between an older woman and a younger man, and bisexuality. The novel is interesting for its use of the local term, “double adapter” (2001: 50, 66), and for its inclusion of three characters whose behaviour or fantasies are bisexual, thus challenging ubiquitous, rigid categorizations of sexual identity. A male character comes out as gay after his divorce, and two female characters are used to reveal the fluidity of the erotic life. Kate, whose daughter Ferial asks her whether she is a “double adapter” in the quotation from *Bitter Fruit* used as one of the epigraphs to this chapter, veers between defining herself as a bisexual and as a lesbian. After having “irrevocably” announced that she is now a lesbian (65), she becomes attracted to Michael, with whom she later has an affair. This provokes her to think about “the vague and theoretical concepts” that are insufficient to explain her infatuation with the young man and her simultaneous love for her partner: “Why can’t I have the best of both worlds. Mikey’s and Janine’s, complex youth and warm, simple adult, enjoy them both at the same time? Would it have been different if I was heterosexual instead of bisexual?” (123).

Based on the evidence of the text, the answer to this question would be in the negative. Before meeting Silas, Lydia had to renounce her dream of becoming a nun and leave the convent because of sexual fantasies about a nun, Sister Catherine:

Ah, how she longed to touch that agonised face on the crucifix, how she dreamed, every night for one whole year, of Sister Catherine's purity and Christ's sorrow all fused together, of her lips searching out this hallowed union, dreams of desire that she dared not speak about, knowing instinctively that they would be seen as wrong, and would therefore become wrong. (105)

This passionate combination of the sacred and the profane, the masculine and the feminine, is subsequently altered to become more carnal as she visualizes a Chinese lover, a prostitute whom she names Cathy, as a fantasy to allow her to achieve pleasure when having sex with men. Unlike Kate, Lydia is unable to act on her same-sex desires, yet her sexuality and her selfhood are more complex and problematic than simple binarist categories would allow. Lydia's moment of sexual emancipation occurs after she has danced to the erotic strains of Ravel's *Bolero* with a young man of mixed race; she ends up having sex with him in semi-public, on a billiard table, and this exorcizes her demons. The novel's end is narrated through the consciousness of Lydia, who is embarking on a journey, having left her husband and taken charge of her own destiny.

Archangels (2002) is set in Cape Town in 2000. It satirically traces the fortunes of the bisexual-behaving Howard Sheerness, a forty-year old who is so self-absorbed that his wife leaves him, and who subsequently falls obsessively in love with the intoxicating drug-addict Michael, who is half his age. The term "bisexual" is not applied to Howard, but neither is "gay" accepted. On being asked if his transformation renders

him gay, Howard replies, “Ah, it’s better than that [...] I am myself. Now that’s a real achievement” (144). Love for an unlikely object has conferred authenticity, plenitude and hope on the lover. Reviewer Michiel Heyns complains that, unlike other authors such as Thomas Mann in *Death in Venice* (1988 [1912]), “Willoughby, by contrast, makes the mistake of giving us access to enough of Michael’s dialogue to strip him of any charisma he might have had as a love object” (2003: 18). On the contrary, I would argue that the vapidness of Michael’s intellectual and lexical grasp serves several purposes, across a range of tones. It increases the uncomfortable humour of a mid-life crisis with a sexually mesmerizing yet unsuitable partner. It reveals the simultaneous fascination yet incomprehension with which all of us view the future, which uses another language and has different values: “[Howard] could have no idea what, indeed, was going to happen. But then, neither do any of us: ever” (2002: 15). The connection of the fallen angel, Michael, to the future is also perceived in terms of the land: “[T]he older man – if it were possible, his awe yet greater than before – looked to the silent, waiting country to furnish, if not the dark future, then at least the outline of its waiting contours, as at dawn” (192). Finally, this alien yet desirable other represents an ethical dilemma, as a misled Howard betrays Michael, using terms which recall Oscar Wilde’s “Ballad of Reading Gaol” (1992 [1898]): “He had betrayed the one he loved – yes, these words came to him – but he must go on” (2002: 226). In line with the comic register which prevails, Howard attempts to undo the train of events he has set into play, although the novel ends at the liminal space of a doorway through which he must pass to discern whether or not he has been successful.

Michiel Heyns's *The Reluctant Passenger* (2003a) is set in Cape Town over some four years after the first democratic elections in 1994. The tone is dry, witty, ironic and droll, and the text melds a comedy of manners and more serious issues, such as the TRC and the RDP, the effectiveness of the legal system, responses to crime, differing perceptions of white and black South Africans, and the effects of being in a collision zone between nature and culture. This conflict is clearly portrayed through the image of a Rottweiler in a shopping trolley (11), representing animal instincts kept in check, but precariously: "[T]he beast was clearly well trained, and stayed put, but you could see that all it really wanted to do was chew the wheels off all the trolleys in the universe" (11). Yet, economically, this image also serves to define the effects of reining passion into the confines of the sonnet. One of the issues touched on through the text is the contradictory effects of Western creative works, considering opera as one instance: "All decadent music is torn between two extremes, a kind of spiritual gluttony and a kind of death wish" (242). By implication the novel mocks the pretensions of its own literary heritage while lightly re-shaping the form according to the needs of the place and time. As a black character wryly notes: "The *real* trouble with this country [...] is that everybody's in favour of transition, but nobody wants change" (137). *The Reluctant Passenger* embodies an evolving form, deftly incorporating elements of the nineteenth-century novel, a few situations reminiscent of the parodic farce of Tom Sharpe, but without the savagery, and a pointedly relevant South African content.

Rigid binaries are refused in the text. The two main characters are seeming opposites, as one, Nicholas Morris, the inhibited, anal-retentive first-person narrator, is English-speaking, hails from Kloof, and is apparently heterosexual, although he has not had

sex with his girlfriend or anyone else, while his friend, Gerhard, was raised in an Afrikaans family in Makwassie, and is an enthusiastically active gay man. Nicholas, who is dubbed a “green James Bond” (24) as a result of his work as an environmental lawyer, comes into contact with a young man whom Gerhard nicknames “the angel of dawning” (31). His name, while sadly not Michael, is also Biblical and symbolic: Luc Tomlinson. Luc is keen to secure the rights of baboons over the interests of rapacious developers at the Cape Point Nature Reserve, and Nicholas’s involvement propels him into a series of unexpected journeys of discovery. Coming to terms with change, particularly for whites, is seen as being relegated not to the “juggernaut of history,” but, bathetically, to “the minibus taxi of history: overcrowded, hospitable, unroadworthy, unlicensed and completely unpredictable as to destination” (58). So Nicholas is hijacked, discovers revolting experiments on baboons, reminiscent of Wouter Basson’s excesses, at a sinister institution, and becomes aware of political chicanery in the present regime developing out of the corruption of the previous era; in Leon de Kock’s adaptation of the Gramscian phrase used by Gordimer, “morbid symptoms that have survived the interregnum” (2003: 3). Although some of the evil and corrupt continue to flourish, others suffer darkly appropriate demises, one engineered in self-defence by Nicholas.

Nicholas loses his political innocence and relinquishes his celibacy along with his presumed sexual identity. He enters into a passionate relationship with the bisexual Luc, while the *très-gay* Gerhard has sex with a woman and impregnates her. At the end of the novel Gerhard, who has constantly advocated staying in South Africa, moves to London to please his “unfaithful” male lover, while Nicholas, who has been tempted to move to London, elects to remain in South Africa, reacting philosophically

to his own lover's polyamory. Compromise, rather than purism, is the order of the day. So too does Heyns confound absolutism by his artful and amusing mixing of narrative sub-genres: "political thriller, social satire, courtroom drama, boys' adventure saga, coming-out story, urban legend, hijack yarn and finally, even a gay love story" (De Kock 3). I would argue, though, that it is not a gay love story, but in fact, appropriately and significantly, a bisexual love story, as all three main characters turn out to occupy the interstitial space of bisexuality, rather than hetero- or homosexuality. Although the word "bisexuality" is not used, "double adapter" puts in another appearance (356), and the text reveals pervasive sexual mutability. Even though the tone of *The Reluctant Passenger* is ironic and satiric, rather than serious and dark, Heyns suggests that the content deals with the perceived collapse of Western civilization (Isaacson 2003: 18), much as J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) does. Part of that collapse can be seen as conflating binaries, as in a negotiation between carnality and culture, and in the trope of bisexuality. In the case of *The Reluctant Passenger*, accepting this mid-ground leads to a sense of precarious self-affirmation and autonomy: "*I accept all I am*" (357).

Although *Bitter Fruit*, *Archangels* and *The Reluctant Passenger* all explore bisexuality as a prime image of social change in contemporary South Africa, the text which offers most scope for analysis in this regard is the serious and major work, Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun* (1998), which interestingly explores the symbolic use of bisexuality. Born in 1923, Gordimer has explored the fault-lines in South African society in short stories, novels and critical essays for over 50 years. Her long and socio-politically engaged writing career has achieved much acclaim, and was crowned with the Nobel Prize for literature in 1991. Her *oeuvre* constitutes a

cartography of South Africa's shifting social, political, emotional and moral climate over half a century, from a progressive viewpoint. In view of her oppositional stance to apartheid, critics were interested to discern what her creative reaction to its demise would be. *The House Gun* (1998) explores the interstitial space of transition shortly after South Africa became a democracy. This terrain is the obverse of that evoked by the famous Gramsci quotation used as the epigraph of *July's People* (1982 [1981]) and as a linchpin in her 1982 lecture, "Living in the Interregnum" (1989: 285-300): "The old is dying and cannot be born; in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms." Now, in a new political dispensation, the effects of a pathologically warped past continue to dog characters in *The House Gun* as they struggle to adjust to becoming citizens in a transforming nation.

The text opens with the ominous line, "Something terrible happened" (1998: 3). White middle-class married couple, Harald and Claudia Lindgard, are cosily at home on the 19th of January, 1996, when the news intrudes that someone has been shot, and that their son, Duncan, has been arrested for the murder. They have been watching the international news on television, where some national disaster or other has been aired for public consumption. From the outset, the novel sets up a dialectic between the private and personal, the national and political, and the packaging of tragedies simultaneously as heart-rendingly conscientizing and as entertainingly spectacular. *The House Gun* explores the complex interstices of race, class, gender, sexuality, criminality and the legal system in a newly democratic, changing South Africa.

The text is constantly pricked with unsettling images of undecideability or random chaos, familiar from *A Sport of Nature* (1987), such as the narrator's comment, "It is

probable that neither of the Lindgards had ever been in a court before” (1998: 6), or “He was tall or short, bald or not – doesn’t matter” (8), with reference to the magistrate who commits Duncan for trial, or the question, “What did they talk about in the car?” immediately answered by “Neither would remember. Maybe they hadn’t spoken at all, each preferring it that way” (111). Gordimer’s well-known avoidance of quotation marks for speech, combined with her use of interior monologues for the main characters, act to blur the difference between thought and speech, and call into question the process of communication. Such unsettling comments and techniques render relative truth claims, memory, the ability to know another human being, or even oneself, and the relationship between narrator and reader. Julian Verster, the friend of Duncan who acts as messenger, telling his parents of the murder, says, “I won’t have you thinking what I’ve told you is conclusive, I wasn’t there, I didn’t see, although I know Duncan well, your son, I don’t know what went on inside him” (24). For Claudia and Harald, however, it is imperative that they attempt to understand as conclusively as possible what happened, what went on inside Duncan, and how the past, their conceptions of a happy family life, and their previously privileged place within the nation have to be revised. Although their reactions are incommensurable – Harald suddenly perceives disasters on television as reflecting his life, while Claudia shuts out the world and embeds herself in solipsism – he/she, as Gordimer terms them, both realize that “a new calendar is opened. The old Gregorian cannot register this day. It does not exist in that means of measure” (5).

The prime apparatus for sense-making in Part One of the two-part book is the complementary but different pair, Claudia and Harald. Claudia is a secular humanist and rationalist, who places her confidence in her profession as a medical doctor. Her

respect is for the corporeal, and her aim is to minimize suffering: “The purpose of a doctor’s life is to defend the body against the violence of pain. She stands on the other side of the divide from those who cause it. The divide of the ultimate, between death and life” (13) – the ultimate binary. In addition to running a private practice she works once a week at a clinic, serving the needs of the underprivileged black community. Harald, on the other hand, is the director of an insurance company “with a pragmatically enlightened policy towards blacks” (40). He too deals with suffering and disaster, although the benefits he provides are merely pecuniary. He is also socially aware, as he is involved in providing low-interest loans for homes for the indigent; however, like Claudia, he is pervaded with unconscious racism, and both are the providers of charity. Alongside Harald’s practical work, he differs from his wife in that he is an avid reader of literature and a devout Christian. The differences between the two are expressed most forcefully through their respective ethnic heritages, or incompatible “streams of ancestry” (64):

For those whose ancestors went out from their own [country] to conquer, or quit their own because of persecution and poverty, ancestry begins with grandfathers who emigrated. There is an Old Country and a New Country; the heredity of the one who is conceived there begins with the New Country, the mongrel cross-patterns that have come about. The Norwegian grandfather was a Protestant but Harald’s father, Peter, mated with a Catholic whose antecedents were Irish, which is how Harald comes to have a Scandinavian first name but was brought up – his mother’s duty to do so, according to her faith – as a Catholic. Claudia’s parents had been to Scotland only once. On a European holiday, but her father, the doctor whose disciple she was, was named for a Scottish grandfather who emigrated on a forgotten date, and so Claudia’s son has received the genetically coded name Duncan Peter Lindgard. (65)

The upheavals of history have led to passionate yokings across nationalities, religions and races. These bonds and partnerships may appear placid and harmonious, yet under

pressure are revealed to be fraught, difficult, painful and dangerous. The end-result of Claudia and Harald's passionate premarital affair has been the birth of the ethnically and sexually divided individual, Duncan.

Through the focalization of his disparate parents the reader encounters the gradually unfolding lurid revelations associated with Duncan's crime. Duncan's domicile overturns heteronormative assumptions: it is a commune consisting of a main house occupied by three gay men, and a cottage occupied by an apparently heterosexual couple: Duncan Lindgard and Natalie James, all of whom are "mates" (270). In David Medalie's neat summary, the unconventional group is "mostly homosexual, but not entirely so; mostly white, but including one black man; mostly male, but including one woman; mostly South African, but including one foreigner" (1999: 638). Harald and Claudia warily place themselves in the hands of Duncan's black lawyer, Hamilton Motsamai, who acts as a guide through the legal system but also as a means by which they have to confront their own prejudices. Through the revelations of Motsamai, Duncan's parents learn that their son discovered Natalie having sex with one of the occupants of the main house, Carl Jespersen, in the semi-public space of the sofa in the lounge. It later emerges that the relationship between Natalie and Duncan was a troubled one: before meeting him she had had a child, whom she gave up for adoption, after which she had a nervous breakdown and attempted suicide. Duncan viewed himself as her saviour, which she resented. The Lindgard parents learn that Duncan and Carl Jespersen were once lovers, and that the sex act between Carl, who actively identified as gay from adolescence, and Natalie could therefore have been construed by Duncan as a double emasculation. Duncan's friend Khulu Dladla, one of the gay occupants of the main house, explains that Duncan was less easy-going about

sexual mores than the rest of the household. The day after he viewed his lover and his ex-lover having sex, he returned to the house, and stood in the liminal position of the doorway, from where he saw Carl on the sofa. After being lightly invited into a brotherhood of solidarity by Carl, Duncan lost control, picked up the house gun and killed Carl.

In Part Two of the novel there are occasional glimpses into Duncan's consciousness as he is put on trial for the murder in a context in which the death penalty is in the process of being abolished. Motsamai effectively handles the evidence, and Duncan is sentenced to a Biblically just seven years in prison for his crime. Natalie has a child who may be Duncan's or Carl's, but who is accepted, with varying degrees of difficulty, by all as an emblem of reconciliation and of hope for the future. In an interview in 1998 Gordimer was asked, "How long will this transition period last, do you think?" and she replied,

Let's be realistic. The real extent of the transition is going to be a whole generation. If I look now at little kids at grammar school, going to school together, black and white, in what were formerly white schools – they're now 6 or 7 years old. So it's only when they grow up that you will see whether we really have overcome completely the racial divides. Because that's the first time ever that children have been brought up together to know each other as people, rather than "I'm black, and you're white." (Garner: 9)

For Gordimer, then, the child represents obviously enough the future, but more than this the litmus test of nullifying the divisive binaries of the genetic, ethnic and national past.

The House Gun marks a shift in Nadine Gordimer's previous preoccupation with pairs and binaries, noted by Abdul R. JanMohamed (1983) and Stephen Clingman, whose article, "Surviving Murder: Oscillation and Triangulation in Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun*" (2000), provides an illuminating comparison of Gordimer's earlier texts and techniques with her usages in *The House Gun*. Clingman points out the proliferation of triangulation in this text, and the technique of oscillation or wave motion in conversational interchanges, which suggests fluidity and permeable boundaries "in much the same way that postapartheid South Africa, going through an era of great change, has and must experience a similar profusion and cohabiting of voices" (154). He perceptively notes that in this new nation "sexual, familial, and racial identities" (155) are being re-created. This is an impressive article which contributes greatly to one's reading of the text; however, I must note an occasional (unconscious?) lapse into binarism, for instance in the questions: "Is there a difference between productive and unproductive triangles? How will we tell?" (145) – questions which are not fully answered in the text. My main concern, though, is Clingman's scanty treatment of the character Duncan, as in my opinion he is central to the concerns Clingman has aired.

The word "bisexual," unusually in a South African novel, appears twice in *The House Gun*. It occurs once as part of Hamilton Motsamai's utterance, "Who really can follow these bisexual variations" (1998: 124). This is written with the lexical marker, "Who," indicating the interrogative mood, but with the typographical marker of a full stop, indicating a statement, rather than a question mark. Gordimer's technique thus places the urbane words in the realm of a rhetorical question, whereby bisexuality is figured as accepted but rare, scandalous and difficult to decipher. The effect of

tension achieved by the dissonance between the form and content of this statement/question is enhanced by the placement of “really,” which could apply either to “who” or to “follow.” Even though the concept is named, the sentence in which it occurs serves to shroud the notion in mystery.

Clingman, though, avoids the word “bisexual,” instead commenting: “As for his identity, Duncan must accept a reality of himself as neither simply gay nor straight, but composed on either side of the permeable boundary (again the slash mark) in the homo/heterosexual” (155). This is an inadequate discussion of the subject, revealing the skittishness associated with discussions of bisexuality. In his lengthy analysis of the character Duncan, Medalie avoids any discussion of bisexuality, and he repeatedly professes himself mystified as to the significance of the murder in the text, as in his complaint: “the catastrophe which throws their lives into disarray seems to have no easily identifiable *social* relevance” (1999: 636). To come to grips adequately with *The House Gun* it is essential to analyse in depth the representation of the character Duncan Lindgard, and the consequences of Gordimer’s choice to represent him as bisexual and a murderer. This task has not previously been attempted in the critical literature examining the novel.

At the beginning of Part Two of the novel the narrator enquires, “Why is Duncan not in the story? He is a vortex from which, flung away, around, are all: Harald, Claudia, Motsamai, Khulu, the girl, and the dead man” (1998: 151). This character, described in terms of a slippery, whirling mass of liquid, an energy with an indecipherable nullity at its heart, can only be seen obliquely, and through actions which he himself has difficulty understanding, as he is the prime signifier of mutability. Like Hillela in

A Sport of Nature, he is a singular anomaly, with no overriding heritage from his bifurcated genetic makeup. One attribute which he has inherited from his father, however, is his love of literature, and a veneration for its significance, and it is through a literary allusion that Harald contemplates his son's place in history:

“... the transition from any value system to a new one must pass through that zero-point of atomic dissolution, must take its way through a generation destitute of any connection with either the old or the new system, a generation whose very detachment, whose almost insane indifference to the suffering of others, whose state of denudation of values proves an ethical and so an historical justification for the ruthless rejection, in times of revolution, of all that is humane ... And perhaps it must be so, since only such a generation is able to endure the sight of the Absolute and the rising glare of freedom, the light that flares out over the deepest darkness, and only over the deepest darkness ...” (142)

This quotation, from Herman Broch's *The Sleepwalkers*, obviously delineates the familiar terrain of Gordimer's interregnum, on the other side of the border, or, to pick up the depiction of Duncan as a vortex, the start of a new cycle of Yeats's gyres. In this terrain of flux and amorality, the past echoes as automatic violence, enacted in this case by the firing of the house gun.

As well as being bisexual, Duncan is white, male and middle-class, an architect responsible for drawing new designs of societal spaces. In the shared space of his communal home the availability of the gun leads to the tragedy of the shooting. As Jacklyn Cock points out, guns are a crucial signifier of masculinity for both white and black men in South Africa (2001: 47). Yet Gordimer reverses the post-apartheid discourse of black crime visited on white homeowners by depicting a white man killing another with the weapon at hand for protection. Cock comments: “The level of violent crime and conflict linked to the proliferation of guns and other small arms is

an indicator of a level of social disintegration in South Africa which threatens among other things the consolidation of democracy” (43). In *The House Gun* the dissociative state experienced by Duncan under stress leads to a “blankout” (1998: 246-7), characterized by poor impulse control, in which he automatically shoots Carl with the gun which happens to be to hand. The word “blankout” is distinguished in the text from “blackout,” and partly because of this opposition there is an implicit suggestion for the reader to understand “blank” as the Afrikaans for “white.” Duncan functions multiply in the novel, and one of his functions is to embody specifically white violence, inherited from the collective past, and guilt. As the judge is passing sentence on Duncan, both the murdered and the murderer are thought of by Duncan’s parents. Duncan’s victim is visualized as being “under the ground of the city where this court is the seat of justice” (261). On the surface is the place of justice, built over the remains of many victims of acts of violence and oppression, with, as Mongane Wally Serote’s “City Johannesburg” attests, a heavily racial dimension. In the democratic South Africa, the tables have been turned, and Hamilton Motsamai wields power in the legal system. The scapegoat who carries the symbolic weight of the history of violence and oppression is Duncan: “As if the sacrificial victim is anointed in his extremis, and removed from the contagion of human contact which he pursued to its awesome finality, the taking of another’s life. But hope. Can it reach their son, from them” (261).

As Cock avers, in general a gun “combines two contradictory images: it is a means of both order and of violence; and paradoxically it is believed to provide protection from violence through the potential threat of violence” (2001: 48). As the symbol of the house gun is complex and paradoxical or enantiodromic in the text, so too is the

character Duncan. In addition to being represented as a scapegoat, the vessel containing the evils of his community, he is also depicted in saintly imagery, encased in a nimbus, like Fiamma in *Cracks* (1998: 99). Gordimer employs subtlety and polyvocality in delineating Duncan. He cannot be read solely in the crude and judgemental terms suggested by George Bishop, quoted as an epigraph to this chapter:

The bisexual deviate occupies a unique niche in the annals of sexual crime. The confused passions aroused by his double deviation make him an all the more dangerous killer, when the delicate balance that contains his mental aberration within reasonable bounds becomes tipped toward the side of psychopathic criminality. (1964: 90)

What is useful in Bishop's otherwise egregiously stereotyped comment, however, is the focus on bisexuality as symbolic, rather than realistic. This has been noted by several reviewers of the novel. Angelo Fick waspishly claims that "the complexities of homo- and bisexuality do not only elude Harald and Claudia, but seem for the most part beyond Gordimer's authorial skill as well" (1998: 12). This judgement pays no heed to Gordimer's structural purpose of exploring the breakdown of binaries from a stylized perspective in the text. Another discontented critic, Adam Mars-Jones, elaborates on his grievances with regard to the representation of sexuality in the text:

As for the other Other Side, the other side of sexual orientation, there are some rather awkward impositions of meaning. There is no moralising about homosexuality as such, but the dead man's attitudes towards sex were casual to the point of nihilism. To him sexual contact was as necessary and as trivial as a drink of water, and he refuses any context of emotional obligation. Quite how this squares with his choosing to have sex with Natalie, despite a misogynist aversion, not to mention him having a live-in intimacy with another man, isn't clear. Carl's lover David doesn't have so much as a walk-on role in the book. (1998: 3)

These comments provide a cogent reminder that by virtue of their actions both victim and murderer can be conceived of as behaviourally bisexual. Although it might be considered to be stretching a point to suggest that one sexual act implies bisexual behaviour, Mars-Jones's point about the implausibility of an avowedly misogynist gay man having sex with a woman, combined with the presentation of Duncan as being primarily heterosexual, makes it clear that Gordimer's concern is not with the lived texture of bisexual experience, but in structural and symbolic resonances. Similar to my application of Jo Eadie's article, "'That's Why She Is Bisexual': Contexts for Bisexual Visibility" (1997), to my reading of the representation of bisexuality in *Cracks*, here too I see bisexuality carrying a symbolic cultural freight. Both Carl and his alter ego ex-lover Duncan, who venture into the middle ground of bisexuality from opposite corners, embody the dangers Eadie describes as being typically associated with the bisexual. So Carl characteristically is an outsider (significantly from Norway, where part of Duncan's own fractured heritage lies), who has travelled extensively without ever fitting in. Carl's behaviour similarly goes "beyond the limits" (142) and disrupts stability by his sexual act with Natalie, despite his expressed aversion to women's bodies. Here, Carl also embodies the symbolic role of the deceiver, which is popularly associated with bisexuality (156). He transgresses the "normal boundaries" (148) by his flouting of the pair-bonds which he and Natalie are engaged in. His sexual appetite and desire are excessive, and, typically fickle, he quickly tires of his conquests. Relating this behaviour to the "zero-point of atomic dissolution" passage from *The Sleepwalkers*, quoted by Gordimer, Carl exemplifies "a generation [... of] almost insane indifference to the suffering of others" (1998: 142).

Duncan, however, is represented in much more complex terms than the merely pathological. While he displays a similar and even more extreme disruptiveness to Carl's through the act of murder, his behaviour is generally more restrained. His father surmises that his affair with Carl represents bisexual chic which is part of youth culture: "Fashion that's been around for his generation, the idea that homosexuality is the real liberation, to suggest this as superiority beyond the ordinary humdrum" (120). Duncan's behaviour is thus associated with youth culture which has different mores and a more relaxed attitude both to sexual behaviour and race: "In that house, as the saying goes: no problem, black and white, brothers in bed together" (160). Co-existing with the negative associations with bisexuality, connected to lack of restraint, and the suggestions that homo-/bisexual behaviour is an indicator of a new period in South Africa, and a new generation, Duncan is shown to embody certain attributes which Eadie perceives as norms against which bisexuality is measured. These actions typical of "mental health" as defined by Eadie (1997: 147) include acts of commitment and loyalty towards Natalie, despite her erratic behaviour and the fact that "she tortured him" (1998: 224). Duncan displays elements of heroism and altruism, although these are represented ambiguously, in that Natalie views him as controlling and overbearing. Unlike Sheila Kohler in *Cracks*, Gordimer explores "the social tensions that emerge at [...] cultural flashpoints" (Eadie 1997: 156) both from a perspective of anxiety and as presaging (as expressed in the same passage in *The Sleepwalkers*) the ability "to endure the sight of the Absolute and the rising glare of freedom, the light that flares out over the deepest darkness, and only over the deepest darkness" (1998: 142). Symbolically, Gordimer uses Duncan to explore a range of associations, from pathology, through the cultural *Zeitgeist*, to a degree of hope and redemption through the reconciliation of oppositions.

Early in the text Harald overcomes his scruples and reads his son's private notebook "with the intention of deciphering him" (52). Duncan is a cipher in the senses both of inscrutability and being a key counter or emblem in the novel. The fact that Harald is represented as being more attuned to Duncan suggests that a more profitable means of analysing Duncan is via the literary, emotional and spiritual lenses employed by his father, rather than via the rational, scientific and factual lenses employed by his mother. Elements of rationally viewed psychopathology in the representation of his bisexuality are certainly suggested by the fact that the expert called on by Hamilton Motsamai to testify on Duncan's behalf is a psychiatrist, a medical doctor trained to deal with illness, rather than a psychologist, an academically trained, and potentially more neutral, expert in human behaviour in context. In court, the Defence psychiatrist evaluates Duncan's "loss of control" (229) in killing Carl Jespersen as being intrinsically connected to his bisexuality:

– Lindgard is a man with a bisexual nature. That in itself is a source of personality conflict. He had suffered emotional distress when he followed his homoerotic instincts and had a love affair which his partner, Jespersen, did not take seriously and broke off at whim. He overcame the unhappiness of the rejection and turned to the other, and probably dominant side of his nature, a heterosexual alliance for which, again, he took on serious responsibility. Even more so, since the alliance was with an obviously neurotic personality with complex self-destructive tendencies for which, when crossed in what she saw as her right to pursue them, she punished him with denigration and mental aggression. When he saw her in the sexual act with his former male lover, he felt himself emasculated by them both. (229)

While this viewpoint is offered as an explanation of Duncan's culpability, thus providing simplified causality, it is clearly constructed on a binarist model, postulating an essentialized and aberrant "bisexual nature" consisting of two warring

elements, rather than a Kinseyan continuum. This judgemental expert opinion is presaged by a slippage in communication between Harald and Claudia. Referring wryly to Duncan's sexuality, Harald comments, "Apparently he did not know what he wanted to be" (121), echoing a stereotype about mindless vacillation attached to bisexuals. What this stereotype fails to perceive is the social imperative to commit either to heterosexuality (preferably), or homosexuality – for some, an impossible choice. Claudia perceives her husband's meaning, but Harald withholds from her his subsequent thought, a memory of a quotation from Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*: "...the man is as he has wished to be, and as, until his last breath, he has never ceased to wish to be. He has revelled in slaying" (121). In other words, Harald views his son's bisexual rootlessness and instability as the paradoxical means through which he realizes his *métier* or "deepest desire" to murder (71), a thrice-occurring phrase quoted from *The Magic Mountain*.

It is worth taking a brief detour at this point to discuss some implications of Gordimer's choice of *The Magic Mountain* as a hypotext for *The House Gun*, thus illuminating archetypal themes by transplanting them to contemporary South Africa.¹ Wilson Harris suggestively discusses this imaginative cross-cultural terrain: "In that energy eclipsed bridges and potential bridges exist between divorced or separated or closed orders and worlds, bridges that are sometimes precarious, never absolute, but which I think engender a profound awareness of the numinous solidity of space" (1998: 239). Mann's Hans Castorp journeys to a Swiss sanatorium, which functions as a heightened microcosm of the First World War raging in the flatland below. He

¹ Johan Jacobs offers a full account of Gordimer's use of intertextuality through a number of novels, most particularly *My Son's Story*, where he draws an analogy between the literary technique and Gordimer's exploration of the interstitiality of coloured identities. Jacobs also reveals a link between homes, subject to the irruptions of violence and history, and the fragile "house of fiction" in South Africa (1993: 43).

intends merely to visit a relative, but is diagnosed with tuberculosis and spends seven years in the sanatorium. Mann reflects on his hero's place in the novel: "His story is the story of process itself. It employs the methods of the realistic novel, but actually it is not one. It passes beyond realism by means of symbolism, and makes realism a vehicle for intellectual and ideal elements" (1981 [1924]: 721). As in *The House Gun*, family relations are formal rather than intimate.

Further, memories of Hans's childhood infatuation with a Slavic schoolmate, from whom he borrows a pencil and sentimentally keeps the shavings, are closely paralleled with his later erotic attraction to a physically similar woman patient at the sanatorium, from whom he borrows a pencil on Walpurgis Night. On this night, the time of debauchery and magic, he confesses his love to her, and she, like Natalie in *The House Gun*, a sexually autonomous woman, although married, offers herself to him. Through the elision between the characters – the boy and the woman – and imagery associated with them, Mann implies a degree of structural bisexuality within the representation of the character Hans. In his letters of the time in which he discusses the writing of the novel, Mann is preoccupied with "the dualism of intellect and nature, the conflict between civil and demonic tendencies in human beings – in war this problem is truly made manifest" (1993: 11; translated by Jean Rossman). In his letters Mann refers to this dualism as the conflict or perhaps concurrent existence of good and evil tendencies, or reason versus nature. Although the scale of conflict is social, familial and personal rather than global in *The House Gun*, the battle between animal instinct and reason is the same. Duncan's failure to recall the moment of the murder suggests the separation of mind and body. Harald is haunted by the suggestion that murder is a fulfilment of one's "heart's deepest desire" (1998: 71), suggesting the

almost libidinal nature of the desire to commit murder, or in Freud's terms the meeting-point of Eros and Thanatos. Duncan too finds *The Magic Mountain* apposite, quoting from it then applying its insights to his situation:

“It is absurd for the murderer to outlive the murdered. They two, alone together – as two beings are together in only one other human relationship, the one acting, the other suffering him – share a secret that binds them forever together. They belong to each other.”

Writers are dangerous people. How is it that a writer knows these things? Only that this time it is the three of us, alone together. In the “human relationship” – love-making and all the rest – Carl acted, I suffered him, I acted, Natalie suffered me, and that night on the sofa they acted and I suffered them both. We belong to each other. (282)

Gordimer employs intertextuality to suggest the co-existence of desire and destructiveness within the bisexual character of Duncan Lindgard, and also to extend these intertwined impulses into triads, family structures and society at large, particularly South African society under the process of transition.

Returning to a consideration of the representation of bisexuality in *The House Gun*, the intolerance of the psychiatrist's expert, and Harald's lay, viewpoints of bisexuality are highlighted by the lesbian philosopher, Elisabeth D. Däumer's, visualizations of some potential advantages of adopting a bisexual perspective:

1. Because bisexuality occupies an ambiguous position *between* identities, it is able to shed light on the gaps and contradictions of all identity, on what we might call the difference *within* identity. This ambiguous position, while it creates painful contradictions, incoherences, and impracticalities in the lives of those who adopt it, can also lead to a deep appreciation of the differences among people – whether cultural, sexual, or gendered – since any attempt to construct a coherent identity in opposition to another would flounder on the multiplicity of at times conflicting identifications generated by the bisexual point of view.

[...]

3. Because of its ambiguous position between mutually exclusive sexual cultures, bisexuality also urges us to problematize heterosexuality in ways that distinguish more clearly between the institution of compulsory heterosexuality and the efforts of individual men and women to resist heterosexualism within and without so-called heterosexual relationships. (1992: 98)

In addition to Duncan's textual function as embodiment of white shame and violence, his bisexuality also functions in the ways delineated by Däumer. His behaviour provides a spur for his parents to think more progressively about difference, privilege, cultural relativism, sexuality and marriage. In the personal realm, they come to realize that their "covenant" with Duncan that he could tell them anything, even though well intentioned, lacked substance and "meant nothing" (1998: 160), acting more to defuse their own anxieties rather than being of practical benefit to Duncan. In the political domain, they realize that their liberal beliefs and charitable acts were similarly a veneer over racism and assumptions of superiority.

In terms of sexuality, Harald learns to perceive his knee-jerk reactions as being rooted in his subject position as a heterosexual man (23), a step in acknowledging the power of heterosexism in his own mind. Both parents, despite their liberal views, have to confront their deep-rooted conventionality and unacknowledged homophobia. After their guide, Motsamai, informs them of Duncan's previous affair with Carl, they affect unconcern, although Claudia's anguished thoughts, "*Which way, which way*" (116) capture their common sense of dislocation. Having been reminded by Motsamai of the equality clause in the Constitution which grants the "right of preference" (116), Harald and Claudia's reactions are revealing. Harald asks (the again characteristically typographically unmarked) questions: "Why did he take on a kind of life he just isn't

equal to. Who did he think he was” (117), while Claudia “shame[s] herself with an ugly giggle,” and projects her prejudice on to the lawyer, saying: “Hamilton has the idea we’d be more concerned about the homosexuality than what happened.” Harald responds in kind, with forced crudity: “Buggery may be criminal to him” (117). The masquerade of mutual deception is highlighted by being set in a descending lift: “The mirrored box that caught their private images from all angles, a camera identifying them, halted with a shudder and Harold stepped back in an exaggerated gesture of convention for her to precede him” (117). The mirrors reveal the fracture between outer appearance and inner, barely disguised disgust.

In both parents, rationality and emotions are at war, and on the next occasion they see Duncan, this conflict surfaces strongly: “[W]hat does what he did with his sex matter, but as they sat before him and the warders there came to them now actual repulsion against him as one who had committed that act: killed” (120). Ironically, facing their revulsion towards Duncan draws them together as a couple, and gives them the strength to move beyond their loathing for his act of murder and his bisexuality, which are linked horrors in their minds. The Lindgards contemplate what Duncan’s relationship with Carl Jespersen signified. They wonder whether it denoted the “disintegration of a personality” (160), aware that this judgement is a heterosexual stereotype. They agonize whether they could have reassured him that his affair with Carl was “a matter of the ambiance in that house, a fashion, the beguilement of male bonding in a period – his adulthood – and a place where social groupings were in transition” (160), reflecting the wider social upheavals in terms of politics and sexuality after the demise of apartheid. Harald ends this meditation by pondering whether it would not have been better for Duncan to remain with men. While this

perspective is again contingent upon an either/or dynamic, it portrays a significant shift in Harald's thinking.

In addition to the shifts discerned in Duncan's parents' views of sexuality, gender and relationships, the reader also has ample evidence of complex effects associated with bisexuality such as Däumer outlines. Duncan is represented as a willing victim in his relationship with Carl. According to their friend Khulu Dladla, Carl made a point of seducing a neophyte Duncan (222), then callously broke off relations when he grew bored with him, to Duncan's bewilderment and distress (222-3). Homosexuality is no panacea in the text, but heterosexuality is comprehensively problematized. Duncan's relations with Natalie James are portrayed as obsessively combining the roles of saviour and jealous lover, thus bolstering his masculinity. His dual name for her, Natalie/Nastasya, reveals his assumption of the right to name her according to his reading of her personality, based on the intertextuality of Dostoevsky's character Nastasya Filippovna in *The Idiot*. The quotation which Gordimer uses to depict the connection between Duncan and Natalie/Nastasya is taken from *The Idiot*: "She would have drowned herself long ago if she had not had me; that's the truth. She doesn't do that because, perhaps, I am more dreadful than the water'" (47). These words suggest that Duncan identifies with the speaker, Rogozhin, who is driven to kill Nastasya because of her contemptuous treatment of him and her desire to debase and ruin herself by eschewing other options for love and happiness. As Rogozhin remains with a woman whom he loves but who he knows is destroying him, so does Duncan accept the unhealthy dynamics between him and Natalie which he anticipates will be destructive, and a potential catalyst for violence. Intertextually and intratextually, heterosexual power play is shown to be devastating in its effects.

Duncan does not use the word “bisexual” to refer to his own sexuality. In court he and Hamilton Motsamai have a significant interchange:

– Although you yourself had had homosexual relations with him, and then fell in love with and entered into a close relationship with a woman, it did not occur to you that he might be capable of the same instincts? –

– I am not homosexual, not any more than any adult human being has some erotic ambivalence that may or may not – come out – in certain circumstances. I only had that one attachment. He was actively homosexual, he’d been so, he often told me, from the age of twelve. – (208)

The line of questioning is directed towards establishing Duncan’s confidence that, although Natalie had had flings with men after she and Duncan became sexually involved, she and Carl could be trusted together. Further evidence which serves to deepen his belief that Natalie and Carl would never have sex is that Carl was a misogynist, finding women’s genitals revolting (233). Fascinatingly, then, from each end of the sexual continuum, Duncan, who defines himself as “not homosexual,” and his “*doppelgänger*” (229), Carl J(espersen), whose name evokes Carl Jung and his theories of the shadow self or embodiment of one’s antithetical qualities, both shift from a space of singleness to experiences of “erotic ambivalence” or bisexuality. Duncan’s suggestion that “any adult human” may act on such desires is radical. This is the heart of the ubiquity of fluidity which the novel conceptualizes, in political, social, racial and gendered terms, as well as with regard to sexuality. Duncan’s propensity for shifting sexuality is mild in comparison with Carl’s actions. While the consequences of this particular sexual encounter between Carl and Natalie are catastrophic, the broadening of the symbolic concept of bisexuality implies that bisexuality or fluidity generally need not necessarily be pathological or threatening. In

the judge's summation of the case he glosses Duncan's plea of not guilty as being based on "the defence of lack of criminal capacity, defined as temporary non-pathological incapacity" (252). The judge thus divests Duncan of the psychiatrist's imputation of pathology. Under oath, Khulu Dladla commends his friend for his openness: "You can work out ideas with him, politics, art, music, God – no frontiers" (222). This ability to interact freely, without frontiers, is connected to Duncan's bisexuality, as well as the upbringing he has received from his parents, and is perceived by Khulu as a valuable characteristic. Bisexuality in *The House Gun* represents a space of anxiety, but also of opportunity. It represents a mysterious ability to adapt, which is essential in contemporary South African society.

In addition to offering a view of shifts in rigid binaries of sexuality, Duncan Lindgard suggests new patterns of family structures. The conventional white nuclear family is perceived from a jaundiced viewpoint: the terrible occurrence of Duncan's childhood was the suicide of a classmate, which led the Lindgards to offer their son the spurious comfort of a "covenant" whereby they would protect him. The circumstances of the child's suicide are not explained, but this event is an oblique indictment of sending children to boarding schools, and of lack of proper parental care and communication. In contrast, Duncan portrays the communal living space which he and his circle have set up as an alternative family of choice, a "latter-day Bloomsbury Group" (Medalie 1999: 638). Duncan claims that this family is "[b]etter than a nuclear family, a lot of friendship and trust between us" (1998: 208). It is the betrayal of this friendship and trust, both in the sex act between Natalie and Carl, and in Carl's cynical appellation, "Bra," for Duncan, which emphasizes the gap between the ideal of the supportive community and the sordid, spiteful, exposed coupling which Duncan witnessed. The

word “Bra” acts as the trigger for Duncan to lose control and kill Carl. Both the traditional nuclear family and new experimental forms may then be callous and deadly, but the new is taking its place alongside the old.

In the novel hope is provided through Natalie’s baby, who has an uncertain genetic heritage, being either Carl’s or Duncan’s child. The erotic triangle is figured as fruitful, despite violence and death, and traditional anxieties related to paternity are defused. In prison, Duncan has a fantasy in which he imagines the child in whom he has a stake: “Is it a girl, it looks like Natalie/Nastasya. No, it’s a boy, it looks like us, Carl and Duncan” (243). The child is indeed a boy, and will come to occupy a part of Duncan’s life. His parents, though, are resistant. Filled with shame – a word which pervades the text – over Duncan’s crime, Claudia tries unsuccessfully to fall pregnant and replace him, but although “[t]here was no conception for a forty-seven-year-old [...], there is a child” (291). Khulu Dladla and Hamilton Motsamai mediate to persuade the Lindgards to accept the boy as part of their family, according to black cultural notions, which are more humane than the Lindgards’:

Khulu Dladla has his own knowledge that this couple to whom the fact that he’s black and gay doesn’t preclude his being, to them, like a son – well, they’re white after all, and what they’re appalled by is that they might be expected to prove themselves as parents to their own son by taking in the kid, themselves. As if – with his people – this would need a second’s thought! Children belong, never mind any doubts about their origin, in the family. (290)

The conventional family structure and an emerging family of choice structure, both of which are revealed to be hazardous, are combined, and tempered by a generous indigenous understanding of the concept of family. This is illustrated in the text through Hamilton Motsamai’s broad, embracing extended family, which draws no

race, class, gender or age distinctions, and where Claudia especially finds a temporary haven, and solace in dancing with a young black man. Motsamai himself, who has risen to the top of his profession thanks to his missionary education, despite the oppressions of apartheid, views his bright daughter as having the capacity, thanks to equal access to a privileged education afforded by his elite position, to overtake his accomplishments: “She’s going to outshine even her father” (173), he confidently asserts. This hybrid family style represents a third way which may, the text suggests, prove workable in post-apartheid South Africa.

The black characters in the text act as moral touchstones: Khulu’s full first name, Nkululeko, means “freedom,” and the play on first names suggests that the wise lawyer Hamilton M(otsamai) is modelled on Nelson M(andela). It is through their agency that the white characters learn various lessons about the cocoons of privilege which surround them. Yet this role of conscientizing service-provider has an unsettling whiff of the Mammy stereotype in American literature, discerned most clearly in Duncan’s wry thought: “*Affordable* – there’s that word coined for our time, for what you can get out of it without going too far for safety, good old Khulu’s way to acceptance: he’s affordable by white males, in their beds” (278). In *The House Gun* the black characters appear as tokens, with precious little interiority. Khulu overturns stereotypes by being black and gay, but his gayness is seen solely in terms of commercial transactions with whites. In his review of *The House Gun* Adam Mars-Jones comments:

The only gay character to have a part to play is Khulu, a friend of Duncan’s, who supports his parents during their time of trial. In his manly tenderness he embodies black gay pride and functionality, and indeed he wears in court the

tryst rings and necklaces which are “the insignia of the gay”. He has a positive value in the book but no actual sex life [,] tryst rings but no trysts. (1998: 3)

The chief black character in the text, Motsamai, is intelligent and worldly-wise, and he makes grave pronouncements. He is characterized by the narrator as “diagnostician-priest-confessor” who “brought from the Other Side his particular kind of mother-tongue prescience” (1998: 114). He generously opens his home to the Lindgards, thus breaking down social barriers, yet another service function which he performs. In terms of interiority, both characters are even more enigmatic than Duncan, who does have some sections of interior monologue. Aside from the set speeches, Motsamai’s character is conceived as combinational: “here is a man who has mastered everything, all contradictions that were imposed on him by the past” (40). He is polylingual and melds Western and traditional African appearance in his “well-cut suit” and with his “19th-century African chief’s wisp of chin-beard” (244). In the absence of conventional renditions of names introducing speech within quotation marks, Motsamai is given irritating verbal tics, chiefly “Ah-hêh,” which marks his speech apart from other speakers’. This repetitious, meaningless vocal signature conveys the character to some extent through surface mannerism, although he is also portrayed in terms of inner contradictions, not merely stereotypes. The black characters in *The House Gun* fulfil the function of exposing white characters’ unconscious racism which co-exists with conscious non-racialism, and do the interactional work of revealing the mystery of “the Other Side,” but they are never revealed in thought as all three Lindgards are; they are only conveyed through the formal exteriority of the spoken word.

In *The House Gun*, “sexual, familial, and racial identities” (Clingman 2000: 155) are in the process of transformation from strict binaries of the past. Other sites which reveal the blurring of demarcated zones are in the law and metaphysics. Harald, who is deeply spiritual, schools himself not to think of professional ethics when he sees the Prosecutor and Defence Counsel, ostensibly on opposite sides of the fence, walking with the arm of one draped chummily on the shoulder of the other (1998: 258), another self-referential importation from Gordimer’s earlier fiction. Harald also understands the significance of a stranger’s comment: “*Nous sommes tous créatures mêlées d’amour et du mal. Tous,*” translated roughly by Claudia as “Something like us being creatures mixed of love and evil, all of us” (183). This impulse towards the combinational, the compendious, within the overarching frame of the ethical, is markedly different from Gordimer’s earlier impulse to use schematic binaries. It complements her use of triangulation in the text, and is an appropriate writing strategy for a society which is undergoing radical reorganization. This writing is in line with Graham Pechey’s vision of the multiplicity of perspectives which can be offered in a post-apartheid setting:

What I have called “writing” [...] is that which can only by an act of hermeneutic violence be read as being *for* any one proposition and *against* another construed as its opposite. We are in the presence of writing in this strong sense when the discourse before us has no designs of assimilation upon other discourses; is unimpressed by the monopolistic claims of any one narrative, even its own; and loves the incommensurability of “phrasal universes” above all else. The polar contest of apartheid and its antagonists needed for its own purposes to compel an infinity of disparate temporalities and identities into a totality. Writing is under no such necessity. (1998: 63)

This generous view is endorsed by Gordimer both in her essays written towards the turn of the century and in *The House Gun*. In *Living in Hope and History* she

approvingly quotes Léopold Sédar Senghor, who characterizes Europeans as “white cannibals” for their omnivorous instincts and refusal to celebrate and share with others, yet who also implores, in a poem dedicated to Georges Pompidou:

*Lord God, forgive white Europe.
It is true, Lord, that for four enlightened centuries, she has
scattered the baying and slaver of her mastiffs over my land
and opened my heavy eyelids to the light of faith;
who opened my heart to the understanding of the world,
showing me the rainbow of fresh faces that are my brothers’.*
(1999: 52)

Senghor generously points out that the flip side of white oppression has been the provision of education and Christianity to himself, to Senegal, and, by extension, to Africa, allowing connections which might not otherwise have occurred. After this quotation, which perceives the rainbow array of human races, ethnicities and tinctures as a family (albeit visualized in purely masculine terms), Gordimer comments that this yoking together of the incommensurable in the two quotations is: “More contradictions brought boldly together” (52).

Although a number of characters display the interplay of multiple discourses in *The House Gun*, the chief “vortex” through which Gordimer renders the fluid space of possibilities referred to by Pechey is, of course, the character Duncan. Bisexuality offers her a way of rendering the ambiguities within individual identities and sexuality, and a “deep understanding of the differences among people – whether cultural, sexual, gendered” (Däumer 1992: 98). The representation of bisexuality is particularly associated with temporality, as sexuality is popularly considered to be contingent on, and is read according to, the gender of one’s partner. Thus the question

of the gender of past and future possible partners is a source of anxiety when reading bisexuality.

Gordimer's use of bisexuality, triangulation, oscillation, intertextuality and polyvocality in *The House Gun* demand correspondingly adroit and biopic reading strategies. Frann Michel offers some useful comments in this regard:

bisexuality has been constructed in conjunction with other sexualities, and [...] neglect of this construction has been an artifact of conventional habits of reading. Thus bisexuality is neither immanent in static images nor determined by narrative closure. Rather, reading bisexuality involves reading the process of narrative, the tensions between end and image, between the pull toward closure and the dilation of spectacle. (1996: 56)

The reader of *The House Gun* must negotiate the terrain of the lurid plot as well as interior monologues concerning the personal, the social, the political, the philosophical and the religious. The generic structure is multiple, embracing the murder-mystery, the thriller, the courtroom drama, moral fable, a psychoanalytic analysis of sexualities, and a treatise on the dangers of a society awash with guns, all of which are crammed together indiscriminately. The end of the text gives closure and suggests punishment, with Duncan jailed for his crime; it simultaneously contains elements of incipient futurity, rehabilitation, even redemption. Further, Gordimer's pronominal usage and shifts within the final three pages of the novel compel an open, active, engaged, multiple and ethically responsible reading.

The final pages, in which Duncan's situation in prison is handled, contain an echo of an alternative ending, one in which he would have been sentenced to death for his crime, before the abolition of the death penalty. This is a reminder of the text's earlier

discussion of the liberalization of laws in South Africa as a result of Constitutional guarantees for all groups, whether along the axis of sexuality or of race or of gender. It is also a reminder of the legal establishment of the rights of the individual – even the criminal, who is cast beyond the social pale – to life. Further, it serves to remind the reader of the gap between the web of constitutional rights and the laws which uphold them, on the one hand, and popular opinion, or “collective morality” (128), on the other. The reader is sited in this interstitial space by the shift from third-person narration in the first two paragraphs of page 292 to an unannounced entry into Duncan’s consciousness. The flurry of pronouns over this border zone includes first, second and third person pronouns, both in the singular and the plural form. This serves to blur perspectival distinctions between examining from the outside and reflecting from the inside. From both sides of the judgement border the colloquial “you” is used, in place of “one,” to speculate about anger, revenge, hatred, violence, crime and punishment. No-one, it is implied, is exempt: all should be able to identify with Duncan’s subject-position. This represents a breakthrough; as Leon de Kock observes, in South African literary production “schisms, barriers, and misperceptions have occurred, so even today it is highly problematic to shift from the first-person singular to the first-person plural when talking South African – to move from ‘I’ to ‘we’ or ‘us’” (2001: 272). Here, boldly, Gordimer embraces all pronouns and subject positions through identification with Duncan.

At the end of the novel, in a typical manoeuvre, Gordimer again uses intertextuality to thicken the associations. This time it is Odysseus’s slaying of Penelope’s suitor, Antinous, which she employs in order to make her point. Even though Duncan himself has dissociated in the deed of murder, splitting off mind and body, later as an

act of will he has been able to reconstruct the satisfying and horrifying moment of violence, which might feel to the individual like a discovery, but which has been experienced since the dawn of humanity, and has been written about since writing existed:

Again and again, what Odysseus did, and what Homer, whoever he was, knew. Violence is a repetition we don't seem able to break; oh look at them, my brothers – *Bra*, they have the right to claim me, we crowd of feasters on our own carrion in this place made secure for us alone – I look at them when we're in the yard for our exercise, and they lope round and round, round and round. I haven't come to the end of the book yet, I don't know how Odysseus reconstructed what he did, what way he found for himself. (1998: 294)

Yet alongside this propensity for cyclic violence the possibility of curbing it to a certain degree is also possible. Perpetuating the violence could entail turning it inward, in self-punishment, as Oedipus put out his own eyes; in Duncan's case, this would have entailed “[t]urn[ing] the gun on your own head” (294). Yet this is not the path Duncan has chosen. He has chosen, instead, to “throw away the gun in the garden” (294). Duncan functions partly as a realistic character and partly allegorically, and the reference to the garden, when placed alongside other textual references to hell and Adam and Eve and, in this final section of the novel, brothers, obviously refers to an Eden which is tainted by the gun, agent of violence, which is passed through the generations as it was from Adam and Eve to Cain, who slew his brother Abel.

Having experienced – even revelled in – violence, Duncan moves beyond this point to search for meaning and redemption. *The House Gun* ends with him musing:

But I have to find a way. Carl's death and Natalie's child, I think of one, then the other, then the one, then the other. They become one, for me. It does not matter whether or not anyone else will understand: Carl, Natalie/Nastasya and me, the three of us. I've had to find a way to bring death and life together. (294)

In the oscillatory movement of this passage Duncan constructs a triad of himself and his lovers; this notional three has the power to translate the script of violence to offer a measure of hope, particularly through the redemptive symbol of Natalie's baby, who performs the miraculous in reconciling the ultimate conflictual situation. As a national allegory, the novel, which emphasizes the instructive power of writing, implies that this is the task of all individuals and groups within post-apartheid South Africa. It is significant that this insight of painful, contradictory but meaningful change is conveyed through the bisexual persona of Duncan Lindgard.

In Chapter 5 I elaborated on Tatamkhulu Afrika's riven and anguished representation of desire and taboo with relation to bisexuality in South Africa's (and the Western world's) Second World War past, as well as the South African present. In Chapter 6 I turned to the apartheid era, pointing to Sheila Kohler's pathologizing of bisexuality as part of her anxiety about boundary-maintenance, as compared with Mark Behr's more nuanced examination of dual impulses. In this chapter I have referred briefly to ways in which Achmat Dangor, Guy Willoughby and Michiel Heyns have incorporated representations of bisexuality as part of their examination of love, violence and generational differences between individuals and within the broader South African body politic. I have argued that the most complex representation set in the post-apartheid era is Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun*, which investigates incommensurable discourses which need reconciliation primarily through the lens of

bisexuality. In the following chapter I turn to an examination of emblems of hope and celebration within representations of bi- and homosexuality.

Chapter 8

Bisexuality and the Queer Celebratory:

K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, Ashraf Jamal's *Love Themes*

for the Wilderness, and Shamim Sarif's *The World Unseen*

In the queer universe, to be queer implies that not everybody is queer in the same way. It implies a willingness to enable others to articulate their own particular queerness.

Elisabeth D. Däumer (1992: 100)

[T]he emphasis is on looking awry at [...] the dominant modalities of analysing particular social issues [...] This attitude of looking beyond may be thought by some to be deluded, especially in a postmodernist world where any assumed position is always open to accusations of conscious or unconscious exclusion of other positions. But it seems to me that the habit of optimism is a necessary one, especially in the field of postcolonial studies, which in direct and indirect ways purports to be concerned with problems in real-life situations.

Ato Quayson (2000: 21)

Certainly, the addition of bisexual politics to the civil struggles of the 1990s begins to widen our cultural ontologies of sex [...]

Sexual desire in the contemporary world is not easily contained, yet its anarchic frenzy is persistent. Through the momentum of desire, pleasure, and sensual life, we collectively create new forms of erotic hybridity and individual variation. This life inhabits different communities of meaning that articulate a politic of survival for different sexual kinds [...] *The call to an ontology* in this new multiplicitous politic of sex is a call for less oppressive social/sexual relations of power. In this sense sex comes to matter as a deeply political and historical category. In contrast to the dream of sexual modernity, where there may have been an *end-all gene* to hold our sexual selves in place, there is now an evolution of sex in the production of erotic hybridities and in the multiplication of narratives and categories available for making sense of sex.

Jacquelyn N. Zita (1998: 138-9)

In this chapter I move beyond the chronological divisions of the national narrative, which organized my discussion in Chapters 5 to 7. Here I analyse texts which, unlike Sheila Kohler's *Cracks* and Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun*, explore sexuality and queer life on their own terms and from a perspective of interiority and sympathy.

rather than employing them merely as tropes, or judgementally. In order to counter pervasive social and textual stereotyping and negativity associated with bisexuality and other dissident sexualities, this chapter highlights the more celebratory mode, although not from an uncritical position, as celebrating one type of sexuality in a text may be privileged in such a way as to continue to elide other queer behaviours. I examine the ways in which different sexualities are discursively revealed to articulate with one another. I gauge to what extent each text is politically, socially and ethically progressive in contributing to a queer South African cartography, examining in particular the implications of each text's treatment of bisexuality.

The imaginary space of the double rainbow of sexuality/gender and race/ethnicity which forms the title of this thesis implies hopefulness associated with the dissolution of oppressive binary practices. Texts which tend towards the celebratory form the ideal place to ascertain authors' visions of the possibilities offered by sexual dissidence in forging a new national imaginary. The three texts which will be commented on are K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (2001), Ashraf Jamal's *Love Themes for the Wilderness* (1996), and Shamim Sarif's *The World Unseen* (2001).

The Quiet Violence of Dreams is by black South African author K. Sello Duiker, who committed suicide at the age of 30 in January, 2005. At the time of his death he had already achieved considerable critical acclaim. His first novel, *Thirteen Cents* (2000), won the 2001 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book, Africa region, and *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* received the 2002 Herman Charles Bosman Prize. Further, older black writers such as Zakes Mda and Lewis Nkosi rated his work as

amongst the best post-apartheid black writing (Van der Merwe 2005). Despite his successes, however, he had a nervous breakdown in 2004 (“Encyclopedia: K. Sello Duiker” 2005), and ended his own life. Sabine Cessou asks, “So, what happened? South Africa would like to believe in its own uncertain dream of a ‘rainbow nation,’ but here, with the death of Sello Duiker, it needs to face up to its own internal problems” (2005). Cessou mentions personal factors such as Duiker’s homosexuality and his decision to stop his mood-altering medications as they were inhibiting his creativity and his enjoyment of life. Beyond these factors, however, she sees Duiker’s death as symptomatic of an existential crisis in the new South Africa. John Matshikiza (2005: 28), Liz McGregor (2005) and Cessou find psychological significance in the timing of his death, just as black South Africans are able to create spaces for themselves in the country. Cessou suggests that, although the past is over, the present is still unbearable. She comments that Duiker’s life was marked by various identity crises, seen for instance in the very name Duiker itself, a common coloured name adopted by his grandfather in order to render himself more employable. A further stress Cessou suggests Duiker experienced was being caught between two cultures, and feeling compromised because of his promotion of English culture.

Despite the anguish referred to by the authors of these obituaries, and despite the use of deeply disturbing themes of drug-addiction, insanity and suffering, *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* is imbued with hope, and the novel celebrates alternative sexuality and spirituality. Duiker was of middle-class, Roman Catholic origins (Khumalo 2002: 14), and his central protagonist shares this background. The novel is a challenging work of extraordinary depth and complexity. It is a picaresque quest, set mainly in Cape Town of the present. The contemporary nature of the text is

emphasized by the use of the first-person present tense for the polyvocal narration. In various respects *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* is reminiscent of Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962), various novels by Patrick White, especially *The Eye of the Storm* (1973), Bessie Head's *A Question of Power* (1974 [1973]), and Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* (1991). All of these texts deal with issues of sanity and nonconformity, alienation and national identity, and the connection between the physical and the spiritual domains. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is particularly evoked through the central spatial image of the psychiatric institution, symbolic of repression and punishment, and in both novels' examination of gender issues, sexuality, the quest motif, father-son relationships and the psychologically disturbed hero figure. Comparisons between *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and Patrick White's oeuvre, notably *The Eye of the Storm*, include binary structures, stream-of-consciousness technique and the juxtaposition of the metaphysical and epiphanic with physical degradation. The main protagonist of *The Eye of the Storm* is materialistic and solipsistic, yet a moral touchstone who transcends the limitations of Australian society. *A Question of Power* also deals with psychological breakdown, and the haunting of the main character by supernatural figures embodying good and evil. In addition, issues of sexuality are explored (although Head is antagonistic to homosexuality), and Jean Marquard credits this novel with being "the first metaphysical novel on the subject of nation and a national identity to come out of southern Africa" ("Bessie Head" 2003: 4). The text views the possibility of social transformation through the lens of one character's personal odyssey. Ben Okri uses surreal dream-states and creation myths to convey his sense of the interpenetration between the quotidian and the mystical in his portrayal of Nigeria within its continental setting. With these antecedents, a useful framework in which to place *The*

Quiet Violence of Dreams is spiritual realism, a term used by Kwame Anthony Appiah (1992: 146-8) to distinguish African authors' combination of the visionary and the realistic from their South American counterparts' works of magic realism.

Partly as a result of using the writing mode of spiritual realism, the text both subverts certain boundaries and reinstates others, using techniques of shifting from one binary to its opposite. I will detail these effects after sketching out the scope of the novel. The setting of this ambitious, 450-page text is seen in terms of extremes of privilege and poverty, but the fashionable mid-ground between these extremes is represented as a brand-conscious consumer culture "pushing to be hybrid and past gender and racial lines" (2001: 35). The protagonist, Tshepo, suffers from cannabis-induced psychosis. He is also suffering from trauma as a result of his father having orchestrated the rape and killing of his mother by five men, and his own rape by some of these men. A third of the novel occurs in Valkenberg psychiatric institution, where Tshepo struggles to acknowledge and come to terms with his loss and rage. On leaving Valkenberg, he is again raped, by a man he has fallen in love with and his friend. Unable to find any other job, he becomes a "black stallion" at a massage parlour, and acknowledges his attraction to men (his previous consensual sexual experience was heterosexual). Here he is inducted into the secrets of the Brotherhood, a mystical union of supportive masculinity based on the Pre-Raphaelite Brethren. He is told:

"The inspiration of the Pre-Raphaelites is like our foundation, you know. It's like our motto, our mission statement, it's very important. It gives us a direction, a vision, somewhere to go, something to work towards. Without it we would be just another massage parlour. Sex is so ugly today, so basic, so stripped of anything beautiful, transcendental or aesthetic [...] We're trying to move beyond that. We're also artistic revolutionaries but of a different sort." (257)

Tshepo, who assumes the pseudonym Angelo in his sex work, progressively releases areas of sexual repression. Unwilling at first to engage in penetrative sex, he surmounts this barrier, first with a woman, and later with men. However, his reaction to both sexes differs markedly. He finds having sex with a woman ridiculous:

There is something comical about watching a woman having sex. They let go so completely. Really, it makes me want to laugh. I have to hold myself back as I watch her face twisted in comical expressions, moaning about things that only she knows about. I thrust quicker and deeper into her. Her expression becomes too much. I have to hide my laugh by pretending to moan harder. I can't help it. (333)

On the other hand, sex with men is seen as transcendental. Angelo sings a long paean of praise to homoerotic desire, which includes the following affirmation:

To explore a man's body? It is like getting to know your own shadow intimately. It is like being a child again. It is like playing with fire safely and not getting burned. [...] It is like white water rafting down the Zambezi. To love a man is not like loving a woman.

To be with a man, to feel his strength? It is like a road whose twists and bends you know well. It is like knowing all the answers to all the questions in an exam. It is like being passed before being tested. It is like being in a foreign country but speaking their language. It is like being welcomed to the carnival. It is like singing alone and hearing your echo [...]

To know a man? It is like serenading yourself and all men. It is like having the choice of all the delicious forbidden fruit in a garden. It is like hearing butterflies sing. [...] It is like having your cake and eating it, scraping the depths of desire and satisfaction. It is like scaling a sacred sequoia. It is like knowing a secret that everyone is asleep to.

Oh, the infinite beauty of a man and his penis. (334-5)

This mantra of delight in sameness is an antidote to heteronormativity and homophobia, although it is as highly binarized as these systems. Phrased as a catechism, rhetorical questions are succeeded by a torrent of similes, including

references to self-validation, surreal natural imagery, an overturning of conventional proverbial prohibitions against excess, and being welcomed into the domain of the carnivalesque. Most noteworthy is the constantly recurring central image in the corpus of books under discussion, that of an Eden, in this case perceived in terms of wish-projection as being without bounds. Physical, psychological and spiritual repletion is suggested, and the passage culminates in a shift from the metaphoric to an exclamation of joy directed at the agent for this rapture. While veering towards the purple, the entire passage is a stirring piece; however, in juxtaposition with the previously quoted passage it is obvious that Duiker demeans women's bodies and sexuality.

In a series of rites of passage Angelo transgresses various taboos about sexuality, such as sex with multiple partners and ritualized sadomasochism. As part of his spiritualized sexual quest he offers a new myth of the origins of sex, largely a synthesis of the myth offered by Aristophanes in Plato's *The Symposium*:

The first universal human beings were born of three sexes from the Sun, Earth and Moon. There were men, women and hermaphrodites, each of the three sexes doubled over and united as a whole. At some point in the unknowable past they were brutally cleaved in two, doomed to go through history suffering the violence and anguish of separation, constantly longing to be reunited with the lost half of the self, the better self. Being cut in half resulted in the forms of heterosexuality from the hermaphrodites and homosexuality in both female and male forms, the amnesia of the brutal separation mutating into bisexuality in others. (380)

The reference to bisexuality is Duiker's addition to Plato's version. While all sexuality in this myth is treated as traumatic, bisexuality is rendered as a particularly pathological aberration. Other textual references to bisexuality in the novel include a

newspaper personal advertisement for a “bi guy or girl” (202), alongside five other advertisements seeking other types of partners, and a number of allusions to bisexual pornography, first mentioned as part of a list: “straight, gay, lesbian and bisexual pornographic tapes” (233). Duiker therefore includes the concept of bisexuality in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*; however, his characters’ preferred term is “sexual ambiguity” rather than “bisexuality,” and this term itself is ambiguous, as it could signify behaviour which is queer, bisexual, undecided, indecipherable or protean. A number of characters have sex with both men and women, although the word “bisexual” is refused in each case. Sex-worker West, for instance, an Afrikaner from a conservative background, mainly services men, although his preference is for women sexual partners. He is adamant, however, that this “is not to say that I’m bisexual, because I’m not. I don’t like men like that” (293). Despite this rigid separation of behaviour and identity, though, West tenderly makes love with Angelo/Tshepo as an act of connection or love. In *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, then, bisexuality is represented as problematic and is elided, as male homosexuality is privileged.

Although deeply significant interracial sexual relationships are represented in the text, Angelo-Tshepo is quick to criticize racism amongst gays, and the paucity of black gays. Duiker also includes a description of a god-like black gay character, who acts as an inspiration and role model to others. Andromeda is depicted mythically, as a “real Nubian prince by birth” (300). His work name is significant, as the original Andromeda was the princess of Greek mythology who was chained to a rock and saved by Perseus, who married her. By naming his character Andromeda Duiker unsettles conventions of gender, victimhood, Eurocentrism and heteronormativity. The character is venerated for his phallic power over men and women, specifically

from the outsider position of black man (301-2). The ethos which the novelist wishes to establish is an ideal of inclusiveness, and the abolition of stereotypes and bigotry. This ethos is, however, only partially realized with regard to the gamut of alternative sexualities, and with regard to gender.

The second most significant character in the text after Tshepo is Mmabatho, a black woman whose white German lover, Arne, deserts her after she falls pregnant, and after he has had a sexual encounter with Angelo. Mmabatho is represented with considerable sympathy, but she is not depicted having sex, as Angelo is. The text maintains that women generally, and by implication Mmabatho too, are not as interested in sex as men are. They refuse to perform acts which men desire, and drive them to sex workers for comfort. The disappearance of Mmabatho's lover from her life suggests that she has been bested by Angelo's superior, mystical sexual skills, which have been so transformative that Arne cannot settle into heterosexuality, bisexuality, or domesticity. Mmabatho's apotheosis occurs through her pregnancy with a child she predicts will be a boy, and whom she intends to call Venus. This imagery is paralleled by the idealized and idolized lost mother-figure whom Tshepo addresses *in extremis*. Such imagery functions to fetter women characters to the stereotyped roles of incubator, mother and caregiver, revealing a relative lack of depth, complexity and agency in their depiction.

Towards the end of the text the prophetic imagery escalates. Angelo-Tshepo enters Arne's mind during their sexual encounter; he enters a phantasmagoric domain (reminiscent of similar creations by Patrick White and Ben Okri) in which he experiences a metaphysical reconciliation with his dead father, and takes on the

persona of Horus, the Egyptian god of sky and sun. At the same time he plans to become a painter, representing in his life and art a new way of celebrating being a man.

Through the persona of his central protagonist, Duiker explores what it means to be a man, the suffering men inflict on each other, by violence, rape and war, and the degree of support and comfort they can offer each other, across barriers of race, age, sexual preference and disability, predominantly through mutually desired sexual connection. His polyvocal text gives voice to a range of ten characters, of different race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender, all of whom are connected in some way to Tshepo. The mixed mode of Duiker's novel juxtaposes realism and mythopoesis. He makes use of Western traditions, myths and narrative forms, but adapts them to the contemporary South African setting. He gives weight to ancestral African voices and myths, the most significant being that of Horus. Duiker's use of altered states of consciousness, myth and the metaphysical subverts the conventions of traditional, linear, rational discourse. He concludes his text with the representation of the artist/godlike figure, who has a sacred duty to transform society.

To evaluate the novel in more depth, in terms of its representation of a politically, socially and ethically progressive queer celebratory vision in a South African context, it is necessary to analyse the effects which Duiker creates by his choices of literary mode and subject matter. The literary mode employed, now being called spiritual realism, was commented on over a decade ago by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., as an emerging hybrid form which extends the parameters of magical realism:

[D]espite the fact that the novel enjoyed the role of primogeniture among the genres of contemporary African literature, few authors have chosen to test the limits of the well-made realistic novel, a form inherited from Europe [...] In an era of literary innovation – boundaries exist to be trespassed, conventions to be defied. So it should not be surprising that African novelists would eventually seek to combine Western literary antecedents with modes of narration informed by Africa's powerful tradition of oral and mythic narrative. (1992: 3)

The enterprise of melding the traditional novel with African myth poses problems to the author concerning the union of conflicting perspectives: the real and the fantastic, the secular and the spiritual, the pre-colonial past and the post-industrial present. As Brenda Cooper points out with regard to the closely analogous category of magical realism, this attempt at amalgamation is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve:

Magical realism at its best opposes fundamentalism and purity; it is at odds with racism, ethnicity and the quest for tap roots, origins and homogeneity; it is fiercely secular and revels in the body, the joker, liminality and the profane. I say that it can do these things, when at its best, to emphasize that it does not, by definition, do them. In reality, the novels themselves are heir to many traditions, pressures and conflicting strategies and as such, tend to be an amalgam of politics and purposes, working at different times in the interests of different segments [*sic*] of different populations. (1998: 22)

The potential of subversion and balance is further complicated in the case of *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* in that Duiker is concerned to explore the issue of black gay sexuality, an area which until recently has been characterized by a “barrenness of the repertoire of images” (Julien 1993: 60). Duiker expands this repertoire, particularly audaciously through his presentation of spiritual quests finding their fulfilment through socially taboo forms of sexual expression. For instance, Duiker represents the connections between Sebastian and Tshupo as deeply significant. Duiker lays the ground by portraying a lengthy conversation between Sebastian and

Tshepo about forms of same-sex expression cross-culturally from ancient times to the African present, conveying these as metaphysically resonant. He then establishes the symbolically-named Sebastian as a camp, effeminate character who was tormented for his sexual preferences at school, and who has attempted suicide, but has come to revel in being a queen and in “the blurry path I travel” (2001: 337). Sebastian is revealed to be a dedicated hedonist and ritualist, who derives a sense of mystical power through masturbation and fantasy. Sebastian inducts Angelo into one of his most potent rituals in what he considers the language of sex (386) when they take cannabis together, view pornographic images and masturbate, controlling their release, and culminating with orgasm triggered by a transcendental image of their “highest self[ves]” (385).

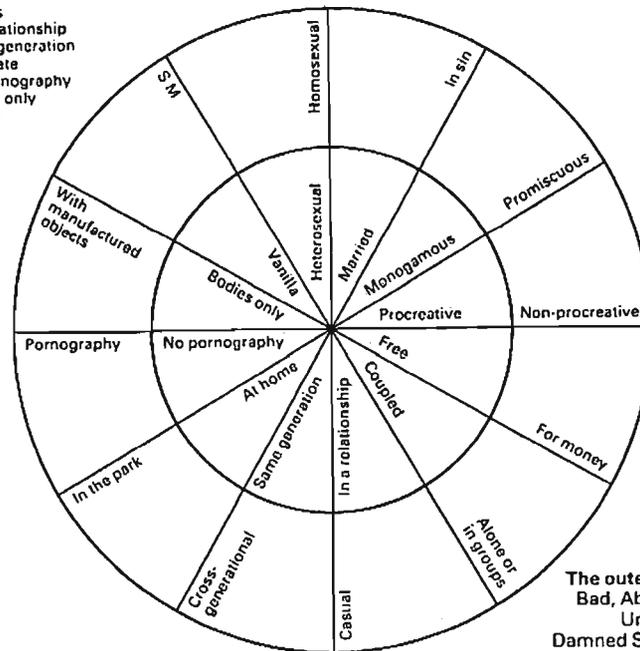
As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick points out, historically the discourse on homosexuality resulted in an epistemology of oppositions, including secrecy/disclosure, knowledge/ignorance, private/public, masculine/feminine, innocence/initiation, new/old, wholeness/decadence, domestic/foreign, health/illness, same/difference, cognition/paranoia, utopia/apocalypse and voluntarity/addiction (1990: 11). Each of these binaries operates in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*. At the start of the text Tshepo is maintaining a destructive secrecy about having been raped and the murder of his mother, and he is only able to progress and acknowledge his attraction to men after he has disclosed his pain. Once he expresses his trauma in the public domain he moves to a position of self-knowledge and increasing voluntarity, marked by his escape from Valkenberg and his immersion in the culture of the male brothel, which paradoxically represents health rather than decadence. Tshepo explores his heritage from his family background, both maternal and paternal, his path is contrasted with

that of Mmabatho, and he comes into contact with a range of domestic and foreign characters and practices. He moves out of cannabis addiction to its voluntary use to enhance both pleasure and a transcendental state, in company with other male sex-workers. His *Bildung* leads him from pathology, paranoia and apocalyptic nightmares to a new health and integration, where he is the sexually confident quester-*Künstler* who embodies the opportunity for social renewal and a more utopian South Africa, which is seen in its continental context. For my purposes the most important of Sedgwick's oppositions which operate in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* are those centring around sexuality, race/ethnicity and gender, each of which will be examined in turn.

In terms of sexuality, Tshepo "converts" or shifts from heterosexuality to homosexuality, which is validated as a privileged site by reference to mystical notions of brotherhood and spiritual revelation. The Ur-signifier of the phallus is endorsed as physically and spiritually transcendent, while women's bodies are viewed with nausea. The novel charts a trajectory of sexual experience, moving from Gayle Rubin's "charmed circle" of what society dubs "good, normal, natural, blessed sexuality" to her list of the socially reprehensible, or "the outer limits: bad, abnormal, unnatural, damned sexuality," illustrated as follows:

**The charmed circle:
Good, Normal, Natural,
Blessed Sexuality**

Heterosexual
Married
Monogamous
Procreative
Non-commercial
In pairs
In a relationship
Same generation
In private
No pornography
Bodies only
Vanilla



**The outer limits:
Bad, Abnormal,
Unnatural,
Damned Sexuality**

Homosexual
Unmarried
Promiscuous
Non-procreative
Commercial
Alone or in groups
Casual
Cross-generational
In public
Pornography
With manufactured objects
Sadomasochistic

Figure 1 The sex hierarchy: the charmed circle vs the outer limits

Rubin 1989 [1984]: 281

The shift traced through the course of *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* includes a crossover from sex which is heterosexual, monogamous, non-commercial, in pairs, in a relationship, intra-generational, without pornography, bodies only and vanilla (or non-sadomasochistic), to sex which is homosexual, promiscuous, commercial, alone or in groups, casual, cross-generational, including pornography and manufactured objects, and sadomasochistic (281). This shift to the outer limits is further illustrated by Rubin as follows:

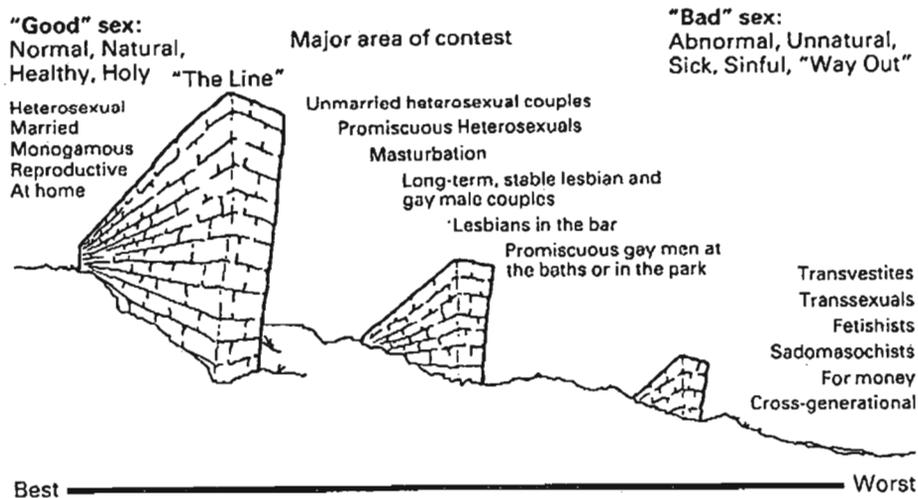


Figure 2 The sex hierarchy: the struggle over where to draw the line

Rubin 282

In this continuum, the sexual behaviour portrayed in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* crosses the normative line, straddling the midground of masturbation and promiscuity to some of the "worst" categories, chiefly represented by aspects of paid sex-work. The shift which Duiker describes is from a conservative stance to a pro-sex position. Despite its polyvocality, Duiker's text thus endorses a very particular vision of sexuality – and, further, one which, far from recognizing its own "sinfulness," glories in the spiritual potential within transgressive sexuality.

In terms of race, the novel is at pains to affirm blackness over white normativity, as well as critique narrow ethnicity or xenophobia. There is deliberate blurring over the question of whether Tshepo is Xhosa or Sotho; there are South African characters representing a range of ethnic origins; Tshepo relates well to characters from other African countries, and rebukes xenophobic comments about them; and Duiker's chosen icon of transcendence for his main character is that of the Egyptian god of sun

and sky, Horus, son of Isis and Osiris. The novel, through its evocation of African spirituality, attempts to include past and present, and geographically span the continent. However, the apotheosis attained is merely personal, individual rather than collective. The text ends with Tshepo assuming the persona of Horus, and glorying in his godlike powers which he assumes as part of this identification: "I know where my greatest treasures lie. They are within me" (2001: 457). Tshepo thus represents a messiah, and Cooper comments perceptively that

the messianic is a device that enables the resolution of the conflicts between the belief in the necessity for social change and the scepticism about its possibility. It is a resolution of the contradiction between the belief in the universality of the human condition of greed and repetitive evil, and in the uniqueness of the human ability to produce exceptionally talented and morally upstanding individuals. Archetypal and mythological battles are Manichean battles between good and evil, life and death. (1998: 98)

Consequently, even where Duiker deliberately attempts to disrupt binaries and open up the field of signification, he paradoxically ends in a binary structure. The novel deals with binarized archetypal struggles, clearly revealed in the obsessive repetition of the varied evils pitted against the character Tshepo throughout the text, embodied in a series of male characters who unaccountably abuse and violate him, as well as in the nightmarish surreal imagery of squalor and moral degradation which he attempts to escape, and does, through the agency of and sexual congress with his spiritual guide, Nasuib. Binarism is also clearly revealed in the third area of representation which I want to consider, that of gender. Cindy Patton notes the similarities between the functions of race and sexuality:

[B]oth are cultural criteria pressed into a socially constructed pair of opposites. In this context, the idea of passing (acquiring the signifiers of the normative

category) of claiming “Black is beautiful” or “gay is good,” and the increasing visibility of “racially mixed” persons and “bisexuals” constantly function to call into question the lines of demarcation between socially constructed opposites. (1990: 37)

Subversive strategies adopted by Duiker might indeed be represented as celebrating blackness and homosexuality. However, he is less interested in subverting binaries in terms of sexuality, and his depiction of bisexuality and the potential of mixed race also needs analysis through the figure of Mmabatho, using the lens of gender theorizing.

It is laudable, in a novel which focuses so strongly on masculinity and homoerotic spirituality, that a woman character is given a prominent voice. However, Mmabatho’s sexuality in particular, and that of women generally, is presented equivocally. Mmabatho is represented in terms of fluidity: she looks stylish in a combination of Xhosa head wrap and jeans, and she has had sexual experiences with a woman as well as men. This bisexual behaviour, though, is represented as experimental. In fact, the concept of bisexuality is not even entertained: speaking of her ex-lover, a woman, she says, “But I know I’m not a lesbian. I like men’s bodies too much. Women’s bodies make fragile landscapes” (2001: 72). In other words, having tried both male and female partners, Mmabatho “converts” to male bodies as objects of desire. Monosexuality, or a single object choice (whether same-sex or opposite sex) is thus endorsed by the text, so keeping in play oppositions rather than the middle ground. As discussed earlier, Mmabatho’s sexuality is not directly explored in the text, which sets up triangulation between Tshepo, Mmabatho and her German lover, Arne. Seemingly, Arne’s sexual experience with Tshepo is so transcendental that he shifts away from heterosexuality and a pregnant Mmabatho,

whose entire identity now becomes tied to the hybrid baby that she is expecting. She herself ruefully notes the ways in which she and Tshepo have switched positions:

It is as if we have swapped lives. I have become him and he has become me. I used to be the one getting dressed and going out, always picking him up. He was always alone at home, shy and awkward, eager for my company. Now the tables have turned. My belle époque has come and gone.

A pregnant woman is just a pregnant woman to everyone, even an invalid to some. I cannot expect people to look at me the same way again. They see someone's mother when they look at me, youth ripped out of my eyes. (450)

Mmabatho's role becomes solely that of mother of a future saviour figure, who is outside the frame of the text. As Florence Stratton points out, referring to Manichean divides in the representation of gender within Negritude writing, the Mother Africa trope, which frequently occurs in works by male African authors, functions to exclude women from agency, citizenship and artistic or spiritual vision. Stratton refers to the dual forms of femininity as displayed in a host of novels: "a young girl, nubile and erotic, or [...] a fecund nurturing mother" (1994: 41), both of which are combined in the representation of Mmabatho. As textual mother, the African woman is reduced to her body and her sexuality, yet in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* even this aspect of sexuality is diminished in favour of masculine sexuality and potential.

A further example of gender stereotyping occurs in the mythopoeia of the text. This again relies on binaries and gender roles. The trajectory of Tshepo's quest moves from a spiritual frisson provided by belonging to a "brotherhood" of sexual artists of various races, to a particularly African vision of divinity and destiny. The first part of Tshepo's journey celebrates non-violent, consensual sexual expression through "phallic hyperbole" (Marriott 1996: 198), as seen in Tshepo's already-quoted "white

water rafting” (2001: 334) anthem to the male body, and especially the penis. The symbolic use of this celebration of the phallus is twofold: it is intended to solve dilemmas around masculinity and sexuality. In the USA, the challenge to masculinity provided by feminism led to the establishment of the mythopoetic men’s movement, represented most vociferously by Robert Bly. Duiker’s depiction of Tshepo’s induction into “The Brotherhood” is similar to the depiction of Bly’s “Iron John” wild man, who has to overcome fears of “wildness, irrationality, hairiness, intuition, emotion, the body, and nature” (1990: 14). All of these fears are faced by Tshepo in the psychiatric hospital, in his sex work, and in his hallucinatory wanderings towards the end of the text. As Johnson points out, the fears which the mythopoetic male has to face are in fact attributes which are culturally ascribed to women (1997: 60). Being part of a mythopoetic brotherhood enables men to tame through incorporation feminized qualities. The fear of the “taint” of femininity may be particularly pronounced for a gay male subject, and this makes the necessity of asserting masculine values of virility more imperative. The phallocentrism of “The Brotherhood” thus serves to bolster masculinity and homosexuality in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*.

In the second part of his mythic quest Tshepo moves beyond race-blind bonding in terms of gay male sexuality to a specifically African vision. He dissociates himself from whites, coloureds, Indians and consumerist “new blacks” (2001: 438). Led by his mystic spirit guide, Nasuib, an Indian Egyptian, Tshepo accepts his utopian destiny, in which he can “feel mother’s eyes upon me, my father guiding me” (456). The rage against his father on account of the rape and death of his mother is now erased. This is disconcerting, certainly to a feminist reader. There is a shift from the

early mother-identification of the text to a realization of an ancient, patrilineal African heritage. Tshepo accepts the violence associated with masculinity, returns home to Johannesburg, and dons the mantle of superior being, black gay male, a key member of a shadowy but mystically endowed group of illuminati. He is a “pathfinder, a strange gate-opener” (435), who is associated with an earlier textual reference to “the Native Americans and the berdache [...], usually a gay man who was honoured with the privilege of being like a village shaman, a person who looked after the children, gave advice, saw things that people didn’t because they took them for granted” (255). At the end of the text Tshepo has indeed become a shaman who works in a children’s home, nurturing the future and passing on wisdom. As a gay male Tshepo has a specialized role to play in the community; this role is a superior and spiritual one, which is similar to, but more highly textually endorsed than, the merely biological role of Mmabatho.

The novel acts to offer a privileged black gay male voice through a variety of techniques. While it certainly expands the “repertoire of images” (Julien 1993: 60) of black South African men, and while it counters “hetero-fascis[m]” (2001: 334), it runs the risk of endorsing patriarchal, phallogocentric and misogynistic attitudes and practices through its use of binarist shifts.

A self-identified bisexual, Ashraf Jamal views his sexuality as the wellspring for his creative and critical work (personal communication 2002a). Like K. Sello Duiker, Jamal has received recognition for his writing. *Love Themes for the Wilderness* (1996) was an M-Net Book Prize finalist in 1997, and he was awarded the 2002 Sanlam Literary Award for the short story, “The Shades,” which gave its title to a collection

of short stories (2002c). Jamal's parentage was mixed: his father was an Indian Muslim who squandered his fortune and fathered 11 children with three wives, while his mother was a coloured Roman Catholic woman who saved to give her son the best possible education. Jamal attended private schools in India, Swaziland and England (Govender 1994: 35), and later attended the School of African and Asian Studies at Sussex, the Department of English at the University of New Brunswick, the Center for Twentieth Century Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and the School of Criticism and Theory at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire (personal communication 2001). A "shamanic nomad" (Wiesner 1999: 3), Jamal returned to South Africa in 1989, and he received his PhD from the University of Natal in 2003. Although, like Duiker, Jamal is a sensitive individual who has had a nervous breakdown (Wiesner), and who has had his share of tragedies, including the suicide of his wife in 2004, and although he deals with dark themes in his fiction, he considers himself to be an optimist, and claims, "I have never been cynical or ironic" (Von Klemperer 2001: 9).

Love Themes for the Wilderness assumes the artistic task of opening up a Third Space between the local and the global, finding a hard-won sense of hope despite the onslaught of tragedies – personal, sub-cultural, national or international – which could lead to despair. This interstitial terrain of the ordinary which has the potential for transformation is akin to Frantz Fanon's vision in *The Wretched of the Earth*, in which culture is situated "in the zone of occult instability where the people dwell and where the revolution comes from" (1967 [1961]: 168). The chief engines for this creative instability in *Love Themes for the Wilderness* are camp, the carnivalesque, and an idiosyncratic version of queer.

The novel is set in artistic circles in Cape Town's variant on Greenwich Village, Observatory. The central protagonist is Adrian Stoker, a painter in oils, through whom the visual arts are privileged, although literature, music, and cultural debates are also raised in the text. Stoker is the hub connecting some twenty other characters whose lives interconnect. A key dictum of the novel is E. M. Forster's appeal from *Howard's End*, "Only connect," although Stoker's paintings reveal his sense of disconnection and rootlessness. This picaresque novel is also implicitly a state-of-the-nation novel, although it eschews laboured, angst-ridden commentary on issues of race or gender, focusing instead on art and sexuality as a gauge of the body politic. *Love Themes for the Wilderness* is structured in two books and an epilogue, together spanning five months in 1994. The first book details nineteen consecutive days of Stoker's life. The second book picks up the narrative thread three months later, and renders two more weeks of Stoker's life. The epilogue is set a month later, bringing together all the characters in a historic art and queer party, the Locker Room Project, part of the Mother City Queer Project. This party is figured as a climactic, redemptive finale to the novel.

Love Themes for the Wilderness exists in a dialectical relationship with a critical commentary on contemporary South African art co-authored by Jamal and Sue Williamson, *Art in South Africa: The Future Present* (1996). The cover picture of *Love Themes for the Wilderness*, for instance, is an intriguing piece of art. A cursory glance at the cropped head and shoulders view reveals a head thrown back, scarlet lips parted, heavily made-up eyes closed, tousled pale tresses framing the face. The shoulders are out of kilter. There is a glimpse of a black bra strap, softly swelling

chest flesh, fingers clasped to one side. The expression is difficult to read: is it ecstasy, pain, or a combination of the two? A closer examination of the picture reveals further dissonances. While the clavicles and the depression between them are sumptuously defined, so too is a protuberant Adam's apple, and the neck is the same width as the skull. Markers of femininity and masculinity co-exist. Further, an odd metallic halo surmounts the figure, and there is an ominous shadow – merely smudged lipstick, or a bruise? – to one side of the mouth. The overall effect is unsettling, and this effect is enhanced when one opens the book and sees that the cover art is a detail from a picture by Tracy Payne, entitled "Sebastian," the saint and icon of gay desire, portrayed through centuries of religious art as paradoxically relishing his martyrdom.

The blurring of the boundaries between fact and fiction is made explicit in the body of the text, which refers to a painting by one of the characters, Joan, of a model, Percy, "stark naked and writhing effeminately, a cock-ring floating above his head like a halo" (1996: 199). Tracy Payne's full picture is reproduced in *Art in South Africa: The Future Present* (117). It shows the model clad only in a lacy bra, and reveals his penis and his large hand, a pair of handcuffs attached to his wrist. The complete picture contains a welter of dissonant images, but the cropped version of androgyny, theatrical mask and overwhelming emotion is even more satisfactory and concentrated, with more enigmatic and subtle juxtapositions of signifiers. The commentary on Tracy Payne in *Art in South Africa: The Future Present* acts as a useful gloss on *Love Themes for the Wilderness*. Reference is made to her art portraying gender as "complex and polymorphous" (115). In this hybrid conceptualization,

[a]ndrogyny and bisexuality are the order of the day. ‘There’s the woman who is a man, a man who is a woman.’ Thus it is the attempt through art to abolish divides – between man and woman, surface and inner hurt, the real and the fake – the consecration of a slippage, aberrant and mutant, which distinguish Payne’s art. (115)

Jamal himself values a similar sensibility. In his introductory commentary in *Art in South Africa: The Future Present* he claims, “A liberation is afoot, a way out of the tough binaries and absolute contests”; he quotes Mike Nichol’s *The Waiting Country*, also an intertext in *Love Themes for the Wilderness*, that this liberation is out of “the calculated simplicities: good against bad, black against white, system against struggle, and everything sanctified in the name of a cause” (13).

A further example of supplementarity between *Love Themes for the Wilderness* and *Art in South Africa: The Future Present* can be seen in two artworks by Randolph Hartzenberg, reproduced in the art book, which in the novel are purportedly created by Stoker. One is a useless tap, bandaged to two cough mixture bottles, bringing to mind images of war, the scarcity of potable water and other resources, palliatives and healing. The other is a painting of a gigantic red plug severed from its flex, hovering over a small brown suitcase. This work is nightmarish in its depiction of dysfunctionality and manipulated scale, a vivid realization of Fanon’s “zone of occult instability.”

Although the plot line of the novel is slim, horrors and sorrows similar to the descriptions of artistic appropriations are alluded to. Stoker’s parents have been murdered, his friend Bridget is raped, the actual musician James Phillips’s untimely

and gruesome end is referred to, and so are the effects of Aids. In the three-month hiatus between the two books of the novel Stoker's girlfriend Phyllis discovers she is pregnant with Stoker's child, but she decides to leave Stoker and embark on a relationship with his brother, Dylan, and Stoker's employer dies in Stoker's presence. Although serious problems are raised, the overall tone is far from morbid, but neither is it relentlessly cheerful. Characters grapple with grief and despair, retreating within themselves to dredge up their inner resources, and they also reach out to one another in their need. Sorrows bring self-knowledge and unexpected opportunities. For instance, after Stoker's employer, Olivieri, literally dies laughing at a joky performance of Stoker's, he discovers that Olivieri has unbeknownst to him long viewed him as a surrogate son, and has made a generous bequest in his will, which transforms not only Stoker's life but all of his friends' lives. From the beginning of the novel Stoker knew that Olivieri visited the nudist beach at Sandy Bay in the guise of a blind man to elicit sympathy and physical contact with young women, including Phyllis. However, after Olivieri's death he also discovers that Olivieri's 90-year old widow, Beatrice, was a porn queen in her heyday, a fact of which she is proud:

“Beautiful, no?” Beatrice asked. She was definitely not interested in criticism. Stoker and Jay nodded in agreement as they silently riffled through more than a hundred images of Beatrice swooning, pouting, being fucked from every angle and in each and every orifice by marauding priests, crusaders and a host of other classic pillagers. (1996: 241)

This farcical and absurd interlude effectively reveals a pro-sex stance in the text, and it also unsettles prejudices about age and assumptions about marriage. Stoker had presumed that Olivieri's activities at Sandy Bay were clandestine; however, to his surprise he finds a photograph of a naked Olivieri and Phyllis, taken at Sandy Bay, on

the Olivieris' fridge. Having realigned his assumptions, Stoker connects with Beatrice: "Stoker saw a tear fall from Beatrice's eye. A single tear. Then he folded her in his arms. This small old bony woman who had once been so beautiful and so fuckable" (242).

In the text, the character who epitomizes celebration of the life force is Phyllis, the "bimbo-shaman" (95). The term reveals the way in which she reconciles oppositions. She is generous-hearted and succours all in need. She became the lover of a woman who was mourning the death of her male lover, in order to heal her. Sexuality is presented in the text as fluid and regenerative. Phyllis, coded as bisexual, responds with intuitive passion to others, regardless of gender. Not referring to race or ethnicity, but to mystical auras, she claims, "People have colours," and promises, "I will show you how to shine" (107). She is not herself part of the art world, and in fact dresses as the epitome of kitsch, thereby being placed in the domain of camp. Her garish garb signals her individuality. She is figured as a wise woman who acts as the spokesperson for grieving when the group of friends mourns the loss of James Phillips. She ritually screams, performing an exorcism on behalf of the community. Her shamanic or occult status is further revealed by the settling of an emerald-plumaged blackbird on her sleeping form, the jewel colouring implying that this familiar is a totemic emblem invested with *mana*.

In the first book Phyllis accompanies Stoker on his quest, but in the second book she abandons him, and he learns to cope with loss, and to make a success of his art, both locally and internationally. This success has more to do with serendipity than acts of will or ability on Stoker's part. The dignity of labour and hope in happenstance

govern the spirit of the book. References to those quintessential South African narratives, of Helen Martins and Koos Malgas, and Saartjie Baartman, also support the cautious optimism of the text, as do intertextual references to books, such as Patrick White's *The Vivisector* – significantly, also a *Künstlerroman* – and Mike Nichol's *The Waiting Country*, as well as poetry by Gregory Corso, Ingrid Jonker and Lionel Abrahams. In each case, the central issue being validated by Jamal is the hybrid, seen in the instance of Stoker's art as "the combination of ruin and hope" (287). Permaculture is revered by Stoker for displaying "aberrant logic, the collapse of obvious divides" (291). Stoker's Italian sponsor, Bianca Buonacuore, reveals an understanding of this cultural moment:

"Nicol's book manages to sneak out of the dualism of action-reaction. It doesn't set out the terms. It works like the [Abrahams] poem I quoted earlier. It asks us to stay quiet a while, let opinion fall away. Nicol's waiting country is Abrahams' waiting emptiness of which none knows. In your paintings I see the same suspension ... the suitcase ... the hammer studded with nails ... the plug torn from the socket ... the breakdown of the certainty and flow of action ... power. These tactile and graphic images are, for me, emblematic of a state of hovering, of being between things. They suggest a space neither of doubt or of hope. Bear to be numb and dumb. Those are Abrahams' words. We are living in uncertain times. Either we fall into the abyss of equivocation or we find new ways in which to act." (217)

One of the "new ways" of acting which the characters explore is in terms of sexual expression. Sexual behaviour is handled in a matter-of-fact and open way in *Love Themes for the Wilderness*. In keeping with the centrality of the visual arts in the text, vision and the power of observation are privileged. The setting of Observatory is appropriate in this regard. Detached, scientific watching and learning form a major part of the characters' behaviour. In the spirit of hybridity which pervades the novel, it is immaterial whether the sexual behaviour being observed is same-sex or opposite

sex. Curiosity is validated: for instance, at the beginning of the text, Stoker, who is seemingly heterosexual, attempts to find examples of gay graffiti. Taboos are released: Stoker feels guilty when he is fantasizing about Bianca as Phyllis is fellating him, and asks her to stop; however, she reassures him that she too fantasizes during sex – about Sylvester Stallone – and the pair end up having blissful sex, with Stoker recounting episodes from Stallone films for Phyllis's delectation. Through these techniques Jamal induces in the reader a state of receptivity, such that voyeurism and different types of sexual activity are naturalized. Stoker is entranced by viewing from a vantage point up a tree a pair of men in bed, reading; later, two other characters observe these men having sex, and feel thrilled and privileged to have observed such an instructional sight. By analogy, the reader responds to descriptions of Stoker masturbating with interested scopophilia rather than embarrassment or distaste. A scene in which Phyllis assumes the superior position as she and Stoker have sex in hot water springs, surrounded by music and candles, is rendered as romantic, sensual and delicate, although there is a third party at the site, Phyllis's ex-lover, Hedda, who drums to the music as the partners enjoy their sexual experience. Not only characters, then, but also a conservative reader, broaden their horizons and become increasingly non-judgemental over the course of the text, which is less extreme in its sexual representations than *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, as sexuality is not startlingly juxtaposed with spirituality of a rarefied nature, but treated as everyday and communal expressions of playfulness, camp and celebration.

The main trope of hope by way of despair through the route of sexuality in *Love Themes for the Wilderness* is the enactment of queer in the Locker Room Project, which is steered in the text as in real life by Andrew Putter. The concept of the Locker

Room Project is fleshed out progressively through the novel, through conversations between Putter and Stoker, as well as other characters. The stimulus for the project is the untimely death of a young man by Aids. Putter conceives of the project as a memorial, conscientization and celebration in the form of a huge art party which alters a complacent Cape Town and ripples out into South Africa and the entire Southern Africa region, despite the public homophobia of figures such as Robert Mugabe. “It’s about thriving in the midst of death. About celebrating life for what it’s worth. Waking up this syph city” (183). The concept is idiosyncratic, under-theorized and extremely broad. Irritating aphorisms are offered, such as “Nothing was queerer than permaculture, Stoker thought” (291), or “there’s nothing queerer than Empire” (177), without any elaboration beyond an admittedly amusing reference to the apparent quivering of Cecil John Rhodes’s handlebar moustache as his statue gazes towards Cairo (219).

The lack of political edge because of the amorphous breadth of the concept of queer is clear:

Stoker turned the pages of the Locker Room Project booklet. He uttered the word Queer. Yes, that was the connection. His life was queer. But so was everyone else’s. The difference was Putter wasn’t getting strung out and upset, he was celebrating the queerness of things. Stoker resumed reading the booklet: “People – hetero and homo alike – are waking up to the fact that their sexual identity will always defy neat labelling. Although most Queer people are homosexual, not all homosexuals are Queer. In fact, some straight people are Queerer than some gay people. QUEERNESS IS AN ATTITUDE.”

Everyone Stoker knew was queer in one way or another. Queerness was tied to the instability of things, the crazy happenstance way the world seemed to be working. Nothing made sense until it happened. (170)

It is noteworthy that heterosexuality is insistently appeased in the quotations from the booklet in this passage. The lack of political awareness is evident in the claim that queerness is an attitude. Tolerance is an attitude, unconventionality is an attitude, counterculturalism is an attitude, but it is offensive and insulting to members of minority sexualities, who are still subject to discrimination, to claim that queerness can be adopted as a chic mantle by heterosexuals as an act of will. This possibility is momentarily entertained by the text, but quickly dismissed. Putter complains: “Some gay friends of mine think I’m stealing their fire by applying the term to any sexual preference.” His friend, Dean, responds crudely, “Fuck them” (177). The term “queer” as used in the text, then, is vague and slips from one meaning to another. Heteronormativity is not effectively queried, as would be expected if the word were used with more theoretical accuracy. Instead of the fluid zones of possibility envisaged by queer theorists, we have here a trendy, uniform designer lake.

Aside from these objections to the terminological inexactitude, however, which may be attributable as much to the historical Putter as to the novelist, aspects of Jamal’s depiction of the Locker Room Project are interesting when viewed from the perspectives of Queer Nation, camp and the carnivalesque. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Queer Nation was a form of activism in the United States in the early 1990s which aimed to “simulate ‘the national’ with a camp inflection” (Berlant and Freeman 1993: 196). This is exactly what the Locker Room Project attempts. The theme of the party is a queer view of sport, South Africa’s national obsession, as refracted through the Australian film, *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, which similarly attempts to queer the nation:

“In the lovely long jump lounge a team of leaping latex lesbians will lick lashings of lugubrious liqueur. In the Ra-Ra-Rugga-Bugga Bar moffie mountaineers will mingle with gorgeous goalkeepers and terribly terrific tennis-players, while outside the raving rollerbladers will race raucously round and round and round and round.” (262)

The epilogue of the novel coalesces all the threads from the text, combining the modes of realism and dream-like fantasy. Realism is employed in the descriptions of the characters’ mundane lives at the end-point of the text, and fantasy predominates in the descriptions of the community party which forms the Locker Room Project; however, even in this crashing, delirious finale, realism is employed as a subsidiary discursive mode. For the Caribbean novelist Wilson Harris, this combination provides a fruitful rapprochement, as he conceives of interwoven “realism and fantasy as a threshold into evolution and alchemy. That threshold is a component of the mental bridge within and across cultures” (quoted in Slemon 1988: 21). This “zone of occult instability” can fruitfully be examined through the lens of camp, as explained in the 1964 seminal work, “Notes on Camp,” re-printed in *Against Interpretation* (1986), by Susan Sontag, herself behaviourally bisexual, and also discussed by Jamal in his PhD thesis, *Predicaments of Culture in South Africa* (2002):

[Camp] is not a natural mode of sensibility, if there be such. Indeed the essence of Camp is its love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration [...] It is one way of seeing the world as an aesthetic phenomenon. (1986: 275)

Camp is art that proposes itself seriously, but which cannot be taken altogether seriously because it is “too much.” (284)

Camp taste turns its back on the good-bad axis of ordinary aesthetic judgement. Camp doesn’t reverse things. It doesn’t argue that the good is bad, or the bad is good. What it does is to offer for art (and life) a different – a supplementary – set of standards. (286)

Camp refuses both the harmonies of traditional seriousness, and the risks of fully identifying with extreme states of feeling. (287)

The whole point of camp is to dethrone the serious. Camp is playful, anti-serious. More precisely, Camp involves a new, more complex relation to “the serious.” One can be serious about the frivolous, frivolous about the serious. (288)

While these Notes of Sontag’s act as a vivid gloss to *Love Themes for the Wilderness* in its entirety, they serve best to illuminate the distance and ludic celebration of the novel’s Epilogue. Camp as detailed by Sontag and as embodied in the Locker Room Project plainly has intimate connections with LGBT Pride Parades, drag queens and drag artists like the Australian comedian Barry Humphries in his incarnation of Dame Edna Everidge, or of course Pieter-Dirk Uys’s creation, Tannie Evita Bezuidenhout. The picture of the real-life Andrew Putter in drag at the actual Locker Room Party reproduced in *Art in South Africa: The Future Present* is the acme of camp, conveyed in *Love Themes for the Wilderness* in terms of glamorous, lurid excess:

Putter, who naturally had his own agenda, appeared in ten inch silver-spangled heels that put Phyllis’s gold shoes to shame. He also wore a sequined wig that bore a striking resemblance to candyfloss, a silver tennis outfit with an enormous bust, and an eighteenth-century pancake face riddled with beauty spots. He tottered and towered over everyone else, regally swatting the masses with his silver-spangled tennis racquet. (1996: 295)

Yet beyond this spectacle of camp epitomized by Putter in solitary queenly splendour, and also embodied by other characters dressed alike, such as the hermaphrodarts and the Ra-Ra-Rugga-Buggas, the Locker Room Project also incorporates a contemporary take on the carnivalesque, particularly Bakhtin’s notion of ritual spectacle, into which a couple of publicly performing fist-fuckers and the characters Stoker and Phyllis fit, in very different ways. For Bakhtin (1965), although the modern manifestation is a weaker form than its Renaissance counterpart, the carnivalesque tweaks and mutates

conventional mores. Carnival involves the temporary blurring of social barriers and the lifting of prohibitions; it accepts death and welcomes revival; it is festive and elicits anarchic laughter. It embraces a plurality of voices, and visualizes new, vibrant forms. In addition to having a philosophical or spiritual dimension, carnival emphasizes the material body: “all that is bodily becomes grandiose, exaggerated, immeasurable” (19) or grotesque, and there is a particular focus on “the lower stratum of the body, the life of the belly and the reproductive organs; it therefore relates to acts of defecation and copulation, conception, pregnancy, and birth” (21). The carnivalesque is joyously ambivalent and all-embracing.

In the carnal spirit of carnival, in the revelry of the Locker Room Project as depicted in *Love Themes for the Wilderness*, “in a ditch alongside the rosy pink and mauve lane, a couple of fist-fuckers [was] fist-fucking. The assailant wore industrial strength rubber gloves. Both the victim and the assailant wore T-shirts advocating safe sex” (1996: 295-6). Neither in private nor completely in public, these two ritually have safer sex. Although fisting is considered by some to be an extreme if not disgusting sexual practice, because of cultural revulsion attached to the rectum, as Sedgwick argues, the act also has powerful and positive symbolic associations: exploring a taboo or secret space, filling up a lover’s body, even reaching into the sacred via the profane (1994b: 99-103). Further, fisting is not a gender-specific act, and it can “cut across lines of gender and sexual orientation” (Eadie 2004: 74). In the context of the carnival, even the squeamish are required to view this sexual practice with new eyes, as proudly queer.

Among the sexually diverse group of characters who gather at the theatrical extravaganza, the Locker Room Project, which culminates Jamal's novel, not all are totally caught up in the spectacle; some remain detached, although interested. This simultaneous immersion and observation is typical both of the carnival and representations of characters throughout the novel. The end of the novel is recounted through Stoker's eyes:

Stoker, at odds with the crowds and attention, marvelled at the spectacle that Putter had engineered. With silvered face and perplexed eyes concealed behind thick glasses, he receded before the glare. Dreams of mountains and valleys, eland and buck, of river-water sweet and cool washed through and carried him. It was Phyllis, pure and fearless, always wakeful to the moment, who guided the group through the gauntlet of cameras and microphones, her giant belly like a prow, unaided by artifice. Together and alone they lost themselves in the swelling stream. (1996: 296-7)

Both in and outside the dreamscape, Stoker imaginatively reconciles city and pre-colonial San-scape, the artificial and the natural, hedonism and reflection, queer and straight. This description of a moment which raises multiple simultaneous yet opposed possibilities is a prime example of Fanon's "zone of occult instability" or Wilson Harris's "mental bridge within and across cultures." The major focus of change and movement, however, is not Stoker, but the bisexual bimbo-shaman, Phyllis, whose pregnancy recalls Titania's comments comparing a pregnant belly with a ship in that carnivalesque play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (II.i.123-34). Unlike Mmabatho's pregnancy in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, Phyllis's pregnancy is not the only defining factor in her life. She is an active agent in her own destiny, having chosen Dylan as a partner over the father of her baby, Stoker, without alienating him. Her grotesquely distorted body forges a path to the future, and through its forward-thrusting life force creates a space for the group of friends, and for each individual,

enabling a “celebrat[ion of] the self” (1996: 271) as well as the diversity implied in a queer sensibility. Although I have critiqued the slack and apolitical usage of the term “queer” in *Love Themes for the Wilderness*, the text as a whole embodies the camp, the carnivalesque and the celebratory, and functions to contribute to a queering of the nation by its relaxed attitude to individual protean sexuality, by portraying links rather than divisions between characters who are portrayed as gay, lesbian and bisexual, and by its subversion of the national endorsement of heterosexual masculinity associated with sport by means of the Locker Room Project.

The next text which I shall discuss is more conventionally written, although it too is cautiously optimistic and celebrates difference by examining the interplay between a lesbian and a bisexual woman, amongst other means. Its author, Shamim Sarif, has a female partner and a son, and thus may be either a lesbian or bisexual (“Shamim Sarif” 2002: 1). She was born and brought up in England, although she has lived and worked in South Africa. Her parents were born in South Africa of Indian ancestry, and her debut novel, *The World Unseen* (2001), was based on stories told to her by her grandmother (“Old Words, New Images” 2001). *The World Unseen* was awarded the Pendleton May First Novel award, as well as a Betty Trask Award in 2002. It was voted by Johannesburg’s *The Star* as second in the list of the top ten novels of 2001, and Shamim Sarif was in this newspaper’s list of the top 100 South Africans (“Winner of the Betty Trask Award 2002”). Sarif’s writing has been compared with that of Anita Desai, Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy. Desai’s novels deal with Indian characters, particularly women in families, coping with cultural and social change. Viewed from her Creolized Indian-German subject position, issues of alienation, triangulation and spiritual redemption are explored. Seth’s *A Suitable Boy: A Novel*

(1993) relates the narrative of an Indian woman who is involved in an arranged marriage, and who rebels against the traditional customs expected of her by her mother and her Indian society in general, against a backdrop of seismic social shifts. Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1998 [1997]) is a fractured text which deals with forbidden love, family betrayal and "the magic of prelapsarian Eden, [which] make[s] the fall from innocence doubly poignant" (in the words of Bhaswati Chakravorty, cited in a fragment of a review in Roy n.p.)

Some of the issues raised in *The World Unseen* concern cross-cultural connections, sexuality, gender and transgression in diasporic Indian communities; some British and Canadian films which illustrate similar issues are *Bhaji on the Beach* (Gurinder Chadha 1993), *East Is East* (Damien O'Donnell 1999), *My Son the Fanatic* (Udayan Prasad 1997), and *Fire* (Deepa Mehta 1996). *Bhaji on the Beach*, a charming film set in Blackpool, lightly touches on issues of racism and sexism in a changing society through the eyes of outsider women, who bear the burden of rearing the new generation. *East Is East* deals with a traditional Indian patriarch in Manchester, who wants to arrange marriages for his children, and his long-suffering British wife. *My Son the Fanatic* reveals family tensions from the other side of the moral high ground, as the Pakistani father figure, living in the British midlands, has drifted away from his traditional culture and fallen in love with a sex-worker, while his son has become a religious zealot. Roger Ebert argues that film love stories are socially transgressive in their support of individual passions, even those which violate taboos, against conservative mores: "it could be that movie love stories are the most consistently subversive genre in the cinema, arguing always for personal choice over the disapproval of parents, church, ethnic groups or society itself" (2000: 1-2). Similarly,

Fire, the first Indian film to explore same-sex relations between women, endorses their relationship, and insists on the spiritual purity of the sisters-in-law whose husbands pay no attention to their needs. So too does Sarif explore the subversion of social norms in her novel, and her authorial stance is one of tentative celebration rather than anxiety and judgement.

Like Sheila Kohler's *Cracks*, *The World Unseen* is also set in South Africa of the 1950s, but the times and locations are much more specific than in *Cracks*. The political background is sketched in: the 1946 Indian Congress protests against the Ghetto Bill, the Mixed Marriages Act and the Group Areas Act are specifically referred to. In addition, the effects of the whole panoply of apartheid legislation are shown on the lives of Indians, blacks, "coloureds" and whites. The main focus is on the diasporic Muslim Indian community in and around Pretoria. As Loren Kruger points out, South African Muslims of Indian descent figure problematically in cartographies of cultural traffic, and critical commentary on South African writing seldom specifically highlights that by authors of Indian descent (2002: 34-50). This lacuna may be observed in other texts, such as *Changing Men in South Africa* (Morrell 2001). Devarakshanam (Betty) Govinden's PhD thesis, "*Sister Outsiders*": *The Representation of Identity and Difference in Selected Writings by South African Indian Women* (2000), which is shortly to be published by UNISA Press, is useful in addressing the work of Indian women of various religious groupings, although texts by their male counterparts await comparative critical analysis. *The World Unseen* thus enters a space of interstitiality and frequent critical elision. Sarif reveals a community which is nucleating and making the shift from traditionalism to modernity, while coping with the increasing implications of apartheid. Treatment of the racial,

gendered or sexual Other is the main gauge of characters' ethical worth in the text; all vectors of oppression are deemed equally unethical and shameful. Yet despite the prevalence of conformity to binarist hegemonic values, political and personal acts of rebellion and subversion are revealed as possible, and celebrated.

The central narrative strand of *The World Unseen* concerns two contrasted characters. Amina is an unconventional young woman, who, contrary to custom, lives apart from her family, wears trousers, co-owns a restaurant with a "coloured" man, scoffs at the thought of an arranged marriage, and to top it all is a lesbian. She embodies ethnic hybridity, as one of her grandfathers was black. One grandmother has inspired Amina to act independently, despite her own personal tragedies: as a young woman she was raped, and gave birth to an obviously mixed-race daughter, which led to ostracization and severe beatings from her family, as well as the snatching of her first child, a boy, by her husband. This grandmother encouraged Amina to avoid the typical female fate of being effaced in marriage: "For as long as I can remember, she was always warning me about the dangers of losing yourself in a marriage, or being ruled by family" (2001: 98). Amina's other grandmother is a model of propriety, and she literally dies of shock at Amina's transgressive behaviour, her reputation of being "not feminine enough" (164), and her refusal to accept an arranged marriage. The placing of Amina in the context of this dual heritage illustrates the possibility of agency and autonomy, despite the chains of tradition, patriarchy, taboos and repression. The title of the book is related to Amina's vision of alterity: "She felt at times that she was living in a different universe, breathing a different atmosphere from other people" (11). Despite her sense of alienation, however, she refuses to compromise her ideals or her sexuality.

The second main character is Miriam, the epitome of the obedient and docile woman, who unthinkingly accepts an arranged marriage, which becomes increasingly unhappy, to the point of physical violence from her husband and her realization that he is having an affair with her shrewish sister-in-law. Prior to her marriage, though, she is figured as being full of *joie de vivre*, chatting, laughing, singing cheerfully, and an avid reader of literature. She has been subdued by the cultural expectations of a married woman of that place and time, but she has had a good relationship with her father, who promoted her right to an education (a supportive father being a key factor in girls' self confidence), and in private she flouts unreasonable demands of her husband, such as his insistence that she speak to her children either in English or Afrikaans, not in her home tongue, Gujarati. Mainly through the narratives involving Miriam the text explores issues of particular applicability to women in India, South Africa and elsewhere, such as conventions of respect required of woman and not of men, the validation of women through marriage, their required submission to their husbands' demands, the requirement that on marriage they relinquish paid employment and forego independence, including financial independence, the need for a woman to marry within her own narrow community, the imperative to reproduce, the marked social preference for boy children, and the difficulty of obtaining reliable contraception. As with other human categories in South Africa of the early 1950s, gender is a rigidly binarized scheme. When Miriam is giving birth to a third child after her contraception has failed, she is modestly covered up by the midwife when her husband, Omar, enters the bedroom. Despite the intimacy involved in producing a child, he may not observe her naked form delivering it. Typical of the time, childbirth

is represented as women's domain. Yet significantly, much of this section is recounted through Omar's baffled point of view.

This binarized system is revealed to warp men as much as women. The male characters are treated sympathetically, but their socialized power and violence are critiqued. Omar is emotionally choked and has no idea how to communicate tender feelings to his wife. He is aware that he is not a satisfactory sexual partner for Miriam, but is unable to discuss this delicate matter. Instead, he rationalizes that Miriam will welcome his affair with Farah. Rather than communicating dialectically Omar resorts to issuing orders, and to physical violence when his frustration becomes unendurable. His masculinity and his identity have been formed by suppressing his finer feelings and his ability to empathize with women, children and Africans. He instructs Miriam to treat black people with brusque authority, which makes her uncomfortable, but he unctuously defers to whites. Miriam is appalled when an Afrikaner solicits help from Omar after he has knocked over a black man, and neither spares the victim a thought:

A man is knocked down – a *kaffir*, a Black man, but a man just the same – and the man who hit him, together with the man she was married to, the father of her children, were outside worrying about the dent in the car. The cost of the new lamp. The inconvenience. (148)

Despite knowing that her husband will react with violence if she is caught, Miriam attempts to aid the injured man, and is indeed hit. She had previously imagined that being assaulted by her husband would be intolerable to her. but she realizes that she has no options other than to stay with her husband and her children. She has insight both into Omar's ambivalence and her positioning amongst other victims and survivors:

She knew him better than he knew himself, knew he would hate what he had just done. She could visualise him in the bathroom upstairs, washing his hands as though that would remove the taint of the violence; combing back his hair without meeting his own eyes in the mirror. She tasted the blood filling her mouth, and it tasted as she imagined metal would taste, cool and sharp. Blood like his, like the injured African's, there on the road. (151-2)

The novel is infused with a humanitarian, progressive spirit which emphasizes the presence of acts of rebellion or connection even during the dehumanizing times of apartheid. Marriage is demystified, but with a respect for and understanding of the predicament of individuals trapped within a rigid code. From the beginning of the text the lack of warmth, reciprocity and egalitarianism in Omar and Miriam's marriage has been clearly revealed. At one stage Miriam counts a period of ten days without a smile from anyone in her extended family, when she and her two sisters-in-law go to the café co-owned by Amina. Miriam's reaction to Amina's reputation as an outlaw has been to regard the unknown young woman with curiosity tinged with disapproval; however, Amina disarms her when they meet by offering her a koeksister, and the moment of kindness is marked by the exchange of smiles. Hereafter in the text every smile is loaded with heightened significance. Further rendering the scene memorable is Amina's choice of music after meeting Miriam: the bisexual Cole Porter's song of unquenchable, obsessive love, "Night and Day," a song which collapses binaries. Unaware of Amina's sexual preference, Miriam is mystified by her sister-in-law's acid suggestion, "“Maybe she *likes* you”" (23); however, she is intrigued and attracted by the powerful yet nurturing presence she has encountered. This is the start of a gradually developing attraction between the two women.

Paralleled with this relationship are two others. One is a mixed-race union between Omar's twin sister, Rehmat, and a white man, who, because of the provisions of the Mixed Marriages Act live in Paris, but who have returned to South Africa briefly to visit Rehmat's family. Sarif overturns hierarchical conventions by illustrating that far from being pleased with the social benefits of such a marriage, on initially discovering her secret attachment her father beat her severely, and her male relatives later sought her in order to kill her for bringing dishonour on the family name. This violence illustrates the policing of the imperative for a woman in particular to marry within her own religion, race and ethnicity. Rehmat has subsequently been expunged from the family chronicle, and Miriam has been unaware of her existence. The difficulties of conducting an interracial alliance in apartheid South Africa are emphasized by the police hounding to which the visiting couple is subjected. The arch-villain of the novel, allegorically named De Witt, is a sociopath who delights in his legitimated power to harass those who are not safely white, male and heterosexual. "“Stinking queer”" (127), he spits at Amina as he strikes her for refusing to divulge the whereabouts of Rehmat, whom she has concealed in her closet. In thanking her for saving her from jail, Rehmat delicately says, "“You are very considerate. It'll be a lucky man...or [...] a lucky person who has you as their partner”" (139-40), which a surprised Amina takes as a compliment.

A second attraction which is paralleled with that of Amina and Miriam is similarly unconventional for the time: that between an elderly white woman, Miss Madeleine Smith, and Amina's "coloured" business partner, Jacob Williams. Even though Miss Smith is figured as a brave, unconventional woman, with the mention of a son suggesting that she has previously flouted convention by bearing a child outside

wedlock, and Jacob's yearning for her is profound, their nascent relationship founders because of social surveillance which makes intimate meetings between them impossible.

However, a tender regard grows between Amina and Miriam. They share the intimacy of speaking each other's name, and their senses are stirred in proximity to one another. Amina re-kindles Miriam's love of books, and she starts to teach Miriam to drive, which is a step towards her gaining self-confidence and independence. This episode is marked by effects which function similarly to rainbow imagery, and signals the emotional turning-point of the novel:

After a quick tour of the gears and ignition, the truck was started up, and trembled beneath them. The sun had dropped lower and hit the glass, so that when Miriam tried to look at Amina her eyes were flooded with light and colour. [...]

"I can't do it," she said finally, sitting back.

"Yes, you can. Here, let me show you." Amina's hand closed over Miriam's and they slowly manoeuvred the gear stick together, sliding easily into first.

"See?" said Amina.

Miriam nodded, although in fact she did not see, because her heart had stopped in the instant that Amina's hand touched hers, and all she had been aware of after that was the way the long fingers so easily took control of hers. [...]

Miriam remembered very little then, but the few seconds that followed seemed to expand in her mind, and she could hear nothing but a roaring and pounding which she later realized had come from her own blood and her own ears. The scent of the girl next to her was no longer an ephemeral thing to be caught in passing moments, but had turned into the very air around her. [...] Miriam was no longer breathing, and she waited as still as a statue as [Amina's] lips moved slowly down, barely touching her cheeks before they were finally upon her own mouth.

Miriam felt the sun on her closed eyelids, and the feather touch of the lips on hers. She jerked her head suddenly and pulled away as though she had been stung. Her hand went to her mouth and she stared at Amina.

"What are you doing?"

Amina smiled and opened her hands as though to say that Miriam already knew the answer to that question.

"We can't do this."

“We can,” replied Amina, with a sigh, “but we probably shouldn’t.”
(199-200)

It is significant that this episode is recounted through the consciousness of Miriam, who is responding to her new-found same-sex attraction. An emerging fluid sexual identity is endorsed by the imagery and delicacy with which the character’s emotional state is portrayed. There is no textual judgement of her ethical position.

The conservative Indian community in the text is criticized for a tendency towards discrimination, which it itself suffers from. Self-interest, the stratifications of apartheid, patriarchy and heterosexism outweigh impulses towards empathy with those further marginalized; Indians, as well as whites, treat blacks as less than fully human, and gossip viciously about Amina and Miriam because of their sexuality. Yet in a number of ways Sarif offers alternatives to conservatism, stereotyping, binarism and othering. She employs flashbacks to disrupt simple temporal linearity. She simultaneously raises and overturns stereotypes. In terms of race, she dismisses the 1950s spectre of black hypersexuality. In terms of gender, she reveals women as sexual agents; for instance, it is Farah who seduces her brother-in-law Omar. Trust in the new generation’s capacity to overturn gendered expectations is revealed by Miriam and Omar’s daughter being active, outgoing and confident, while their son is sensitive. In terms of sexuality, the stereotype of the sour lesbian man-hater is overturned through the character of Amina, who shows compassion for Omar and loves Miriam and Omar’s children. The stereotype of the excessive, death-dealing bisexual is similarly naturalized through the representation of Miriam. This portrayal is neither a demonization nor an idealization. A final technique which Sarif employs is the use of triads, such as the three settings, Pretoria, Springs and Delhof, the three

children of Omar and Miriam, and the three compared couples whose liaisons are not socially endorsed. As Marjorie Garber notes, such triadic structures serve to undercut pervasive binaries, as the “third” introduces crisis into stability and hierarchy (1992: 11, 13).

The social pressures which face Miriam and Amina are daunting, and after acknowledging that they love each other, Miriam decides that she is unable to make a life with her, as they would be outcasts. A despondent Amina prepares to leave her job and move away, but her supportive father flouts convention and counsels her to pursue her dream.

Despite the threat of separation, the end of the text offers hope. Sarif again employs as a conduit for reading the consciousness of the character, Miriam, who has shown a capacity for empathy towards others less fortunate than herself, as well as a capacity for growth in terms of independence and choice of sexuality. Amina has offered her a part-time job, which will provide economic independence, and an opportunity for them to meet. Miriam’s enraged husband has hurled a glass at her in his fury. The final paragraph of the novel is understated, but quietly hopeful. Again, light imagery acts as a benison on the scene:

She looked down at the brush and at the splinters of glass which lay like a miniature field of sparkling crystal at her feet. She stepped across them carefully, and went into the dark shop. In the slight moonlight that filtered through the rain clouds, she went behind the counter, and felt below it for the pen and the pad of paper that he always kept there. When she had found them, she carried them into the kitchen, and sat down at the table, stopping to right the chair that he had toppled over. Her letter to Amina was brief and businesslike, just as the acceptance of a job should be, she thought. She toyed with adding a further paragraph of explanation at the end, but decided against

it. The night was late already, and she wanted to be up early the next morning to catch the first mail to Pretoria. (2001: 233)

While Amina is a feisty, transgressive character who represents a refusal to conform to social codes from the outset of *The World Unseen*, it is significant that the novel charts Miriam's movement from conformity to independence, despite swingeing social pressures, and endorses her process of becoming more sexually protean. She does not leave her husband or her children, and plans to achieve further agency, including pursuing her sexual attraction to Amina. Miriam can therefore be seen in terms of textually endorsed liminality, bisexuality and polyamory. This view of bisexuality is consonant with Däumer's conception of its potential:

Because the bisexual perspective enacts within itself the battle of contradictory sexual and political identifications, it can also serve as a bridge between identifications and communities, and thus strengthen our ability temporarily to "forget" entrenched and seemingly inevitable differences – especially those of race, gender, and sexuality – in order to focus on what we might have in common. (1992: 99)

Within the time-setting of the novel, the bridging character of Miriam learns through the power of empathy, responsibility and love to connect to others who embody difference, unlike the bigoted binarists or those who lack courage in the text. The novel, significantly, refuses the finality of closure, ending at a moment of unresolved triangulation and incipience. In various ways, then, it can be seen as validating a feminist, queer, and racially and ethnically sensitive perspective on life in South Africa. Sarif's novel is an important re-visioning of struggles of the past in South Africa, in terms of race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. So too does the trope of bisexuality at the time of publication offer hope and a means of continuing the project

of progressive nation-building across divides. Writing as a diasporic Indian writer living in England, Pratibha Parmar urges:

[I]t is vital that our histories and our struggles are documented. It is vital, too, that we become visible in ways we can control. Writing is one way of doing this, where we can create images of ourselves through our visions and imaginations, as well as challenge existing stereotypes. We must speak through whatever means are available to us, or we will be condemned to silence, misrepresentation and invisibility. (1987: 153)

The World Unseen is just such a work, which catalogues the inequities and bigotries of the past, while celebrating the impulses to subversion which contributed to the realization of democratic ideals. It is significant that the Indian community can be seen as occupying a liminal position with regard to race in the South African context. Sarif's novel celebrates a coalition between queer, feminism, multiculturalism and hybridity, in a manner reminiscent of Lani Ka'ahumanu's comments:

Like multiculturalism, mixed race heritage and bi-racial relationships, both the bisexual and transgender movements *expose and politicize* the middle ground. Each shows there is no separation: that each and everyone [*sic*] of us is part of a fluid social, sexual, and gender dynamic. Each signals a change, a fundamental change in the way our society is organized. (1993: 16)

The World Unseen admirably and positively represents the subversive space within the double rainbow of sexuality/gender and race/ethnicity. It is politically conscious and progressive, and it illustrates the difficulties and possibilities of connections between minority sexualities.

The Quiet Violence of Dreams is a site of contestation, where issues of fluidity are raised, but ultimately foreclosed. *Love Themes for the Wilderness* provides a

definition of queer which is an extremely broad one, lacking political edge, but the novel itself employs camp and the carnivalesque to queer purposes, particularly as represented through the body of a bisexual character. *The World Unseen* uses bisexuality as a vehicle to offer a critique of heteronormativity and binaries of race and gender, and to offer a politically aware, progressive view of the future of the nation. This text embodies Bhabha's notion of the hybrid, "the *in-between* space" that permits a conceptualization of histories which "elude the politics of polarity" and accommodate alterity (1994: 38-9).

This in-between ground, the cultural and queer space I have termed "somewhere in the double rainbow of gender/sexuality and race/ethnicity," particularly figured by bisexuality, is a space of anxiety, but one which potentially offers innovative ways of examining and interpreting the world. Gloria Anzaldúa aptly describes this potential for re-vision:

When we experience boundary shifts, border violations, bodily penetrations, identity confusions, a flash of understanding may sear us, shocking us into new ways of reading the world. The ideological filters fall away; we realize that the walls are porous and that we can "see" through them. Having become aware of the fictions and fissures in our belief system, we perceive the cracks between the worlds, the holes in reality. These cracks and holes disrupt the neat categories of race, gender, class, and sexuality. (2000: 280)

In the creative flux of the double rainbow, sexual diversity both reflects and shapes the state of the nation.

Chapter 9

Writing in the Interzone: A Queer Postcolonial Reading
of Barbara Adair's *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*

[F]amily life and the intimate sphere are areas that are very much fundamental to the nation-state's sovereignty. The area of international migration of sexual dissidents brings to the fore questions of national identity, citizenship and belonging.

Jon Binnie (2004: 94)

The study of the postcolonial nationalisms of the so-called Third World continues to be quasi-uniformly based on the presupposition of an unexamined totalising signifier: universalised heterosexuality.

Paola Bacchetta (1999: 141)

Let us now imagine reintroducing into the politico-sexual field ... *a touch of sentimentality*: would that not be the ultimate transgression? The transgression of transgression itself? For, after all, that would be love: which would return: *but in another place*.

Roland Barthes (1975: 65-6)

Thus far in this thesis I have argued for the inclusion of bisexuality as part of the analysis of sexuality within a range of cultural products. I have analysed the effects of the representation of bisexuality in novels published after apartheid, but set before, during and after this oppressive system. I have also analysed a group of relatively celebratory texts. I turn now to examine ways in which distance, and comparison with another African country, can help to clarify ways in which representations of bisexuality in literature can offer new and progressive ways of conceiving a nation in transition, through my guiding metaphor of the double rainbow of sexuality/gender and race/ethnicity.

In 2004 Wits human rights law lecturer, Barbara Adair, published *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*. Compared to the other South African novels I have critically

examined to this point, Adair's briefly situates the author as part of her own South African *milieu* in her preface to the text. In the bulk of the text, however, she uses the trope of bisexuality as displayed at the opposite end of the African continent, in mid-twentieth century Morocco. Through this trope she explores issues of colonialism, postcolonialism, intimate relationships and nation, all of which indirectly have a bearing on the representation of the Third Space in South African novels as I have developed it so far. The text is set in the symbolically resonant space of Tangier, and employs techniques of intertextuality to fictionalize the lives of Jane and Paul Bowles, American writers who were part of the expatriate community in Tangier for some time in the middle of the twentieth century. Also included as characters are a number of queer Western literary figures, such as William Burroughs and Gertrude Stein, and a number of Moroccan characters, some of whom are purely fictional, and others of whom are based on historical figures. There is little in the way of plot. Instead, the novel explores the unconventional marriage of the Bowleses, both of whom were behaviourally bisexual, and their love affairs with Moroccans of the same sex as themselves, two of whom are also represented as bisexual. Bisexuality is thus textually perceived as the norm, rather than an aberration, although the author herself identifies as a lesbian (personal communication 2004b). Adair thus usefully for my purposes is biopic in her representation of a number of personae (a practice I argued for in Chapter 4). The novel also incorporates, unmarked, parts of the Bowleses' fictional texts. Adair plaits together elements of the factual with her own and others' fictions, chiefly the Bowleses', but other examples of intertextuality include an epigraph from *King Lear*, and references to Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and Sartre's *Huis Clos*.

Few South African readers would come to the novel with much prior knowledge of the Bowleses, yet the text is clearly marketed by local press Jacana as of significance to a South African readership. In addition, before the main text begins, the author sketches out the genesis of the novel in a brief preface, dated 1993, which provides a clear optic through which to read the ensuing fictionalized account. In the preface the author, Barbara Adair, is sitting in the Café Hafa in Tangier, on the threshold of being able to view the Straits of Gibraltar; she is grateful to be travelling in Africa after the lifting of travel restrictions on South Africans following the unbanning of the ANC and the move towards democracy. A young hustler approaches her and tells her that Paul Bowles is in the café. Whether the old man who has been pointed out to her is indeed Paul Bowles she does not ascertain; their connection is a purely imaginative one, leading to the writing of the novel. Appropriately and significantly enough, however, the episode serves to blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, past and shifting present, and geographical locations. The stimulus for the writing of the text thus occurs on the cusp of the transition to democracy in South Africa, and the changing socio-political landscape over the next eleven years which it took to bring the book before a reading public provides the implicit focus for interpretation. Adair laconically comments:

It feels strange to be sitting in a café in Tangier. For years South Africans have been unable to travel to other countries in Africa. Now for the first time, with the announcement of the release of political prisoners and the unbanning of the African National Congress, we can travel. Is it for this reason that I welcome political change in my country or can I muster other reasons for my hopefulness? But as I sit in this café I am grateful. (2004a: n.p.)

The author positions herself as a tourist engaging with another African country's culture as a result of the imminent shift to democracy in South Africa. Yet her

motives are unclear, even to herself. Her “imprisonment” within South Africa has affected her, as a privileged white South African, far less than her compatriots, who have suffered oppression, disempowerment and literal imprisonment. Adair’s question as to whether she can “muster other reasons for my hopefulness” suggests an awareness – possibly including a degree of cynicism – of her ethically compromised position, and raises general questions for South African readers about the continuing burdens of binarized systems, such as apartheid, in a transitional national imaginary. Adair’s question directs the reader to respond to the text as a meditation on the significance of the dissolution of some systemic boundaries, such as the ability to travel, and the liberalization of censorship of sexually explicit material, but it also foregrounds the place to be occupied by former colonizers in the new nation-state.

In terms of content and style, the novel itself blurs conventionally binary categories. Most importantly, it allows questions to be asked about the interface between queer theory and postcolonialism in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa as compared with a similar liminal, transitional space in mid-twentieth century Tangier, which William Burroughs (himself bisexual) referred to as the Interzone (Mullins 2002: 4). Just as democratic South African literature and theoretics are exploring the implications of a transitional, newly democratic, multiple society with Constitutional guarantees in terms of sexuality as well as race, the Interzone was a similar interstitial space of developing, contradictory and contesting discourses: “Suspended between nations, cultures, and languages, the interzone is a place of intermediacy and ambiguity, a place that remains outside standard narratives of nationhood and identity” (3).

This chapter rests theoretically on ideas suggested by the influential feminist and cultural theorist Elizabeth Grosz with regard to the relationship of the body and the city, as well as the growing scholarship on the interzone between queer theory and postcolonial theory as I discussed it in Chapter 1 (Bell and Valentine 1995, Lambevski 1999, Povinelli and Chauncey 1999, Alderson and Anderson 2000, Patton and Sánchez-Eppler 2000, Hawley 2001; and with a specifically Southern African focus Elder 1995, Hoad 1999, Barnard 2001, Epprecht 2004). Elizabeth Grosz discusses two dominant models of the interrelation between bodies and cities. On the one hand is the “causal view,” a humanist understanding of the city being the result of the sovereign agency of individuals. On the other is the representational model, which conceives of the body and the city (or state) as being analogous. Grosz critiques both of these models, and proposes instead a “two-way linkage” or “interface” between the concept of the body and that of the city. She visualizes

a model of the relations between bodies and cities that sees them, not as megalithic total entities, but as assemblages or collections of parts, capable of crossing the thresholds between substances to form linkages, machines, provisional and often temporary sub- or micro-groupings. This model is practical, based on the productivity of bodies and cities in defining and establishing each other. It is not a holistic view, one that would stress the unity and integration of city and body, their “ecological balance”. Rather, their interrelations involve a fundamentally disunified series of systems, a series of disparate flows, energies, events, or entities, bringing together or drawing apart their more or less temporary alignments.

The city in its particular geographical, architectural, and municipal arrangements is one particular ingredient in the social constitution of the body. It is by no means the most significant (the structure and particularity of, say, the family is more directly and visibly influential); nonetheless, the form, structure, and norms of the city seep into and affect all the other elements that go into the constitution of corporeality. (1999: 385)

This dialogic and mutually productive view of the city, which is the titular heart of *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*, and which is also a gauge of the health of the

broader nation, matches my focus on the creative mid-ground at the interface between conventionally opposed categories. In addition, the novel offers an alternative to the conventional model of the nuclear family, an alternative which is possible in a specific cityscape and time, but which may also have broader applicability. A tenet of poststructuralist, feminist, and postcolonial critical theories is that binaries form oppressive hierarchies, and the binarist categorization exists to affirm its power. The dominant ideological system is, however, subject to ruptures and contradictions produced by “[a]mbivalence, hybridity and complexity[, which] continually disrupt the certainties of imperial logic” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2002 [2000]: 26). Of particular interest is the creative dissonance offered by liminal spaces, where the possibility exists of transformation, ambiguity or transition.

With regard to analyses of sexuality within postcolonial studies, there is a polarized debate about relative emphases of sexuality and race. Queer theorists critique homophobia in postcolonial discourse, while postcolonial theorists “decry gay/lesbian studies as ‘white’ and ‘elitist’” (Hawley 2001: 1). Jon Binnie summarizes the hazards inherent in this conceptual terrain, individually and collectively:

while significant in challenging the ethnocentricity of lesbian and gay studies, postcolonialism is in danger of producing a theoretical purity and universalism where alternative ways of conceptualizing the relationships between sexual dissidence, globalization and national identity are squeezed out. The universalizing tendencies of postcolonial theory combined with the elitist tendencies of queer theory mean that bringing them together is dangerous. (2004: 148)

In order to avoid these pitfalls, instead of focusing on identity-based lesbian and gay studies, I rely on queer theory’s examination of forms of behaviour or writing which

reject the power of heteronormativity and propose instead a fluid zone of possibilities. Further, to ground the discussion in the specific, material and corporeal, rather than the merely theoretical or the elitist, I use as particular exemplars of queer theory textual representations of bisexuality.

The trope of bisexuality is a particularly apposite means of gauging shifts within the body politic of South Africa, as this sexuality functions as a marker of change or instability, and embodies a set of social signifiers and anxieties about boundaries, appetite, commitment and health (Eadie 1997). As I have discussed in Chapters 5 to 8, in the post-apartheid South African context there has been a burgeoning of texts which employ this trope. The shift between apartheid-era censorship and post-apartheid exploration of the implications of bisexuality is revealed by juxtaposing the banning of the camp (and lily-white) *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (directed by Jim Sharman) soon after its appearance on the cinema screens of South Africa in 1975 with the uncontroversial screening on M-Net of the locally-made, bilingual short film, “Me, My Husband and His Boyfriend” in 2005 (directed by Nomakhomazi Dyosopu), starring an exclusively black cast.

The cultural and sexual encounters which are represented in many post-apartheid texts are coded as racial meeting-grounds, and I evoke (post)colonialism to problematize the treatment of racial difference, and to enquire into the representation of the “other” in the fiction of Jane and Paul Bowles, as well as in Barbara Adair’s novel. In order to respond to *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* appropriately I explore issues of liminality and hybridity as a means of analysing the representation of gendered, sexualized and racially inflected bodies in various spaces in the novel. In particular I

focus on two characters, one of whom is the focalizer, Belquassim, through whose eyes significant bisexual effects are achieved, and the other a character, Cherifa, who embodies the concept of surprise, and whose unique status leads to conclusions with regard to the representation of race and gender in the text. I touch on some implications of a South African author's choice, at this historical juncture, to write a novel about life in Tangier, and the significance of this postcolonial dialogue. I consider ways in which this text is embedded in its own cultural matrix, and ways in which it offers a re-framed Interzone for South Africa some ten years after independence.

No text could evoke more clearly Homi Bhabha's postcolonial notion of the Third Space, where the binary ideological system of colonialism is revealed to be subject to productive ruptures, contradictions and transitions, than *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*. Bhabha adapts the concept of the liminal to cultural hybridity. While he posits the Third Space to be a cultural space of transformation, he claims that recognizing "the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an *international* culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*." This "*in-between* space" is the place where translation and negotiation occur, and these are the processes which define the significance of culture, allowing for an understanding of national, anti-nationalist histories of the "people" through a criss-crossing process of self-othering: "we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves" (Bhabha 1994: 38-9). A similar liminal or third imaginary space to that discussed by Bhabha, which is exploratory, non-hierarchical and humble, has been investigated by theorists in a number of fields from the latter half of the twentieth century to the

present, with regard to such topics as the self in terms of somatics, and spatial location, gendered subjectivity, and sexuality, as well as cultural and ethical positionings. This “in-between” space of “translation and negotiation” in ideal terms constitutes the body politic of post-apartheid South Africa, although within the predominantly Africanist agenda of the ANC under Thabo Mbeki issues involving sexuality and gender have been handled with defensiveness, anxiety and hostility. Mbeki’s characteristic denialism employs a binarist action/reaction paradigm, rather than allowing for dialogue within a broader framework.

Marjorie Garber examines the possibilities of a similar imaginary space to Bhabha’s in terms of the body, gendered subjectivity and queer sexuality. In this context she proposes the “third” as a space simultaneously of crisis, the deconstruction of binaries, and possibility: “Three puts in question the idea of one: of identity, self-sufficiency, self-knowledge. [... The third] reconfigures the relationships between the original pair, and puts into question identities previously conceived as stable, unchallengeable, grounded and ‘known’” (1992: 11, 13). Garber’s term, “space of possibility” (11), makes it clear that while the Third Space opens up the potential for different, previously unimagined, transgressive or subversive experiences, perceptions or readings, these are not inevitable or simply automatically produced by the context. Any such event is contingent, partial, tentative or volatile. Garber follows up her insights on the third to a consideration of the applicability of the concept specifically to bisexuality:

The question of whether someone was “really” straight or “really” gay misrecognizes the nature of sexuality, which is fluid, not fixed, a narrative that changes over time rather than a fixed identity, however complex. The erotic discovery of bisexuality is the fact that it reveals sexuality to be a process of

growth, transformation, and surprise, not a stable and knowable state of being. (1996 [1995]: 66)

Although, misleadingly, often not flagged as bisexual,¹ the lives of the Bowleses have previously been explored by biographers such as Millicent Dillon (1988 [1981]) and Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno (1989). Paul Bowles was born in New York in 1910. He initially received recognition as a composer, having trained under Aaron Copland, but over the course of his long life he explored a number of talents, achieving a reputation as a novelist, short-story and travel writer, a translator of fiction by a number of Moroccans, and a collector of Moroccan folk music for the Library of Congress. He had relationships with men and women before he met Jane Auer in 1937. She was born in New York in 1917, and had had a number of affairs with women when they met. They agreed to a nonmonogamous and bisexual marriage. They married in 1938, and their sexual relationship with each other lasted a few years, after which they led separate sexual lives, although the marriage endured as a primary emotional relationship (Dillon 43, 223). They travelled in South America, where Jane Bowles's novel *Two Serious Ladies* (1979 [1943]) was set, and in 1947 settled in Morocco. She suffered from writer's block and ill-health, died in 1973, and was buried in Spain. Paul Bowles died in Tangier in 1999.

Both Jane and Paul Bowles creatively re-worked aspects of their lives in fictional form, and raised issues connected to sexuality and relations with racial "others."

¹ Fascinatingly, even Garber falls prey to an essentializing impulse when she ponders the relationship between the Bowleses in these terms: "What is a marriage? In this case a marriage between a bisexual man and a *lesbian* was reinvented so as to last a lifetime" (1996 [1995]: 407; my emphasis). In other texts Paul Bowles is referenced as gay, and claims of asexuality with regard to him (Levin 2004: 7) and the fictional characters of Jane Bowles (introduction to *Two Serious Ladies* by Francine du Plessix Gray: Jane Bowles 1979 [1943]) also occur. These usages point to the difficulties associated with accurately naming bisexuality in contexts of hegemonic, binarized hetero-/homosexuality.

Although her published fictional *oeuvre* was relatively slim, consisting of *Two Serious Ladies*, a play, a puppet-play, short stories and unfinished material, it impressed a number of admirers, including Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote (Garber 1996 [1995]: 407). Jane Bowles's persistent thematic concerns are the exploration of women's fluid sexual desires and their striving for autonomy within a system of mandatory binary sexuality. Race and class can also be discerned operating in this economy, especially with regard to travel to "exotic" locales. Marcy Jane Knopf comments:

Many of Bowles's characters travel to other places to seek positions of power and experience desires through their power over "others." This dynamic may reflect Bowles's own position as a white, privileged woman; nevertheless, it represents a complicated web of erotic relationships that are inseparable from the politics of power. (1996: 155)

This vexed, spatially enabled alteration of power dynamics is illustrated most clearly in the case of one of the two "serious ladies," Mrs. Copperfield, who journeys with her husband to Panama, where she encounters a prostitute, Pacifica, through whom she is transformed from being a social subordinate in a heterosexual marriage to being a sexual colonizer. Although, significantly, Pacifica's desires are not presented from the inside, but through conversation with Mrs. Copperfield, Pacifica does exert a form of control over her benefactor in driving her wild with jealousy over her male companions. While Mr. Copperfield yearns for the solace of conventionality, Mrs. Copperfield comments that without Pacifica she would "go completely to pieces," yet the woman to whom she makes this admission perceives her as already having done so, which Mrs. Copperfield acknowledges as the truth, concluding,

“I *have* gone to pieces, which is a thing I’ve wanted to do for years. I know I am as guilty as I can be, but I have my happiness, which I guard like a wolf, and I have authority now and a certain amount of daring, which, if you remember correctly, I never had before.” (1978 [1943]: 197)

While Mrs. Copperfield has achieved a degree of autonomy, this is at the expense of psychic integration, and, less obvious to Jane Bowles, at the expense of the “other woman” (in the usual, sexual sense and in the racialized sense employed by Gayatri Spivak) in the erotic triangle.

Knopf asserts that “[b]oth Jane and Paul Bowles’s writing is heavily problematic in its representations of colonialist relationships and colonialism in general” (1996: 163). Paul Bowles’s writing, including a number of novels, the best known of which is *The Sheltering Sky* (1990 [1949]), and a number of his short stories also play out the impact of erotic triangles in exotic locations, as well as representing cruel male sexual encounters. Paul Bowles is highly critical of Western culture, and is influenced by the tenets of existentialism and nihilism. In his writing, expatriation is explored as not only exile from the home culture, but also from any social integration. Against this backdrop, characteristically, are placed Westerners in problematic, unconventional marriages exerting sexual power over one another as they move ever outwards from stability, civilization and the known. Such a test of mettle is represented in *The Sheltering Sky*, which is set in Algeria. A married couple, Port and Kit Moresby, who start out as arrogant colonizer figures, move further and further into the desert, losing markers of identity, health and sanity as they journey away from the familiar. Port dies, and Kit is captured into sexual slavery by a hypersexualized character, Belquassim. The cosmic shelter implied by the novel’s title is revealed to be an ironic

illusion, and all that remains at the end is Kit's psychic disintegration. The novel both relies on and critiques colonial sexual fantasies of possession.

Jane and Paul Bowles spent most of their married life together in the city of Tangier, William Burroughs's Interzone. The term is an abbreviation for the International Zone. It is also a shorthand for a specific text written by Burroughs, a place which generated it, and a style of writing about issues of sexuality, race and nation which avoids easy binaries, and, while implicated in its own ideologies, simultaneously attempts to critique them, as in the case of *Two Serious Ladies* or *The Sheltering Sky*. Before proceeding to examine Barbara Adair's usage of this Interzone, it is necessary to contextualize it in literal terms.

Tangier is a prime example of a liminal city. Geographically sited slantwise, at the north-western corner of Africa, its east-west axis lies between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean, and on a north-south axis it functions as a portal to and from Africa. Historically it was the site of a series of invasions over the centuries, and a contact zone for three major religions: Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. The name of the city varies according to language. For most of the period between 1923 and 1956 it was designated an International Zone, governed by representatives from eight European countries, including Great Britain, France and Spain, and later also including the United States (Pickford 2004: 2). This cultural hub acquired a reputation for decadence. The International Zone had a weak and fragmented administration, and as laws were not stringently enforced illegal activity, including commerce in sex and drugs, flourished (Mullins 2002: 4). As Mullins points out,

sexual tourists have long been and continue to be drawn to Tangier. As a border town between North Africa and Europe, it is a site where cultures, sexualities, bodies, fantasies, and politics meet and emerge more complex for having encountered one another there. (x)

This Interzone is a Third Space in terms of national belonging, cultures and languages, an interstitial space of contradiction, multiplicity and possibility, a space which fostered the creation of fiction which explored new conceptions of nation and subjectivity. Mullins epitomizes Interzone literature as contesting “totalizing narratives of nationality and also of language, culture, identity, and sexuality” (5). While Mullins’s specific focus is on sex between men, I would argue that bisexuality, which is obsessively re-worked in the fiction of Jane and Paul Bowles, is an even better example of a Third Space of sexuality.

Like its setting, the form of *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* is complex. Aside from the 1993 preface, there are two other time schemes in the text. The bulk of the text unfolds in a truncated and fictionalized version of the lives of the Bowleses in 1949 and for a few years after this date. Some sections are in free indirect narration, while others (signalled by italics) are in first-person narration. The main narrators are the characters Paul and Jane Bowles; Paul’s narration occupies some 50% more space than Jane’s. Similar to William Faulkner’s usage in *The Sound and the Fury* (1964 [1929]), the italicized sections do not have the narrators’ names attached to them, but the reader has to deduce from the context which character is using first-person narration. In the first and last chapters of the text the focalizer is Belquassim, Paul’s lover, who is also represented as bisexual, as he is also attracted to women and at the end of the text is portrayed as married, with at least one child. Belquassim is not based on an actual individual: the name is taken from a minor and racially stereotyped

character in the actual Paul Bowles's novel, *The Sheltering Sky* (1990 [1949]), although the two characters are very different from one another. The framing chapters of *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* are set some fifteen years after the bulk of the text. The first chapter opens with Belquassim raising his glass in a toast to salute his memories of Paul and Jane in the previous years, and musing:

The telling of a memory makes the story, the story that is more exotic than the experience. What happened itself is not real, only the story is real. The real adventure. And it can never be repeated. And he had never told this story before. (2004a: 1)

Belquassim's salute naturalizes the triangular relationship between the three characters, thereby disrupting the conventional "politics of Noah's Ark" kind of narrative (Hogeland 1994: 18-21), which demonizes triangulation. Belquassim's words signal a textual privileging of discourse, narrative and interpretation over the claims of factual history. They also suggest that the subsequent free indirect narration which comprises each alternate chapter will be primarily focalized through the character of Belquassim, who, of the four main characters, is the only one who is purely (and doubly) fictional. The fourth character in the scheme is Cherifa, based on a Moroccan woman who was a lover of Jane Bowles.

The unconventional marriage between the characters, Paul and Jane, is reminiscent of the open marriage of Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson as it is so sympathetically and movingly portrayed by their son, Nigel Nicolson, in *Portrait of a Marriage* (1974 [1973]). The complicated marriage of the Bowleses is perceived by Paul in the imagery of harbours and, significantly, a city:

“It is a relationship that few will ever understand [...] I think that is a great relationship because it is based on our common understanding, or maybe misunderstanding, of the world. We have an implicit trust which, despite distance and sexual infidelity, will always be there. For Jane I am her harbour, for me, Jane is my harbour. Everyone else is just one of the small ports that we call into along the way. We always come back to our common city. It may be a city that will destroy us in the end, but we will come back anyway. We will come back always, because – I can’t call it love for that is just a word ... We come back to each other because, maybe, we fill each other’s emptiness. But it is a relationship that is difficult to sustain. It cannot last.” (2004a: 46)

Physical and emotional relationships are conceived in terms of spatial metaphors, which reveal the anxiety associated with paradigm shifts. A twenty-first century South African reader would perceive the local relevance of the dilemmas of these characters, two bisexuals who are polyamorous yet emotionally committed to each other, in an unconventional marriage. Jane and Paul’s sexual relationships with other people, the most significant of whom in the text are Belquassim and Cherifa, lead to tensions of jealousy, cruelty, responsibility, caring and love. However, a further set of tensions plays out around the partnership of two creative artists. Paul is a musician and collector of Moroccan music for an American audience, while Jane is an author. She perceives him as usurping her role as an author, and she develops severe writer’s block. Her loss of self-esteem is exacerbated by the fact that Paul is revered for novels which are existentialist and nihilist, ideologies which are anathema to her. As in post-apartheid South Africa, intimate connections are being reconfigured, and ideologies and creative forms are under contestation. These issues resonate with current South African debates about homophobia, about broadening the concept of marriage to include same-sex unions, and about honest negotiations with sexual partners in a context of multiple partners, traditional polygyny, rampant HIV/Aids, and the widespread sexual abuse of women and children.

While Adair uses several locales in Morocco in different chapters, the main setting is Tangier. She provides a number of narratives which briefly relate key moments in her history of Moroccan cities, particularly Tangier. These serve to reveal that the city, like contemporary South African cities, is fragmented and fosters a wide variety of actions and interpretations. Belquassim tells a story of his grandfather, a trader, who used to travel to the city to sell jewellery which he bought from village families. This jewellery was their artistic, cultural and family heritage, but they were forced to sell their age-old heirlooms to survive. In general terms, then, the city in this story represents both a source of needed money and employment, and the plundering of people's treasured ancient artefacts and tangible connection with the past.

This past also contains episodes of intolerance. Jane, whose mother is Jewish, remembers that "the Jews were driven out of Morocco, out of [Tangier], killed for being Jewish" (71). On the other hand, however, the city also offers a haven for those suffering under the burden of colonialism. A character called Mohammed refers balefully to the French buying fertile land in the Rif valley, which he remembers as a land of milk and honey. Although he acknowledges that the treatment of farmers in Morocco was better than that in Algeria, he refers ironically to the name "Protectorate," and enquires biting, "whom did we need protection from?" He answers his own question, "Only from them" (142), that is, the colonizers themselves. He remembers the walk many made from the mountains to Tangier after a famine, and graphically recounts details of those who died on the road to that city which was only a relative "Eden" (145). This implies that Tangier is no static, eutopian zone of purity, but a site of constant process, subject to multiple historical and ideological forces, and unreliable in its provision of benefits.

The reason Belquassim comes to Tangier is to find medical aid for his sister, who has TB. He finds a place for her in a hospital run by nuns, but the disease is too far advanced, and she dies. The hope offered by Tangier for health and happiness is often not fulfilled. Jane is abandoned in Tangier when Paul leaves the mainland of Morocco to stay on an island off the coast of Casablanca in order to write.² When Jane has a stroke the hospital in Tangier is represented as being unable to offer appropriate medical care, and she is taken to Spain, where she is later buried.

In a particularly shocking and poignant story in the novel, the city is represented as a battle zone during the local uprisings against the French colonialists. Paul admires those who are protesting, commenting:

“This is the sound of people who want to be free, free from the French who won’t let them walk on their stinking bourgeois boulevards without being sneered at. And they think that if they are free of the French, the Boulevard Pasteur is called the Avenue Mohammed V, they will be free from hunger and from nihilism. They won’t you know, but it doesn’t matter, what matters is their movement, their need to destroy those that they perceive are the cause of this wanton poverty and squalor. We are all its cause. We all want to destroy. I can’t think of purity any more, it sickens me.” (96)

The central episode in this story of revolt is when a young fleeing boy is shot by a French guard, and a woman cradling the boy in his death throes is also shot in the back of the head in cold blood. Such renditions of the Moroccan city are comparable with the history of South African cities, under apartheid ideological zones of racial

² This island is a fictional equivalent of an island off the coast of Ceylon owned by the historical Paul Bowles (Dillon 1988 [1981]: 259). Adair is manipulating geography to her purpose of exploring notions of centre and margins in a Moroccan context, as well as highlighting Paul’s emotional distance from Jane at this point, and his ability to acquire temporary homes with his protégés, allowing him the space to create.

“purity,” and after 1994 subject to progressive change and inclusivity, yet also problematic locations of expectation and exploitation, seen for instance in the proliferation of squatter camps, the increasing presence of Aids-orphaned street children, and escalating protests against poverty, unemployment, slow delivery of housing and services, and widespread corruption.

Yet alongside this failure to give succour to its inhabitants, the city of Tangier offers a tantalizing contact zone for a range of people who would not otherwise interact. It is represented as a quintessentially liminal space. In Paul’s words:

“Last night was interesting. Jane, Bill and I went to the Hotel Mirador. I love the bar in the hotel. It has a desperate quality to it. The bar itself is set against the windows, which are long and reach to the floor. Someone who sits there is forced to look out, and what does he see through those windows? The mountain ranges of Spain. It’s almost as if we can never get away, any of us. Something else is always there looming large, but not close enough to reach out and touch. The mountain range across the sea halts our movement. And the sea in between engulfs. The bar is always full of expatriates and young boys. It really does have the feel of the International Zone, Tangier, owned by no one, least of all by its indigenous people. The bar is a mini replica of Tangier, local boys mixing with foreigners, all of whom have no real existence. The boys because they have left their culture and their homes to sell sex for money, and the foreigners because the very reason we all came to Tangier was to be outside of that world which is supposed to give us meaning. No-one in that bar has any essential identity, we all just exist.” (20-1)

The sharp juxtapositions of literal and symbolic spaces represented in this passage range in scale from the architecturally liminal (the windows in a hotel, a space of temporary habitation which is not home) to the grand scale of the national, colonial and international. While the philosophy of existentialism is alluded to, the passage is also pervaded with a postmodern scepticism about essences and unproblematic unitary identities. At the peak of the International Zone of Tangier in the 1950s,

foreigners numbered almost half the city's population (Ellingham, Grisbrook and McVeigh 2001: 79), spurring a process of hybridization. The microcosm which Adair chooses to represent the city and its interactions is appropriately enough the bar, which for Muslims is an emblem of deculturation and sin. As a result of the Qur'anic prohibition on alcohol, "as a Moroccan, if you went into the bars it meant one thing: you and Faust, the same pact, the inevitable consequences. The bar was the line that separated one world from another" (Adair 2004a: 13-4). The bar is also represented in the novel as a space of conviviality, loss of inhibition and control, altered states of consciousness, and the blurring of traditional barriers such as age. This space cannot be perceived as a carnivalesque zone where pleasures are freely indulged in, as the carnival is by definition a rare occurrence which serves to offer temporary escape from the status quo, while serving ultimately to bolster it. The bar, in contrast, is a permanent liminal site, where some power relations are softened, while others such as class and economic privilege remain intact in the offering of sexual services by boys.

A South African readership would consider what sites and opportunities are available for meaningful contact between previously segregated strata of society, and to what extent the dissolution of boundaries involves interactions beyond the merely economic, fleeting or trivial. Further, the question arises as to what the implications are of a dialectic which straddles the fault-lines between tradition and modernity, the local and the global, the individual and the community, the queer and the straight worlds, the hedonistic and the ethical, the devout and the secular, consumerism and corruption.

Although Belquassim has gained a love of Western culture, especially literature, through his association with Paul, his sense of displacement and deculturation are evident in three episodes. The first of these begins with Belquassim thinking about Paul's ambiguous situation in Tangier, which offers him freedom, but where he is ultimately regarded as an outsider, a "Nazarene" (101). However, Belquassim's own position is drawn into question when the two chance upon a *Jilali* purifying dance, during which participants cut their flesh as they dance to flute music, in the presence of a gilded snake. Belquassim is jittery and uneasy, feeling "like a sinner[, ...] not pure" (103). In the second episode a nationally mixed group is outside the tomb of Moulay Idriss, who is renowned for having founded the first Islamic kingdom in Africa. Paul has drawn a distinction between tourists and travellers, and Belquassim thinks reverentially of the tomb as holy and of such historical significance that it "cannot be tainted by anyone else" (120). Yet Belquassim is seated with the foreigners, rather than the Arabs, and he views himself as a traveller, one who has by implication lost his sense of a rightful place in history and religion. In the third episode, Paul and Belquassim enter the hospital where Jane is being treated after her stroke, and Belquassim feels "as if he were the devil, a devil that had invaded this convent" (157). Both in his own cultural surroundings, then, and in foreign ones, Belquassim feels displaced, sinful and corrupting.

Belquassim's loss of connection to his past is also signalled by his relationship with his mother. He knows that she lives on "The outer edges of the International Zone where they had no place or space or culture," yet he has forgotten exactly where her dwelling is (74), and abrogates his filial duties.

The character Jane, too, muses about Tangier and the complex ethical questions which it raises with regard to power relations:

“I love this city – even the name, Tangier, has a ring to it. And the International Zone. I cannot rationalise its existence politically. No one who thinks, I believe, can ever rationalise colonialism in any form. It is only the faceless patriot who believes in the right of conquest and subjugation. Or is it (sometimes I am not certain) colonising others? Perhaps we all do it without recognizing what it is. Am I colonising Cherifa, or is she colonising me? But I love the city for that lack of morality that it has. No one, at least no one of the expatriates imposes a judgement upon anything or anyone. Everyone is somehow outside of social morality. I can move from the streets of the souks where women sit day after day working, selling, bartering, to the cafés where the men are permanently stoned on hash or majoun, to the places where the expatriates get drunk. And everyone just carries on living; it is as if they know that judgement here is of no force and effect and so it just passes them by.”
(24-5)

Despite Jane’s principled questions about colonization, when it comes down to questions of sexual appetite and power she is clearly in a morally compromised position with regard to Cherifa, although she rationalizes away her culpability by reference to the city’s lack of morality, which supposedly exonerates her own actions. Yet the partisanship of her view is revealed by the shift from “the city” as an entity which is amoral, to the expatriates who eschew judgement. She is shrewd enough to note the parallels between the intoxications indulged in by Moroccan men and expatriates, regardless of gender, while Moroccan women are perceived as suffering the double jeopardy of race and gender, and yet her relationship with Cherifa is represented as exploitative. Colonization in the novel *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* mirrors the relation of the historical Jane and Paul Bowles with Moroccan people. With regard to Jane Bowles’s biographer, Millicent Dillon, Marcy Jane Knopf claims:

the desire between Jane and Cherifa was troubled by complicated issues of race and class differences. Cherifa was a working-class Moroccan woman who was primarily dependent upon Jane for money; so Dillon's claim that Cherifa "stole" money from Jane is highly problematic in and of itself, regardless of the sexual-colonialist aspect of their relationship. (1996: 164)

Race and class differences are still present as unexamined issues in Adair's novel, thereby perpetuating some degree of gender inequity and othering of Cherifa; this othering is substantially different from the alienation experienced by the character Belquassim. Belquassim and Cherifa are presented as structural counterparts of one another by virtue of their attachments to Paul and Jane. Belquassim's hybridity and angst are narrated from a position of interiority, and his character and opinions are developed over the course of the text, while Cherifa is represented rarely, and only from the outside; no sections of the text are mediated through her consciousness, and what representation there is is largely from a hostile perspective. Furthermore, she is a static character, conveyed primarily through a series of stereotypes. The first account of her in the text is typical; Belquassim comments:

Jane [...] had persuaded herself that she was in love with a woman who sold herbs and other medicines in the market. Her name was Cherifa. Cherifa, tall, heavy and dark. She would cover herself with a *djellaba* and *haik* during the day. At home, in the evenings, she would wear a white cotton shirt and faded blue jeans. Her long brown fingers that she used to sift the millet, the long dark fingers [...] Belquassim imagined how they penetrated Jane's body, a knife through her thin chest, a chest that would not be hard to pierce. Cherifa, an old woman now, still sat in the market, surrounded by young girls. [...] Cherifa had wished that Jane would die, and that had come true. Was the die cast by her spells? (8)

While Cherifa is represented as a hybrid figure, her hybridity is figured as a site of scandal and menace. The insistent mention of Cherifa's darkness is obviously symbolic (Jane shivers, "She is so dark, so wanton when we are together": 50). This

stereotyped use of colour imagery calls to mind Chinua Achebe's comments about Conrad's obsessive and racist "fixation on blackness" in *Heart of Darkness*, typified by: "A black figure stood up, strode on long black legs, waving long black arms" (1978: 10). However, it must also be remembered that Achebe concluded his article by looking forward to "the possibility that Western *man* may begin to look seriously at the achievements of other people" (14; my emphasis); many feminists have pointed out the similarities between the systems of racism and sexism. Gayatri Spivak, for instance, in "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," analyses the representation of Christophine in *Wide Sargasso Sea* in the following terms:

[...] Christophine is tangential to this narrative. She cannot be contained by a novel which rewrites a canonical English text within the European novelistic tradition in the interests of the white Creole rather than the native. No perspective *critical* of imperialism can turn the other into a self, because the project of imperialism has always already historically refracted what might have been the absolutely other into a domesticated other that consolidates the imperialist self. (1989 [1985]: 186)

While Cherifa shares certain attributes with Christophine, such as their intimate knowledge of indigenous magic systems, there are also significant differences. Spivak examines the speech of Christophine and her disappearance off the scene as germane to her argument. In contrast, Cherifa is given barely any voice in *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*, a lacuna in the text made more apparent in light of her structural juxtapositioning with the articulate (and domesticated) Belquassim. The text unfolds against the backdrop of Belquassim's nostalgic memories of Paul, Jane, and the days of the International Zone. The frame narrative ends with a drunk Belquassim being led home by his son, whom he has not recognized. The last word of the novel, "home," thus attains an ironic significance, emphasizing that Belquassim, as

representative of natives of Tangier who came into intimate contact with the expatriates in various liminal zones, has been forever changed, and estranged, by the experience.

Adair allowed herself the latitude to create the character of Belquassim, while she apparently felt more constrained by the historical record detailing Cherifa's relationship with Jane Bowles. This record, told from the outside, is a hostile one. Millicent Dillon, Jane Bowles's biographer, discusses a widespread myth across cultures that Cherifa poisoned Jane, although Dillon also provides comments by those who discount this myth, and medical evidence which would explain Jane's stroke at a young age (1988 [1981]: 285-8). Adair represents Cherifa as a hybrid presence in her dress code-switching, yet her subjectivity remains outside the imaginative scope of the text. Adair adds to the demonization of Cherifa as represented in the biographical accounts of the Bowleses by portraying the character as considerably older than her real-life counterpart was (Dillon quotes Jane Bowles as saying that Cherifa was younger than she: 239), which, combined with her representation as a practitioner of the dark arts of sorcery, stereotypes her as a witch figure. In addition, Adair renders Cherifa sexually alien by representing her as a stone butch, a lesbian who touches her partner but refuses a reciprocal sexual touch. As Judith Halberstam notes, the identity of the stone butch is articulated in the negative, by the denial of sexual practices and of the broaching of physical boundaries (1998: 123). Cherifa is portrayed as unfathomable through this denial and solipsism. C. Jacob Hale suggests that the stone butch occupies a liminal space between the categories of butch and FtM, female-to-male performativity, thus embodying a "border zone" where battles over territory and legitimacy are played out (1998).

Unlike Belquassim, who adapts to the Bowleses' domestic space and finally needs reminding of his own domestic space, Cherifa belongs in the market-place, where she fends for herself, and in her own domestic space, where she sets her own rules, and makes a home for a number of Moroccan women, who function as a harem. She does not "consolidate the imperialist self," in Spivak's term, but occupies an unimaginable space, a space of surprise, fascination and speculation. As Richard F. Patteson comments: "Surprise is inimical to domestication, whose aim is to make the strange seem familiar and predictable" (1987: 21). Cherifa cannot be domesticated or appropriated. In fact, her great desire is to be given the house which Jane and Paul own. Her wish is thus to dispossess the expatriates and appropriate the home which they have established in Tangier. However, despite her strength of character, remarkable for a Moroccan woman of her class and time, she is not accorded a first-person narrative section of her own in the text, and speaks a mere three times over the course of the novel, in each case briefly. Adair's inability to give a voice to Cherifa marks both a nagging, problematic absence in the novel, and an awareness of the impossibility of making a plausible imaginative leap into the psyche of the other woman. As Adair comments, it is easier to give a male character a voice, as men have traditionally been given disproportionate space in narrative (personal communication 2004b). This skewed focus on the male characters in the text has the effect of perpetuating androcentrism; at the same time, however, power dynamics with relation to gender and sexuality are exposed. Terry Castle points out that lesbians in literature are "apparitional," as desire between women destabilizes traditional narratives (1993). Even more than the male-female-male triangle analysed by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985), the triangle including two women is profoundly destabilizing and unsettling,

as Adair's reticence reveals. In addition, an enigmatic, silent, indecipherable, witch-like Cherifa may be invested with imaginative force by a receptive reader, allowing her to figure even more anarchically than her surface representation would suggest. As Sandra M. Gilbert suggestively enquires:

[T]he sorceress – the witch, the wisewoman, destroyer and preserver of culture – is she not the *midwife*, the intermediary between life and death, the go-between whose occult yet necessary labors deliver souls and bodies across frightening boundaries? (1996 [1986]: xiii)

Male characters occupy more space in the novel than female characters, and a number recount sexual experiences in first-person narration. Belquassim graphically relives his experiences as a young sex worker, as does Mohammed, through the effects on the senses: the taste of semen, like “uncooked fish and black pepper” (2004a: 15), or the beating of boys in a sadomasochistic scene by a character who would seem to be a fictionalization of Joe Orton. Despite the disadvantages and exploitation of this life, however, Belquassim's memories of sex-work in the bar are represented as being philosophical, even granting him a sense of superiority:

For him what he did was no different from what any woman did in a brothel. It was work. What he did was not always gratifying, sometimes it was shameful, sometimes erotic, but always what he did made him feel somehow richer than those around him. He could not describe why it made him feel rich, he could only say that his experiences gave him more life, more life than that which was handed out to those who placed a brick upon a brick. He smelt life in the sweat and the semen of the white men. He could see further than others who were also poor and had nothing. He could see beyond the cliffs that lined the beach, he could see another world, the world outside Tangier. He could even see Spain if the weather was clear. (12)

This complex view refuses to place Belquassim as a victim, instead revealing his economic dependence on expatriates such as Paul, but also his relative agency in an erotic world where he derives a measure of power from his body. This sexual exchange is represented as being more meaningful and potentially more liberating than menial labour. The entry into this queer sexual realm provides the possibility of transcending the judgemental limits of the African continent, allowing an imaginative bridge to the broader world of that other Continent, by way of the tantalizing image of Spain. Adair's authorial stance is matter-of-fact and positive towards sex, including acts which are portrayed on the outer ring of Gayle Rubin's "charmed circle" (1989 [1984]: 281): sex which is paid, homosexual, cross-age, unmarried, non-procreative, promiscuous, casual, and out of doors; however, Adair only endorses those acts which occur within a context of (however problematically defined) consent.

Even though Paul comments, "*I don't much care for sex, which is why I do not often get involved with it. Taking pleasure from the body is absurd – it ties one to thinking that life is to be enjoyed*" (2004a: 23), he is shown participating in a variety of sexual acts with Belquassim, in a number of settings. The grounding myth of the relationship which develops between the two of them, however, is set in the marital home of Paul and Jane, and it is based on the triangulation between the married couple and Belquassim, and a further subsidiary triangulation between Jane, Cherifa and Paul:

Much later that night they left the bar together. They went to Paul's house, or Paul and Jane's house, for that was her name, the slim dark woman with the changeable vacant eyes, the slim dark woman who was Paul's wife. And afterwards in the hot air of the open verandah above the house, when the tube of Vaseline was pressed flat, finished, and Belquassim lay leaning into Paul's shoulder on the long bed, Jane brought them small cups of hot coffee. This was not the last time that she would do this, she would do it often. Then she would sit on the floor next to the bed and tell them stories, love stories.

And so Belquassim stayed with Paul and Jane, and sometimes Cherifa, and sometimes the others whom Jane would bring home. He too would make Jane coffee and they would laugh together and count on their fingers the number of people they had fucked in Tangier. And she would tell him about Paul, how they had met, what they ate in America, New York City, but never when they were going back. And when Paul was not at home and there was no other woman with her they would lie together, smoking, waiting for Paul. Belquassim would brush her short dark hair, so that streaks of light appeared in it.

And they only ever went to the bar in the Hotel Mirador together, the three of them. (19)

The dreamy repetition of “and” at the start of sentences in this passage marks it out as a fairy story, a utopian idealization of an ethically aware yet highly unusual example of a polyamorous marriage. Instead of the common phenomenon of “cheating,” where a spouse takes another partner “on the side,” without the knowledge of the other partner, here there is acceptance and a ritual blessing of providing refreshments and even sharing love stories. Sex is demystified from its common taboo status, instead being viewed as a suitable topic for conversation and even laughter. Although this myth is impossible to sustain in its celebratory fullness, it functions in the text to provide an ideal of narratives of the behaviour of gendered bodies in relationships against their particular spatial contexts, as well as to disrupt norms of heterosexuality, pair-bonding, marriage and monogamy, thus conceptualizing alternative, humane possibilities of family structures.

Against the ideal vision of a polyamorous relationship, the complexity of power in the relationship between Belquassim and Paul is revealed throughout the novel, most clearly in three episodes. In the first, Paul indicates his ownership of Belquassim by inscribing his own name with semen on the young man’s stomach; this act typifies his power to control, to stamp his authority, and to claim the cultural ascendance in the

relationship. Yet, mixed as Paul's motives are and ambivalent though Belquassim's reactions may be, Belquassim loves him and accepts the contract between them, despite social ostracism and personal suffering. The second episode involves two men at a café reviling Paul and Belquassim and inscribing social disapproval on his body:

In Moghrebi Belquassim heard one say to the other "arse-fucking foreigner and his sellout whore". The other man glanced in their direction and made a crude gesture with his thumb and forefinger. Then he got up and walked towards them. The chained gold eagle let out a cry that hovered in the air above the room. The monkey laughed excitedly. Belquassim got up slowly; he wanted to leave. As the man got close to them he took a knife out of his pocket, as sharp as a snake's tongue. The monkey stopped his laugh. The eagle became still. The man was tall. He leaned over Belquassim. Belquassim could feel his hot breath on his skin, it smelt of boiled eggs. Slowly the man drew a line with the silver sliver across Belquassim's face. The sound of moving flesh rattled in Belquassim's ears, it was slow and rasping. The knife moved down across his eye and over his mouth. There was no sound except the laughter of the blade. In the silence the monkey and the eagle watched the charade. The man then went back to where he was sitting and continued to drink his tea. The blood dripped across the table, it filled the cracks of the name in the carved out heart and then fell to the floor. "Drip drip drip". It was like rain, red rain, nourishing the stone cold floor. Belquassim could do nothing, he was paralysed. The dog in the corner looked up at this violation. Then it walked over to the pool of blood that lay on the floor next to the table, and licked at the scarlet liquid, tentatively at first as if to taste it. It seemed to like the taste of human suffering. Its muzzle was soon covered in red, it slobbered and slavered as it went "lick, lick, lick". (80)

This episode is redolent of mythic significance, as oppositional heraldic beasts, a chained eagle (suggesting the West and the symbolic element of air) and a chained monkey (suggesting the East or Africa and the symbolic element of earth), react as a line is literally drawn, and Belquassim is ritually marked by a devilish blade wielded by a symbolically sulphurous-smelling agent. The shedding of Belquassim's blood brings to mind the myth of the Fisher King, whose endlessly dripping blood was similarly licked by a hound, as expressed in the nineteenth-century variant of the early sixteenth-century "Corpus Christi Carol," "All Bells in Paradise": "At that bed's foot

there lies a hound,/Which is licking the blood as it daily runs down” (Speirs 1971: 76-80). In the tale of the Fisher King the grievous wound of the sovereign (who is conflated with the suffering Christ) represents the sickness of the body politic, or the Garden of Eden after the Fall. So too in *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* Belquassim is seen as the wounded knight or Fisher King of the Grail quest, or a cross-cultural suffering saviour, on whose body the destructive violence of homophobia – indicator of a nation’s lack of tolerance – is symbolically written. Yet Adair does not explicitly draw this parallel, instead preferring to draw a more Gothic analogy in Belquassim’s consciousness between his bleeding and attacks by Dracula, leading him to fancy that he may attain immortality through his attack. The representation of Belquassim combines a number of dissonant roles: hustler, victim, scapegoat and god, whose passion may regenerate the sick land. Belquassim’s sex-work has turned him into a “foreigner” (2004a: 81) in his own country, yet his alienation is of profound significance to an evaluation of the state of the nation.

In the third and most disturbing of the sequence of three episodes involving the lovers, which acts as an intimate parallel of the cutting scene, Paul meditates on instinctive versus rational love, his feelings for Jane and cruelty, before deliberately burning Belquassim with a hashish cigarette:

His shoulder blades convulsed. He looked down and saw the skin bubbling up like animal fat in a pan when a woman is cooking meat. Paul pushed the lighted coal harder into him. With the pain of the burn he felt Paul thrust inside him. Instinctively he tried to pull away, but he could not move. Their sweat mingled, and the pain shrugged its way across his shoulder, then it was gone. In his body was a strange and particular delight.

For a long time afterwards they lay next to each other on the floor of the study. Paul licked his fingers and put them to the raw burn on the smooth brown flesh. “It’s nothing,” he said, “only another scar.” (133-4)

For some individuals pain can act to heighten sexual pleasure, and certainly Belquassim is shown acquiescing in the intense sensations to which he is subjected in this dramatic encapsulation of the dynamics between him and Paul. However, the most effective means of interpreting this episode is not physiological, but philosophical, filtered through the perspective of existentialism. According to the early Sartre, the Other imperils the freedom of the self, through his or her objectifying look. In response to this danger, the individual has the choice of balancing the absorption of the Other's freedom with keeping it intact, as in the case of love, or of objectifying the Other, as in the case of sadism (Decino 2001: 2). It is not insignificant that the place where Paul sadistically objectifies Belquassim is his study; Belquassim represents an object of his detached scientific curiosity. In other words, Paul is shown splitting his responses to Jane and Belquassim, maintaining a more moderate, civil, stable and committed bond with Jane, but treating Belquassim with the extremes of cruelty and mutual pleasure. These differences are also explicable given the relative power, gender and type of desire experienced by each of the actors in the sexual drama. However, both Jane and Belquassim hanker after what the other has with Paul.

Pleasurable heterosexual intercourse is not depicted in the novel. Jane and Paul are no longer lovers, although there is still an intimacy between them, and all of the main characters are shown struggling with the effects of polyamory. The effect is to disentangle the presumed consonance between intimacy, sexual expression, heterosexuality and marriage as a constellation of "blessed sexuality" within the "sex

hierarchy” (Rubin 1989 [1984]: 281). As Paul is with Belquassim, Jane is physically enraptured with Cherifa:

“Obsession, obsessive. It’s a feeling that so attracts me, but at the same time it repulses me. On the one hand I love the abandon of it all, the wildness, the danger. And Cherifa is dangerous. [...]

When she touches me, and whispers to me, my body seems to have a life of its own. It just moves and responds and it refuses to be influenced by what I say in my head. I say don’t stay, and I stay. I say don’t tell her that you worship her, and I tell her that I worship her. There are no rules in this game of passion. And Paul, when Paul touches me, and when I touch him, my head and my hands move together. But when I touch Cherifa my hands move on their own, they have no guide. It’s a kind of love I feel for her. But what is love really? I can’t compare what I feel for her to what I feel for Paul, but can’t they both be called love? Or, is love something that is reserved only for others? Something that I can never know?” (2004a: 50-1)

Instead of resting assured that she is loved differently by two individuals, and loves them differently in turn, the need to love according to a socially sanctioned formula leads to the agonized suspicion that she is aberrant and lacking.

Same-sex relationships between the women characters differ from those experienced by the male characters. They are confined to the domestic setting, unlike the male same-sex erotic acts which also occur outdoors in alleyways, in the desert and in the mountains. Descriptions of sexual behaviour are filtered through the perceptions of Belquassim, who perceptively imagines what sex is like between Jane and Cherifa, and even observes sex-play between Jane and Natalie Barney:

Sometimes they made love, for Belquassim could only call those slow sensuous caresses lovemaking, he could not think of another word for it. Natalie would undo the buttons on Jane’s shirt and move her long fingers, with their short blunt fingertips that were tipped in purple, over Jane’s small upright breasts. Her fingers would move for a long time, they never seemed to be in a hurry, slowly grasping, twisting and stroking the dark nipples. And Jane would

arch her back, moving in towards Natalie's hands, wanting more of her touch. At other times, it was not lovemaking, not the slow gentle movement of fingers on the tips of a breast or between pulsating legs. At other times they seemed almost violent in the way they sought out each other's bodies. Jane, on her knees in front of Natalie, moving her mouth along and up Natalie's thighs, under her long Paris dress, moving upwards, touching and reaching inside. And Natalie would cry out as the tip of a tongue met that wet space that gives so much pleasure. And when she twisted Jane in a hard brutal way Jane would gasp as if she were a frangipani bud that had been torn from the branch. (114)

This passage acts as a counterpoint to the episode quoted above, where Paul burns Belquassim's shoulder. It is the most lyrical of all the sexual descriptions in the text, and it is significant that it is more soft-focus than the more explicit and violent passages which deal with male-male sex. The affair being portrayed here is a temporary one, which momentarily deflects Jane from her obsession with Cherifa. Adair therefore chooses to represent sybaritism as her most luminous example of sexual encounters in the novel. This has the effect of providing a respectful space for sensuality outside an emotional framework, a concept which is not socially endorsed. Further, the erotic acts depicted are triangulated through the focalization of a male gaze, which escalates the sense of transgression already present in the passage through female same-sex erotic behaviour by emphasizing that conventions of sexual privacy have been flouted. However, this is not a heterosexual gaze, but a bisexual gaze, which complicates and expands the erotic dynamics through a thoroughly queer shifting web of identification and desire. Instead of the crude pornographic cliché of two lesbians performing for the delectation of a heterosexual man who fantasizes about having sex with both of them and "converting" them to heterosexuality, there is a protean interplay here between the bisexual male subject's understanding of and identification with same-sex behaviour, and a simultaneous desire which would not be possible for a gay male subject, combined with a reciprocal performative current from

the female lovers. Belquassim's pivotal position ensures that this complex circuit of energy is visualized by the perceptive reader, whatever her or his sexuality.

Further, Paul and Belquassim are present at a screening of the lesbian film classic, *Mädchen in Uniform*, which as I discussed in Chapter 4 was directed by Leontine Sagan. Although Paul and Belquassim observe Jane's disappearance with a masculine woman in a dress suit, Jane's perceptions are not given. Elsewhere in the text Jane gives voice to her yearning for Cherifa, but their physical relationship is portrayed sketchily, and from a speculative position, filtered through Belquassim's sensory perceptions. He remembers a conversation with Jane which illustrates that the dynamic between her and Cherifa is the mirror image of the one between him and Paul:

"Cherifa is one of the only women who has consistently evaded me. I can never seem to get her to really want me. Oh yes, she does want me, I can feel that she wants me, but her body is separate from anything else. Her body wants me, but her heart, that I cannot know. And there are all those other women in her life, ones I can never compete with, and in fact don't want to compete with as I am so different to them." [...] He thought that Cherifa alienated Jane from the comfort and security of Paul. But he knew he would have to keep silent for Jane loved Cherifa. Not like he loved Paul. His feeling was so different from Jane's – he loved Paul, not just for sexual passion but for his mind and what he could teach him.

It's probably where Mrs Copperfield comes from, thought Belquassim. Freedom through this strange kind of love. And at the same time he could not help but hope that Cherifa remained a part of Jane's life, no matter how dangerous she really was. If Cherifa stayed then there would be a place for him: he could take Jane's place next to Paul. Freedom for me through this strange kind of love, he thought. Space for me and my kind of love. (67-8)

Jane is frustrated by her inability to know or own Cherifa, who is perceived in terms of Manichean oppositions of mind and body. Jane rationalizes her feelings of inadequacy and competitiveness, using the excuse of difference to exonerate herself from culpability. Yet difference is key to her attraction to Cherifa, and to her and

Paul's reactions to Moroccans generally. Difference is both erotic and threatening. Yet the focalizer is the Moroccan Belquassim, bisexual site of difference and sameness through cultural assimilation. His motives in this passage are mixed, combining affection for Jane and prudent self-interest, seen through the repeated symbol of space which he seeks for his love. Within this passage and the novel as a whole, bisexuality is neither demonized nor celebrated. It is viewed as a Third Space, a site of struggle between difference and sameness, between self and other, between sexualities, between mind and body, and between cultures, which confers benefits and pleasures, but also causes frustration and sorrow.

Although Cherifa is given virtually no direct voice in the text, and has motives and actions which are open-ended, Adair does give Cherifa's mystical and evil powers an interesting twist. In the novel Belquassim and Paul "know" that Cherifa has killed Paul's beloved pet, a blue parrot. Yet the title of the novel is *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*. This is a surprising title: it forces the reader to assume both a position of identification with Cherifa and confront an implied collective responsibility for the death of the parrot which symbolizes wildness, difference and creativity. Adair responded to my question about her usage of the word "we" in the title by saying that it points to a wider sense of culpability: that experienced by "the expatriates in Morocco, Moroccans, colonialists and us in South Africa; we are destructive in many senses" (personal communication 2004b). This blanket responsibility does, however, elide the different degrees of culpability and destructiveness displayed by different groups, both in Morocco and South Africa, in different periods.

On a global canvas, *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* is situated within a popular moment of re-discovering an archive of historical characters, and re-interpreting the significance of their lives in the present, through the medium of films and written texts. Partly fuelled by the avidity for the revelations and dramas provided by reality TV, biographies are mushrooming. There is an appetite for narratives which explore gender, sexual and erotic ambiguities. Recent films in this category which explore issues of bisexuality include Oliver Stone's *Alexander* (2004), the producers of which were for a time threatened with a law suit by a group of 25 Greek lawyers upset by the representation of the national hero as bisexual ("No 'Boyfriend' for Alexander" 2004: 4); Irwin Winkler's *De-Lovely*, a film about the music of Cole Porter and his relationship with his wife which survived his gay liaisons (2004); Julie Taymor's *Frida*, about the life of the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, married to the muralist Diego Rivera, and lover of men – including Leon Trotsky – and women (2002); and Patty Jenkins's *Monster*, starring South African Charlize Theron, portraying murderer Aileen Wuornos (2003). Some stories are recounted in a number of forms, such as the fictional *Boys Don't Cry*, directed by Kimberly Peirce (1999), and its documentary counterpart, *The Brandon Teena Story*, directed by Susan Muska and Gréta Olafsdóttir (1998), both of which handle the tragic consequences of a young woman's passing as a man in small-town America. A further example is the film, *Kinsey*, directed by Bill Condon (2004), and the novel, *The Inner Circle*, by T. Coraghessan Boyle (2004), both of which explore the life of the bisexual Alfred Kinsey, whose painstaking and groundbreaking work on human sexuality I discussed in Chapter 2. A number of novels, unambiguously but without sensationalism, cover similar ground, such as Erica Jong's *Sappho's Leap*, which gives the historical and bisexual Sappho an epic treatment (2004 [2003]), and *Trumpet*, by Jackie Kay, about a successful

gender masquerade, and based on the case of the jazz musician, Billy Tipton (1998). Examples with a South African connection include Ann Harries's *Manly Pursuits*, set in the Cape and imaginatively handling the lives of Cecil John Rhodes, Rudyard Kipling, Olive Schreiner, Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) and Oscar Wilde (2000 [1999]); as well as Patricia Duncker's *James Miranda Barry*, about the nineteenth-century British Army doctor who spent some time in the Cape, passed as a man for over 50 years and whose sex was only discovered after death (1999).

In South Africa, the reception of *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* has been positive, although in a review in *ThisDay* Adam Levin (2004: 7)³ takes exception to what he feels is a lack of research on Adair's part (based on a throwaway comment of hers in an interview that she had not read biographies of Jane or Paul Bowles, and insisting that what she had written was a novel). Clearly, however, she has done research, and not only read the fiction of the Bowleses, or she would not be aware, for instance, of the widespread representation of Cherifa that she continues in her novel. Based on his suspicion engendered by Adair's comment, Levin seeks expert advice on the literary, ethical and legal implications of Adair's adaptation of the story of the Bowleses. This line of investigation strikes me as inappropriate. First, it privileges biography, treating it as sacrosanct, although a biography itself is no more than a subjective interpretation of a life, rather than a direct, complete and unmediated account – as I have analysed in Chapter 4. A biography is subject to a range of pressures, not least the necessity to shape the narrative into a coherent whole – much like a work of fiction. Viewing the two forms as polar extremes is purist and unrealistic. Second, the line of investigation adopted by Levin does not sufficiently

³ My thanks to Professor David Attwell for alerting me to this review.

take account of the status of the text as a novel. Possibly his own subject position as a journalist and author of a factual account of his travels, *The Wonder Safaris: African Journeys of Miracles and Surprise* (2003), leads him to value non-fiction over imaginative writing. On the issue of the lack of transparency as to where quotations from Paul and Jane Bowles come from, Levin's point is valid. This matter could easily have been dealt with in an appendix, and would have obviated suspicions of plagiarism which Levin raises.

Beyond this unfortunate elision on Adair's part, however, other usages of hers in the novel reveal a sophisticated understanding of postmodernist techniques, such as her juxtaposition of multiple (usually three) viewpoints of the same event, the cutting of Belquassim's face being a case in point, as this is recounted from Belquassim's point of view, as well as Paul's and even that of the perpetrator of the deed. This technique serves to reveal viewpoints as partial, subjective, contingent and relative, not absolute truth-claims. In addition to being viewed in the light of this polyvocality, the novel needs to be viewed in terms of Adair's use of intertextuality and a chain of signifiers self-consciously and wittily revealing the consonance between hustling, tourism, appropriation, translation, colonialism and the act of writing – including by implication the writing of the novel – which is not innocent but deeply embedded in its socio-political matrix.

Levin, who situates himself as gay in *The Wonder Safaris: African Journeys of Miracles and Surprise* (65), also objects to the explicit sexual content of *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*, although he makes it plain that this is not because he “object[s] to a frisson of homoerotic text, but because it seems jarringly untrue to

Paul's spirit" (2004: 7). He reads the actual Paul Bowles as "practically asexual." However, auto/biographical evidence suggests otherwise. In a letter to Aaron Copland in 1933 Paul Bowles refers to his "mean rate" of 35 to 40 anonymous partners a week in Algeria (quoted in Garber 1996 [1995]: 406). Further, Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno reports that it was widely assumed by friends of the Bowleses, including William Burroughs, Tennessee Williams and Allen Ginsberg, that Paul was having an affair with his *protégé*, Ahmed Yacoubi, in the early 1950s. However, after Yacoubi was charged for seducing a fifteen-year-old German boy (1989: 295), and after the loss of international status in Tangier, leading to a reduced tolerance of diversity (352), and to questions being asked about decadent foreigners, Paul Bowles became paranoid about being expelled from Morocco. This resulted in an intensification of his privacy with regard to sexual matters (353), and denials about same-sex relationships (295). In addition to this evidence which suggests that Paul Bowles was far from asexual, but resorted to subterfuge to protect himself from homophobia and legal punishment, it must be acknowledged that Adair is writing a novel and that South Africa of the twenty-first century is newly receptive to an unexpurgated account of same-sex activity, unlike Morocco both of the mid-twentieth century and the present.

In a review of *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* Chris Dunton comments:

in the end I'm not quite sure what it intends to achieve. One possible way beyond that uncertainty is to read it in the context of South African fiction, post-*Disgrace*: to see it, in other words, as an exploration of notions of choice, distancing and home that reflects, very obliquely, on patterns of social consciousness in the author's own environment. (2004: 18)

This analogy is apt and suggestive. The shorthand term “post-*Disgrace*” evokes a watershed in South African literary and public culture.⁴ Much of the debate on *Disgrace* (1999) centred around perceptions of Afro-pessimism and racism, and after J. M. Coetzee was awarded the Nobel Prize a delicate egg-dance ensued, balancing the ANC’s previous denunciations of the text against national pride in the achievements of a world-acclaimed author. The novel explores a number of issues, however, and a full analysis of the text takes into account its representations of the intersections of race, gender and sexuality as they play out both on the intimate sphere of the home and the wider domain of the nation. *Disgrace* is no apologia for colonialism, and it critiques racism of whatever stripe. The body of the lesbian, Lucy, becomes a fecund site where power, force, choice (the specific motivations of which are unknowable), and a future-directed life-force coalesce. Like *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*, *Disgrace* provides an investigation of sexuality in a changing society with a racially over-determined history.

In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot is an anomalous text, difficult to classify, but comprehensible primarily within a South African context. The text raises important questions with regard to colonialism and its effects, voice, and the validity and responsibility of representing another culture, as a traveller, in a postcolonial context. It is a lyrically written, hybrid text which in a brief space does justice to the lives of Jane and Paul Bowles. Beyond the specifics of this representation of individual lives, however, the novel is a text set in the Interzone which raises questions about individual postcolonial societies and transcultural connections within the continent of Africa. In Interzone literature, “the indeterminacy and fluidity of interzone sexuality

⁴ My thanks to Dr Kai Easton for discussing this with me.

was counterbalanced by the rigidity of conventional colonial relations” (Mullins 2002: 8).

Similarly to those who perceived *Disgrace* as racist, many Moroccans may feel affronted that the Bowleses are used in the novel to comment on Moroccan space and culture. They may feel that the characters reproduce a discourse of bastardisation, harm, or a curse.⁵ This line of criticism is apparent in an interview with the actual Paul Bowles conducted by Abdelhak Elghandor, where he pointedly questions Bowles about his use of Orientalist discourse and his representation of Morocco as atavistic and exotic (1994: 7-9; 17).⁶ On the other side of this debate, however, Timothy Weiss points out how complex Orientalism is, and that it has the potential to unsettle Western hegemony (1998: 1). Weiss argues that Bowles does not display a sense of Western superiority, but “simultaneously undermines ‘white mythologies’ of America and Europe and writes an end-of modernity fiction” (3). In Weiss’s view Bowles attempts to recognize other cultures and to shift away from “the values of modernity [...] toward a nomad discourse” (3).

This is the spirit in which Barbara Adair is representing the lives of the Bowleses. Although it may be regrettable to some that she has relied heavily on distanced, outsider figures, her prime focalizer is a Moroccan; further, she is writing from the perspective both of a tourist, an observer of Moroccan culture, and as a white South African in a newly postcolonial context, who needs to come to terms with a changed national dynamic and a newly accessible continent. The form of *In Tangier We Killed*

⁵ My thanks to Professor Fatima Bouzenirh, Dr Hasna Lebbady and Professor Abdelkader Sabil, who raised these issues with me during the *Urban Generations: Post-Colonial Cities* conference in Rabat, Morocco, 1-3 October 2004.

⁶ My thanks to Dr Stefan Helgesson, who directed me to this interview.

the Blue Parrot is deliberately postmodern, and a sympathetic reading will respond to its fractured polyvocality, yet notice the limits that it embodies in its inability to give interiority to the character Cherifa, who remains steadfastly connected to her own culture, and even attempts to re-appropriate space occupied by the expatriates Jane and Paul Bowles.

While Adair uses the current cultural and literary climate to explore more fully the trope of bisexuality in South African fiction, thus expanding the boundaries of queer writing in this country, she is less successful in explicitly dealing with the consequences of racial privilege; however, the text itself reveals its limits in this regard. *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* is a polyvocal text which functions to critique homophobia and heteronormativity. It destabilizes accepted binarist narrative conventions and broadens notions of sexuality, commitment, love, marriage and ethics beyond rigid orthodoxies. While it is situated in the Interzone of Tangier, it also allows for productive and progressive reflection on the contemporary South African social landscape, as well as on South Africa's position within the continent of Africa.

As Elisabeth D. Däumer conceptualizes the potential of the bisexual, battling between disparate sexual and political affiliations, to provide a notional cultural bridge and promote commonalities (1992: 99), so too Barbara Adair uses the trope of bisexuality to explore the problematic but enabling ways cultural bonds between bodies can be nurtured in city settings. Wilson Harris expresses the possibility of connections in terms of intercultural links, referring to a creative, imaginative energy in which "eclipsed bridges and potential bridges exist between divorced or separated or closed orders and worlds, bridges that are sometimes precarious, never absolute, but which I

think engender a profound awareness of the numinous solidity of space” (1998: 239). In much the same way Adair’s novel can be seen as attempting to establish imaginative inter-continental links around issues of intimate and political importance. Leon de Kock refers to South Africa as “a country of thoroughly interstitial identities” (2001: 272). Its literature, he observes, has in the past employed “various mechanisms of homogenization and erasure” (274). He proposes instead what he calls “the seam”: this is “the place where difference and sameness are hitched together – where they are brought to self-awareness, denied, or displaced into third terms” (277). De Kock’s seam, the place of overlapping between oppositional discourses, would seem to be consonant with my image of the double rainbow, which is the interzonal literary space explored in *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*.

Chapter 10

Conclusion: Bisexuality in the South African Imaginary

South Africa as a “case” seems to offer one of the most acute examples of the crisis of the sign in colonial and postcolonial identity formation in the wake of imperialism. [...] In a place of such interstitial identity, literary culture [...] will also be characterized by doubleness and *representational crisis* [...] that should forever give [...] pause about any form of imagined singularity. Let doubt return. Let the tatty, patchwork “rainbow nation” [...] become once more, in representation, the normal thing that it is in the streets, the shacks, and the bloody intellectual parlors of the old “new” South Africa.

Leon de Kock (2001: 283, 284, 290; my emphasis)

South African literature since 1990 has taken upon itself the task of articulating [...] the experiential, ethical, and political ambiguities of transition: the tension between memory and amnesia. It emphasizes the imperative of breaking silences necessitated by long years of struggle, the refashioning of identities caught between stasis and change, and the role of culture – or *representation* – in limiting or enabling new forms of understanding.

[...] The experience of gay people *as represented in fiction* could be taken as an index of the gap between the country’s experiments in constitutionalism, its nation-building optimism, and the pressures of day-to-day life in a society undergoing at times awkward, indeed painful, adjustments.

David Attwell and Barbara Harlow (2000: 3, 6; my emphasis)

Reading bisexuality [...] involves neither, on the one hand, just a reading of a static moment outside its history, a specular performance, nor, on the other hand, simply a teleological reading of narrative, in which the ending determines the significance of particular moments that have come before. It involves, instead, reading the tensions of an ongoing construction.

[...] We have the tools to begin reading bisexuality as [...] the provocation of *a crisis in representation*. “Bisexual” can retain an awareness of the constraints of gendering, even while, like “queer,” it gestures towards a utopian wonderland beyond gender, where it really would not matter whether one ended up with a partner who was a boy or a girl or neither.

Frann Michel (1996: 65, 66; my emphasis)

Over the course of this thesis I have argued that the handling of a nation’s varied attitudes towards alterity in sexuality provides an index of its legal, socio-political and ethical progressiveness, as David Attwell and Barbara Harlow suggest in their

introduction to a special issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* 46,1: *South African Fiction after Apartheid* (2000), and as Tim Trengove Jones argues in the same volume. Further, I have proposed that a preoccupation with the trope of bisexuality in novels at this stage of South Africa's history is not accidental, but deeply significant of a national imaginary which is attempting to move beyond a strictly binarist viewpoint. This attempt is fraught with anxiety and hope, emotions which are variously involved in the characterization of bisexuals generally, but most specifically in post-apartheid fiction, as I have discussed in Chapters 5 to 9.

Leon de Kock, in his introduction to a special issue of *Poetics Today* 22,2: *South Africa in the Global Imaginary* (2001), comments on the anti-totalitarian "doubleness and representational crisis" which typify literary culture in a "place of interstitial identity" (284). Although neither De Kock nor the other contributors to this volume develop this insight in the domain of the intimate, the representation of bisexuality is in my view a prime means of conveying what are popularly perceived as incommensurable differences within one psyche, the interstitial internalized and embodied. The novelists I have examined have varied perspectives on the significance of bisexuality, ranging from the demonic to the epiphanic, with most occupying a mid-ground between these extremes.

It is significant that Frann Michel, the cultural analyst of bisexuality, uses the same term as De Kock. Michel's chapter, "Do Bats Eat Cats? Reading What Bisexuality Does," provides a critical reading of the tensions of an ongoing construction involved in cultural expressions of bisexuality, including literary forms. She notes that bisexuality provokes "a crisis in representation" (1996: 66). Michel maintains that this

crisis occurs as bisexuality remains part of the familiar construction of the sex/gender/sexuality matrix, even while it, in company with queer, suggests new ways of conceptualizing intimate and family relationships. She perceives this forward look as gesturing towards a “utopian wonderland beyond gender” (66), which, when paired with the South African setting of the texts under discussion, chimes with my metaphoric conception of an imaginary zone somewhere in the double rainbow of gender/sexuality and race/ethnicity, a zone with a wretched history but the possibility of a broader, more inclusive and generous future. This zone does not exist in a vacuum, but needs to be analysed against a global perspective. This I have done in my discussions of various international theorists. In addition, the first and last novelists I have discussed, Tatamkhulu Afrika and Barbara Adair, have settings of Europe and Morocco, respectively, which place the trope of bisexuality as seen from South African authors’ perspectives in the Western world and elsewhere in the continent of Africa.

This thesis, appropriately enough, is situated in the middle ground between recent literary critics’ depiction of post-apartheid South African literature as being a space of representational crisis, and claims by Michel that the trope of bisexuality itself figures a similar crisis of representation. It is thus totally understandable that at this historical juncture a good number of South African novelists have chosen to explore the implications of bisexuality in their novels.

The crucial significance of this trope in terms of the social and national imaginary is revealed by its representation in terms of the ethical and the mythic. The ethical dimension can be seen as part of the “ethical turn” in literary studies globally, as

theorized by the later Derrida, as well as by critics including Wayne C. Booth, Martha C. Nussbaum, Susan Gubar and J. Hillis Miller (Davis and Womack 2001). Applications of this paradigm of writing, representation and reading which have a bearing on this thesis include ethics and the representation of identity, ethics and gender, ethics in postcolonial studies, and ethics and sexuality. From an ethical frame a reader may query how just specific depictions in literature are, and how portrayals of lives and minds display authorial empathy, compassion or advocacy, as contrasted with disgust, othering or cruelty. Where the ethical turn has a particular South African inflection, however, is in its post-1994 context. In apartheid South Africa, judgemental and punitive religious morality held sway, while in the liberal democracy which has subsequently been instituted, with a separation between church and state, the discourse of ethics has supplanted the discourse of religious morality. The prevalent paradigm with respect to gauging matters of race, gender and sexuality has become more liberal and open. The representation of bisexuality in the novels under discussion reveals a striking preoccupation with ethics, and with re-workings of religious mythology.

In their introduction to *Queer Diasporas* (2000), entitled “With a Passport Out of Eden,” editors Benigno Sánchez-Eppler and Cindy Patton read the foundational Western myth of Eden from a queer perspective, which provocatively illuminates the texts which I examined in Chapter 5, Tatamkhulu Afrika’s *Bitter Eden* and his autobiography, *Mr Chameleon*. Sánchez-Eppler and Patton suggest that the prime bond in the creation myth is between male god and his first-created, and that the installation of Eve disrupts this ideal, non-sexual unity:

That most intimate pairing of male creature and male creator was disrupted by the introduction of a supernumerary Other body, as much as by the sexual union of these differently sexed humans. [...] Although this is not in any way a “gay” displacement, the simultaneity of the expulsion from Eden and the installation of heterosexuality suggest that Western sexual and diasporal discourses are fundamentally, if anxiously, related. (1, 2)

In a variant on this reading of the Genesis story, in *Bitter Eden* and *Mr Chameleon*, as I have discussed, the Second World War prisoner-of-war camps in Italy and Germany provide a male-only space of intimate, deep mateship, a discovery of gender and sexual relativism, and sexual temptation. The move into civilian life in England and South Africa represents both the expulsion from this relative paradise and the resumption of a connection with female bodies, in the form of the mother, who urges heterosexual union and normalization, and the sexualized female body who can provide this social validation: whore or wife. The narrator in *Bitter Eden* and his *alter ego*, Tatamkhulu Afrika, in *Mr Chameleon*, are functionally bisexual, and are anxiously torn between desire for the socially forbidden male and a need for social conformity and respectability, which are connected to a sense of patriotism and national identity. Prior to the establishment of the apartheid state, then, homosexual desire, heterosexism and homophobia are represented as uneasily co-existing within the tormented psyche of the bisexual.

In Chapter 6 I critically analysed two novels which dealt with the transitional state from childhood to adulthood, the protagonists in each *Bildungsroman* being scarred by exposure to a bisexual paedophile associated with violence and death. As with *Bitter Eden*, there are two time schemes which illuminate each other, and there are also resonances beyond the individual and psychological to the domains of the national, the mythic and the spiritual, thus conveying the depth of significance of the

narratives being told. *Cracks* by Sheila Kohler (1999) and *The Smell of Apples* by Mark Behr (1996 [1995]) are complementary texts, as they portray the effects of a binarist apartheid ideology, including racism and sexism, on white children, English-speaking girls and Afrikaans-speaking boys.

In an interesting twist on Leon de Kock's assertion that "even today it is highly problematic to shift from the first-person singular to the first-person plural when talking South African – to move from "I" to "we" or "us" (2001: 272), Kohler uses first-person plural narration throughout her novel, while eliding the presence of the individual "I." By means of this technique of using a group identity for the girls of the swimming team she compellingly reveals a pack mentality operating, and shows how partial (in both senses) and culpable "we" can be. The prime catalyst for disaster in the novel, however, is the bisexual Miss G, characterized by dangerous fluidity, excess, and a lack of proper boundaries. She is coded as dangerous by virtue of being a woman, a masculinized, narcissistic, animalistic lesbian, and, worst of all, a bisexual, associated with temptation, sin, rootlessness, disease, and corruption from the ideal of heterosexual monogamy. She is represented in imagery of Satan and Eve, and while her absolutism is revealed to be contaminating, no healthier or more viable alternative is offered. In addition to bisexuality representing a site of anxiety about boundaries in the text, race too is presented in terms of separation and incompatibility, even in the later post-apartheid chronotope.

Over the course of *The Smell of Apples* the child narrator, Marnus, shifts from perceiving his father, General Erasmus, as a saviour to acknowledging that he is a rapist and a corrupt hypocrite. While the Erasmus family presents a façade of

decorum and civilization, under the surface seethes an interlinked system of sexual and family violence, gender and racial oppression, fascism and religious bigotry. The key symbol is Edenic apples, which reveal the extent to which the ostensibly upright have succumbed to temptation, and corrupted the innocent. Both the family and the nation are portrayed as riddled with malaise, which Marnus willingly embraces. This choice leads to his destiny as a blood-sacrifice, so as not to further perpetuate harm. The text also offers alternatives to the pathological zealotry of apartheid and allied ideologies by revealing a sensuous world of polymorphous pleasure, a female world of support which avoids the traps of masculine competition and a laager mentality, a humane coloured community of syncretism, and a wider, inspiring natural world. Bisexuality is not seen as inherently evil, as in *Cracks*, but as dependent on context: warping and destructive in a repressive, binarist system, but alternatively having the potential for emotional liberation as part of an open, accepting world-view.

In Chapter 7 I looked briefly at three novels set in the post-apartheid era which employ the trope of bisexuality alongside other means to disrupt monolithic identities. Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit* (2000) explores the implications of a range of transgressive sexual practices, including self-identified bisexuality, also colloquially called a "double-adaptor" in the text, and therapeutic bisexual fantasies. Alongside this sexual middle ground the interstitial coloured community is also investigated. The novel endorses hybridity and syncretism, and reveals the echoes of the past which pervade the present, and which need acknowledging before the future can be contemplated. The title, characters and technique of magical realism evoke the mythic and allegorical, and the novel is creative and imaginative in its handling of sexual material as crucial to an understanding of South Africa's national imaginary.

Like *Bitter Fruit*, Guy Willoughby's *Archangels* (2002) also includes a character who is angelic, although his spiritual dimension is likewise conceived as fallen, as it is highly carnal and venal. In this novel the central character's bisexuality is associated with authenticity. Questions of ethics and the land are also raised, as they are in Michiel Heyns's *The Reluctant Passenger* (2003a). This novel is light and amusing in tone, despite the serious issues it deals with. Three characters are represented as bisexual; shifting states occur frequently, and are socially accepted and textually endorsed.

The major focus of Chapter 7 was, however, my analysis of Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun* (1998), which also foregrounds bisexuality as a significant part of the national imaginary at this historical moment of transition. Through the lens of the aftermath of the tragic interaction between two characters represented as bisexual, Gordimer reveals shifting patterns of sexual, family and racial identities beyond previous binarist schemes. Shifts in a progressive direction in law are also followed over the course of the novel. Again, the garden of Eden is a central metaphor, indicating the mythic depth of anxiety associated with transition from one state to another. Techniques such as polyvocality, intertextuality and the use of triads further emphasize the thematic concern with the co-existence of two incommensurable desires, seen most clearly in the psyche of the murderer, Duncan Lindgard, who is simultaneously altruistic and destructive, loving and lethal, emotionally healthy and pathological, a throwback to the white violence of the past and the possible progenitor of the future. Through the crime committed by their son, his parents, Claudia and Harald Lindgard, are forced to confront their unsuspected prejudices, despite their

good works, with regard to internalized racism, homophobia, and alternative social structures and behaviours. These alternatives, which represent a paradigm shift on the part of the Lindgard parents, are embodied in the black characters Hamilton Motsamai and Khulu Dladla.

The novels I critically examined in Chapter 8 were not part of a historical sequence, but together offered different views of the celebratory, which it is important to include as a counterbalance to prevalent negativity with regard to LGBT issues in the dominant discourse, and also in view of the imagery of hope implicit in my guiding metaphor of the double rainbow. The first of the three novels in this chapter, K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (2001), is particularly interesting for its pairing of the carnal and the spiritual, and for its development of a specifically pan-African version of spirituality based on ancient Egyptian deities. However, I critiqued the text for its dismissal of bisexuality and for its reliance on a binarist schema of sexuality, race and gender, whereby homosexuality is privileged over heterosexuality and black over white, thus overturning conventional patterns in the South African imaginary, while masculinity remains privileged over femininity, as heretofore.

Love Themes for the Wilderness (1996) by Ashraf Jamal fascinatingly employs techniques of camp, the carnivalesque and the celebratory throughout the text. These are displayed most particularly through the depiction of the bisexual "bimbo-shaman," Phyllis, a character who epitomizes the combining of differences which is textually endorsed, and also through the culminating, fantastic, queer Locker Room Project, where in the spirit of allowing space for alternative expressions of hierarchy and sexuality people of all sexual persuasions mingle and celebrate together.

In Shamim Sarif's *The World Unseen* (2001), set in 1950s South Africa, in the Indian community, itself interstitial, a love relationship between a transgressive lesbian and a conventional married woman is depicted. Key moments of intimacy are viewed through the consciousness of the married woman, who is grappling with an unexpected sensual awakening. At the end of the text she is shown as open to the possibility of intimacy with her friend, while remaining committed to her husband and her children. Both politically and personally, ethical behaviour is textually endorsed, although this may vary from the hegemonically normative. The focus on the ethical is particularly important because it counters the popular perception of the social meaning of bisexuality as implying the lack of a moral restraint of appetite, a refusal to commit and excessive desire, as Jo Eadie discusses in "That's Why She Is Bisexual: Contexts for Bisexual Visibility" (1997: 142-60). In *The World Unseen*, however, bisexuality and lesbianism are normalized and given an ethical colouring, which is enhanced by making both the bisexual and lesbian character particularly tolerant towards racial difference and sensitive to racial oppression. This pairing serves to class the acceptance of difference of whatever type as representing a progressive human rights ethos.

In Chapter 9 I performed a close reading of Barbara Adair's *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* (2004), a text which is saturated with the trope of bisexuality as found in the mid-twentieth century Interzone of Tangier. Adair imaginatively bridges the African continent to draw implicit connections and contrasts between sexuality, race and gender as experienced and represented in Morocco of the past and in contemporary South Africa. While the text contains a lacuna in the form of the voice

of “the other woman,” it nevertheless provides a fascinating and sophisticated analysis of different organizations of sexuality, intimacy, love and marriage, which, although unorthodox, are conceptualized within an ethical frame.

A biopic view of the range of novels I have scrutinized reveals the crucial importance of the trope of bisexuality in post-apartheid novels. This trope is an indicator of the hybrid, the liminal and the interstitial, or Bhabha’s Third Space, within the psyche or life of an individual. It enacts the national representational crisis in terms of sexuality and political transition, and reveals authors’ anxieties, hopes and fears about the present, infected with the malaise of the apartheid and sexually regulated and repressive past, and their range of visions of the future. The body of the bisexual, variously represented as demonic, pathological, murderous, stylized, natural, playfully camp or celebratory, reveals the gamut of responses of South African authors to this moment in which they become part of the global imaginary. At their most luminous and suggestive, the representation of bisexuality and reading biopically may offer, as Elisabeth D. Däumer suggests, four separate but interrelated advantages (1992: 98-9). The first relates to the interstitial position of bisexuality, which illuminates the lacunae and contradictions of all identity, and which, despite being painfully contradictory and incoherent itself, may also provide an understanding of differences in culture, sexuality, or gender. The second potential advantage posited by Däumer relates to the political, as “bisexuality reactivates the gender and sexuality destabilizing moment of all politicized sexual identities” (98), while portraying contradiction not as dangerous but as broadening and enabling. The third use of bisexuality as a perspective allows heterosexuality to be problematized, revealing distinctions between heteropatriarchy, heterosexism and efforts to resist heterosexism

both from inside and outside the institution of marriage. Däumer's fourth point suggests that because of the internal battles of sexual and political identifications waged by the bisexual perspective, it may serve as a bridge between different identifications and communities.

Further studies developing ideas in this thesis may choose to compare novelistic representations of alterity in sexuality in other African countries with South African examples. A relative lack in this thesis has been representations of bisexuality or lesbianism by black women. However, as South African society continues to transform I feel confident that creative material including this trope by more black women authors will appear, and this would also provide an important subject for analysis and comparison.

In South Africa, 1994 marked a paradigm shift in the representation of alternative sexualities. Significantly, the chief marker of this change has been the appearance of the culturally and psychologically resonant persona of the bisexual, who has been used to question and destabilize heteronormativity, homophobia, traditional gender roles, intimacy, marriage, the family, and the "regimes of the normal" (Warner 1993: xxvi) in a society moving out of the rigid and oppressive racial, gender and sexual binaries of the past. The depth of the significance of this representation is revealed by the omnipresence of religious and mythic imagery attached to it. It is my fervent hope that in the fluid space of the double rainbow of sexuality/gender and race/ethnicity in South Africa of the future, more acceptance, tolerance and liberation will be found.

Bibliography

- Achebe, Chinua. 1978. "An Image of Africa," in *Research in African Literature* 9: 1-15.
- Achmat, Zachie, dir. 1999. *Apostles of Civilized Vice*. SA.
- Adair, Barbara. 2004a. *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*. Cape Town: Jacana Media.
- . 2004b. Personal communication 14 September.
- Afrika, Tatamkhulu. 1991a. *Nine Lives*. Cape Town: Carrefour/Hippogrif.
- . 1991b. "Acceptance Speech for the Thomas Pringle Award for Poetry in Periodicals, 1991," in *English in Africa* 18,2: 146-7.
- . 1994. *The Innocents*. Cape Town: David Philip.
- . 1996. *Tightrope: Four Novellas*. Bellville: Mayibuye.
- . 2000. *Mad Old Man under the Morning Star (The Poet at Eighty)*. Plumstead: Snailpress.
- . 2002a. *Bitter Eden*. London: Arcadia Books.
- . 2002b. Unpublished manuscript. *Mr Chameleon: An Autobiography*. NELM, Grahamstown.
- . 2003. *Nightrider: Selected Poems*. Introd. Keith Gottschalk. Roggebaai and Plumstead: Kwela/Snailpress.
- . 2005. *Mr Chameleon: An Autobiography*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media.
- Akerman, Anthony. 2000. *Dark Outsider: Three Plays*, introd. Lesley Marx. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- . 2003. "Dark Outsiders: Writing the Dramatic Life of Roy Campbell," in *English in Africa* 30,1: 5-20.

- Alderson, David, and Linda Anderson, eds. 2000. *Territories of Desire in Queer Culture: Refiguring Contemporary Boundaries*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
- Alexander, Peter F. 1982. *Roy Campbell: A Critical Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 1994. *Alan Paton: A Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2000. "Roy Campbell," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 225: South African Writers*, ed. Paul A. Scanlon. Detroit and London: Brucoli Clark Layman: 105-20.
- Amupadhi, Tangeni. 2000. "Eliminate Homosexuals, Says Minister," in *Mail and Guardian* 6-12 October: 13.
- Anderlini-D'Onofrio, Serena, ed. 2003. *Women and Bisexuality: A Global Perspective*. New York, London and Oxford: Harrington Park Press/The Haworth Press. Co-published simultaneously as a special issue of *Journal of Bisexuality* 3,1.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition. London and New York: Verso.
- Angelides, Steven. 2001. *A History of Bisexuality*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. 1983 [1981]. "Prieta," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, ed. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color Press: 198-209.
- . 2000. *Interviews/Entrevistas*, ed. AnaLouise Keating. New York and London: Routledge.

- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 1992. "Spiritual Realism," review of Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*, in *The Nation* 255,4, New York: 3 August: 146-8.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. 2002 [2000]. *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Ashton, Len. 2004. "Stylised Macbeth Is Half Space Ship, Half Granny's Cupboard," in *The Sunday Independent* 25 January: 11.
- Associated Press. "Gay High School." 2003. Online.
<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/gayschool030728.html>
- Atkins, Dawn, ed. 2002. *Bisexual Women in the Twenty-First Century*. New York, London and Oxford: Harrington Park Press/The Haworth Press. Co-published simultaneously as a special issue of *Journal of Bisexuality* 2,2/3.
- Atkinson, Kate. 2004. *Case Histories*. London: Doubleday.
- Aucamp, Hennie. 1990. *Wisselstroom*. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau.
- Ault, Amber. 1996. "Hegemonic Discourse in an Oppositional Community: Lesbian Feminist Stigmatization of Bisexual Women," in *Queer Studies: A Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Anthology*, ed. Brett Beemyn and Mickey Eliason. New York and London: New York University Press: 204-16.
- Azuah, Unoma N. 2005. "The Emerging Lesbian Voice in Nigerian Feminist Literature," in *Body, Sexuality, and Gender: Versions and Subversions in African Literatures I, Matatu* 29-30, ed. Flora Veit-Wild and Dirk Naguschewski: 129-41.
- Bacchetta, Paola. 1999. "When the (Hindu) Nation Exiles its Queers," in *Social Text* 17,4: 141-66.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1965. *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky. Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press.

- Balasko, Josiane, dir. 1995. *Gazon Maudit*. France.
- Ballantyne, R. M. 1977 [1858]. *The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean*. New York: Garland Publishing Company.
- Barnard, Ian. 2001. "The United States in South Africa: (Post)Colonial Queer Theory," in *Postcolonial and Queer Theories: Intersections and Essays*, ed. John C. Hawley. Westport, Conn., and London: Greenwood Press: 129-38.
- Barnard, Rita. 2000. "The Smell of Apples, Moby Dick and Apartheid Ideology," in *South African Fiction After Apartheid*, guest eds. David Attwell and Barbara Harlow. Special issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* 46,1 (Spring): 207-26.
- Barrell, Howard. 2000. "Levine Used Drugs and Electric Shocks to 'Cure' Gay Men," in *Mail and Guardian* 28 July - 3 August: 5.
- Barthes, Roland. 1975. *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*. London: Papermac.
- Bauer, Gabriel, dir. 2001. *Venus Boyz*. USA/Switzerland.
- Beemyn, Brett, and Mickey Eliason, eds. 1996. *Queer Studies: A Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Anthology*. New York and London: New York University Press.
- Beemyn, Brett, and Erich W. Steinman, guest eds. 2001. *Bisexuality in the Lives of Men: Facts and Fictions*. Special issue of *Journal of Bisexuality* 1,2/3.
- , guest eds. 2002. *Bisexual Men in Culture and Society*. Special issue of *Journal of Bisexuality* 2,1.
- Behr, Mark. 1993. *Die Reuk van Appels*. Strand: Quellerie.
- , 1996 [1995]. *The Smell of Apples*. London: Abacus.
- , 1996. "South Africa: Living in the Fault Lines," in *Common Sense* online 11,1 (October). http://www.nd.edu/~com_sens/issues/old/v11/v11_n1.html: 13-17.
- , 2000. *Embrace*. London: Little, Brown and Company.

- Bell, David, and Gill Valentine, eds. 1995. *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Berlant, Lauren, and Elizabeth Freeman. 1993. "Queer Nationality," in *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, ed. Michael Warner. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press: 193-229.
- Bersani, Leo. 1995. *Homos*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press.
- "Bessie Head." 2003. *Gale Literary Databases: Contemporary Authors* online.
<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/GLD/hits?r=d&origSearch=true&o=DataType&n=10&l=d&c=18&10clD=kzls&secondary=false&u=CA&t=KW&s=Z&NA=bessie+head>: 1-10.
- Bhabha, Homi. 1988. "The Commitment to Theory," in *New Formations* 5 (summer): 5-23.
- , 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Bi Academic Intervention, eds. (Phoebe Davidson, Jo Eadie, Clare Hemmings, Ann Kaloski, and Merl Storr). 1997. *The Bisexual Imaginary: Representation, Identity and Desire*. London and Washington: Cassell.
- Binnie, Jon. 2004. *The Globalization of Sexuality*. London, Thousand Oaks, California, and New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Birch, Lannie. 1998. "James Barry's Corporeal Archive: An Hermaphrodite at the Cape," in *Alternation: Journal for the Study of Southern African Literature and Languages* 5,2: 58-71.
- The Bisexual Anthology Collective, eds. (Leela Acharya, Nancy Chater, Dionne Falconer, Sharon Lewis, Leanna McLennan, and Susan Nosov). 1995. *Plural Desires: Writing Bisexual Women's Realities*. Toronto: Sister Vision.

- “Bisexual Chic: Anyone Goes.” 1974. In *Newsweek* 27 May: 90.
- Bishop, George. 1964. *The Bisexuals*. Los Angeles: Century.
- Blasingame, Brenda Marie. 1992. “The Roots of Biphobia: Racism and Internalized Heterosexism,” in *Closer to Home: Bisexuality and Feminism*, ed. Elizabeth Reba Weise. Seattle: Seal Press.
- Blumstein, Philip W., and Pepper Schwartz. 1974. “Lesbianism and Bisexuality,” in *Sexual Deviance and Sexual Deviants*, ed. Erich Goode and Richard Troiden. New York: Morrow: 278-95.
- . 1976a. “Bisexuality in Women,” in *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 5,2: 171-81.
- . 1976b. “Bisexuality in Men,” in *Urban Life* 5,3: 339-58.
- . 1976c. “Bisexual Women,” in *The Social Psychology of Sex*, ed. Jacqueline P. Wiseman. New York: Harper and Row: 154-62.
- . 2000 [1977]. “Bisexuality: Some Social Psychological Issues,” in *Bisexuality in the United States: A Social Science Reader*, ed. Paula C. Rodríguez Rust. New York: Columbia University Press: 339-51. Originally published in the *Journal of Social Issues* 33,2: 30-45.
- Bly, Robert. 1990. *Iron John: A Book About Men*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.
- Boehmer, Elleke. 2005. “Versions of Yearning and Dissent: The Troping of Desire in Yvonne Vera and Tsitsi Dangarembga,” in *Body, Sexuality, and Gender: Versions and Subversions in African Literatures I, Matatu* 29-30, ed. Flora Veit-Wild and Dirk Naguschewski: 113-28.
- Borain, Nic. 1996. “The Smell of Rotten Apples,” in *Mail and Guardian* 12-18 July: 27.
- Bornstein, Kate. 1994. *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us*. London and New York: Routledge.

- . 1990. Quoted in Eileen Myles, "Gender Play," in *Outweek 5* (December): 49.
- Bowie, Malcolm. 1992. "Bisexuality," in *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, ed. Elizabeth Wright. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Bowles, Jane. 1978 [1943]. *Two Serious Ladies*, in *My Sister's Hand in Mine: The Collected Works of Jane Bowles*. New York: Ecco.
- . 1979 [1943]. *Two Serious Ladies*. London: Virago.
- Bowles, Paul. 1990 [1949]. *The Sheltering Sky*. London: Paladin.
- Boyle, T. Coraghessan. 2004. *The Inner Circle*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Brett, Philip, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas, eds. 1994. *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Bristow, Joseph. 1997. "Fratrum Societati: Forster's Apostolic Dedications," in *Queer Forster*, ed. Robert K. Martin and George Piggford. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Cage, Ken, in collaboration with Moyra Evans. 2003. *Gayle: The Language of Kinks and Queens: A History and Dictionary of Gay Language in South Africa*. Bellevue: Jacana Media.
- Camara, Mohamed, dir. 1997. *Dakan*. Guinea.
- Cameron, Edwin, with contributions by Nathan Geffen. 2005. *Witness to AIDS*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Campbell, Roy. 1931. *The Georgiad: A Satirical Fantasy in Verse*. London: Boriswood.
- . 1936. *Mithraic Emblems*. London: Boriswood.

- , 1951. *Light on a Dark Horse: An Autobiography (1901-1935)*. London: Hollis and Carter.
- Cantarella, Eva. 1992. *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*. Trans. Cormac Ó'Cuilleain. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.
- Carswell, John. 1978. *Lives and Letters: A. R. Orage, Beatrice Hastings, Katherine Mansfield, John Middleton Murry, S. S. Kotliansky 1906-1957*. New York: New Directions.
- Cassell's Encyclopedia of Queer Myth, Symbol and Spirit: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Lore*. 1997. Ed. Randy P. Conner, David Hatfield Sparks, and Mariya Sparks. London: Cassell.
- Castle, Terry. 1993. *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cessou, Sabine. 2005. "Sello Duiker's Suicide." Trans. Karen Bruce. *Africultures* online.
http://www.africultures.com/index.asp?menu=revue_affiche_article&no=3845
- Chadha, Gurinder, dir. 1993. *Bhaji on the Beach*. UK.
- Chedgzoy, Kate. 1997. "'Two Loves I Have': Shakespeare and Bisexuality," in *The Bisexual Imaginary: Representation, Identity and Desire*, ed. Bi Academic Intervention. London and Washington: Cassell: 106-19.
- Cixous, Hélène. 1981 [1975]. "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, in *New French Feminisms: An Anthology*, ed. and introd. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron. Brighton: The Harvester Press: 245-64. Originally published in France as "Le Rire de la Méduse."
- , 1996 [1986]. "Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays," trans. Betsy Wing, in Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément: *The Newly Born Woman*.

- London: I. B. Tauris Publishers: 63-132. Book originally published in France as *La Jeune Née*: 1975.
- Clingman, Stephen. 2000. "Surviving Murder: Oscillation and Triangulation in Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun*," in *South African Fiction After Apartheid*, guest eds. David Attwell and Barbara Harlow. Special issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* 46,1 (Spring): 139-58.
- Clinton, Michelle. 1994. *Good Sense & The Faithless*. Albuquerque, NM: West End Press.
- Cock, Jacklyn. 2001. "Gun Violence and Masculinity in Contemporary South Africa," in *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, ed. Robert Morrell. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press; London and New York: Zed Books: 43-55.
- Coetzee, J.M. 1999. *Disgrace*. London: Secker and Warburg.
- , 2002. *Youth*. London: Secker and Warburg.
- Coleman, Robert. 1999. "Coming to Terms with Being Lesbian and Being African Is a Mean Feat," at *Mail and Guardian* q-online.
<http://www.q.co.za/regulars/coleman/991015-shongwe.htm>
- Condon, Bill, dir. 2004. *Kinsey*. USA/Germany.
- Connolly, Cressida. 2004. *The Rare and the Beautiful: The Art, Loves, and Lives of the Garman Sisters*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Cooper, Brenda. 1998. *Magical Realism in West African Fiction: Seeing with a Third Eye*. London: Routledge.
- Cooper, Sharon. 2000. "Editorial Note," in *Women on Women* 3, May: 2.
- Coullie, Judith Lütge. 2000. "Speaking about Writing about Living a Life: Interview with Stephen Gray on his Autobiography, *Accident of Birth*," in *Alternation*:

- Journal for the Study of Southern African Literature and Languages* 7,1: 236-53.
- , 2001. "The Race to be Hero: Race and Gender in Roy Campbell's *Light on a Dark Horse*," in *scrutiny2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa* 6,2: 3-16.
- Couzyn, Jeni. 1975. *Christmas in Africa*. London: Heinemann.
- , 1978. *House of Change*. London: Heinemann.
- Creed, Barbara. 1999. "Lesbian Bodies: Tribades, Tomboys and Tarts," in *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, ed. Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press: 111-24.
- Crompton, Louis. 1985. *Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in Nineteenth-Century England*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.
- Dangor, Achmat. 2001. *Bitter Fruit*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.
- Däumer, Elisabeth D. 1992. "Queer Ethics; or, The Challenge of Bisexuality to Lesbian Ethics," in a special issue of *Hypatia: Lesbian Philosophy* 7,4: 91-105.
- Davis, Todd F., and Kenneth Womack, eds. 2001. *Mapping the Ethical Turn: A Reader in Ethics, Culture, and Literary Theory*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- DeBarros, Luiz, dir. 2000. *Metamorphosis: The Remarkable Journey of Granny Lee*. SA.
- Decino, Denchu Jose. 2001. "Sartre Online: Freedom and Facticity."
http://www.geocities.com/sartresite/sartre_theses4.html: 1-2.
- de Fay, Sophia, and John Bonham Carter, dirs. 2002. *The Soweto Gaieties*. SA.

- de Kock, Leon. 1997. "Becoming Different from Ourselves," Panel Discussion from the Literary Historiography Conference, "Literary Studies at the Crossroads," UNISA 21 February 1997, in *Journal of Literary Studies/Tydskrif vir Literatuurwetenskap* 13,1/2 (June): 223-4.
- . 2001. "South Africa in the Global Imaginary: An Introduction," in *Poetics Today* 22,2: 263-98.
- . 2003. "Stories within Stories," review of *The Reluctant Passenger* by Michiel Heyns, in *The Sunday Times* online 16 November.
<http://www.suntimes.co.za/2003/11/16/lifestyle/life04.asp>: 1-5.
- de Lauretis, Teresa, ed. 1991. "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities," in *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 3,2: iii-xviii.
- de Lange, Johann. 1991. *Nagsweet*. Bramley: Taurus.
- de Waal, Shaun. 1995 [1994]. "A Thousand Forms of Love: Representations of Homosexuality in South African Literature," in *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa*, ed. Mark Gevisser and Edwin Cameron. New York and London: Routledge: 232-45.
- . 2003. "Here's Looking at You," in *Mail and Guardian* 20-27 March, Friday supplement: iv.
- Deitch, Donna, dir. 1985. *Desert Hearts*. USA.
- Derrida, Jacques, and Christie V. McDonald. 1982. "Choreographies," in *Diacritics: A Review of Contemporary Criticism* 12 (summer): 66-76.
- Dillon, Millicent. 1988 [1981]. *A Little Original Sin: The Life and Work of Jane Bowles*. London: Virago.
- Dollimore, Jonathan. 1996. "Bisexuality, Heterosexuality, and Wishful Theory," in *Textual Practice* 10,3: 523-39.

- . 2001. *Sex, Literature and Censorship*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Donoghue, Emma. 1994. *Stir Fry*. New York: Harper Collins.
- . 1996a. "Divided Heart, Divided History: Eighteenth-Century Bisexual Heroines," in *Bisexual Horizons: Politics, Histories, Lives*, ed. Sharon Rose, Cris Stevens *et al.*/ Off Pink Collective. London: Lawrence & Wishart: 75-82.
- . 1996b. *Hood*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Duiker, K. Sello. 2001. *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.
- Duncker, Patricia. 1999. *James Miranda Barry*. London: Serpent's Tail.
- Dunton, Chris. 2003. "Memories and Self-Examination Aplenty to be Found in Afrika's Collection of Poems," review of *Nightrider: Selected Poems* by Tatamkhulu Afrika, in *The Sunday Independent* 31 August: 18.
- . 2004. "Vicarious Reconstruction of an Uneasy Existence in the Interzone," review of *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*, in *The Sunday Independent* 29 August: 18.
- Dyer, Richard. 1993. *The Matter of Images*. London: Routledge.
- Dyosopu, Nomakhomazi, dir. 2005. "Me, My Husband and his Boyfriend." SA; screened on M-Net 12 April 2005.
- Eadie, Jo. 1993. "Activating Bisexuality: Towards a Bi/Sexual Politics," in *Activating Theory: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Politics*, ed. Joseph Bristow and Angelia R. Wilson. London: Lawrence and Wishart: 139-70.
- . 1997. "'That's Why She Is Bisexual': Contexts for Bisexual Visibility," in *The Bisexual Imaginary: Representation, Identity and Desire*, ed. Bi Academic Intervention. London and Washington: Cassell: 142-60.
- , ed. 2004. *Sexuality: The Essential Glossary*. London: Hodder Arnold.
- Eagleton, Terry. 1983. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Ebert, Roger. 2000. "East Is East," review of *East Is East* dir. Damien O'Donnell, *Chicago Sun-Times* online.
http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/2000421/REVIEW_S/4210302/1023: 1-2.
- Edelman, Lee. 1992. "Tearrooms and Sympathy, or, The Epistemology of the Water Closet," in *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, ed. Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger. New York and London: Routledge.
- Elder, Glen. 1995. "Of Moffies, Kaffirs and Perverts: Male Homosexuality and the Discourse of Moral Order in the Apartheid State," in *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities*, ed. David Bell and Gill Valentine. London and New York: Routledge: 56-65.
- Elghandor, Abdelhak. 1994. "Atavism and Civilization: An Interview with Paul Bowles," in *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 25,2: 7-30.
- Ellingham, Mark, Don Grisbrook, and Shaun McVeigh. 2001. *The Rough Guide to Morocco*. London: Rough Guides Ltd.
- Elliott, Stephan, dir. 1994. *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. Australia.
- Ellis, Havelock. 1897. *Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Volume 1: Sexual Inversion*. London: University Press.
- "Encyclopedia: K. Sello Duiker." 2005. NationMaster.com online.
<http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/K.-Sello-Duiker>
- Epprecht, Marc. 2004. *Hungochani: The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa*. Montreal, Kingston, London and Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Epstein, Rob, and Jeffrey Friedman, eds. 1995. *The Celluloid Closet*. USA.

- Eugenides, Jeffrey. 2002. *Middlesex*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Falk, Kurt. 1998. "Homosexuality among the Natives of Southwest Africa (1925-26)," trans. Bradley Rose and Will Roscoe, in *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities*, ed. Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe. New York: St. Martin's Press: 187-96.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1967 [1961]. *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Faulkner, William. 1964 [1929]. *The Sound and the Fury*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Ferguson, Gus. "Tatamkhulu Afrika," in LitNet~PoetryNet online.
<http://www.mweb.co.za/litnet/relax/tatam.asp>
- Fick, Angelo. 1998. "The House Gun: Nadine Gordimer," review, in *Cape Times* 20 March: 12.
- Fleming, Victor, dir. 1939. *The Wizard of Oz*. USA.
- Ford, Clellan S., and Frank A. Beach. 1951. *Patterns of Sexual Behavior*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Forster, E. M. 1972 [1951]. *Two Cheers for Democracy*. London: Edward Arnold.
- , 1973 [1971]. *Maurice*. New York: Signet. First edition published by W. W. Norton.
- Fosse, Bob, dir. 1972. *Cabaret*. USA.
- Foucault, Michel. 1984 [1976]. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. London: Penguin. First published as *La Volonté de savoir*.
- Fox, Ronald C. 1996. "Bisexuality in Perspective: A Review of Theory and Research," in *Bisexuality: The Psychology and Politics of an Invisible Minority*, ed. Beth A. Firestein. Thousand Oaks: Sage: 3-50.
- Frears, Stephen, dir. 1985. *My Beautiful Laundrette*. UK.

- Freud, Sigmund. 1905. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, in vol. 7 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 vols. Ed. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1953-74. (Hereafter *SE*).
- . 1931. "Female Sexuality," in vol. 21 of *SE*.
- . 1937. "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," in vol. 23 of *SE*.
- . 1940. *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, in vol. 23 of *SE*.
- . 1954. *The Origins of Psychoanalysis: Letters to W. Fliess, Drafts and Notes: 1887-1902*. London: Imago.
- Fuss, Diana, ed. 1991. *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Galgut, Damon. 1982. *A Sinless Season*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball.
- . 1991. *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*. London: Scribner.
- Gallagher, Susan Vanzanten. 1997. "The Backward Glance: History and the Novel in Post-Apartheid South Africa," in *Studies in the Novel* 29,3: 376-95.
- Gamson, Joshua. 1995. "Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma," in *Social Problems* 42,3: 390-407.
- Garber, Marjorie. 1992. *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*. New York: Routledge.
- . 1996 [1995]. *Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life*. New York: Touchstone.
- Garner, Dwight. 1998. "The *Salon* Interview: Nadine Gordimer," in *Salon* online. http://www.salon.com/books/int/1998/03/cov_si_09int.html: 1-14.
- Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. 1992. "Between the Living and the Unborn," in *The New York Times Book Review*, 28 June: 3.

- Gathorne-Hardy, Jonathan. 2004 [1998]. *Kinsey: Sex the Measure of All Things*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Gaudio, Rudolf P. 1998. "Male Lesbians and Other Queer Notions in Hausa," in *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities*, ed. Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe. New York: St. Martin's Press: 115-28.
- Geller, Thomas. 1990. *Bisexuality: A Reader and Sourcebook*. Ojai, Calif.: Times Change Press.
- George, Sue. 1993. *Women and Bisexuality*. London: Scarlet Press.
- Gevisser, Mark. 2000. "Love Will Tear Us Apart," in *Sunday Times* 2 January, Millenium Souvenir supplement: 16.
- , and Edwin Cameron, eds. 1995 [1994]. *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa*. New York and London: Routledge. First published Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. 1996 [1986]. "Introduction: A Tarantella of Theory," in *The Newly Born Woman* by Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, trans. Betsy Wing. London: I. B. Tauris Publishers: ix-xviii.
- Glendinning, Victoria. 1983. *Vita: The Life of V. Sackville-West*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Goldman, Ruth. 1996. "Who Is That *Queer* Queer? Exploring Norms around Sexuality, Race and Class in Queer Theory," in *Queer Studies: A Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Anthology*, ed. Brett Beemyn and Mickey Eliason. New York and London: New York University Press: 169-82.
- Goosen, Jeanne. 1975. *Om 'n Mens na te Boots*. Johannesburg: Perskor.
- Gordimer, Nadine. 1982 [1981]. *July's People*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- . 1987. *A Sport of Nature*. Cape Town: David Philip.

- , 1989. *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics, Places*. New York: Penguin.
- , 1995 [1994]. *None to Accompany Me*. New York: Penguin.
- , 1998. *The House Gun*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip.
- , 1999. *Living in Hope and History: Notes from Our Century*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Gottschalk, Keith. 2003. "Introduction," in *Nightrider: Selected Poems* by Tatamkhulu Afrika. Roggebaai and Plumstead: Kwela/Snailpress: 7-9.
- Govender, Ronnie. 1994. "Ashraf Jamal Takes His Yo-Yo to the Cape," in *Weekly Mail and Guardian* 20-26 May: 35.
- Govinden, Devarakshanam (Betty). 2000. "*Sister Outsiders*": *The Representation of Identity and Difference in Selected Writings by South African Indian Women*. Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Natal, Durban.
- "Govt to Act on Gay Marriage Ruling." 2005. *The Witness*, 2 December: 1-2.
- Gray, Stephen. 1987. *John Ross: The True Story*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- , 1988. *Time of Our Darkness*. London: Frederick Muller/Century/Hutchinson.
- , 1989. *Born of Man*. London: GMP; Johannesburg: Justified.
- , 1991a. "The Building Site," in *Passport*, Cambridge, no. 2; reprinted in *The Invisible Ghetto: Lesbian and Gay Writing from South Africa*, ed. Matthew Krouse and Kim Berman 1995 [1993]. London: The Gay Men's Press: 65-75.
- , 1991b. *War Child*. Johannesburg: Justified; London: Serif.
- , 1992. "His Name," in *The Ten Commandments*, ed. Tom Wakefield. London: Serpent's Tail. Reprinted 1993 in *Human Interest and Other Pieces*, by Stephen Gray. Johannesburg: Justified.
- , 1993. *Accident of Birth: An Autobiography*. Johannesburg: COSAW Publishing.

- , 1994. "A Wild Colonial Girl: Reconstructing Beatrice Hastings," in *Current Writing* 6.2: 113-26.
- , 1999. "Beatrice Hastings," in *Free-Lancers and Literary Biography in South Africa*. Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA.: Rodopi.
- , 2004. *Beatrice Hastings: A Literary Life*. London: Viking.
- Gregory, Deborah. 1983. "From Where I Stand: A Case for Feminist Bisexuality," in *Sex & Love: New Thoughts on Old Contradictions*, ed. Sue Cartledge and Joanna Ryan. London: The Women's Press.
- Greyson, John, and Jack Lewis, dirs. *Proteus*. Canada/SA.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. 1999. "Bodies-Cities," in: *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, ed. Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press: 381-7.
- Haffajee, Ferial. 2000. "Uneasy Bedfellows Fight Sexual Rights," in *Flamme: African Daily Newspaper*, 8 June 2000. Online.
www.womensnet.org.za/beijing5/news1/news1.cfm Reprinted on Gennet listserv 12 June 2000.
- Halberstam, Judith. 1998. *Female Masculinity*. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press.
- Hale, C. Jacob. 1998. "Consuming the Living, Dis(re)membering the Dead in the Butch/FtM Borderlands," in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 4,2: 311-48.
- Hall, Donald E. 1996. "BI-ntroduction II: Epistemologies of the Fence," in *RePresenting Bisexualities: Subjects and Cultures of Fluid Desire*, ed. Donald E. Hall and Maria Pramaggiore. New York and London: New York University Press: 8-16.

- , 2003. *Queer Theories*. Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- , and Maria Pramaggiore, eds. 1996. *RePresenting Bisexualities: Subjects and Cultures of Fluid Desire*. New York and London: New York University Press.
- Hall, Radclyffe. 1972 [1928]. *The Well of Loneliness*. London: Corgi Books. First published by Jonathan Cape.
- Hambidge, Joan. 1991. *Die Verlore Simbool*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Hamilton, Jillian. 2001. "Coming Out," in *The English Academy Review* 18: 188-9.
- Hampton, Christopher, dir. 1995. *Carrington*. UK.
- Haresnape, Geoffrey. 1995. "Tatamkhulu Afrika: *The Lemon Tree* Launch." NELM, Grahamstown: Tatamkhulu Afrika reviews file: 1-3.
- Harries, Ann. 2000 [1999]. *Manly Pursuits*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Harris, E. Lynn. 1994. *Invisible Life*. New York: Anchor.
- Harris, Wilson. 1999. "Creoleness: The Crossroads of a Civilization?" in *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination*, ed. Andrew Bundy. London and New York: Routledge: 237-47.
- Hastings, Selina. 2003 [2002]. *Rosamond Lehmann*. London: Vintage. First published by Chatto & Windus.
- Hatugari, Leo. 2002. "Hosting Malaika Pageant Won't Solve Our Problems," in *The Daily News* [Zimbabwe] online, 8 February.
<http://www.dailynews.co.zw/daily/2002/February/February8/1408.html>
- Hawley, John C., ed. 2001. *Postcolonial and Queer Theories: Intersections and Essays*. Westport, Connecticut, and London: Greenwood Press.
- Head, Bessie. 1974 [1973]. *A Question of Power*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn G. 1982 [1974]. *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*. New York and London: W. W. Norton.

- Hellman, Lillian. 1934. *The Children's Hour*. New York: Knopf, 1934.
- Hemmings, Clare. 1993. "Resituating the Bisexual Body," in *Activating Theory: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Politics*, ed. Joseph Bristow and Angelia R. Wilson. London: Lawrence and Wishart: 118-38.
- . 1995. "Locating Bisexual Identities: Discourses of Bisexuality and Contemporary Feminist Theory," in *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities*, ed. David Bell and Gill Valentine. London and New York: Routledge: 41-55.
- . 2002. *Bisexual Spaces: A Geography of Sexuality and Gender*. New York and London: Routledge.
- , guest ed. 1999. *Stretching Queer Boundaries: Queer Method and Practice for the 21st Century*: Special Issue of *Sexualities* 2,4 (November).
- Henderson, Jane. 2002. "Sheila Kohler's Fiction Springs from Her Life Experiences." COCA online. <http://www.cocastl.org/news/archives/kohler.html>: 1-5.
- Hennop, Jan. 2004. "Hamba Kahle, Brenda Fassie." iafrica.com online. Posted 10 May. <http://entertainment.iafrica.com/features/321431.htm>: 1-3.
- Herman-Wurmfeld, Charles, dir. 2002. *Kissing Jessica Stein*. USA.
- Heyns, Michiel. 1996. "Fathers and Sons: Structures of Erotic Patriarchy in Afrikaans Writing of the Emergency," in *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 27,1 (January): 81-104.
- . 2000. "The Whole Country's Truth: Confession and Narrative in Recent White South African Writing," in *South African Fiction After Apartheid*, guest eds. David Attwell and Barbara Harlow. Special issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* 46,1 (Spring): 42-66.
- . 2002. *The Children's Day*. Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball.

- , 2003a. *The Reluctant Passenger*. Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball.
- , 2003b. "Austere Voluptuousness and Unbridled Obsession," review of *Archangels* by Guy Willoughby, in *The Sunday Independent* 16 March: 18.
- Highleyman, Liz A. 1993. "A Brief History of the Bisexual Movement." Online. http://www.glaad.org/glaad/bi_visibility/bihistory.html
- Hoad, Neville. 1999. "Between the White Man's Burden and the White Man's Disease: Tracking Lesbian and Gay Human Rights in Southern Africa," in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 5,4: 559-84.
- , Karen Martin, and Graeme Reid, eds. 2005. *Sex and Politics in South Africa*. Cape Town: Double Storey/Juta.
- Hogeland, Lisa Maria. 1994. "Fear of Feminism," in *Ms.* 5,3: 18-21.
- Horler, Adelle. 1994. "Twists, Turns and Bitter Sweet Memories, But Eternally Young," *Weekend Argus* 9/10 July: 17.
- Howard, Ron, dir. 2001. *A Beautiful Mind*. USA.
- "The Hudson Valley Writers' Center Presents a Reading with Sheila Kohler and Anne Landsman." 2004. Online. <http://www.writerscenter.org/kohlerandlandsman.html>: 1-2.
- Huisman, Emma. 1990. *Berigte van Weerstand*. Bramley: Taurus.
- , 1992. *Requiem op Ys*. Pretoria: HAUM-Literêr.
- Hutchins, Loraine, and Lani Kaahumanu, eds. 1991. *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out*. Boston: Alyson Publications.
- ILGA (The International Lesbian and Gay Association): World Legal Survey online. 1999. http://www.ilga.org/Information/legal_survey/africa/southafrica.htm
- "Immigration Victory in South Africa." 2000. In *Diva* February: 23.

- Isaacson, Maureen. 2003. "Heyns's Biting Novel Focuses on Transitions," review of *The Reluctant Passenger* by Michiel Heyns, in *The Sunday Independent* 9 November: 18.
- Jacobs, Johan U. 1993. "Nadine Gordimer's Intertextuality: Authority and Authorship in *My Son's Story*," in *English in Africa* 20,2: 25-45.
- . 2002. "Gender-Blending and Code-Switching in the South African Novel – A Postcolonial Model," in *Deep HiStories: Gender and Colonialism in Southern Africa*, ed. Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi: 283-301.
- Jagose, Annamarie. 1996. *Queer Theory: An Introduction*. New York: New York University Press.
- Jamal, Ashraf. 1996. *Love Themes for the Wilderness*. Cape Town: Kwela Books in association with Random House.
- . 2001. Personal communication. 17 October.
- . 2002a. Personal communication. 30 April.
- . 2002b. *Predicaments of Culture in South Africa*. Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.
- . 2002c. *The Shades*. Howick: Brevitas.
- James, Christopher. 1996. "Denying Complexity: The Dismissal and Appropriation of Bisexuality in Queer, Lesbian, and Gay Theory," in *Queer Studies: A Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Anthology*, ed. Brett Beemyn and Mickey Eliason. New York and London: New York University Press: 217-40.
- Jameson, Fredric. 2000 [1986]. "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," in *The Jameson Reader*, ed. Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks. Oxford: Blackwell: 315-39. Originally published in *Social Text* 15: 65-88.

- JanMohamed, Abdul R. 1983. *Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa*. Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press: Chapter 4.
- Jenkins, Patty, dir. 2003. *Monster*. USA/Germany.
- Johnson, Allan G. 1997. *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Jong, Erica. 2004 [2003]. *Sappho's Leap*. London: Arcadia.
- Jonze, Spike, dir. 1999. *Being John Malkovich*. USA.
- Jordan, June. 1992. "The New Politics of Sexuality," in *Technical Difficulties: African-American Notes on the State of the Union*. New York: Pantheon.
- Jordan, Neil, dir. 1992. *The Crying Game*. UK.
- Joubert, Marlise. 1978. *Klipkus*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Jubasi, Mawande. 2003. "Fassie's Lesbian Lover Turns to God," in *The Sunday Times* 20 April: 3.
- Julien, Isaac. 1993. "'Filling the Lack in Everybody Is Hard Work, Really...': A Roundtable Discussion with Joy Chamberlain, Isaac Julien, Stuart Marshall, and Pratibha Parmar," in *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video*, ed. Martha Gever, Joy Chamberlain, Isaac Julien, Stuart Marshall and Pratibha Parmar. London: Routledge: 41-60.
- Ka'ahumani, Lani. 1993. "A 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Rights and Liberation Speech," in *Anything that Moves* 5: 16.
- Kaloski, Ann. 1997. "Editors' Roundtable Discussion: The Bisexual Imaginary," in *The Bisexual Imaginary: Representation, Identity and Desire*, ed. Bi Academic Intervention. London and Washington: Cassell: 198-211.
- Kay, Jackie. 1998. *Trumpet*. London: Picador.

- Kendall. 1998. "‘When a Woman Loves a Woman’ in Lesotho: Love, Sex, and the (Western) Construction of Homophobia," in *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities*, ed. Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe. New York: St. Martin’s Press: 223-41.
- Kesey, Ken. 1962. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. New York: Viking.
- Khumalo, Bafana. 2002. "Seeking Other Selves," in *Sunday Times Lifestyle* supplement, 31 March: 14-5.
- Khumalo, Gabi. 2003. "Sindisiwe Khambule Returns Home to Plan Her Way Forward," in *The Natal Witness (Echo supplement)*, 17 April: 4.
- Kimmel, Michael. 1996. *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. New York: The Free Press.
- Kinsey, Alfred C., Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin. 1948. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders.
- , 1999 [1948]. "Extracts from *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*," in *Bisexuality: A Critical Reader*, ed. Merl Storr. London and New York: Routledge. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* originally published Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders.
- , and Paul H. Gebhard. 1953. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders.
- Kirk, Paul. 2000a. "‘Freaks’ Offered a Chance to Change," in *Mail and Guardian* 28 July - 3 August: 4.
- , 2000b. "Mutilation by the Military," in *Mail and Guardian* 28 July - 3 August: 4-5.
- , 2000c. "A Painful and Dangerous Op," in *Mail and Guardian* 28 July - 3 August: 5.

- Klein, Fred [Fritz]. 1978. *The Bisexual Option: A Concept of One-Hundred Percent Intimacy*. New York: Arbor House.
- Kliris, Stelana, dir. 2002. *Unmasking Mavis*. SA.
- Knight, Isabel. 1981. "The Feminist Scholar and the Future of Gender," in *Alternative Futures* 4,2/3 (Spring/Summer): 17-35.
- Knopf, Marcy Jane. 1996. "Bi-nary Bi-sexuality: Jane Bowles's *Two Serious Ladies*," in *RePresenting Bisexualities: Subjects and Cultures of Fluid Desire*, ed. Donald E. Hall and Maria Pramaggiore. New York and London: New York University Press: 142-64.
- Kohler, Sheila. 2001 [1999]. *Cracks*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Krafft-Ebing, Richard von. 1965. *Psychopathia Sexualis, with Especial Reference to the Antipathic Sexual Instinct*, trans. Franklin S. Klaf (English translation of the 12th edition). London: Staples Press.
- Kramarae, Cheri, and Paula A. Treichler. 1985. *A Feminist Dictionary*. London: Pandora Press.
- Krouse, Matthew. 2004. "Brenda the Lesbian Icon," in *Mail and Guardian* 14-20 May 2004: 12.
- , and Kim Berman, eds. 1995 [1993]. *The Invisible Ghetto: Lesbian and Gay Writing from South Africa*. London: The Gay Men's Press. First published Johannesburg: COSAW Publishing.
- Kruger, Loren. 1996. "Introduction," in *Lights and Shadows: The Autobiography of Leontine Sagan*, ed. and introd. Loren Kruger. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press: ix-xli.

- , 2002. "‘Black Atlantics’, ‘White Indians’ and ‘Jews’: Locations, Locutions, and Syncretic Identities in the Fiction of Achmat Dangor and Others," in *scrutiny2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa* 7,2: 34-50.
- Kunda, Anthony. 1998. "Zambian Gays Out of Closet," in *Mail and Guardian* 11-17 September: 10.
- Kureishi, Hanif. 1990. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. New York and London: Penguin Books.
- Lambevski, Sasho A. 1999. "Suck My Nation – Masculinity, Ethnicity and the Politics of (Homo)Sex," in *Stretching Queer Boundaries: Queer Method and Practice for the 21st Century*: special issue of *Sexualities* 2,4 (November), guest ed. Clare Hemmings: 397-419.
- Lane, Christopher. 1997. "Betrayal and Its Consolations in *Maurice*, ‘Arthur Snatchfold,’ and ‘What Does It Matter? A Morality,’” in *Queer Forster*, ed. Robert K. Martin and George Piggford. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press: 167-91.
- Lategan, Annel. 2004. "Tribute to Brenda Fassie." Women24 online.
http://www.women24.com/Women24/Life/BodySoul/Article/0,7173,1-2-4_4827,00.html: 1-3.
- Leatt, Annie, and Graeme Hendricks. 2005. "Beyond Identity Politics: Homosexuality and Gayness in South Africa," in *Performing Queer: Shaping Sexualities 1994-2004 – Volume I*, ed. Mikki van Zyl and Melissa Steyn. Roggebaai: Kwela Books: 303-21.
- Lehman, Rosamond. 1927. *Dusty Answer*. London and New York: Harcourt Brace Janovich.

- Leigh, Maxwell. 1992. *Captives Courageous: South African Prisoners of War World War II*. Johannesburg: Ashanti Publishing.
- Leland, John, *et al.* 1995. "Bisexuality Emerges As a New Sexual Identity," in *Newsweek*, 17 July: 44-50.
- Leroux-Van der Boon, Marzanne. 1992. *Klaprose teen die Wind*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Levin, Adam. 2003. *The Wonder Safaris: African Journeys of Miracles and Surprise*. Cape Town: Struik.
- . 2004. "Paul, Jane and Barbara," review of *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*, in *ThisDay* 10 June: 7.
- Levine, Laura. 1994. *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-Theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Levy, Barry. 2004. *Burning Bright*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.
- Lewis, Jack, and Thulanie Phungla, dirs. 1998. *From Sando to Samatha, a.k.a. The Art of Dikvel*. SA.
- Loftus, Brian. 1996. "Biopia: Bisexuality and the Crisis of Invisibility in a Queer Symbolic," in *RePresenting Bisexualities: Subjects and Cultures of Fluid Desire*, ed. Donald E. Hall and Maria Pramaggiore. New York and London: New York University Press: 207-33.
- Lumet, Sidney, dir. 1975. *Dog Day Afternoon*. USA.
- Luchsinger, Gretchen. 2000. "Out in Africa," in *Ms* 10,3 (April/May): 23-4.
- "Mabrr's Music Legacy Will Continue to Live On." 2004. BuaNews online. Posted on allAfrica.com online 11 May.
- <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200405110391.html>: 1-3.
- Maclean, Alison, dir. 1990. *Crush*. New Zealand.

- Macphail, E. M. 1987. *Phoebe and Nio*. Johannesburg: Hippogriff Press.
- Madondo, Bongani. 2004. "Brenda Fassie Is Dead. Long Live the Queen," in *Marie Claire* (South Africa) August: 140-3.
- Magardie, Khadija. 2003. *The Third Sex*. Screened on SABC 3, 20 November and 27 November: 22:00-22:30.
- Magona, Sindiwe. *Mother to Mother*. 1998. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Magwood, Michele. 2001. "Girls, Interrupted," in *Sunday Times Lifestyle* 22 April: 10.
- Mail and Guardian*. 1995. 4-10 August: 15.
- Mann, Thomas. 1981 [1924]. *The Magic Mountain*. Trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter. Franklin: The Franklin Library.
- , 1988 [1912]. *Death in Venice and Other Stories*, trans. David Luke. New York: Bantam.
- , 1993. *Thomas Mann: Selbstkommentare: Der Zauerberg*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.
- "Marriage Rejected." 2003. *Behind the Mask* online. 31 July.
- http://www.mask.org.za/SECTIONS/AfricaPerCountry/ABC/south%20africa/south%20africa_index.html
- Marriott, David. 1996. "Reading Black Masculinities," in *Understanding Masculinities: Social Relations and Cultural Arenas*, ed. Máirtín Mac an Ghail. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press: 185-201.
- Mars-Jones, Adam. 1998. "Murder Most Secondary to Everything Else," review of *The House Gun* by Nadine Gordimer, in *The Observer* 15 February. *Guardian Unlimited* online:
- <http://books.guardian.co.uk/reviews/generalfiction/0,,98558,00.html>: 1-4.

- Martin, Bidy. 1994. "Sexualities without Genders and Other Queer Utopias," in *Diacritics* 24,2/3: 104-21.
- Masters, William H., and Virginia E. Johnson. 1966. *Human Sexual Response*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- , and Robert C. Kolodny. 1985. *Masters and Johnson on Sex and Human Loving*, expanded edition. Boston: Little, Brown: 1985.
- Matshikiza, John. 2005. "To Burn So Bright and Die So Young," in *Mail and Guardian* 18-24 February: 28.
- McGregor, Liz. 2005. "Obituary: Kabelo Duiker," *Guardian Unlimited Books* online. <http://books.guardian.co.uk/obituaries/story/0,11617,1407426,00.html>
- Mead, Margaret. 1975. "Bisexuality: What's It All About?" in *Redbook*, January: 29, 31.
- Medalie, David. 1997. "Old Scars, Old Bones, and Old Secrets: Three Recent South African Novels," in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23,3 (September): 507-14.
- , 1999. "'The Context of the Awful Event': Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun*," in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25,4 (December): 633-44.
- , 2000. "'Such Wanton Innocence': Representing South African Boyhoods," in *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa* 12,1 (April): 41-61.
- Mehta, Deepa, dir. 1996. *Fire*. Canada.
- Meihuizen, Nicholas. 2003. "Campbell's Autobiographies: Versions of a Life," in *Tydskrif vir Nederlands & Afrikaans* 2 (December): 196-205.
- Meyersfeld, Michael. 2003. *Gaze*. Cape Town: Bell-Roberts.
- Michel, Frann. 1996. "Do Bats Eat Cats? Reading What Bisexuality Does," in *RePresenting Bisexualities: Subjects and Cultures of Fluid Desire*, ed. Donald

- E. Hall and Maria Pramaggiore. New York and London: New York University Press: 55-69.
- Mitchell, Juliet. 1974. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- “The New Bisexuals.” 1974. In *Time* 13 May: 79.
- Mogoatlhe, Lerato, and Luvuyo Kakaza. 2004. “The Unfussy Life of Brenda Fassie.” *Weekend Witness* 8 May: 6.
- Montgomery, M.S. 1994. *Telling the Beads*. Baltimore: Chestnut Hills Press.
- Morgan, Ruth, and Saskia Wieringa. 2005a. *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-Sex Practices in Africa*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media.
- , 2005b. “Present-Day Same-Sex Practices in Africa: Conclusions from the African Women’s Life Story Project,” in *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-Sex Practices in Africa*, by Ruth Morgan and Saskia Wieringa. Johannesburg: Jacana Media: 309-24.
- Morrell, Robert. 2001. “The Times of Change: Men and Masculinity in South Africa,” in *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, ed. Robert Morrell. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press; London and New York: Zed Books: 3-37.
- Morris, Michael. 2003. “Many Lives and Wild Times of African Poet,” *Cape Argus Classified Supplement* 6 January: 1.
- Muli, Wayua. 2001. “Brenda Fassie: Queen of the Night.” *FemmeNoir.net* online. http://www.mask.org.za/SECTIONS/AfricaPerCountry/ABC/south%20africa/south%20africa_11.html: 1-3.
- Mullins, Greg. 2002. *Colonial Affairs: Bowles, Burroughs and Chester Write Tangier*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Murray, Stephen O. 1998a. “‘A Feeling within Me’: Kamau, a Twenty-Five-Year-Old Kikuyu,” in *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African*

- Homosexualities*, ed. Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe. New York: St. Martin's Press: 41-62.
- , 1998b. "Sexual Politics in Contemporary Southern Africa," in *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities*, ed. Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe. New York: St. Martin's Press: 243-54.
- , and Will Roscoe, eds. 1998. *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Muska, Susan, and Gréta Olafsdóttir, dirs. 1998. *The Brandon Teena Story*. USA.
- Muthien, Bernedette. 2005. "Playing on the Pavements of Identities," in *Performing Queer: Shaping Sexualities 1994-2004 – Volume I*, ed. Mikki van Zyl and Melissa Steyn. Roggebaai: Kwela Books: 41-73.
- Myers, Bill. 2003. "South Africa Constitutional Court," at Gay Rights Info online.
<http://www.actwin.com/eatonohio/gay/sacc.html>
- Myles, Eileen. 1990. "Gender Play," in *Outweek* 5, December 1990: 49.
- "Namibia 'Does Not Allow Gays.'" 2001. In *The Natal Witness*, 21 March: 4.
- The Natal Witness*. 1999. 20 November: 5.
- Ndebele, Njabulo. 1994. "Redefining Relevance," in *South African Literature and Culture: Rediscovery of the Ordinary*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
- Nicolson, Nigel. 1974 [1973]. *Portrait of a Marriage*. New York: Bantam.
- Njinge, Mpumi, and Paolo Alberton, dirs. 2000. *Everything Must Come to Light*. SA.
- Nkabinde, Nkunzi, with Ruth Morgan. 2005. "'This Has Happened Since Ancient Times ... It's Something You Are Born with': Ancestral Wives amongst Same-Sex Sangomas in South Africa," in *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men and*

- Ancestral Wives: Female Same-Sex Practices in Africa*, by Ruth Morgan and Saskia Wieringa. Johannesburg: Jacana Media: 231-58.
- “No ‘Boyfriend’ for Alexander.” 2004. *The Witness* 1 December: 4.
- Nuttall, Sarah. 1998. “Telling ‘Free’ Stories? Memory and Democracy in South African Autobiography Since 1994,” in *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*, ed. Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee. Cape Town: Oxford University Press: 75-88.
- , and Carli Coetzee. 1988. “Introduction,” in *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*, ed. Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee. Cape Town: Oxford University Press: 1-15.
- Odendaal, Welma. 1995 [1993]. “Bye Bye, Forget Me Not,” in *The Invisible Ghetto: Lesbian and Gay Writing from South Africa*, ed. Matthew Krouse and Kim Berman. London: The Gay Men’s Press: 184-91. First published Johannesburg: COSAW Publishing.
- O’Donnell, Damien, dir. 1999. *East Is East*. UK.
- O’Donnell, Guillermo. 1996. Letter to the Editor, in *Common Sense* online 11,2 (November). http://www.nd.edu/~com_sens/issues/old/v11/v11_n2.html: 2-6.
- Off Pink Collective, eds. (Sharon Rose, Cris Stevens, *et al.*). 1988. *Bisexual Lives*. London: Off Pink Publishing.
- Okri, Ben. 1991. *The Famished Road*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- “Old Words, New Images.” 2001. <http://www.africacentre.org.uk/habariwords.htm>
- Olifant, Nathi. 2004. “Sassy Sindi a Star on the Rise,” in *The Witness* (Echo supplement) 13 May: 10.
- “Out in Africa.” 2002. In *Diva* October: 25, 27.

- Pallotta-Chiarolli, Maria, and Sara Lubowitz. 2003. "“Outside Belonging’: Multi-Sexual Relationships as Border Existence,” in *Journal of Bisexuality* 3,1: 53-85.
- Parmar, Pratibha. 1987. "Words Are Weapons," in *In Other Words: Writing As a Feminist*, ed. Gail Chester and Sigrid Nielsen. London: Hutchinson: 149-53.
- Patteson, Richard F. 1987. *A World Outside: The Fiction of Paul Bowles*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Patton, Cindy. 1990. *Inventing AIDS*. New York: Routledge.
- , and Benigno Sánchez-Eppler, eds. 2000. *Queer Diasporas*. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press.
- Pearce, Joseph. 2002 [2001]. *Bloomsbury and Beyond: The Friends and Enemies of Roy Campbell*. London: HarperCollins.
- Pechey, Graham. 1998. "The PostApartheid Sublime: Rediscovery of the Extraordinary," in *Writing South Africa*, ed. Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 57-74.
- Peirce, Kimberly, dir. 1999. *Boys Don't Cry*. USA.
- Philadelphia, Desa. 2001. "The Madonna of the Townships," in *Time* magazine online. <http://www.time.com/time/musicgoesglobal/africa/mfassie.html>
- Philp, Rowan, Babalwa Shota, and Isaac Mahlangu. 2004. "Heartbreaking Vigil for Queen of Pop." *Sunday Times* 2 May: 3.
- Pickford, Lucas. N.d. "William Burroughs page: Tangiers," online. <http://www.lucaspickford.com/burrtangiers.htm>
- Piercy, Marge. 1987 [1976]. *Woman on the Edge of Time*. London: The Women's Press. Originally published New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

- Piggford, George. 1997. "Camp Sites: Forster and the Biographies of Queer Bloomsbury," in *Queer Forster*, ed. Robert K. Martin and George Piggford. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press: 89-112.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth A., and George Chauncey, special eds. 1999. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 5,4, special issue, *Thinking Sexuality Transnationally*.
- Prabhudas, Yasmin. 1996. "Bisexuals and People of Mixed-Race: Arbiters of Change," in *Bisexual Horizons: Politics, Histories, Lives*, ed. Sharon Rose and Cris Stevens, *et al./Off Pink Collective*. London: Lawrence & Wishart: 30-1.
- Prasad, Udayan, dir. 1997. *My Son the Fanatic*. UK.
- Prinsloo, Koos. 1982. *Jonkmanskas*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- . 1988. *Die Hemel Help Ons*. Emmarentia: Taurus.
- . 1993. *Slagplaas*. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau.
- "Proof that Truth Hurts – Once a Hero, Now Vilified as a Traitor." 1996. Sapa article datelined Johannesburg 30 July, posted on ANC Daily News Briefing online (31 July). <http://www.anc.org.za/anc/newsbrief/1996/news0731>
- Quayson, Ato. 2000. *Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice or Process?* Cambridge: Polity.
- Ramphela, Mamphela. 1996 [1995]. *A Life*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip.
- Reddy, Vasu. 2001. "Institutionalizing Sexuality: Theorizing Queer in Post-Apartheid South Africa," in *The Greatest Taboo: Homosexuality in Black Communities*, ed. Delroy Constantine-Simms. New York and Los Angeles: Alyson Press: 163-84.

- Reed, Christopher. 1997. "The Mouse that Roared: Creating a Queer Forster," in *Queer Forster*, ed. Robert K. Martin and George Piggford. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Regchand, Sharika. 2003. "Brenda Fassie's Former Lover Goes Home to Mum," in *The Natal Witness* 14 April: 1.
- Retief, Glen. 1995 [1994]. "Keeping Sodom out of the Laager: State Repression of Homosexuality in Apartheid South Africa," in *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa*, ed. Mark Gevisser and Edwin Cameron. New York and London: Routledge: 99-111.
- Rich, Adrienne. 1977. *The Dream of a Common Language (Poems 1974-1977)*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- . 1980. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 5,4: 31-60.
- Rodgerson, Gillian. 2000. "I'm So Very Free," in *Diva*, June: 29.
- . 2001. "Obituary: Poliyana Mangwiro," in *Diva*, July: 23.
- Roos, Don, dir. 1998. *The Opposite of Sex*. USA.
- Rose, Sharon, Cris Stevens, et al./Off Pink Collective, eds. 1996. *Bisexual Horizons: Politics, Histories, Lives*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Rosenthal, Jane. 2000. "The Smell of Betrayal," review of *Embrace* by Mark Behr, in ZA@Play Books online.
<http://64.233.183.104/search?cache:oD3fS1JCWT4J:www.chico.mweb.co.za/mg/books>: 1-4.
- Ross, Herbert, dir. 1995. *Boys on the Side*. USA.

- Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women's Issues and Knowledge*. 2000. General eds. Cheris Kramarae and Dale Spender. Vol. 1. New York and London: Routledge.
- Roy, Arundhati. 1998 [1997]. *The God of Small Things*. London: Flamingo.
- Rozema, Patricia, dir. 1995. *When Night Is Falling*. Canada.
- Rubin, Gayle. 1975. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. R. R. Reiter. New York: Monthly Review Press: 157-210.
- . 1989 [1984]. "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, ed. Carole S. Vance. London: Pandora: 267-319.
- Rust, Paula C. 1992. "Who Are We and Where Do We Go from Here? Conceptualizing Bisexuality," in *Closer to Home: Bisexuality and Feminism*, ed. Elizabeth Reba Weise. Seattle: The Seal Press: 281-310.
- Rust, Paula C. Rodríguez. 2000a. "Pioneers in Contemporary Research on Bisexuality," in *Bisexuality in the United States: A Social Science Reader*, ed. Paula C. Rodríguez Rust. New York: Columbia University Press: 335-8.
- . 2000b. "Popular Images and the Growth of Bisexual Community and Visibility," in *Bisexuality in the United States: A Social Science Reader*, ed. Paula C. Rodríguez Rust. New York: Columbia University Press: 537-53.
- . 2000c. "Review of Statistical Findings About Bisexual Behavior, Feelings, and Identities," in *Bisexuality in the United States: A Social Science Reader*, ed. Paula C. Rodríguez Rust. New York: Columbia University Press: 129-84.

- Sachs, Albie. 1990. "Preparing Ourselves for Freedom," in *Spring Is Rebellious: Arguments about Cultural Freedom*, ed. Ingrid de Kok and Karen Press. Cape Town: Buchu Books: 19-29.
- Sagan, Leontine. 1996. *Lights and Shadows: The Autobiography of Leontine Sagan*. Ed. and introd. Loren Kruger. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Sam, Tanya Chan. 1995 [1994]. "Five Women: Black Lesbian Life on the Reef," in *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa*, ed. Mark Gevisser and Edwin Cameron. New York and London: Routledge: 186-92. First published Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- Sandford, Christopher. 1996. *Bowie: Loving the Alien*. London: Little, Brown and Company.
- Sarif, Shamim. 2001. *The World Unseen*. London: The Women's Press.
- Sawyer-Lauçanno, Christopher. 1989. *An Invisible Spectator: A Biography of Paul Bowles*. New York: Weidenfield and Nicolson.
- Scarry, Elaine. 1985. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schiller, Greta, dir. 1998. *The Man Who Drove with Mandela*. UK/USA/SA/Netherlands/Belgium.
- Schlesinger, John, dir. 1971. *Sunday, Bloody Sunday*. UK.
- Schoeman, Karel. 1990. *Afskeid en Vertrek*. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau.
- "Schools Fail Bisexual Pupils." 2004. *Times Educational Supplement* Friday 7 May: 15.
- Schwinges, Lars, dir. 2003. *Below the Belt*. 13 part series. SA.
- Scott, Ridley, dir. 1983. *The Hunger*. USA.

- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. 1985. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 1990. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- . 1994a. "Bi," Queer Studies Listserv.
QSTUDY-L@UBVM.CC.BUFFALO.EDU: 17 August.
- . 1994b. *Tendencies*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Seidelman, Susan, dir. 2001. *Gaudi Afternoon*. USA.
- Seth, Vikram. 1993. *A Suitable Boy: A Novel*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Shakespeare, William. 1964 [1623]. *Macbeth*. Ed. Kenneth Muir. The Arden Shakespeare. London and New York: Methuen.
- . 1963 [1595-6]. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ed. F. C. Horwood. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
- "Shamim Sarif." 2002. *Gale Literary Databases: Contemporary Authors* online.
<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/GLD/hits?r=d&origSearch=true&o=DataType&n=10&1=d&c=18&10cID=kzls&secondary=false&u=CA&t=KW&s=Z&NA=shamim+sarif>: 1-3.
- Sharman, Jim, dir. 1975. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. UK.
- Shaw, Alexander. 2003. "SA Is Different," in *The Witness*, 6 November: 10.
- Shaw, Drew. 2005. "Queer Inclinations and Representations: Dambudzo Marechera and Zimbabwean Literature," in *Body, Sexuality, and Gender: Versions and Subversions in African Literatures I*, *Matatu* 29-30, ed. Flora Veit-Wild and Dirk Naguschewski: 89-111.
- "Sheila (May) Kohler." 2000. *Gale Literary Databases – Contemporary Authors* online. <http://infotrac.london.galegroup.com/itweb/kzls>: 1-4.

- Sher, Antony. 1995. *Cheap Lives*. London: Little, Brown and Company.
- The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. 1973. William Little, H. W. Fowler, and Jessie Coulson. Revised and ed. C. T. Onions. 3rd ed. revised G. W. S. Friedrichsen. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sichel, Pierre. 1967. *Modigliani: A Biography of Amedeo Modigliani*. London: W. H. Allen.
- Sikorski, Grace. 2002. "Stepping into the Same River Twice: Internal/External Subversion of the Inside/Outside Dialectic in Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar*," in *Bisexual Women in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Dawn Atkins. Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press: 53-71.
- Slemon, Stephen. 1988. "Magic Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse," in *Canadian Literature* 116.
- Smith, Gail. 2003. "Hating Girls Who Love Girls," in *ThisDay*, 9 October. Reprinted in *Behind the Mask* online: 1-4.
<http://www.mask.org.za/SECTIONS/Women/newlook/news/news14.htm>
- Smith, Kevin, dir. 1997. *Chasing Amy*. USA.
- Somerville, Siobhan B. 2000. *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture*. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press.
- Sontag, Susan. 1986 [1966]. "Notes on 'Camp,'" in *Against Interpretation*. New York: Octagon Books: 275-92.
- "South Africa Passes TG Identity Bill." 2003. At GayLawNews online.
http://www.gaylawnet.com/news/2003/tr030709.htm#south_africa_passes
- Speirs, John. 1971. *Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition*. London: Faber and Faber.

- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1988. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York: Routledge.
- . 1989 [1985]. "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," in *The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, ed. Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore. London: Macmillan: 175-95.
- . 1990. "Strategy, Identity, Writing," in *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym. New York: Routledge: 35-49.
- . 1991. "Reflections on Cultural Studies in the Post-Colonial Conuncture: An Interview with the Guest Editor," in *Critical Studies* 3,1: 63-78.
- Spurlin, William J. 1999. "Queer Identity and Racial Alienation: The Politics of Race and Sexuality in James Baldwin and the 'New' South Africa," in *Journal of Literary Studies* 15,1/2: 218-37.
- Stander, Christell. 1999. "Desiring the Undesirable: Developing a Methodology of Queer Reading," in *Body, Identity, Sub-Cultures and Repression in Texts from Africa*, ed. Johannes A. Smit. Durban: CSSALL: 148-60.
- Steenkamp, Lizel. 2004. "Cocaine Overdose Killed Brenda Fassie, Not Asthma," in *Weekend Witness* 18 December 2004: 1.
- Steiner, George. 1971. "Under the Greenwood Tree," in *New Yorker* 9 October: 158-69. Quoted in Lane 1997: 178.
- Stobie, Cheryl. 2003. "Reading Bisexualities from a South African Perspective," in *Women and Bisexuality: A Global Perspective*, ed. Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio. New York, London, and Oxford: Harrington Park Press/The Haworth Press: 33-52. Co-published simultaneously in *Journal of Bisexuality* 3,1: 33-52.

- , 2005. "Between the Arches of Queer Desire and Race: Representing Bisexual Bodies in the Rainbow Nation," in *Body, Sexuality, and Gender: Versions and Subversions in African Literatures I, Matatu* 29-30, ed. Flora Veit-Wild and Dirk Naguschewski: 65-87.
- Stone, Oliver, dir. 2004. *Alexander*. USA/UK/Germany/Netherlands.
- , 2005. Quoted in "News Snippets" in *Weekend Witness* 8 January: 4.
- Storr, Merl. 1997. "The Sexual Reproduction of 'Race': Bisexuality, History and Racialization," in *The Bisexual Imaginary: Representation, Identity and Desire*, ed. Bi Academic Intervention. London and Washington: Cassell: 73-88.
- , 1998. Review of *Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life*, by Marjorie Garber, *Bisexual Horizons: Politics, Histories, Lives*, ed. Sharon Rose, Cris Stevens, et al./Off Pink Collective, and *Bisexuality and the Challenge to Lesbian Politics: Sex, Loyalty, and Revolution*, by Paula C. Rust, *Feminist Review* 58: 102-7.
- , ed. 1999. *Bisexuality: A Critical Reader*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Stratton, Florence. 1994. *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Sykes, Gresham, and David Matza. 1957. "Techniques of Neutralization," in *American Sociological Review* 22: 664-70.
- Sylvester, Elliott. 2004. "African Singer Brenda Fassie Dead at 39." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* online.
http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/national/apafrika_story.asp?category=1105&slug=Obit%20Fassie&searchdiff=3&searchpagefrom=1: 1-3.
- Szasz, Thomas S. 1970. *The Manufacture of Madness*. New York: Delta Books.

- Tartt, Donna. 1992. *The Secret History*. New York: Knopf.
- “Tatamkhulu Afrika.” 2003. *NELM News* 39, June: 3.
- Taymor, Julie, dir. 2002. *Frida*. USA/Canada/Mexico.
- Tcheuyap, Alexie. 2005. “African Cinema and Representations of (Homo)Sexuality,” in *Body, Sexuality, and Gender: Versions and Subversions in African Literatures I*, *Matatu* 29-30, ed. Flora Veit-Wild and Dirk Naguschewski: 143-54.
- “A Threat to Women’s Freedom.” 2000. *Behind the Mask* online.
www.mask.org.za/sections/women/index/html
- Time Out Film Guide* sixth edition. 1998. Ed. John Pym. London: Penguin.
- Trapido, Barbara. 2003. *Frankie and Stankie*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Tremlett, George. 1996. *David Bowie: Living on the Brink*. London: Century.
- Trengove Jones, Tim. 2000a. “A Baggy Monster of Overstated Anxiety,” review of *Embrace* by Mark Behr, in *Sunday Times* Insight section online, 30 April.
<http://www.suntimes.co.za/2004/04/30/insight/in11.htm>: 1-3.
- , 2000b. “Fiction and the Law: Recent Inscriptions of Gayness in South Africa,” in *South African Fiction After Apartheid*, guest eds. David Attwell and Barbara Harlow. Special issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* 46,1 (Spring): 114-36.
- Trinh, T. Minh-ha. 1989. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Tseka, Tholang. 2004a. “The Brenda I Loved,” in *True Love* November: 139- 44.
- , 2004b. “The Brenda I Loved... Continued,” in *True Love* December: 148-50.
- Tutu, Desmond Mpilo. 1998. “Foreword,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report*: 1-22.

- “Two Moms: A Family Portrait.” 2004. SABC 2, 12 August 21:00.
- Udis-Kessler, Amanda. 1996. “Challenging the Stereotypes,” in *Bisexual Horizons: Politics, Histories, Lives*, ed. Sharon Rose, Cris Stevens *et al.*/Off-Pink Collective. London: Lawrence & Wishart: 45-57.
- Uys, Pieter-Dirk. 2002. *Elections and Erections: A Memoir of Fear and Fun*. Cape Town: Zebra Press.
- van der Merwe, Annari. 2005. “SA Author K. Sello Duiker Dies.”
<http://www.africanreviewofbooks.com/Newsitems/050121duiker.html>
- Vangroenweghe, Daniel. 2000. *Sida et Sexualité en Afrique*. Bruxelles: EPO.
- van Zyl, Johan. 2002. “Verkleurman se Naam Is Tatamkhulu,” interview with Tatamkhulu Afrika in *Die Burger* 25 October: 13.
- van Zyl, Mikki, and Melissa Steyn, eds. *Performing Queer: Shaping Sexualities 1994-2004 – Volume I*. Roggebaai: Kwela Books.
- Veit-Wild, Flora. 1998. “Defiant Desire(s): Homosexuality and Democracy in the New South Africa,” in *The Zimbabwean Review* 4,2: 19-21.
- , and Dirk Naguschewski, eds. 2005. *Body, Sexuality, and Gender: Versions and Subversions in African Literatures I*, *Matatu* 29-30.
- Verhoeven, Paul, dir. 1992. *Basic Instinct*. USA.
- Visagie, Andries. 1999. “Flaunting the Gay Male Body: *Slagplaas* by Koos Prinsloo,” in *Body, Identity, Sub-Cultures and Repression in Texts from Africa*, ed. Johannes A. Smit. Durban: CSSALL: 184-90.
- Volcano, Del LaGrace, and Judith “Jack” Halberstam. 1999. *The Drag King Book*. London: Serpent’s Tail.
- von Klemperer, Margaret. 2001. “Juggler in the Ivory Tower,” in *The Natal Witness* 31 October: 9.

- wa Afrika, Mzilikazi, Henriette Geldenhuys, and Lesley Mofokeng. 2004. "My Last Night Together with Brenda." *Sunday Times* 9 May: 3.
- Wachowski, Andy, and Larry Wachowski, dirs. 1996. *Bound*. USA.
- Walker, Alice. 1983 [1982]. *The Color Purple*. London: The Women's Press.
- , 1989. *The Temple of My Familiar*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Warner, Alan. 1999 [1998]. *The Sopranos*. London: Vintage.
- Warner, Michael. 1993. *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Watter, Lola. 1988. *Images from Africa*. Bellevue East: Justified Press.
- , 1998. *Insights and Idylls: Poems*. Johannesburg: Quartz Press.
- , 2001. *Snippets of Time: Memoirs of a Maverick*. Johannesburg: Quartz Press.
- Wayne, Linda D. 2002. "Identity and Agency: Teaching on Bisexuality," in *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy* 13,2 (Fall): 109-16.
- Weir, Peter, dir. 1975. *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. Australia.
- Weise, Elizabeth Reba. 1992. "Introduction," in *Closer to Home: Bisexuality and Feminism*, ed. Elizabeth Reba Weise. Seattle: The Seal Press: ix-xv.
- Weiss, Timothy. 1998. "Paul Bowles as Orientalist: Toward a Nomad Discourse," in *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* 7: 37-61, available online <http://www.bilkent.edu.tr/~jast/Number7/Weiss.html>: 1-21.
- Welch, Liz. 2000. "Tsitsi Tiripano," in *Ms* 10,4 (June/July): 12-5.
- White, Patrick. 1973. *The Eye of the Storm*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Wicomb, Zoë. 2000. *David's Story*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.
- Wiesner, André. 1999. "Blood Themes for the Wild," in *Mail and Guardian* 22-28 January: Friday Supplement: 3.

- Wilde, Oscar. 1992 [1898]. *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. London: Dover Books.
- Williamson, Sue, and Ashraf Jamal. 1996. *Art and South Africa: The Future Present*.
Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip.
- Willoughby, Guy. 2002. *Archangels*. Howick: Brevitas.
- Winkler, Irwin, dir. 2004. *De-Lovely*. USA/UK.
"Winner of the Betty Trask Award 2002." 2002.
<http://www.shamimsarif.com/front.htm>
- Winterson, Jeanette. 1992. *Written on the Body*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- , 1997. *Gut Symmetries*. London: Granta.
- Wolff, Charlotte. 1971. *Love Between Women*. New York: Harper and Row.
- , 1979. *Bisexuality: A Study*. Revised and expanded edition. London: Quartet
Books. First edition published 1977.
- , 1980. *Hindsight*. London: Quartet Books.
- Woolf, Virginia. 1928. *Orlando: A Biography*. London: Hogarth Press.
- Wylar, William, dir. 1961. *The Children's Hour*. USA. Released as *The Loudest
Whisper* in the UK.
- Young, Elaine. 2002. "Interview with Achmat Dangor," in *Kunapipi*, special issue
South Africa Post-Apartheid, 24,1 and 2: 52-60.
- Zita, Jacqueline. 1998. *Body Talk: Philosophical Reflections on Sex and Gender*. New
York: Columbia University Press.